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## EU integration process in CEE countries

### **Relocation: Commission moves to next stage in infringement procedures against the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland**

The European Commission has sent reasoned opinions to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland for non-compliance with their legal obligations on relocation. Despite repeated calls for action and the launch of infringement procedures by the Commission last month, these three countries remain in breach of their legal obligations and have shown disregard for their commitments to Greece, Italy and other Member States. On 15 June 2017, the Commission launched infringement procedures and sent letters of formal notice to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The replies provided have not been found satisfactory as none were accompanied by an indication that these Member States would start relocating swiftly to their territory. Whereas Hungary has not taken any action at all since the relocation scheme started, Poland has not relocated anyone and not pledged since December 2015. The Czech Republic has not relocated anyone since August 2016 and not made any new pledges for over a year.

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-2103\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2103_en.htm)

### **Infringements - Hungary: Commission launches infringement procedure for law on foreign-funded NGOs**

The European Commission decided to send a letter of formal notice to Hungary for its new law on foreign-funded NGOs adopted on 13 June. The Hungarian law introduces new obligations for certain categories of NGOs receiving annual foreign funding above HUF7.2 million (approx. € 24,000) to register and label themselves in all their publications, websites and press material as "organisations supported from abroad", and to report specific information about the funding they receive from abroad to the Hungarian authorities. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"Civil society is the very fabric of our democratic societies and therefore should not be unduly restricted in its work. We have studied the new law on NGOs carefully and have come to the conclusion that it does not comply with EU law. We expect that the Hungarian government will engage in a dialogue to resolve this issue as soon as possible. We await a reaction from the Hungarian authorities within a month."*

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-1982\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1982_en.htm)

## Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership

### **European Commission launches infringement against Poland over measures affecting the judiciary**

The European Commission launched an infringement procedure against Poland by sending a Letter of Formal Notice, following the publication in

the Polish Official Journal of the Law on the Ordinary Courts Organisation. The Commission's key legal concern identified in the law on the organisation of ordinary courts relates to the discrimination on the basis of gender due to the introduction of a different retirement age for female judges (60 years) and male judges (65 years). In the Letter of Formal Notice, the Commission also raises concerns that by giving the Minister of Justice the discretionary power to prolong the mandate of judges who have reached retirement age, as well as to dismiss and appoint Court Presidents, the independence of Polish courts will be undermined.  
[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-2205\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2205_en.htm)

#### **July infringements package – Part 1: key decisions**

In its monthly package of infringement decisions, the European 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 in the article and grouped by policy area. The Commission is also closing 122 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-17-1935\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-1935_en.htm)

#### **General development of the EU**

#### **Security: the EU is driving work to share information, combat terrorist financing and protect Europeans online**

The 9th Security Union progress report, highlights the recent steps taken to prevent terrorist financing through trafficking in cultural goods and improve the interoperability of EU information systems. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos said: *"In this rapidly changing security environment, we must intensify our efforts to deliver on all essential elements and work swiftly to achieve a genuine and effective Security Union. Fragmentation makes us all vulnerable. Unity and trust by enhancing cooperation and facilitating information exchange between our Member States is the only way for the EU to bring concrete added value and ensure the security and safety of European citizens."* Commissioner for the Security Union Julian King said: *"The Comprehensive Assessment fulfils a commitment I gave to the European Parliament to carry out a thorough review of the EU's security policy – the first in 16 years. There are some important lessons, including the need for greater agility to respond to the evolving threat landscape. There will be an opportunity to discuss with Parliament in September."*  
[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-2106\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2106_en.htm)

#### **EU consumers show growing demand for cross-border online shopping, new survey reveals**

The 2017 edition of the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard shows that more and more EU consumers are shopping online and that their trust in e-commerce has increased, in particular in buying online from other EU countries. While consumer conditions have improved overall since the last Scoreboard, the levels of trust, knowledge and protection still vary greatly

