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Nouvelles étiquettes énergétiques de l'UE applicables à partir du 1er mars 2021

Afin d'aider les consommateurs de l'UE à réduire leurs factures énergétiques et l'empreinte carbone, une toute nouvelle version de l'étiquette énergétique de l'UE, largement reconnue, sera applicable dans tous les magasins et chez les détaillants en ligne à partir d'aujourd'hui, le 1^{er} mars 2021. Les nouvelles étiquettes concerneront dans un premier temps quatre catégories de produits: réfrigérateurs et congélateurs, lave-vaisselle, lave-linge et téléviseurs (et autres moniteurs externes). De nouvelles étiquettes pour les ampoules électriques et les lampes à sources lumineuses fixes arriveront le 1er septembre, puis d'autres produits suivront dans les années à venir. Le changement le plus important consiste à revenir à une échelle de A à G plus simple. Cette échelle, plus stricte, est conçue de manière à ce que très peu de produits soient dans un premier temps capables d'obtenir la note A, laissant une marge pour l'inclusion future de produits moins énergivores. La commissaire à l'énergie, Kadri **Simson**, a déclaré : « *L'étiquette énergétique originale a été un succès: elle a permis aux ménages européens d'économiser plusieurs centaines d'euros par an en moyenne et a incité les entreprises à investir dans la recherche et le développement. Jusqu'à fin février, plus de 90 % des produits étaient étiquetés A+, A++, ou A+++.* Le nouveau système sera plus clair pour les consommateurs et permettra aux entreprises de continuer à innover et à proposer des produits encore moins énergivores. Il nous aidera également à réduire nos émissions de gaz à effet de serre. » Un certain nombre de nouveaux éléments figureront sur les étiquettes, notamment un QR code vers une base de données à l'échelle de l'UE, qui permettra aux consommateurs de trouver plus de détails sur le produit. Un [communiqué de presse](#), un [document questions-réponses](#) et du [matériel audiovisuel](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Tim McPhie - Tél.: +32 229 58602; Ana Crespo Parrondo - Tél.: +32 229 81325)

Yemen: €95 million in EU humanitarian aid for people threatened by conflict and famine

The European Commission is allocating €95 million in humanitarian support to address the most pressing needs of people in Yemen amid record highs of child malnutrition, an imminent threat of famine and renewed fighting. More than 2 million children as well as over 1 million pregnant women and mothers are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2021, while escalating hostilities are forcing thousands of families to leave their households. The new funding was announced by the Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**, at the [high-level pledging event for Yemen](#) on 1 March co-hosted by the United Nations, Sweden and Switzerland. Commissioner **Lenarčič** said: "The EU does not forget the dire situation of people in Yemen who are once again on the brink of famine after bearing the brunt of the world's worst humanitarian crisis. New EU funding will be essential in maintaining life-saving aid for millions of people, exhausted after a disastrous year marked by fighting, COVID-19 and further economic collapse. Parties to the conflict need to facilitate the access of humanitarian organisations to those most in need and avoid further civilian suffering. Now more than ever it is crucial that International Humanitarian Law and unrestricted access to those in need are upheld." In 2021, EU humanitarian aid will continue to provide food, nutrition and healthcare, financial assistance, water and sanitation, education and other lifesaving support to the conflict-displaced and those in severe need. The press release is available [online](#). (For information: Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi - Tel.: +32 229 69140)

EU Cohesion policy: Over €60 million to improve Dubrovnik's water supply and treatment system in Croatia

Today, the European Commission has approved an investment of more than €60 million from the [Cohesion Fund](#) to upgrade the water supply and wastewater collection and treatment infrastructures in and around Dubrovnik, Croatia. Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa **Ferreira**, commented: "This project will not only provide inhabitants with the essential access to clean water and reduced water losses but it will also boost the commercial and touristic attractiveness of the

area, thus improving the local socio-economic development. Once more, Cohesion policy is about delivering concrete solutions and additional benefits to local challenges." Works on water supply mainly cover Dubrovnik, but also include districts supplied by the Zaton-Orašac-Elafiti and Mioševići-Visočani systems, while the wastewater section of the project covers Dubrovnik agglomeration alone. The project will contribute to ensure compliance with the [EU Drinking Water](#), urban wastewater treatment, groundwater and [Water Framework Directives](#). More details on EU funded investments in Croatia are available on the [Open Data Platform](#). (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Veronica Favalli - Tel.: +32 229 87269)

