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Biodiversité : les orientations de la Commission concernant les nouvelles zones protégées qui permettront de guider la nature européenne sur la voie de la restauration d'ici 2030

La Commission a publié aujourd'hui [les orientations](#) sur l'identification et la désignation de nouvelles zones naturelles protégées dans l'UE, ainsi que sur la gestion des zones protégées existantes et futures. La [stratégie de l'UE en faveur de la biodiversité à l'horizon 2030](#) - une initiative essentielle du [Pacte vert pour l'Europe](#) - vise à mettre la biodiversité de l'Europe sur la voie du rétablissement d'ici à 2030. Pour aider à y parvenir, la stratégie a pour objectif de protéger au moins 30 % des terres et des mers de l'UE d'ici à 2030. Ces objectifs de l'UE sont cohérents avec les objectifs mondiaux proposés à la 15e conférence des parties (COP15) de la convention des Nations unies sur la diversité biologique. Un tiers de cette surface de l'UE, des zones très importantes en terme de biodiversité et de climat, devrait faire l'objet d'une protection stricte, à la fois sur terre et en mer, selon la stratégie de l'UE en faveur de la biodiversité. Les orientations adoptées aujourd'hui aideront les États membres à atteindre ces objectifs et à mettre en place un réseau transnational cohérent. Frans **Timmermans**, vice-président exécutif en charge du Pacte vert pour l'Europe, a déclaré : « Afin d'orienter notre économie sur une voie véritablement durable, nous devons donner à la nature l'espace nécessaire pour se rétablir. L'expansion des zones protégées dans l'Union européenne, tant terrestres que maritimes, est essentielle à la fourniture de cet espace. » Le commissaire à l'environnement, aux océans et à la pêche, Virginijus **Sinkevičius**, a ajouté : « Nous dépendons de la nature et nous devons la préserver. Natura 2000 constitue le pilier d'un réseau transeuropéen de la nature, toutefois des efforts supplémentaires sont nécessaires sur le plan national pour le compléter. Nos orientations donnent aux États membres des outils pour les aider à identifier, désigner et gérer des zones protégées supplémentaires. Nous continuerons à travailler ensemble afin de mettre la nature européenne sur la voie du rétablissement d'ici 2030, dans l'intérêt de notre planète et de notre économie. » Le réseau actuel de zones légalement protégées n'est pas assez étendu pour permettre la sauvegarde de la biodiversité. Les désignations supplémentaires devraient soit contribuer à parachever le réseau Natura 2000, soit relever de régimes de protection nationaux. Les objectifs pour 2030 s'appliquent à l'ensemble de l'UE et chaque État membre désignera des zones à protéger sur la base de critères écologiques objectifs et de la quantité et de la qualité de la biodiversité qui lui sont propres. Les avantages écologiques et économiques vont de pair puisque les services écosystémiques du seul réseau Natura 2000 existant (alimentation, filtration de l'eau et de l'air, résilience aux catastrophes, etc.) sont [estimés à 300 milliards d'euros par an](#) et que le réseau soutient quelque 500 000 [emplois](#). Le guide d'orientations a été élaboré en collaboration avec l'Agence européenne pour l'environnement après des discussions d'un an avec des experts nationaux et des organisations d'acteurs concernés. De plus amples informations sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Adalbert Jahnz – Tél.: + 32 229 53156; Daniela Stoycheva – Tél.: +32 229 53664)

Eurostat: Commission adopts amendment to energy statistics to further support the European Green Deal

Today, the European Commission has adopted the most encompassing amendment of the energy statistics regulation ever conducted. The aim is to support even further the [European Green Deal](#). This amendment, which will enter into force in February, will provide statistics to monitor a number of policy initiatives to decarbonise the European economy, including the [Energy Union](#) and the [Fit for 55 package](#), as well as the [Hydrogen Strategy](#) and the [Initiative on Batteries](#). The new statistics will be first available in 2022. Commissioner for Economy, Paolo **Gentiloni**, said: "Today's amendment to the energy statistics regulation marks a milestone on the path to a credible and evidence-based transition towards a climate-neutral economy. With this legal act, we set the pace for energy statistics worldwide, stay ahead of policy developments and already incorporate data needs from the Fit for 55 package and other important policy initiatives, in line with the Commission's priorities." With this amendment, the Commission will publish new and more detailed high-quality data on (i)

