

January 2016



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

EU integration process in CEE countries

High-Level Political Dialogue between the EU and Turkey in Ankara

The High Representative for Foreign Affairs/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Ambassador Volkan Bozkır issued this statement following the EU-Turkey High Level Political Dialogue meeting held in Ankara on 25 January 2016.

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release STATEMENT-16-156_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-16-156_en.htm)

Progress following Western Balkans Route Leaders' Meeting

A thirteenth video conference was held between the contact points nominated after the Western Balkans Route Leaders' Meeting held on 25 October. The objective was to follow up on the agreement reached at the meeting and set out in the Leaders' Statement. Senior officials from the countries and agencies present at the meeting had a detailed discussion on recent trends concerning external borders and reception capacity.

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release IP-16-148_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-148_en.htm)

EU-Armenia Cooperation Council

The European Union and Armenia reconfirmed their joint commitment to enhance and deepen their cooperation in all areas possible and compatible with Armenia's new international obligations deriving from its accession to the Eurasian Economic Union.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/01/18-eu-armenia/>

Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership

Commission discusses draft Schengen Evaluation Report on Greece

The College of Commissioners has taken note and discussed a draft Schengen Evaluation Report on Greece. The report looks at the presence of police and coast guard personnel on the inspected sites, the efficiency of the identification and registration process, sea border surveillance and cooperation with neighbouring countries.

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release IP-16-174_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-174_en.htm)

Rule of law in Poland: Commission starts dialogue

During its first formal meeting in 2016, the College of Commissioners discussed several important issues: The College held an orientation debate on recent developments in Poland and launched a structured dialogue under the Rule of Law Framework.

http://ec.europa.eu/news/2016/01/20160113_en.htm

Commission invests € 63.8 million in new environmental projects across Member States

New LIFE funding will help bring over € 1 billion of support to environmental plans across the EU. The European Commission announced an investment of € 63.8

	<p>million for the first-ever "Integrated Projects" to be funded under the LIFE programme for the environment. "Integrated Projects" were introduced to implement environmental legislation on a wider scale and increase the impact of funding for plans developed on the regional, multi-regional or national level. The six projects selected have a total budget of € 108.7 million, including € 63.8 million of EU co-financing.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-150_en.htm</p>
<p>General development of the EU</p>	<p>Member States agreed on a Commission proposal to invest €217 million in key trans-European energy infrastructure projects</p> <p>In total, 15 projects were selected following a call for proposals under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), an EU funding programme for infrastructure. The selected projects will increase energy security and help end the isolation of Member States from EU-wide energy networks. They will also contribute to the completion of a European energy market and the integration of renewables into the electricity grid</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-94_en.htm</p> <p>2015 Employment and Social Developments review</p> <p>This year's review reveals further positive employment and social developments in the EU. However, despite recent improvements, huge disparities still exist between Member States, in terms of economic growth, employment and other key social and labour market indicators. Many of these disparities are linked to an underutilisation of human capital on several fronts.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-93_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to EU institutions and their Functioning</p>	<p>The European Commission proposed the upgrading of the European Criminal Records Information System.</p> <p>This key action of the European Agenda on Security aims to improve cooperation between national authorities in the fight against terrorism and other forms of serious cross-border crime. This initiative will ensure that ECRIS, which is already widely used for exchange of criminal records of EU citizens, will be used to its full potential</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-87_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to EU law</p>	<p>Commission presents new measures against corporate tax avoidance</p> <p>The European Commission has opened up a new chapter in its campaign for fair, efficient and growth-friendly taxation in the EU with new proposals to tackle corporate tax avoidance. The Anti Tax Avoidance Package calls on Member States to take a stronger and more coordinated stance against companies that seek to avoid paying their fair share of tax and to implement the international standards against base erosion and profit shifting.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-159_en.htm</p> <p>Why does the Commission report on progress in judicial reform and the fight against corruption in Bulgaria and Romania?</p> <p>Upon the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union on 1 January 2007, certain weaknesses remained in both Member States in the areas of judicial reform and the fight against corruption, and in the case of Bulgaria in the fight against organised crime. These weaknesses could prevent an effective application of EU laws, policies and programmes, and prevent Bulgarians and Romanians from enjoying their full rights as EU citizens.</p>

