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EU integration process in CEE countries

EU announces €18 million in humanitarian aid for Ukraine

An estimated 2.8 million people are displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. The complex crisis in eastern Ukraine has a dramatic impact on the population affected and with negative consequences for neighbouring countries. The recent escalation of violence in the Donbas shows the conflict is far from being solved. Heavy fighting in the vicinity of Adviiivka on 29 January-5 February has resulted in 17,000 residents without water, electricity and heating for almost a week.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-288_en.htm

From Estonia till Croatia: Intelligent Energy Saving Measures for Municipal housing in Central and Eastern European Countries (INTENSE)

INTENSE aims at transferring intelligent energy saving measures for municipal housing from “old” EU Member States to “new” Member States and Accession countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The project is implemented in 12 countries by 28 partners representing multiplier organizations, municipalities and project experts. Built on a holistic approach for planning of energy optimized housing, the project comprises an analysis of legal preconditions, experience exchange on best practice examples, development and implementation of training programmes, pilot planning activities at partner municipalities, and public awareness raising.

<http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/en/projects/intense>

Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership

February infringements package: key decisions

The key decisions taken by the Commission (including 5 letters of formal notice, 50 reasoned opinions, 7 referrals to the Court of Justice of the European Union, and 3 closures) are presented below and grouped by policy area. The Commission is also closing 103 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-17-234_en.htm

Commission calls for renewed efforts in implementing solidarity measures under the European Agenda on Migration

The Commission made a renewed call on Member States to pick up the pace of relocation to alleviate pressure from Italy and Greece, with few having met their commitments in full. The Commission is also calling on Member States to make good on the strong political commitment given and fill gaps in manpower and equipment by the end of March for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. With the EU-Turkey Statement continuing, one year on, to keep irregular crossings under

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| | <p>control but with arrivals still outpacing returns, the Commission is also calling on Greece and all Member States to keep up the momentum in implementing the Joint Action Plan to improve the situation in the islands. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-348_en.htm</p> |
| <p>General development of the EU</p> | <p>White Paper on the future of Europe: reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025 The White Paper will be presented by the European Commission on 1 March and sets out possible paths for the future of Europe. Taking into account the challenges that EU faces, from globalisation, to the impact of new technologies on society and jobs, to security concerns and the rise of populism, EU countries must ensure that they are not overwhelmed but rather that they seize the opportunities that these trends present. This is why the White Paper offers five scenarios for the Union's evolution by 2025, depending on the choices the countries will make. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/white-paper-future-europe-reflections-and-scenarios-eu27-2025_en</p> <p>Ten years of European solidarity via the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund The European Globalisation adjustment Fund was set up specifically to help workers affected by closures of factories or the decline of certain economic sectors and its operations began ten years ago. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, said: <i>"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."</i> http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-443_en.htm</p> |
| <p>Introduction to EU institutions and their functioning</p> | <p>Only a strong economy can allow Europe to weather the storm EESC proposes fostering economic growth and "beyond-GDP" indicators, because only if Europe has a strong economy, can face better the political and social challenges that stand before it. The EESC calls for more investment– both private and public – directly in the countries that need it most. The EU body representing Civil Society also finds that the Juncker plan is not enough. http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.press-releases.41611</p> |

Decentralized management of EU funds

General Affairs Council; Mid-term review of the EU's budgetary framework 2014-2020

The Council agreed to adjust the EU's multi-annual financial framework for 2014-2020 to bring it in line with new priorities. The agreed changes reinforce the EU's support for tackling the migration crisis, strengthening security, boosting growth and creating jobs. They will allow the EU to respond more easily to unexpected needs without changing the MFF expenditure ceilings. And they will help to avoid an excessive backlog of unpaid bills.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2017/03/07/>

Fair Taxation: Commission welcomes new rules to prevent tax avoidance through non-EU countries

The Commission welcomes the agreement reached at ECOFIN on new rules to help prevent tax avoidance via non-EU countries. This latest addition to the EU's anti-tax avoidance toolbox will prohibit multinational companies from escaping corporate tax by exploiting differences between the tax systems of Member States and those of non-EU countries (so-called 'hybrid mismatches'). "Today is yet another success story in our campaign for fairer taxation" said Pierre Moscovici, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs. "Step by step, we are eliminating the channels used by certain companies to escape taxation. I congratulate the Member States for agreeing on this tangible measure to clamp down on tax abuse and install a fairer tax environment in the EU."

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-305_en.htm

Multi-level governance

How competitive is your region? Commission publishes the 2016 Regional Competitiveness Index

The Commission published the third edition of the Regional Competitiveness Index for 263 EU regions, which is a study that provides useful insights for regions to boost their economic performance. Regional competitiveness means the ability of a region to offer an attractive and sustainable environment for firms and residents to live and work. The novelty of this edition is an interactive web tool, which allows for a more detailed analysis and comparison of each region, either with its peers in terms of GDP per capita or with all EU regions.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-333_en.htm

A fresh start for Europe: Regions and cities launch investment plan for a citizen-centred EU

The EU must address an alarming fall in public investment in order to tackle growing regional disparity, support sustainable growth and restore faith among citizens, politicians across Europe said today during a two-day Summit of Regions and Cities in Bratislava. Meeting in the Slovak capital a week after Slovakia took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first time, local and regional leaders adopted a declaration that calls on the EU to improve regulation and attract greater private-public investment to create more jobs and tackle the investment gap.

