



## Daily News 18 / 03 / 2021

Brussels, 18 March 2021

### La Commission lance le Conseil européen de l'innovation pour contribuer à transformer des idées scientifiques en innovations prometteuses

Lors d'un [événement en ligne](#) aujourd'hui, la Commission européenne a lancé le [Conseil européen de l'innovation](#) (CEI). Doté d'un budget de plus de 10 milliards d'euros (à prix courants) pour la période 2021-2027, il vise à développer et à diversifier les innovations prometteuses. Nouveauté du programme [Horizon Europe](#), le CEI s'appuie sur un programme pilote mené dans le cadre du programme Horizon 2020 et est unique au monde : il combine la recherche sur des technologies émergentes, un projet pilote d'accélérateur et un fonds dédié (le [Fonds du Conseil européen de l'innovation](#)) afin d'accélérer le développement des petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) et start-up innovantes. Environ 3 milliards d'euros du budget du CEI seront alloués au Fonds du CEI. Le premier [programme de travail](#) annuel du CEI, qui est publié, offre des possibilités de financement pour un montant de plus de 1,5 milliard d'euros en 2021. Par ailleurs, les candidatures pour deux [prix](#), à savoir le prix des femmes innovatrices et le prix de la capitale européenne de l'innovation, sont ouvertes dès aujourd'hui. Margrethe **Vestager**, vice-présidente exécutive pour une Europe adaptée à l'ère du numérique, a déclaré : « *Nous disposons à présent d'un fonds qui nous permettra de soutenir les petites et moyennes entreprises qui travaillent sur des innovations décisives, de donner accès à des fonds propres et d'accélérer le développement des start-up innovantes. Il s'agit là d'un moyen de convertir les résultats de la recherche en possibilités commerciales et d'élaborer des idées nouvelles pour les avancées technologiques et innovantes.* » Mariya **Gabriel**, commissaire à l'innovation, à la recherche, à la culture, à l'éducation et à la jeunesse, s'est quant à elle exprimée en ces termes : « *Le Conseil européen de l'innovation est l'initiative la plus ambitieuse que l'Europe ait menée afin de soutenir les avancées dont elle a besoin pour sortir de la crise économique et accélérer la transition vers une économie verte et numérique. En investissant dans des entreprises de recherche et d'innovation tournées vers l'avenir, le Conseil européen de l'innovation renforcera la souveraineté technologique européenne, permettra à des centaines de start-up parmi les plus prometteuses d'Europe de se développer plus rapidement et ouvrira la voie au futur espace européen de l'innovation.* » Le CEI prend appui sur les enseignements tirés et les résultats obtenus dans le cadre sa phase pilote menée entre 2018 et 2021. Doté d'une enveloppe financière de 3,5 milliards d'euros, il a permis de soutenir plus de 5 000 PME et start-up ainsi que plus de 330 projets de recherche. Plus d'informations sont disponibles dans ce [communiqué de presse](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke — Tél.: + 32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou — Tél.: + 32 229 83583)

### President von der Leyen at the launch of the European Innovation Council: "I declare Europe open to innovation"

Commission President Ursula **von der Leyen** delivered the [opening speech](#) at [today's event](#) launching the new [European Innovation Council](#) (EIC), which will help start-ups, SMEs and researchers in Europe achieve their full potential. During the speech, the President described the EIC's mission: "Europe is a power house in science. But we also face a big paradox: We, Europeans, are excellent in making science with money. But we are not so good in making money out of science. The new European Innovation Council is there to help resolve this paradox." President **von der Leyen** explained the impact the EIC will have, saying: "With our European Innovation Council, we make €10 billion available until 2027: To fund small and medium-size companies with high-risk but also with high-potential. We support innovative researchers that have ideas for the next breakthrough technology. And we offer coaching, matchmaking and support them to set up a business." She highlighted the commitment of the Commission to align the work of the EIC with Europe's current and upcoming challenges: "There is no time to waste. We get down to business – and launch the first calls: Over €1.5 billion are foreseen alone for this year. Most of this will directly support SMEs and start-ups. Half of that finance will support the Green Deal, digital technologies, and health innovation." Finally, the President described the innovation outlook in Europe: "14 years