EU Cohesion policy: investment spending in projects accelerated in 2020 up to €251 billion

Member States have accelerated their Cohesion policy investments in 2020 by €70 billion, increasing their total cohesion expenditure to €251 billion. This corresponds to 52% of the planned €482 billion in the 2014-2020 programming period. At the same time, the financial allocation to projects reached the maximum of available funding. These data are shown on the updated [ESIF Open Data Platform](#) ([#ESIFOpenData](#)) where key indicators on the implementation of Cohesion policy by theme, country and fund are easily accessible via [an interactive tool](#). Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa **Ferreira**, said: "These indicators show that we are on the right track in the Cohesion policy implementation and that by 2023, the end of the programming period, we will be able to make the most of the resources available under Cohesion policy." Sweden, Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Portugal and the Netherlands are the best performers in terms of spending, while Hungary, Czechia, Malta, Latvia and Estonia have the highest rates of Cohesion policy investments allocated to projects. The acceleration in spending was also made possible thanks to the flexibility that the Commission has granted to Member States for the reallocation of resources for emergency measures to fight the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, the EU helped Member States purchase 2.4 billion items of personal protective equipment, 4,500 ventilators, create 5,000 extra hospital bed spaces, and supply 3.7 million COVID-19 tests. Furthermore, businesses received €11.1 billion, while workers and vulnerable groups, €3.4 billion. More details on the [Coronavirus Dashboard](#). (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Veronica Favalli - Tel.: +32 229 87269)

EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement enters into force

Today, 1 March, the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement has entered into force, having been ratified by Armenia, all EU Member States, and the European Parliament, and having been provisionally applied since 1 June 2018. This Agreement provides a framework for the EU and Armenia to work together in a wide range of areas, and plays an important role for the modernisation of Armenia, in particular through legislative approximation to the EU. High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep **Borrell**, said: "The entry into force of our Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement comes at a moment when Armenia faces significant challenges. It sends a strong signal that the EU and Armenia are committed to democratic principles and the rule of law, as well as to a wider reform agenda. Across political, economic, trade, and other sectoral areas, our Agreement aims to bring positive change to people's lives, to overcome challenges to Armenia's reforms agenda." Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér **Várhelyi**, underlined that: "While these are trying times for Armenia, the European Union continues to stand by the Armenian people. The entry into force of the bilateral EU-Armenia agreement on 1 March will allow us to strengthen our work on the economy, connectivity, digitalisation and the green transformation as priority areas. These will have concrete benefits for the people and are key for socio-economic recovery and the longer-term resilience of the country. In the current turbulent days, maintaining calm and respect for democracy and constitutional order are key." More information on the entry into force is available in a [full press release](#), as well as in dedicated factsheets [on the Agreement](#) and on [EU-Armenia relations](#). (For more information: Peter Stano – Tel.: +32 229 54553; Ana Pisonero – Tel.: +32 229 54320; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359; Zoi Muletier – Tel.: +32 229 94306)

Consumer rights: European Commission reports on the Package Travel Directive

Today, the Commission has adopted a report on the [Package Travel Directive](#), taking stock of its application since it has entered [into force in July 2018](#). The report looks into how Member States transposed the Directive into national law and assesses it in the context of the 2019 Thomas Cook bankruptcy and the challenges that have emerged during the COVID-19 crisis. Commissioner for Justice, Didier **Reynders**, said: "The coronavirus pandemic has led to massive travel disruptions worldwide, demonstrating how important it is to have rules in place that protect travellers in all

circumstances. It is our ambition to ensure that our rules remain protective, effectively enforced, and fit for the times we live in." As announced in its [New Consumer Agenda](#), and building on the findings of today's report, the Commission will carry out a deeper analysis by 2022, further evaluating whether the current regulatory framework for package travel continues to ensure robust and comprehensive consumer protection at all times. Today's report is [online here](#). Further information can be found on the [Package Travel Directive webpage](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko - Tel.: +32 229 63444; Jördis Ferroli - Tel.: +32 229 92729)

