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Syria crisis: EU will host Brussels V Conference 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region' on 29 and 30 March

On 29 and 30 March, the European Union will virtually host the fifth Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region'. On the 10th anniversary of the Syrian uprising, the situation in the country and the region remains highly critical, as the conflict still continues. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the deterioration of the neighbouring economies over the last year further exacerbate the dire humanitarian situation inside Syria and the conditions for Syrian refugees. The aim of the Brussels Conferences is to further rally the international community behind UN-led efforts to achieve a lasting political solution to the Syria crisis in line with UN Security Council resolution 2254 and to mobilise the necessary financial assistance for Syrians and their host communities in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, among others. On 29 March, the Day of Dialogue will allow to pursue dialogue between civil society, refugee-hosting countries, the EU and the UN. Other Syria-related conference side events will take place the week before. The Ministerial Conference will take place on 30 March. More information on the Conference is available in the [press release](#). (For more information: Peter Stano - Tel.: +32 229 54553; Ana Pisonero - Tel.: +32 229 54320; Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578)

Safer Internet Day 2021: Un meilleur internet pour les enfants et les jeunes

Demain, le 9 février 2021, se déroule la [Journée pour un internet plus sûr](#). Lancée en 2004 et promue par le réseau de centres pour un internet plus sûr financé par l'UE dans les États membres, la journée est célébrée en ligne dans plus de 170 pays du monde. Le thème «Ensemble pour un meilleur internet» est un appel à participer pour faire de l'internet un endroit plus sûr et de meilleure qualité, en particulier pour les enfants et les jeunes. Mariya **Gabriel**, commissaire à l'innovation, à la recherche, à la culture, à l'éducation et à la jeunesse, a déclaré: « *Les jeunes doivent se sentir en sécurité et autonomes lorsqu'ils naviguent dans le monde en ligne afin de pouvoir profiter pleinement du monde numérique. Avec le plan d'action européen pour l'éducation numérique, nous plaçons l'éducation numérique au centre du paysage éducatif européen, en promouvant la culture numérique pour lutter contre la désinformation en ligne, en soutenant les éducateurs et les enseignants et en garantissant un apprentissage en ligne de qualité.* » Thierry **Breton**, commissaire chargé du marché intérieur, a déclaré: « *La crise du coronavirus nous a obligés à déplacer la plupart de nos activités quotidiennes en ligne et lorsque nous laissons nos enfants parcourir l'internet, nous voulons qu'ils soient protégés. Nous sommes déterminés à faire en sorte que la transformation numérique profite à tous en toute sécurité. Ce qui est illégal hors ligne devrait être illégal en ligne. Nous attendons désormais du secteur de la technologie qu'il joue sans tarder son rôle en faveur d'un internet plus sûr dans le respect des règles de l'UE.* » La [directive sur les services de médias audiovisuels](#), récemment révisée, impose aux plateformes de partage de vidéos en ligne de restreindre l'accès des enfants aux contenus préjudiciables et [les règles pour les plateformes numériques](#), proposées en décembre 2020, prévoit des obligations spécifiques pour les très grandes plateformes afin de faire face aux risques importants pour le bien-être des mineurs. En outre, la plateforme «[Better Internet for Kids](#)», plateforme paneuropéenne de ressources dans le cadre de la [stratégie européenne pour un internet mieux adapté aux enfants](#), fournit aux enfants, à leurs parents et à leurs éducateurs une multitude d'informations et de ressources pertinentes. Afin de mieux protéger les enfants en ligne, la Commission a également présenté l'année dernière une [stratégie de l'UE pour une lutte plus efficace contre les abus sexuels commis sur des enfants](#), mettant l'accent sur la coopération avec l'industrie, le renforcement de la prévention, le renforcement de l'action répressive ainsi que la mise en œuvre et l'élaboration d'un cadre juridique solide. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke — Tél.: + 32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou — Tél.: + 32 229 83583; Charles Manoury — Tél.: + 32 229 13391)

Égalité : la Commission ouvre une consultation publique sur la lutte contre la violence à l'égard des femmes et la violence domestique

Aujourd'hui, la Commission européenne a lancé une consultation publique sur les meilleurs moyens de lutter contre la violence sexiste et domestique. Les points de vue recueillis lors de la consultation alimenteront une initiative législative, annoncée [dans la stratégie en faveur de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes](#) attendue pour la fin de cette année. La présidente de la Commission européenne, Ursula **von der Leyen** a placé la lutte contre les violences sexistes parmi ses principales [priorités politiques](#) et a réitéré son engagement en faveur de l'initiative législative dans [la Lettre d'intention sur l'état de l'Union 2020](#). La violence à l'égard des femmes et des filles est l'une des formes les plus persistantes de discrimination fondée sur le sexe et constitue une violation des droits humains en Europe. Dans l'UE, 33% des femmes sont victimes de violences physiques et / ou sexuelles. La violence domestique - contre les femmes et d'autres victimes telles que les enfants, les hommes et les personnes âgées - a augmenté en raison des mesures de confinement liées à la pandémie de COVID-19. La consultation publique rassemblera les points de vue d'un large éventail de parties prenantes - telles que des membres du grand public, des universitaires, des représentants d'entreprises et d'employés, des ONG, des organisations de médias et des autorités publiques. Les personnes souhaitant participer à la consultation publique peuvent remplir un questionnaire qui sera disponible [en ligne](#). De plus amples informations sont disponibles en ligne sur [les travaux de la Commission pour mettre fin à la violence sexiste](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand - Tél. + 32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko - Tél.: + 32 229 63444; Jördis Ferroli - Tél.: + 32 229 92729)

