



Daily News 03 / 05 / 2021

Brussels, 3 May 2021

Coronavirus: Commission proposes to ease restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU while addressing variants through new 'emergency brake' mechanism

Today, the Commission is [proposing](#) that Member States ease the current restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU to take into account the progress of vaccination campaigns and developments in the epidemiological situation worldwide. The Commission proposes to allow entry to the EU for non-essential reasons not only for all persons coming from countries with a good epidemiological situation but also all people who have received the last recommended dose of an EU-authorized vaccine. This could be extended to vaccines having completed the WHO emergency use listing process. In addition, the Commission proposes to raise, in line with the evolution of the epidemiological situation in the EU, the threshold related to the number of new COVID-19 cases used to determine a list of countries from which all travel should be permitted. This should allow the Council to expand this list. At the same time, the emergence of coronavirus variants of concern calls for continued vigilance. Therefore as counter-balance, the Commission proposes a new 'emergency brake' mechanism, to be coordinated at EU level and which would limit the risk of such variants entering the EU. This will allow Member States to act quickly and temporarily limit to a strict minimum all travel from affected countries for the time needed to put in place appropriate sanitary measures. It is now for the Council to consider this proposal. A first discussion is scheduled at technical level in the Council's integrated political crisis response (IPCR) meeting taking place on 4 May, followed by a discussion at the meeting of EU Ambassadors (Coreper) on 5 May. Once the proposal is adopted by the Council, it will be for Member States to implement the measures set out in the recommendation. The Council should review the list of non-EU countries exempted from the travel restriction in light of the updated criteria and continue doing so every 2 weeks. A full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: – Adalbert Jahnz, Tel: +32 229 53156; Laura Bérard, Tel: +32 229 55721)

Climate and Environment: Commission welcomes the final approval of the new LIFE Programme with €5.4 billion budget *

On Friday, the European Parliament officially approved the deal with Member States on LIFE Programme, which will allow it to invest €5.4 billion in climate and environmental projects over the next seven years. The LIFE programme is among the EU funding programmes for which [the Commission proposed](#) the largest proportional increase for the period 2021-2027. Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus **Sinkevičius**, said: "I would like to thank the European Parliament for its great support for LIFE throughout the 3-year negotiation. For more than 30 years, our LIFE programme has supported thousands of iconic projects. With its new and significantly boosted €5.4 billion budget, it will help us deliver major EU Green Deal initiatives, for a toxic-free, circular and climate-neutral Europe." The total budget allocated for LIFE - the only programme at EU-level solely dedicated to the environment and climate - will be split between €3.5 billion for environmental activities and €1.9 billion for climate action. The EU programme will contribute to making the necessary shift towards a clean, circular, energy-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy, to protect and improve the quality of the environment, and to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. With its contribution of 64% of its budget to the target for environmental financing, it is one of the largest contributors to environmental objectives across all EU programmes. The Commission will ensure that LIFE projects especially support Member States with so far low participation. Improving the national contact points will hence contribute to a geographical balance across the EU. More information on [LIFE projects](#). (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712; Daniela Stoycheva - Tel.: +32 229 53664)

World Press Freedom Day: Commission stands for free and independent media

Today, on World Press Freedom Day, the Commission reaffirms its commitment to defend [media](#)

