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Commission proposes to amend the EU's 2021 budget to accommodate the Brexit Adjustment Reserve

Following the proposal for a Brexit Adjustment Reserve the Commission put forward on 25 December, the Commission has today proposed a €4.24 billion increase (equal to €4 billion in 2018 prices) of the EU's 2021 budget. This will ensure sufficient resources are available this year to support EU countries in addressing the immediate effects of Brexit. The total amount for the Brexit Adjustment Reserve is €5 billion in 2018 prices, or €5.37 billion in current prices for the MFF 2021-27. This would bring the budget to €168.5 billion in commitments and €170.3 billion in payments. Commenting on the decision, Commissioner **Hahn** said: *"The EU budget has always been and continues to be a tool to deliver on EU's political commitments. The Brexit Adjustment Reserve is yet another example of European solidarity. The Commission will now work with the European Parliament and the Council to ensure that money becomes available to businesses and companies, regions and local communities as soon as possible."* Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa **Ferreira**, added: *"Our motto in Cohesion policy is to leave no one behind. The Brexit Adjustment Reserve will come in support to those most impacted by Brexit. European unity was key throughout the negotiations and European solidarity will be crucial to deal with the outcome."* The Brexit Adjustment Reserve will be rapidly available and flexible, and will cover expenditure to counter adverse consequences of Brexit in all Member States over a period of 30 months. The vast majority will be allocated through pre-financing already in 2021, calculated on the basis of the expected impact of the end of the transition period on each Member State's economy, taking into account the relative degree of economic integration with the UK. This includes trade in goods and services, and the negative implications on the EU fisheries sector. An initial breakdown per Member State is available online [here](#). The remaining €1 billion in 2018 prices will be paid in 2024, after the Member States have notified the Commission about the actual expenditures incurred. This will allow to respond to unforeseen events, and ensure that the support from the Brexit Adjustment Reserve is concentrated on the Members States and sectors most affected by the withdrawal. For more information on the Brexit Adjustment Reserve, see [here](#) and [here](#). (For information: Miriam Garcia-Ferrer - Tel.: +32 229 99075; Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Claire Joawn - Tel.: +32 229 56859; Veronica Favalli - Tel.: +32 229 87269)

Coronavirus: EU delivers personal protective equipment to North Macedonia and Mongolia

Following a request for assistance from North Macedonia and Mongolia, Czechia and France are sending personal protective equipment to help in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Czechia sent 126,000 masks and 5,000 overalls to North Macedonia, while France sent 400 oxygen masks, 200 nasal cannulas, generators and other related items to Mongolia. The requests for assistance came through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. European Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**, said: *"The coronavirus continues to be a challenge around the globe. The EU supports those who need help because we can only beat this pandemic by cooperating with and supporting our neighbours. I am grateful to the Member States who continue to put EU solidarity into action."* Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, 29 countries have received assistance in the form of medical or personal protective equipment, through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#). In addition to its coordination role, the EU finances up to 75% of the transport costs for the assistance dispatched. (For information: Miriam Garcia-Ferrer - Tel.: +32 229 99075; Daniel Puglisi - Tel.: +32 229 69140)

The Commission authorises eight genetically modified crops for use as food and feed

Today, the Commission has authorised five genetically modified crops (3 maize and 2 soybeans) and renewed the authorisation for three maize crops used for food and feed. All of these GMOs have gone through a comprehensive and stringent authorisation procedure, including a favourable scientific

assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The authorisation decisions do not cover cultivation. Member States did not reach a qualified majority either in favour or against at the Standing Committee and at the subsequent Appeal Committee. The European Commission has therefore the legal duty to proceed with the authorisations. The authorisations are valid for 10 years, and any product produced from these GMOs will be subject to the EU's strict [labelling and traceability rules](#). For more information on GMOs in the EU see [here](#). (For more information: Stefan De Keersmaecker – Tel.: +32 229 84680; Darragh Cassidy – Tel.: +32 229 83978)

Égalité : 10ème anniversaire de l'entrée en vigueur de la convention des Nations Unies relative aux droits des personnes handicapées dans l'UE

Il y a dix ans, la convention des Nations Unies relative aux droits des personnes handicapées est entrée en vigueur dans l'UE. La convention a constitué une avancée en matière de droits des personnes handicapées et elle est la première convention sur les droits de l'homme ratifiée par l'UE. Les parties qui adhèrent à la convention sont tenues de protéger et de respecter les droits de l'homme de toutes les personnes handicapées et de garantir leur égalité en vertu de la loi. [La stratégie européenne 2010-2020](#) en faveur des personnes handicapées a été le principal instrument dont dispose l'UE pour faire en sorte que les dispositions de la convention deviennent réalité et pour soutenir les États membres dans leurs efforts. La stratégie a placé le handicap au premier rang des priorités de l'UE et a apporté des améliorations, entre autres, dans les domaines de l'accessibilité, de la sensibilisation, de l'éducation et de la formation, de la protection sociale et de la santé. Dans quelques semaines, la Commission européenne présentera une nouvelle stratégie sur les droits des personnes handicapées. Helena **Dalli**, commissaire chargée de l'égalité, a déclaré : « *L'UE compte plus de 87 millions de personnes présentant un handicap. Nous avons besoin d'un effort sans réserve et décisif pour que ces personnes puissent participer de manière égale à tous les domaines de la vie. Nous ne pouvons réussir à améliorer la situation des personnes handicapées qu'avec le soutien total des États membres de l'UE et des mesures nationales renforcées. La stratégie à venir permettra de travailler plus facilement ensemble sur nos engagements, y compris en dialogue et en partenariat avec les personnes handicapées. Nous devons unir nos forces et redoubler d'efforts pour concrétiser notre Union de l'égalité.* » De plus amples informations sont disponibles [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations : Christian Wigand — Tél.: + 32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko — Tél.: + 32 229 63444; Jördis Ferroli — Tél.: + 32 229 92729)

