



Daily News 12 / 05 / 2021

Brussels, 12 May 2021

REUNION DU COLLEGE: Pacte vert pour l'Europe : la Commission vise « le zéro pollution » dans l'air, l'eau et les sols

La Commission européenne a adopté aujourd'hui [le plan d'action de l'UE : « Vers une pollution zéro pour l'air, l'eau et les sols »](#) - un objectif clé du [Pacte vert européen](#) et le thème principal de la [Semaine verte de l'UE](#) de cette année. Il définit une vision intégrée pour 2050 : un monde où la pollution est réduite à des niveaux qui ne sont plus nuisibles pour la santé humaine et les écosystèmes naturels, ainsi que les étapes pour y parvenir. Frans **Timmermans**, vice-président exécutif du Pacte vert européen, a déclaré : « *Le Pacte vert vise à construire une planète saine pour tous. Pour offrir un environnement exempt de substances toxiques à tous et à la planète, nous devons agir maintenant. Ce plan établira les étapes pour y parvenir. Les nouvelles technologies vertes déjà présentes peuvent contribuer à réduire la pollution et offrir de nouvelles opportunités commerciales. Les efforts de l'Europe pour reconstruire une économie plus propre, plus équitable et plus durable doivent également contribuer à la réalisation de l'ambition de pollution zéro.* » Le commissaire chargé de l'environnement, des océans et de la pêche, Virginijus **Sinkevičius**, a déclaré : « *La pollution environnementale a des effets négatifs sur notre santé, en particulier sur celle des catégories les plus vulnérables et socialement défavorisées, et constitue également l'un des principaux moteurs de la perte de biodiversité. Les arguments en faveur de l'UE pour mener la lutte mondiale contre la pollution sont aujourd'hui plus forts que jamais. Avec le plan d'action « Pollution zéro », nous créerons un cadre de vie sain pour les Européens, nous contribuerons à une reprise résiliente et nous stimulerons la transition vers une économie propre, circulaire et neutre sur le plan climatique.* » Le plan associe toutes les politiques pertinentes de l'UE pour lutter contre la pollution et la prévenir, en mettant particulièrement l'accent sur l'utilisation des solutions numériques pour lutter contre la pollution. Un réexamen de la législation européenne pertinente est prévu afin d'en identifier les lacunes restantes et les domaines où une meilleure mise en œuvre est nécessaire pour respecter ces obligations légales. Dans le but de guider l'UE vers l'objectif de 2050 d'une planète saine pour des personnes en bonne santé, le plan d'action fixe des objectifs clés pour 2030 afin de réduire la pollution à la source, par rapport à la situation actuelle. Le plan décrit également un certain nombre d'initiatives et d'actions-phares. Vous trouverez de plus amples informations dans le [communiqué de presse](#), les [questions-réponses](#) et la [fiche d'information](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Vivian Loonela – Tél.: +32 229 66712; Daniela Stoycheva – Tél.: +32 229 53664)

Spring 2021 Economic Forecast: Rolling up sleeves

The [Spring 2021 Economic Forecast](#) projects that the EU economy will expand by 4.2% in 2021 and by 4.4% in 2022. The euro area economy is forecast to grow by 4.3% this year and 4.4% next year. This represents a significant upgrade of the growth outlook compared to the [Winter 2021 Economic Forecast](#) which the Commission presented in February. Growth rates will continue to vary across the EU, but all Member States should see their economies return to pre-crisis levels by the end of 2022. The rebound in Europe's economy that began last summer stalled in the fourth quarter of 2020 and in the first quarter of 2021, as fresh public health measures were introduced to contain the rise in the number of COVID-19 cases. However, the EU and euro area economies are expected to rebound strongly as vaccination rates increase and restrictions are eased. This growth will be driven by private consumption, investment, and a rising demand for EU exports from a strengthening global economy. Public investment, as a proportion of GDP, is set to reach its highest level in more than a decade in 2022. This will be driven by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the key instrument at the heart of NextGenerationEU. A [press release](#) in all languages and the [Spring 2021 Economic Forecast](#) are available online. (For more information: Arianna Podestà – Tel. +32 229 87024; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

