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EU integration process in CEE countries

State aid: Commission finds Poland's tax on the retail sector in breach of EU rules

The European Commission has found that a Polish tax on the retail sector is in breach of EU state aid rules. The Commission concluded that the progressive tax rates based on turnover give companies with low turnover an advantage over their competitors. Following a complaint, the Commission opened an in-depth investigation in September 2016 into the measure. Poland did not collect this new tax and, as a result, no State aid was effectively granted. Consequently, there is no need for recovery in this case. The Commission does not question Poland's right to decide on its taxation systems or on the objective of different taxes and levies. However, the tax system must comply with EU law, including State aid rules, and cannot unduly favour certain companies over others.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1861_en.htm

State aid: Commission approves public support for Bulgarian railway company BDZ

The European Commission has concluded that Bulgarian support measures in favour of the publicly-owned railway incumbent BDZ are in line with EU state aid rules. The measures will allow the company to address its debt level without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market. Bulgaria notified in 2011 a restructuring plan for BDZ to the Commission for assessment under EU state aid rules. The initial plan included several measures that could give an economic advantage to BDZ and therefore could involve state aid within the meaning of the EU rules. In November 2011, the Commission opened an in-depth investigation as it had doubts concerning BDZ's long-term viability and whether the restructuring plan contained sufficient measures to ensure the company's own contribution to the restructuring costs and to off-set distortions of competition.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1659_en.htm

Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership

Strengthened EU rules to tackle money laundering, tax avoidance and terrorism financing enter into force

The Juncker Commission has made the fight against tax avoidance, money laundering and terrorism financing one of its priorities with the Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive which enters into force. It strengthens the existing rules and will make the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing more effective. It also improves transparency to prevent tax avoidance. This entry into force comes as discussions with the European Parliament and the Council on extra measures further reinforcing the Directive are already at an advanced stage. Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President said: "*Laundered money is*

	<p>oxygen to crime, terrorism and tax-avoidance. We need to cut off its supply as best we can. Today's stronger rules are a big step forward but we now need quick agreement on the further improvements the Commission proposed last July."</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1732_en.htm</p> <p>End of roaming charges in the EU: Joint statement by 3 EU institutions</p> <p>From 15 June 2017, roaming charges in the European Union will no longer apply. President of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani, Prime Minister of Malta Joseph Muscat, on behalf of the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, issued the following statement: <i>"The European Union is about bringing people together and making their lives easier. The end of roaming charges is a true European success story. From now on, citizens who travel within the EU will be able to call, text and connect on their mobile devices at the same price as they pay at home. Eliminating roaming charges is one of the greatest and most tangible successes of the EU"</i>.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-17-1590_en.htm</p> <p>June infringements package: key decisions</p> <p>In its monthly package of infringement decisions, the European Commission ('Commission') is pursuing legal action against Member States for failing to comply with their obligations under EU law. These decisions, covering various sectors and EU policy areas, aim to ensure the proper application of EU law for the benefit of citizens and businesses. The key decisions taken by the Commission are presented below and grouped by policy area. The Commission is also closing 101 cases in which the issues with the Member States concerned have been solved without the Commission needing to pursue the procedure further.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-1577_en.htm</p>
<p>General development of the EU</p>	<p>New Pan-European Personal Pension Products</p> <p>European consumers will soon benefit from more choice when saving for retirement, thanks to Commission plans to create a new class of pension products. Europe is facing an unprecedented demographic challenge. For every retired person in 2060, there will only be two people of working age, compared to four today. The social and welfare systems are already coming under pressure. Part of the answer lies in occupational and personal pension schemes complementing state-based pensions. This is the reason why the Commission launched a proposal that will lay down the foundations to offer consumers a new pan-European option to save for retirement.</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/new-pan-european-personal-pension-products_en</p>
<p>Introduction to EU institutions and their functioning</p>	<p>Security Union: Commission delivers on interoperability of EU information systems</p> <p>The Commission delivered on its commitment to ensure interoperability</p>

