



## Daily News 05 / 07 / 2021

Brussels, 5 July 2021

### **Sondage Eurobaromètre: les Européens considèrent que le changement climatique est actuellement le plus grave problème mondial**

Un nouveau [sondage Eurobaromètre](#) publié aujourd'hui montre que les citoyens européens considèrent que le changement climatique est actuellement le plus grave problème mondial. Plus de neuf personnes interrogées sur dix considèrent que le changement climatique est un problème grave (93 %) tandis que près de huit sur dix (78 %) considèrent qu'il s'agit d'un problème très grave. En ce qui concerne les réponses politiques, neuf Européens sur dix (90 %) conviennent qu'il faudrait réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre au strict minimum, tout en compensant les émissions résiduelles avec des puits de carbone afin d'atteindre l'objectif de neutralité climatique de l'Union à l'horizon 2050. Près de neuf Européens sur dix (87 %) estiment qu'il est important que l'Union fixe des objectifs ambitieux afin d'accroître l'utilisation des énergies renouvelables, et un pourcentage identique pense qu'il est important que l'Union apporte son soutien pour améliorer l'efficacité énergétique. Le vice-président exécutif chargé du pacte vert pour l'Europe, Frans **Timmermans**, a déclaré à ce propos: « *En dépit de la pandémie et des difficultés économiques qui frappent les Européens, le soutien en faveur de l'action pour le climat ne faiblit pas. Les Européens sont conscients des risques à long terme que posent les crises du réchauffement climatique et de la biodiversité, et ils attendent du secteur privé, des gouvernements et de l'Union européenne qu'ils prennent des mesures. Les chiffres mentionnés dans le sondage Eurobaromètre sont un cri de ralliement lancé à l'attention des politiciens et du monde des affaires. Ils offrent à la Commission européenne une motivation supplémentaire pour mettre la dernière main à l'acte législatif concernant l'ajustement à l'objectif de 55 %, qui sera présenté dans le courant de ce mois, pour avoir la garantie d'atteindre nos objectifs en matière de climat.* » Le [communiqué de presse](#) est disponible en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Tim McPhie – Tél.: +32 229 58602; Lynn Rietdorf – Tél.: +32 229 74959)

### **Afghanistan: EU mobilises €25 million in humanitarian aid to fight hunger**

The Commission is allocating €25 million in humanitarian funding from its Solidarity Emergency Aid Reserve to fight hunger in Afghanistan. Urgent actions to save lives and livelihoods are required due to a drought that is currently affecting Afghanistan, leaving at least 11 million people in a food crisis, and 3.2 million people in a food emergency. Janez **Lenarčič**, Commissioner for Crisis Management said: "In 2021, half of the population in Afghanistan is expected to suffer from acute food insecurity. The drought affecting the country is worsening an already dire situation with political insecurity and conflict, as well as the current strong third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The food shortage and limited water availability will increase the prevalence of severe malnutrition. In response, the EU is mobilising humanitarian support to help alleviate hunger." The latest EU funding to Afghanistan comes in addition to the EU's initial allocation of €32 million humanitarian aid for Afghanistan in 2021. The funding will support activities that contribute to addressing the increased needs stemming from drought, including the sectors of food assistance, nutrition, health, water-sanitation-hygiene, and support to humanitarian logistics. All EU humanitarian assistance is delivered in partnership with UN agencies, International Organisations, and NGOs. It is provided in line with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, to benefit directly the people in need across the country. The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Balazs Ujvari – Tel.: +32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

### **Trafficking of firearms: Commission launches public consultation to review EU rules on imports and exports of weapons**

The Commission is launching today a [public consultation](#) on the review of [EU rules](#) governing exports, imports and transit of civilian firearms, with the objective to close possible loopholes, which traffickers can use, and to simplify the legal framework for legal traders. All interested parties are

invited to contribute until 11 October 2021. The results of the consultation will feed into the review of the rules, to improve traceability and exchange of information, and to increase the security of export and import procedures. Firearms trafficking feeds organised crime within the EU and breeds political instability in the EU's neighbourhood. With the development of fast parcel delivery and of new technologies, trafficking of firearms is taking new forms to escape controls. At the same time, legal importers and exporters of firearms are faced with a wide variety of different rules across the EU. The initiative to review the current legislation is part of the [EU Action plan on firearms trafficking](#) for the period 2020 to 2025. Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva **Johansson**, has also published a [blog article](#) today encouraging all interested parties to contribute to the consultation. (For more information: Adalbert Jahnz – Tel.: + 32 229 53156; Ciara Bottomley – Tel.: +32 229 69971; Laura Bérard – Tel.: +32 229 55721)