Europe's Digital Decade: Commission launches consultation and discussion on EU digital

principles

Today, as a follow-up to its [Digital Decade](#) Communication of 9 March, the Commission is launching a [public consultation](#) on the formulation of a set of principles to promote and uphold EU values in the digital space. Margrethe **Vestager**, Executive Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age, said: "A fair and secure digital environment that offers opportunities for all. That is our commitment. The digital principles will guide this European human-centred approach to digital and should be the reference for future action in all areas. That's why we want to hear from EU citizens." Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry **Breton**, said: "This is Europe's Digital Decade and everyone should be empowered to benefit from digital solutions to connect, explore, work and fulfil one's ambitions, online as offline. We want to set together the digital principles on which a resilient digital economy and society will be built." The consultation, open until 2 September, seeks to open a wide societal debate and gather views from citizens, non-governmental and civil society organisations, businesses, administrations and all interested parties. These principles will guide the EU and Member States in designing digital rules and regulations that deliver the benefits of digitalisation for all citizens. The contributions to the public consultation will feed into a proposal from the Commission for a joint inter-institutional declaration on Digital Principles of the European Parliament, the Council, and the Commission. The proposal is expected by the end of 2021. A [press release](#) is available online. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Charles Manoury – Tel.: +32 229 13391)

EU Cohesion policy: €133.4 million for Bulgaria and Sweden to tackle the social and economic impact of the coronavirus crisis

The Commission has approved the modification of three operational programmes (OPs) under [REACT-EU](#) to provide €75.9 million to Bulgaria and €57.5 million to Sweden to help tackle the effects of the pandemic. Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas **Schmit**, said: "The coronavirus has put our social fabric to the test and has hit the most vulnerable people the hardest. The EU is showing solidarity by supporting the provision of aid in these difficult times and promoting social inclusion." Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa **Ferreira**, said: "The decisions approved today are the result of good policy measures. They will provide much needed investment resources for the post-coronavirus crisis move to a green and digital recovery." The Bulgarian programme for the [Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived](#) (FEAD) will receive an extra €19.9 million in 2021 to provide daily warm meals to 50,000 people from vulnerable groups living in poverty. This is the first amendment of a FEAD OP under REACT-EU. In addition, the Bulgarian programme 'Science and Education for Smart Growth', co-financed by the [European Social Fund](#) (ESF) and the [European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF), will be topped up with €56 million to support distance learning. At least 10% of students and teachers will receive laptops or tablets and 30% of teachers will receive training in online teaching. In Sweden, the Commission has approved the modification of an OP that will increase the funding available for investments by nearly €57.5 million. The amendment of the national OP co-financed by the ERDF will support the sustainable green and digital transition of the Swedish SMEs that were most negatively impacted by the crisis, such as from the tourism and hospitality sectors. REACT-EU is part of [NextGenerationEU](#) and provides €50.5 billion additional funding over the course of 2021 and 2022 to programmes under the ERDF, the ESF and the FEAD. (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 229 86500; Veronica Favalli - Tel.: +32 229 87269; Flora Matthaes – Tel.: +32 229 83951)

Recovery and Resilience Facility: Hungary submits official recovery and resilience plan

The Commission has received an official recovery and resilience plan from Hungary. This plan sets out the reforms and investment projects that Hungary plans to implement with the support of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). The RRF is the key instrument at the heart of NextGenerationEU, the EU's plan for emerging stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic. It will provide up to €672.5 billion to support investments and reforms (in 2018 prices). This breaks down into grants worth a total of €312.5 billion and €360 billion in loans. The RRF will play a crucial role in helping Europe emerge stronger from the crisis, and securing the green and digital transitions. The presentation of the plan follows intensive dialogue between the Commission and the Hungarian national authorities over the past months. The Commission will assess the Hungarian plan within the next two months based on the eleven criteria set out in the Regulation and translate its content into legally binding acts. The Commission has now received a total of 15 recovery and resilience plans, from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, and Slovakia. It will continue to engage intensively with the remaining Member States to help them deliver high quality plans. A [press release](#) and a [Q&A](#) are available online. (For more information: Arianna Podestà – Tel. +32 229 87024; Enda McNamara –

