



Daily News 22 / 09 / 2020

Brussels, 22 September 2020

Commission welcomes finalisation of guarantee system for €100 billion SURE instrument

The Commission welcomes the activation of the SURE instrument, which will provide up to €100 billion in financial support to help protect jobs and workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic. This follows the finalisation of national approval procedures and signatures by all Member States to provide for the guarantee agreements with the Commission worth a total of €25 billion. The voluntary commitment of guarantees is an important expression of solidarity in the face of an unprecedented crisis. These guarantees are necessary to expand the volume of loans that can be provided to Member States while safeguarding the Union's prime credit rating and strong position on international capital markets. The Commission has already presented [proposals to the Council for decisions to grant financial support](#) of €87.3 billion to 16 Member States under the SURE instrument. Once the Council adopts these proposals, the financial support will be provided in the form of loans granted on favourable terms from the EU to Member States. These loans will assist Member States in addressing sudden increases in public expenditure to preserve employment in the context of the pandemic crisis. Specifically, they will help Member States to cover the costs directly related to the financing of national short-time work schemes, and other similar measures they have put in place as a response to the coronavirus pandemic, in particular for the self-employed. As an ancillary, SURE could also finance some health-related measures, in particular at the work place, used to ensure a safe return to normal economic activity. (For more information: Marta Wieczorek – Tel.: +32 229 58197; Flora Matthaes – Tel.: +32 229 83951)

Coronavirus: 4 new Member States join the rescEU medical reserve

Today, Denmark, Greece, Hungary and Sweden have joined Germany and Romania as host states of the rescEU medical equipment reserve. With financial support from the European Commission now altogether 6 EU Member States are building up common European stocks of lifesaving protective and other vital medical equipment that can be distributed across Europe at times of medical emergencies, for example when national health systems are overwhelmed by coronavirus patients. *"With winter approaching and coronavirus cases increasing across Europe, building up stocks of critical medical equipment is crucial. With the further host states, rescEU is stepping up a gear. We will be much stronger in fighting the pandemic by working together"*, said Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**. The high grade medical stocks now include FFP2 and FFP3 masks, protective gowns gloves, as well as ventilators. The rescEU reserve can include different types of medical equipment, such as protective masks or medical ventilators used in intensive care, and is constantly replenished. The reserve is hosted by several Member States who are responsible for procuring the equipment. The European Commission finances 100% of the assets, including storage and transport. The full press release is available [online](#). Coverage of the press statement by Commissioner **Lenarčič** is available on EbS [here](#). (For more information: Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Lutte contre le cancer: Une meilleure protection des travailleurs contre les agents chimiques cancérigènes

Afin d'améliorer la protection des travailleurs contre le cancer, la Commission a proposé aujourd'hui de limiter davantage leur exposition aux substances chimiques cancérigènes. Cette quatrième modification de la directive sur les agents cancérigènes et mutagènes instaure ou révisé des valeurs limites pour trois substances importantes, à savoir l'acrylonitrile, les composés du nickel et le benzène. L'instauration de nouvelles limites d'exposition professionnelle aidera les travailleurs, les entreprises et les États membres à réduire les cas de cancer et d'autres maladies graves liés au travail, ainsi que les coûts des soins de santé. Nicolas **Schmit**, commissaire à l'emploi et aux droits sociaux, a déclaré à ce propos: « *Le lieu de travail devrait être un lieu sûr et, pourtant, le cancer est à l'origine de la moitié des décès liés au travail. La mise à jour de la directive sur les agents*

*cancérogènes et mutagènes présentée aujourd'hui est l'une des premières étapes de notre plan ambitieux de lutte contre le cancer. Cette démarche montre que nous sommes déterminés à agir et que nous ne transigerons pas sur la santé des travailleurs. Dans le contexte de la crise sanitaire majeure provoquée par la COVID-19, nous allons redoubler d'efforts pour garantir la protection des travailleurs en Europe. Nous étudierons les moyens concrets d'y parvenir grâce au futur cadre stratégique en matière de sécurité et de santé au travail. » Stella **Kyriakides**, commissaire à la santé et à la sécurité alimentaire, a poursuivi en ces termes: « La réduction des souffrances causées par le cancer est une priorité pour nous, et pour ce faire, la prévention est essentielle. Aujourd'hui, nous franchissons une étape importante pour protéger nos travailleurs contre l'exposition aux substances dangereuses sur le lieu de travail et pouvons entamer nos travaux dans le cadre du très prochain plan européen de lutte contre le cancer. Avec ce plan, nous visons à combattre les principaux facteurs de risque du cancer pour tout un chacun, mais également à guider les patients à chaque étape de leur parcours et à améliorer autant que possible la vie des personnes atteintes de cette maladie. » Un [communiqué de presse](#) et un [mémo](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Marta Wieczorek – Tél.: +32 229 58197; Flora Matthaes – Tél.: +32 229 83951)*

