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Ebola: coordination européenne d'une livraison immédiate d'équipements médicaux de protection en Guinée

Suite à la résurgence du virus Ebola en République de Guinée, le gouvernement guinéen a sollicité de l'assistance par l'intermédiaire du Mécanisme de protection civile de l'Union européenne. A travers ce mécanisme, la France envoie plus de 500 kits de protection contre le virus Ebola contenant des combinaisons, masques et gants pour le personnel médical intervenant en première ligne dans la lutte contre le virus. L'UE coordonne l'expédition de ces équipements. Le Commissaire chargé de la gestion des crises, Janez **Lenarčič**, a déclaré : « *L'UE est déterminée à aider les autorités guinéennes à contenir ce virus mortel et montrer de la solidarité avec le peuple guinéen, comme elle l'a fait lors de l'épidémie de 2014-2016 dans la région et, par la suite, également en République démocratique du Congo. Je remercie la France d'avoir mis la solidarité européenne en action. L'UE est prête à fournir une assistance supplémentaire par l'intermédiaire de ses instruments humanitaires d'urgence, en fonction des besoins en Guinée et dans les pays limitrophes, tout en continuant à soutenir le système de santé du pays.* » L'UE reste en contact étroit avec les autorités nationales et les acteurs de la réponse en soutien aux actions gouvernementales, notamment avec les partenaires ONG, le Mouvement de la Croix Rouge, et les agences des Nations unies telles que l'Organisation mondiale de la santé pour suivre l'évolution de la situation et apporter une réponse rapide et adaptée. (Pour plus d'informations: Balazs Ujvari — Tél.: + 32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi — Tél.: + 32 229 69140)

Coronavirus : EU sends personal protective equipment to Moldova

Following Moldova's request for assistance through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#), Romania has offered various items of personal protective equipment to assist the country in its fight against the coronavirus pandemic. The shipment consists of 1,500,000 surgical masks, 100,000 FFP3 masks, 100,000 protective suits and 100,000 gloves. Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**, said: “*The pandemic knows no borders. This is why the European Union and the Member States are committed to help their neighbours in the fight against the pandemic. I am grateful to Romania for their solidarity with Moldova and sending much needed protective equipment.*” This comes in addition to earlier deliveries of personal protective equipment and ventilators from Czechia earlier this month and personal protective equipment and disinfectant from Austria and Poland in 2020. The EU coordinates and co-finances the transport costs of these deliveries via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 30 countries have received assistance in the form of medical or personal protective equipment, through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. (For more information: Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi - Tel.: +32 229 69140)

New EU project to support readiness for vaccination efforts and resilient health systems in the Western Balkans

The European Union in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched a new regional project worth over €7 million to support safe and effective vaccination of the populations across the Western Balkans. This project will help to prepare the region for the effective reception and administration of COVID-19 vaccines, including those received from COVAX and through the EU vaccine sharing mechanism with EU Member States. It will also help improve the region's resilience against health emergencies, and support it in moving towards sustainable funding for universal health care. Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér **Várhelyi**, commented: “*With this new project to support vaccination campaigns in the Western Balkans in partnership with the WHO, the EU continues to deliver on its commitment to support our partners in dealing with the pandemic since its start. The project comes on top of our €70 million package to support access to vaccines for the region and to procure the necessary equipment for the campaigns.*” More information is available in [the press release](#), the [factsheet on the EU's response to COVID-19](#) and the

[Commission Communication](#) on the support to the Western Balkans in tackling COVID-19 and post-pandemic recovery. (For more information: Ana Pisonero – Tel.: +32 229 54320; Zoi Muletier – Tel.: +32 229 94306)

European Citizens' Initiative: The Commission grants further extension to citizens' initiatives due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Today, the Commission decided to grant an additional three-month extension for the registered European Citizens' Initiatives due to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The extension concerns initiatives, which are currently collecting statements of support. A first six-month extension was already granted in [July 2020](#) and the second three-month extension in [December 2020](#). European Citizens' Initiatives are one of the unique tools through which European citizens can directly influence the future of the EU and call for new laws. The text of the Commission Decision is available [online](#) and more information available on the [European Citizens' Initiatives website](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel. + 32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: + 32 229 63444; Jördis Ferroli – Tel.: + 32 229 92729)

