



## Daily News 02 / 06 / 2020

Brussels, 2 June 2020

### EU budget for recovery: rescEU - giving the EU direct crisis response tools

The Commission proposes today to give the European Union the tools to react more quickly when a serious cross-border emergency such as the coronavirus strikes and affects EU countries at the same time. To do so, rescEU - part of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism - will be significantly reinforced with €2 billion over 2021-2027 to create reserves of strategic equipment to cover health emergencies, forest fire outbreaks, chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear incidents or other major emergencies. As such, the total budget for the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism will top €3.1 billion. Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**, said: " *When the coronavirus hit Europe, there was a lack of many kinds of medical equipment across Member States. Yet the EU did not have the power or the means to offer equipment; we could only encourage cooperation. Citizens expect the EU to act during a crisis. We all need to be better prepared and learn the lessons. rescEU will be massively strengthened to leave no EU country behind during a crisis.*" Under the Commission's proposal, the EU will create a reserve of crisis response capacities, be able to directly procure equipment and fully finance the development and operational costs of rescEU capabilities. The Commission has also proposed a substantial boost of its global humanitarian budget by €5 billion, allocating in total €14.8 billion to better respond to growing needs worldwide in the next EU long term budget 2021-2027. For more information, see the [Q&A](#), a [Factsheet on rescEU](#), a [Factsheet on Humanitarian Aid](#), as well as the [press conference](#) by Commissioner **Lenarčič**. (For more information: Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi - Tel.: +32 229 69140)

### The EU budget for recovery increases funds for a stronger Europe in the world

As part of the revised long-term EU budget 2021-2027 package, the European Commission has proposed a budget of €118.2 billion for external action, with an additional €15.5 billion to support its partners in recovery efforts in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, in line with the European Union's role of a strong global actor. Another €1 billion is foreseen for the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) from the current EU budget for an immediate response to the crisis, rounding up the additional funds to €16.5 billion. Out of €118.2 billion (in 2018 prices, €132.6 billion in current prices), the main instrument, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), will receive €86 billion (in 2018 prices, €96.4 billion in current prices), including €10.5 billion from the new European Recovery Instrument ('Next Generation EU'). Humanitarian aid budget will increase by €5 billion thanks to this new instrument to €14.8 billion (€16.5 billion in current prices). When it comes to the Pre-Accession Assistance, the Commission is maintaining the amount of €12.9 billion (€14.5 billion in current prices) for the next Multiannual Financial Framework. The press conference by High Representative/Vice-President **Borrell**, Commissioners **Várhelyi** and **Urpilainen** is available on [EbS](#). For more details, see a [Q&A](#), a [factsheet on the IPA](#) and a Q&A on the [European Peace Facility](#). All the legal texts related to the new MFF proposal are available [here](#). (For more information: Ana Pisonero - Tel.: +32 229 54320; Virginie Battu-Henriksson - Tel.: +32 229 54438; Gesine Knolle - Tel.: +32 229 54323; Zoï Muletier - Tel.: +32 229 94306)

### Commission launches consultation to seek views on Digital Services Act package

Today the Commission launches a [public consultation](#) on the Digital Services Act, a landmark package announced in the Commission's digital strategy "[Shaping Europe's Digital Future](#)". Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager** said: " *The Internet presents citizens and businesses with great opportunities, which they balance against risks that come with working and interacting online. At this time, we are asking for the views of interested citizens and stakeholders on how to make a modern regulatory framework for digital services and online platforms in the EU. Many of these questions impact the day-to-day lives of citizens and we are committing to build a safe and innovative digital future with purpose for them.*" Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry **Breton**, said: " *Online platforms have taken a central role in our life, our economy and our democracy. With such a role comes greater responsibility, but this can happen only against the backdrop of a modern rulebook for*

