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Presidents von der Leyen and Michel present the EU priorities for the G20 Leaders' Summit

President of the European Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen**, and President of the European Council, Charles Michel, presented the EU priorities for the G20 virtual Leaders' Summit in a press conference today. Jointly, they represent the EU at the summit this weekend, on 21 and 22 November. In a world disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, the EU is sparing no effort to tackle the far-reaching consequences of this crisis and therefore calls for continued investment in research and deployment of a future vaccine and therapeutics, while ensuring their affordable and equitable access for all people globally. The ACT-Accelerator and its COVAX Facility are our main tools to do so. The EU will call on G20 Leaders to respond to their immediate financing needs, providing \$4.5 billion before the end of the year. The EU is also focused on supporting European economies, as well as developing and low-income countries, backing the extension of the debt suspension until mid-2021 with the possibility of an additional 6-month extension thereafter. Turning challenges into an opportunity to build back better, the EU will promote at the G20 a recovery based on green, inclusive, sustainable, resilient and digital growth by implementing the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. The Summit will also be an occasion to reaffirm the EU's commitment to the rules-based international order and free and fair trade. Finally, the EU will advocate for gender equality and decent work conditions for all, including within global supply chains, and continued efforts to eradicate child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery. The press conference is available on [EBS](#). President **von der Leyen**'s remarks will be available [here](#). More information on the EU priorities can be found in this [factsheet](#), with translations available. (For more information: Eric Mamer – Tel.: +32 229 94073; Nabila Massrali - Tel.: +32 229 88093)

Équipe Europe : l'Union européenne et l'Allemagne soutiennent le Sénégal avec plus de 200 millions d'euros

La Commission européenne et l'Allemagne ont annoncé aujourd'hui la mobilisation de plus de 200 millions d'euros à travers l'enveloppe globale européenne de « l'Équipe Europe » pour soutenir le Sénégal dans la lutte contre la pandémie du coronavirus. Ces fonds, dont 112 millions d'euros proviennent de l'UE et 100 millions d'euros du programme mondial d'urgence de l'Allemagne pour la COVID-19, permettront de soutenir le Programme de résilience économique et sociale du Gouvernement sénégalais. Entre autres, ces fonds contribueront notamment à des mesures d'appui économique aux micros, petites et moyennes entreprises, qui constituent l'épine dorsale du secteur privé sénégalais, et aideront à maintenir les services de protection sociale. La commissaire européenne pour les partenariats internationaux, Jutta **Urpilainen**, a déclaré : « *Cet appui, d'une importance sans précédent, illustre la force de l'engagement de l'Union européenne aux côtés du Sénégal. Je suis fière de cet effort conjoint de l'Équipe Europe pour optimiser l'impact des mesures sociales en faveur de la population la plus vulnérable et pour soutenir les acteurs économiques. Les autorités sénégalaises, en garantissant la transparence de leur gestion, peuvent compter sur nous pour renforcer la résilience du pays.* » Plus d'informations sont disponibles dans [le communiqué de presse](#). Pour plus de détails, consultez les sites web consacrés au [Développement et la Coopération de l'UE au Sénégal](#) et au [Fonds fiduciaire d'urgence de l'UE pour l'Afrique](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ana Pisonero – Tél.: +32 229 54320; Gesine Knolle – Tél.: +32 229 54323)

Sustainable Finance and Taxonomy: Commission launches public consultation on criteria defining environmentally sustainable activities

The European Commission has today launched a public consultation on the first two sets of criteria for determining which economic activities can qualify as environmentally sustainable, under the EU's Taxonomy. The EU's [Taxonomy Regulation](#), which entered into force on 12 July 2020, will help create the world's first-ever “green list” – a classification system for sustainable economic activities – that