REUNION DU COLLEGE: La Commission définit une politique commerciale ouverte, durable et ferme pour l'Union européenne

La Commission européenne a présenté hier sa stratégie commerciale pour les années à venir. Reflétant le concept d'autonomie stratégique ouverte, elle s'appuie sur la volonté de l'UE de contribuer à la reprise économique en soutenant les transformations écologique et numérique, ainsi qu'en mettant à nouveau l'accent sur le renforcement du multilatéralisme et la réforme des règles du commerce mondial pour qu'elles soient équitables et durables. Si nécessaire, l'UE adoptera une position plus ferme dans la défense de ses intérêts et de ses valeurs, y compris au moyen de nouveaux instruments. Pour relever l'un des plus grands défis de notre époque et répondre aux attentes des citoyens européens, la Commission place la durabilité au cœur de sa nouvelle stratégie commerciale, à l'appui de la transformation fondamentale de l'économie de l'UE pour qu'elle devienne neutre pour le climat. Cette stratégie comprend une série d'actions principales qui visent à renforcer les règles du commerce mondial et à contribuer à la reprise économique de l'UE. S'exprimant sur la nouvelle stratégie, Valdis **Dombrovskis**, vice-président exécutif et commissaire chargé du commerce, a déclaré : « *Les défis auxquels nous sommes confrontés rendent nécessaire une nouvelle stratégie pour la politique commerciale de l'UE. Nous avons besoin d'un commerce ouvert et fondé sur des règles pour contribuer au rétablissement de la croissance et à la création d'emplois après la pandémie de COVID-19. La politique commerciale doit aussi soutenir pleinement les transformations écologique et numérique de notre économie et piloter les efforts déployés à l'échelle mondiale pour réformer l'OMC. Elle devrait également nous donner les moyens de nous défendre lorsque nous sommes confrontés à des pratiques commerciales déloyales. Nous suivons une démarche ouverte, stratégique et ferme, qui met l'accent sur la capacité de l'UE de faire ses propres choix et de façonner le monde qui l'entoure par son rôle de chef de file et par son engagement, à la lumière de nos intérêts stratégiques et de nos valeurs.* » Plus d'informations sont disponibles dans le [communiqué de presse](#) et les [questions et réponses](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Miriam Garcia Ferrer – Tél.: +32 229 99075; Sophie Dirven – Tél.: +32 229 67228)

State aid: Commission approves amended Italian scheme to support companies in Southern Italy affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has found the modification of an existing Italian direct grants scheme to support companies operating in regions of Southern Italy affected by coronavirus outbreak to be in line with the [Temporary Framework](#). The original scheme was approved by the Commission on [6 October 2020](#) under case number [SA.58802](#) and prolonged on 10 December 2020 under case number [SA.59655](#). On 13 February 2021 Italy notified the following modifications to the Commission: (i) the prolongation of the duration of the scheme until 31 December 2021; (ii) the increase of the estimated total budget of the scheme allocating €4.8 billion for 2021 (€1.5 billion budget for 2020); (iii) the tightening of the eligibility requirements for beneficiaries, excluding further categories (among which entities transformed into joint stock companies as a result of proceedings of privatisation, non-profit organisations, and ecclesiastical bodies); and (iv) the increase of the maximum amounts of aid per company, up to €270,000 per company active in the fishery and aquaculture sector (previously €120,000), and €1.8 million per company active in the other eligible sectors (previously €800,000). As the original scheme, the modified measure will provide for the reduction of the social security contribution for private employers operating in the South of Italy. The Commission concluded that the scheme, as modified, remains 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 numbers SA.61940 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; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Canyon by GBL

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Canyon Bicycles GmbH ('Canyon') of Germany by Groupe Bruxelles Lambert SA ('GBL') of Belgium. Canyon develops, produces and sells various types of bicycles, and distributes related bicycle parts, accessories and apparel, mainly in Europe and the U.S. GBL is an investment company holding interests in global companies operating in various sectors, mainly in Europe. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because GBL and the companies it controls are not active in the same product and geographic markets as Canyon, or in product markets which are upstream or downstream from those markets. 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 case number [M.10125](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission adopts final measures to preserve the divestment of former Aleris plant in Belgium following Novelis' acquisition of Aleris