La Commission et les autorités de protection des consommateurs lancent une enquête sur les pratiques des compagnies aériennes en matière d'annulation

Le [réseau de coopération en matière de protection des consommateurs \(CPC\)](#) et la Commission européenne ont lancé une enquête coordonnée sur les pratiques actuelles des compagnies aériennes en matière d'annulation, faisant suite à une alerte externe émanant du Bureau européen des unions de consommateurs (BEUC) et à une alerte émise par la Commission pour la première fois au titre du règlement CPC révisé. Les dialogues entre les compagnies aériennes et le réseau seront coordonnés par les autorités nationales de protection des consommateurs de plusieurs États membres, dans la plupart des cas par l'Agence suédoise des consommateurs. L'objectif est de recueillir des informations complémentaires auprès des compagnies aériennes opérant dans l'UE sur la manière dont elles informent les consommateurs sur leurs droits en tant que passagers et comment elles traitent les demandes de remboursement. Dans les cas où les compagnies aériennes ont des difficultés persistantes à rembourser tous les consommateurs en temps utile, elles sont invitées à fournir des informations sur ce qu'elles font pour remédier rapidement à ces difficultés. Les compagnies aériennes disposent de trois semaines pour répondre. Le cas échéant, la Commission et les autorités CPC assureront ensuite un suivi avec les compagnies aériennes. Le lancement de cette enquête s'inscrit dans le cadre des efforts déployés par la Commission pour garantir le respect des droits des consommateurs et des passagers pendant la pandémie du coronavirus. Didier **Reynders**, commissaire chargé de la justice, a déclaré : « *Nous attendons des compagnies aériennes qu'elles informent correctement les consommateurs de leurs droits lorsqu'un vol doit être annulé et qu'elles veillent à ce que tous les passagers qui souhaitent un remboursement en espèces le reçoivent.* » Adina **Vălean**, commissaire chargée des transports, a ajouté : « *Il s'agit d'une étape importante vers le bon fonctionnement du secteur des voyages. D'autres mesures sont en cours, telles que la révision du cadre réglementaire pour les droits des passagers, comme le prévoit la [Stratégie pour une mobilité durable et intelligente](#).* » De plus amples informations sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand — Tél. + 32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko — Tél.: + 32 229 63444; Jördis Ferroli — Tél.: + 32 229 92729)

Honouring courage in journalism: Apply for the 2021 Lorenzo Natali Media Prize until 19 April

Applications open today for one of the world's leading journalism awards - the Lorenzo Natali Media Prize. Backed by the European Commission, the prize honours journalists from around the world for their courageous reporting and for their stories about people and the planet that highlight some of today's biggest challenges and inspiring solutions that address them. To mark the launch of the 2021 edition, Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta **Urpilainen**, said: "*The European Union stands for freedom of expression, in Europe and around the world. Through the Lorenzo Natali Media Prize, we recognise journalists who have dared, often at great personal risk, to report the facts and tell the stories shedding light on issues like injustice, inequality, and environmental degradation. Stories that showcase the inspiring ways in which people are responding. If you are a journalist who has told just this story in the past year, I encourage you to apply.*" The closing date for entries is 19 April 2021. The winners will be awarded with €10,000. For more details, please consult the [press release](#) and the [Lorenzo Natali Media Prize website](#). (For more information: Ana Pisonero - Tel.: +32 229 54320; Gesine Knolle - Tel.: +32 229 54323)

Launch of public vote on commemorative coin for 35th anniversary of Erasmus programme