*digital services. Today we launch our public consultation: we will listen to all views and reflect together to find the right balance between a safe Internet for all, protecting freedom of expression and ensuring space to innovate in the EU single market.”* The consultation seeks to gather views, evidence and data from people, businesses, online platforms, academics, civil society and all interested parties to help us shaping the future rulebook for digital services. The consultation, open until 8 September, covers issues such as safety online, freedom of expression, fairness and a level-playing field in the digital economy. The consultation will inform the Commission's proposals for the Digital Services Act package, expected to be released at the end of the year. In parallel, a second consultation was launched today on a possible [new competition tool](#). You will find all the details in the [press release](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Charles Manoury – Tel.: +32 229 13391)

### **Antitrust: Commission consults stakeholders on a possible new competition tool**

The European Commission has published today an inception impact assessment as well as an open public consultation inviting comments on exploring the need for a possible new competition tool that would allow addressing structural competition problems in a timely and effective manner. Stakeholders can submit their views on the inception impact assessment until 30 June 2020 and respond to the open public consultation until 8 September 2020. Over the past years, the Commission has reflected on the role of competition policy and how it fits in a world that is changing fast, is increasingly digital and globalised, and must become greener. This reflection process is part of a broader policy debate about the need for changes to the current competition law framework so that enforcement agencies around the globe can continue to preserve the competitiveness of markets. The new competition tool should enable the Commission to address gaps in the current competition rules and to intervene against structural competition problems across markets in a timely and effective manner. After establishing a structural competition problem through a rigorous market investigation during which rights of defence are fully respected, the new tool should allow the Commission to impose behavioural and where appropriate, structural remedies. However, there would be no finding of an infringement, nor would any fines be imposed on the market participants. Subject to the outcome of the impact assessment, a legislative proposal is scheduled for Q4/2020. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *“The world is changing fast and it is important that the competition rules are fit for that change. Our rules have an inbuilt flexibility which allows us to deal with a broad range of anti-competitive conduct across markets. We see, however, that there are certain structural risks for competition, such as tipping markets, which are not addressed by the current rules. We are seeking the views of stakeholders to explore the need for a possible new competition tool that would allow addressing such structural competition problems, in a timely and effective manner ensuring fair and competitive markets across the economy.”* The 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)

### **Commission launches WiFi4EU call for municipalities to apply for free Wi-Fi network in public spaces**

Tomorrow, the Commission will launch the fourth call for applications for [WiFi4EU](#) vouchers to set up free Wi-Fi networks in public spaces, including town halls, public libraries, museums, public parks or squares. It will be open to municipalities or associations of municipalities in all 27 EU Member States and the United Kingdom, as well as Iceland and Norway, for one day and a half - specifically from tomorrow 3 June 2020 at 13.00 CET until 4 June 2020 at 17.00 CET. Municipalities will have the opportunity to apply for 947 vouchers, valued €15,000 each. Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for the Internal Market, said: *“I am pleased to announce the opening of the call for the fourth and final round of WiFi4EU vouchers. Free connectivity in public spaces across Europe, benefits citizens and tourists alike, while at the same time it is amplifying the positive effects of connected local communities.”* Once municipalities have registered on the dedicated [WiFi4EU portal](#), they will be able to apply for a voucher with just one click. The vouchers will be distributed on a first come, first served basis, but in order to ensure the best possible geographical balance, each participating country will be entitled to a minimum of 15 vouchers. The present call for applications marks the fourth and final one for the WiFi4EU programme. Since its launch in 2018, a total of 7,980 vouchers and €120 million in funding have been awarded. Information about the opportunity to participate in the WiFi4EU call as well as local community stories are available on the [WiFi4EU page](#). Further information is available [online](#), in the [Questions and Answers](#) and this [factsheet](#), while a [map](#) illustrates the number of municipalities throughout Europe who have so far benefited from the scheme. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

