



### Daily News 08/ 03 / 2021

Brussels, 8 March 2021

#### **The European Union and the United States conclude negotiations on agricultural quotas agreement**

The European Union and the United States have concluded negotiations to adjust the European Union's World Trade Organization (WTO) agricultural quotas, following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. This is the culmination of two years of negotiations in the WTO framework to divide these EU quotas, with part of the volume remaining with the EU-27, and part going to the UK, based on recent trade flows. The agreement covers dozens of quotas and billions of euros of trade including for beef, poultry, rice, dairy products, fruits and vegetables and wines. Commenting on the agreement reached in principle today, Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz **Wojciechowski** said: *"I am delighted we have reached agreement with our most important trade partner the U.S. This agreement – done inside the framework of the WTO – preserves the original volumes but shares them between the EU and the UK. It gives certainty and stability to agricultural trade and our markets. I am particularly pleased that this agreement marks the significance of our trade and economic relationship. This sends a good signal of our commitment to work together both bilaterally and in the WTO framework. I want to thank my team and our U.S. colleagues for a job well done"*. Once the Commission has adopted the EU-U.S. Agreement, it will then be sent to the European Parliament and the Council for ratification, so that it can enter into force as soon as possible. A press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Miriam Garcia Ferrer – Tél.: +32 229 99075; Thérèse Lerebours – Tél.: +32 229 63303)

#### **Sustainable finance: Commission welcomes reports on development of EU sustainability reporting standards**

The European Commission has welcomed today the publication of two reports setting out recommendations on the development of sustainability reporting standards. These reports, which were prepared at the request of the Commission following an [invitation by the Council](#), are an important step in the development of corporate sustainability reporting across the EU. Both reports recognise the importance of coordinating the development of EU sustainability reporting standards with existing and emerging global initiatives. EU sustainability standards are necessary to meet the political ambition and urgent timetable of the [European Green Deal](#). They are also necessary to ensure consistency of reporting rules at the heart of the [EU's sustainable finance agenda](#), especially the existing [Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation](#), [the Non-Financial Reporting Directive \(NFRD\)](#), the [Taxonomy Regulation](#), as well as with the requirements of forthcoming legislation on sustainable corporate governance and due diligence. The [first report](#) proposes a roadmap for the development of a comprehensive set of EU sustainability reporting standards. It was prepared by a [multistakeholder task force](#) established by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG). A [second report](#) proposes reforms to EFRAG's governance structure to ensure that future EU sustainability reporting standards are developed using an inclusive and rigorous process. It sets out, for example, how national and European authorities will be involved, while ensuring that the process also draws upon the expertise of the private sector and civil society. The publication of the reports is very timely. EU law requires large companies to disclose certain information on the way they operate and manage social and environmental challenges. This helps investors, civil society and other stakeholders to evaluate the sustainability performance of large companies and encourages these companies to develop a sustainably responsible approach to business. [The Non-Financial Reporting Directive \(NFRD\)](#) lays down the rules on the disclosure of non-financial information by large companies. In its [Communication on the European Green Deal](#), the Commission committed to [reviewing the Non-Financial Reporting Directive](#) as part of the strategy to strengthen the foundations for sustainable investment. The Commission will carefully consider these reports as it prepares its proposal to strengthen the Directive, which is planned for April. You can read the full reports [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 229 86500; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

## Two EU-funded films awarded in the 2021 Berlin International Film Festival

Two EU-supported films received awards at the 71st [Berlin International Film Festival](#) that took place online last week: the Silver Bear for Best Director went to Dénes Nagy for 'Natural Light' (Természetes fény) and the Special Jury Award in Encounters went to 'Taste' (Vj), by Lê Bảo. [Nine EU-supported films and series](#) were nominated for awards. The EU supported the development and co-production of these titles with an investment of over €750,000, awarded through the [Creative Europe MEDIA programme](#). This first phase of the festival hosted the [European Film Market](#), which included an edition of the [European Film Forum](#) on the future of the audiovisual sector in Europe. Various professionals from the industry highlighted the importance of more collaboration across different fields to further innovate by bringing together cinemas and new technologies among others, mirroring some of the topics identified and brought forward by the [Media and Audiovisual Action Plan](#). The second round of this year's festival, 'The Summer Special', will take place in June 2021, opening the films to the public and hosting the official award ceremony. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke - Tel.: +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou - Tel.: +32 229 83583).