new energy carriers (such as hydrogen), (ii) large-scale batteries, (iii) additional renewable fuels (as an example, heat pumps and solar PV production in buildings), (iv) the non-energy use of renewables (including bio-lubricants or bio-asphalt), (v) detailed breakdown of final energy consumption in the services sector (including data centres) and in transport activities, and (vi) specific final energy consumption in agriculture and in forestry. In addition, annual data will become available one month earlier (in October of the following year, instead of November). New statistical requirements on energy consumption, renewable energy, electricity, CHP (combined heat and power) and decentralised production will help monitoring the current [Renewable Energy Directive](#), the [Energy Efficiency Directive](#), the [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#), the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action and the [Resilience and Recovery Facility](#), which foresees sizeable funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy in buildings. Other modifications support the [Common Agriculture Policy](#) and the [digital transition](#). More information is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Humanitarian aid: €21 million for assistance in the Philippines, Nepal and South East Asia

Today the Commission has announced it will allocate €21 million for disaster preparedness and humanitarian aid in the Philippines, Nepal and other South East Asian countries to support people affected by natural hazards, the coronavirus and conflicts. Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič** said: *“Most recently typhoon RAI has been a painful reminder that countries in South East Asia are experiencing first-hand the dramatic consequences of climate change. This is why the EU is further stepping up its humanitarian support to the most vulnerable affected by natural hazards in the Philippines, Nepal and the region. We also support those affected by protracted conflict in the Philippines, while further investing into the preparation and response to the coronavirus pandemic.”* Funding will be provided for families in the Philippines who have lost their homes and livelihoods in late December 2021 due to typhoon RAI as well as for those affected by the protracted conflict in the country. Other funding will target disaster preparedness and contingency response plans in the Philippines, Nepal and the South East Asia region. The press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Miriam Garcia Ferrer - Tel.: +32 229 99075; Daniel Puglisi - Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Kustomer by Meta (formerly Facebook), subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed acquisition of Kustomer by Meta (formerly Facebook). The approval is conditional on full compliance with commitments offered by Meta. The decision follows an [in-depth investigation](#) of Meta's proposed acquisition of Kustomer. Meta and Kustomer operate in vertically-related markets. The Commission's investigation focused on whether Meta may disadvantage Kustomer's rival providers of customer service and support customer relationship management ('CRM') software. Following its market investigation, the Commission had concerns that the transaction, as initially notified, would have harmed competition in (i) the market for the supply of CRM software and (ii) the market for the supply of customer service and support CRM software. In particular, the Commission found that Meta would have the ability, as well as an economic incentive, to engage in foreclosure strategies vis-à-vis Kustomer's close rivals and new entrants. To address the competition concerns identified by the Commission, Meta offered comprehensive access commitments with a 10-year duration: (i) a public API access commitment and (ii) a core API access-parity commitment. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, responsible for competition policy, said: *“We must carefully review transactions that could further strengthen large players that increasingly dominate the digital economy, irrespective of the target company's size. Our decision today will ensure that innovative rivals and new entrants in the customer relationship management software market can effectively compete. The commitments offered by Meta ensure that its rivals will continue to have free and comparable access to Meta's important messaging channels.”* A press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

State aid: Commission approves the renewal of an Italian scheme to support companies active in agriculture, forestry, fishery, aquaculture and related sectors, including €500 million budget increase, in the context of the coronavirus pandemic

The European Commission has found the renewal of an Italian scheme to support companies active in agriculture, forestry, fishery, aquaculture and other related sectors, including €500 million budget

increase, to be in line with the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). The Commission approved the original scheme on [15 July 2020 \(SA.57947\)](#). Under the scheme, the aid takes the form of direct grants, repayable advances, tax and payment advantages, reduction or cancellation of the payment of social security and welfare contributions, debt write-off and other payment facilities. Public support will also continue to be granted in the form of support for uncovered fixed costs. The purpose of the scheme is to address the liquidity needs of these companies and to help them continue their activities during and after the outbreak. The Commission found that the renewal of the Italian scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework as amended on 18 November 2021. In particular, when it comes to support in the form of limited amounts of aid, the support will not exceed €290,000 per company active in the primary production of agriculture products, €345,000 per company active in the fishery and aquaculture sector, and €2.3 million per company active in other sectors. When it comes to support for uncovered fixed costs, the aid will not exceed €12 million per beneficiary. Under both measures, the aid will be granted no later than 30 June 2022. Therefore, the Commission concluded that the scheme continues to be 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.101474 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; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

State aid: Commission approves Czech scheme, including €8.3 million budget increase, to support travel agencies affected by the coronavirus pandemic

