



## Daily News 24 / 09 / 2020

Brussels, 24 September 2020

### Leuven is European Capital of Innovation 2020

The city of Leuven in Belgium is the [European Capital of Innovation 2020](#), the Commission announced today at the [European Research and Innovation Days](#). The title was awarded to Leuven in recognition of its excellent innovation concepts as well as its processes and governance models that enable ideas come to life. The prize comes with a €1 million cash prize funded by [Horizon 2020](#), the EU's research and innovation programme. The other five runner-up cities – Cluj-Napoca (Romania), Espoo (Finland), Helsingborg (Sweden), Valencia (Spain) and Vienna (Austria) – will receive €100,000 each to promote and scale up their innovation practices. Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: "*Leuven is a mission-driven city that excels in innovative governance models. It offers its people an opportunity to get involved in critical decision-making processes. But it's an honour to recognise the initiatives of all six winners. Their vibrant innovation ecosystems are an inspiration to all European cities.*" Leuven is the sixth city to win the European Capital of Innovation award, and the third non-capital city after Barcelona and Nantes. Leuven aims to become one of Europe's Labs of the Future through a mission-oriented model in which different groups of stakeholders come together to develop and implement innovative solutions to complex challenges, from climate change and the shift to a circular economy to ensuring high-quality education and care. This year's edition of the European Capital of Innovation Awards was launched in March 2020. Also known as iCapital Awards, the competition was open to cities with a minimum of 100,000 inhabitants from the EU Member States and [countries associated to Horizon 2020](#). The competition first took place in 2014. Past winners include Barcelona (2014), Amsterdam (2016), Paris (2017), Athens (2018) and Nantes (2019). More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

### Journées européennes de la recherche et de l'innovation : le Prix Horizon de l'EIC pour la haute technologie abordable au service de l'aide humanitaire est attribué à cinq solutions innovantes

Aujourd'hui, à l'occasion des [Journées européennes de la recherche et de l'innovation](#), la Commission a annoncé les lauréats du Prix EIC Horizon pour la [haute technologie abordable en matière d'aide humanitaire](#), à savoir cinq innovations exemplaires qui peuvent faire une grande différence dans la vie des personnes les plus vulnérables dans le monde. Le prix est financé dans le cadre d'[Horizon 2020](#), le programme de recherche et d'innovation de l'UE, et fait partie du projet pilote du [Conseil européen de l'innovation](#) (EIC). Il récompense les meilleures solutions technologiques à prix accessible dans le domaine de l'aide humanitaire dans cinq catégories : abris et assistance connexe; eau, hygiène et assainissement; énergie; santé et soins médicaux; ainsi qu'une catégorie ouverte. Les lauréats, un par catégorie, ont reçu 1 million d'euros chacun. Mariya **Gabriel**, commissaire à l'innovation, à la recherche, à la culture, à l'éducation et à la jeunesse, a déclaré: « *Ces innovations montrent nettement la manière dont les technologies physiques telles que les capteurs, les panneaux solaires ou la fabrication d'additifs peuvent être associées aux technologies numériques pour aider ceux qui en ont désespérément besoin, leur donner les moyens d'agir et améliorer leur résilience. Je suis très heureuse de décerner ce prix à la fois à des organisations humanitaires bien établies et à de jeunes entreprises innovantes qui se sont engagées à améliorer la vie du quotidien.* » Janez **Lenarčič**, commissaire chargé de la gestion des crises, a ajouté : « *L'innovation peut nous aider à fournir une aide meilleure et plus efficace aux personnes qui en ont le plus besoin. Les technologies reconnues aujourd'hui en sont la preuve. Il est encourageant de voir la grande diversité d'acteurs et de nouveaux partenariats pour l'innovation, des jeunes entreprises aux organisations humanitaires existantes. J'espère que ce prix servira à soutenir la mise à l'échelle et à une plus large utilisation de ces innovations dans le travail humanitaire à travers le monde.* » Dans le cadre de la [phase pilote du Conseil européen de l'innovation](#), les [Prix EIC Horizon](#) visent à promouvoir l'innovation dans des domaines où il existe des défis sociaux importants. Ils appellent à des

solutions révolutionnaires à haut potentiel, afin que les innovateurs puissent les proposer rapidement sur le marché et atteindre ceux qui en ont besoin. Plus d'informations sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations, cliquez ici : Johannes Bahrke - Tél : +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou - Tél : +32 229 83583)