## **NextGenerationEU: European Commission endorses Lithuania's €2.2 billion recovery and resilience plan**

The European Commission has adopted a positive assessment of Lithuania's recovery and resilience plan. This is an important step towards the EU disbursing €2.2 billion in grants under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). This financing will support the implementation of the crucial investment and reform measures outlined in Lithuania's recovery and resilience plan. It will play a key role in enabling Lithuania to emerge stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission assessed the plan based on the criteria set out in the RRF Regulation. The Council will now have, as a rule, four weeks to adopt the Commission's proposals. The RRF is at the heart of NextGenerationEU which will provide €800 billion (in current prices) to support investments and reforms across the EU. A [press release](#), [Q&A](#) and [factsheet](#) are available online. (For more information: Marta Wieczorek – Tel.: +32 229 58197; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

## **Farm to Fork Strategy: 65 companies and associations sign the EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices**

Today, the Commission, alongside industry stakeholders, officially launched the [EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices](#), another deliverable under the Commission's [Farm to Fork Strategy](#). This Code is an essential part of the EU's efforts to increase the availability and affordability of healthy and sustainable food options that help reduce our overall environmental footprint. Executive Vice-President **Timmermans** said: "We need to make our food system sustainable and we need to do it soon. We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions and halt biodiversity loss related to food production, and shape a food system that makes it easier to choose a healthy and sustainable diet. Addressing these environmental, health, and social challenges in our food system require cooperation across the entire food chain and I am encouraged by ambitions of the stakeholders who have already signed up to the EU Code of Conduct." The Code has been developed with EU associations and companies, with active involvement and input from other stakeholders, including international organisations, NGOs, trade unions and trade associations, and together with the European Commission services. Associations and companies in the food sector that sign the code commit to accelerate their contribution to a sustainable transition. With their pledges, they endorse the objectives set out in the Code and encourage similar companies to also participate. More information is available on a [press release](#) and a [questions and answers](#). (For more information: Stefan de Keersmaecker – Tel.: +32 229 84680; Darragh Cassidy – Tel.: +32 229 83978)

## **Feux de forêt: L'UE mobilise un soutien en faveur de Chypre**

Au cours du week-end, Chypre a activé le mécanisme de protection civile de l'UE, demandant un soutien pour lutter contre les incendies de forêt dans le district de Limassol. En réaction immédiate, l'UE a rapidement mobilisé des avions de lutte contre les incendies de rescEU qui ont été déployés rapidement à Chypre. Janez **Lenarčič**, commissaire chargé de la gestion des crises, a déclaré à ce propos: «L'UE est pleinement solidaire de Chypre lors de ces moments difficiles. Je tiens à remercier la Grèce et l'Italie pour leur réaction rapide et leur solidarité concrète. Nos pensées vont à toutes les personnes touchées et aux premiers intervenants qui risquent leur vie pour lutter contre les incendies. Nous sommes prêts à fournir une aide supplémentaire.» En outre, le satellite Copernicus d'urgence de l'UE a été activé pour fournir des cartes d'évaluation des dommages des zones touchées. Le [centre de coordination de la réaction d'urgence](#) de l'Union européenne fonctionnant 24 heures sur 24 et 7 jours sur 7, est en contact permanent avec les autorités chypriotes afin de suivre de près l'évolution de la situation et de fournir toute aide supplémentaire si nécessaire. Un communiqué de presse complet est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Balazs Ujvari – Tél.: +32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi – Tél.: +32 229 69140)

## **State aid: Commission opens in-depth investigation into €190 million Romanian support measures in favour of TAROM**

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess whether Romanian support measures in favour of the airline TAROM would be in line with EU rules on State aid to companies in difficulty. TAROM has received a temporary rescue loan from Romania of approximately €36.7 million, after approval by the Commission under EU State aid rules in [February 2020](#). On 28 May 2021, Romania notified to the Commission a plan for the restructuring of TAROM. EU State aid rules, more specifically the Commission's [Guidelines on rescue and restructuring aid](#), enable Member States to support companies in difficulty, under certain strict conditions. In particular, rescue aid may be granted for a period of up to six months. Beyond this period, either rescue aid must be reimbursed or Member States must notify a restructuring plan to the Commission, for assessment under the State aid rules. At this stage, the Commission has doubts that the proposed restructuring plan and the aid to support it satisfy the conditions of the Guidelines. The Commission's in-depth investigation will in particular examine: (i) whether the proposed restructuring plan is appropriate for addressing TAROM's difficulties and for restoring its long-term viability in a reasonable time frame without continued State aid; (ii) whether TAROM or market operators would sufficiently contribute to the restructuring costs, thus ensuring that the restructuring plan does not overly rely on public funding and that the aid is proportionate; and (iii) whether appropriate measures to limit the distortions of competition created by the aid would accompany the restructuring plan. The Commission will now investigate further to find out whether its initial concerns are confirmed. The opening of an investigation gives Romania and interested third parties the opportunity to submit comments. It does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation. A full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

