



## Daily News 23 / 04 / 2020

Brussels, 23 April 2020

### **Coronavirus: Commission hosts a European hackathon to develop innovative solutions to fight the outbreak**

As of tomorrow and throughout the weekend, the Commission will host the pan-European [#EUvsVirus Hackathon](#), under the patronage of Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth. The hackathon, led by the [European Innovation Council](#) and in close collaboration with the EU Member States, will connect civil society, innovators, partners and investors across Europe to develop innovative solutions aimed at fighting the coronavirus outbreak. Commissioner **Gabriel** said: *"The #EUvsVirus Hackathon is a great example of the European cooperative spirit I so admire. When times get tough we come together, work together and we will beat this virus together for everyone. I thank all those that have given their free time, boundless energy and expertise to make this a reality. Tomorrow is just the beginning - the solutions will be the true reward."* Together with Commissioner **Gabriel**, interventions at the opening ceremony tomorrow are foreseen at highest level from representatives of EU Institutions, namely Luca Jahier, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, President of the European Committee of the Regions, and Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy ITRE at the European Parliament. [Over 12,000 participants](#) have registered to the hackathon, which is structured around several categories of problems that need short-term solutions in relation to coronavirus health and life, business continuity, remote working and education, social and political cohesion, digital finance and other challenges. All 27 EU Member States are taking part as well as other countries. The winning solutions will be invited to join a European Innovation Council COVID Platform, which will be launched [here](#) on 27 April, to facilitate connections with end users, such as hospitals, and provide access to investors, foundations and other funding opportunities from across the EU. Participants can still register on the [EUvsVirus Hackathon website](#). The event will be streamed live on this [webpage](#). The Commission is committing hundreds of millions of Euros in research and innovation actions to develop vaccines, new treatments, diagnostic tests and medical systems to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke - Tel: +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou - Tel.: +32 2 29 83583)

### **Medical Devices Regulation: Commission welcomes Council support to prioritise the fight against coronavirus**

The European Commission welcomes the adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of the proposal to postpone by one year the date of application of the [Medical Devices Regulation](#). This will allow all key players - Member States, health institutions and economic operators to give priority to the fight against the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, forming a key position in the timing of the lifting of confinement measures as Member States return to the road of recovery. Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinus**, said: *"I welcome the adoption in record time by the European Parliament and the Council of the proposal to postpone by one year the date of application of the Medical Devices Regulation. We are determined to have our medical industries pouring all their energy into what we need them to be doing: helping fight the pandemic. The European Union will do whatever it takes to support our health systems in their hour of need."* Stella **Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *"Yesterday's adoption will allow us all, in this time of crisis, to maintain our focus on the most critical issues and to ensure the continued availability of vitally important medical devices. This is clear proof of our ongoing determination to tackle the pandemic through all possible means, while always maintaining the safety of patients as our utmost objective. I thank the Parliament and Council for the record time approval, cooperation and efficient handling of this urgent proposal."* The adopted amendment takes into consideration the need for an increased availability of vitally important medical devices across the EU, and at the same time continues to guarantee patient health and safety until the new legislation becomes applicable. The Commission adopted the proposal on 3 April, and this was followed by the support of the European Parliament on 17 April. As a final step, yesterday the Council voted to adopt the proposal and it will enter into force upon publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. A press release is

[available online](#). Further information is available on the Commission's dedicated coronavirus response [webpage](#). (For more information: Stefan de Keersmaecker – Tel: +32 229 84680; Darragh Cassidy – Tel. +32 229 83978)

## **Coronavirus: The EU and 21 other WTO Members pledge to ensure well-functioning global food supply chains**

The European Union, together with 21 other Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), today committed to open and predictable trade in agricultural and food products during the current global health crisis. Co-signatories of the [joint statement](#) pledge to ensure well-functioning global agriculture and agri-food supply chains and avoid measures with potential negative impact on food security, nutrition and health of other members of the organisation and their populations. The statement calls for any emergency measures related to agriculture and agri-food products to be targeted, proportionate, transparent, temporary and consistent with WTO rules. Measures should not distort international trade in these products or result in unjustified trade barriers. Rather, WTO Members are encouraged to put in place temporary working solutions to facilitate trade. Signatories also commit to engage in a dialogue to improve preparedness and responsiveness to pandemics, including through multilateral coordination. WTO Members, other than the EU, who have signed the initiative are Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong-China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malawi, Mexico, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Singapore, Switzerland, the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, Ukraine, United States and Uruguay. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 2 295 61 85; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 2 295 25 09; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 2 295 13 83)

