



Daily News 11 / 02 / 2021

Brussels, 11 February 2021

EU emergency number 112 marks 30th anniversary

'112', the common EU number for emergency communications has been saving lives for 30 years, helping Europeans travel safely and reach emergency services in any EU country through the single EU number. In 2019, Europeans called '112' close to 150 million times, which represents 56% of all emergency calls, while in the last 10 years, some 1.5 billion calls were made to the number. Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for the internal market, said: "112 has been keeping Europeans safe, allowing them to easily reach emergency services wherever they are in the EU. All citizens should be aware of the single EU number and Member States should ensure that the latest available technology is used to efficiently respond to callers in distress." Behind the 112 number, operators and national Public Safety Answering Point systems must ensure that emergency communications are effective and properly handled. The Commission supports the technological upgrade of emergency communications. For example, the implementation of Advanced Mobile Location (AML) was financed in 10 Member States through the [HELP112](#) and [HELP112 II](#) projects. In 10 years, AML could potentially save more than 10,000 lives in the EU by more precisely pinpointing the caller's location. When a caller dials 112 from their smartphone, AML uses the phone's functionalities and the EU's [Galileo satellite navigation system](#), to accurately and efficiently transmit the caller's location to emergency services. AML is available in 19 Member States, Iceland and Norway. The Commission urges all Member States to quickly implement this life-saving technology, in line with the [European Electronic Communications Code](#). The Commission continues to closely monitor the implementation of the emergency number 112 in Member States, through regular [reports](#). More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

Prévisions économiques de l'hiver 2021: Après un hiver difficile, la lumière au bout du tunnel

L'Europe reste en proie à la pandémie de COVID-19. La recrudescence du nombre de cas, couplée à l'apparition de nouvelles souches plus contagieuses du coronavirus, a contraint de nombreux États membres à réinstaurer des mesures de confinement ou à les durcir. D'autre part, le lancement de programmes de vaccination dans toute l'Union européenne permet d'être prudemment optimiste. Selon les [prévisions économiques de l'hiver 2021](#), l'économie de la zone euro connaîtra une croissance de 3,8 % tant en 2021 qu'en 2022. Quant à l'économie de l'UE, sa croissance devrait être de 3,7 % en 2021 et 3,9 % en 2022. Les économies de la zone euro et de l'UE devraient retrouver leurs niveaux de production d'avant la crise plus tôt que ne le prévoyaient les [prévisions économiques de l'automne 2020](#), principalement grâce à une dynamique de croissance plus vigoureuse qu'anticipé pour le second semestre 2021 et l'année 2022. Après avoir affiché une forte croissance au troisième trimestre 2020, l'activité économique s'est contractée à nouveau au quatrième trimestre, lorsqu'une deuxième vague de la pandémie a déclenché de nouvelles mesures de confinement. Ces mesures étant toujours en place, l'économie de l'UE comme celle de la zone euro devraient se contracter au premier trimestre 2021. La croissance économique devrait reprendre au printemps et s'intensifier en été, au fur et à mesure de l'avancement des programmes de vaccination et du relâchement des mesures de confinement. La reprise devrait aussi être soutenue par l'amélioration des perspectives pour l'économie mondiale. Un [communiqué de presse](#) dans toutes les langues et les [prévisions économiques de l'hiver 2021](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations : Marta Wieczorek – Tél.: +32 229 58197; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64976)

New EU programme to support readiness for vaccination efforts in Eastern Partnership countries with WHO

Today, the European Union in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) launched a new €40 million programme to provide critical assistance to ensure safe and effective vaccination in the

six Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. This programme will strengthen local preparedness and readiness for the effective receipt and administering of vaccines, including those from COVAX and the vaccine sharing mechanisms with EU Member States. The programme includes key logistical support for the vaccine supply chain management, training of health managers and medical staff, and vaccination data and safety monitoring, among others. Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér **Várhelyi**, said: *"With this new programme that we launch today in partnership with the WHO, the EU delivers on its commitment to support our Eastern Partners to fight the health crisis. Acting together now will also allow us to work rapidly on the region's sustainable socio-economic recovery. Today's programme comes in addition to the €1 billion of EU assistance mobilised so far to address the health pandemic and support the longer term socio-economic recovery of the region."* More information is available in the [press release](#) and in the [project factsheet](#). You can find more details on the EU's response to the coronavirus pandemic in the Eastern Partnership [here](#). (For more information: Ana Pisonero – Tel.: +32 229 54320; Zoi Muletier – Tel.: +32 229 94306)