[freedom and pluralism](#) in the EU and beyond. Media should be able to work freely and independently – this lies at heart of EU values and democracies. On this day, Vice-President for Values and Transparency, Věra **Jourová**, said: *"More than ever the pandemic has showed the key role of journalists to inform us, but also the need to protect them. I am concerned about increasing threats and attacks against journalists, targeting in particular women. We will present recommendations to Member States on the safety of journalists by the end of the year, as part of our overall approach to support media and democracy"* ([full video message](#)). Vice-President **Jourová** will also contribute to the ["Women Breaking the News" event](#). Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry **Breton**, added: *"Today, we are once again reminded of the many challenges faced by the media, accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis. We are determined to strengthen and protect a resilient, free and independent media sector. It is my priority to ensure that journalists benefit from the highest level of protection when they carry out their indispensable work, whether online or offline"*. Yesterday, High Representative/Vice-President Josep **Borrell** issued a [declaration on behalf of the EU](#). Last December the Commission presented for the first time a comprehensive European approach for the media building on the [European Democracy Action Plan](#) and the [Media and Audiovisual Action Plan](#). As announced, the Commission will put forward a recommendation on safety of journalists later this year, feedback is still open [here](#). Additionally, the Commission is also working on an initiative to fight abusive litigation against journalists and rights defenders. The Media and Audiovisual Action Plan serves as a roadmap to support the recovery and transformation of the media and audiovisual sector throughout the current crisis and beyond. Media pluralism is one of the key elements of the annual Rule of Law Report and, in this context, the Commission continues to monitor the situation in all EU Member States. For the first time, the Commission will have a dedicated funding of at least €75 million to support media pluralism, journalism and media literacy under the [Creative Europe programme](#). Currently, the Commission is funding [eighteen projects](#) related to media freedom and pluralism, including safety of journalists and threats to media freedom, with close to €20 million. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253 Charles Manoury – Tel.: +32 229 13391, Katarzyna Kolanko - Tel.: +32 229 6 34 44;).

Facilité pour la reprise et la résilience: 8 pays présentent leurs plans officiels pour la reprise et la résilience

La Commission a reçu vendredi dernier des plans officiels pour la reprise et la résilience de la part de la Belgique, du Danemark, de l'Espagne, de l'Italie, de la Lettonie, du Luxembourg, de l'Autriche et de la Slovaquie. Ces plans exposent les réformes et les projets d'investissement public que chaque État membre prévoit de mettre en œuvre avec le soutien de la facilité pour la reprise et la résilience (FRR). La FRR est l'instrument clé au cœur de NextGenerationEU, le programme de l'Union européenne pour sortir plus forte de la pandémie de COVID-19. Elle apportera jusqu'à 672,5 milliards d'euros pour soutenir les investissements et les réformes (aux prix de 2018). Ce montant se répartit en subventions pour un montant total de 312,5 milliards d'euros et en prêts pour 360 milliards d'euros. La FRR jouera un rôle crucial pour aider l'Europe à sortir plus forte de la crise et pour assurer les transitions écologique et numérique. La présentation de ces plans fait suite à un dialogue soutenu entre la Commission et les autorités nationales de ces États membres au cours des derniers mois. La Commission évaluera les plans dans les deux prochains mois sur la base des onze critères énoncés dans le règlement et traduira son contenu en actes juridiquement contraignants. La Commission a maintenant reçu un total de 13 plans pour la reprise et la résilience, de la Belgique, le Danemark, l'Allemagne, la Grèce, l'Espagne, la France, l'Italie, la Lettonie, le Luxembourg, l'Autriche, le Portugal, la Slovaquie et la Slovaquie. Elle continuera de dialoguer étroitement avec les autres États membres afin de les aider à élaborer des plans de grande qualité. Un document [questions-réponses](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Marta Wieczorek – Tél.: +32 229 58197; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64976)

India: EU Civil Protection Mechanism continues to coordinate emergency supplies

The [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) continues to coordinate additional EU assistance to India, which is facing a tremendous increase in COVID-19 cases. Last week, the European Union announced the offers of support made by Ireland, Belgium, Romania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sweden, France, Italy, Austria and Finland with other Member States pooling resources of urgently needed medical supplies for India. Additional emergency support packages from Czechia, Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands and Germany via the EU Mechanism have since been offered to India. This includes support from Czechia, 500 oxygen cylinders; Denmark, 53 ventilators; Spain, 119 oxygen concentrators and 145 ventilators; Netherlands, 100 oxygen concentrators, 30,000 vials of antiviral drugs, Remdesivir and 449 ventilators; Germany, 15,000 vials antiviral drugs, 516 ventilators and 1 oxygen generator. *"I am proud to say EU Member States are providing substantial help part of a Team Europe effort to*

show our solidarity with India at this very difficult time, offering critical oxygen, ventilators and antiviral drugs to our Indian friends. Collective action is the only solution if we want to win our fight against the pandemic,” said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**. The European Commission's 24/7 [Emergency Response Coordination Centre \(ERCC\)](#) is closely monitoring developments and stands ready to channel further support as required. The Commission co-finances the transport and coordinates the delivery of assistance. (For more information: Balazs Ujvari — Tel.: +32 229 54578; Daniel Puglisi- Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Inauguration of the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking Headquarters in Luxembourg