Victims' Rights: Commissioner Reynders launches new platform and presents first European Commission's Coordinator for victims' rights

At a high-level videoconference this afternoon, co-hosted with the German Presidency, Commissioner for Justice, Didier **Reynders**, will inaugurate the new Victims' Rights Platform – an important deliverable following the adoption of [the first EU Strategy on Victims' Rights](#) earlier this year. The new platform, which will meet annually and on an ad-hoc basis when necessary, will serve as an important forum for discussions on victims' rights with all relevant actors. These include the European Network on Victims' Rights, the EU Network of national contact points for compensation, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Eurojust, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and civil society. In addition to these organisations, who will also participate this afternoon, the event will gather EU Ministers of Justice and Members of the European Parliament. At the conference, Commissioner Reynders will also introduce the Commission's newly appointed Coordinator for Victims' Rights - Katarzyna Janicka-Pawlowska. Ahead of the event, Commissioner **Reynders** said: "Today is an important moment in our work to protect victims' rights in the European Union. With a new EU-wide Victims' Rights Platform and a new Coordinator for Victims' Rights, we are showing clear commitment to carry this work on, and only a few months after the Commission presented the first EU strategy in this area. I welcome the support of the German Presidency as well as our stakeholders, and I look forward to our cooperation going forward. On 24 June 2020, the Commission adopted the first ever EU Strategy on Victims' Rights. The primary goal is to ensure that all victims of crime can rely on their rights no matter where in the European Union and no matter in what circumstances the crime happened. More information on the Strategy is available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko - Tel.: +32 229 6 34 44; Alice Hobbs – Tel: +32 229 808 29)

Coronavirus response: €95.9 million of Cohesion policy to strengthen health, education and SMEs in Poland

Today, the Commission has approved the modification of the Operational Programme for Mazovia region in Poland. By reallocating almost €95.9 million of Cohesion policy funding, the EU is going to help tackle the effects of the coronavirus crisis. Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa **Ferreira** said: "Cohesion policy is playing an important role in the response to the pandemic providing a way to recovery. Thanks to the joint and swift efforts of the Commission and the regional authorities of Mazovia, these resources are providing much needed relief and support to the country's health sector and economy." In particular, €56 million of EU funds will be redirected to purchase medical and protective equipment for over 75 hospitals in the region and to support elderly homes and emergency medical and sanitary transport teams from Warszawa, Ostrołęka, Siedlce, Płock and Radom. Mazovian SMEs will also benefit from almost €33.6 million for continuing their operations and save employment. Finally, €6.3 million will be dedicated to improve conditions of remote education of students and teachers from 236 schools. Modifications of operational programmes are possible thanks to the exceptional flexibility provided under the [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative](#) (CRII) and [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus \(CRII+\)](#), which allows Member States to use Cohesion policy funding to support the sectors most exposed to the pandemic. (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Veronica Favalli – Tel.: +32 229 87269)

Directive sur l'accessibilité du web : les sites web du secteur public doivent être accessibles

dès demain

Demain marque une étape importante pour les internautes handicapés. À partir du 23 septembre 2020, la [Directive sur l'accessibilité du web](#) doit être mise en œuvre par le secteur public dans toute l'UE, afin que les sites web publics soient accessibles aux personnes handicapées. Margrethe **Vestager**, vice-présidente exécutive pour Une Europe adaptée à l'ère numérique, a déclaré: « *Notre vie quotidienne dépend de plus en plus des solutions numériques et le web est pour beaucoup une partie essentielle de cette vie. La technologie doit fonctionner pour les gens, c'est pourquoi nous voulons nous assurer que chaque citoyen peut accéder aux services publics numériques.* » Thierry **Breton**, commissaire chargé du marché intérieur, a ajouté : « *Dans le contexte de la transformation numérique, l'accessibilité du web répond à un besoin sociétal croissant, l'âge moyen de la population européenne s'accroît et davantage de services essentiels sont passés en ligne pendant la pandémie de coronavirus. Tous les Européens devraient pouvoir bénéficier pleinement de la technologie et de ce qu'elle apporte à la société.* » Actuellement, 5 millions de personnes handicapées dans l'UE [n'utilisent pas Internet](#) en raison d'une forme de handicap. Selon la directive, tous les utilisateurs devraient être en mesure de percevoir, de faire fonctionner et de comprendre les sites web du secteur public, dont le contenu doit également être conçu de manière à pouvoir être interprété par des technologies d'assistance, telles que les lecteurs d'écran. Après les sites web du secteur public, l'étape suivante concerne les applications mobiles des organismes du secteur public qui devront être accessibles à partir de juin 2021. (Pour plus d'informations : Johannes Bahrke - Tél : +32 229 58615; Charles Manoury +32 229 133 91)