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme: €328 million to support 1,630 experienced researchers in Europe and beyond

The Commission announced today the results of the 2020 [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions \(MSCA\)](#) call for Individual Fellowships. These grants are funded through the EU's [Horizon 2020](#) programme for research and innovation and are awarded to excellent, experienced researchers to work on projects in all research fields while receiving training and supervision to enhance their skills and boost their career. A total of €328 million will finance 1,630 excellent post-doctoral researchers working at universities and research organisations in Europe and all over the world, as well as in industry and small and medium-sized businesses. The fellows will work on projects addressing global challenges such as climate change, health and migration as well as in areas relevant to the [EU missions](#) including cancer, smart cities, soil and healthy oceans. Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya **Gabriel**, said: *"I warmly congratulate the 1,630 exceptional researchers who have succeeded, despite tough competition, to obtain the prestigious Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship. Today more than ever, we need high-level research skills to predict, detect and tackle global challenges but also to communicate scientific evidence across disciplines and to the wider community. I am excited to see that projects will contribute to the green and digital transitions, healthy ageing and inclusive societies, and to get insights on the next challenges for which we need to be prepared. I am also delighted to see that through the successful pilot 'Widening Fellowships', we were able to grant 46 additional Fellowships to excellent researchers in European countries that are currently less represented in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions."* This was the last call of MSCA Individual Fellowships under the [Horizon 2020](#) programme for research and innovation. In [Horizon Europe](#), the MSCA will continue to be an essential part of the European Research Area, supporting excellent post-doctoral researchers to enhance their creative and innovative potential, acquiring new skills through advanced training, international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral research. More information on the Individual Fellowships is available [here](#). (For more information: Sonya Gospodinova - Tel.: +32 229 66953; Sinéad Meehan-van Druten - Tel.: +32 229 84094)

Fighting crime: Commission launches public consultation on environmental crime

The Commission has today launched a [public consultation](#) on environmental crime. The results of this public consultation will feed into the review of the EU rules on environmental crime. The Directive ([Directive 2008/99/EC](#)) requires Member States to treat activities that breach EU environmental legislation, such as illegal shipment of waste, trade in endangered species or in ozone-depleting substances, as criminal offences. Didier **Reynders**, Commissioner for Justice, said: *"The EU is a front-runner in developing a comprehensive environmental policy. We are determined to continue setting global standards for the protection of the planet. A green transition means that we have to protect our environment against crime and our natural resources against exploitation. I invite everyone to take part in this consultation and share their contribution. Together, we can do more to protect wildlife and improve the quality of life of all citizens."* A legislative proposal for a revised Directive is expected by the end of 2021. An evaluation of the Directive, carried out in 2019-2020,

concluded that room for improvement remains when it comes to reducing environmental crime and prosecuting offenders. The revision addresses those issues, by making use of the EU's reinforced competence in the field of criminal law under the Lisbon Treaty as well as ensure better coordination of the rules with other green initiatives. The public consultation will gather views from individuals and groups with interest and expertise in the matter, like members of the general public, academics, businesses and NGOs. The public consultation is open from 5 February until 4 May 2021. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand — Tel. + 32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko — Tel.: + 32 229 63444; Jördis Ferrolí — Tel.: + 32 229 92729)

State aid: Commission acknowledges implementation by Denmark of a € 255.5 million Danish scheme to compensate mink farmers affected by coronavirus measures

The European Commission has published an information note on the implementation by Denmark of a € 255.5 million (a DKK 1.9 billion) Danish scheme to support farmers active in the mink fur sector that were affected by the extraordinary measures that the Danish government had to take to limit the spread of the coronavirus outbreak. The Danish authorities consider that the scheme falls within the scope of the Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation No 702/2014 ("ABER"). The Commission took note of Denmark's intention and published the scheme on its website for information purposes within 24 hours of receipt from Denmark. This means that the scheme can be immediately implemented and does not have to be notified to and approved by the Commission under EU State aid rules. The support will take the form of direct grants consisting in advance payments covering a part of the skin value of the culled minks and the costs of the culling. Aid under the scheme can be granted until 30 June 2023, in line with the conditions set out in Article 26 of the ABER, which enables Member States to grant aid to cover the costs for the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases under certain conditions without the need of prior approval by the Commission. In line with standard EU State aid rules, schemes covered by block exemptions are not assessed by the Commission. Such assessment and the granting of aid under block exempted schemes lies within the responsibility of the Member State. More information on the actions taken by the Commission to address the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic can be found [here](#). The information sheet submitted to the Commission will be made available under the case number SA.61782 in the [State aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website. (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Obton Group by Obton Invest and FSN Capital VI