Today, Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for Internal Market, together with Luxembourg's Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Jean Asselborn, and Minister for the Economy, Franz Fayot, inaugurated the headquarters of the European High Performance Computing (EuroHPC) Joint Undertaking in Luxembourg. Commissioner **Breton** said: *“I am delighted to inaugurate the new home for European HPC. Supercomputing is key for the digital sovereignty of the EU. High Performance Computers are crucial to harness the full potential of data — notably for AI applications, health research and industry 4.0. We are massively investing in this cutting-edge technology for Europe to remain ahead of the global tech race.”* The mission of the [EuroHPC Joint Undertaking](#) is to pool European and national resources to procure and deploy world-class supercomputers and technologies. Supercomputers will help European researchers and industry to make significant advances in areas such as bio-engineering, personalised medicine, fighting against climate change, weather forecasting, as well as in the discovery of drugs and of new materials that will benefit all EU citizens. The Commission is committed to supporting research and innovation for new supercomputing technologies, systems and products, as well as fostering the necessary skills to use the infrastructure and build a world-class ecosystem in Europe. A [Commission proposal](#) for a new EuroHPC JU Regulation, presented in September 2020, aims to enable a further investment of €8 billion to help drive and expand the work of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking in order to provide the next generation of supercomputers and to support an ambitious HPC research and innovation agenda in the EU. More information will be available in this [press release by the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

European Health Union: Commission publishes open public consultation on the European Health Data Space

Today, the Commission published an open [public consultation](#) on the European Health Data Space (EHDS) - an important building block of the European Health Union. The EHDS aims to make full use of digital health to provide high-quality healthcare and reduce inequalities. It will promote access to health data for prevention, diagnosis and treatment, research and innovation, as well as for policy-making and legislation. The EHDS will place individuals' rights to control their own personal health data at its core. The consultation will remain open for responses until 26 July 2021. **Stella Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *“The European Health Data Space will be a crucial component of a strong European Health Union. It will enable EU-wide collaboration for better healthcare, better research and better health policy-making. I invite all interested citizens and stakeholders to take part in the consultation and help us leverage the power of data for our health. This will have to rest on a strong foundation of non-negotiable citizens' rights, including privacy and data protection.”* A press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Stefan De Keersmaecker – Tel.: +32 229 84680; Darragh Cassidy – Tel.: +32 229 83978)

EU Cohesion policy: Commission launches call for proposals worth €1 million for journalism education

Today, the Commission has opened applications for educational institutions teaching journalism to apply for a €1,000,000 grant. The Commission seeks potential beneficiaries that will develop a curriculum and teaching materials, set up a deployment strategy, create a network of partners, and implement a course on the European Union and on Cohesion policy for journalism students. Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa **Ferreira** commented: *“This initiative will allow future journalists to learn about the European Union and get a better understanding of how the EU is supporting the development of their regions and cities. The Commission is keen to encourage training, research and reflection about the Union foundations, current work and its future.”* Proposals can be submitted by educational institutions teaching journalism at undergraduate or graduate level. Applicants must be located in an EU Member State and be accredited under the legislation of that

country. The deadline for application is 24 August 2021. Further details are available on the [website of the Commission](#). (For more information: Vivian Loonela - Tel.: +32 229 66712, Veronica Favalli - Tel.: +32 229 87269)

Commission launches new learning portal for tax and customs professionals across the EU