## **Coronavirus: la Commission annonce des mesures exceptionnelles pour soutenir le secteur agroalimentaire**

La Commission a proposé hier des mesures supplémentaires exceptionnelles pour [soutenir davantage](#) les secteurs agroalimentaires les plus touchés. Le secteur agroalimentaire de l'UE a fait preuve de [résilience](#) au cours de l'épidémie de coronavirus. Néanmoins, certains marchés ont été durement touchés par les conséquences de cette crise sanitaire. Le paquet de mesures présenté comprend des mesures d'[aide au stockage privé](#) dans les secteurs des produits laitiers et de la viande, d'autorisation d'auto-organisation de marché par les opérateurs dans les secteurs durement touchés et de flexibilité dans les secteurs des fruits et légumes, du vin, ainsi que d'autres [programmes de soutien du marché](#). Janusz **Wojciechowski**, commissaire à l'agriculture, a déclaré: « *Les conséquences de la crise du coronavirus se font de plus en plus sentir dans le secteur agroalimentaire. C'est pourquoi nous avons décidé d'agir rapidement, en complément des mesures déjà prises depuis le début de la crise. En l'état actuel des évolutions du marché, les mesures proposées visent à stabiliser les marchés. Elles sont considérées comme les plus appropriées pour assurer la future stabilité des prix et de la production, permettant ainsi de garantir l'approvisionnement et la sécurité alimentaires. Les mesures nouvelles et exceptionnelles, que nous annonçons, visent à soutenir les secteurs agroalimentaires les plus touchés en s'attaquant aux perturbations déjà observées, ainsi qu'aux risques futurs. Je suis convaincu que ces mesures soulageront les marchés et produiront rapidement des résultats concrets.* » Ce paquet de mesures fait suite à un ensemble d'[autres mesures](#) adoptées précédemment par la Commission en vue de soutenir le secteur agroalimentaire dans le contexte de la crise actuelle, telles que l'augmentation des montants des aides d'État, des paiements anticipés plus élevés et des délais plus longs pour la présentation des demandes de paiement. La flexibilité accrue en ce qui concerne les règles de la politique agricole commune vise à alléger la charge administrative qui pèse sur les agriculteurs et les administrations nationales. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations : Daniel Rosario – Tél.: + 32 2 295 61 85 ; Clémence Robin – Tél.: + 32 2 295 25 09)

## **EU Copernicus satellite activated for wildfires in Poland**

As wildfires rage in Podlaskie Voivodeship area of Poland, the [EU's emergency satellite mapping service](#) has been activated. Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez **Lenarčič** said: "Our EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre is closely monitoring the situation working to provide satellite mapping support to the national authorities. We are in close contact with Polish authorities and stand ready to assist further." The satellite maps help monitor the progression of the fires and damaged areas to support local response teams. (For more information: Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

## **State aid: Commission approves Dutch guarantee scheme of up to €10 billion to support the**

## **economy in context of coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved a Dutch loan guarantee scheme of up to €10 billion to support the Dutch economy in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#) adopted by the Commission on 19 March 2020, as amended on [3 April 2020](#). In order to address companies' liquidity shortages stemming from the coronavirus outbreak, the scheme only covers loans granted by banks as of 24 March 2020. The Dutch State will guarantee 90% of new loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and 80% of new loans to large enterprises. Banks are obliged to grant a 6-month moratorium on loan repayments to borrowers before they can invoke the State guarantees on loans provided under the scheme. The Commission found that the scheme notified by the Netherlands is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. The Commission concluded that the Dutch measure is necessary, appropriate and proportionate to remedy a serious disturbance in the economy of a Member State, in line with Article 107(3)(b) TFEU and the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. On this basis, the Commission approved the measures under EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The Dutch scheme, with a budget of up to €10 billion, will help companies cover their immediate working capital and investment needs in these difficult times to continue their activity during and after the coronavirus outbreak. We continue working closely with Member States to ensure that national support measures can help mitigate the economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak."* The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