Ciel unique européen: pour une gestion du trafic aérien plus durable et résiliente

Aujourd'hui, la Commission européenne a proposé une mise à niveau du cadre réglementaire du ciel unique européen qui fait suite au pacte vert. L'objectif est de moderniser la gestion de l'espace aérien européen, ce qui permettra d'établir des trajectoires de vol plus durables et efficaces. Cela peut réduire jusqu'à 10% des émissions du transport aérien. La proposition intervient alors que la forte baisse du trafic aérien causée par la pandémie de coronavirus appelle à une plus grande résilience de notre gestion du trafic, afin d'ajuster au mieux les capacités du trafic à la demande. La Commissaire aux transports, Adina **Vălean**, a déclaré: « *Les avions zigzaguent parfois entre différents blocs d'espace aérien, augmentent les retards et la consommation de carburant. Un système efficace de gestion du trafic aérien signifie plus de routes directes et moins d'énergie utilisée, ce qui entraîne moins d'émissions et des coûts inférieurs pour nos compagnies aériennes. La proposition d'aujourd'hui de réviser le ciel unique européen contribuera non seulement à réduire les émissions du transport aérien jusqu'à 10% grâce à une meilleure gestion des trajectoires de vol, mais stimulera également l'innovation numérique en ouvrant le marché des services de données dans le secteur. Avec les nouvelles règles proposées, nous aidons notre secteur de l'aviation à progresser sur la double transition verte et numérique.* » La Commissaire **Vălean** a tenu une conférence de presse aujourd'hui à 11 heures, qui peut être visionnée sur [EbS](#). Un [communiqué de presse](#) et des [questions / réponses](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Stefan De Keersmaecker - Tél.: +32 229 84680; Stephan Meder - Tél.: +32 229 13917)

Single Market: Member States and Commission prioritise work on removing barriers to free movement of goods and services*

Yesterday, in the second formal meeting of the [Single Market Enforcement Task Force](#) (SMET) Member States' and Commission representatives discussed a plan to prioritise work on removing the key barriers that hamper the functioning of the Single Market. The work plan aims, among others, to prevent possible restrictions linked to a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic as well as to address other restrictions in key industrial ecosystems, like construction and tourism, with a view to improving the single market's resilience. Commissioner **Breton**, responsible for the Internal Market, said: "Created just months ago, the Single Market Task Force is a key tool for working together with all Member States to ensure the good functioning of our single market by establishing a coordinated approach to addressing restrictions and enforcing EU rules. We now agreed on a set of priority areas – including coronavirus related restrictions and barriers in key industrial ecosystems – to ensure that the single market can play its full role in contributing to Europe's resilience and recovery." In this meeting, the SMET focused on how to address barriers in the agri-food sector and to regulated professional services as well as discussed a coordinated EU approach to building stockpiles of medicines and medical equipment that prevents possible shortages and ensures transparency. During the meeting, the task force also discussed a strong and clear mandate that will allow it to strengthen enforcement measures to avoid inadequate or overly differentiated implementation by Member States. Member States' commitment to the SMET work was reiterated during the Competitiveness Council on 18 September. (For more information: Sonya Gospodinova – Tel.: +32