The European Commission has launched a [new EU learning portal](#) offering tax and customs professionals across the EU an opportunity to build, upscale or share their knowledge on important topics in the field. Capitalising on the advantages of online learning, it aims to build common expertise and improve the skills of customs and tax professionals working in national administrations and authorities, businesses, academia and researchers in the field of tax and customs, with some specific content for staff of public administrations. The new portal includes a combination of different learning formats – from self-paced learning and development to interactive exchanges of best practices - and should help to modernise customs and tax competencies in the EU by providing a new way for people working in the field to share experiences and knowledge. It can also help professionals to build common skillsets to address shared challenges, such as fraud, tax avoidance and digitalisation. Tax and customs play a vital role in our societies and in the functioning of the EU's Single Market by ensuring efficient revenue collection, contributing to the prosperity of businesses, supporting the safety and security of citizens, and by facilitating legitimate trade. Customs and tax professionals and their administrations and enterprises must be able to respond to and anticipate change to remain effective in a constantly evolving social, political and economic global context. More details and the new learning portal can be found [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 229 86500; Nerea Artamendi Erro – Tel.: +32 229 90964)

Agriculture : la Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique de Hongrie

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription de la « [Nagykunsági szilvapálinka](#) » de Hongrie dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). La « Nagykunsági szilvapálinka » est une eau-de-vie de prune, produite à partir de prunes cultivées dans la région de Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, au centre de la Hongrie. Elle offre un arôme pur avec un piquant délicat, en plus des notes florales discrètement parfumées. Les prunes cultivées localement sont l'une des matières premières les plus couramment utilisées pour la distillation traditionnelle de l'eau-de-vie. Les conditions climatiques caractéristiques de la région et le nombre élevé d'heures d'ensoleillement permettent de produire des prunes aromatiques particulièrement savoureuses. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre 250 boissons spiritueuses déjà protégées. La liste est disponible dans la base de données [eAmbrosia](#). Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Miriam Garcia Ferrer – Tél.: +32 229 99075; Thérèse Lerebours – Tél.: +32 229 63303)

Antitrust: Commission sends Statement of Objections to Apple on App Store rules for music streaming providers

The European Commission has informed Apple of its preliminary view that it distorted competition in the music streaming market as it abused its dominant position for the distribution of music streaming apps through its App Store. The Commission takes issue with the mandatory use of Apple's own in-app purchase mechanism imposed on music streaming app developers to distribute their apps via Apple's App Store. The Commission is also concerned that Apple applies certain restrictions on app developers preventing them from informing iPhone and iPad users of alternative, cheaper purchasing possibilities. The Statement of Objections concerns the application of these rules to all music streaming apps, which compete with Apple's music streaming app "Apple Music" in the European Economic Area (EEA). It follows-up on a complaint by Spotify. The Commission's preliminary view is that Apple's rules distort competition in the market for music streaming services by raising the costs of competing music streaming app developers. This in turn leads to higher prices for consumers for their in-app music subscriptions on iOS devices. In addition, Apple becomes the intermediary for all IAP transactions and takes over the billing relationship, as well as related communications for competitors. If confirmed, this conduct would infringe Article 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) that prohibits the abuse of a dominant market position. The sending of a Statement of Objections does not prejudice the outcome of an investigation. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "App stores play a central role in today's digital economy. We can now do our shopping, access news, music or movies via apps instead of visiting websites. Our preliminary finding is that Apple is a gatekeeper to users of iPhones and iPads via the App Store. With Apple Music, Apple also competes with music streaming providers. By setting strict rules on the App store that disadvantage competing

music streaming services, Apple deprives users of cheaper music streaming choices and distorts competition. This is done by charging high commission fees on each transaction in the App store for rivals and by forbidding them from informing their customers of alternative subscription options.” A full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

State aid: Commission approves €12 million coronavirus damage compensation and €255.5 million of liquidity support to SATA Air Açores and Azores Airlines in Portugal; extends ongoing in-depth investigation to planned restructuring aid