State aid: Commission approves €12 billion German umbrella scheme to compensate companies for damages suffered due to coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has found a €12 billion German umbrella scheme (final part of the Novemberhilfe package) to compensate companies for damages suffered due to restrictive measures to contain the coronavirus outbreak to be in line with EU State aid rules. Under the scheme, companies from all sectors will be entitled to compensation for damages suffered during the lockdown periods imposed by the German government in March/April and November/December 2020 to limit the spread of the coronavirus. The compensation, in the form of direct grants, covers either up to 100% of the actual damage incurred during the lockdown periods, or 75 % of the turnover in the reference months of November and December 2019, whichever amount is lower. The Commission assessed the measure under Article [107\(2\)\(b\)](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which enables the Commission to approve State aid measures granted by Member States to compensate specific companies or sectors (in the form of schemes) for damage directly caused by exceptional occurrences, such as the coronavirus outbreak. As a result, exceptional interventions by the Member States to compensate for the damages directly linked to the outbreak are justified. The Commission found that the German aid scheme will compensate damages that are directly linked to the coronavirus outbreak. It also found that the measure is proportionate, as the envisaged compensation does not exceed what is necessary to make good the damage. The Commission therefore concluded that the scheme is in line with EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "*The second wave of the coronavirus has hit many businesses very hard. This €12 billion scheme will enable Germany to compensate businesses of all sectors for the damages suffered due to restrictive measures taken to contain the coronavirus outbreak. It complements already approved schemes enabling support of up to €4 million per company as part of the Novemberhilfe package. We continue to work closely with Member States to find effective solutions to support companies in these difficult times, 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 invites comments on revision of the Communication on the enforcement of State aid rules by national courts

The European Commission is inviting comments from Member States and interested stakeholders on the [draft Communication on the enforcement of State aid rules by national courts](#), in view of its revision. The Communication provides practical information on the enforcement of State aid rules at national level. The Communication aims to provide guidance to national courts when they apply these rules and to encourage closer cooperation with the Commission. Enforcement is a central element of State aid control. Both the Commission and national courts have competences in enforcing State aid rules and good cooperation between them is therefore essential. Since the [2009 Enforcement Notice](#), which is the current basis for the application of State aid rules at national level and cooperation between national courts and the Commission, the case law of the Union Courts and the regulatory framework for State aid have evolved. Under the Commission's [State aid modernisation agenda](#), more possibilities have been introduced for the Member States to grant aid without prior Commission scrutiny, including further exemptions from the obligation to notify planned State aid measures to the Commission. As a result, the amount of aid granted on the basis of block exemptions has increased, while the role of national courts in ensuring compliance with State aid rules has become even more prominent. However, the 2019 [Study on the enforcement of State aid rules and decisions by national courts](#) highlighted the need to improve cooperation between the Commission and the courts of the Member States. The draft Communication now under consultation emphasises the importance the Commission attaches to the enforcement of State aid rules at national level and promotes better coordination and cooperation in this field. Member States and stakeholders are invited to submit comments on today's public consultation until 16 April 2021. *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Calisen by BlackRock, Mubadala and Goldman Sachs

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Calisen plc of the UK, by BlackRock Alternatives Management LLC ('BAM') of the U.S., Mubadala Investment Company PJSC of Abu Dhabi and Goldman Sachs Inc. of the U.S. Calisen supplies electricity and gas meters in the UK. BAM is a subsidiary of BlackRock Inc. and controls and manages investment decisions of a fund, which operates globally and focusses on investments in the energy and power infrastructure value chain. Mubadala provides investment and development across a variety of industries, including among others, aerospace, ICT, semiconductors, metals and mining, renewable energy, oil and gas, real estate, pharma and med-tech, agri-business and a global portfolio of financial holdings. Goldman Sachs is a global investment banking, securities and investment management firm that provides a range of banking, securities and investment services worldwide to a substantial and diversified client base that includes corporations, financial institutions, governments and high-net-worth individuals. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because the activities of the companies do not overlap. 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.10107](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Hyundai Assan Otomotiv Sanayi by Hyundai Motor Company

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Hyundai Assan Otomotiv Sanayi Ve Ticaret A.Ş. of Turkey by Hyundai Motor Company of South Korea. Hyundai Assan Otomotiv Sanayi manufactures and exports Hyundai motor vehicles. Hyundai Motor Company is active in the motor vehicle sector, including the business of manufacture and sale of motor vehicles. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because Hyundai Motor Company already had joint control of Hyundai Assan Otomotiv Sanayi and the change to sole control would have no significant impact on the existing competition. 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.10074](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

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