## Understanding and fighting disinformation: the European Digital Media Observatory kicks off

The EU-funded European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) [project](#) started its activities yesterday. Led by the European University Institute of Florence (Italy), [EDMO](#) will support the creation and work of a multidisciplinary community composed of fact-checkers, academic researchers and other relevant stakeholders with expertise in the field of online disinformation. The project will contribute to a deeper understanding of disinformation relevant actors, vectors, tools, methods, dissemination dynamics, prioritised targets and impact on society. Vice-President for Values and Transparency, Věra **Jourová**, said: *"Disinformation is increasingly becoming a threat to our democratic societies and we need to fight it. Whilst doing so, we will uphold European values and fundamental rights, including the freedom of expression and information. The independent European Digital Media Observatory is an important element of our approach – it promotes fact-checking and improves our ability to understand better the spread of online disinformation."* Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry **Breton**, added: *"The past few months have again shown the serious and damaging impact disinformation can have on our health, societies, and economies. I am pleased to see the launch of the European Digital Media Observatory. The Observatory will be an important reference point for our efforts to fight, debunk, expose, understand and analyse disinformation activities in Europe."* This independent collaboration hub will increase the scientific knowledge available on online disinformation but also advance the development of an EU market of fact-checking services, and support public authorities in charge of monitoring digital media and developing new policies. It will receive €2.5 million funding through Connecting Europe Facility, the European infrastructure financing programme. The consortium includes the Athens Technology Center (Greece), Aarhus University (Denmark), and the fact-checking organisation Pagella Politica (Italy). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Charles Manoury – Tel.: +32 229 13391; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

## Making sure crime does not pay: Commission reports on implementation of EU rules on seizing criminals' assets

The Commission is today [reporting](#) on the implementation of EU rules on seizing tools used to commit crimes and revenues from criminal activities. Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinias**, said: *"We need to hit criminals where it hurts the most. Seizing illicit assets is one of the most powerful means to tackle serious and organised crime. Criminals and their assets move easily across borders, so we must strengthen action at EU level, together with Member States and EU Agencies."* Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva **Johansson**, said: *"We need the right tools at our disposal to quickly and effectively deprive criminals of their financial gains and break their business model. We will continue to work closely with the European Parliament and the Council towards building a more effective EU asset recovery system."* The report shows that the EU has deployed considerable efforts to harmonise rules on confiscation and asset recovery. Thanks to the 2014 [Directive](#) on the freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime, there are now clear rules in place across the EU for seizing criminals' assets. In addition, Asset Recovery Offices have been established in all Member States, helping to quickly trace illicit assets. The recently-adopted [Regulation](#) on the mutual recognition of freezing orders and confiscation orders will also improve cross-border cooperation. However, much more remains to be done. Only 1% of criminal proceeds are confiscated in the EU according to Europol estimates, allowing organised crime groups to invest in the expansion of their criminal activities and infiltrate the legal economy. The Commission will now assess the potential for further developing the EU's asset recovery system, based on the results of today's report, and in close cooperation with the European Parliament and the Council. The [report](#) and its [annex](#) are available online. More information on confiscation and asset recovery is available [online](#). (For more information: Adalbert Jahnz - Tel.: +32 229 53156; Ciara Bottomley - Tel.: +32 229 69971; Laura Bérard - Tel.: +32 229 55721)

## Sécurité aérienne: la Commission met à jour la liste des compagnies aériennes interdites dans l'UE

La Commission européenne a mis à jour aujourd'hui la liste des compagnies aériennes soumises à une interdiction d'exploitation ou à des restrictions d'exploitation au sein de l'UE, car ne satisfaisant pas les normes de sécurité internationales. La Commission souhaite garantir le plus haut niveau de sécurité aérienne à tous les passagers voyageant dans l'UE. Suite à la mise à jour, toutes les compagnies aériennes certifiées en Arménie ont été ajoutées à la liste, après une évaluation plus approfondie des capacités de supervision de la sécurité du pays. Cette décision fait suite aux auditions du Comité arménien de l'aviation civile (CAC) et de six transporteurs aériens arméniens. La commissaire aux transports, Adina **Vălean**, a déclaré: *« La liste de sécurité aérienne de l'UE devrait être utilisée comme un instrument qui aide les compagnies aériennes et les pays répertoriés à réévaluer et à améliorer leurs normes de vol. La décision d'inclure les transporteurs arméniens sur la liste de la sécurité aérienne de l'UE a été prise sur la base de l'avis unanime du comité de la sécurité aérienne. La*

