



Daily News 23 / 11 / 2020

Brussels, 23 November 2020

Coronavirus: Commission to provide 200 disinfection robots to European hospitals

As part of its continued efforts to tackle the spread of coronavirus and provide Member States with necessary equipment, the Commission launched the purchase of 200 disinfection robots that will be delivered to hospitals across Europe. Overall, a dedicated budget of up to €12 million is available from the [Emergency Support Instrument](#) (ESI). Hospitals from most Member States expressed a need and interest in receiving these robots, which can disinfect standard patient rooms, using ultraviolet light, in as quickly as 15 minutes, and thus help prevent and reduce the spread of the virus. The process is controlled by an operator, who will be located outside of the space to be disinfected, in order to avoid any exposure to the UV light. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager** said: *"Developing technologies can set up forces of change and we see a good example of this in the disinfection robots. I welcome this action to help our hospitals in Europe reduce the risk of infection – an important step in containing the spread of coronavirus."* Commissioner for the Internal Market, Thierry **Breton**, added: *"Europe has remained resilient and solidary during the current crisis. From repatriating EU citizens stranded abroad to increasing the production of masks and ensuring that medical equipment reaches those who need it within the single market, we are acting to protect our citizens. Now we are deploying disinfection robots in hospitals so that our citizens can benefit from this potentially life-saving technology."* The robots are expected to be delivered in the coming weeks. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Charles Manoury – Tel.: +32 229 13391; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

EU contributes €183 million to debt relief for 29 of the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries

Today, the European Union has announced that it will contribute €183 million to the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT) for debt relief in 29 low-income countries, allowing them to increase their social, health and economic spending in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This contribution, announced just after the G20 Summit endorsed a Common Framework on Debt Treatments beyond Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), is fully in line with Commission President **von der Leyen's** proposal for a Global Recovery Initiative that links investments and debt relief to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). High Representative/Vice-President for Foreign and Security Policy, Josep **Borrell**, said: *"The EU is combining injections of funds for the rapid easing of budget constraints to help the immediate response – through contributions like this one – with a sustained longer-term plan to assist partners in weathering a severe social-economic storm, which is far from over. The EU has been leading global efforts to do more on debt relief and debt restructuring efforts. It is our hope that our contribution will pave the way for others to join those global efforts."* Commissioner for Economy, Paolo **Gentiloni**, added: *"Today, Europe makes an important contribution to multilateralism and debt relief. The EU as a member of the G20 strongly supports the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the new Common Framework on Debt Treatment. This contribution to the IMF debt relief trust is a further demonstration of our firm commitment to helping low-income countries deal with their debt burden."* Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta **Urpilainen**, stressed: *"The Commission is determined to continue supporting its partner countries in maintaining their path toward the SDGs despite dire financial situations. Debt levels were already high before the crisis and in many countries they are now simply becoming unsustainable."* With this €183 million contribution, the EU becomes the largest donor to the CCRT, which currently amounts to almost €426 million. More information is available in [the press release](#). For more details, consult the dedicated website on the [EU global response to COVID-19](#). (For more information: Ana Pisonero – Tel.: +32 229 54320; Nabila Massrali – Tel.: +32 229 88093; Marta Wiczorek – Tel.: +32 229 58197)

États membres pour défaut de transposition de la directive sur le contenu audiovisuel

La Commission européenne a lancé aujourd'hui des procédures d'infraction contre 23 États membres et le Royaume-Uni pour non-transposition des nouvelles règles régissant la coordination à l'échelle de l'UE de tous les médias audiovisuels, tant les émissions télévisées traditionnelles que les services à la demande, ainsi que les plateformes de partage de vidéos. Ces nouvelles règles de l'UE visent à créer un cadre réglementaire adapté à l'ère numérique, conduisant à un paysage audiovisuel plus sûr, plus équitable et plus diversifié. Elles renforcent la protection des téléspectateurs, notamment en ce qui concerne la sécurité des personnes les plus vulnérables, telles que les mineurs, et favorisent la diversité culturelle dans les médias audiovisuels, tout en introduisant pour la première fois de nouvelles exigences d'indépendance pour les régulateurs nationaux des médias et en préservant le pluralisme des médias. Le délai de transposition de la [directive révisée sur les services de médias audiovisuels](#) dans la législation nationale était le 19 septembre 2020 et seuls le Danemark, la Hongrie, les Pays-Bas et la Suède ont notifié des mesures de transposition et déclaré leur notification complète. Par conséquent, la Commission a adressé les lettres de mise en demeure à la Belgique, à la Bulgarie, à la Tchéquie, à l'Allemagne, à l'Estonie, à l'Irlande, à la Grèce, à l'Espagne, à la France, à la Croatie, à l'Italie, à Chypre, à la Lettonie, à la Lituanie, au Luxembourg, à Malte, à l'Autriche, à la Pologne, au Portugal, à la Roumanie, à la Slovénie, à la Slovaquie, à la Finlande, et au Royaume-Uni, les invitant à fournir des informations complémentaires. Ils disposent à présent d'un délai de deux mois pour répondre. Un communiqué de presse peut être consulté [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke — Tél.: + 32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou — Tél.: + 32 229 83583)