## Investment Plan backs innovative robotics company in Germany with €12 million

The European Investment Bank, backed by the [European Fund for Strategic Investments \(EFSI\)](#) is providing financing of €12 million to the German company Magazino to advance its development of intelligent robots and therefore assist the safe, efficient and flexible organisation of warehouses and production lines. More specifically, the funding will go towards increasing the company's R&D and international sales activities. Automation is one of the largest drivers for growth in the intra-logistics sector and is crucial for Europe's industrial competitiveness. Commissioner for the Economy, Paolo **Gentiloni**, said: "*The European Commission is committed to helping our SMEs to grow and invest in innovation. That's exactly what we are doing through the EFSI guarantee for Magazino. With their cutting-edge intelligent robots for warehouse logistics, Magazino is a true protagonist of the digital transition that offers such immense opportunities.*" The press release is available [here](#). So far, the [Investment Plan for Europe](#) has mobilised €535 billion of investment across the EU, with €38 billion in Germany. (For more information: Marta Wieczorek – Tel.: +32 229 58197; Flora Matthaes – Tel.: +32 229 83951)

## Coronavirus: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control's new risk assessment shows need to step up coronavirus response in the EU

Today, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) published its [updated risk assessment](#) regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside a set of [guidelines for non-pharmaceutical interventions](#) (such as hand hygiene, physical distancing, cleaning and ventilation). The updated risk assessment shows that notification rates have increased steadily across the EU and the UK since August, and that the measures taken have not always been sufficient to reduce or control exposure. It is therefore crucial that Member States roll out all necessary measures at the first sign of new outbreaks. Stella **Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: "*Today's new risk assessment clearly shows us that we cannot lower our guard. With some Member States experiencing higher numbers of cases than during the peak in March, it is abundantly clear that this crisis is not behind us. We are at a decisive moment, and everyone has to act decisively and use the tools we have. This means that all Member States must be ready to roll out control measures immediately and at the right time, at the very first sign of potential new outbreaks. This might be our last chance to prevent a repeat of last spring.*" Andrea Ammon, Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, said: "*We are currently seeing a worrying increase in the number of COVID-19 cases detected in Europe. Until there is a safe and effective vaccine available, rapid identification, testing, and quarantine of high-risk contacts are some of the most effective measures to reduce transmission. It is also everyone's responsibility to maintain the necessary personal protective measures such as physical distancing, hand hygiene and staying at home when feeling ill. The pandemic is far from over and we must not drop our guard.*" A press conference with Commissioner **Kyriakides** and Director Ammon took place at 11:00 today and can be viewed on [EbS](#). A full [press release](#), as well as a [Q&A](#) on the EU Vaccines Strategy, are available online. (For more information: Stefan De Keersmaecker – Tel.: +32 229 84680; Stephan Meder – Tel.: +32 229 13917)

## Coronavirus response: EU funds help better equip emergency healthcare services, save jobs and businesses in Poland

The Commission has approved the modification of the Operational Programme for Pomorskie region in Poland with a total of €60 million being reallocated as a response to the coronavirus pandemic. Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa **Ferreira**, said: "*This decision will benefit medical personnel, employees and businesses in the region. Pomorskie joins a growing number of EU regions that are making good use of the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to recover from the crisis.*" Nearly €22.2 million have been redirected to support diagnosis and treatment of coronavirus patients, including purchase of necessary personal and medical equipment. Another €20.3 million are providing liquidity for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises that were affected by the negative consequences of the lockdown. Finally, €6.7 million are being reallocated to entrepreneurs and employees at risk of losing their employment and to better the working conditions, especially for those working in long-term care facilities. These modifications are possible thanks to the exceptional flexibility under the [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative](#) (CRII) and [Coronavirus Response](#)

[Investment Initiative Plus](#) (CRII+) which allow Member States to use Cohesion policy funding to support the most affected sectors by the pandemic. (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Veronica Favalli - Tel.: +32 229 87269)