Tel.: +32 229 64976)

Coronavirus: EU helps Nepal to tackle infections surge

Nepal has requested EU assistance to help contain the explosion in COVID-19 cases. In response, the EU has mobilised an initial €2 million in humanitarian funding, which will support monitoring of all home isolated cases through tele-health / tele-medicine services and rapid referral to hospitals; national emergency medical teams deployment and international emergency medical teams mobilisation facilitation; procure COVID-19 equipment and supplies in Nepal. Key equipment and supplies will include oxygen equipment including oxygen gas cylinders, oxygen concentrators, home care kits, diagnostics including antigen test kits; personal protection equipment. Nepal has also activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Finland is the first Member State to offer more than 2 million surgical facemasks, 350,000 FFP2 masks, 52,500 pairs of vinyl gloves and 30,000 isolation gowns. Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**, said: *"The COVID-19 surge in Nepal is claiming more lives every minute as it spreads across the country. We stand in full solidarity with Nepal in its fight against the pandemic. We are quickly mobilising emergency support with initial €2 million funding. I am very thankful to Finland for their quick offers of assistance via our Civil Protection Mechanism. We stand ready to provide further assistance."* The European Union's 24/7 [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) is in regular contact with the Nepalese authorities to closely monitor the situation and channel the EU assistance. (For more information: Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi - Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Tourism: Commission helps the tourism ecosystem with a user-friendly guide on EU funding*

The Commission will today publish a Guide on EU funding for tourism, which collects information on the EU funds that are available to people and companies working in the tourism sector. The user-friendly guide contains links to the relevant EU programmes' websites where the reader can find the call for proposals and information on each funding programme. It also includes examples of good projects co-funded by EU funds in the past. Commissioner for the Internal Market, Thierry **Breton**, said: *"The Tourism ecosystem is among the worst hit by the pandemic. With this new guide, the Commission aims to help people working in the tourism sector, including SMEs to navigate and access the available EU financing. These EU funds will contribute to the tourism industry's recovery and sustainable and digital transition."* The online guide presents new EU programmes included in the EU budget for 2021 -2027, moving towards a more sustainable, digital EU economy and gathers information on sources of EU funding with the highest potential to support investments in tourism. It will be available online [here](#) at 13:00 CET. (For more information: Sonya Gospodinova – Tel.: +32 229 66953; Federica Miccoli – Tel.: +32 229 58300)

Commissioners Schmit, Breton and Sinkevičius hosted Pact for Skills roundtable with renewable energy stakeholders

Yesterday, Commissioners **Schmit**, **Breton** and **Sinkevičius** hosted a high-level roundtable of the Pact for Skills with renewable energy stakeholders, among which those from the offshore, wind, and solar sectors. This is part of a series of sectoral roundtables to encourage stakeholder involvement under the [Pact for Skills](#). The objective of the Pact is to mobilise all relevant actors – industrial, social, regional and education partners – to assist people in developing the right skill-set for a sustainable, social and resilient recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Partnerships established under the Pact will benefit from Commission support such as a partnership platform and information on EU funding options. Renewable energy has been identified as an important industrial ecosystem in Europe for recovery, ripe enough to sustain partnerships under the Pact due to the strong engagement of energy stakeholders and industrial players, the existence of an ongoing maritime technology Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills that will look into an offshore renewables Skilling Strategy, as well as the great potential of the sector to be a driver for the twin, digital and green, transitions ahead. Skilled personnel, equipped with the necessary digital skills alongside technical/engineering competences in assisting and facilitating the transformation of energy systems is of particular interest. The Renewable energy ecosystem will create new opportunities for industry, generate green jobs across the continent, and strengthen the EU's global leadership in renewable energy technologies. Clean energy is crucial to meeting the EU's goal of climate neutrality by 2050, as set out in the [European Green Deal](#). The meeting confirmed the significant growth opportunities in this ecosystem, and the crucial need to reskill and upskill workers, including from more traditional industries, to ensure a just transition while avoiding potential skills shortages. Attracting talents and especially women is central to be successful in this endeavour. Announced under the [European Skills](#)

