



Daily News 04 / 08 / 2021

Brussels, 4 August 2021

Libéralisation du régime des visas: la Commission fait rapport sur le respect continu des exigences en la matière par les pays des Balkans occidentaux et du Partenariat oriental

La Commission présente aujourd'hui son [quatrième rapport sur le suivi du régime d'exemption de visa avec l'Albanie, la Bosnie-Herzégovine, le Monténégro, la Macédoine du Nord et la Serbie ainsi qu'avec la Géorgie, la Moldavie et l'Ukraine](#). Le rapport met l'accent sur les mesures prises en 2020 pour donner suite aux recommandations formulées dans le [troisième rapport dans le cadre du mécanisme de suspension de l'exemption de visa](#). Pour les pays qui ont obtenu une exemption de visa depuis moins de sept ans (Géorgie, Moldavie et Ukraine), le rapport fournit également une évaluation plus détaillée des autres mesures prises pour garantir le respect continu des critères. Le rapport conclut que tous les pays concernés continuent de satisfaire aux exigences liées à la libéralisation du régime des visas et ont accompli des progrès dans la mise en œuvre des recommandations de l'année dernière. Parallèlement, le rapport met en lumière les domaines dans lesquels chaque pays doit encore fournir des efforts supplémentaires. Le rapport précise également que la circulation sans obligation de visa continue d'apporter des avantages économiques, sociaux et culturels positifs aux États membres de l'UE et aux pays partenaires. Un [communiqué de presse](#) et des [questions et réponses](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (*Pour plus d'informations : Adalbert Jahnz - Tél. : + 32 229 53156 ; Laura Bérard - Tél. : +32 229 55721*)

Forest fires: EU helps Italy, Greece, Albania and North Macedonia to fight devastating fires

As forest fires continue affecting various regions in the Mediterranean and the Western Balkans, the European Commission is swiftly mobilising support to assist countries in limiting the spread of the fires and protect lives and livelihoods. Two Canadair firefighting airplanes from France are being sent to affected areas in Italy to start firefighting operations today. Two firefighting planes from Cyprus are supporting Greece, on top of a firefighting team to support operations on the ground. Two helicopters to support operations in Albania will be equally dispatched from Czechia and the Netherlands. In addition, Slovenia is sending a team of 45 firefighters to North Macedonia. All help is mobilised through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, with co-funding by the Commission of at least 75 % of transport costs. These deployments come in addition to EU-coordinated firefighting operations that are currently ongoing in Turkey, as well as in Sardinia, Italy at the end of July. Satellite maps from the EU's Copernicus Emergency Management satellite are providing further support to the emergency services to coordinate the operations. The European Union's 24/7 [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) is in constant contact with the civil protection authorities of countries affected by the fires to closely monitor the situation and channel EU assistance. Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez **Lenarčič** said: *"We are working around the clock to send help as fires rage across Europe. I thank Cyprus, Czechia, France, Slovenia and the Netherlands for swiftly deploying firefighting airplanes, helicopters and a team of firefighters to support countries heavily affected by forest fires. At this time as several Mediterranean countries are facing fires, EU Civil Protection makes sure that our firefighting tools in place are used at maximum capacity. This is an excellent example of EU solidarity in times of need."* A full press release is available [online](#). (*For more information : Miriam García Ferrer – Tel: +32 229 99075; Daniel Puglisi – Tel: +32 229 69140*)

Agriculture: Commission adopts measure to increase cash flow to farmers

Today, the European Commission adopted a measure allowing farmers to receive higher advances of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments. This measure will support and increase the cash flow to farmers affected by the COVID-19 crisis and by the impact of adverse weather conditions across the EU. Some regions have been deeply affected by floods, for instance. The measure will allow Member States to pay income support and certain rural development schemes to farmers with a higher level of advances, up to 70% (from 50%) of direct payments and 85% (from 75%) of rural development payments. The safeguards to protect the EU budget apply, so the payments can be disbursed once

[controls and checks](#) have been finalised and as from 16 October 2021 for the direct payments. The European Commission has provided [support to the agri-food sector](#) throughout the COVID-19 crisis through increased flexibility and specific market measures. More information [here](#). (For more information: Miriam Garcia Ferrer – Tel.: +32 229 99075; Thérèse Lerebours – Tel.: +32 229 63303)

Investment Plan for Europe supports research, development and innovation strategy at Spanish company