Consumer protection: AliExpress commits to bringing terms and practices in line with EU consumer rules

The Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM), working closely with the Commission and the European network of [national consumer protection \(CPC\) authorities](#), has obtained commitments from [AliExpress](#) to ensure compliance with EU consumer rights. The Commission and several European consumer organisations had brought to the attention of consumer protection authorities, a number of unfair terms and practices by the online market place, which enables traders mainly from China to sell goods to consumers worldwide. The changes include the respect of the right of withdrawal and legal guarantees, for example for faulty goods, also by its listed traders. In addition, the online marketplace will improve transparency on the ranking of offers and the presentation of prices, in particular by informing consumers, in a prominent way, that additional costs linked to customs clearance may apply. Didier **Reynders**, Commissioner for Justice, said: *"Online shopping is developing even faster than before the pandemic. We have to protect our consumers and make sure that all sellers active on the European market respect our rules. I welcome the efforts made by AliExpress to ensure this also for their business partners."* In addition, AliExpress committed to making their General Terms and Conditions clearer for consumers as required under EU law, by no later than 1 May 2021. You can find more information in the ACM's press release (in [Dutch](#) and [English](#)) and [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand — Tel. + 32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko — Tel.: + 32 229 63444; Jördis Ferroli — Tel.: + 32 229 92729)

Lutte contre les abus sexuels contre des enfants en ligne : La Commission lance une consultation publique en vue de préparer une nouvelle législation et un éventuel centre européen

La Commission lance aujourd'hui une [consultation publique](#) sur la lutte contre les abus sexuels concernant des enfants en ligne, abordant les contenus illicites et la sollicitation d'enfants à des fins sexuelles. Les autorités nationales, régionales et locales, les organisations de la société civile, les entreprises et les particuliers sont invités à apporter leur contribution jusqu'au 15 avril. Les résultats de la consultation informeront la proposition à venir de la Commission pour des règles claires, complètes et de long terme sur la lutte contre les abus sexuels concernant des enfants en ligne, ainsi que la création éventuelle d'un centre européen de prévention et de lutte contre les abus sexuels commis contre des enfants tant en ligne qu'hors ligne. Ces initiatives s'inscrivent dans le cadre de la [stratégie de l'UE pour une lutte plus efficace contre les abus sexuels commis contre des enfants](#) et comprendront des garanties détaillées visant à garantir la responsabilité, la transparence et le plein respect des droits fondamentaux, en particulier le droit à la liberté d'expression, la protection des données à caractère personnel et de la vie privée, ainsi que les droits des enfants et des victimes. Afin de mettre en place une passerelle jusqu'à ce que ces règles complètes soient en place, la Commission promeut un accord rapide entre le Parlement européen et le Conseil sur un [règlement provisoire](#) garantissant que les fournisseurs de services de communications en ligne puissent continuer à détecter et signaler volontairement les abus sexuels commis contre des enfants en ligne et à supprimer les contenus à caractère pédopornographique. La lutte contre les abus sexuels commis sur des enfants figure au premier rang des priorités de la Commission. La commissaire chargée des affaires intérieures, Ylva **Johansson**, a publié aujourd'hui un [article de blog](#) qui encourage toutes les parties intéressées à contribuer à la consultation publique. (Pour plus d'informations: Adalbert Jahnz — Tél. + 32 229 53156; Ciara Bottomley — Tél.: + 32 229 69971; Laura Bérard — Tél.: + 32 229 55721)

Défis en matière de cybersécurité liés à l'adoption de l'intelligence artificielle pour la conduite autonome