Sommet du G20 : les dirigeants du G20 s'unissent pour faire face aux grands défis mondiaux

Ce week-end, les 21 et 22 novembre, la présidente de la Commission européenne, Ursula **von der Leyen**, et le président du Conseil européen, Charles Michel, ont représenté l'UE au 15e sommet des dirigeants du G20 organisé par l'Arabie saoudite. Les dirigeants du G20 se sont réunis dans un format virtuel afin d'examiner la voie à suivre pour faire face ensemble à la pandémie de COVID-19, financer le développement et le déploiement d'un vaccin et continuer à soutenir les citoyens et les entreprises qui luttent pour faire face aux conséquences de la pandémie. Ils ont également discuté de la manière de mieux reconstruire et d'ouvrir la voie à un avenir inclusif et durable, ainsi que d'autres questions cruciales telles que la reprise économique, la réforme de l'OMC, la taxation de l'économie numérique et la manière de soutenir les pays à faible revenu et alléger leur dette. La présidente **von der Leyen** a déclaré : « *Je suis heureuse que les dirigeants du G20 aient convenu de rendre les vaccins contre la COVID-19 disponibles et abordables pour tous. Mais un financement supplémentaire est nécessaire. C'est pourquoi j'ai appelé les dirigeants du G20 à s'engager à financer 4,5 milliards de dollars pour l'Accélérateur ACT d'ici la fin de l'année. Les dirigeants du G20 ont également convenu de maintenir les mesures économiques jusqu'à ce que la reprise soit bien engagée.* » Le président Michel a ajouté : « *La COVID-19 a surpris beaucoup d'entre nous. Mais ce n'est pas la première pandémie mondiale. Et malheureusement, ce ne sera pas la dernière. Pour l'avenir, la communauté mondiale doit être mieux préparée aux pandémies. Un traité international sur les pandémies pourrait nous aider à réagir plus rapidement et de manière plus coordonnée lorsqu'elles se produisent. Il devrait être négocié avec toutes les organisations et agences des Nations unies, en particulier l'OMS. L'OMS doit rester la pierre angulaire de la coordination mondiale contre les urgences sanitaires.* » Plus d'informations sont disponibles dans [le communiqué de presse](#). Pour plus de détails, consultez les déclarations des présidents [von der Leyen](#) et [Michel](#) en amont du sommet du G20, ainsi que la [déclaration du G20 Riyad](#), adoptée suite au sommet pour faire face aux défis mondiaux communs. (Pour plus d'informations: Eric Mamer – Tél.: +32 229 94073; Dana Spinant – Tél.: +32 229 90150 ; Nabila Massrali – Tél.: +32 229 88093)

State aid: Commission approves Austrian 'Fixkostenzuschuss Phase II' scheme to support uncovered fixed costs of companies affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved the Austrian 'Fixkostenzuschuss Phase II' scheme to support the uncovered fixed costs of companies affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). Under the scheme, Austria plans to provide economic assistance to all businesses, self-employed individuals, associations and institutions in order to keep them solvent and to bridge liquidity shortages related to the coronavirus outbreak. The measure is an Austria-wide scheme and, together with the Fixkostenzuschuss Phase I scheme already approved by the Commission in [May 2020 \(SA.57291\)](#), has a total estimated budget of up to €12 billion. Under the scheme, support will take the form of direct grants. The Commission found