[Agenda](#) in July, the Pact for Skills was [launched on 10 November](#). (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Tim McPhie - Tel: +32 229 58602; Daniel Ferrie - Tel.: +32 229 86500; Sonya Gospodinova - Tel.: +32 229 66953)

La présidente von der Leyen reçoit les lettres de créance de chefs de mission auprès l'UE

Hier, la **présidente von der Leyen** a reçu les lettres de créance de 26 chefs de mission de pays tiers auprès l'Union européenne. Les chefs de mission en question sont : S.E. Mme Isabelle Berro-Amadeï, Ambassadeur de Monaco ; S.E. M. Carl Allan Reaich, Ambassadeur de la Nouvelle Zélande ; S.E. M. Thérance Ntahiraja, Ambassadeur du Burundi ; S.E. Mme Joy-Ann Skinner, Ambassadrice de la Barbade ; S.E. M. Mamadou Mandjou Berthe, Ambassadeur du Mali ; S.E. Mme Anna Aghadjanian, Ambassadrice d'Arménie ; S.E. M. Mário de Azevedo Constantino, Ambassadeur d'Angola ; S.E. M. Masaki Yasushi, Ambassadeur du Japon ; S.E. M. Sutiawan Gunessee, Ambassadeur de Maurice ; S.E. M. Abdelrahim Ahmed Khalil Eltayeb, Ambassadeur du Soudan ; S.E. M. Jean Omer Beriziky, Ambassadeur de Madagascar ; S.E. M. Andri Hadi, Ambassadeur d'Indonésie ; S.E. M. Nabil Ammar, Ambassadeur de Tunisie ; S.E. Mme Ailish Campbell, Ambassadrice du Canada ; S.E. M. Dieudonné Rugambwa Sebashongore, Ambassadeur du Rwanda ; S.E. M. Mahbub Hassan Saleh, Ambassadeur du Bangladesh ; S.E. Mme Hirut Zemene Kassa, Ambassadrice d'Éthiopie ; S.E. M. Serge Thierry Mickoto Chavagne, Ambassadeur du Gabon ; S.E. M. Mahamat Mamadou Addy, Ambassadeur du Tchad ; S.E. Mme Tokozile Xasa, Ambassadrice d'Afrique du Sud ; S.E. Mme Saja Majali, Ambassadrice de Jordanie ; S.E. M. Iván Emilio Ogando Lora, Ambassadeur de la République dominicaine ; S.E. Mme Ambassador Pontšo S. M. Sekatle, Ambassadrice du Lesotho ; S.E. M. Lim Hong Huai, Ambassadeur de Singapour ; S.E. M. Gahendra Rajbhandari, Ambassadeur du Népal ; et S.E. M. Margulan Baimukhan, Ambassadeur du Kazakhstan. Des photos de la cérémonie sont disponibles sur le [portail audiovisuel](#) de la Commission. (Pour plus d'informations: Eric Mamer - Tél.: +32 229 94073; Dana Spinant - Tél.: +32 229 90150)

Competition: The Multilateral Working Group on pharmaceutical mergers launches a joint public consultation

The Working Group on pharmaceutical mergers, created in [March 2021](#) by the European Commission and several other authorities launched a joint public consultation in the field of pharmaceutical mergers. The Working Group consists of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Competition, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission ('FTC'), the Canadian Competition Bureau, the UK's Competition and Markets Authority ('CMA'), the U.S. Department of Justice ('DOJ') and three Offices of Attorneys General. The objective of the Working Group is to share experiences on the assessment of the effects of mergers in the pharmaceutical sector and to identify concrete and actionable steps to enhance the analysis of pharmaceutical mergers. The purpose of the consultation is to gather ideas and views from all interested parties in the field, including health services, doctors, academia, industry, patient groups, consumer organisations and competition experts. These contributions will then feed into a workshop that will be organised later this year. Interested parties can respond to the consultation until 25 June 2021. The FTC will collect and publish all contributions and comments on behalf of and in close co-operation with all members of the Working Group. You will find the public consultation [here](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta - Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti - Tel.: +32 229 55344)