Un rapport publié aujourd'hui par le Centre commun de recherche de la Commission et l'Agence de l'UE pour la cybersécurité (ENISA) examine les risques en matière de cybersécurité liés à l'intelligence artificielle (IA) dans les véhicules autonomes et formule des recommandations pour les atténuer. Le rapport préconise une approche de sécurité dès la conception dans le développement des fonctionnalités d'IA dans les véhicules autonomes, où la cybersécurité devient un élément central de la conception des véhicules. Mariya **Gabriel**, commissaire à l'innovation, à la recherche, à la culture, à l'éducation et à la jeunesse a ainsi déclaré: « *Les véhicules autonomes ne peuvent atteindre leur potentiel en termes de réduction des accidents de la route que s'ils sont en mesure de faire face aux risques en matière de cybersécurité. Je salue ce rapport et j'encourage les constructeurs automobiles, les décideurs politiques et les chercheurs à travailler main dans la main pour donner suite à ses recommandations pratiques afin de garantir la sécurité des futurs véhicules autonomes.* » Thierry **Breton**, commissaire chargé du marché intérieur, a dit: « *La conduite autonome, les voitures connectées, les véhicules électriques et la mobilité partagée seront des moteurs essentiels de l'industrie automobile dans les années à venir. Nous devons veiller à ce que ces innovations soient sûres et fiables dès la conception. Avec les États membres, nous mettons en place un cadre solide pour prévenir les cybermenaces et y faire face — notamment une nouvelle stratégie de cybersécurité de l'UE, une proposition de révision de la directive SRI, la boîte à outils de sécurité 5G de l'UE, le cadre européen de cybersécurité, et d'autres encore.* » Juhan **Lepassaar**, directeur exécutif de l'Agence de l'UE pour la cybersécurité a déclaré: « *Lorsqu'un véhicule autonome en situation d'insécurité franchit la frontière d'un État membre de l'UE, il en va de même de ses vulnérabilités. La sécurité ne devrait pas être considérée comme une conséquence positive, mais plutôt comme une condition préalable au déploiement fiable des véhicules sur les routes européennes.* » Le rapport recommande des évaluations systématiques de la sécurité et des risques des composants de l'intelligence artificielle avant et tout au long du processus de développement. Il plaide également en faveur de politiques de sécurité dans le domaine de l'intelligence artificielle et d'une culture de la sécurité, dans le cadre desquelles tous les acteurs participant au développement des produits sont suffisamment compétents en matière de cybersécurité et travaillent de concert avec l'objectif commun de création d'un produit sûr. De plus amples informations sont disponibles [ici](#) (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke — Tél.: +32 229 58615; Sinéad Meehan — van Druuten — Tél.: +32 229 84094)

Joint Research Centre analysis reveals divergent population growth, decline and ageing across Europe

Today, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has published a new [report](#) on the Demographic Landscapes of EU territories, moving beyond traditional country-level analysis to explore Europe's demographic change in detail, right down to individual neighbourhoods. The report finds that Europe's population is getting older but also, that not all places are ageing equally. Findings also show that the gap between regions of population growth and regions of population decline is set to widen in the coming decades. Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka **Šuica**, said: "This report on the Demographic Landscape of EU Territories provides the insights and tools necessary for us to better understand demographic change in Europe and to tailor our policies to the new realities on the ground. It helps us to capture the diversity of regional dynamics, which we will use to better target our initiatives in response to the new challenges we are all facing." Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, responsible for the Joint Research Centre, Mariya **Gabriel**, said: "This report draws on demographic expertise at the Commission's Joint Research Centre, and is a welcome contribution to fostering effective policies to counteract economic or demographic decline. Demography is not only relevant for a strong European economy, but also for the functioning of our democracies." The report reveals that young people moving, for work or studies, are having a major impact on demographic change, with some regions thriving and others lagging behind. [EU Cohesion policy](#), and [innovation policies](#) targeting regions, can help address territorial imbalances by providing services and economic opportunities so that currently depopulated areas become more attractive places to live. The Commission has recently adopted a [Green Paper](#) and launched [a public consultation](#) to discuss possible ways to anticipate and respond to the socioeconomic impacts of Europe's ageing population. This latest report from the Joint Research Centre adds valuable insights on the territorial dimension of demographic change and the challenges and opportunities presented and feeds into the work on the long-term vision for rural areas, which the Commission will present in June. The JRC press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 +32 229 58615; Sinéad Meehan - van Druuten - Tel.: +32 229 84094)

