



## Daily News 07 / 03 / 2017

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### **Espace: le nouveau satellite Copernicus rend les données sur la surface terrestre encore plus rapidement disponibles**

Le lancement, réussi tôt ce matin, d'un nouveau satellite de la famille Copernicus permettra de réduire de moitié le temps pour fournir aux agriculteurs, aux marins et à tous les professionnels des données de la surface terrestre. Copernicus - le programme européen d'observation de la Terre- peut désormais établir une image complète de la Terre en seulement cinq jours. A cette occasion, le vice-président Maroš **Šefčovič** a déclaré: "*Les Européens peuvent être fiers! C'est une avancée considérable pour Copernicus. Ce sont des bonnes nouvelles pour l'agriculture, pour notre climat et l'environnement, la détection des pollutions de l'eau et notre capacité à faire face aux catastrophes*". Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, commissaire en charge du marché intérieur, de l'industrie, de l'entrepreneuriat et des PME, a ajouté: "*La réussite du lancement d'un nouveau satellite Copernicus aujourd'hui est un nouveau signe de l'excellence de l'Europe dans le domaine spatial. Avec ce lancement, davantage de données seront disponibles pour développer des services et des applications innovants*". Les données de haute résolution fournies par ces satellites sont en accès libre et gratuites et servent d'ores et déjà à de diverses utilisations. En 2016, les données fournies par Copernicus ont notamment été utilisées pour recenser les dommages causés par les tremblements de terre en Italie. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: [+32 229 56182](tel:+3222956182); Mirna Talko – Tel.: [+32 229 87278](tel:+3222987278); Maud Noyon – Tel.: [+32 473 865656](tel:+32473865656))

### **Europe celebrates International Women's Day – many successes, but still a way to go**

Ahead of International Women's Day, Europe speaks out for women's rights in Europe and abroad. Read a [joint statement](#) by nine Commissioners: "*The European Union stands by women in Europe and around the globe today, as it did at the time of its foundation. Sixty years ago, equality between women and men was embedded in the Rome Treaty as one of the European Union's fundamental values. At that time, Europe's commitment to the principle of equal pay for equal work was unique in the world. Since then, the EU has continued to lead and has made visible progress on all fronts. We work tirelessly to defend women's rights and empower them in the fight against discrimination and gender-based violence.*" Today the Commission publishes the [2017 annual gender equality report](#), summarising the achievements and remaining challenges in Europe. Presenting the report, First Vice-President **Timmermans** and Commissioner **Jourová** stress that: "*More than ever, we need to continue to raise awareness that equality is still not a given and marshal political action from all Member States, civil society and social partners.*" Further, several activities are taking place to mark the day: High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will be in Rome to speak at the Celebration of the International Women's Day organised by the Presidency of the Italian Republic. Commissioner **Jourová** will welcome three female role models in the Berlaymont press room ([follow on EbS](#)), she will also speak with Peter Agnefjäll, CEO of IKEA, to discuss the role of women in companies, and meet with a group of teenage girls active in technology. Commissioner **Oettinger** will participate in a panel on "women@work", and Commissioner **Vestager** will speak about the importance of a [European society of fairness and equal opportunities](#). Commissioner **Moedas** will be in the European Parliament to award the [Prize for Women Innovators 2017](#) to four outstanding entrepreneurs. Commissioner **Malmström** will be in Singapore to strengthen EU-Singapore trade ties, where she will also announce the first ever [International Forum on Gender and Trade](#), to be organised by the Commission on 20 June. The event will look at how trade policy can advance women's empowerment - from anti-discrimination clauses to helping small businesses. A press release with useful facts and figures relating to International Women's Day will be available on Wednesday. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: [+32 229 67456](tel:+3222967456); Mélanie Voin – Tel.: [+32 229 58659](tel:+3222958659))

### **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions: support for 100 000 excellent researchers, with a strong focus on boosting women's careers in science**

Today the European Union is celebrating the one hundred thousandth fellow benefiting from the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#). To mark this milestone in the history of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, 30 highly promising researchers have been selected to showcase the EU's actions dedicated to excellence and worldwide mobility in research. Since the launch of the programme 20 years ago, the share of female participants has been exceptionally high and 18 of the selected researchers are women. Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"Celebrating the award of the 100 000th Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowship is a great moment to recall the importance of this programme, which supports our brightest and best researchers in tackling the big societal challenges facing Europe. Marie Skłodowska-Curie paved the way for future generations of female researchers. On the eve of International Women's Day, I am especially proud that the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions pay particular attention to gender balance, and with more than 40% of fellowships awarded to female scientists, are the best performing part of Horizon 2020 with respect to gender."* The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, named after the double Nobel Prizewinning Polish-French scientist famed for her work on radioactivity, support excellent researchers at all stages of their careers, irrespective of nationality. A [press release](#), a [factsheet](#) and more information on the [profiles of the 30 selected researchers](#) can be found online. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel. +32 229 56184)

### **Juncker Plan: Investment Plan for Europe unlocks EUR 100 million for SMEs in Czech Republic**

The EIB and Česká spořitelna a.s. (CSAS), a Czech Republic based bank, have signed an agreement to provide EUR 100 million worth of financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Czech Republic. This transaction was made possible by the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The EFSI is the central pillar of the European Commission's Investment Plan for Europe, the so-called "Juncker Plan". The agreement is expected to allow CSAS to offer additional financing worth EUR 100 million on more favourable terms to SMEs and midcaps engaged in climate action and energy efficiency projects in the Czech Republic. European Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"The Investment Plan is working to empower SMEs across Europe to take their next steps. I am delighted that today's agreement will facilitate innovation, expansion and job-creation by small businesses in the Czech Republic. I wish those SMEs who will benefit from today's transaction every success in the future"*. (For more information see [here](#) or contact Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