The European Investment Bank (EIB) will provide €10 million to finance the research, development and innovation (RDI) strategy of Fagor Arrasate, a Mondragón Group cooperative based in the Basque Country, Spain. The project is backed by a guarantee from the [European Fund for Strategic Investments \(EFSI\)](#), the main pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe. The company's RDI plan will focus on driving the development of advanced machinery and digital services to meet the future challenges of the strategic sectors of European manufacturing. A major part of the innovation centres on the development of machinery that will enable car manufacturers to make lighter, more environmentally friendly vehicles, as well as to produce components for electric vehicles. Commissioner for the Economy, Paolo **Gentiloni**, said: "With help from the Investment Plan for Europe and the EIB, Spanish company Fagor Arrasate will invest in new manufacturing technologies and the development of machinery for producing electric vehicles. This is good news for competitiveness and for the green transition in the Spanish automotive sector." The [Investment Plan for Europe](#) has so far mobilised €546.5 billion of investment, of which €63 billion in Spain. The [press release](#) is available online (For more information: Arianna Podestà – Tél.: +32 229 87024; Flora Matthaes – Tel.: +32 229 83951)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique du Guyana La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription du « [Demerara Rum](#) » du Guyana dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Le « Demerara Rum » est une boisson spiritueuse présentant les caractéristiques organoleptiques spécifiques de la canne à sucre, qui est obtenue exclusivement par fermentation et par distillation de mélasse ou d'un substrat à base de canne à sucre. Le « Demerara Rum » a des subtiles notes florales et fruitées accentuées par le processus de distillation, ainsi que des arômes doux de noix, épicés, boisés, végétaux, et terreux. La complexité des saveurs résulte de la méthode de production traditionnelle utilisée et de la teneur spécifique en minéraux des eaux de la région du Demerara, au Guyana. Le « Demerara Rum » est produit dans les basses plaines côtières du Demerara, un comté du Guyana circonscrit par les rivières Boeraserie, à l'ouest, et Abary, à l'est. Le comté de Demerara est situé sur la côte septentrionale de l'Amérique du Sud, au bord de l'océan Atlantique. La spécificité du « Demerara Rum » réside dans la combinaison de nombreux facteurs découlant des conditions agroécologiques de la zone de plantation de la canne à sucre et de l'aire de vieillissement, mais aussi de l'authenticité du procédé de production, qui allie nature, tradition, art et science. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre les 252 indications géographiques de boissons spiritueuses déjà enregistrées dont la liste est disponible dans la [base de données eAmbrosia](#). Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Miriam Garcia Ferrer – Tél.: +32 229 99075; Thérèse Lerebours – Tél.: +32 229 63303)

State aid: Commission approves €430 million Italian scheme to compensate ski lift operators for damages suffered due to coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, a €430 million Italian measure to compensate ski lift operators for the damages suffered due to the restrictive measures introduced by the Italian government to limit the spread of the coronavirus, which prohibited the access of the general public to ski lifts between 4 December 2020 and 30 April 2021. Under the scheme, ski lift operators will be entitled to compensation in the form of direct grants for part of the damages incurred during this period. The Italian authorities will verify that there will be no overcompensation on the basis of the net losses incurred because of the pandemic. 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. The Commission considers that the coronavirus outbreak qualifies as such an exceptional occurrence, as it is an extraordinary, unforeseeable event having a significant economic impact in line with the Article [107\(2\)\(b\)](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). 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 Italian measure

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 measure is in line with EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The measures that the Italian government has had to take to limit the spread of the coronavirus pandemic required ski lift operators to stop their operations, resulting in considerable losses for them. This scheme will enable Italy to compensate ski lift operators for the damage suffered. We will keep working together with Member States to find the best solutions to support companies during these difficult times, in line with EU rules."* A full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

State aid: Commission approves €19.7 million Danish scheme to support cultural institutions affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, an approximately €19.7 million (DKK 148 million) Danish scheme to support 15 Danish cultural institutions affected by the coronavirus outbreak. This scheme complements a [previous measure](#) approved by the Commission on 20 March 2021 ([SA.62035](#)) and concerns only the 15 beneficiaries which requested more than €800,000, compensating them for their operational losses, up to a reasonable profit. The Commission assessed the scheme under EU State aid rules, and in particular [Article 107\(3\)\(d\)](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which enables the Commission to approve State aid granted to promote culture and heritage conservation. The Commission found that the Danish scheme had a genuine cultural objective, was necessary, appropriate, proportionate and did not create excessive negative effects on the proper functioning of the internal market. Therefore, the Commission concluded that the measure is in line with Article 107(3)(d) TFEU. On this basis, the Commission approved the measure under EU State aid rules. The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.62217 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)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control of Światłowód Inwestycje by Orange Polska and APG Asset Management

