



## Daily News 15 / 10 / 2020

Brussels, 15 October 2020

### **Coronavirus: Commission lists key steps for effective vaccination strategies and vaccines deployment**

Today, ahead of the discussion of EU leaders, the [Commission is presenting the key elements](#) to be taken into consideration by Member States for their COVID-19 vaccination strategies in order to prepare the European Union and its citizens for when a safe and effective vaccine is available, as well as priority groups to consider for vaccination first. President of the European Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen**, said: *"A safe and effective vaccine is our best shot at beating coronavirus and returning to our normal lives. We have been working hard to make agreements with pharmaceutical companies and secure future doses. Now, we must ensure that once a vaccine is found, we are fully prepared to deploy it. With our Vaccination Strategy, we are helping EU countries prepare their vaccination campaigns: who should be vaccinated first, how to have a fair distribution and how to protect the most vulnerable. If we want our vaccination to be successful, we need to prepare now."* The Commission is working to ensure that there will be access to safe vaccines across Europe, and encourages a coordinated approach of vaccination strategies for deployment of the vaccines. A full [press release](#) and a [factsheet](#) are available online. (For more information: Stefan De Keersmaecker – Tel.: +32 229 84680; Darragh Cassidy – Tel.: +32 229 83978)

### **Politique de cohésion de l'UE : la Commission annonce les lauréats des prix REGIOSTARS 2020**

La Commission européenne a annoncé les gagnants de l'édition 2020 des [prix REGIOSTARS](#) qui récompensent les meilleurs projets de politique de cohésion dans l'Union européenne. Pour la toute première fois, l'édition de la [cérémonie REGIOSTARS](#), qui se déroulait lors de la 18e [Semaine européenne des régions et des villes](#), était entièrement digitale cette année. Six commissaires ont organisé l'événement à distance et le concours de cette année a recensé le plus grand nombre de candidatures jamais enregistré. La commissaire en charge de la cohésion et des réformes, Elisa **Ferreira**, a déclaré : *« Je tiens à féliciter chaleureusement les meilleurs projets pour la politique de cohésion 2020. Les bénéficiaires des projets sont les acteurs de la politique de cohésion, car ce sont eux qui font de notre mission une réalité, c'est-à-dire, une Union européenne plus juste et plus cohésive, assurant la convergence des niveaux de vie et améliorant le bien-être de chacun. Les prix REGIOSTARS soulignent que nous pouvons obtenir d'excellents résultats lorsque l'Union Européenne, les États membres, les régions et les villes travaillent ensemble pour une utilisation et une mise en œuvre optimales des fonds et projets de l'UE. »* La Commission européenne a lancé les prix REGIOSTARS en 2008 afin d'inspirer d'autres régions et chefs de projet à travers l'Europe. Cinq catégories et un prix du public sont à gagner chaque année. La liste des gagnants et plus de détails sont disponibles dans notre [communiqué de presse](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Vivian Loonela - Tél.: +32 229 66712; Veronica Favalli - Tél.: +32 229 87269)

### **Investment Plan in Sweden: €40 million for biotech company researching cancer treatments**

With support from the [European Fund for Strategic Investment](#) (EFSI), the European Investment Bank (EIB) provides €40 million (SEK 416m) of financing to the Swedish biotech company Oncopeptides for their long-term research and growth strategy. Oncopeptides is developing drug treatments for rare haematological cancers – like multiple myeloma that affects ca. 3 in every 10,000 people each year for which there is no cure. The financing made available through the new agreement will be notably used to fund phase 3 clinical studies of Oncopeptides' lead candidate drug treatment which aims at extending and improving the quality of life for patients. Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"Investment in research and innovation is crucial towards achieving our goal to beat cancer, contributing to the development of effective health and care tools for the prevention, early diagnosis and successful treatment of the*

disease. This is why we are setting up a mission to fight cancer as part of the future Horizon Europe programme. By joining efforts across Europe, we will ensure that more people will live without cancer in the future, while increasing quality of life for those affected." The press release is available [here](#). The [Investment Plan for Europe](#) has so far mobilised €535 billion of investment across the EU, with a quarter supporting research, development and innovation projects. (For more information: Marta Wieczorek – Tel.: +32 229 58197; Flora Matthaes – Tel.: +32 229 83951)