Commission, avec l'aide de l'Agence de la sécurité aérienne de l'Union européenne, est prête à coopérer et à investir en Arménie pour améliorer sa sécurité aérienne. » Un [communiqué de presse](#) et un [memo](#) sont disponible en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Stefan de Keersmaecker – Tél.: +32 2 298 46 80; Stephan Meder – Tél.: +32 2 291 39 17)

### **State aid: Commission approves €97 million Danish scheme to compensate travel operators for damages caused by cancellations due to coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules an approximately €97 million (DKK 725 million) Danish scheme to compensate travel operators for damages caused by the cancellation of package travels due to the exceptional circumstances caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the subsequent travel restrictions imposed by the Danish Government. Under the scheme, travel operators will be entitled to compensation for the losses suffered as a consequence of reimbursing consumers in the event of cancellation.. The compensation, in the form of direct grants covering up to 100% of documented losses related to the coronavirus outbreak, will be granted by the Danish Travel Guarantee Fund and will cover the period from 26 January 2020 until 31 May 2020, corresponding to the timeframe in which the Danish government has put in place travel restrictions. The Commission found that the Danish measure is in line with Article [107\(2\)\(b\)](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which enables the Commission to approve State aid measures granted by Member States to compensate specific companies or specific sectors for the damages directly caused by exceptional occurrences, such as the coronavirus outbreak. The Commission found that the Danish measure will compensate damages that are directly linked to the coronavirus outbreak. It also found that the measure is proportionate, as the envisaged compensation does not exceed what is necessary to make good the damage. The Commission therefore concluded that the scheme is in line with EU State aid rules. The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.57352 in the public [case register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website, once 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)

### **Aides d'État: La Commission autorise des régimes d'aides au Luxembourg pour un montant de 260 millions d'euros en faveur de certaines entreprises touchées par la pandémie de coronavirus**

La Commission européenne a approuvé deux régimes d'aides luxembourgeois pour un montant total estimé à 260 millions d'euros, afin de soutenir certaines entreprises durement touchées par la pandémie de COVID-19. Ces régimes ont été autorisés au titre de l'[encadrement temporaire](#) des aides d'État adopté par la Commission le 19 mars 2020, tel que modifié les [3 avril](#) et [8 mai 2020](#). Dans le cadre des deux régimes, l'aide sera accordée sous la forme de subventions directes. Le premier régime, doté d'un budget estimatif de 200 millions d'euros, sera ouvert aux entreprises de toute taille opérant dans certains secteurs définis par le Luxembourg (parmi lesquels les hôtels, les restaurants et les services d'organisation de voyages et d'événements). Ces entreprises peuvent en bénéficier si elles ont connu une baisse de leur chiffre d'affaires d'au moins 25 % en raison de la pandémie de COVID-19 au cours du premier semestre de 2020 et si cette situation est appelée à perdurer au cours du second semestre de 2020. Le second régime d'aides, doté d'un budget estimé à 60 millions d'euros, sera ouvert aux micro-, petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) exploitant des magasins de détail ou offrant certaines catégories de services définies par le Luxembourg (tels que les coiffeurs, les opticiens, les stylistes et les services de nettoyage à sec et de blanchisserie). Ces entreprises peuvent en bénéficier si elles ont dû suspendre leurs activités ou ont enregistré une baisse de leur chiffre d'affaires d'au moins 50 % entre mars et mai 2020 en raison de la pandémie. L'objectif de ces régimes d'aides est de répondre aux besoins soudains de liquidités auxquels sont confrontées certaines entreprises par suite de la pandémie, et de les aider ainsi à poursuivre leurs activités pendant et après celle-ci. La Commission a estimé que les régimes proposés par le Luxembourg étaient conformes aux conditions énoncées dans l'encadrement temporaire. En particulier, l'aide ne dépasse pas 800 000 EUR par entreprise. La Commission a conclu que les mesures étaient nécessaires, appropriées et proportionnées pour remédier à une perturbation grave de l'économie d'un État membre, conformément à l'article 107, paragraphe 3, point b), du TFUE et aux conditions énoncées dans l'encadrement temporaire. Sur cette base, la Commission a autorisé les mesures en vertu des règles de l'UE en matière d'aides d'État. De plus amples informations sur l'encadrement temporaire et les autres mesures prises par la Commission pour faire face aux retombées économiques de la pandémie de COVID-19 sont disponibles [ici](#). La version non confidentielle de la décision sera publiée sous les numéros SA.57304 et SA.57338 dans le [registre des aides d'État](#) figurant sur le site web de la Commission consacré à la [concurrence](#), une fois que les éventuels problèmes de confidentialité auront été résolus. (Pour plus d'informations: Arianna Podesta – Tél. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tél.: +32