The Commission is today launching [a public vote on the six final designs for a common commemorative €2 coin](#) to celebrate 35 years of the Erasmus+ programme in 2022. After more than 70 coin designs were submitted for this competition, a jury selected six coins to go forward for consideration by a final public vote. The public vote will allow EU citizens to choose the design that, in their view, best represents and celebrates the success of the Erasmus project. [Erasmus+](#) is one of

the EU's most emblematic initiatives and a real European success story. Since its inception in 1987, 10 million people have benefitted from it. The programme has expanded from mobility in education and training sectors to support youth and sport as well. Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"The Erasmus+ programme has accompanied several generations since its launch in 1987, having evolved over the years both in scope and range of activities to better fit societal developments. Originally only focussed on higher education, it now includes vocational education and training, schools, adult education, youth and sport. A euro coin celebrating Erasmus is the epitome of two European policies that have contributed to the history of European integration."* Paolo **Gentiloni**, Commissioner for Economy, said: *"The Erasmus+ programme encapsulates the best of the European project. For more than three decades, it has enabled young people from across our continent to study in another European country, enriching their lives as well as their CVs. It is a fitting tribute that we celebrate the success of Erasmus with a special euro coin, that other most tangible symbol of European unification. Cast your vote for your favourite coin design!"* (For more information: Marta Wieczorek – Tel.: +32 229 58197; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

Une nouvelle enquête Eurobaromètre montre que l'Europe sociale est une priorité absolue pour la grande majorité des citoyens européens

Dans la perspective de l'adoption du plan d'action relatif au socle européen des droits sociaux, la Commission européenne a publié une nouvelle [enquête Eurobaromètre sur les questions sociales](#). L'enquête révèle que neuf Européens sur dix (88 %) considèrent qu'une Europe sociale est importante pour eux personnellement. Les questions les plus urgentes pour eux sont l'égalité des chances et l'accès au marché du travail, des conditions de travail équitables et l'accès à des soins de santé de qualité. 71 % des personnes interrogées considèrent également qu'un manque de droits sociaux est un problème sérieux, tandis que 62 % pensent qu'il y aura une Europe plus sociale en 2030. Enfin, quelque 76 % des personnes interrogées qui ont entendu parler du socle européen des droits sociaux reconnaissent que son succès dépendra des actions des États membres visant à faire des droits sociaux une réalité. Le socle européen des droits sociaux, présenté en 2017, définit 20 droits et principes clés pour une Europe sociale forte. Le plan d'action contribuera à une reprise équitable, inclusive et résiliente de la pandémie et à une forte ambition sociale à long terme. Un rapport de synthèse de l'enquête Eurobaromètre ainsi que des fiches d'information spécifiques à chaque pays sont disponibles [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Marta Wieczorek – Tél.: +32 229 58197; Flora Matthaes – Tél.: +32 229 83951)

EU-China agreement protecting geographical indications enters into force

Today, the [EU-China bilateral agreement](#) protecting geographical indications (GIs) in China and the EU entered into force. The agreement protects around 200 iconic European and Chinese agri-food names against imitation and usurpation, bringing mutual trade benefits and introducing consumers to guaranteed, authentic products from two regions with rich culinary and cultural traditions. The EU list of GIs to be protected in China includes products such as Cava, Champagne, Feta, Irish whiskey, Münchener Bier, Ouzo, Polska Wódka, Porto, Prosciutto di Parma and Queso Manchego. Among the Chinese GI products, the list includes Pixian Dou Ban (Pixian Bean Paste), Anji Bai Cha (Anji White Tea), Panjin Da Mi (Panjin rice) and Anqiu Da Jiang (Anqiu Ginger). In the course of the next four years as of today, the agreement will expand to cover an additional 175 GI names from both sides. These names will follow the same approval procedure as the names already covered by the agreement (i.e. assessment and publication for comments). The Chinese market has high-growth potential for European food and drinks. In 2020, China was the third destination for EU agri-food products, reaching [€16.3 billion](#) up to November. It is also the second destination of EU exports of GI products, accounting for 9% by value, including wines, agri-food products and spirit drinks. Chinese consumers appreciate the safety, quality and authenticity of European agrifood. European consumers will be able to discover genuine Chinese specialties thanks to this agreement. More information on the agreement is available [here](#), in this [press release](#) and in this [factsheet](#). The Chinese GIs are entered in [eAmbrosia – the EU geographical indications register](#), under this agreement. For the EU GIs, protection in China is shown on their respective pages in [Giview](#) which also contains all GIs protected at EU level. (For more information: Miriam Garcia Ferrer – Tel.: +32 229 99075; Thérèse Lerebours – Tel.: +32 229 63303)