Fight against illicit drugs: Launch of the European Drug Report 2020

This morning, Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson participated in the virtual launch of the European Drug Report 2020, together with Laura d'Arrigo, Chair of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction's Management Board, and the Agency's Director, Alexis Goosdeel. Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life Margaritis **Schinias** said: *"Organised crime groups quickly adapted their drugs operations to the new situation brought by the coronavirus pandemic. Under the Security Union Strategy, we are working to reduce both the demand and supply of illicit drugs."* Commissioner **Johansson** said: *"The high levels of cocaine and heroin seized show that criminals continue exploiting supply chains, shipping routes and large ports to traffic drugs, threatening the health and security of those living in Europe. Modern organised crime needs a modern organised response. This is why we are working with our European Agencies to dismantle drug trafficking networks and disrupt production while improving prevention and access to treatment."* The European Drug Report analyses recent drug use and market trends across the EU, Turkey and Norway. This year's report shows an increase in cocaine availability with seizures at a record high amounting to 181 tonnes, an almost doubling of heroin seizures to 9.7 tonnes and high availability of high purity drugs in the EU. It also explores the appearance of novel synthetic opioids, of particular health concern and addresses the challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The report itself is available [online](#), together with a full press release by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. (For more information: Adalbert Jahnz – Tel.: +32 229 53156; Ciara Bottomley - Tel.: +32 229 69971; Laura Bérard – Tel.: +32 229 55721)

Commission launches initiative for more sustainable cocoa production

The European Commission today kicks off an initiative to improve sustainability in the cocoa sector. A new multi-stakeholder dialogue will bring together representatives of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana – the two main cocoa producing countries accounting for 70% of global cocoa production – as well as representatives of the European Parliament, EU Member States, cocoa growers and civil society. It aims to deliver concrete recommendations to advance sustainability across the cocoa supply chain through collective action and partnerships. Executive Vice-President and acting Trade Commissioner Valdis **Dombrovskis** said: *"The cocoa sector is important for the EU and our trading partners. Today's launch of the multi-stakeholder dialogue for sustainable cocoa will help to guide the sector's recovery from Covid-19, while also finding solutions to existing sustainability challenges. We plan to develop concrete recommendations on sustainable cocoa as trade is not only about growth and profits, but also the social and environmental impact of our policies."* *"When we talk about cocoa, sustainability is key"*, said Jutta **Urpilainen**, Commissioner for International Partnerships. *"Lifting up the three pillars of sustainable development in one go – social, economic and environmental – is possible. We stand ready to act as an honest broker to create the foundation of a new international framework for sustainable cocoa."* The new dialogue will be supported by technical assistance for cocoa producing countries. For more information, see a full [press release](#), a [dedicated website](#) and a multi-stakeholder dialogue [concept paper](#). (For more information: Miriam Garcia Ferrer - Tel.: +32 229 99075; Ana Pisonero Hernandez - Tel.: +32 229 54320; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383; Daniel Puglisi – Tel: +32 229 69140)

State aid: Commission opens in-depth investigation into Belgian capacity mechanism

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess whether a Belgian capacity mechanism to safeguard security of electricity supply is in line with EU State aid rules. With the capacity mechanism, Belgium aims at ensuring security of electricity supply, in particular in view of its decision to phase-out of all nuclear capacity by 2025. More specifically, the objective of the scheme is to ensure that there is sufficient capacity for the production of electricity and that such production meets the demand (so-called "resource adequacy"). At this stage, the Commission has concerns that the capacity mechanism, as notified by Belgium, may not be in line with EU State aid rules, more specifically with the [Guidelines on State aid for environmental protection and energy](#). In particular: (i) the Commission's preliminary view is that Belgium has not so far sufficiently demonstrated, nor properly quantified, possible future issues of resource adequacy in the Belgian electricity market. This is essential to identify the actual need for public support and to determine whether the envisaged aid would be limited to what is necessary. In this respect, the Commission also has concerns that the support foreseen by the capacity mechanism may go beyond what is necessary to address the adequacy issue, possibly leading to over-procurement of capacity; (ii) the Commission is concerned that the measure may discriminate against certain technologies or unfairly

limit participation of cross-border capacity; (ii) finally, the Commission will examine whether the so-called "congestion revenues" that would be earned by the TSO from the allocation of cross-border tickets would be allocated in a way that effectively incentivises further interconnection between Belgium and its neighbouring countries and that does not lead to undue negative effects on competition and trade. The Commission will now investigate further to determine whether its initial concerns are confirmed. The opening of the in-depth investigation gives Belgium and other interested parties the opportunity to submit their comments. It does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "*Capacity mechanisms have the important objective of ensuring security of electricity supply. But if they are not well-designed they may cause higher electricity prices for consumers, give undue advantages to certain energy operators or hinder electricity flows across EU borders. We will now investigate further if the nation-wide capacity mechanism that Belgium plans to introduce is in line with EU State aid rules, to ensure it is cost-effective and that it does not lead to undue distortions of competition.*" The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission approves Fortenova's acquisition of Mercator