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Obton Group by Obton Invest, both of Denmark, and FSN Capital VI of the UK. Obton Group provides specialised alternative investment opportunities in photovoltaic solar projects and real estate to individual private investors via its subsidiaries. Obton Invest is the holding company Obton Group, through which it provides alternative investment opportunities. FSN Capital VI is an investment fund managed by FSN Capital, a private equity advisor active in the Northern European region which provides investment opportunities to institutional investors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the very limited overlap between the activities of the companies. 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.10105](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of NBS by TA Associates and the SSCP Funds

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of NBS Group ('NBS') of the UK by TA Associates Management L.P. ('TA Associates') of the U.S. and Stirling Square Capital Partners Jersey AIFM Limited ('SSCP Funds') of the UK. NBS provides Software-as-a-Service based platforms to architecture, engineering and construction professionals. TA Associates is focused on targeted sectors within technology, healthcare, financial services, consumer, and business services. The SSCP Funds invest through three private equity funds, in unquoted equity and equity-linked instruments. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the companies' limited combined market positions resulting from the proposed transaction. 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.10100](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears creation of the joint venture Daimler Truck Fuel Cell by Volvo and Daimler

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a new joint venture called Daimler Truck Fuel Cell, based in Germany, by Aktiebolaget Volvo ('Volvo') of Sweden and Daimler Truck AG, part of the Daimler group ('Daimler') of Germany. The joint venture will be active in the development, production, sales and after sales of hydrogen fuel cell systems (FCS) primarily for heavy-duty trucks and, to a smaller extent, for stationary applications. Volvo is globally active amongst other things in the manufacture and sale of on- and off-highway trucks, buses, construction equipment and marine, on-highway and industrial engines. Daimler globally develops, manufactures and distributes automotive products, mainly passenger cars, trucks, vans and buses. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the absence of relevant horizontal overlap between the activities of the companies. In addition, despite Volvo and Daimler's strong position in the manufacture and supply of heavy-duty trucks, the transaction is unlikely to lead to competing FCS manufacturers being excluded from the market for the manufacture and supply of FCS, in view of the existence of other truck manufacturers in the European Economic Area and globally and the potential demand for FCS from manufacturers of other vehicles and applications. The operation was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.9857](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of sole control of Resins & Functional Materials businesses of Koninklijke DSM N.V. by Covestro

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control of the Resins & Functional Materials businesses of Koninklijke DSM N.V. of the Netherlands by Covestro AG of Germany. The acquired businesses are active in the supply of coating resins and crosslinkers. Coating resins are used to produce coatings that provide a film with decorative, protective or other functional effects on a surface. Crosslinkers serve as hardeners of coatings. Covestro is also active in the supply of coating resins and crosslinkers, as well as in the production of various chemicals used for the production of coating resins and crosslinkers. The proposed transaction results in a number of horizontal overlaps in coating resins and crosslinkers as well as of vertical overlaps between the manufacture of coating resins and crosslinkers and the production of various chemicals used for this manufacture. In each of the markets under consideration, the combined market shares of the companies are limited and several other well established players are present. Therefore the Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns. 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.10006](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Viking by CPPIB, TPG and the Torstein Hagen trust

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Viking Holdings Ltd ('Viking') of Bermuda by Canada Pension Plan Investment Board ('CPPIB') of Canada, TPG Capital ('TPG') of the U.S. and The Torstein Hagen Interest in Possession Settlement ('the Torstein Hagen trust') of the Cayman Islands. Viking is currently solely controlled by the Torstein Hagen trust. Viking operates ocean and river cruises throughout the world, including Europe. CPPIB is a global investment management organisation that invests the funds transferred to it by the Canada Pension Plan. It principally invests in public and private equities, real estate, infrastructure, credit investments and fixed income investments. TPG is a private investment firm that manages a family of funds that invest in a variety of companies through acquisitions and corporate restructurings. The Torstein Hagen trust indirectly controls Viking and does not have any business activities that generate revenues other than those of Viking. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because of the limited impact it would have on the market. 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.10082](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of Faerch by APMH Invest

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Faerch Group A/S ('Faerch') by APMH Invest A/S ('APMHI'), a wholly owned subsidiary of A.P. Møller Holding A/S ('APMH'), all three of Denmark. Faerch is active in the manufacture and distribution of plastic packaging for the food industry. APMHI is active in fund management focussing on shipping, oil exploitation and land based industries. APMH is the controlling shareholder of A.P. Møller-Maersk A/S group, an integrated transport and logistics company. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise competition no concerns, given that the companies are not active in the same business areas. 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.10117](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

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

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

[Eurostat](#): communiqués de presse

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