The European Commission has found a Czech guarantee aid scheme to support travel agencies, including €8.3 million (approximately CZK 200 million) budget increase, to be in line with the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). The scheme is a re-introduction of a measure approved by the Commission in [May 2021 \(SA.61837\)](#) which expired on 31 December 2021. The public support will take the form of bank guarantees, securing these beneficiaries' co-participation under a compulsory insurance against bankruptcy. The support will help travel agencies that are facing a lack of liquidity to obtain such an insurance, allowing them to continue their activities during and after the pandemic. The Commission found that the Czech scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular, the aid (i) will not exceed €2.3 million per beneficiary; and (ii) will be granted no later than 30 June 2022. 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 scheme 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.101455 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; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control of Voith Hydro by Voith

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control of Voith Hydro Holding GmbH & Co. KG and its general partner Voith Hydro Holding Verwaltungs GmbH ('Voith Hydro') by the Voith group of companies ('Voith'), all of Germany. Voith Hydro, currently jointly controlled by Voith and a subsidiary of Siemens Energy AG, manufactures and sells power units for hydropower plants. Voith manufactures and sells paper machines, hydropower plants, transmission and control technology for commercial vehicles and buses, agriculture and construction machinery, rolling stock, and shipping and industrial applications for many industrial sectors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns given the absence of overlaps or vertical links between the activities of the companies. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.10547](#). *(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

STATEMENTS

European Health Union: new rules to improve clinical trials in the EU

As of Monday 31 January, the assessment and supervision of [clinical trials](#) throughout the EU will be harmonised, notably via a [Clinical Trials Information System \(CTIS\)](#) run by the European Medicines Agency. On this date, the [Regulation on Clinical Trials](#) will enter into application. The Regulation will improve conducting clinical trials in the EU, with the highest standards of safety for participants and increased transparency of trial information. Welcoming this important step, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella **Kyriakides**, made the following statement: *"The Clinical Trials Regulation marks an important and positive step for European patients and brings us closer to a stronger European Health Union. It will allow us to have swifter authorisation of clinical trials across our Member States, thus improving the efficiency of clinical research as a whole. At the same time, the high quality and safety standards already set for such trials will be upheld. While almost 4,000 clinical trials are already carried out each year in the EU, the Regulation will make vital research even more beneficial to the researchers and patients who depend on fast and reliable trials the most."* The full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Stefan De Keersmaecker – Tel.: +32 229 84680; Veronica Favalli - Tel.: +32 229 87269)

Médicaments vétérinaires : désormais de nouvelles règles pour promouvoir la santé animale et lutter contre la résistance antimicrobienne s'appliquent

Dans le cadre de la lutte contre la résistance aux antimicrobiens (RAM), une [législation révisée sur les médicaments vétérinaires](#) s'applique dès aujourd'hui dans l'UE. Adoptée il y a trois ans, cette législation est désormais une pierre angulaire essentielle pour soutenir la réalisation des objectifs fixés dans le [plan d'action européen One Health](#) et dans la [stratégie Farm to Fork](#) contre la RAM. La législation renforce également le rôle de premier plan de l'UE sur la scène mondiale pour agir contre la RAM. Saluant cette étape importante, la commissaire à la santé et à la sécurité alimentaire, Stella **Kyriakides**, a fait la déclaration suivante : *« La pandémie de COVID-19 a illustré l'interdépendance de la santé humaine, végétale et animale, de la santé environnementale et de la sécurité alimentaire. L'illustration la plus claire de ces liens est la pandémie silencieuse de résistance aux antimicrobiens. Dans notre stratégie « de la ferme à la table », nous avons fixé un objectif ambitieux : réduire de moitié les ventes globales d'antimicrobiens dans l'UE pour les animaux d'élevage et l'aquaculture d'ici à 2030. Avec le plan d'action européen One Health, nous voulons nous attaquer à cette crise sanitaire potentielle en considérant la santé humaine, animale et végétale comme un continuum. Les nouvelles règles seront essentielles pour y parvenir. Elles garantiront qu'à partir d'aujourd'hui, les traitements par antimicrobiens pour les animaux seront administrés seulement quand il y a un réel besoin. Avec la nouvelle législation sur les aliments médicamenteux, qui interdira l'utilisation préventive et limitera les prescriptions d'antimicrobiens dans les aliments médicamenteux, les nouvelles règles renforceront considérablement la lutte contre la RAM. J'encourage tous les États membres à s'assurer que les mesures et les ressources appropriées sont mises en place, afin de garantir le plein fonctionnement de la législation sur le terrain au niveau national, et de faire de sa mise en œuvre un succès commun. »* Vous trouverez plus d'informations dans la [déclaration](#) complète et notre [Q&A](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Stefan De Keersmaecker - Tél : +32 229 84680; Anna Wartberger - Tél: +32 229 82054)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pacte vert européen : la Commission organise une conférence sur les cycles du carbone durables