### **Ten years of European solidarity via the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund**

Ten years ago, the [European Globalisation adjustment Fund \(EGF\)](#) began its operations. The fund is a practical demonstration of European solidarity because it gives financial support to Member States to help workers and companies adjust in response to changing patterns of trade. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: *"The European Globalisation adjustment Fund is one of the most concrete expressions of European solidarity and an essential instrument to support workers who have lost their jobs as a result of changing trade patterns. During the last ten years we were able to support more than 140,000 people. It has a clear added-value because it tops up national support mechanisms for workers involved in mass lay-offs, and funds measures that are tailored to workers' specific needs in order to help them move on."* Since its establishment in 2007, the Commission has received 148 applications from 21 Member States, totalling almost €600 million of EGF co-funding in support of 138,888 redundant workers and 2,944 persons not in employment, education or training (NEETs). More information can be found in the [press release](#) and [factsheet](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

### **Mayors of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos visit the Commission**

On the invitation of Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, the mayors of the Aegean islands of Lesbos (Spyros Galinos), Samos (Michalis Angelopoulos), Chios (Manolis Vournous), Leros (Michalis Koliass) and Kos (George Kyritsis) are in Brussels today. Discussions will focus on the migratory challenges the islands are facing, including as regards reception capacity for migrants and efforts to decongest the islands. In addition to meeting Commissioner **Avramopoulos**, the five mayors will also meet with EU Coordinator for the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement Maarten Verwey as well as Commission experts in the field of migration. A statement will be available on [EBS](#) from 18:00. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 80423)

## **EU and New Zealand move a step further in expanding trade links**

Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia Malmström, and New Zealand's Minister of Trade, Todd McClay, met today in Brussels to mark the end of preparatory talks for potential EU-New Zealand trade negotiations. Over the last months, representatives from the EU and New Zealand have examined all bilateral economic issues to define the areas to be covered and the right level of ambition for any future negotiations. As a next step, the European Commission will ask Member States for a negotiating mandate to negotiate on behalf of the EU on the basis of specific objectives. In parallel, the Commission is finalising its assessment of the potential impact of such a trade deal, taking into account the preliminary scope agreed today. This assessment will take into account new opportunities that an EU-New Zealand trade agreement could create for EU businesses, as well as agricultural sensitivities that need to be accommodated. The discussions started in October 2015 based on new policy orientations set out in the EU trade and investment strategy "[Trade for All](#)". With annual bilateral trade amounting to more than €8 billion, the EU is New Zealand's second largest trading partner after Australia. For the EU, trade with New Zealand results in a positive trade balance of €1.3 billion, and EU companies hold nearly €10 billion in foreign direct investment in New Zealand. Any potential deal would aim to further deepen this trade and investment relationship. More information is available on [the website of DG Trade](#). [Video](#) and [photo](#) footage from today's meeting can be found on EbS. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Axel Fougner – Tel.: +32 229 57276)

## **Cohesion Policy: implementation gains speed; web-portal now featuring important updates**

For the implementation of Cohesion Policy through the five [European Structural and Investment Funds](#) during the current financial period 2014 -2020, last year brought a breakthrough. During 2016, the selection rate of operations increased significantly from 8% to 28% of the Cohesion Policy allocations. The data reveals that the acceleration of investments has been particularly marked towards the end of 2016. Including national co-financing, €176 billion are already being invested through Cohesion Policy across the EU's 263 regions. "We are on the right track in terms of implementation. The 2014 – 2020 programmes are now gaining speed and I reiterate my appeal to all Member States to further accelerate their efforts in both selection and implementation", commented Regional Policy Commissioner Corina **Crețu**. At the same time the Commission launches today an upgraded version of the [Open Data Platform](#). This website provides data on financing and achievements of Cohesion Policy for 2014–2020. It is now updated with the December 2016 data and with improved visualisations on the progress by Fund, by Member State and by programme. "The Open Data Platform shows that implementation of our Funds is making good progress, with now over 30% of projects selected for the European Social Fund and over 60% for the Youth Employment Initiative. This online tool is a great initiative that makes detailed information on EU investments and their implementation accessible to everybody", said Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Marianne **Thyssen**. (For more information: Jakub Adamowicz – Tel.: [+32 229 50595](#); Sara Soumillion – Tel.: [+32 229 67094](#))

## **State aid: Commission clears €420 million Czech support scheme for combined heat and power**

The European Commission has approved a Czech support scheme for electricity generation from high-efficiency combined heat and power plants under EU state aid rules. The scheme supports electricity produced from high-efficiency combined heat and power plants commissioned from January 2016 until December 2020. The scheme has a total budget of €420 million. High-efficiency co-generation of electricity and heat helps to increase energy efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions, and leads to higher levels of environmental protection. The Commission recognised that the measure helps the Czech Republic to achieve its 2020 environmental and climate change objectives, in line with EU objectives, while at the same time avoiding undue distortions of competition as the scheme will benefit a range of different market players. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [CS](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

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