The European Commission has approved €12 million in Portuguese support in favour of SATA Air Açores - Sociedade Açoriana de Transportes Aéreos S.A. ('SATA Air Açores') as compensation due to damages suffered as a direct result of travel restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus outbreak. Furthermore, it approved up to €255.5 million additional liquidity support to SATA Air Açores. At the same time, the Commission has extended the ongoing in-depth investigation into other support measures to assess whether Portugal's planned restructuring support measures in favour of SATA are in line with EU rules on State aid to companies in difficulty. Portugal notified to the Commission an aid measure to compensate the two airlines for damages suffered between 19 March 2020 and 30 June 2020 due to the travel restrictions that the Regional Government of Azores, Portugal and the authorities of other destination countries had to impose to limit the spread of the coronavirus. The support will take the form of a €12 million direct grant. 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 granted to compensate specific companies or specific sectors for the damages directly caused by exceptional occurrences. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the Portuguese measure is in line with EU State aid rules. Separately, Portugal notified the Commission of its intention to grant an additional €122.5 million in support to SATA, in the form of a public guarantee on temporary loans or public loans, with the aim of providing the airlines with sufficient resources to address its urgent and immediate liquidity needs until the end of 21 November 2021, or until the Commission takes a final decision on the ongoing investigations. The Commission found that the increase and prolongation of individual aid to SATA in the form of guarantees and loans strictly relates to urgent liquidity needs linked to the provision of essential services including routes subject to PSOs and services of general economic interest at local airports. On this basis, the Commission approved the measure under EU State aid rules. Furthermore, Portugal notified the Commission of its intention to grant restructuring aid to support SATA's restructuring plan. At this stage, the Commission has doubts that the planned restructuring aid is in line with these rules. The opening of an in-depth investigation is a normal step in the procedure, which provides Portugal and other interested parties with an opportunity to provide comments. It does not prejudge in any way the outcome of the investigation. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *“The measures we have approved today, amounting to almost €270 million, will enable Portugal to provide immediate support to SATA Air Açores and Azores Airlines to ensure the continuity of air connections within and to the Azores, an outermost region of the EU. At the same time, we have extended the ongoing investigation into the compliance of past measures in favour of the airlines. We will continue to be in close contact with the Portuguese authorities in this context.”* 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 clears the creation of a joint venture by Ceravis and Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a joint venture, E-VITA GmbH, by Ceravis AG and Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der angewandten Forschung e.V. ('Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft'), all of Germany. The joint venture will market, use, distribute and develop electron technology for chemical-free seed treatment. Ceravis belongs to the Danish Agro Group of Denmark and is active in agricultural trade as well as production of seeds and animal feed, primarily for farmers in northern Germany. Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft conducts application-oriented research as well as contract research for government agencies and the private sector. The Commission concluded that the proposed creation of a joint venture would raise no competition concerns, given the limited foreseen activities of E-VITA in the European Economic Area. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.10209](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Concentrations: La Commission autorise l'acquisition de Essent Belgium par Luminus

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, le projet d'acquisition de Essent Belgium NV, basée en Belgique, par Luminus S.A. implantée en Belgique et filiale du groupe français EDF. Essent Belgium fournit du gaz et de l'électricité au détail à des petits clients industriels et commerciaux ainsi qu'à des clients résidentiels. Luminus est un producteur et fournisseur d'électricité qui distribue également du gaz en Belgique. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence en raison des parts de marché modérées des entreprises pour la fourniture au détail de gaz et d'électricité aux petits clients industriels et commerciaux et aux clients résidentiels en Belgique, de l'augmentation limitée des parts de marché de la nouvelle entité et de la présence d'autres acteurs importants sur les marchés. La concentration a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure normale du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site de la Commission consacré à la concurrence](#) dans le [registre public](#) des affaires de concurrence sous le numéro [M.10173](#). (Pour plus d'information: Arianna Podesta – Tél.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tél.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Freesat by Channel 4, together with BBC and ITV

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Freesat (UK) Limited by Channel 4 Television Corporation ('Channel 4'), together with the British Broadcasting Corporation ('BBC') and ITV Network Limited, all of the UK. Freesat is a joint venture currently controlled by BBC and ITV. Freesat provides a satellite broadcasting platform to approximately 1.1 million homes. Channel 4 is a publicly-owned and commercially-funded UK public service broadcaster which operates a portfolio of channels accessible on a free-to-view basis, via a variety of platforms and devices. BBC is a public sector broadcaster providing a wide range of TV and radio channels, as well as iPlayer and other on-demand services which are accessible to licence fee payers throughout the UK via a variety of platforms and devices. ITV is an integrated producer broadcaster who creates and distributes content on multiple platforms globally and broadcasts a portfolio of commercial channels. The Commission concluded that the operation does not raise any competition concerns since there are no horizontal nor vertical overlaps between the activities of Channel 4 and Freesat. 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.10187](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Europe Day: discover the European Union on the occasion of 9 May 2021