## **Liberté et pluralisme des médias : l'UE finance des projets de soutien à la coopération transfrontalière dans le domaine des médias**

Le projet financé par l'UE, [Stars4Media](#), soutenu par 1,2 million d'euros de fonds européens, a sélectionné [21 initiatives](#) impliquant 105 professionnels des médias à travers 17 pays pour accélérer l'innovation et accroître la couverture transfrontalière. L'UE soutient également à hauteur de 1,5 million d'euros le projet [Investigative Journalism for Europe \(IJ4EU\)](#) qui a récemment accordé 75 000 euros à [10 enquêtes transfrontalières](#) en cours allant des dangers de la désinformation lors de la crise du coronavirus aux pratiques des plateformes de jeux et paris en ligne. La vice-présidente chargée des valeurs et de la transparence, Věra **Jourová**, a déclaré : « Ces différentes initiatives permettent à des journalistes des quatre coins de l'Europe d'unir leur talent pour encore mieux nous informer. La Commission est déterminée à accroître son soutien à ce type de projets et à présenter de nouvelles actions, notamment pour améliorer la protection des journalistes, dans le cadre du plan d'action européen pour la démocratie que nous adopterons d'ici la fin de l'année. » Le commissaire chargé du marché intérieur, Thierry **Breton**, a ajouté : « Nous défendons sans relâche les médias indépendants et soutenons les initiatives visant à promouvoir la liberté et le pluralisme des médias en Europe. L'effort de la Commission pour aider les médias d'information à se rétablir sera complété par le plan d'action pour les médias et l'audiovisuel qui contribuera à stimuler leur transformation numérique pour le futur. » Le soutien de l'UE se concrétisera notamment par de nouveaux appels à propositions, qui seront publiés d'ici la fin de l'année, notamment un Observatoire de la propriété des médias destiné à accroître la transparence dans le domaine en créant des bases de données accessibles au public sur les principaux médias. Un autre appel soutiendra jusqu'à cinq projets pilotes et actions préparatoires sur la liberté des médias et le journalisme d'investigation. La Commission a aussi proposé pour la première fois une enveloppe dédiée au pluralisme des médias de 61 millions d'euros sous le programme Europe créative au sein du prochain cadre financier pluriannuel. Vous trouverez plus d'informations sur les projets que soutient l'UE dans cette [fiche d'information](#) et sur les futurs appels à projets [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations : Johannes Bahrke - Tél: +32 229 58615; Charles Manoury - Tél: +32 229 13391)

## **Green Deal: Commission launches Level(s) - the European Framework for Sustainable Buildings**

Today, the European Commission officially launched [Level\(s\)](#) – the European Framework for Sustainable Buildings - closely affiliated with the goals of the [European Green Deal](#) for a sustainable building sector, and part of the actions described in the new [Circular Economy Action Plan](#) and the [Renovation Wave Strategy](#). It contributes to President **von der Leyen's** [initiative](#) of a [new European Bauhaus](#). *Level(s) is an important tool to help architects, builders and public authorities play their role by improving the buildings we live, study and work in.* Welcoming the initiative, Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus **Sinkevičius**, said: "The European Green Deal set our goal - making Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 – but this will require innovative ways to cut emissions. We need a functioning circular economy with clean energy at the heart of it. Level(s) is designed to improve the sustainability of buildings throughout their lifecycle, helping professionals deliver better buildings while also speeding Europe's transition towards a more circular economic model." Buildings are responsible for 36% of EU's greenhouse gas emissions from energy, and looking at the whole life cycle, including not only use, but also manufacturing of the construction products, construction and end of life, they consume half of our energy. In addition, the buildings and construction sector consume nearly half of all extracted materials, one third of the water we use and one third of our waste. Level(s) is a framework to help design and construct sustainable buildings with the whole lifecycle in mind. It focuses attention on the most important aspects of a building's performance, providing a simple entry point to what can be a very complex area. The framework has been developed for use by the various actors taking part in the construction of a building, as well as by those managing assessment and certification schemes to make sure that their criteria reflect the most important priorities for the circular economy at European level. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 229 53664)