## **Commission and European Investment Fund provide financial boost to small agricultural businesses in Lithuania**

Through the EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), the European Investment Fund together with the private equity fund Helenos is investing €3 million today to strengthen the lending capacities of the Lithuanian Central Credit Union (LCCU). The LCCU has a strong social mission, serving clients that usually have limited access to traditional finance, such as small and micro-sized agricultural companies in rural areas. It also explicitly supports start-ups, for instance through dedicated business advice, and has a wide regional outreach with its 45 credit unions covering the entire country. Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit, said: "The past months have shown us how important it is to invest in our local economies and support small businesses hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I welcome this agreement under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation which will enable the Lithuanian Central Credit Union to provide financing to even more microenterprises in Lithuania's agricultural sector, as well as offering them crucial advisory services." The press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Marta Wieczorek - Tel.: +32 229 58197; Flora Matthaes - Tel.: +32 229 83951)

## **Toy safety: Commission consults on limiting aniline in toys**

Today, the Commission launched a public consultation on limiting values for aniline in toys in order to enhance the protection of children's health. Aniline, which may be bound to colorants in toy materials, such as textiles or leather, is suspected to cause cancer and induce heritable mutations in the germ cells of humans. The Commission is proposing to amend the [Toy Safety Directive](#) to limit the amount of aniline in toys to 30 mg/kg, which is the lowest concentration the test can identify. Aniline should also be limited in finger paints. The Directive lays down the safety criteria that toys must meet before they can be marketed in the EU. Before being subject to the next steps in the adoption process, the draft amendment will be published for four weeks on the [Better Regulation Portal](#) for public feedback. The consultation will be open until 22 October 2020 included. (For more information: Sonya Gospodinova - Tel.: +32 229 66953; Federica Miccoli - Tel.: +32 229 58300)

## **La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique de Turquie**

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription de l' « [Aydın Kestanesi](#) » de Turquie dans le registre des appellations d'origine protégée (AOP). L'« Aydin Kestanesi » est une châtaigne avec une coque brillante et de couleur brun clair, qui se consomme frais. Elle est cultivée dans la province d'Aydin, au sud-ouest de la Turquie, à une altitude comprise entre 650 et 1 500 mètres. Parmi les facteurs qui déterminent les caractéristiques spécifiques de l'« Aydin Kestanesi », les plus importants sont les facteurs écologiques comme le climat et le sol, qui ont une influence sur la grande taille du fruit ainsi que sur sa résistance. Le stockage des châtaignes dans la province d'Aydin est un processus culturel différent de celui pratiqué dans d'autres régions. Les châtaignes sont traditionnellement récoltées avec leurs bogues sous les arbres des vergers, sont stockées en tas et sont recouvertes de plantes telles que des fougères. Il y a actuellement 34 indications géographiques protégées dans le registre de l'UE en provenance de pays tiers (aliments, vins et spiritueux compris) et plus de 1 500 indications géographiques de pays tiers protégées dans l'UE par des accords. Plus d'information dans la base de données [eAmbrosia](#) et dans les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Miriam Garcia Ferrer - Tél.: +32 229 99075; Thérèse Lerebours - Tél.: +32 229 13963)

## **State aid: Commission approves €10 million Belgian scheme to support potato producers affected by coronavirus outbreak in Wallonia**

The European Commission has approved a €10 million Belgian scheme to support the Walloon potato sector in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State Aid [Temporary Framework](#). The public support, which will take the form of direct grants, will be open to producers and stockers active in the potato sector in Wallonia. The scheme aims at addressing the liquidity needs of the beneficiaries, thus helping them continue their activities during and after the coronavirus outbreak. The Commission found that the Belgian scheme is in line with the conditions of the Temporary Framework. In particular, (i) the aid does not exceed €100,000 per beneficiary as

provided by the Temporary Framework for undertakings in the primary agricultural sector and (ii) the scheme will run until 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 set out in the Temporary Framework. On this basis, the Commission approved the scheme under EU State aid rules. More information on the Temporary Framework and other actions taken by the Commission to address the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic can be found [here](#). The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.58649 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 Tsioni – Tel.: +3 229 90526)