	<p>between EU Member States. Commissioner Jourová said: <i>"My priority has been to improve trust of the people and smaller retailers in the Digital Single Market. Consumers are now more confident when they shop online. And we've equipped them with a quick procedure to get their money back if something goes wrong, even when buying from another country. The challenge now is to encourage more businesses to respond to this growing demand."</i></p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2109_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2109_en.htm</a></p> <p><b>Commission launches public consultation on Health and Care in the Digital Single Market</b></p> <p>The input will feed into a new policy Communication to be adopted by the end of 2017, as announced in the recent review of the Commission's Digital Single Market strategy. Welcoming the initiative Vice-President Andrus Ansip and Commissioners Vytenis Andriukaitis, Mariya Gabriel and Carlos Moedas stated: <i>'We are dedicated to improving European citizens' quality of living by improving Europe's health, care and research systems by using digital technologies to their full potential. This consultation will help us identify ways to offer citizens, medical professionals and researchers better access to health data, prevention, rapid response to pandemic threats, personalised treatments and care. We are considering new digital initiatives to deliver on the free movement of patients and data, to support the modernisation of national health systems, and to bring together scattered evidence and innovative knowledge from across Europe. At the heart of our policies, citizens and their wellbeing are our first priority.'</i></p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2085_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2085_en.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to EU institutions and their functioning</b></p>	<p><b>White Paper on the Future of Europe</b></p> <p>Debate on the future of Europe is picking up speed with potentially over 30 million citizens reached so far. Four months after the Commission presented its White Paper on the Future of Europe, the debate on the future of Europe is picking up speed with potentially over 30 million citizens reached so far. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said: <i>"I am very encouraged to see so many people engage in the debate about the future of the European Union, which the Commission launched on 1 March 2017 with our White Paper. We have seen many different views expressed already and a strong positive momentum driving us forward. I will outline my vision in September but in reality Europe's future will be of your design. It is you writing the history books of tomorrow. So continue to engage and make your voices heard!"</i></p> <p><a href="https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/white-paper-future-europe-2017-jul-17_en">https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/white-paper-future-europe-2017-jul-17_en</a></p>
<p><b>Decentralized management of EU funds</b></p>	<p><b>Finance ministers face sceptical MEPs on steps taken in fight against tax fraud</b></p> <p>Finance ministers from four major European economies faced sceptical questions from MEPs on the PANA committee on their commitment to the fight against money laundering and tax avoidance. The questions came during a briefing by Finance Ministers Wolfgang Schäuble from Germany,</p>

Paschal Donohoe of Ireland, Pier Carlo Padoan from Italy and Jeroen Dijsselbloem of The Netherlands to Committee of inquiry to investigate alleged contraventions and maladministration in the application of Union law in relation to money laundering, tax avoidance and tax evasion, on Tuesday. The ministers listed the numerous legislative and other measures undertaken by their governments in the wake of the Panama Leaks.  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170710IPR79372/finance-ministers-face-sceptical-meps-on-steps-taken-in-fight-against-tax-fraud>

**Peace and stability projects will get more EU support**

The review of a key EU external assistance fund that has contributed to more than 260 stability and peace-building projects in 68 countries got the support of committee MEPs on Tuesday. Foreign affairs committee MEPs agreed to raise the EUR 2.3 bn budget of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace by EUR 100 mln by the end of 2020, so as to allow for exceptional circumstances in which the fund could help build the capacity of the military in partner countries.  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170710IPR79395/peace-and-stability-projects-will-get-more-eu-support>

**Multi-level governance**

**Smart specialisation for European regions**

Commission acts to help regions build resilient economies in the era of globalisation. Globalisation has brought enormous benefits to the less-developed economies of the world and many opportunities for Europeans; but while the benefits are widely spread, the costs are often borne unevenly as the Commission's reflection paper on harnessing globalisation highlighted. To take up the challenge of economic modernisation, Europe needs to empower its regions and help them create value. This means embracing innovation, digitisation, decarbonisation and developing people's skills. This the reason why, the Commission proposed a new set of actions to further help Europe's regions invest in their niche areas of competitive strength ("smart specialisation") and generate the innovation, resilience and growth needed.