will create a common language that investors and businesses can use when investing in projects and economic activities that have a substantial positive impact on the climate and the environment. As part of the Taxonomy Regulation, the Commission was tasked with coming forward with technical screening criteria (through 'delegated acts') to develop the taxonomy further. The first two sets of criteria have today been published in a draft delegated act, which is now open for feedback. It concerns those activities that substantially contribute to climate change mitigation or climate change adaptation. The activities and criteria are based on the [recommendations](#) of the Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance (TEG) published in March 2020, which represented an excellent basis for the Commission's work. Mairead **McGuinness**, Commissioner for Financial Services, Financial Stability and Capital Markets Union, said: *"The EU's Taxonomy Regulation is a key piece of legislation that is central to the European Green Deal. It will be instrumental in channeling investment to green and sustainable projects. By contributing to this public consultation, you can have your say on the development of these rules."* The public consultation will run for four weeks. The Commission will consider the feedback received before finalising the adoption of the delegated act. It will then be subject to scrutiny by the European Parliament and the Council and will apply from 1 January 2022. The [draft texts of the delegated acts](#) published for public consultation are available online. (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 229 86500; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Commission invests €3.9 million to support investigative journalism and media freedom

Today, the European Commission launched a [call for proposals](#) of €3.9 million to further support cross-border investigations as well as to map and address violations of press and media freedom. Vice-President for Values and Transparency, Věra **Jourová**, said: *"More than ever journalists are facing threats, from online harassment to physical attacks, from political pressure to the lack of job security. When journalists are in danger, democracy is in danger. This is why we are funding projects which will directly support journalists who need it with legal and practical assistance as well as with grants for cross-border investigations."* Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for the Internal Market, added: *"I welcome the launch of this call for proposals, which, besides supporting collaboration on journalistic investigations into topical societal issues, will also help equipping journalists with the skills and technological know-how. It will foster innovation and diversity in news media production and distribution."* The call aims for example at legally and materially supporting investigative journalists training, promoting content sharing, co-creation and translation of journalistic pieces of general interest and monitoring press and media freedom violations to ensure the general public and European institutions are provided with reliable and comprehensive information. It is aimed at NGOs, international organisations, and academia, with each project expected to involve partners from at least two countries, with project coordinators based in the EU. This call for proposals is part of a series of EU co-funded projects to support media pluralism and freedom detailed in this [factsheet](#). The deadline for submissions is 20 January 2021. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Charles Manoury – Tel.: +32 229 13391)

European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 helped to remove barriers

Today, the European Commission is publishing the [evaluation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#). The Strategy aims to empower persons with disabilities to enjoy their full rights and to benefit from participating in society on an equal basis with others. It also implements the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at EU level. The 10-year evaluation shows that, while there is room for improvement, the Strategy had a positive impact on EU rules and policies. A good example of its positive impact is the inclusion of disability issues in EU legislation and policy, with the adoption of the European Accessibility Act, the Web Accessibility Directive and legislation on the rights of passengers. Commissioner for Equality, Helena **Dalli** said: *"We have achieved a strong legal framework at EU level to eliminate barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in society. We have to keep up our efforts. Early next year, the Commission will present a reinforced strategy for 2021-2030. The new strategy will build on the progress achieved and the challenges identified in the present evaluation."* Involving persons with disabilities and organisations representing them in the policy-design of the Strategy has contributed to its positive results, notably in making sure that issues that really matter to them were high on the EU's agenda. Despite the efforts of the European Union and its Member States, people with disabilities continue to face challenges, like high rates of unemployment or poverty. The new Strategy 2021-2030 will build on the results of today's evaluation and will address emerging issues such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities. The evaluation can be accessed [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko - Tel.: +32 229 63444; Jördis Ferroli – Tel.: +32 229 92729)

Team Europe: EU mobilises €86.5 million to fight COVID-19 in Ghana

Today, the Commission has mobilised €86.5 million in emergency budget support to help Ghana in tackling the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. As part of [Team Europe global response to the COVID-19](#), this funding will support Ghana to relieve some of the macroeconomic and financial pressure it is facing, including urgent fiscal and balance of payments needs, while continue attending basic public services such as healthcare and education. Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta **Urpilainen**, said: *"Our Team Europe response to COVID-19 is offering immediate support to our partner in responding to the crisis. It is also about building a long-term recovery, a greener, fairer, and more sustainable world for future generations. I am delighted that our support to Ghana covers both of these crucial aims."* Through the 11th European Development Fund (2014-2020), the Commission has allocated a total of €323 million to support sustainable agriculture, job opportunities and good governance in Ghana. More information is available in the [press release](#) and on the websites dedicated to the [Development cooperation with Ghana](#), the [EU Budget Support](#) and the [EU and International Cooperation and Development](#). (For more information: Ana Pisonero – Tel.: +32 229 54320; Gesine Knolle – Tel.: +32 229 54323)