### **State aid: Commission approves € 1.6 billion Polish scheme to compensate companies for damages suffered due to coronavirus outbreak and provide liquidity support**

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, an approximately €1.6 billion (PLN 7.5 billion) Polish scheme that partially compensates large enterprises and certain small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for the losses suffered due to the coronavirus outbreak and provides them with direct liquidity through loans. The scheme, which will be managed by the Polish Development Fund, is part of the "Financial Shield for Large Enterprises", a support programme set up by the Polish authorities. The support will be given in the form of subsidised loans at favourable interest rates which can be redeemed by 30 September 2021 in an amount not exceeding 75% of the actual damage incurred by the beneficiary companies from 1 March until at the latest 31 August 2020 directly due to the coronavirus outbreak. The Commission assessed the measure, which provides for both compensation for damages and liquidity support, under both Article [107\(2\)\(b\)](#) and under Article 107(3)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The Commission found that the Polish aid scheme will compensate damages that are directly linked to the coronavirus outbreak and that the measure is proportionate, as the foreseen compensation does not exceed what is necessary to make good the damage, in line with Article 107(2)(b) TFEU. Moreover, the Commission concluded that the measure for liquidity support 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 adopted by the Commission on 19 March 2020, as amended on [3 April](#) and [8 May](#) 2020. On this basis, the Commission approved the measure under EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "The € 1.6 billion scheme will allow Poland to compensate large enterprises and certain small and medium-sized enterprises for the damage suffered as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, while supporting their immediate liquidity needs. The measure will help those businesses continue their activities during and after the outbreak. We are working in close contact and cooperation with Poland, as we continue working with all Member States to ensure that national support measures can be put in place as quickly and effectively as possible, in line with EU rules." The 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 joint acquisition of Tank&Rast by Allianz and OMERS**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the indirect acquisition of joint control over Autobahn Tank&Rast Gruppe GmbH & Co KG of Germany, by Allianz SE of Germany and OMERS Administration Corporation ("OMERS") of Canada. Tank & Rast is a provider of food services, retail goods, hotel accommodation and fuel on German motorways. It is currently under the sole control of Allianz. Allianz offers a comprehensive range of insurance and asset management products and services to both private and corporate customers. OMERS is the administrator of the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System Primary Pension Plan. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition of joint control would raise no competition concerns, because the companies are not active in the same 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 the case number [M.9801](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

[Liste des points prévus](#) à l'ordre du jour des prochaines réunions de la Commission

*Veillez noter que ces informations sont données sous réserve de modifications.*

[Eurostat](#): communiqués de presse

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