The European Commission has approved unconditionally, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of Mercator by Fortenova. The Commission concluded that the transaction would raise no competition concerns in the European Economic Area ('EEA'). Based on its market investigation, the Commission found that the transaction, as notified, would not significantly reduce head-to-head competition in the procurement and wholesale supply of daily consumer goods. A majority of market participants consulted by the Commission appears to be either supportive of the transaction or not concerned by it. The Commission also found that vertical relationships between the activities of Fortenova and Mercator are unlikely to result in harm to competition. In Croatia, the addition of Mercator's very limited activities would not change Fortenova's incentive to give competitors' access to essential inputs or to a sufficient customer base. In Slovenia, the addition of Mercator's activities would not give Fortenova the ability or incentive to shut out competitors, mainly because a sufficient number of alternative suppliers and customers remain available in the market. The Commission therefore concluded that the transaction would raise no competition concerns in the EEA and cleared the case unconditionally. The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into the proposed acquisition of Eaton Hydraulics by Danfoss

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess the proposed acquisition of Eaton's hydraulics business ("Eaton Hydraulics") by Danfoss under the EU Merger Regulation. The Commission is concerned that the proposed acquisition may reduce competition in the supply of certain hydraulic components for mobile machinery. At this stage, the Commission is concerned that the transaction may lead to a reduced choice in suppliers, as well as higher prices, for certain hydraulic components for mobile applications, including (i) Hydraulic steering units, (ii) Electrohydraulic steering valves, and (iii) Orbital motors. For each of the above hydraulic components the transaction would lead to high combined market shares, in already concentrated markets, where limited credible alternative suppliers to the companies are present. Furthermore, the initial market investigation suggests customers would not have sufficient buyer power to counteract any risk of price increases. The Commission will now carry out an in-depth investigation into the effects of the proposed transaction to determine whether it is likely to significantly reduce effective competition. The Commission now has 90 working days, until 3 February 2021, to take a decision. The opening of an in-depth investigation does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "Danfoss and Eaton are both strong players in hydraulic components globally. Manufacturers and distributors active in agricultural and construction machinery depend on access to these components at fair prices for their businesses to thrive. We have opened an in-depth investigation to assess carefully whether the transaction could lead to negative effects for competition, less choice and higher prices for European customers." The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

State aid: Commission approves €193 million Polish scheme to support companies operating in the tourism and cultural sector affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved an approximately €193 million (PLN 851.9 million) scheme

to support companies operating in the tourism and cultural sector affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the [State aid Temporary Framework](#). The support will take the form of (i) subsidised interest rates on loans, (ii) direct grants, and (iii) exemptions from the obligation to pay certain social contributions. Under the subsidised interest rates measure, the State support will cover the reimbursements, on behalf of tour operators, of package tours cancelled because of the coronavirus outbreak. The aid in the form of direct grants will support companies operating in the tourism and cultural sector, which had to interrupt their activities due to the coronavirus outbreak. The exemption from the obligation to pay certain contributions will support companies active in the tourism and cultural sector, which have lost more than 80% of their revenues due to the outbreak. The Commission found that the Polish scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular: (i) the reduced interest rates will be at least equal to the minimum levels set in the Temporary Framework; (ii) the direct grants, and (iii) the exemptions from the obligation to pay certain social contribution will not exceed €800,000 per company and will be granted no later than 31 December 2020. The Commission concluded that the measure is necessary, appropriate and proportionate to remedy a serious disturbance in the economy of a Member State, in line with Article 107(3)(b) TFEU and the conditions of the Temporary Framework. On this basis, the Commission approved the measure under EU State aid rules. The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.58102 in the [State aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. *(For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of sole control of BP's chemicals business by INEOS

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control of BP plc's chemicals business by the INEOS Group, both of the UK. BP's chemicals business is the chemical division of BP plc, mainly consisting of BP plc's aromatics and acetyls business. INEOS is a global manufacturer of petrochemicals, specialty chemicals and oil products. A limited number of vertical overlaps arise as a result of the transaction, between the manufacturing of acetic acid by BP's chemicals business which serves as an input to the production of isobutyl acetate and acrylonitrile by INEOS. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the presence of several other well-established competitors in all of those markets. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9883](#). *(For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Wolong ZF Automotive Electric Motors by ZF China and Wolong