	<p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-16-154 en.htm</p> <p>Deal on new rules to attract non-EU students, researchers and interns to the EU</p> <p>Harmonised EU entry and residence rules that will make it easier and more attractive for students and researchers from third countries to study or do research at EU universities were informally agreed by MEPs and ministers on Tuesday. The deal also has provisions to clarify and improve conditions for non-EU interns, volunteers, school pupils and au pairs, so as to facilitate cultural exchanges. These rules still need to be approved by Parliament as a whole and the Council of Ministers.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20151117IPR03054/html/Deal-on-new-rules-to-attract-non-EU-students-researchers-and-interns-to-the-EU</p>
<p>Decentralized management of EU funds</p>	<p>Commission invests in new environmental projects across Member States</p> <p>The European Commission today announced an investment of € 63.8 million for the first-ever "Integrated Projects" to be funded under the LIFE programme for the environment. "Integrated Projects" were introduced to implement environmental legislation on a wider scale and increase the impact of funding for plans developed on the regional, multi-regional or national level.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release IP-16-150 en.htm</p> <p>EU to invest €1 billion in regions along its external borders</p> <p>The European Commission has adopted a series of cross-border cooperation programmes totalling €1 billion, supporting social and economic development in the regions on both sides of the EU's external borders</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release IP-16-6 en.htm</p> <p>Erasmus+: The first year</p> <p>The Commission published three reports on EU funding in the area of education, training, youth and sport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report on the first year of implementation of Erasmus+, the EU funding programme for education, training, youth and sport between 2014-2020; • Statistics on student and staff mobility numbers in the last academic year under the former Erasmus programme for higher education. • A follow-up to the Erasmus Impact Study - focusing on regional analysis of the benefits of the Erasmus programme. <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-16-143 en.htm</p>
<p>Multi-level governance</p>	<p>EU Urban Agenda: new working methods to improve coherence of all EU policies on cities</p> <p>The new European Urban Agenda should improve the quality of life in cities but also the EU governance. It is about developing new working methods, including partnerships and selective impact assessments of legislation. European Parliament's Regional Development Committee and Committee of the Region's COTER members stressed in a joint hearing on January 25th that to reach this goal there is a need for a practical and concrete approach, reflecting the needs on the ground and building partnerships with different levels of government.</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/EU-Urban-Agenda-new-working-methods-to-improve-coherence-of-all-EU-policies-on-cities.aspx</p>

Introduction to different negotiation chapters

Chapter 1: Free movement of goods

Chapter 2: Freedom of movement for workers

Chapter 3: Right of establishment and freedom to provide services

Chapter 4: Free movement of capital

Chapter 5: Public procurement

Chapter 6: Company Law

Chapter 7: Intellectual property law

Chapter 8: Competition

Chapter 9: Financial services

Chapter 10: Information society and media

Chapter 11: Agriculture and rural development

Chapter 12: Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy

Chapter 13: Fisheries

Chapter 14: Transport policy

Chapter 15: Energy

Chapter 16: Taxation

Chapter 17: Economic and monetary policy

Chapter 18: Statistics

Chapter 19: Social policy and employment

Chapter 20: Enterprise and industrial policy

Chapter 21: Trans-European networks

Chapter 22: Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments

Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights

Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

Chapter 25: Research and development

Commission reports on progress in Romania under the Co-operation and Verification Mechanism

The Commission issued its latest report on steps taken by Romania on judicial reform and the fight against corruption, in the context of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM). The report shows continued progress towards the goals of the CVM and indicates where further steps are needed.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-152_en.htm

Commission issues report on progress in Bulgaria under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism

The report shows the steps taken by Bulgaria on judicial reform and the fight against corruption and organised crime in the past twelve months, and where further steps are needed.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-153_en.htm

Ports: transport MEPs favour clear public funding rules, but not free market access

The draft rules aim to boost the efficiency of seaports in the trans-European transport network, used by the bulk of EU maritime traffic, so as to make EU industry more competitive, attract investment and foster job creation in EU coastal regions. "We have been able to dismiss the forced free market access to port services. Especially for safety and security concerns, ports must be able to decide on the organisation of port services", said rapporteur Knut Fleckenstein (S&D, DE), who is steering the proposal through Parliament. "For the first time in the course of the long discussions on the port package we have the ports, the terminal operators and the unions on board."

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20160125IPR11370/Ports-transport-MEPs-for-clear-public-funding-rules-but-not-free-market-access>

Libyan mayors and migration in spotlight at ARLEM

Local politicians from across Europe and the Mediterranean will meet in Nicosia, capital of the Republic of Cyprus, on 18-19 January with relations between the European Union and its neighbourhood being reshaped by conflict, migration, social change and a review of the EU's neighbourhood policy. Improving skills and integrating migrants are two themes in a report that will be adopted by ARLEM.