## **State aid: Commission approves €39.7 million of Italian aid measure to compensate Alitalia for further damages suffered due to coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has found that an Italian aid measure of €39.7 million to support Alitalia is in line with EU State aid rules. This measure aims at compensating the airline for the damages suffered on certain routes due to the coronavirus outbreak during the period between 1 March and 30 April 2021. The restrictions put in place in Italy and other countries to limit the spread of a second and third wave of the coronavirus pandemic have heavily affected Alitalia's operations. As a result, Alitalia incurred significant operating losses until at least 30 April 2021. On 25 June 2021, Italy notified to the Commission an additional aid measure to compensate Alitalia for further damages suffered on certain specific routes from 1 March to 30 April 2021 due to the emergency measures necessary to limit the spread of the virus. The support will take the form of a €39.7 million direct grant, which corresponds to the estimated damage directly caused to the airline in that period according to a route-by-route analysis of the eligible routes. This follows the Commission decisions of 12 May 2021, 26 March 2021, 29 December 2020 and 4 September 2020 approving Italian damage compensation measures in favour of Alitalia, compensating the airline for the damages suffered from 1 to 31 January 2021, 1 November to 31 December 2020, 16 June to 31 October 2020 and 1 March to 15 June 2020 respectively. 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 for damage directly caused by exceptional occurrences. The Commission considers that the coronavirus outbreak qualifies as such an exceptional occurrence, as it is an extraordinary, unforeseeable event having significant economic impact. As a result, exceptional interventions by the Member State to compensate for the damages linked to the outbreak are justified. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the additional Italian damage compensation measure is in line with EU State aid rules. A full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

## **State aid: Commission approves Austrian scheme to support organisers of events affected by the coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved an Austrian scheme to support organisers of events in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. The aim of the scheme is to compensate them for the costs of organising events, scheduled to take place between 1 July 2021 and 31 December 2022, should they be cancelled or significantly restricted as a result of restrictive measures implemented by the Austrian government to limit the spread of the virus. The measure is open to event organisers of all

sizes active in Austria. The damage compensation is limited to a maximum of 80% of the actual net costs of the cancelled events, that is the costs minus any event-related revenue and any amount obtained from insurance, litigation, arbitration or any other source. The Commission found that the scheme is in line with [Article 107\(2\)\(b\)](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). In particular, (i) the scheme will compensate damages that are directly linked to the coronavirus outbreak and to the restrictive measures implemented by the Austrian government, and (ii) the envisaged compensation will 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. More information on the 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.63287 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; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

### **Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into proposed merger of Cargotec and Konecranes**

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess the proposed merger of Cargotec Corporation ('Cargotec') and Konecranes Plc ('Konecranes') under the EU Merger Regulation. The Commission is concerned that the proposed acquisition may reduce competition in the supply of certain container and cargo handling equipment in Europe. At this stage, the Commission is concerned that the transaction may lead to a reduced choice and higher prices for customers in the European Economic Area for certain container and cargo handling equipment in the following product areas: (i) gantry cranes; (ii) horizontal equipment; and (iii) mobile equipment. For each of these types of terminal equipment, the transaction would lead to high combined market shares in already concentrated markets, with limited or even no credible alternative suppliers remaining post-transaction. The Commission will now carry out an in-depth investigation into the effects of the proposed transaction on these markets to determine whether it is likely to significantly reduce effective competition. The Commission now has 90 working days, until 10 November 2021, to take a decision. The opening of an in-depth investigation does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, responsible for competition policy, said: *"Cargotec and Konecranes are two global leaders in the supply of container and cargo handling equipment. We will carefully assess whether the proposed transaction would negatively affect competition in the supply of this equipment, possibly leading to reduced choice and higher prices, to the detriment of European customers."* A full press release is available [online](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Slaney and Linden by ABP**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Slaney of Ireland and Linden of the UK by ABP of Ireland. Slaney and Linden, which are currently jointly controlled by ABP and Fane Valley of the UK, slaughter cattle and ovine animals, process their meat and collect and process animal by-products, in Belgium and Ireland for Slaney, and in the UK for Linden. ABP slaughters cattle and ovine animals, processes their meat and collects and processes associated animal by-products. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because ABP already had joint control of the companies and the change to sole control would have a limited impact on the market. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.10280](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

[Eurostat](#) press releases

**On 1 July, the Spokesperson's Service re-opened the Berlaymont press room to a limited number of journalists. For more information, please see [here](#).**