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EU integration process in CEE countries

European Union delivers on its commitments in support of Ukraine

The European Commission and Ukraine signed a number of agreements, further demonstrating the EU's ongoing commitment to Ukraine and to the ongoing reform efforts that Ukraine is undertaking. The agreement supporting Ukraine's public administration reform is worth €104 million, and is one component of a larger package totalling €300 million of EU support for accountable and transparent governance in Ukraine.

http://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/news/european-union-delivers-its-commitments-support-ukraine_en

EU identifies 20 key deliverables for 2020 for the Eastern Partnership

The European Commission and the European External Action Service have developed a joint working document "Eastern Partnership – focusing on key priorities and deliverables". The document aims to identify 20 key deliverables for 2020, intended to contribute to the joint work of EU Member States and EaP Partner countries and step up actions in four key priority areas: economic development and market opportunities; strengthening institutions and good governance; connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change; mobility and people-to-people contacts.

http://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/news/eu-identifies-20-key-deliverables-2020-eastern-partnership_en

Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership

December infringements package: key decisions

The key decisions taken by the Commission (including 7 letters of formal notice, 77 reasoned opinions, 3 referrals to the Court of Justice of the European Union, and 4 closures) are presented below and grouped by policy area. The Commission is also closing 67 cases in which the issues with the Member States concerned have been solved without the Commission needing to pursue the procedure further.

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-12-12_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-12_en.htm?locale=en)

General development of the EU

Schulz, Fico and Juncker sign pledge to make “substantial progress” on key proposals in 2017

The first-ever joint declaration to fast-track a set of EU priority proposals was signed by the presidents of the EU Parliament, Council and Commission on Tuesday. They pledge, on behalf of their institutions, to make “substantial progress” in key policy areas next year. Global, economic, environmental and societal challenges put the European Union at “a critical junction”, the declaration says, and European citizens expect the EU to address these challenges efficiently. Parliament, the Council, and the Commission want to meet this expectation by giving “priority

treatment in the legislative process” to 58 proposals that should “make a concrete difference”.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20161208IPR55153/schulz-fico-and-juncker-sign-a-joint-declaration-on-key-proposals-2017>

Already €130 billion delivered into Europe's real economy under the European Structural and Investment Funds

For the first time, the Commission issued a progress report covering the five Funds. It shows a sharp acceleration in investments over the last months, with an implementation expected to reach cruising speed in 2017. By the end of 2015, 274 000 businesses had already received support under the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds; 2.7 million people already had benefitted from assistance in finding a job or developing skills; the biodiversity of 11 million hectares of agricultural land was improved and one million EU-funded projects were selected, for a total value of almost €60 billion.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4421_en.htm

Introduction to EU institutions and their functioning

Your Europe, Your Say! 2017 kicks off

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) selected the schools which will be participating in this year's edition of *Your Europe Your Say!*, its flagship event for youth. Their names were selected from over 680 applications at a draw in the presence of Goncalo Lobo Xavier, EESC Vice-President for Communication, and of Katiana Vicens Guillén and Indrè Vareikytė, members of the EESC Communication group. Thirty-three secondary schools, will be involved in this initiative, one from each of the 28 EU Member States and the 5 candidate countries (Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey), which will be taking part for the first time.

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.press-releases.41182>

New Strategic Partnership Framework for Developing Countries with IMF focuses on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

The Framework focuses on supporting economic institution building, including the design and implementation of macroeconomic policies and structural reforms which are key for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. It will be organised around three main pillars including an 'Africa Flagship Initiative' to support economic growth in Africa; a 'Collect More Initiative' to foster revenue mobilization; and a 'Spend Better Initiative' to achieve tangible expenditure outcomes. Upon signing the Framework, Carla Grasso, IMF Deputy Managing Director, made the following statement: "I am pleased to mark this new milestone in our cooperation with the European Commission with the Strategic Partnership Framework. This Framework will leverage our shared vision and core expertise to continue our long track record of working with developing countries as they build sound institutions to achieve sustainable, inclusive economic growth."

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news-and-events/new-strategic-partnership-framework-developing-countries-imf-focuses-achieving_en

<p>Decentralized management of EU funds</p>	<p>Investment Plan for Europe: Momentum continues with EFSI-backed agreements in all 28 Member States The European Commission welcomes the news that, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is now helping to boost investment, support jobs and spur growth in all 28 Member States. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4490_en.htm?locale=en</p> <p>EIF AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION LAUNCH NEW CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR MICRO-CREDIT AND SOCIAL FINANCE PROVIDERS The new 'EaSI Capacity Building Investments Window' will reinforce the capacity of selected financial intermediaries in the areas of microfinance and social enterprise finance. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4470_en.htm</p>
<p>Multi-level governance</p>	<p>Urban Agenda: new call for projects worth €50 million to help cities solve urban challenges The Commission is launching a second call to reward the most innovative projects put forward by the cities themselves. The new call, with a budget of €50 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), will reward the most innovative projects in three categories, in line with the priorities of the Urban Agenda for the EU: the integration of migrants, urban mobility and the circular economy. The call runs from today until mid-April 2017. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4367_en.htm</p> <p>Cohesion policy is delivering €130bn of quality investment, proving it is irreplaceable for all EU regions The delivery of European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds is accelerating sharply with 20% of total resources allocated to projects identified at national and regional level, according to a European Commission report just published. The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) stresses the unique impact of cohesion policy on the lives of EU citizens and encourages the Commission and Member States proactively to support the implementation of 533 operational programmes. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/cohesion-policy-is-delivering-130bn-of-quality-investment.aspx</p>
<p>Introduction to different negotiation chapters</p>	<p>Environment Council, 19/12/2016 The Council adopted conclusions on the sound management of chemicals. The text highlights the need to maintain a high level of protection of human health and the environment. The aim is to send a political message at a time when some legislation and measures in this field are to be developed or reviewed. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/env/2016/12/19/</p> <p>Debate on migration, security, Russia, Brexit and investment in jobs Political group leaders discussed how to relieve the humanitarian tragedy in Aleppo, sanctions against Russia and ways to boost European defence capacities ahead of the European Summit.</p>