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/arlem-7th-plenary-session-nicosia.aspx>

Fiscal Sustainability Report 2015

The Fiscal Sustainability Report 2015 provides an overview of the challenges to public finance sustainability faced by Member States in the short, medium and long term. Although public finances in the EU today are more sustainable than they were at the onset of the crisis, significant challenges remain over the medium and long term because of high debt levels and population ageing.

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/eeip/ip018_en.htm?utm_source=social%20media&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=fiscal%20sustainability%20report%202015%20-%2025/01/2016

2015 Employment and Social Developments review: Investing in people is key to economic growth

<p>Chapter 26: Education and culture Chapter 27: Environment Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection Chapter 29: Customs union Chapter 30: External relations Chapter 31: Foreign, security and defence policy Chapter 32: Financial control Chapter 33: Financial and budgetary provisions</p>	<p>The Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) review is an annual review of the latest employment and social trends, reflecting on upcoming challenges and possible policy responses.</p> <p>This year's review reveals further positive employment and social developments in the EU. However, despite recent improvements, huge disparities still exist between Member States, in terms of economic growth, employment and other key social and labour market indicators. Many of these disparities are linked to an underutilisation of human capital on several fronts.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-93_en.htm</p> <p>Energy: EU invests €217 million in energy infrastructure</p> <p>The Member States agreed on a Commission proposal to invest €217 million in key trans-European energy infrastructure projects.</p> <p>Today Member States agreed on a Commission proposal to invest €217 million in key trans-European energy infrastructure projects, mainly in Central and South Eastern Europe. In total, 15 projects were selected following a call for proposals under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), an EU funding programme for infrastructure. The selected projects will increase energy security and help end the isolation of Member States from EU-wide energy networks. They will also contribute to the completion of a European energy market and the integration of renewables into the electricity grid.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-94_en.htm</p>
<p>Specific issues</p>	<p>State of Play: Measures to Address the Refugee Crisis</p> <p>The list of priority actions set out the key measures immediately required in terms of: operational measures; budgetary support and implementation of EU law.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6134_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy).</p>	<p>Trade policy promotes sustainability and human rights</p> <p>The European Commission and the EU High Representative published today the first report on the concrete effects of the GSP+, the EU trade policy instrument devised to encourage third countries to comply with core international standards in the areas of human rights, labour rights, environmental protection and good governance.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-169_en.htm</p> <p>The European Commission has tabled legislative proposals to ensure car manufacturers comply strictly with all EU safety, environmental and production requirements.</p> <p>The Commission is proposing a major overhaul of the so-called EU type approval framework. The proposals will make vehicle testing more independent and increase surveillance of cars already in circulation. Greater European oversight will strengthen the system as a whole.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-167_en.htm</p> <p>New measures against corporate tax avoidance</p> <p>Commission's proposals aim for a coordinated EU wide response to corporate tax avoidance, following global standards developed by the OECD. New rules are needed to align the tax laws in all EU countries in order to fight aggressive tax practices by large companies</p>

	http://ec.europa.eu/news/2016/01/20160128_en.htm
Promotion of EU upcoming events and news	<p>Boosting entrepreneurial spirit – pioneering regions and cities in Europe The European Committee of the Regions will organise on 9 February 2016 in Brussels the conference "Boosting entrepreneurial spirit – pioneering regions and cities in Europe". One of the current key challenges in Europe is renewing and stabilising economic growth. In order to truly achieve dynamic growth in Europe and remain competitive in the global economy, Europe must find new, innovative and creative solutions to its challenges. http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/entrepreneurial-spirit.aspx</p> <p>Third Joint Action Conference in Varna, Bulgaria – 18&19/02/2016 Joint Action Conference on Planning & Educating Health Workforce without borders, co-funded by the European Health Programme http://healthworkforce.eu/events/18022016-varna/</p> <p>The role of city-regions in the achievement of a low-carbon economy 04/02/2016, Brussels, Belgium The COST association and the European Commission's Joint research centre (JRC) will host a joint workshop aiming at revisiting the importance of both bottom-up and top-down solutions in accelerating the penetration of low-carbon policies into practice. https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/event/workshop/role-city-regions-achievement-low-carbon-economy?search</p> <p>Public participation and transparency in the implementation of energy policies 25/02/2016- 26/02/2016, Belgrade, Serbia The workshop is part of the JRC activities on collecting and sharing diverse practices for public participation and developing a knowledge centre for transparency governance, in particular for the 'Energy – Transparency centre of knowledge' (E-TRACK). https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/event/workshop/e-track-enlargement-integration-workshop?search</p>

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.