ago, we created the European Research Council – to support top-researchers, based on scientific excellence. The European Innovation Council we are creating today will be its strong partner to support breakthrough technology and scale up disruptive innovation. With the launch of the EIC, we complete the research and innovation landscape in Europe. I declare Europe open to innovation.” The full speech is available [here](#) and can be rewatched [here](#). A press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Eric Mamer – Tel.: +32 229 94073; Dana Spinant – Tel.: +32 229 90150; Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: + 32 229 58615)

### **Security Union: Commission launches public consultation to evaluate the work of the EU Agency for law enforcement training**

Today the Commission is launching a [public consultation](#) on the [European Union Agency for law enforcement training](#) (CEPOL). National, regional and local authorities, law enforcement, civil society, policy-makers, think tanks, academia, research institutes and the general public are invited to contribute. The consultation will run until 13 May. The results of the consultation will feed into the Commission's ongoing evaluation of the Agency, assessing, in particular, its impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and EU added value. The Commission will report on the results of the evaluation in the second half of this year. CEPOL develops, implements and coordinates training for law enforcement officers tackling serious and organised crime and terrorism across the EU. The Agency is an essential partner to assist Member States in providing law enforcement with the right skills and building a common EU law enforcement culture, as highlighted in the EU Security Union Strategy. (For more information: Adalbert Jahnz - Tel.: + 32 229 53156; Ciara Bottomley - Tel.: +32 229 69971; Laura Bérard - Tel.: +32 229 55721)

### **Aides d'État: la Commission autorise une aide au sauvetage sous forme d'un prêt de l'État français d'un montant de €40 million en faveur de CNIM**

La Commission européenne a autorisé, en vertu des règles de l'UE en matières d'aides d'État, le projet de la France d'octroyer un prêt d'un montant de €40 million à la société CNIM. Fondée en 1856, la CNIM est un acteur majeur du paysage industriel français qui conçoit et réalise des ensembles industriels clé en mains, principalement dans le domaine de l'énergie, de la gestion de déchets et de l'industrie. La CNIM, dont le carnet de commandes est rempli pour plusieurs années, fait toutefois face à des besoins de liquidités pressants. En effet, elle connaît des difficultés en raison de la défaillance de certains de ses sous-traitants et au vu des obligations financières extraordinaires lui incombant dans ce contexte, telles que des pénalités de retard ou la prise en charge de paiements dus par les entreprises défaillantes. Le prêt d'État vise ainsi à procurer à la CNIM la trésorerie nécessaire afin d'élaborer un plan pour la restructuration et la continuité de ses activités. [Les lignes directrices de la Commission concernant les aides d'Etat au sauvetage et à la restructuration](#) permettent aux États membres d'aider les entreprises en difficultés pour autant, notamment, que les mesures publiques de soutien soient limitées dans le temps, bien ciblées, et proportionnées. Les entreprises doivent payer une rémunération appropriée à l'État et l'effet négatif des mesures sur la concurrence doit être limité. Dans le cas présent, la France a démontré que le montant du prêt est proportionné par rapport aux besoins de financement. De plus, le prêt dont l'échéance est fixée à six mois sera assorti d'un taux d'intérêt suffisamment rémunérateur de l'aide. À défaut d'un remboursement dans un délai de six mois après la date d'octroi, la France s'est engagée à notifier à la Commission, soit un plan de restructuration permettant de rétablir la viabilité à long-terme de l'entreprise, soit un plan menant à la sortie de la CNIM du marché. Le prêt préservera à court terme l'outil et le savoir-faire industriels et contribuera à éviter des pertes immédiates de plus de 1,600 emplois en France, dont la moitié dans la région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, qui présente un taux de chômage relativement élevé, au-dessus de la moyenne française depuis plusieurs années. La Commission a donc autorisé la mesure de sauvetage en considérant que l'effet positif de l'aide était supérieur à la distorsion de concurrence potentiellement engendrée par le soutien de l'État. De plus amples renseignements seront disponibles dans la section « Concurrence » du site web de la Commission, dans le registre public consacré aux aides d'Etat, sous la référence SA.62120. (Pour plus d'informations: Arianna Podesta – Tél.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tél.: +32 229 55344)