The European Commission has adopted final measures to preserve the divestment of the former Aleris plant in Duffel, Belgium, by Novelis under the EU Merger Regulation. To obtain clearance of its acquisition of Aleris in [2019](#), Novelis offered to divest the plant in binding commitments but failed to close the sale within the deadline set in those commitments, despite extensions granted. As a result of the breach of this condition of the Commission's 2019 clearance decision, the decision and the commitments became inapplicable. The Commission therefore adopted provisional interim measures to preserve competition. Novelis later sold the Duffel plant, as authorised by the Commission in compliance with the interim measures. Following the sale of the Duffel plant to Liberty, the Commission considers that final measures are necessary to ensure that the sale remains effective, and that the plant's viability and competitiveness are protected. Therefore, pursuant to Article 8(4) (b) of the Merger Regulation and in order to restore as far as possible the situation that existed before the implementation of the Novelis/Aleris transaction, the Commission has ordered a number of measures, with which Novelis must comply. These measures include, among others, a non-reacquisition measure preventing Novelis from reacquiring all or part of the Duffel plant, as well as a non-solicitation measure preventing Novelis from soliciting the Duffel plant's customers or standing orders. They also reproduce other safeguards and obligations typically required under the commitments, which in this case became inapplicable. The decision also provides for transitional agreements, measures on the trustee's mandate, as well as on investment funding for the benefit of the plant. Finally, daily penalty payments are foreseen in the event Novelis fails to comply with the measures. A full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisitions of joint control over EKPO by ElringKlinger and Plastic Omnium New Energies and of sole control over EKAT by Plastic Omnium New Energies

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control of EKPO Fuel Cell Technologies ('EKPO') of Germany by ElringKlinger of Germany and Plastic Omnium New Energies of Belgium, and the acquisition of sole control of ElringKlinger Fuelcell Systems Austria ('EKAT') of Austria by Plastic Omnium New Energies. The proposed acquisitions are interdependent and form part of a single overall concentration. EKPO is active in the research and development, design, manufacturing and sale of hydrogen fuel cell stacks, fuel cell stack components and assembled fuel cell stack modules primarily for the automotive industry. ElringKlinger is an automotive supplier that specialises in lightweight solutions, e-mobility, sealing and shielding technology, tooling and engineering services. Plastic Omnium New Energies is an automotive supplier offering exterior components, fuel storage and delivery systems, high pressure storage

systems and depollution systems. EKAT is specialised in the development of hydrogen fuel cell system solutions. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisitions would raise no competition concerns, because the horizontal overlaps and vertical links between the companies are very limited, and a number of strong players will remain in the relevant markets. The concentration 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.10067](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President von der Leyen participates in the launch of Global Citizen's new campaign for global recovery

On Tuesday, 23 February, President **von der Leyen** will announce the European Commission's support to international advocacy group [Global Citizen](#)'s new campaign, 'A Recovery Plan for the World'. This yearlong campaign is built around five priorities: 1) ending COVID-19 for all; 2) ending the hunger crisis; 3) resuming learning everywhere; 4) protecting the planet; and 5) promoting equity for all. The launch event will be live on [EBS](#) from at 5pm to 6pm CET. It will feature addresses by Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Director General of the World Health Organization, Hugh Evans, CEO, Global Citizen, Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa, John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, Hugh Jackman, Actor, Singer, Producer and Global Citizen Ambassador, Declan Kelly, Member of the Global Citizen Board and Billie Eilish, Singer-Songwriter and activist. Last year, the European Commission and Global Citizen joined forces in the fight against the coronavirus. The [Global Goal: Unite for Our Future](#) campaign helped raise significant funding worldwide for universal access to COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines, especially for low and middle-income countries. Find out more on the Commission's [Coronavirus Global Response](#) website. (For more information: Dana Spinant – Tel.: +32 229 90150; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

[CALENDAR](#) – Commissioner's weekly activities

[Eurostat](#) press releases

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