## **Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of joint control of Cypress Creek Holdings by HPS and Temasek**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Cypress Creek Holdings, LLC by HPS Investment Partners, LLC ('HPS') both of the U.S. and Double Helix Pte Ltd ('Double Helix'), an indirectly wholly-owned subsidiary and investment holding company of Temasek Holdings (Private) Limited ('Temasek') of Singapore. Cypress Creek Holdings owns and operates solar projects in the U.S. HPS is an investment firm that manages various strategies across the capital structure that include syndicated leveraged loans and high yield bonds to privately negotiated senior secured debt and mezzanine investments, asset-based leasing and private equity. Temasek is an investment company active in different industries, including financial services, telecommunications, media & technology, transportation & logistics, energy & resources, life sciences and agribusiness. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given that the joint venture will not have any presence 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.9902](#). (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Maria Tsioni – Tel.: +3 229 90526)

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Impexmetal by Gränges**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Impexmetal S.A. of Poland by Gränges AB of Sweden. The activities of Impexmetal and Gränges overlap in the supply of aluminium flat-rolled products ('FRPs') and, in particular, of standard FRPs and aluminium FRPs for automotive heat exchangers. The Commission found that the merged entity would be constrained by a number of remaining strong competitors that would have the ability and incentive to increase their supply and offer alternatives to customers, and thus avoid any price increase. The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns. The operation was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.9560](#). (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel. +32 229 86500; Maria Tsioni – Tel.: +3 229 90526)

## **STATEMENTS**

### **World Maritime Day: Commissioner Vălean calls for support and safe return of seafarers**

On the occasion of today's World Maritime Day, Commissioner for Transport, Adina **Vălean**, issued a statement, emphasising the importance of seafarers and calling for their support. The Commissioner said: "*300,000 seafarers remain stranded on their ships due to travel restrictions and administrative barriers. They are unable to return home and take a break after many months of uninterrupted work, even though this is their right under international law. With support from the EU, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted, on 21 September, a resolution urging States to support repatriations of seafarers and give them access to medical care. I call on all States to implement the IMO resolution and swiftly lift restrictions for crew changes and recall the duty of shipowners to help seafarers return home to their families.*" The full statement is available [online](#). (For more

*information: Stefan De Keersmaecker – Tel.: +32 229 84680; Stephan Meder – Tel.: +32 229 13917)*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Les commissaires Breton et Schmit président la première table ronde sur le Pacte européen pour les compétences avec des représentants du secteur automobile**

Mercredi, 23 septembre, les commissaires **Breton** et **Schmit** ont présidé la première d'une série de tables rondes de haut niveau sur le Pacte européen pour les compétences, cette fois avec divers partenaires du secteur automobile. Le pacte a été annoncé dans le cadre de la [stratégie européenne en matière de compétences](#) adoptée par la Commission le 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 2020. L'objectif du Pacte est de fournir un cadre pour mobiliser toutes les parties prenantes concernées – partenaires industriels, sociaux, régionaux et éducatifs – afin d'aider les personnes à développer le bon ensemble de compétences pour une reprise durable, sociale et résiliente après la pandémie de coronavirus. Les partenariats établis dans le cadre du pacte bénéficieront du soutien de la Commission, par exemple sous la forme d'une plateforme de partenariat ou encore de conseils sur les options de financement de l'UE. Le secteur automobile a été identifié comme un partenaire prioritaire à lancer dans le cadre du pacte compte tenu de la taille de la main-d'œuvre et des nouvelles compétences nécessaires pour gérer la transition en cours vers une conduite plus verte, plus connectée et automatisée. L'amélioration des compétences existantes et le développement des nouvelles compétences sont des moteurs importants pour la relance économique ainsi que pour la restructuration à long terme du secteur. La réunion a montré un engagement fort et positif à travailler ensemble pour garantir la requalification et la formation des travailleurs de l'industrie automobile européenne. (*Pour plus d'informations : Marta Wieczorek - Tél.: +32 229-58197; Sonya Gospodinova - Tél.: +32 229-66953*)

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