Défense européenne: la Commission a signé des accords de contribution pour la gestion de projets de défense avec l'OCCAR

La Commission et l'[Organisation pour la coopération conjointe en matière d'armement \(OCCAR\)](#) ont signé des accords de contribution pour la gestion et la mise en œuvre de deux projets du Programme européen de développement industriel de la défense ([EDIDP](#)) dans le domaine du développement des capacités: [ESSOR](#) et [EURODRONE](#). Ces projets ont été pré-identifiés par la Commission et, sous réserve de leur sélection finale, bénéficieront du soutien de l'EDIDP. Conformément aux accords de contribution, l'OCCAR serait alors en charge de la mise en œuvre et du suivi des projets. Le principal objectif du projet ESSOR est de fournir une architecture de radio logicielle (SDR) à des fins militaires. Le projet garantira l'interopérabilité et la sécurité des communications voix et données entre les forces alliées de l'UE dans le cadre d'opérations conjointes, quelles que soient les plates-formes radio utilisées, renforçant ainsi l'autonomie stratégique européenne. EURODRONE sera exploité dans le monde entier, en particulier pour soutenir les missions de renseignement, de surveillance, d'acquisition d'objectifs et de reconnaissance (ISTAR). Aujourd'hui, les États membres comptent sur des fabricants n'appartenant pas à l'Union européenne. Les projets ont vocation à dépasser les capacités des systèmes actuels comparables et offrira une solution européenne. Pour plus d'informations, veuillez consulter [cette page](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Sonya Gospodinova - Tél. : +32 229 66953; Célia Dejond - Tél. : +32 229 88199)

State aid: Commission approves an additional state guarantee for Klaipėda LNG terminal in Lithuania

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, a Lithuanian measure to issue a state guarantee for securing a loan for AB Klaipėdos Nafta ('KN'). The state guarantee will serve to finance the purchase of the Floating Storage and Regasification Unit ('FSRU') of the LNG terminal. In [November 2013](#), the Commission approved aid to support the construction and operation of the LNG terminal under EU State aid rules. In particular, the Commission found that the measure was necessary to ensure security of gas supply in Lithuania. Under the 2013 decision, the leasing costs connected to the construction and operation of the terminal were exclusively financed through a fee levied on Lithuanian gas consumers, the so-called 'LNG Supplement'. In order to reduce the financial burden on consumers, Lithuania replaced part of the LNG Supplement with a loan guaranteed by the Lithuanian State, which was approved by the Commission in [September 2019](#). After conducting a study, Lithuania concluded that the most cost effective option for continuing the operation of the terminal while reducing the financial burden to gas consumers and guaranteeing secure gas supplies would be for KN to purchase the FSRU after the expiry of the original lease agreement in 2024. To ensure that the most cost efficient option is selected, Lithuania intends to organise a public procurement process in the second half of 2021 for selecting the most advantageous offer. The State guarantee is necessary to obtain a loan which cannot exceed €160 million from a private financial institution as this amount should cover the costs of FSRU. The Commission found that the measure remains compatible with the Internal Market and, therefore, approved the additional state guarantee, under EU State aid rules. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [State Aid Register](#) under the case number SA.57032. (For more information: Arianna Podesta - Tel.: + 32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni - Tel.: + 32 229 90526)

State aid: Commission approves orderly liquidation scheme for small Italian banks