Stratégie « de la ferme à la table »: la Commission lance une consultation sur le futur plan visant à garantir l'approvisionnement alimentaire et la sécurité alimentaire en temps de crise*

La Commission a lancé aujourd'hui [une consultation](#) sur un plan d'urgence pour garantir l'approvisionnement alimentaire et la sécurité alimentaire dans toute l'UE en temps de crise, comme annoncé dans la stratégie « de la ferme à la table ». Cette consultation vise à recueillir des commentaires sur la forme, la nature et la portée du plan. Une diversité d'acteurs impliqués dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire tels que les producteurs, les transformateurs, les distributeurs ou les opérateurs de transport ainsi que les consommateurs, la société civile et les autorités nationales sont invités à donner leur avis pendant une période de 9 semaines, du 1er mars au 3 mai 2021. Comme indiqué dans [la stratégie « de la ferme à la table »](#), la Commission entend renforcer la coordination de la réponse européenne aux crises affectant le système alimentaire de l'UE et garantir la sécurité alimentaire. Pour ce faire, le [plan d'urgence](#) comprendra un ensemble de procédures à suivre en temps de crise ainsi que la mise en place d'un mécanisme de réponse à la crise alimentaire coordonné par la Commission, impliquant les États membres et, éventuellement, divers secteurs tels que l'agriculture, la pêche, les transports et la santé. Le mécanisme prendra la forme d'un forum permanent pour coordonner l'action, échanger les meilleures pratiques et évaluer les menaces et les risques. Conformément à la stratégie « de la ferme à la table » du [Pacte vert pour l'Europe](#) et à ses objectifs, le plan devrait poursuivre une durabilité environnementale, économique et sociale accrue pour un système alimentaire européen résilient. *(Pour plus d'informations: Miriam Garcia Ferrer – Tél.: +32 229 99075; Thérèse Lerebours – Tél.: +32 229 63303)*

Aides d'État: la Commission autorise une mesure d'aide italienne d'un montant de 40 millions d'euros en faveur d'activités de recherche et de développement liées au coronavirus

La Commission européenne a autorisé une mesure d'aide italienne d'un montant de 40 millions d'euros en faveur d'activités de recherche et de développement (R&D) liées au coronavirus menées par la société de biotechnologie ReiThera S.r.l., une société de biotechnologie de taille moyenne située dans la région du Latium. Cette mesure a été autorisée en vertu de l'[encadrement temporaire](#) des aides d'État. Le soutien public prendra la forme d'une subvention directe. L'objectif de la mesure est de soutenir la mise au point d'un nouveau vaccin contre le coronavirus, ce qui contribuerait à trouver des solutions pour faire face à la crise sanitaire actuelle. Le vaccin candidat mis au point par ReiThera a été évalué dans le cadre d'études précliniques et d'une étude clinique de phase I qui a montré qu'il était sans danger chez les adultes et les personnes âgées. La mesure soutiendra l'établissement et la mise en œuvre de l'étape de développement suivante, une étude de phase II/III visant à confirmer que le vaccin est sans danger et à démontrer son efficacité. La Commission a estimé que cette mesure d'aide était conforme aux conditions énoncées dans l'encadrement temporaire. La Commission a conclu que la mesure italienne est nécessaire, appropriée et proportionnée pour lutter contre la crise sanitaire, conformément à l'article 107, paragraphe 3, point c), du TFUE et aux conditions énoncées dans l'encadrement temporaire. Sur cette base, la Commission a autorisé la mesure en vertu des règles de l'UE en matière d'aides d'État. Margrethe **Vestager**, vice-présidente exécutive chargée de la politique de concurrence, a déclaré : « Cette mesure italienne d'un montant de 40 millions d'euros soutiendra la recherche sur un nouveau vaccin contre le coronavirus. Nous continuons à travailler en étroite coopération avec les États membres afin de soutenir des mesures susceptibles de nous aider à trouver des solutions pour lutter contre la pandémie, dans le respect des règles de l'UE. » Le communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Arianna Podesta – Tél.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tél.: +32 229 55344)*