### **State aid: Commission concludes that change of service provider for water and waste-water services in Rostock area in northern Germany does not raise State aid concerns**

The European Commission has found that the measures taken by the city of Rostock and its surrounding municipalities in northern Germany, assigning to a public operator the provision of water and waste water services, do not involve State aid. Following a complaint alleging the involvement of

State aid in the change of water and waste water service provider for the city of Rostock and its surrounding municipalities, the Commission investigated whether the remuneration of the new public service provider and the profit sharing agreement between its two shareholders entail State aid. The Commission found that the city of Rostock and its surrounding municipalities have chosen a legal structure for the establishment and operation of the new water and waste water service provider that excludes competition both in and for the market for these public services. The Commission concluded that this structure qualifies as a valid legal monopoly, established in line with the criteria laid down in the [Commission's Communication on the Notion of Aid](#). Therefore, as in the presence of a valid legal monopoly a distortion of competition can be excluded, State aid is not involved. As regards the profit sharing agreement between the two public shareholders of the service provider, the competent German authorities have aligned the allocation of the new service provider's profits to the corresponding shares of the two shareholders. This was found to be in line with a profit allocation mechanism that would normally occur among independent market operators. Therefore, the Commission concluded that neither of the two measures constitute State aid within the meaning of EU State aid rules. The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.48706 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)

### **State aid: Commission approves €350 million Finnish support to Finavia in the context of the coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, three Finnish measures, with an overall budget of €350 million, to support airport operator Finavia in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. Finland notified to the Commission three measures in favor of Finavia, namely (i) a €249 million capital injection, (ii) a €33 million subordinated loan, both under the State aid Temporary Framework, and (iii) a €68 million a measure to compensate the company for the damage directly suffered as a result of the coronavirus outbreak from 16 March to 30 June 2020 under Article 107(2) (b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The Commission concluded that the subordinated loan and capital injection 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 general principles as set out in the Temporary Framework. With respect to the damage compensation measure, the Commission found that the Finnish aid will compensate 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. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Finavia, as many other companies active in the aviation sector, has been hit very hard by the outbreak and has been suffering significant losses as a result of the travel restrictions that Finland and other countries had to impose to limit the spread of the virus. This €350 million support package will enable Finland to support the airport operator in different forms, namely a capital injection, a subordinated loan and a measure to partly compensate the company for the damages directly linked to the outbreak. We continue working in close cooperation with Member States to ensure that national support measures can be put in place as quickly and effectively as possible, 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 €4 million Slovenian scheme to support enterprises active in apple production**

The European Commission has approved a €4 million Slovenian scheme to support apple growers 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 to compensate micro enterprises and SMEs for their loss of income caused by the coronavirus outbreak. The purpose of the scheme is to help the beneficiaries address their liquidity needs and continue their activities during and after the outbreak. The measure is expected to benefit between 101 and 500 beneficiaries. The Commission found that the Slovenian scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular (i) the aid will not exceed €225,000 per company active in the primary production of agricultural sector, and (ii) the aid under the scheme can be granted until 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.62223 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 €1 million Luxembourgish scheme to support pig farmers affected by coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved a €1 million Luxembourgish scheme to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) active in the pig production sector in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). Under the scheme, the public support will take the form of direct grants of up to €40,000 per farm. The measure aims at helping the beneficiaries to partially address the loss of income they suffered due to the coronavirus outbreak. More specifically, the scheme aims at enabling them to pay the financial charges of their farms for the last trimester of 2020 and the first trimester of 2021. The Commission found that the Luxembourgish scheme is in line with the conditions of the Temporary Framework. In particular, (i) the aid does 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 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.62239 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 joint control of Watford by Arch, Kelso and Warburg**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Watford Holdings Ltd ('Watford') by Arch Capital Group Ltd ('Arch') both of Bermuda, Kelso & Company L.P. ('Kelso') and Warburg Pincus LLC ('Warburg'), both of the U.S. Watford is a global property and casualty insurance and reinsurance company with operations in Bermuda, Europe and the U.S. Arch is an insurance, reinsurance and mortgage insurance company active worldwide. Kelso is a private equity firm investing in a range of industries, including consumer, energy, financial services, healthcare, industrial and services. Warburg is a private equity firm whose portfolio companies are active in a variety of sectors, including consumer, industrial and business services, energy, financial services, healthcare, and technology, media and telecommunications. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the limited overlaps between the companies' activities and the negligible actual or foreseen activities of Watford 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.10099](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Commissioner Breton in Denmark to discuss ramping-up of vaccine production and the Digital Green Certificate**