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/smart-specialisation-european-regions-2017-jul-18\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/smart-specialisation-european-regions-2017-jul-18_en)

**Cities and regions can find 'right answers to the big development issues'**

European Committee of the Regions sets out ways to translate sustainable-development agenda into local and regional policies. Visions of a sustainable future set out by the United Nations and the European Union will require a dynamic and sustained collective process that cannot be driven solely by "centrally managed, top-down policies and programmes", the European Committee of the Regions declared on 12 July in a set of recommendations that also argue that the EU has yet to realise in full the "local and regional dimension" of sustainable development.

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/Cities-and-regions-can-find-right->

	<p><a href="#">answers-to-the-big-development-issues.aspx</a></p> <p><b>Regions and cities welcome increased funding for small-scale transport infrastructure serving cross-border communities</b></p> <p>European Commission invests €140m in 13 cross-border transport projects in cross-border areas in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain A €110m call for tenders was launched by the European Commission in October under the Connecting Europe Facility_(CEF), to fund cross-border missing links. The quality and expected impact of the selected projects led the executive to raise EU investment to €140m. The outcome of the selection process was presented earlier this week, after EU Member States represented in the Connecting Europe Facility Coordination Committee, green-lighted the proposal on 6 July 2017.</p> <p><a href="http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/cross-border-communities.aspx">http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/cross-border-communities.aspx</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to different negotiation chapters</b></p>	<p><b>EU Budget for 2018 must generate growth, jobs and ensure citizens' security</b></p> <p>To achieve sustainable growth and create jobs in the EU, boosting investment in research, innovation, infrastructure, education and SMEs is key, say MEPs. Parliament adopted a resolution proposed by 2018 budget rapporteur Siegfried Mureşan (EPP, RO) with principles to follow during the budget negotiations with Council. The resolution was adopted by 445 votes against 144, with 80 abstentions.</p> <p><a href="http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170629IPR78657/eu-budget-for-2018-must-generate-growth-jobs-and-ensure-citizens-security">http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170629IPR78657/eu-budget-for-2018-must-generate-growth-jobs-and-ensure-citizens-security</a></p>
<p><b>Specific issues relating to the</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European arrest warrant</li> <li>• Stockholm programme</li> <li>• Third pillar</li> </ul> <p><b>Recognition of professional qualifications</b></p>	<p><b>EU launches new humanitarian programme for the integration and accommodation of refugees in Greece</b></p> <p>The European Commission has announced a new wave of emergency support projects to help refugees in Greece worth €209 million. This includes the launch of the flagship 'Emergency Support To Integration &amp; Accommodation' (ESTIA) programme to help refugees and their families rent urban accommodation and provide them with cash assistance. This marks a change from previous humanitarian projects which mainly provided support for accommodation in camps and the provision of direct supplies. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides said: <i>"Today we are opening a new chapter in the lives of refugees in Greece. Our new funding is a game changer on how we deliver aid to improve people's lives. The aim of these new projects is to get refugees out of the camps and into everyday accommodation and help them have more secure and normal lives. Together with our humanitarian partners and the national authorities, we are committed to helping the most vulnerable refugees and fulfilling our humanitarian duty in the move towards a more cost-effective response."</i></p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2121_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2121_en.htm</a></p> <p><b>Migration: Record month for relocations from Italy and Greece</b></p> <p>The Commission has adopted its 14th progress report on relocation of asylum seekers within the EU and resettlement of refugees from outside</p>