Investment Plan for Europe supports impact lending fund investing in a sustainable European economy*

With a contribution from the European Investment Fund (EIF), Tikehau Capital, an alternative asset management and investment group, has raised around €100 million in the first closing for its investment platform focused on impact lending. The EIF investment is backed by the [European Fund for Strategic Investments \(EFSI\)](#), the main pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe. This investment will support Tikehau Capital's impact lending fund which aims at helping companies to move towards more sustainable operations from a climate, innovation and social inclusion perspective and encouraging companies to positively contribute to at least two out of five targeted Social Development Goals as defined by the United Nations. Commissioner for the Economy, Paolo **Gentiloni**, said: *"I am glad that with support from the Investment Plan for Europe, the EIF has invested in the Tikehau's impact Lending fund, which focuses on creating a more inclusive and sustainable economy. The fund will make available new financing for European SMEs and contribute to promoting climate action, innovative growth and social inclusion – important values that are at the heart of our European economy as well"*. The [Investment Plan for Europe](#) has so far mobilised €546.5 billion of investment across the EU. The press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Marta Wiczorek – Tel.: +32 229 58197; Flora Matthaes – Tel.: +32 229 83951)

Ententes et abus de position dominante: la Commission accepte les engagements offerts par Aspen de réduire de 73 % les prix de six médicaments anticancéreux dont le brevet est arrivé à expiration pour répondre à ses préoccupations quant à une tarification excessive

La Commission européenne a rendu les engagements offerts par Aspen juridiquement contraignants en vertu des règles de l'Union en matière de pratiques anticoncurrentielles. Aspen doit réduire en moyenne de 73 % les prix qu'elle pratique en Europe pour six médicaments anticancéreux essentiels. En outre, l'entreprise doit garantir pendant une longue période la continuité de l'approvisionnement en ces médicaments dont le brevet est arrivé à expiration. L'analyse, par la Commission, des données comptables d'Aspen a montré qu'après les augmentations de prix, Aspen a systématiquement engrangé des bénéfices très élevés grâce à ses ventes de ces médicaments en Europe, tant en termes absolus qu'en comparaison avec le niveau de bénéfices d'entreprises similaires du secteur. La Commission craint fortement que le comportement d'Aspen puisse constituer une infraction aux règles de concurrence de l'UE qui, dans certaines conditions, interdisent d'imposer des prix excessifs aux clients. Aspen a cherché à répondre aux préoccupations de la Commission en proposant une série d'engagements. En [juillet 2020](#), la Commission a consulté les parties prenantes afin de vérifier si les engagements proposés étaient de nature à supprimer ses préoccupations en matière de concurrence. La Commission a constaté que les engagements définitifs d'Aspen offrent une solution rapide, globale et durable aux problèmes de concurrence qu'elle avait identifiés et les a donc rendus juridiquement contraignants. Les engagements resteront en vigueur pendant dix ans. Margrethe **Vestager**, vice-présidente exécutive chargée de la politique de concurrence, a déclaré: *« À la suite de la décision prise aujourd'hui, Aspen doit réduire de manière drastique ses prix dans toute l'Europe pour six médicaments qui sont essentiels pour traiter certaines formes graves de cancers du sang, dont le myélome et la leucémie. Certains patients, y compris des enfants en bas âge, dépendent de ces médicaments pour leur traitement. Les engagements offerts par Aspen permettront aux systèmes de santé européens d'économiser plusieurs dizaines de millions d'euros et garantiront la disponibilité de ces médicaments essentiels. La décision prise aujourd'hui adresse un signal fort aux autres entreprises pharmaceutiques occupant une position dominante, leur rappelant qu'elles ne doivent pas se livrer à des pratiques tarifaires abusives visant à exploiter nos systèmes de santé. »* Le [communiqué de presse](#) et [Questions et Réponses](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Arianna Podesta – Tél.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tél.: +32 229 90526)