that the Austrian scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. The Commission concluded that the measure under 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 aid measure under EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The coronavirus outbreak has had a significant impact on livelihoods and the turnover of many shops, restaurants, hotels and other businesses in Austria and all of Europe. The 'Fixkostenzuschuss Phase 2' scheme will enable Austria to support companies face their fixed costs that are not covered by their revenues in this crisis. We continue to work in close cooperation with Member States to find workable solutions to mitigate the economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak, in line with EU rules."* The full press release is available [online](#). (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 German 'umbrella' scheme to support uncovered fixed costs of companies affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved a German 'umbrella' scheme to support the uncovered fixed costs of companies affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). Under the scheme, Germany plans to provide extraordinary economic assistance to all businesses, self-employed individuals, associations and institutions whose operations are temporarily closed as a result of the lockdown measures imposed by the government to limit the spread of the virus. The measure is a Germany-wide 'umbrella' scheme with an estimated budget of €30 billion. Under the umbrella scheme, support can take the form of i) direct grants; ii) State guarantees for loans (granted through credit institutions and other financial institutions as financial intermediaries); or iii) subsidised public loans. In particular, the umbrella scheme will also enable Germany to grant part of its 'Novemberhilfe', i.e. support for companies affected by the lockdown measures implemented in November 2020. The Commission found that the German umbrella scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. The Commission concluded that the measures under the umbrella scheme are 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 aid measure under EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Many shops, restaurants and other businesses have faced a significant decline in turnover because of the recent lockdown measures necessary to limit the spread of the coronavirus. This "umbrella" scheme will enable Germany to support companies face their fixed costs that are not covered by their revenues during these difficult times. We continue to work closely with all Member States to ensure that national support measures can be put in place in a timely, coordinated and effective way, in line with EU rules."* The full press release is available [online](#). (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 Danish fund to enable €1.34 billion of capital support to large companies affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved Danish plans to set up a fund with a target size of up to DKK 10 billion (approximately €1.34 billion) to recapitalise large enterprises affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). Under the scheme, the support will take the form of recapitalisations, by means of acquisition of newly issued preferred shares in eligible private companies. The Commission found that the scheme notified by Denmark is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. The scheme targets large companies that have faced substantial reductions in revenues in 2020 and that are considered of substantial importance to the Danish economy. 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 aid measure under EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The DKK 10 billion Danish fund will provide further support to large enterprises affected by the coronavirus outbreak by facilitating their access to finance. The scheme ensures that the State is sufficiently remunerated for the risk taxpayers assume and that there are incentives for the State to exit as soon as possible. The support also comes with strings attached, including a ban on dividends, bonus payments as well as further measures to limit distortions of competition. We continue to work in close cooperation with Member States to find workable solutions to mitigate the economic impact of*

the coronavirus outbreak, in line with EU rules.” The full press release is available [online](#). (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 €145 million Hungarian recapitalisation scheme to support companies affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved an approximately €145 million (HUF 50 billion) scheme to provide liquidity and capital support to companies affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). The support will take the form of (i) debt instruments in the form of subordinated loans; (ii) equity instruments in the form of recapitalisations; and (iii) convertible loans (hybrid instruments). The scheme will be managed by two state Funds managed by Hiventures Zrt and, in order to ensure their return on the investments, the Funds will become shareholders in all beneficiaries. This means that the recapitalisation will be a mandatory component of aid, whereas it will be possible to combine it with debt and/or hybrid instruments. This will also provide each beneficiary with a balanced support, which can include both equity and debt, thus avoiding distorting the company's financial position. The Commission found that the scheme notified by Hungary is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. This includes the obligation for beneficiaries that are large enterprises to publish information on the use of the aid received, including on how this aid supports the company's activities in line with EU and national obligations linked to the green and digital transformation. 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. The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.58420 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 €2.55 billion Spanish guarantee scheme to compensate certain self-employed and companies for damages suffered due to coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved, under EU State Aid rules, a €2.55 billion Spanish scheme to compensate certain self-employed and companies, which are following judicial composition agreements, for damages suffered due to coronavirus outbreak. The compensation will take the form of public guarantees for repayable new loans granted by supervised financial institutions, and new notes issued on the Alternative Fixed-Income Market. Under the scheme, around 15,000 self-employed and companies with endorsed composition agreements with creditors following judicial insolvency proceedings will be compensated for damages incurred between 14 March and 20 June 2020. This period coincides with the period when the Spanish government implemented restrictive measures to limit the spread of the virus. The Commission assessed the measure under [Article 107\(2\)\(b\)](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which enables the Commission to approve State aid measures granted by Member States to compensate specific companies or specific sectors for the damages caused by exceptional occurrences, such as the coronavirus outbreak. The Commission found that the Spanish scheme will compensate damages that are directly linked to the coronavirus outbreak restrictions. It also found that the measure is proportionate, as the envisaged compensation does not exceed what is necessary to make good the damages. The Commission therefore concluded that the scheme is in line with EU State aid rules. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#), under the case number SA.59045. (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 €4.4 million Romanian aid scheme to compensate regional airport operators for damage suffered due to coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, a RON 21.3 million (approximately €4.4 million) Romanian aid scheme to compensate Romanian regional airport operators for the damage suffered due to the coronavirus outbreak. In order to limit the spread of the coronavirus, on 16 March 2020, Romania imposed the gradual suspension of most of the commercial flights to and from Romania. Due to those flight bans as well as flight restrictions in other countries, the airlines operating at Romanian regional airports gradually reduced their scheduled flights, culminating in the total cessation of their operations on 25 March 2020. Until 17 June 2020, no scheduled international commercial flights took place at such airports, leaving