## **Commission welcomes Member States' declaration on EU cloud federation**

The Commission welcomes the Joint declaration by 25 EU Member States yesterday on building the next generation of cloud in Europe. Advancing European cloud offers is essential to increase the competitiveness of European businesses and provide European citizens, as well as public administrations and companies everywhere, with greater choice regarding the trustworthy data processing infrastructure and services that they need to develop future data-driven innovation and emerging technologies, such as 5G/6G and artificial intelligence. Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for the Internal Market, said, *"Europe needs to join forces to lead on the current and upcoming wave of industrial and public data. This declaration is promising and shows the depth of the change that we witness. There is a common understanding that it is vital that any data can be stored and processed in Europe, according to European rules and standards. That will be a key pillar of our digital sovereignty for this Digital Decade and will propel Europe's recovery, ensure long-term competitiveness and help us reach climate sustainability."* To pool forces and lead the cloud uptake in the private and public sectors across Europe, Member States agreed that their joint actions will focus on: combining private, national and EU investment efforts in deploying resilient and secure cloud infrastructures and services and supporting the development of a competitive European cloud supply industry and Europe as a global data hub; defining a common European approach on federating cloud capacities, by working towards one set of joint technical solutions and policy norms in order to foster pan-European interoperable EU cloud services; leading the shift towards more secure, interoperable and energy-efficient data centres and cloud services in particular for small and medium enterprises, start-ups and the public sector. The Commission, together with Member States, aims to create more synergies between national and cross-border initiatives to enhance and broaden their interoperability, scale-up and scope. To this aim, the next step will be the launch of a European Alliance on Industrial Data and Cloud, as announced in the [European Data strategy](#) of February 2020. Interested Member States, industries and experts will work together to design the detailed business, investment and implementation plans to deploy the next generation cloud. You will find more information and the text of the declaration [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Charles Manoury – Tel.: +32 229 13391)

## **Natura 2000 Awards : EU rewards excellence in nature protection across Europe**

At a [virtual ceremony](#) yesterday evening, Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus **Sinkevičius**, announced this year's winners of the [Natura 2000 Awards](#). The Awards recognise conservation success stories across the EU and raise awareness about one of Europe's outstanding achievements – the [Natura 2000](#) network of protected areas. The six winners include projects from Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Spain, and a trans-boundary project involving partners in Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. Commissioner **Sinkevičius** said: *"The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the link between healthy, resilient societies and keeping our natural environment in good condition. This year's winners demonstrate that investing time, energy and resources into nature protection brings big rewards not only for nature, but also for us. These are the models of cooperation and solutions that need to be scaled up if we are to deliver on the commitments of the EU Biodiversity Strategy."* 85 applicants competed in five categories: conservation, socio-economic benefits, communication, reconciling interests, and cross-border cooperation and networking. The special European Citizens' Award went to the project '[Partnership for protection of Bulgarian old-growth forests in Natura 2000](#)'. The project helped to reconcile conflicting interests over the designation of forest-related Natura 2000 sites. As a result, an additional 109,300 ha of old growth forests were designated for protection and excluded from harvesting. In its [Biodiversity Strategy](#) published earlier this year, the Commission proposed the planting of 3 billion trees by 2030 as part of a far-reaching EU Nature Restoration Plan. More information and the full list of winners can be found [here](#). (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 229 53664)

## **EU Cohesion policy: Commission publishes a new survey on cross border cooperation and a declaration from young people on the future of the European territorial cooperation**

Today, the European Commission has published a [declaration](#) drafted by young people to contribute to improve the European territorial cooperation ([Interreg](#)) and a [survey](#) on the European citizens' awareness and concerns about cooperation in the border territories of the European Union, where one third of Europeans live. This year marks [30 years of Interreg](#). The declaration, presented today during a youth debate at the Interreg Annual Event, provides suggestions to policy-makers about how to better use Interreg funding to meet young people's needs and expectations. It contains 12 recommendations and covers five areas of concern, ranging from education and employment to climate change and access to EU funds. Among others, young people wish to be more involved in

relevant EU-wide groups and networks, increase the knowledge of Interreg in schools and universities, have an easier access to the calls that have a dedicated budget for youth, and want to actively participate to the monitoring committee. The survey published today shows that cross-border mobility has improved by 3 percentage points since 2015, reaching 56% of citizens living in EU border regions. Moreover, 38% European citizens consider living in a border region an opportunity. The most mentioned reasons for crossing borders are leisure activities such as tourism (58%), followed by shopping for goods or services (34%). Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa **Ferreira**, said: *"I warmly encourage all Interreg decision-makers to carefully read the Declaration and incorporate its recommendations in their daily efforts to improve the quality of life of citizens living in border areas. Young people deserve to influence political decisions that affect them. The survey we publish today also shows that more and more citizens live their lives across borders. This confirms that we must continue to support EU border areas with Interreg funds to improve the opportunities to grow together."* (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Veronica Favalli - Tel.: +32 229 87269)