## Towards stronger international cooperation on crime prevention: Commission welcomes adoption of Kyoto declaration

In a [statement](#) delivered yesterday, Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva **Johansson**, welcomed the adoption of the Kyoto Declaration on advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the Rule of Law by the [United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice](#). Under the [declaration](#), UN member countries commit to advancing crime prevention and the criminal justice system. The declaration pays specific attention to addressing the root causes of crime, safeguarding victims' rights and protecting witnesses, addressing children's vulnerabilities to abuse and exploitation, improving prison conditions, reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration into society, removing impediments to the advancement of women in law enforcement and ensuring equal access to justice and affordable legal aid. The declaration also stresses the need to promote the Rule of Law, notably through securing the integrity and impartiality of the criminal justice system as well as the independence of the judiciary, and to strengthen international cooperation to prevent and address crime and terrorism. The EU has rules and tools in place to fight crime, including [legislation on freezing and confiscating the proceeds of crime](#), [EU rules on combating terrorism](#), recently agreed [rules on countering the spread of terrorist content online](#) as well as an independent [European Public Prosecutor's Office](#). In addition, a new Rule of Law mechanism with a [first EU Rule of Law report](#) published last year helps promoting the rule of law culture in the EU. The actions to be taken under the declaration will contribute to the achievement of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). (For more information: Adalbert Jahnz - Tel.: + 32 229 53156; Ciara Bottomley - Tel.: +32 229 69971; Laura Béard - Tel.: +32 229 55721

## L'UE et les États-Unis conviennent de suspendre tous les tarifs liés aux litiges Airbus et Boeing

L'UE et les États-Unis ont convenu, le vendredi 5 mars, de suspendre pour une période de quatre mois tous les droits de rétorsion sur les exportations de l'UE et des États-Unis imposés dans le cadre des litiges concernant Airbus et Boeing. Cette suspension permet aux deux parties de se concentrer sur la résolution de ce différend de longue date. Elle donne un coup de pouce important aux exportateurs européens, puisque les États-Unis avaient été autorisés à augmenter les droits de douane sur 7,5 milliards de dollars d'exportations européennes vers les États-Unis. De même, les droits de douane européens seront suspendus sur quelque 4 milliards de dollars d'exportations américaines vers l'UE. Le vice-président exécutif de la Commission européenne et commissaire au commerce, Valdis **Dombrovskis** a déclaré: « *Il s'agit d'une avancée significative. Il marque une remise à plat de nos relations avec notre partenaire le plus important. La suppression de ces droits de douane est une solution gagnante pour les deux parties, à un moment où la pandémie fait du tort à nos travailleurs et à nos économies. Cette suspension contribuera à rétablir la confiance et nous donnera donc la possibilité de parvenir à une solution négociée globale et durable. Une relation commerciale positive entre l'UE et les États-Unis est importante non seulement pour les deux parties, mais aussi pour le commerce mondial dans son ensemble* ». Ces droits de douane seront désormais suspendus des deux côtés pour une période de quatre mois, dès que les procédures internes des deux parties seront achevées. De plus amples informations sont disponibles dans le [communiqué de presse](#). (Pour plus d'informations, : Miriam Garcia Ferrer - Tél : +32 229 99075 ; Sophie Dirven - Tél : +32 229 67228)

## **State aid: Commission approves €55 million Irish 'umbrella' scheme to support companies active in tourism or in directly related sectors in context of coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved a €55 million Irish 'umbrella' scheme to support companies active in tourism or in directly related sectors in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). Under the scheme, measures can be adopted to support companies active in tourism or in directly related sectors that suffer from a reduction in turnover or profit due to the coronavirus outbreak and the related measures necessary to limit the spread of the virus. The objective of the measure is to help beneficiaries address the sudden liquidity shortage they are facing, thus helping them to continue their activities during and after the outbreak. The Commission found that the Irish scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular, (i) the support will not exceed €1.8 million per company; and (ii) the aid will be granted no later than 31 December 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 of 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.61236 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 €400,000 Croatian scheme to support fattening pig farmers affected by coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved an HRK 3 million (approximately €396,000) Croatian scheme to support fattening pig farmers affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). The public support will take the form of direct grants. The aim of the scheme is to address the liquidity needs of fattening pig farmers that suffered a decrease in sales due to the coronavirus outbreak and to help them to continue their activities during and after the crisis. The measure is expected to support more than 500 undertakings. The Commission found that the Croatian scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular, (i) the aid will not exceed €225,000 per beneficiary, as provided by the Temporary Framework for companies active in the primary agricultural sector; and (ii) the aid under the scheme can be granted until 31 December 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 the 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.62105 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 €38.5 million Czech scheme to support ski resort operators affected by coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved a €38.5 million Czech scheme to support companies active in the ski resort sector that have been adversely affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The measure was approved under the State aid Temporary Framework. The aim of the scheme is to mitigate the sudden liquidity shortages that these companies are facing due to restrictive measures implemented by the Czech government to limit the spread of the virus, notably the mandatory closure of ski resorts in wintertime. The support will take the form of direct grants. The aid amount will depend on (i) the type of equipment used by these companies for their operations (ski lifts, cable cars, etc.) and (ii) their average operational costs of the past two closed accounting periods (for new companies, of the last closed accounting period). The Commission found that the Czech scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular, (i) the aid amount will not exceed €1.8 million per company; and (ii) the aid will be granted no later than 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 of 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.61808 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)*