	<p>the EU. With relocations reaching record levels in June (with over 2,000 relocated from Greece and almost 1,000 from Italy) and almost all Member States pledging and transferring regularly, relocating all those eligible remains feasible before September. However, more efforts are needed to accelerate transfers from Italy, especially in view of the current situation in the Central Mediterranean. Meanwhile, good progress continues to be made on resettlement and the Commission has launched a new pledging exercise to resettle the most vulnerable people from Libya, Egypt, Niger, Ethiopia and Sudan while continuing resettlements from Turkey.</p> <p>EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris <b>Avramopoulos</b> said: "<i>Looking at the results achieved so far, one thing is very clear: relocation works if the political will is there. What we need now is a final push to achieve our common goal of relocating the vast majority of the asylum seekers present and eligible in Greece and Italy by September. Italy in particular is under enormous pressure and I call on all Member States to further step up their relocation efforts from Italy. The EU won't leave countries with an external border alone and the Commission will continue to ensure that all Member States comply with their legal obligations when it comes to relocation.</i>"</p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2104_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2104_en.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy)</b></p>	<p><b>Customs Union: EU customs seized over 41 million fake goods at EU borders last year</b></p> <p>New figures released by the European Commission show that customs authorities detained more than 41 million fake and counterfeit products at the EU's external border in 2016. The goods had a total value of over €670 million. Everyday products which are potentially dangerous to health and safety – such as food and drink, medicines, toys and household electrical goods - accounted for over a third of all intercepted goods. Pierre Moscovici, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: "<i>A high level of protection of intellectual property is crucial to support growth and create jobs. Fake goods pose a real threat to health and safety of EU consumers and also undermine legal businesses and state revenues. Studies show that the EU is particularly exposed to imports of counterfeit products. I want to pay tribute to the hard work of customs authorities in combating these fake goods. They need support and resources to enable them to protect us all from the dangers that they can pose. Cooperation between law enforcement authorities should be strengthened and risk management systems upgraded to protect the EU from goods infringing on intellectual property rights.</i>"</p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2082_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2082_en.htm</a></p> <p><b>Diversity and Inclusion: European Commission acts to reach at least 40% women in its management and launches comprehensive strategy</b></p> <p>The purpose is to create a better workplace for all – including women, staff with disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex (LGBTI) staff and older staff. Concrete steps will be taken to make best use of the talent of all of the Commission's employees. Commissioner Gunther H. Oettinger in charge of budget and human resources said: "<i>We want our staff to be valued and accepted, irrespective of their age, gender, sexual</i></p>

	<p><i>orientation or disabilities. If we build on this diversity, we will be more innovative and deliver better results for our citizens.</i></p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2070_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2070_en.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Promotion of EU upcoming events and news</b></p>	<p><b>Stakeholder Consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights and Reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe</b>  12/09/2017 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).  <a href="http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/dattis-pillar.aspx">http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/dattis-pillar.aspx</a></p> <p><b>Stakeholder consultation on Digital Single Market: Mid-Term Review</b>  13/09/2017 Bruxelles/Belgium  The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is drafting an opinion on "Digital Single Market Mid-Term Review", Rapporteur Mr Alin Nica (RO/EPP), Mayor of Dudeștii Noi Timiș County.  <a href="http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/dig-sing-mkt.aspx">http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/dig-sing-mkt.aspx</a></p> <p><b>2017 Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights</b>  20 – 21/11/2017 Brussels/Belgium  The 2017 edition of the Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights will focus on "women's rights in turbulent times". The objective of the Annual Colloquium is to improve mutual cooperation and greater political engagement for the promotion and protection of key fundamental rights in the EU.  <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/sustainable-development-goals/2017-annual-colloquium-fundamental-rights-2017-nov-20_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/sustainable-development-goals/2017-annual-colloquium-fundamental-rights-2017-nov-20_en</a></p> <p><b>Access City Award 2018</b>  05/12/2017 Brussels/Belgium  EU cities are invited to participate in the eight edition of the Access City Award - The European Prize for making cities more accessible to people with disabilities and older people.  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=88&amp;eventsId=1208&amp;urtherEvents=yes">http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=88&amp;eventsId=1208&amp;urtherEvents=yes</a></p>

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