passenger traffic close to zero. Air traffic started resuming only as of July 2020. Under the scheme, which will be open to operators of Romanian airports with an annual passenger traffic between 200,000 and 3 million, the Romanian authorities will be able to compensate those airports for the net losses suffered during the period between 16 March and 30 June 2020. as a result of the restrictive measures on international and domestic air passenger services implemented by Romania and other countries. The support will take the form of direct grants. The Commission assessed the measure under Article [107\(2\)\(b\)](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which enables the Commission to approve State aid measures granted by Member States to compensate companies for the damage directly caused by exceptional occurrences, such as the coronavirus outbreak. The Commission found that the Romanian scheme will provide compensation for damage that is directly linked to the coronavirus outbreak. It also found that the measure is proportionate, as the compensation does not exceed what is necessary to make good the damage. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the scheme is in line with EU State aid rules. More information on 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.58676 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)

STATEMENTS

Stop violence against women: Statement by the European Commission and the High Representative

Ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November, the European Commission and High Representative/Vice-President, Josep **Borrell**, issued the following statement: *"Violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights, and has no place in the European Union, or anywhere else in the world. The scale of the problem remains alarming: one in three women in the European Union have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. Violence against women exists in every country, culture and community. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown once more that for some women not even their home is a safe place. [...] Change is possible, but it requires action, commitment and determination. The EU is committed to continue to work tirelessly with its partners to investigate and punish acts of violence, ensure support for victims, and at the same time to address the root causes and reinforce the legal framework. Through our Spotlight Initiative we are already fighting violence against women and girls, in 26 countries across the globe. This week we will present a new Action Plan on gender equality and women and girl's empowerment in our external actions. We also call on Member States to ratify the Istanbul Convention - the first legally binding instrument at the international level to combat violence against women and domestic violence. Our goal is very clear: to end all forms of violence against women and girls. We owe it to all the victims."* The [full statement](#) and the [factsheet](#) are available online. (For more information: Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko - Tel.: +32 229 63444; Jördis Ferroli - Tel.: +32 229 92729)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2020 Afghanistan Conference: sustainable peace, anti-corruption and aid effectiveness on the agenda

The 2020 Afghanistan Conference kicks off today, on 23 November, with the EU co-organising and participating in number of events taking place ahead of tomorrow's plenary session. Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**, will co-chair together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mohammad Haneef Atmar, an event on sustainable peace ([livestream available](#)), with a focus on promoting human rights and empowering women, and also on refugees and returnees. Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta **Urpilainen**, will deliver a speech at an event on anti-corruption and good governance, and in doing so will emphasise the EU's expectation that the

Afghan government delivers on its reform agenda. EU officials will also participate in a third side event taking place ahead of the conference, on aid effectiveness. Tomorrow, 24 November, EU High Representative/Vice-President Josep **Borrell** will deliver a speech at the opening session of the conference, when he will outline the EU's position on the ongoing intra-Afghan peace negotiations, as well as the conditions for the EU's support, which were presented in a recent [paper](#) co-authored with key international donors. Later, Commissioner **Urpilainen** will deliver the EU's financial assistance pledge at the conference. Both interventions will be [available on EbS](#). More information on EU-Afghanistan relations is available in a [dedicated factsheet](#) and on the [website](#) of the EU Delegation in Kabul. (*For more information: Nabila Massrali - Tel.: +32 229 88093; Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578; Ana Pisonero - Tel.: +32 229 54320; Adam Kaznowski - Tel.: +32 229 89359*)

[Liste des points prévus](#) à l'ordre du jour des prochaines réunions de la Commission

Veillez noter que ces informations sont données sous réserve de modifications.

[Eurostat](#): communiqués de presse

MEX/20/2191