State aid: Commission approves €500 million Greek scheme to support food service companies affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, a €500 million Greek support scheme to support food service companies, such as restaurants and mobile food service, event catering, beverage serving and other food service activities, affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). The scheme is co-financed by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and will be open to companies of all sizes that experienced a turnover decline of more than 30% over 2020, compared to 2019. The aid will take the form of direct grants, with each grant amounting to up to 7% of the beneficiary's annual turnover. The scheme intends to provide beneficiaries with working capital for acquiring raw materials necessary for their activities. The Commission found that the scheme notified by Greece is in line with the conditions set out in the [Temporary Framework](#). 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. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "Companies active in the

food service sector have been hit hard by the coronavirus outbreak and the restrictive measures imposed to limit the spread of the virus. This €500 million aid scheme will enable Greece to help these companies meet their liquidity needs and continue their activities during these difficult times. We continue to work in close cooperation with Member States to find effective solutions to tackle the economic effects 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)

Aides d'État : La Commission autorise un régime belge de 12,5 millions d'euros en faveur du secteur du transport de passagers de Wallonie touché par la crise du coronavirus

La Commission européenne a autorisé, conformément aux règles en matière d'aides d'État, un régime belge d'un montant de 12,5 millions d'euros visant à soutenir les entreprises et les travailleurs indépendants de Wallonie actifs dans le secteur du transport de passagers touchés par la crise du coronavirus. Le régime a été autorisé sur la base de [l'Encadrement temporaire](#) en matière d'aides d'État. Le soutien, qui prendra la forme de subventions directes, vise à atténuer les conséquences sur le secteur du transport de passagers des mesures restrictives imposées par les autorités belges pour limiter la propagation du virus. Les opérateurs de transport de passagers dans la région wallonne recevront un montant fixe, calculé sur la base du prix d'achat de chacun de leurs véhicules se trouvant à l'arrêt. L'objectif de ce régime est d'atténuer la soudaine pénurie de liquidités à laquelle les bénéficiaires font face en raison de la crise du coronavirus. La Commission a estimé que le régime belge est conforme aux conditions énumérées dans l'Encadrement Temporaire. En particulier, (i) le montant de l'aide n'excédera pas 1,8 million d'euros par bénéficiaire ; et (ii) l'aide sera accordée au plus tard le 31 décembre 2021. 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 conformément aux règles en matière d'aides d'État. De plus amples informations sur l'Encadrement temporaire et les autres mesures prises par la Commission pour faire face aux conséquences économiques de la pandémie de coronavirus sont disponibles [ici](#). La version non-confidentielle de la décision sera publiée sous le numéro d'affaire SA. 62882 dans le [registre des aides d'État](#) figurant sur le site web de la Commission consacré 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)

State aid: Commission approves €6 million Latvian scheme to support companies in the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors in the context of the coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved a €6 million Latvian scheme to support companies active in the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. The measure was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). The scheme, which will be managed by Altum, a state-owned development finance institution, will be open to companies that organise public art, entertainment and recreational events on a regular basis and whose operations have been affected by restrictive measures that the Latvian government had to introduce to limit the spread of the coronavirus. The support will take the form of direct grants and loans for a maximum of €300,000 for the organisation of one event (for all beneficiaries). The overall support per beneficiary under the scheme cannot, in any event, exceed €900,000. The grants are intended to compensate the costs related to the implementation of an event, including its preparation, and the remuneration of performers, as well as the cost of equipment and technical support. The loans are intended to support companies' working capital, in order to mitigate the negative impact of the coronavirus outbreak on their financial situation. The Commission found that the Latvian scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular, the aid (i) will not exceed the limits per beneficiary provided by the Temporary Framework; and (ii) 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.62003 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 €44 million Estonian scheme to support companies active in the tourism and retail sectors in the context of the coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved a €44 million Estonian scheme to support companies active in the tourism and retail sectors 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 direct grants. The scheme will be open to operators active in the relevant sectors, including, among others, travel service providers, accommodation companies, SPA and water centers, trade fair organisers and retail companies that have suffered a significant loss of turnover due to 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 Commission found that the Estonian 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 as provided by the Temporary Framework, 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.62825 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)*