## **REUNION DU COLLEGE: Pacte vert: la Commission adopte une nouvelle stratégie dans le domaine des produits chimiques, vers un environnement exempt de substances toxiques**

La Commission européenne a adopté hier la [stratégie de l'Union européenne pour la durabilité dans le domaine des produits chimiques](#). Cette stratégie est le premier pas sur la voie de l'ambition « zéro pollution » pour un environnement exempt de substances toxiques annoncée dans le [Pacte vert pour l'Europe](#). Elle stimulera l'innovation en faveur de produits chimiques plus sûrs et plus durables et renforcera la protection de la santé humaine et de l'environnement contre les produits chimiques dangereux. Elle prévoit notamment d'interdire l'utilisation des produits chimiques les plus nocifs dans les produits de consommation tels que les jouets, les articles de puériculture, les cosmétiques, les détergents, les matériaux en contact avec des denrées alimentaires et les textiles, sauf s'ils se révèlent essentiels pour la société, et de veiller à ce que tous les produits chimiques soient utilisés de manière plus sûre et plus durable. La stratégie définit des mesures concrètes visant à rendre les produits chimiques sûrs et durables dès leur conception et à faire en sorte que les produits chimiques puissent produire tous leurs avantages sans nuire à la planète ni aux générations actuelles et futures. Plus d'informations sont disponibles dans notre [communiqué de presse](#), [Q&A](#) et [fiche d'information](#). La Commission européenne a également adopté hier une proposition de programme d'action pour l'environnement à l'horizon 2030 (8e PAE). En cohérence avec le Pacte vert européen, elle se concentre sur la mise en œuvre à tous les niveaux de gouvernance et sur le monitoring des progrès réalisés. Plus d'informations sont disponibles [ici](#). Enfin, la Commission a également adopté hier une proposition législative modifiant [le règlement Aarhus](#) afin de permettre un meilleur contrôle public des actions de l'UE portant atteinte à l'environnement. Plus d'informations sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Vivian Loonela - Tél.: +32 229 66712; Daniela Stoycheva - Tél.: +32 229 53664)

## **State aid: Commission approves €8.5 million Italian tax scheme to support agricultural cooperatives affected by the coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved a €8.5 million Italian scheme to support agricultural cooperatives that have been particularly affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#). Agricultural cooperatives have been significantly hit by the restrictive measures imposed by the government to limit the spread of the coronavirus, due to the structure of their supply chain that relies heavily on small local retailers as well as on cooperative members. The support will take the form of a favourable tax regime for revaluation of assets by agricultural cooperatives. In accordance with the generally applicable tax rules, companies in Italy may revalue business assets as part of their 2019 financial accounts. Such revaluation involves the payment of a substitute tax of 12% on the value increase. Building on the above regime, the approved scheme allows agricultural cooperatives and their consortia to offset up to 70% of their pre-existing losses to reduce the base of calculation of the substitute tax. Accordingly, such agricultural cooperatives may benefit from a partial or total exemption from the substitute tax. The purpose of the measure is to ease liquidity constraints of agricultural cooperatives, to facilitate their access to finance and to mitigate the liquidity shortages that they are still facing as a result of the current crisis. The Commission found that the Italian scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. In particular, (i) the amount of aid will not exceed €100,000 per company active in the primary production of agriculture products, €120,000 per company active in the aquaculture sector, and €800,000 per company active in all other sectors; and (ii) the scheme is limited in time until 30 June 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 numbers SA.58418 in the [State aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website. (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