	<p>and address the existing shortcomings of EU information systems for security and border management, as set out by the Commission in its 7th Security Union Report on 16 May and endorsed by the European Council of 22-23 June. As a first step, the Commission is proposing to strengthen the mandate of the EU Agency for the operational management of large scale IT systems (eu-LISA), enabling it to develop and roll-out the technical solutions to make the EU information systems interoperable. In addition, the Commission is also proposing further improvements to the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) to allow Member States to exchange criminal records of non-EU citizens more efficiently.</p> <p>Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos said: <i>"Our border guards, law enforcement and immigration officers need to have access to the right information at the right time to do their job. The security of our citizens depends on the quality and availability of this information. With the stronger mandate we propose today, eu-LISA will become the EU's digital centre of excellence, to make our vision for the interoperability of our information systems a reality."</i></p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1788_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to EU law</p>	<p>Consumer protection: how Parliament safeguards your rights</p> <p>More than one fourth of Europeans (27%) think that consumer and public health protection must be a priority for the European Union. People cited it as one of the top six priorities for EU policy, according to a 2016 Eurobarometer survey commissioned by the Parliament. Especially people in Cyprus, Greece and Spain consider it a priority. Find out more about what people think about consumer protection and how the European Parliament is helping to protect your rights.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170627STO78425/consumer-protection-how-parliament-safeguards-your-rights</p>
<p>Decentralized management of EU funds</p>	<p>College meeting: Future of EU finances</p> <p>Commission opens debate on the future of EU finances, discusses latest State aid and antitrust decisions, trade with Japan, and recent cyber attacks. At a time when the EU is doing more than ever before to protect, empower and defend its citizens, decisions are needed for an EU budget that is fit for purpose and makes every euro work for its citizens. With this reflection paper on the future of EU finances, the Commission sets out possible ways to make this ambition a reality. The challenge is to fund more with less given that the EU is expected to play a bigger role in new policy areas like migration, security and defence. Europe should also preserve its leading role on the global stage, as a major humanitarian and development aid donor and as a leader in the fight against climate change. All of that must be achieved with an EU budget that will only get smaller following the departure of the United Kingdom.</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/college-meeting-future-eu-finances_en</p> <p>€70 million to further support European fruit producers</p> <p>The measures were first introduced by the Commission in the wake of the</p>

Russian import ban in August 2014. The extended scheme is worth up to €70 million to EU fruit producers, and provides a safety net for producers who might not find a market outlet for their products as a result of the import ban. It will compensate European fruit farmers who choose for example to distribute their excess products to organisations (i.e. charity, schools) or make use of it for other purposes (i.e. animal feed, composting, processing). Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan, said: "*the Commission has done everything in its power to support European producers negatively affected by the Russian ban. This latest extension sends yet another clear signal that we will remain firmly and fearlessly on the side of our farmers. These support measures go hand in hand with our ongoing work to modernise and simplify the CAP for the benefit of both our farmers and our wider European society*".
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1825_en.htm

Investments in EU Transport: Commission proposes €2.7 billion for 152 projects

The European Commission is proposing to invest €2.7 billion in 152 key transport projects that support competitive, clean and connected mobility in Europe. In doing so, the Commission is firmly delivering on its Investment Plan for Europe and on Europe's connectivity including the recent "Europe on the Move" agenda. Selected projects will contribute to modernising rail lines, removing bottlenecks and improving cross-border connections, installing alternative fuel supply points, as well as implementing innovative traffic management solutions. This investment is made under the Connecting Europe Facility, the EU's financial mechanism supporting infrastructure networks, and will unlock €4.7 billion of public and private co-financing. Such investment will not only modernise Europe's transport network but also stimulate the economic activity and spur job creation. This year, out of the total €2.7 billion, the Commission is allocating €1.8 billion for the 15 Member States eligible for support from the Cohesion Fund in order to further bridge infrastructure disparities.
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1729_en.htm

Multi-level governance

MEPs and local leaders discuss new plans on migration, air quality, poverty and housing

Thanks to EU Urban Agenda, European cities have joined forces with EU institutions, national and regional governments, associations and experts to better address challenges such as migration, air quality, fight against poverty, housing. After more than one year of work, the pilot partnerships are now presenting their draft action plans which will be discussed over the summer in open consultations involving all member states and administrative levels – from Brussels to town halls. The action plans were discussed in the joint hearing organised by the European Parliament's committee on regional development (REGI) and commission for territorial cohesion policy (COTER) of the European Committee of the Regions on 29 June.
<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/MEPs-and-local-leaders-discuss-new-plans.aspx>