State aid: Commission publishes additional State aid guiding template on support to digitalisation of news media under the Recovery and Resilience Facility

The European Commission has today published an additional State aid [guiding template](#) to assist Member States in the design of their national recovery and resilience plans in line with EU State aid rules, with respect to support to the digitalisation of news media. This follows the publication of eleven State aid guiding templates in [December 2020](#). Under the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#), each national Recovery and Resilience plan will have to earmark a minimum level of 20% of expenditure to support the digital transition. Supporting the digital transformation of news media is essential in order to develop the viability of the sector and support the long-term development of online media and electronic publishing. The Commission's [Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2021](#) underlines that particular attention should be paid to supporting sectors which play a key role for our

democracies, especially the media sector, where support should be provided in a way that respects and promotes media freedom and pluralism. The guiding template, like the other guiding templates, is a technical document which is intended to provide sector-specific guidance as to when (i) support does not involve State aid, and therefore prior notification to the Commission is not necessary; (ii) State aid would be involved, but no notification is necessary because it falls under a block exemption; and (iii) State aid would be involved and a notification is necessary, with reference to the main applicable State aid rules. Under the guiding template, projects for the digitalisation of news media that can receive aid should be focused on developing editorial content for electronic publishing, or on developing new solutions for electronic publishing and for attracting attention to and consumption of electronically published content, or concern innovative business models for digital publishing. Member States can use the dedicated mailbox and hotline set up by the Commission for queries on this and other guiding templates. *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)*

State aid: Commission approves €35 million Portuguese scheme to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Azores region in context of coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved a €35 million Portuguese scheme to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises with head offices or permanent establishments in the region of the Azores in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme, called "Apoiar.PT Açores", is open to companies from sectors most severely affected by the economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). Under the scheme, the public support will take the form of direct grants. The scheme will be open to companies that have experienced a 25% fall in turnover in the first three quarters of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. The aid will correspond to 20% of the lost turnover, with a maximum amount of €7,500 for micro companies, €40,000 for small companies and €100,000 for medium-sized ones. The Commission found that the Portuguese 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; and (ii) the aid will be granted before 30 June 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 set out in 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.61758 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; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Telepass by Partners Group and Atlantia

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Telepass S.p.A. of Italy, by Partners Group AG together with its affiliates ('Partners Group'), of Switzerland and Atlantia S.p.A., of Italy. Telepass is active in the provision of electronic tolling services in Europe and, in particular, in Italy. Partners Group is a global and private investment management company active in the areas of private equity, private real estate, private infrastructure and private debt. Atlantia is a holding company active mainly in the toll motorway and airport infrastructure sectors in France, Italy, Poland and Spain. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns, because of its limited impact on the market structure. 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.10049](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of joint control of Recipharm by EQT, Zentricity and Cajelo

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control of Recipharm AB of Sweden by EQT Fund Management S.à.r.l. ('EQT') of Luxembourg, Zentricity Holding AB ('Zentricity') of Sweden and Cajelo Invest Ltd ('Cajelo') of Cyprus. Recipharm provides contract development and manufacturing organization ('CDMO') services, as well as packaging and logistics services to the pharmaceutical industry, globally. EQT is an investment

company active worldwide. Certain of EQT's portfolio companies provide CDMO services and supply finished dose pharmaceuticals ('FDPs'), care product cosmetic ingredients, and chemicals. Zentricity is an investment company focusing on pharmaceutical companies primarily in Sweden. Cajelo is an investment company. The Commission assessed the overlaps which arise between the companies' product offers. In particular, the Commission assessed the horizontal overlaps with respect to the CDMO services. It also assessed the vertical relationships with respect to the provision of CDMO services upstream and the supply of FDPs and care products downstream, as well as in the distribution of chemicals and cosmetic ingredients upstream and in the provision of CDMO services downstream. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns, since there would be no change in market dynamics, given the low market shares of all of the companies concerned in all of the markets under consideration. 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.10004](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

[Eurostat](#) press releases

*Updated on 11-02-2021, at 16:00

MEX/21/527