The European Commission has authorised under EU State aid rules an Italian liquidation scheme for small banks (other than cooperatives) with total assets of less than €5 billion. The authorisation is granted for 12 months from today. The scheme facilitates the work of the Italian authorities when the competent national authorities have found an eligible bank to be failing, have concluded that the resolution of the bank was not in the public interest, and consequently put the bank into compulsory administrative liquidation. When assessing the public interest the authorities must ensure that the compulsory administrative liquidation achieves the resolution objectives to the same extent as resolution. Under the scheme, the Italian State will be able support the sale of assets and liabilities of a failed bank to another bank. The buyer will be selected on the basis of a competitive bidding process and should viably integrate the acquired activities within one year. The shareholders and subordinated creditors of the failed banks will have to contribute to cover the losses, thus helping to minimise the need for aid. The Commission found that the Italian measure is in line with the conditions set out in the [2013 Banking Communication](#) for orderly liquidation schemes for small banks, with the exception of the €3 billion balance sheet threshold. In this respect, the Italian scheme will be available to small banks (other than cooperatives) with total assets of less than €5 billion. However, given the exceptional circumstances linked to the coronavirus outbreak and the safeguards against undue competition distortions that Italy has included in the scheme, the Commission has accepted the higher threshold of €5 billion. The Commission will also temporarily accept that higher thresholds for similar schemes are applied by other Member States in the context of the coronavirus outbreak, as long as similar safeguards to those implemented by Italy can be demonstrated. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the [public case register](#) under the case number SA.57516. (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Aides d'État : la Commission autorise un régime roumain de 12,4 millions d'euros visant à soutenir les producteurs de vin touchés par la pandémie du coronavirus

La Commission européenne a autorisé un régime roumain d'un montant de 12,4 millions d'euros (59,5 RON) visant à soutenir les producteurs de vin touchés par la pandémie de coronavirus. Le régime a été autorisé en vertu de [l'encadrement temporaire des aides d'État](#). Le soutien public prendra la forme de subventions directes. L'objectif du régime est de répondre aux besoins de liquidités des viticulteurs concernés et de faire en sorte qu'ils puissent poursuivre leurs activités et maintenir leurs emplois pendant et après la pandémie. Plus de 1,000 producteurs devraient bénéficier de ce régime. La Commission a constaté que le régime roumain était conforme aux conditions énoncées dans l'encadrement temporaire. En particulier, l'aide i) ne dépassera pas 100,000 euros par bénéficiaire actif dans la production primaire de produits agricoles; et ii) sera accordée au plus tard le 31 décembre 2020. La Commission a conclu que la mesure était nécessaire, appropriée et proportionnée pour remédier à une perturbation grave de l'économie d'un État membre, conformément à l'article 107, paragraphe 3, point b), du TFUE et aux conditions énoncées dans l'encadrement temporaire. Sur cette base, la Commission a autorisé la mesure au titre des règles de l'UE en matière d'aides d'État. De plus amples informations sur l'encadrement temporaire et sur les autres mesures prises par la Commission pour faire face aux conséquences économiques de la pandémie du coronavirus sont disponibles [ici](#). La version non confidentielle de la décision sera publiée sous le numéro SA.59520 dans le [registre](#) des aides d'État figurant sur le [site web](#) de la Commission dédié à la concurrence, dès que les éventuels problèmes de confidentialité auront été résolus. (Pour plus d'informations: Arianna Podesta - Tél.: + 32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti - Tél.: + 32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni - Tél.: + 32 229 90526)

State aid: Commission approves €1.7 million Romanian aid scheme for airlines starting or resuming operations at Sibiu airport following the coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved a €1.7 million Romanian scheme for those airlines resuming or starting flights to and from Sibiu airport in Romania. Sibiu airport plays an important role in the regional and international connectivity of the country. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). It provides aid in the form of direct grants and will be accessible in a transparent manner to all interested airlines starting or resuming operations at Sibiu airport. The objective of the measure is to support the activity of air operators, and support the economic recovery and structural viability of the region in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. The Commission found that the Romanian scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular, the aid will not exceed €800,000 per company and will be granted before 30 June 2021. 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 measure 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.59156 in the [State aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