### **Concentrations: La Commission autorise l'acquisition d'EEF par PAI Partners**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition d'Euro Ethnic Foods S.A. (« EEF »), basée en Luxembourg, par PAI Partners SAS (« PAI Partners »), basée en France. EEF est l'opérateur de la section Épicerie & Boissons des magasins Grand Frais et est également active dans la production et la vente aux tiers de jus de pruneaux. PAI Partners est une société de capital-investissement dont les principaux secteurs d'investissement sont les biens de consommation, les biens de l'industrie, la distribution, la santé et les services aux entreprises. PAI Partners est également indirectement active dans la production et l'embouteillage de boissons sans alcool. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, étant donné que les activités des entreprises n'entraînent que peu de liens verticaux et qu'un certain nombre d'acteurs importants resteront sur le marché après la concentration. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure normale de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.10088](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Arianna Podesta – Tél.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tél.: +32 229 90526)*

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of ZeniMax by Microsoft**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of ZeniMax Media Inc. by Microsoft Corporation, both of the U.S. ZeniMax is a company that develops and publishes games for personal computers ('PCs'), gaming consoles, and mobile devices. Microsoft is a global technology company, which develops, publishes, and distributes games for PCs, consoles, and mobile devices. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the combined entity's limited market position upstream and the presence of strong downstream competitors in the distribution of video games. 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.10001](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Aldro EyS and Instalaciones MD by Eni**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Aldro Energia y Soluciones, S.L.U. ('Aldro EyS') and Instalaciones Martinez Diez, S.L.U. ('Instalaciones MD'), both of Spain and both wholly owned by Aldro Energy Energy, S.L.U. , by Eni S.p.A. ('Eni') of Italy. Aldro EyS supplies electricity and natural gas in Spain and Portugal. Instalaciones MD provides back office and customer care services to Aldro EyS. Eni is a global oil and gas group, active in exploration, production, refining and selling operations, electricity and chemistry. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the limited overlaps and the companies' moderate combined market positions resulting from the 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.10178](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

## **ANNOUCEMENTS**

### **Visit of U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry to the Commission**

On Tuesday 9 March, Mr John Kerry will be in Brussels to discuss the preparation of the COP26 UN climate conference with his EU interlocutors. Mr Kerry will be welcomed at the Berlaymont VIP Corner

by his counterpart, Executive Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, at around 14:30 and both will deliver short statements which will be available on [EbS](#). Commission President Ursula **von der Leyen** has invited Mr Kerry to join the weekly meeting of the College of Commissioners at 14:45 for a discussion on transatlantic climate action. Following the College meeting President **von der Leyen**, Executive Vice-President **Timmermans** and Mr Kerry will meet trilaterally. Mr Kerry and his delegation will then hold meetings with Mr Timmermans and his team to discuss in detail their cooperation in preparation for COP26. Mr Timmermans and Mr Kerry will have a bilateral working dinner later that evening. Mr Kerry will also meet with High Representative/Vice-President Josep **Borrell** during his visit. (*For more information: Tim McPhie – Tel: +32 229 58602; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel: +32 229 74959*)

[Liste des points prévus](#) à l'ordre du jour des prochaines réunions de la Commission. Veuillez noter que ces informations sont données sous réserve de modifications.

[Eurostat](#): communiqués de presse

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