Le lundi 31 janvier, la Commission organise une conférence sur les cycles du carbone durables. Le vice-président de la Commission européenne chargé du Pacte vert européen, Frans **Timmermans**, et le commissaire à l'agriculture, Janusz **Wojciechowski**, y participeront, ainsi que la ministre française de la transition écologique, Barbara Pompili, et le ministre français de l'agriculture, Julien Denormandie. La conférence réunira des décideurs et des experts de différents horizons pour partager leurs expériences en vue de l'initiative réglementaire de l'UE sur la certification des

absorptions de carbone prévue pour la fin de l'année. Pour compenser les impacts de nos émissions de CO₂, l'UE devra réduire drastiquement sa dépendance au carbone fossile, recourir plus largement au stockage du carbone dans les sols agricoles pour stocker plus de carbone dans la nature, et promouvoir des solutions industrielles afin d'éliminer et de recycler le carbone de manière durable et vérifiable. L'élimination d'une plus grande quantité de carbone de l'atmosphère, des océans et des zones humides côtières est essentielle à la réalisation de l'engagement juridiquement contraignant pris par l'UE de devenir neutre sur le plan climatique d'ici à 2050. Pour mettre en place un cadre législatif conduisant à l'élimination et le stockage du carbone, la Commission a présenté sa [communication sur les cycles du carbone durable](#) en décembre 2021 et prévoit d'adopter un système de certification fiable pour l'élimination du carbone d'ici la fin de l'année, garantissant l'intégrité environnementale et la durabilité de l'élimination du carbone. Cette conférence est la première d'une série d'opportunités pour les parties prenantes et le grand public d'alimenter la discussion sur ce cadre réglementaire pour la certification de l'absorption du carbone. Un [appel à contribution](#) sera également lancé prochainement. Vous pouvez suivre la conférence en direct à partir de 10 heures ce lundi [ici](#). Pour plus d'informations et pour vous inscrire à la conférence, veuillez [cliquer ici](#). (For more information: Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959)

Fit for Future expert group delivers on 2021 objectives and renews ambitions to simplify EU law

Today, the Fit for Future Platform, the high-level expert group helping the Commission simplify EU laws, is holding its fourth plenary meeting, chaired by Vice-President **Šefčovič**. The expert group is adopting a new list of topics (which will shortly be available [online](#)) on which the Platform will work and issue opinions in 2022. This includes an overarching topic on enhancing the interconnectivity between the green and digital transitions, including through simplification. This list, also covering existing EU laws in the areas of taxation, financial services, energy, chemicals and food waste, is based on suggestions from the Platform members, the public, from consultations with the [SME envoys network](#) and the RegHub network of local and regional authorities. Maroš **Šefčovič**, Vice-President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight, said: *"The Commission remains firmly committed to simplifying existing EU laws to ensure that they stay efficient and fit for future. I am therefore pleased to announce that the Fit for Future high-level expert group keeps the momentum on simplification of EU laws, underpinned by adopting an ambitious work programme for this year. This new work programme focuses on identifying and reducing burdens, while maximising the benefits of EU policies for both citizens and businesses. It is an important contribution in support of Europe's recovery and the green and digital transitions."* On the basis of last year's work plan, the expert group has adopted [14 opinions](#) on the potential for simplification of existing EU laws in specific areas. Through its opinions, the Platform advises the Commission on opportunities to simplify existing EU laws and reduce regulatory burdens in a wide area of sectors, to benefit as many citizens and businesses as possible. The Platform is made up of representatives from Member States' authorities, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee as well as key stakeholders representing businesses and non-governmental organisations. Anyone can contribute with suggestions on how to simplify existing EU laws through the [EU Have Your Say: Simplify! portal](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Sinéad Meehan-van Druten – Tel.: +32 229 84094)

[CALENDAR](#) – Commissioners Weekly Activities

[Tentative agendas](#) for forthcoming Commission meetings

Note that these items can be subject to changes.

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission

[Eurostat](#) press releases

The Spokesperson's Service has re-opened the Berlaymont press room to a limited number of journalists. For more information, please see [here](#).