State aid: Commission approves €434 million wage subsidy scheme to support Belgian companies affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved a €434 million Belgian wage subsidy scheme to support companies that have had to suspend their activities due to new emergency measures put in place by the Government to limit the spread of the coronavirus. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). The scheme will be open to companies in the hospitality, culture, recreation and events, sports, holiday parks and campsites sectors, as well as travel agencies, tour operators and touristic information services. The measure also applies to some of their suppliers, subject to the condition that they have suffered a significant decrease in turnover as a result of their clients' compulsory shutdown. The public support will take the form of direct grants, of an amount corresponding to the social security contributions due by the employers between July and September 2020. The scheme aims at avoiding lay-offs and helping the beneficiaries resume their business activities after the compulsory shutdown period. The Commission found that the Belgian scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the [Temporary Framework](#). In particular, the support (i) will be granted to companies that are particularly affected by the coronavirus outbreak; (ii) will not exceed 80% of the gross salary of the benefitting personnel in the relevant 3-month period; and (iii) is subject to the condition that the employers commit not to lay off the relevant personnel during the three months following the granting of the aid. The Commission concluded that the scheme 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 measure 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.59297 in the [State aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of TSA by Voith and PCSH

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Traktionssysteme Austria GmbH ('TSA') by Voith Austria GmbH ('Voith') both of Austria, controlled by Voith GmbH & Co. KGaA ('Voith-Group') of Germany, and by PCS Holding AG ('PCSH') of Switzerland. TSA is active in the manufacturing of electric traction motors and generators. Voith-Group is active in machines for a range of industrial applications, including gearboxes and control systems for trains and busses. PCSH is active through subsidiaries in the manufacturing of rolling stock and special purpose vehicles. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the limited foreseen activities of the joint venture in the European Economic Area, as well as given the limited combined market positions resulting from the proposed transaction. 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.9911](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of sole control of MVC Capital by MassMutual

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control of MVC Capital by MassMutual, both of the U.S. MVC Capital is an investment company. MassMutual is a mutual life insurance company. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given that the overlapping activities of the companies in private equity investments would result in very modest combined market shares. Additionally, there are no vertical relationships between their products. 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.9991](#). *(For*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Borrell in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement

High Representative/Vice-President, Josep **Borrell**, will visit Bosnia and Herzegovina on Saturday, 21 November. The visit is taking place on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement and will underline the key importance of reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and beyond. The visit further aims to encourage the country to address the Key priorities of the European Commission's Opinion to advance more decisively on its EU integration path. High Representative will be meeting with various political leaders, including the members of the tripartite Presidency, members of the Collegium of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly and with representatives of the Council of Ministers, as well as with civil society representatives. The High Representative will also visit the War Childhood Museum and pay tribute to civilian victims of war and peacebuilding champions. He will give a speech to mark the anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the values of peace, reconciliation and coexistence as foundations of democracy and peaceful coexistence. Videos and pictures of the visit will be made available on [EbS](#). More information is available in this [Op-Ed](#) published on the occasion of the 25th anniversary. (For more information: Peter Stano – Tel.: +32 229 54553; Zoi Muletier – Tel.: +32 229 94306)

Commissioner Simson participates in the Strategic Energy Technology Plan 2020 Conference

On Monday, 23 November, Commissioner for Energy, Kadri **Simson**, will participate in the [Strategic Energy Technology \(SET\) Plan 2020 conference](#), which focuses on the theme of 'Making the SET Plan fit for the EU Green Recovery'. Co-hosted by the Commission and the German Presidency of the Council of the EU, this two-day event will discuss the contribution of the SET Plan to the more ambitious energy and climate targets for 2030 and 2050. Commissioner **Simson** will deliver the opening speech and join the high-level ministerial panel to exchange views on the EU's path to clean energy transition and the importance of research and innovation to boost competitiveness and keep Europe at the forefront of clean energy technologies. More details are available on the [SET Plan conference website](#). (For more information: Tim McPhie - Tel.: +32 229 58602; Ana Crespo Parrondo – Tel.: +32 229 81325)

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