## **State aid: Commission approves €38 million Swedish scheme to compensate damages caused by cancelled or postponed cultural events due to coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules a SEK 420 million (approximately €38 million) Swedish scheme that compensates companies affected by the coronavirus outbreak for the loss of revenue or additional costs related to the cancellation or postponement of cultural events. Under the scheme, those operators will be entitled to compensation for the damages suffered, in the form of direct grants covering 75% of their loss of revenue or additional costs up to SEK 1 million (approx. €90,600), and 50% for the part of the losses above SEK 1 million. Aid may be granted up to a maximum amount of SEK 10 million (approx. €906,000) per beneficiary. The compensation provided under the scheme is foreseen for events scheduled between 12 March 2020 and 31 May 2020 that had to be cancelled or postponed. The Commission assessed the measure under Article 107(2)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which enables the Commission to approve State aid measures granted by Member States to compensate specific companies or specific sectors (in the form of schemes) for the damages directly caused by exceptional occurrences. The Commission found that the Swedish aid scheme will compensate damages that are directly linked to the coronavirus outbreak. It also found that the measure is proportionate, as the foreseen compensation does not exceed what is necessary to make good the damage. The Commission therefore concluded that the scheme is in line with EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The culture sector is also one of the sectors hard hit by the coronavirus outbreak. This €38 million Swedish scheme enables Sweden to compensate businesses active in the organisation of cultural events for the damages suffered in these difficult circumstances. We will continue to cooperate closely with Member States to find solutions to help companies get through these difficult times, in line with EU State aid rules."* The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

## **State aid: Commission approves €5.3 million Maltese scheme to support research and development related to coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has approved a €5.3 million Maltese direct grants scheme to support investment in research and development (R&D) related to the coronavirus outbreak. The scheme was approved under the State aid [Temporary Framework](#) adopted by the Commission on 19 March 2020, as amended on [3 April 2020](#). The scheme will be accessible to companies of all sizes, including public entities, that have an establishment in Malta and intend to carry out research and development projects on coronavirus and other antiviral relevant R&D projects. The aim of the scheme is to support the development of innovative solutions to the current coronavirus health crisis, such as relevant medicinal products and treatments, medical devices, hospital and medical equipment, disinfectants, data collection and processing tools, and applications supporting a better dissemination of recommendations by health authorities. At the same time, the scheme aims to improve foresight tools and methodologies for the future, by drawing on lessons learnt from the current pandemic. The

Commission found that the Maltese scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. The Commission concluded that the Maltese measure is necessary, appropriate and proportionate to fight the health crisis, in line with Article 107(3)(c) TFEU and the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. On this basis, the Commission approved the measures under EU State aid rules. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "*The €5.3 million Maltese scheme approved will support research projects to develop urgently needed medicines and products and innovative analysis tools that can help authorities better tackle the coronavirus health crisis. We continue to work closely with Member States to support measures that can improve our knowledge of the coronavirus and can help us find solutions for the future.*" The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

### **Mergers: Commission approves the merger of Mylan and Pfizer's Upjohn division, subject to conditions**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed merger between the global pharmaceutical company Mylan and Upjohn, a business division of Pfizer, which operates Pfizer's off-patent branded and generic established medicines. The Commission's investigation focused on the market for genericised medicines, which are sold to pharmacies and hospitals. Mylan and Upjohn overlap in various therapeutic areas such as cardiovascular, genito-urinary, musculoskeletal, nervous system, and sensory organ treatments. The Commission's investigation found that no competition concerns arise for the majority of the products supplied by both Mylan and Upjohn. However, in some countries and for some molecules, the Commission found the transaction would raise competition concerns because of the strong position of the two companies and the limited number of significant competitors on the market. To address these concerns, Mylan and Upjohn offered to divest to one or more suitable purchasers, Mylan's business in the relevant markets, including the applicable marketing authorisations, contracts and brands, as well as transitory manufacturing and supply arrangements. The proposed commitments remove the entire overlaps between Mylan and Upjohn in the markets raising serious doubts and fully address all of the Commission's competition concerns. The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns in the EEA. The decision is conditional upon full compliance with the commitments. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, responsible for competition policy, said: "*Ensuring that patients and hospitals have access to medicines at fair and competitive prices, as well as ensuring security of supply, is always a key priority which resonates even more strongly in the current challenging context. Our decision ensures that the merger between Mylan and Upjohn does not harm competition, thus preserving competitive access to certain genericised medicines for national health services and European citizens.*" The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

### **Mergers: Commission clears the joint acquisition of ANTT by ANTB and TTSSI**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over ArcelorMittal Neel TT Private Limited ("ANTT") of India by ArcelorMittal Neel Tailored Blanks Private Limited ("ANTB") of Luxemburg/India and by TT Steel Service India Private Limited ("TTSSI") also of India. ANTT will produce and commercialise tailored welded blanks exclusively in India. TTSSI operates a Steel Service Center and ANTB is active in the production, distribution, marketing, and sale of steel products, including tailored welded blanks. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given that the newly created joint venture has no, or negligible, actual or foreseen activities within the European Economic Area. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.9696](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)