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control of Światłowód Inwestycje sp. z o.o. ('FiberCo') of Poland by Orange Polska S.A. ('OPL') of Poland and APG Asset Management N.V. ('APG') of the Netherlands. FiberCo will be active in the expansion and building of fiber infrastructure in the less dense areas of Poland. Based on this infrastructure, FiberCo will offer wholesale access services. OPL provides fixed and mobile telecommunications services, broadband and Pay-TV services in Poland, and other telecommunications value added services. APG manages assets for pension funds in various sectors, including education, government construction, energy and utility companies, and infrastructure investments. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, since the parties' combined and individual market shares remain minimal both for horizontal and vertical relationships under all potential market delineations. 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.10295](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Bergman Clinics by Triton

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Bergman Healthcare Clinics B.V. ('Bergman Clinics') of the Netherlands by Triton group of Jersey. Bergman Clinics operates focus clinics throughout the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Germany offering plannable medical care in the fields of orthopedics, ophthalmology, gynecology, aesthetic medicine, cardiology, gastroenterology, dermatology and vascular medicine. One of Bergman Clinics' portfolio companies, Memira AB, is active in the provision of ophthalmological services across the Nordic countries. Triton is a private equity fund investing primarily in medium-sized businesses headquartered in Central and Northern Europe, with a particular focus on four core sectors, namely Business Services, Industrials, Consumer and Health. One of Triton's portfolio companies, Aleris Group AB, is active in the provision of ophthalmological services in both Sweden and Norway. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given its limited impact on the relevant markets. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#)

website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.10255](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liban : Le haut représentant/vice-président Josep Borrell participe à la Conférence sur le Liban

Aujourd'hui, 4 août, le haut représentant/vice-président Josep **Borrell** participera, au nom de la présidente de la Commission européenne Ursula **von der Leyen**, et aux côtés du président du Conseil européen, Charles Michel, à la « Conférence de soutien au peuple libanais », organisée par le président français Emmanuel Macron et la vice-secrétaire général des Nations Unies, Amina Mohammed. Un an après l'explosion meurtrière qui a frappé Beyrouth, la conférence est l'occasion de réaffirmer le soutien de l'UE au Liban et sa pleine solidarité avec le peuple libanais qui doit encore faire face aux conséquences de l'explosion. L'UE reste à l'avant-garde des efforts déployés pour aider le Liban et a mobilisé un total de 170 millions d'euros depuis août 2020 pour répondre aux besoins immédiats et faire face aux conséquences de l'explosion. Lors de la conférence, le haut représentant/vice-président **Borrell** annoncera un financement humanitaire supplémentaire de 5,5 millions d'euros pour aider le Liban à lutter contre la pandémie de COVID-19. Le commissaire à la gestion des crises, Janez **Lenarčič**, a souligné dans [ce communiqué de presse](#) que ce financement soutiendra le déploiement de la vaccination afin de vacciner le plus grand nombre possible de personnes au cours des prochains mois et d'éviter une augmentation des infections. Il permettra également de répondre aux besoins critiques en matière de santé, y compris le soutien mental et psychosocial lié à la pandémie de la COVID-19. Comme l'a rappelé le haut représentant/vice-président dans une [déclaration](#) faite à l'occasion de l'anniversaire de l'explosion du port de Beyrouth, les familles des victimes et le peuple libanais attendent toujours des réponses de la part des dirigeants politiques à la crise actuelle dans le pays. Les dirigeants politiques libanais ont l'occasion de regagner la confiance du peuple libanais, de mettre leurs différends de côté et de former rapidement un gouvernement doté d'un mandat solide pour faire face aux crises économique, financière et sociale actuelles, mettre en œuvre des réformes attendues depuis longtemps, comme le demande également le FMI, et préparer les élections de 2022. Il est crucial que les autorités libanaises obtiennent des résultats, sans plus attendre, sur l'enquête en cours sur les causes de l'explosion. (Pour plus d'informations: Nabila Massrali – Tél.: +32 229 88093 ; Miriam Garcia Ferrer – Tél.: +32 229 99075; Xavier Cifre Quatresols –Tél.: +32 229 73582 ; Daniel Puglisi – Tél.: +32 229 69140)

[Liste des points prévus](#) à l'ordre du jour des prochaines réunions de la Commission

Veuillez noter que ces informations sont données sous réserve de modifications.

[Eurostat](#): communiqués de presse

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

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