Commissioner Thierry **Breton**, in charge of the Internal Market and responsible for the Task Force on Industrial Scale-up of COVID-19 vaccine production, is travelling to Denmark today and will have several high-level meetings to discuss the ramping up of vaccine production as well as the [Digital Green Certificate](#) announced yesterday by the Commission. Commissioner **Breton** will meet with the Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. During his trip, the Commissioner will also participate in a

roundtable with Jeppe Kofod, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Kollerup, Minister for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs as well as CEOs of companies involved in the vaccine production in the country. He will also have an exchange of views with the Danish Parliament's European Affairs Committee, among others. This mission is part of the Commission's continuous work on scaling up the production of vaccines throughout Europe. (For more information: Sonya Gospodinova – Tel.: +32 229 66953; Céilia Dejong – Tel.: +32 229 88199)

## **EU Platform on Food Losses & Waste: Stepping up action to fight food waste in the EU and worldwide**

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella **Kyriakides**, today addressed the [10<sup>th</sup> meeting](#) of the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste](#). The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss important ongoing work on food loss and waste prevention. At the meeting, Commissioner **Kyriakides** said: *“As the world continues to deal with an unprecedented health crisis, we are focussing our efforts to deliver a green and sustainable recovery through the European Green Deal. Tackling food loss and waste is crucial in order to achieve a sustainable food system and Member States and businesses should make such actions an integral part of their recovery plans. At EU level, the Commission will propose targets to reduce food waste across the EU, as well as the revision of EU date marking rules for better consumer understanding of these dates.”* During the meeting, the Commission provided an update on flagship actions to reduce food waste under the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), such as work on food waste measurement and the setting of EU-level targets for food waste reduction as well as activities related to date marking. Member States and private sector organisations explained how the work of the Platform and its [recommendations for action](#) have supported their activity on the ground. International organisations updated the Platform on recent developments at global level, including preparatory work ahead of the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021. The full speech of Commissioner **Kyriakides** is available [here](#). (For more information: Stefan De Keersmaecker – Tel.: +32 229 84680; Stephan Meder – Tel.: +32 229 13917)

## **EU bank crisis management and deposit insurance framework: Commission hosts virtual event with key policy figures**

Today, the Commission will be hosting a virtual event dedicated to the ongoing review of the bank crisis management and deposit insurance (CMDI) framework. This conference is an opportunity for debate and discussion around the issues that emerged in the implementation of the existing framework and possible policy solutions. The current health crisis has reminded us of the importance of a strengthened banking union and the safety nets it offers – such as a European Deposit Insurance Scheme (EDIS). Commissioner Mairead **McGuinness**, Portugal's Minister of State for Finance João Leão, ECB Vice-President Luis de Guindos, SRB Chair Elke König, Chair of the EP's ECON Committee Irene Tinagli, Chairperson of the EBA Jose Manuel Campa and many others will be taking part. Participants will discuss their views on the resolution and insolvency toolbox, funding in resolution and insolvency as well as the way forward on depositor protection. During the event, participants are welcome to ask questions to [@EU\\_Finance](#) using the hashtag [#CMDIreview](#). You can find out more via the [Conference's webpage](#). (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: 32 229 86500; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

[Eurostat](#): communiqués de presse

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