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REACT-EU: Commission approves €2 billion of additional resources for the recovery in Italy, Spain, Luxembourg and Romania

The Commission has granted €2 billion to Italy, Spain, Luxembourg and Romania following the modification of two [European Regional Development Fund](#), one [European Social Fund \(ESF\)](#) and one [Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived](#) Operational Programmes (OP) under the [Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories in Europe](#) (REACT-EU). In Italy, the national OP 'Governance and Institutional Capacity' will receive a total of €1.2 billion. Of this sum, €761 million will go towards buying 68 million doses of vaccines against the coronavirus. In the Southern regions, authorities will use €374 million to hire new public healthcare workers and cover the costs of extra hours worked by workers currently in the system. €108 million will help strengthen the administrative capacity of national and regional authorities, including in the healthcare system. In Spain, 'Comunidad Valenciana' will receive additional resources of €690 million to provide, amongst others, working capital to the most affected Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, and to reinforce health, social services and investments in basic infrastructure for citizens, including in the health and education sectors. Luxembourg will receive €69 million to support large-scale coronavirus testing and the acquisition of vaccines, and investments in sustainability such as the electrification of the national bus network. In Romania, €56 million will be invested to provide material support for disadvantaged groups, such as hot meals, assistance to disadvantaged children with school supplies and to disadvantaged mothers with essential kits for their newborn babies. REACT-EU is part of [NextGenerationEU](#) and provides €50.6 billion additional funding (in current prices) over the course of 2021 and 2022 to Cohesion Policy programmes. (For more information: Vivian Loonela – Tel.: +32 229 66712 and Veerle Nuyts – Tel.: +32 229 96302)

Protecting journalists and rights defenders: Commission asks for views on measures against abusive litigation

Today, the Commission has launched a public consultation on [EU action against abusive litigation targeting journalists and rights defenders](#) (Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation -SLAPP). The consultation will feed into the upcoming initiative against SLAPP, to be presented by the Commission, as announced in the [European Democracy Action Plan](#). Vice-President Věra Jourová, said: "Daphne Caruana Galizia had 47 abusive law suits known as SLAPP at the time of her assassination. Journalists and rights defenders should be the watchdogs of our democracies, not legally harassed for keeping in check those in power. The public consultation will help us to understand what we need to do to protect them." Commissioner for Justice, Didier Reynders, added: "SLAPP is a threat to democratic values and fundamental rights. SLAPPs misuse legal and judiciary systems to censor, intimidate and silence journalists and rights' defenders. The Commission's initiative will address this threat and help ensure the proper functioning of the checks and balances of a healthy democracy." The anti-SLAPP initiative is part of the [European Democracy Action Plan](#), which noted that such practices are increasingly used across many Member States, in an environment where hostile activity against journalists is growing. Citizens, journalists, Member States, NGOs, civil society, judges, legal professionals are invited to express their views. The public consultation is available [here](#) and will be open until 10 January 2022. Recently the Commission adopted a [Recommendation on safety of journalists](#) and it will continue its actions to protect media freedom and pluralism with its work on a new European Media Freedom Act as announced by [President von der Leyen in 2021 State of the Union](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko - Tel.: +32 229 63444; Jördis Ferroli - Tel.: +32 229 92729)

High Representative/Vice-President Borrell concludes his visit to Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia

On Monday, High Representative/Vice-President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep

Borrell, concluded his first mission to the Gulf region, during which he visited visiting Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In Qatar, he met, among others, with [Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani](#), and discussed about [current challenges](#), especially on Afghanistan and the key role played by Qatar in the evacuations and the safe delivery of humanitarian support. The High Representative also announced the opening next year of an EU Delegation in Doha, as well as the signature of a bilateral Agreement on Civil Aviation. In the [United Arab Emirates](#), High Representative **Borrell** met with Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior and International Cooperation, with whom he discussed on the EU-UAE partnership, security challenges and climate action. Josep **Borrell** also stressed EU's readiness to support the UAE's domestic transformation and economic diversification. This includes [Dubai EXPO](#), where the High Representative visited several EU Member States pavilions, focused on sustainability, mobility and inclusivity. While in Abu Dhabi, the High Representative participated in the [2021 World Policy Conference on Global Governance](#) as one of the main speakers. In the margins of the event, he held meetings, including with [Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama](#), with whom he discussed the upcoming Western Balkans Summit. In Saudi Arabia, High Representative **Borrell** started his programme by visiting the headquarters of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) where he discussed with [Secretary General, Nayef bin Falah Al-Hajraf](#), on the need to keep working together on regional stability. He then held bilateral talks with Saudi Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Energy. The talks focused on bilateral relations, regional cooperation and global issues, such as green transition, climate change and energy transition. Human rights were also part of the discussions following the [first Dialogue on Human Rights](#) held in Brussels earlier that week. A Cooperation Arrangement to reinforce EU-Saudi ties was also signed. Finally, while in Riyadh, the High Representative held also two meetings on the ongoing conflict in Yemen with [UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg](#) and [President of Yemen Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi](#), stressing EU's continuous support to the UN and others to achieve a ceasefire. (For more information: Peter Stano – Tel.: +32 229 54553; Elisa Castillo Nieto – Tel.: +32 229 63803)

Le pont aérien humanitaire de l'UE fournit une aide médicale vitale à l'Afghanistan

Samedi 2 octobre, un vol aérien humanitaire de l'UE a livré à Kaboul plus de 25 tonnes métriques de fret médical vital pour faire face à la situation humanitaire catastrophique en Afghanistan. En raison du conflit en cours et de la sécheresse récente, jusqu'à la moitié de la population afghane dépend de l'aide humanitaire. En réponse, ce vol de pont aérien financé par l'UE permet aux organisations humanitaires de fournir des produits de santé et de nutrition essentiels à ceux qui en ont besoin. Janez **Lenarčič**, commissaire chargé de la gestion des crises, s'est exprimé en ces termes: « *Au cours des dernières semaines, la situation humanitaire en Afghanistan s'est encore détériorée à un rythme alarmant, avec plus de 18 millions de personnes ayant un besoin désespéré d'aide humanitaire. Ce vol aérien humanitaire financé par l'UE permet à l'UE de fournir une aide vitale en matière de santé et de nutrition, malgré les contraintes actuelles en matière de transport et de logistique dans le pays.* » Le fret vital se compose d'équipements médicaux, notamment de kits de soins pour la COVID-19 et la prise en charge des traumatismes. Ceux-ci sont fournis par l'UNICEF, Save the Children et l'Organisation mondiale de la santé. Il s'agit du deuxième vol de pont aérien financé par l'UE à Kaboul cette semaine. Le premier vol est arrivé mercredi 29 septembre, fournissant plus de 32 tonnes métriques d'équipements chirurgicaux et de fournitures médicales qui sont essentiels pour assurer la continuité de l'approvisionnement d'une assistance médicale de base vitale en Afghanistan. Plus de détails figurent dans le [communiqué de presse](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Balazs Ujvari – Tél.: + 32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi – Tél.: +32 229 69140)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Infinitas by NPM Capital

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control of Infinitas Learning Holding B.V. ('Infinitas') by NPM Capital N.V., both of the Netherlands. Infinitas sells educational solutions and materials that provide content in line with the mandatory school curriculum or professional accreditation. NPM Capital holds investments in portfolio companies active in a variety of sectors, including automotive, food, healthcare industry and education services. In addition, NPM Capital's subsidiary FWM provides gamified educational supporting materials outside the mandatory school curriculum in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the absence of horizontal overlaps and vertical relationships 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.10363](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsioni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Réunions de l'Eurogroupe et des ministres des affaires économiques et financières, les 4-5 octobre