For Europe Day (9 May) this year, EU institutions are throwing open their 'virtual' doors so that citizens across Member States and beyond can find out more about the European Union and what it does. An 'all-EU institution' [Europe Day portal](#) presents the various bodies and activities, including those organised by the EU in Member States and across the world. By hovering over a country on the portal's interactive [map](#), visitors will be able to find out what is going on close to where they are. Citizens will also be able to virtually visit and interact with the EU institutions, such as the [European Parliament](#), [Council](#), the [Commission](#) and the [European External Action Service](#). They can watch engaging videos, play online games and test their knowledge on the EU in general, as well as on themes related to a green and digital Europe. With a click, users can take part in online debates on EU topics and explore other online events. Through the recently launched [multilingual digital platform](#) for the Conference of the Future of Europe, citizens can engage with the EU and help shape its future. Citizens of all generations across Europe and the world are invited to join this unique Europe Day experience. For general information on Europe Day and the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950 please see [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 229 86500; Sinéad Meehan-van Druten - Tel.: +32 229 84094)

High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell travels to London for the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting

From Monday 3 to Wednesday 5 May, Josep **Borrell**, the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, will be in London to participate in the physical G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting. Part of the meeting will also be attended virtually by Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta **Urpilainen**. During the meeting, the High Representative and the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States will hold in-depth discussions on a number of topical foreign policy and security issues – including those related to Afghanistan, the JCPOA, Libya, Russia and the Eastern neighbourhood, Sahel, Syria, the Western Balkans, as well as security in Asia and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. The High Representative will introduce the exchange on the situation in the Horn of Africa, notably with regard to the crisis in Ethiopia and the security situation in Somalia. During the meeting, participants will discuss how to strengthen global cooperation and solidarity to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, ensure early and equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics and treatments everywhere, and to start a sustainable global recovery. They will also address the issues of media freedom and the fight against disinformation. Other thematic topics for discussion, in which Commissioner **Urpilainen** will also take part, will include the commitment to an ambitious action to tackle climate change, enhanced support for girls' education, gender equality and women empowerment, as well as collective action to address food insecurity in the world. This year, India, Australia, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, and the Chair and Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been invited to join part of the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' meeting as guests. Whilst in London, the High Representative will hold several bilateral meetings, including with US Secretary of State Blinken, UK Foreign Secretary Raab, Canadian Foreign Minister Garneau, External Affairs Minister of India Jaishankar, South Korean Foreign Minister Chung, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa Pandor, as well as with the ASEAN Chair, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam Erywan. Audiovisual coverage of the High Representative's programme in London will be provided by [EbS](#). (For more information: Peter Stano – Tel.: +32 229 54553; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359)

Citizens' Dialogue: young people to discuss the future of social Europe with Commissioner Schmit ahead of Porto Social Summit

Tomorrow, young people from Portugal will discuss the future of social Europe with Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas **Schmit**, and Portugal's Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, Ana Mendes Godinho. The event is part of the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#), a citizens-focused, bottom-up exercise for Europeans to have their say on what they expect from the European Union. The conference opens a new path towards a genuine engagement with our citizens, bringing them to the heart of EU policy-making. Participants in Tuesday's dialogue can voice their concerns and ideas about social rights in Europe, and ask the politicians questions on topics such as employment, training, equal opportunities and social protection. Up to 100 people will participate in the citizens' dialogue, which will take place in virtual format at 14:00 Lisbon time (15:00 Brussels time). The [debate](#) can be followed online [here](#) and [here](#) (in Portuguese) and [here](#) and [here](#) (in English). It comes just a few days before the [Social Summit in Porto](#) where European institutions, Member States, social partners and civil society are expected to renew their commitment to a strong social Europe and present their perspective on a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery from the coronavirus crisis. The Commission put forward an [Action Plan](#) in March to further implement the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and address the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic, as well as more long-term demographic, societal and technological challenges. (For more information: Marta Wieczorek – Tel.: +32 229 58197; Flora Matthaes – Tel.: +32 229 83951)

[Eurostat](#) press releases

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