Aides d'état: La Commission approuve un régime d'aides français de 100 millions d'euros visant à atténuer les conséquences économiques liées à la cessation de l'utilisation du glyphosate et amplifiées par la pandémie

La Commission européenne a approuvé un régime d'aides français de 100 millions d'euros visant à soutenir le secteur agricole touché par la pandémie du coronavirus. Le régime a été autorisé en vertu de [l'encadrement temporaire](#) en matière d'aides d'État. Le soutien public, qui prendra la forme d'un crédit d'impôt, s'adressera aux entreprises agricoles décidant d'arrêter l'utilisation du glyphosate en 2021. Ce soutien permettra de contribuer à atténuer une partie des conséquences économiques liées au changement de cette pratique agricole et amplifiées par les difficultés rencontrées par le secteur en raison de la pandémie de coronavirus. Le montant du crédit d'impôt est égal à 2.500 euros par bénéficiaire. La Commission a estimé que le régime français est conforme aux conditions énoncées dans l'encadrement temporaire. En particulier, l'aide i) ne dépassera pas les montants maximaux fixés par [l'encadrement temporaire](#) pour les aides en faveur des producteurs primaires de produits agricoles et ii) sera accordée au plus tard le 31 décembre 2021. 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 fixées dans l'encadrement temporaire. Sur cette base, la Commission a autorisé la mesure en vertu des règles de l'UE en matière d'aides d'État. De plus amples informations sur l'encadrement temporaire et les autres mesures prises par la Commission pour faire face aux conséquences économiques de la pandémie de coronavirus sont disponibles [ici](#). La version non confidentielle de la décision sera publiée sous le numéros SA.62568 dans le [registre des aides d'État](#) figurant sur le site web de la Commission consacré à la [concurrence](#), une fois 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)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of NXK by Shell

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Next Kraftwerke ('NXK') of Germany by Royal Dutch Shell ('Shell') of the Netherlands and the UK. NXK is an electricity aggregator and trader specialised in the direct selling of electricity from renewable energy sources. Shell is a global group of energy and petrochemical companies with businesses including oil and gas exploration, production, manufacturing, marketing and shipping of oil products and chemicals, and renewable energy products. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns, given that the companies' combined market shares in the markets where their activities overlap are limited. 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.10170](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)*

Mergers: Commission to assess proposed acquisition of Kustomer by Facebook

The European Commission has accepted requests submitted by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Romania to assess the proposed acquisition of Kustomer by Facebook under the EU Merger Regulation. Facebook, based in the U.S., is a provider of websites and applications for mobile devices offering social networking, consumer communications and photo and video-sharing functionalities, including the messaging channels Messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram Messaging. Kustomer, based in the U.S., offers a customer relationship management ('CRM') software as a service ('SaaS') specialising in assisting business' customer service agents to manage communications with consumers. The proposed acquisition does not meet the turnover thresholds set by the EU Merger Regulation and therefore it was not notified to the European Commission. The transaction was notified instead by Facebook for regulatory clearance in Austria, where the transaction meets the national merger notification threshold. Austria submitted a referral request to the Commission pursuant to Article 22(1) of the EU Merger Regulation. This provision allows Member States to request that the Commission examine a merger that does not have an EU dimension but affects trade within the single market and threatens to significantly affect competition within the territory of the Member States making the request. Other countries of the European Economic Area had the opportunity to join the original referral request. Subsequently Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Romania joined Austria's referral request. On the basis of the information submitted by Austria and the countries joining the referral request, and without prejudice to the outcome of its full investigation, the Commission considers that the transaction meets the criteria for referral under Article 22. In particular, the Commission considers that the transaction might affect competition in the markets for CRM software and online display advertising services. The Commission also concluded that it is best placed to examine the potential cross-border effects of the transaction. The Commission will now ask Facebook to notify the transaction. Facebook cannot implement the transaction before notifying and obtaining clearance from the Commission. *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)*