	<p>Commission President Jean-Claude JUNCKER, outlined progress made in 2016 in tackling the migration crisis and reducing youth unemployment by 10%, thanks to the European Youth initiative. He called for more support for Italy to deal with migrants and reminded member states of the need to double the €44 billion external investment fund to help fight the root causes of migration.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20161208IPR55156/debate-on-migration-security-russia-brexit-and-investment-in-jobs</p>
<p>Specific issues relating to the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European arrest warrant • Stockholm programme • Third pillar <p>Recognition of professional qualifications</p>	<p>Facility for Refugees in Turkey: the EU invests in the education of 70,000 Syrian refugee children</p> <p>The European Commission signed contracts worth a total of €270 million for construction and equipping of school buildings for Syrian refugee children and their host communities in Turkey. Under these contracts, some 100 schools are to be built and equipped, benefitting over 70,000 Syrian refugee children primarily in Turkey's Southern and South-Eastern provinces. Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations said: "The EU continues to deliver on its firm commitment to support Syrian refugees living in Turkey. With the contracts signed today worth €270 million, we will further improve the educational infrastructure on the ground, enabling over 70,000 Syrian refugee children to have access to schooling across the country. We look forward to signing additional contracts in the areas of health, socio-economic support and municipal infrastructure in the near future, to give refugee kids and their families a better perspective in the country".</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4451_en.htm</p> <p>Security Union, Terrorist financing, EU-Turkey Customs Union, rule of law in Poland</p> <p>The European Commission has adopted a package of measures to better protect the security of European citizens by strengthening the EU's capacity to fight the financing of terrorism and organised crime, delivering on the commitments made in the Action Plan against terrorist financing from February 2016.</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/news/2016/12/20161221_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy)</p>	<p>Commission sets out the strategic way forward for the EU's Customs Union</p> <p>The European Commission adopted its long-term plan to give fresh impetus to the management of the Customs Union, a basic pillar of the European Union which supports and protects the Single Market. The role of customs authorities in ensuring our safety and security in the EU is increasing. A strong and well managed system helps to protect the public against terrorist, health, and environmental threats while at the same time fostering and developing competitive businesses.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4457_en.htm</p> <p>Commission reports on progress made under the European Agenda on Migration</p>

	<p>European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "Our comprehensive European approach on migration is showing positive results. We can see this in the continued implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and the dramatic decrease in the number of irregular migrants arriving in Greece. We also see it in the progress made by the Greek authorities in rectifying deficiencies in the country's asylum system, which has allowed us to recommend the gradual resumption of Dublin transfers to Greece as of 15 March 2017. This will provide further disincentives against irregular entry and secondary movements, and is an important step for the return to a normally functionally Dublin and Schengen system." http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4281_en.htm</p>
<p>Promotion of EU upcoming events and news</p>	<p>Call for UIA Experts – deadline extended! The call to become a UIA Expert has been extended until 31 January 2017. The UIA Permanent Secretariat has decided to extend its call for applications to become a UIA Expert that will support urban authorities in the delivery of the approved projects from the first Call for Proposals. The delay is in order to find applicants to support all the 18 approved projects. http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/call-uia-experts-deadline-extended</p> <p>Governance and Citizenship; 09/02/2017 / Jacques Delors building This event will present and discuss research findings on various aspects of political leadership in the EU: the performance of individual leaders, the strategic choices of EU institutions, and the role of individuals and institutions in specific circumstances and issue areas. Main issues for discussion are: Is the European Union "leaderless" or, else, does it have too many leaders? What are the opportunities and constraints for exercising leadership at European level? What is the impact of supranational and intergovernmental leadership on the course of integration? To what extent can individual leaders put their footprint on EU affairs? http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/Political-Leadership-in-the-EU.aspx</p> <p>3rd European Migration Forum 02-03/03/2017 / Brussels, Belgium The topic on the civil society dialogue platform on migration, asylum and migrant integration – was chosen following consultations with civil society representatives and it addresses the key issue of access: migrants' access to Europe, to rights and to services. Moreover, an underlining theme will be that of communication and the media – changing the current narrative on migration, with a view to explore how public discourse can influence public perceptions on migration and integration of migrants in receiving communities. http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-european-migration-forum-3</p>

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