State aid: Commission approves Danish support for Thor offshore wind farm project

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, Danish support for the Thor offshore wind farm project, which will be located in the Danish part of the North Sea. The measure will help Denmark increase its share of electricity produced from renewable energy sources and reduce CO₂ emissions, in line with the [European Green Deal](#), without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market. Denmark notified to the Commission an aid measure, with a total maximum budget of DKK 6,5 billion (approximately €870 million), to support the design, construction and operation of the new Thor offshore wind farm project. The aid will be awarded through a competitive tender and will take the form of a two-way contract-for-difference premium of the duration of 20 years. The Commission assessed the measure under EU State aid rules, in particular the [2014 Guidelines on State aid for environmental protection and energy](#). The Commission found that the aid is necessary and has an incentive effect, as the project would not take place in the absence of the public support. Furthermore, the aid is proportionate and limited to the minimum necessary. Finally, the positive effects of the measure, in particular the positive environmental effects, outweigh any possible negative effects in terms of distortions to competition. On this basis, the Commission

concluded that the measure is in line with EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President, Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"This Danish measure is a very good example of how Member States can provide incentives to companies to take part and invest in green energy projects, in line with EU State aid rules. The Thor offshore wind farm project will contribute to achieving the EU's ambitious energy and climate targets set out in the Green Deal, without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market."* The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

State Aid: Commission opens in-depth investigation into alleged State aid provided by Italy in favour of consortium Cineca

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess whether certain Italian measures in favour of Cineca are in line with EU State aid rules. Cineca is a not-for-profit consortium, composed of the Italian Ministry of Education, the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research, 69 Italian universities and 22 Italian National Institutions. Following the receipt of a complaint, the Commission's in-depth investigation will in particular: (i) examine whether the annual public financing provided since 2004 by Italy to Cineca for the provision of information technology (IT) services to the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) constitutes illegal and incompatible State aid; (ii) assess if the payments by various Italian universities to Cineca for the provision of IT service involve illegal and incompatible State aid; (iii) assess if the public financing received by Cineca has been used to cross-subsidise economic activities in markets where Cineca might be in competition with other market players. In the examination of whether or not the measures in question constitute State aid, the Commission will first examine whether there is an intrinsic link between the provision of IT services to the MIUR and the Italian universities, and the State's task of providing tertiary education. If this was not the case, the Commission will then examine whether or not the amount paid for the provision of these IT services is in line with the market price. A separate issue is whether Cineca used public funding to cross-subsidise the sale of its services to other customers in markets where it competes with providers of comparable IT services. Therefore, the Commission will examine in parallel whether or not Cineca has put in place adequate safeguards to prevent any cross-subsidisation between the supported activities and its other economic activities. The opening of an in-depth investigation gives Italy and interested third parties the opportunity to submit comments. It does not prejudge the outcome of the investigation. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the [State aid register](#) under the case number SA.39639. (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

State aid: Commission approves modification of Luxembourg scheme to support uncovered fixed costs of companies affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has found the modification to an existing Luxembourg scheme to support the uncovered fixed costs of companies affected by the coronavirus outbreak to be in line with the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). The existing scheme was approved by the Commission on [24 November 2020](#) under case number [SA.59322](#) and was first amended on 21 December 2020 ([SA.60541](#)). Luxembourg notified to the Commission the following modifications to the scheme: (i) the prolongation of the duration of the scheme until June 2021; (ii) the increase of the budget from €120 million to €180 million; and (iii) other amendments modifying the categories of eligible beneficiaries and the eligibility conditions for the months from February until June 2021, as well as the calculation of eligible costs and aid intensities. 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 amendments 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.61934 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)