APPOINTMENTS

COLLEGE MEETING: The European Commission appoints a new Deputy Director-General for its department of competition

Today, the European Commission has appointed Guillaume Lorient as Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General for Competition (DG COMP) in charge of Mergers. He will take up his office on 16 May. Guillaume Lorient, a French national, acquired a thorough knowledge of competition law enforcement, in particular in the area of mergers in the private sector, in the EU General Court and since 2002 at the European Commission where he occupied various management positions. In addition to his expertise in this field, his experience in negotiating and representing the Commission at senior level; his proven management and leadership experience and his conceptual and analytical skills make him well suited to contribute to the overall strategic orientation and management of DG COMP and to head the merger network of DG COMP which is responsible for the management of merger procedures. Guillaume Lorient is currently the Director of the Directorate dealing with antitrust, mergers and state aid in digital, telecoms and media cases, at DG COMP where he is notably responsible for the strategy and management of competition enforcement in the areas of digital platforms, online commerce and telecoms. Prior to that, Guillaume Lorient served as a Deputy Head of Cabinet of Vice-President Joaquin Almunia, Commissioner for Competition Policy, between 2010 and 2014, and coordinated competition policy and enforcement in the fields of merger control and antitrust, including legislative initiatives such as the Directive on Antitrust damages actions. Previously, he was Head of the Unit 'Antitrust and Merger Policy' at DG COMP, in charge of the overall coordination of antitrust and merger enforcement. Before joining the European Commission in 2002, Guillaume Lorient completed five years of service as a Référendaire with the EU General Court and worked with a Law firm specialised in European business law until 1996. *(For information: Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578; Claire Joawn - Tel.: +32 229 56859)*

COLLEGE MEETING: The European Commission appoints two new Directors for its department for economy and finance

Today, the European Commission has appointed two Directors in the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN). Luc Tholoniati will become Director for the Directorate 'Economies of the Member States II' and Giorgio Chiarion Casoni Director for the Directorate 'InvestEU and financial institutions'. The date of effect for both these positions is to be determined later. Luc Tholoniati, a French national, has been working at the Commission for over 20 years in various positions in DG ECFIN, the Cabinet of the President, the Secretariat-General (SG) and the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL). This background provides him with a robust expertise of economic policies, a comprehensive experience of negotiation and management functions, as well as a first-hand understanding of the priorities of the Member States under the responsibility of the Directorate (Austria, Germany, Cyprus, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Finland and Slovenia). Luc Tholoniati is currently the Principal Adviser for 'Sustainable Growth and the European Semester' in DG ECFIN, where he leads DG ECFIN teams in the talks with four Member States in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and follows up the activities of economic policy coordination under the European Semester, notably in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal. His prior assignments include the position of economic adviser to the former President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the function of policy assistant to the former Secretary-General of the European Commission, Catherine Day. Giorgio Chiarion Casoni has over 26 years' experience in DG ECFIN, occupying several Heads of Unit positions, among others. The Italian national has a thorough understanding of financial policies along with a strong management experience and ability to work in close cooperation with international, European and national financial institutions. Mr Chiarion Casoni is therefore endowed with the necessary qualities to manage a Directorate fostering investment in Europe in line with the Union's priorities on sustainability, climate change and digitalisation and delivering 'an economy that works for people'. He will also work to support the recovery from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by leveraging the EU budget with other public and private resources. He is currently Head of unit of 'InvestEU implementation' in DG ECFIN where he manages a team responsible for designing and coordinating the set-up of the InvestEU Programme, including relations with implementing partners, new climate tracking, sustainability proofing and risk methodologies. Amongst his many pertinent activities in the past, he managed the unit in charge of institutional relations with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund (EIF) and coordination with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). (*For information: Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578; Claire Joawn - Tel.: +32 229 56859*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fighting terrorist content online: President von der Leyen to deliver video message at Christchurch Call summit on Friday