### **State aid: Commission approves €1.5 million Slovenian scheme to support farmers and SMEs active in the agri-food sector affected by coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved a €1.5million Slovenian scheme to support the agri-food sector in the context of 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 farmers and small or medium-sized companies (SMEs) active in the processing of agricultural products. 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 does not exceed €800,000 per company as provided by the Temporary Framework for companies active in the processing of agricultural products sector; and (ii) the scheme will run until 31 December 2020. 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.58887 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)

### **Concentrations: La Commission autorise l'acquisition d'Ascoval et de FRI par Liberty**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition d'Ascoval et de FRI, toutes deux basées en France, par Liberty, basée à Singapour. Ascoval est une usine qui fabrique des produits sidérurgiques semi-finis. FRI exploite l'aciérie Hayange située en France qui produit des rails, un type de produits finis en acier. Liberty est une société internationale active dans le secteur des métaux et de l'industrie, dont les matières premières, le recyclage des métaux et la fabrication d'acier, d'aluminium et de produits de l'ingénierie. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence compte tenu de son impact très limité sur la structure des marchés en cause. La transaction a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.9917](#). (Pour plus d'informations : Arianna Podesta – Tél.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tél.: +32 229 90526)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **#ErasmusDays 2020: events in Europe and across the world celebrate the success of Erasmus+**

On 15, 16 and 17 October 2020, the 4th edition of [#ErasmusDays](#) will celebrate the [Erasmus+ Programme](#) with more than 4,600 events - both digital and physical - taking place in 80 countries around the world. Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: "Since 1987, Erasmus+ has helped more than 10 million students, pupils, learners and young people gain invaluable experience abroad and strengthen their skills. This year, more than ever, we need the Erasmus Days to celebrate the unique opportunities offered by the programme, and to convey a message of strength and resilience to the whole Erasmus+ community."

Highlighting the beneficial societal role of the Erasmus+ programme, two extra Erasmus+ [calls for proposals](#) are currently open, to support digital education and training, digital youth work and creative skills - each providing €100 million for collaborative projects that respond to the educational challenges posed by the coronavirus crisis. Candidate organisations have until 29 October to apply. The next Erasmus+ Programme (2021-2027), currently subject to discussion in the European Parliament and the Council, will further enhance the programme's unique contribution to European society. It will focus even more on social inclusion, while fostering the competences needed for a successful green and digital transitions. #ErasmusDays 2020 events and initiatives are open to the public and include webinars, open door events, virtual meetings, photo exhibitions, online escape games and radio shows. An online exhibition highlighting Erasmus+ projects promoting inclusion will be available on [EPALE](#), a platform for adult learning professionals in Europe. The #ErasmusDays 2020 [official website](#) includes a map with the full programme. *(For more information: Susanne Conze – Tel : +32 229 80236; Sinéad Meehan-van Druten - Tel : +32 229 84094)*

### **Relance européenne : le commissaire Hahn a pris la parole lors de la 9ème table ronde conjointe DZ BANK – Forum officiel des institutions monétaires et financières**

Le commissaire chargé du budget et de l'administration, Johannes **Hahn**, a prononcé aujourd'hui un [discours lors de la 9ème table ronde conjointe DZ BANK – Forum officiel des institutions monétaires et financières \(OMFIF\)](#), lors du débat consacré à la « relance durable de l'Europe – comment elle se passe dans le monde ». Les discussions ont notamment porté sur le Fonds européen pour la relance et le futur programme d'emprunt de l'UE, ainsi que sur les implications sur l'utilisation internationale de l'euro. Parmi les autres participants au panel figuraient Klaus Regling, directeur général du Mécanisme européen de stabilité, Ambroise Fayolle, vice-président de la Banque européenne d'investissement, Alexander Schindler, membre du directoire de l'Union Asset Management Holding AG et Prakash Kannan, économiste en chef de GIC (l'une des trois entités de gestion des réserves à Singapour). La table ronde a eu lieu dans le cadre des réunions annuelles du Fonds monétaire international et du conseil des gouverneurs du Groupe de la Banque mondiale, qui ont réuni des banques centrales, des ministres des finances et du développement, des cadres du secteur privé, des représentants d'organisations de la société civile et des universitaires. Le discours principal sera publié [ici](#) sous peu. *(Pour plus d'informations: Balazs Ujvari – Tél.: +32 460 760296, Claire Joawn – Tél.: + 32 460 756859)*

[Eurostat](#): communiqués de presse

MEX/20/1919