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| | http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/Regions-and-cities-launch-investment-plan-for-a-citizen-centred-EU.aspx |
| Introduction to different negotiation chapters | <p>Joint Statement by Commissioners Avramopoulos and King on the adoption by the European Parliament of the Commission's proposals for a Directive on combatting terrorism and for reinforcing checks at the Schengen external borders.</p> <p><i>With the new Directive on combatting terrorism, police and prosecutors across the EU will be able to fight and counter terrorism more effectively and ensure a common response to the evolving terrorist threat, fully in line with fundamental rights. In addition, the positive vote to reinforce checks at EU external borders through an amendment of the Schengen Borders Code, together with the roll-out of the European Border and Coast Guard, reflects the Union joint commitment to strengthen the management of the external borders and deliver on the measures agreed in the Bratislava roadmap.</i></p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-17-290_en.htm</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>Fair and sustainable: reforming the EU's asylum system</p> <p>The increased migration flows to Europe and the thousands of refugee children currently missing throughout Europe show the limits of the current EU asylum system. In April 2016 the European Commission proposed a reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) to create a fairer and more sustainable system for allocating asylum applicants among member states. The proposal identified five areas. One of them was the Dublin system that has shown its inadequacies under the strain of the huge the volume and concentration of refugees and immigrants.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20170224STO63944/fair-and-sustainable-reforming-the-eu-s-asylum-system</p> <p>EU strengthens rules to prevent new forms of terrorism</p> <p>In order to respond to the evolving terrorist threat, the EU is updating and extending the tools available to it. New rules adopted by the Council will help prevent terrorist attacks by criminalising acts such as undertaking training or travelling for terrorist purposes, as well as organising or facilitating such travel. They also strengthen the rights of the victims of terrorism.</p> <p>http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/07-rules-to-prevent-new-forms-of-terrorism/</p> |
| <p>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy)</p> | <p>Environmental Implementation Review: new way to help Member States apply EU rules benefits citizens, administrations and economy</p> <p>The Commission adopted the Environmental Implementation Review, a new tool to improve implementation of European environmental policy and commonly agreed rules. The Commission debated with Member States the causes of implementation gaps and in order to find solutions before problems become urgent. Full implementation of EU environment legislation could save the EU economy €50 billion every year in health costs and direct costs to the environment. According to Eurobarometer, 3</p> |

out of 4 citizens consider European laws necessary to protect the environment in their country, and 4 out of 5 agree that European institutions should be able to check whether the laws are being correctly applied.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-197_en.htm

Local leaders gather in Warsaw with Commissioner Crețu and Visegrad Group: Cohesion Policy is vital to build the future of the EU

Investing more to reduce regional disparities and to mobilise regions and cities to create opportunities for citizens should be the key answer to the challenges of the post-Brexit scenario. This was the main message shared by members of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) at a meeting in Warsaw on 2 March with the European Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu and the ministers for development from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia as well as Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia.

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/local-leaders-gather-in-warsaw-with-commissioner-cretu-and-visegrad-group.aspx>

Promotion of EU upcoming events and news

European Youth Conference: 20-23/03/2017

The Youth Conference is a headline event of each EU presidency. It brings together policy makers, young people and relevant stakeholders to consider and discuss youth policy development and implementation. It also affords young people the opportunity to inform and influence policy makers on the issues that are impacting on their lives. The Structured Dialogue between young people and policy makers is a central feature of each Youth Conference. This year's conference at Buġibba marks the conclusion of the V cycle of the Structured Dialogue process.

https://europa.eu/newsroom/events/european-youth-conference-0_en

Protection of critical infrastructures: 16-17/03/2017

The European Union has provided significant funding for research projects dealing with the impact of extreme events on critical infrastructures. As several projects ended recently or will be concluded in the coming months, it is timely to disseminate their results, collect feedback from stakeholders and put forward common recommendations. The workshop is organised by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) with the European Commission's DG RTD, DG ECHO, DG HOME, DG CLIMA, DG ENV, the Research Executive Agency (REA) and the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME).

https://europa.eu/newsroom/events/protection-critical-infrastructures_en

EMA human scientific committees' working parties with patients' and consumers' organisations (PCWP) and healthcare professionals' organisations (HCPWP) joint meeting: 15/03/2017

This joint PCWP/HCPWP meeting, organised by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), will include discussions on the EMA annual report 2016; on the interaction with patients, consumers, healthcare professionals and their organisations; the work plans for 2018-19; the outcome of the Committee for medicinal products for human use (CHMP) pilot project; European antibiotic awareness day; an update on topic groups; biosimilars; 10 year

report on conditional marketing authorisations; regulators'/health technology assessment (HTA) bodies' related activities; scientific committees feedback.
https://europa.eu/newsroom/events/ema-human-scientific-committees-working-parties-patients%E2%80%99-and-consumers%E2%80%99-organisations-pcwp_en

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