This Friday, President **von der Leyen** will deliver a video message at the Christchurch Call summit. Hosted by the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, and the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, the meeting will gather Heads of State or Government and tech sector leaders with the objective of stepping up cooperation on addressing terrorist and violent extremist content online. The [Christchurch Call](#) is a commitment by governments and tech companies to eliminate such content online, following the livestreamed terrorist attack against two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2019. The Commission is a founding supporter of the Christchurch Call. Discussions at this year's summit will focus on crisis response, with a view to ensuring timely, consistent and well-coordinated action when responding to crisis situations involving the spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online. Participants will also discuss transparency reporting, necessary to measure the extent of the threat posed by terrorist content online and monitor compliance of measures taken with fundamental rights. They will then reflect on the need to better understand algorithms that promote content online, to evaluate the risks they could pose in terms of radicalisation. In line with the commitments taken under the Christchurch Call, the Commission has acted to fight terrorist and violent extremist content online. The Commission launched the [EU Internet Forum](#) to facilitate cooperation with tech companies on addressing terrorist content online. In 2019, EU Internet Forum participants committed to an EU Crisis Protocol, allowing governments and online platforms to respond rapidly and in a coordinated manner to the dissemination of terrorist content online in the event of a terrorist attack. The Commission is also working at the global level with tech companies under the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. Beyond this voluntary approach, the EU has also agreed binding legislation. New EU rules adopted last month will oblige online platforms to remove terrorist content referred by

Member States' authorities within 1 hour while providing for strong safeguards to ensure the full respect of fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and information. (For more information: Adalbert Jahnz - Tel.: + 32 229 53156; Ciara Bottomley - Tel.: +32 229 69971; Laura Bérard - Tel.: +32 229 55721)

Avenir de Schengen: la Commission encourage le débat politique sur le maintien de la mobilité en temps de crise et le renforcement de la sécurité

Lundi, le 17 mai, la Commission convoquera le deuxième Forum Schengen, réunissant des membres du Parlement européen et les ministres de l'intérieur des Etats membres. L'objectif du Forum est de favoriser la coopération et le dialogue politique et les échanges se concentreront sur le renforcement de la mobilité et de la sécurité au sein de l'espace Schengen sans contrôles aux frontières intérieures. Les résultats des discussions de lundi alimenteront la Stratégie à long terme pour l'avenir de Schengen, qui sera présentée en juin cette année. Faisant le point sur les leçons tirées de la pandémie de coronavirus, les participants se concentreront sur l'amélioration de la coordination des mesures aux frontières en temps de crise et débattront d'alternatives efficaces à la réintroduction des contrôles aux frontières, avec pour objectif de maintenir la libre circulation des personnes et des marchandises au sein de l'espace Schengen. Les autres sujets de discussion comprennent les possibilités d'utiliser nouvelles technologies et innovation pour faciliter la mobilité entre les 26 États de l'espace Schengen. La réunion débutera lundi matin à 10h00 HEC avec une allocution d'ouverture par Margaritis **Schinias**, vice-président chargé de la promotion de notre mode de vie européen, suivie d'interventions de la commissaire chargée des affaires intérieures, Ylva **Johansson**, du ministre de l'administration interne du Portugal, Eduardo Cabrita, et de la Membre du Parlement européen et présidente du groupe d'examen Schengen, Tanja Fajon. Une première réunion du Forum Schengen a eu lieu en [novembre 2020](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Adalbert Jahnz - Tél.: + 32 229 53156; Ciara Bottomley - Tél.: +32 229 69971; Laura Bérard - Tél.: +32 229 55721)

[Eurostat](#): communiqués de presse

*Modified on 12-05-2021, at 12:54

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