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Wolong ZF Automotive Electric Motors Co., Ltd., ("Wolong ZF Automotive Electric Motors"), a newly created joint venture, by ZF China Investment Co., Ltd. ("ZF China") and Wolong Electric Group Co., Ltd. ("Wolong"), all of the People's Republic of China. Wolong ZF Automotive Electric Motors will be active in the development, design, manufacturing and sale of electric motors and related services thereto for automotive markets worldwide. ZF China is a subsidiary of ZF Friedrichshafen AG ("ZF") of Germany. ZF is a global supplier of products for passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, and industrial technology. Wolong is a motor and drive manufacturer. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the limited presence of the joint venture in the European Economic Area, the limited overlaps between the activities of the companies and the presence of a number of strong players. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9900](#). *(For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Rovensa by Partners Group and Bridgepoint

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Rovensa S.A. of Portugal by Partners Group AG of Switzerland and Bridgepoint Group Limited of the UK. Rovensa provides crop protection products, bionutrition and biocontrol products as well as technical assistance. Partners Group is an investment management company active in private equity, private real estate, private infrastructure and private debt. Bridgepoint is a private equity group that invests

in established European middle-market businesses in a broad range of sectors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because Rovensa, the portfolio companies of Partners Group and Brigdepoint operate on different markets and on markets that are not related to one another. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9942](#). *(For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control of Objego by Aareal Bank and ISTA International

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control of Objego GmbH by ISTA International GmbH and Aareal Bank AG, all of Germany. Objego is active in the development and operation of a digital platform providing and arranging services in the real estate and energy sectors and related service sectors. ISTA International provides submetering and related services in Denmark, France and Germany. Aareal Bank is active in real estate financing and related services along with software solutions for real estate companies. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given Objego's negligible activities in the European Economic Area. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9909](#). *(For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

European Research and Innovation Days: Europe's flagship event starts today

The [European Research and Innovation Days](#), Europe's annual flagship event on the future of research and innovation, are starting today and will take place online until 24 September. This year they will feature more than 100 different sessions and connect over 28 000 policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs and citizens to discuss how research and innovation policy and funding can deliver on the [European Green Deal](#), [Shaping Europe's digital future](#), the renewed [European Research Area](#) and other priorities. Furthermore, the virtual [Science is Wonderful! Exhibition](#) will help schools, youth, citizens and stakeholders discover 40 EU-funded projects tackling the main challenges faced by our societies, from the climate emergency to the fight against cancer and the coronavirus. Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"The 2020 edition of the European Research & Innovation Days already is a fantastic interactive event. With the policy conference covering ten thematic hubs including the Green Deal and Horizon Europe, co-design sessions, as well as prize ceremonies and the Science is Wonderful! exhibition, there is opportunity for everyone to get involved and share their thoughts on the future of European research and innovation."* In addition to the plenary sessions, various hub sessions and workshops that will take place during the event, the Commission will award four prestigious European prizes to game-changing innovators and ideas: the [EU prize for Women Innovators 2020](#), the [European Capital of Innovation \(iCapital\) Award](#), the [Horizon Impact Award](#), and the [European Innovation Council Horizon Prize for Affordable Tech for Humanitarian Aid](#). The European Research and Innovation Days are open to everyone interested in research and innovation. The 2019 edition of the European Research and Innovation Days was recognised as the most visible EU research event in many years, attracting more than 4400 conference participants, 3200 exhibition visitors, and with an overall social media reach of some 120 000. More information is available [here](#). *(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)*

Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis participates in G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting

Executive Vice-President and acting Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis will participate today in the meeting of G20 Trade and Investment Ministers. Following two earlier G20 meetings held this year devoted to handling of coronavirus crisis, today's videoconference will be an occasion to discuss the issues included in the initial agenda of the Saudi presidency: recent international trade

developments, the WTO reform, economic diversification, investment and competitiveness of micro-small-and-medium size enterprises (MSME). On the latter subject, the Ministers are expected to adopt Policy Guidelines to Boost MSME Competitiveness. They will also issue conclusions on technical assistance for investment attraction and get updated on the Riyadh Initiative on the Future of the WTO, as well as on best practices on trade in services and on special economic zones. (*For more information: Miriam Garcia Ferrer - Tel.: +32 229 99075; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383*)

[Tentative agendas](#) for forthcoming Commission meetings

Note that these items can be subject to changes.

[Eurostat](#) press releases

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