Le vice-président exécutif **Dombrovskis** et le commissaire **Gentiloni** représenteront la Commission européenne lors de la réunion de l'Eurogroupe qui a lieu aujourd'hui à Luxembourg. Le directeur de l'Agence de coopération des régulateurs de l'énergie (ACER), Christian Zinglersen, informera l'Eurogroupe de l'évolution récente des prix de l'énergie. Les ministres poursuivront avec une discussion sur la situation macroéconomique. Les ministres feront le point sur la mise en œuvre des priorités de la zone euro dans les plans de reprise et de résilience sur la base d'une présentation de la Commission. De plus, les ministres identifieront les thèmes prioritaires à examiner lors des discussions de l'Eurogroupe de l'année prochaine sur la croissance et l'emploi. L'Eurogroupe discutera également du [11ème rapport](#) de surveillance renforcée pour la Grèce. Lors de la réunion de l'Eurogroupe en configuration de l'union bancaire, le président du conseil de surveillance de la BCE, Andrea Enria, informera les ministres des missions de surveillance effectuées dans le cadre de la surveillance bancaire de la BCE. Pour conclure, Elke König, présidente du Conseil de résolution unique (CRU ou Single Resolution Board), informera l'Eurogroupe sur les activités récentes du CRU. Le commissaire **Gentiloni** représentera la Commission lors de la [conférence de presse](#) qui aura lieu après la réunion. Le commissaire **Gentiloni** et la commissaire **McGuinness** représenteront la Commission lors de la réunion des ministres de l'économie et des finances qui aura lieu demain à Luxembourg. Les ministres discuteront de la mise en œuvre de la facilité pour la reprise et la résilience et devraient adopter une décision d'exécution du Conseil relative au plan pour la reprise et la résilience de Malte. Les ministres discuteront également des enseignements tirés du Semestre européen 2021, et d'une éventuelle voie à suivre. Les ministres débattront de l'état d'avancement des travaux concernant SURE, l'instrument européen de soutien temporaire à l'atténuation des risques de chômage en situation d'urgence, lancé dans le cadre de la réaction de l'UE à la pandémie de COVID-19. Les ministres continueront de préparer la réunion des ministres des finances et des gouverneurs des banques centrales du G20, ainsi que les réunions annuelles du FMI, prévues du 12 au 14 octobre 2021. Les ministres devraient également approuver des conclusions sur le financement de l'action climatique en vue de la 26ème Conférence des Parties à la Convention-cadre des Nations unies sur les changements climatiques (COP26), qui se tiendra à Glasgow. Les ministres discuteront de la révision des règles de l'UE en matière d'assurance (connues sous le nom de « solvabilité II ») suite à la [présentation](#) par la Commission la semaine dernière. La Commission fournira également des informations sur l'état d'avancement de la mise en œuvre de la législation sur les services financiers. Le commissaire **Gentiloni** représentera la Commission lors de la [conférence de presse](#) qui suivra la réunion. (Pour plus d'informations: Veerle Nuyts – Tél.: +32 229 96302; Daniel Ferrie – Tél: +32 229 86500; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64976; Aikaterini Apostola – Tél.: +32 229 87624)

Commissioner Breton participates in HealthTech Innovation Days

Today, Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for the Internal Market, participates in the [HealthTech Innovation Days](#) in Paris, where it was announced that the Venture Centre of Excellence has brought together venture capital funds with more than €1.7 billion of life science investment capabilities. Since 2020, [EIT Health](#) – a knowledge and innovation community of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) – and the [European Investment Fund](#) (EIF) are partnering to operate the [Venture Centre of Excellence](#), a public-private co-investment programme empowering financing for European health start-ups to accelerate their innovation for citizens. The programme is now fully operational, with start-ups able to benefit from the investments of its members as well as EIT Health's vetting process and connection to services in support of their fundraising. Commissioner **Breton** said: "Now is the time to mobilise private funds for health innovation in Europe. The Venture Centre of Excellence programme will serve as a flywheel for investments into Europe's most innovative life science start-ups. Last year, the European Commission announced its €150 million anchor investment from the European Fund for Strategic Investments. Today, I am pleased to see venture capital funds and private entities with €1.7 billion in life science investment capabilities joining this important initiative." The funds from the Venture Centre of Excellence will begin flowing into European life science start-ups via direct investments and co-investments made between them. The group of initial members will grow over the coming months to reach its full size, representing a

large portfolio of more than 200 SMEs across all major life sciences areas: therapeutics, med-tech, digital health and diagnostics, as well as a wide range of maturity stage and geographic expertise. More information is available in this [EIF press release](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

[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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