	<p>Cities and regions key to strengthen economic recovery and undertake structural reforms, new report shows</p> <p>The role of local and regional authorities and the awareness of territorial concerns in addressing economic challenges are growing. This is the conclusion of a new analysis by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) showing that 75% of the Country-specific Recommendations are related to the territory. The CoR published the report on the occasion of the CoR commission meeting for economic policy (ECON) on 22 June. It supports its call for a Code of Conduct for the stronger involvement of cities and regions in the European Semester. Each year, the Commission undertakes a detailed analysis of each Member State's outlook and challenges for budgetary, macroeconomic and structural reforms in the framework of the European Semester process. It then provides EU governments with Country-specific Recommendations (CSR) for the next 12-18 months in May/June, which the CoR's Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform analyses yearly from the perspective of the local and regional authorities.</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/CsR_2017.aspx</p>
<p>Introduction to different negotiation chapters</p>	<p>EU investment plan to tackle root causes of migration agreed</p> <p>An informal agreement on an EU scheme aiming to mobilise €44 billion in private sector investment in Africa and EU neighbourhood was reached with EU ministers on Wednesday. As part of the European External Investment Plan, the new European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) would encourage €44 billion in private investments in fragile states by offering a combination of grants, loans and financial guarantees worth €3.3 billion to boost jobs, growth and stability, thus addressing the root causes of migration.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170628IPR78506/eu-investment-plan-to-tackle-root-causes-of-migration-agreed</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>Helping non-EU nationals integrate into the labour market</p> <p>World Refugee Day: The Commission releases the EU Skills Profile Tool to help non-EU nationals enter the labour market. Integration of non-EU nationals into the labour market is one of the most important challenges EU faces, especially in light of the past, current and future inflow of refugees and asylum seekers. The cost of non-integration is far greater in the long run than the cost of effective integration policies, and in light of digitalisation and an ageing society, Europe has an interest in becoming an attractive destination for the talent our economies need. This is the reason why, on the occasion of the United Nations' World Refugee Day celebrated today, the European Commission presented the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third-Country Nationals. It is an off – and online web editor that will make it possible for non-EU nationals to present their skills, qualifications, and experiences in a way that is well understood by employers, education and training providers and organisations working with migrants across the whole European Union.</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/helping-non-eu-nationals-integrate-labour-market_en</p>

	<p>European Agenda on Migration and financial stability of EU Commission assesses progress made under the European Agenda on Migration and proposes targeted reforms to further improve the financial stability of the EU. The Commission reviewed progress made in the EU's emergency relocation and resettlement schemes and, as announced in its previous progress report, specified its position on making use of its powers under the Treaties for those Member States that have not yet implemented the Council decisions. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/european-agenda-migration-and-financial-stability-eu_en</p>
<p>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy)</p>	<p>Report: Protectionism on the Rise, EU Successful in Countering Barriers: 372 trade barriers in place around the world, 10% increase in 2016 European exporters reported a 10% increase in the number of trade barriers they encountered in 2016 alone. 372 such barriers were in place at the end of last year in over 50 trade destinations across the world. The 36 obstacles created in 2016 could affect EU exports that are currently worth around €27 billion. According to the Report on Trade and Investment Barriers released today by the European Commission, thanks to its effective Market Access Strategy, the Commission succeeded last year in removing as many as 20 different obstacles hindering European exports. Commenting on the report, EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström said: <i>"We clearly see that the scourge of protectionism is on the rise. It affects European firms and their workers. It is worrying that G20 countries are maintaining the highest number of trade barriers. At the upcoming G20 summit in Hamburg, the EU will urge leaders to walk the talk and resist protectionism. Europe will not stand idly by and will not hesitate to use the tools at hand when countries don't play by the rules."</i> http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1765_en.htm</p> <p>Commission takes further steps to enhance business transparency on social and environmental matters The Commission adopted guidelines on the disclosure of environmental and social information. These guidelines will help companies to disclose relevant non-financial information in a consistent and more comparable manner. The aim is to boost corporate transparency and performance, as well as encourage companies to embrace a more sustainable approach. Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President responsible for Euro and Social Dialogue, Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Market Union, said: <i>"Europe needs to take the lead in making economies greener and more sustainable. This is why we are today proposing flexible guidelines to boost corporate transparency across all sectors. By providing relevant information on their environmental and social credentials, companies are doing themselves a favour and helping their investors, lenders and society at large."</i> http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1702_en.htm</p>

Promotion of EU upcoming events and news

Stakeholder Consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights and Reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe

18/07/2017/ Brussels/ Belgium

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is drafting an opinion on the European Pillar of Social Rights and Reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe (COM(2017) 251 and COM(2017) 206).

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/dattis-pillar.aspx>

Join Regions and Cities for Development

10- 11/07/2017/ European Committee of the Regions

Co-organised by the **European Commission** and the **European Committee of the Regions**, the **Assises** are a unique dialogue forum between regions and cities on cooperation for development. The Assises will gather more than 600 representatives of local and regional authorities from the EU and partner countries: Africa, Caribbean, Pacific and Latin America. The Assises 2017 will take place in the wake of the new Agenda 2030 for Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Cities and regions will showcase projects, discuss common challenges and establish new partnerships over two days: Plenary sessions, political round tables, project-oriented workshops, thematic stands and networking areas, all focussing on sustainable development.

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/5th-Assises-of-Decentralised-Cooperation.aspx>

The CAP: Have your say

07/06/2017/Brussels/Belgium

On 2 February 2017, Commissioner Phil Hogan launched a major consultation on the future of the common agricultural policy (CAP). The three-month consultation allowed participants to share their views on the challenges faced by the EU agricultural sector, its rural areas and society as a whole, and on how a simpler, more modern CAP could potentially be used to meet them. This conference is a chance to take stock of the results of the consultation and to see how they match the scientific evidence from the ground compiled by the Commission.

https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/cap-have-your-say_en

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