State aid: Commission approves €110 million Czech scheme to support enterprises active in the primary agricultural sector and food production affected by the coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved a CZK 3 billion (approximately €110 million) Czech scheme to support enterprises active in the primary agricultural sector and food production affected by the

coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). The public support, which will take the form of direct grants, will be open to all enterprises active in the primary agricultural production sector (farmers) and to food producers. The aid is specifically intended to ensure sufficient working capital for beneficiaries that suffered a decrease in total earnings of at least 25% compared to the corresponding reference period in December 2019 – February 2020. The purpose of the scheme is to help the beneficiaries address their liquidity needs and continue their activities during and after the outbreak. The measure is expected to benefit between 5,000 and 10,000 beneficiaries. The Commission found that the Czech scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular (i) the aid will not exceed €225,000 per company active in the primary production of agricultural sector or €1.8 billion per company active in food production; and (ii) the aid under the scheme can be granted until 31 December 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.62044 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)

State aid: Commission approves €1 million Finnish scheme to support fishery and aquaculture sector affected by coronavirus outbreak

The European Commission has approved a €1 million Finnish scheme to support the fishery and aquaculture sector affected by 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 to cover costs such as reasonable salary and travel costs, investments in installation, alteration and repair of machinery and equipment and training of staff. The purpose of the scheme is to help the beneficiaries address their liquidity needs and to help them continue their activities during and after the coronavirus outbreak. The Commission found that the scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular, (i) the aid will not exceed € 270,000 per company; and (ii) the scheme will run until 30 December 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 measures 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.61987 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)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

European Green Deal: Commission discusses green policies with Norwegian Government

Today, Executive Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, Commissioner Kadri **Simson** and Commissioner Adina **Vălean** hold a virtual meeting with Ine Eriksen Søreide, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sveinung Rotevatn, Minister of Climate and Environment, Tina Bru, Minister of Petroleum and Energy, and Knut Arild Hareide Minister of Transport of Norway to discuss different aspects of the [European Green Deal](#). Norway is an important partner for the EU and shares our ambition to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Today's meeting focuses on the actions needed to translate our targets into concrete actions across the board, from climate action and biodiversity protection, to the energy and transport transitions. The Commission aims at accelerating the transition to a climate neutral economy, fostering sustainable growth and creating green jobs. The Green Deal is the EU's new growth strategy and the foundation of our economic recovery from the current crisis. With 30% of the [NextGenerationEU](#) fund and the [EU's seven-year budget](#) dedicated to climate action, the EU

has more financial fire power dedicated to the green transition than ever before. Norway is at the forefront of green technology developments, and strengthened cooperation around the Green Deal will be beneficial for the EU, Norway and the planet. (For more information: Tim McPhie – Tel: +32 229 58602; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel: +32 229 74959)

Nine EU-supported films compete in the 2021 Berlin International Film Festival*

The [71st Berlin International Film Festival](#) has kicked off today, this year in its digital edition due to the coronavirus pandemic. The prestigious nominations include [nine EU-supported films and series](#), three of which are competing for the highest prize, the Golden Bear: [Memory Box](#) by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, [Nebenan \(Next Door\)](#) by Daniel Brühl, and [Természetes fény \(Natural Light\)](#) by Dénes Nagy. The EU supported the development and co-production of these nine titles with an investment of over €750 000 that was awarded through the [Creative Europe MEDIA programme](#). Targeted to film professionals and media, the Berlinale film festival is hosting the [European Film Market](#), where the Creative Europe MEDIA programme is active with a virtual stand as well as with the [European Film Forum](#). The Forum that will take place online on 2 March will gather various professionals from the industry to discuss the future perspectives for the audiovisual sector in Europe. The Berlinale will run until 5 March, when the winning films will be announced. The second round of this year's festival, '[The Summer Special](#)', will take place in June 2021 and will open the films to the public and host the official Award Ceremony. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

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