



Daily News 15 / 06 / 2023

Brussels, 15 June 2023

EU Cohesion Policy: Waste management capacity has improved in Malta thanks to EU funds

The Commission welcomes today's inauguration of the Multi-Material Recovery Facility in Ħal Far, Malta. The Facility will develop alternative ways of collecting waste with the aim of preparation and storage for recycling and export. This will improve Malta's waste management capacity by deviating recoverable materials away from landfills and directing them into the circular economy.

The project benefitted from **€11.4 million from the Cohesion Fund** and will focus on waste such as wood, mattresses, textiles, flat glass, waste electrical and electronic equipment, expanded polystyrene, gypsum and tyres. The Facility is expected to recover almost 20,000 tonnes of waste by 2029.

Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa **Ferreira**, said: *"The reliance on landfilling puts pressure on Malta's environment, infrastructure, and socio-economic structures. This project is expected to lower landfilling allowing for more efficient land use, and this is key to ensure the highest possible re-use and recovery of waste in line with national and European directives. The Facility will be of concrete help in Malta's path towards reducing the volume of waste going to landfill at the direct benefit of the population and the environment."*

The inauguration will take place at the Facility site in Ħal Far during a press conference with Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus **Sinkevičius**; Miriam Dalli, Minister for the Environment, Energy and Enterprise; and Chris Bonett, Parliamentary Secretary for European Funds.

During his official visit to Malta, Commissioner **Sinkevičius** will also have a working lunch with Miriam Dalli, and visit the Ecohive Complex and Wied Fulija - a former landfill now transformed into open green space. The Commissioner has also met with Prime Minister Robert Abela and had bilateral exchanges with Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights, Anton Refalo.

In 2014-2020, Malta benefited from Cohesion Policy funding worth more than €1 billion, including to finance other environment relevant projects such as measures to increase awareness to improve recycling levels and the rehabilitation of Wied Fulija.

More details on Cohesion Policy-supported projects in Malta on [Kohesio](#) and in the [Cohesion Open Data Platform](#).

A video about the project is available [here](#).

(For more information: Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 2 295 86 02; Veronica Favalli – Tel.: +32 2 298 72 69)

InvestEU: EIF provides €50 million to illimity Bank to support SMEs' green and digital transition in Italy

The European Investment Fund (EIF) is providing **two guarantees totalling €50 million** to illimity Bank to **improve access to finance for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Italy**, primarily focusing on **sustainability, innovation and digitalisation**. The EIF funding is backed by the [InvestEU programme](#).

Thanks to the **InvestEU Innovation and Digitalisation guarantee of €25 million**, illimity Bank will be able to further support innovation and digitalisation-driven enterprises. This support will enhance access to finance for research and innovation intensive SMEs and small mid-caps, as well as supporting the uptake of digital technologies and the digital transformation of businesses.

In addition, the **InvestEU Sustainability guarantee of €25 million** will enable illimity Bank to boost the green and sustainable transition of the economy, encouraging environmentally friendly,

green, and inclusive investments of the final recipients.

Paolo **Gentiloni**, Commissioner for Economy, said: *These two guarantees are part of the InvestEU programme, which aims to encourage sustainable, digital, innovative and inclusive investments across Europe. InvestEU is playing an important role in helping small and medium-sized companies gain access to the finance they need to grow and create jobs. Thanks to this agreement, an increasing number of Italian small and medium businesses will be able to secure crucial financing to do so and drive the green and digital transitions."*

The [InvestEU programme](#) provides the EU with long-term funding by leveraging private and public funds in support of EU policy priorities. As part of the programme, the InvestEU Fund is implemented through financial partners who will invest in projects using the EU budget guarantee and thus mobilising at least €372 billion in additional investment.

A press release is available [online](#).

(For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 2 298 65 00 ; Flora Matthaes – Tel.: +32 2 298 39 51)

InvestEU backs EIF investment in new impact fund in Spain supporting social and green projects

The European Investment Fund (EIF), backed by the [InvestEU programme](#), has agreed to **commit €30 million as cornerstone investment** in 'IB Deuda Impacto España', a fund that will **finance Spanish businesses investing in high social impact areas** such as rural development, labor inclusion, climate and environment, circular economy, sustainable agriculture, and gender equality. The announced investment falls under the 'Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)' and 'Research, innovation, and digitalisation' policy windows of InvestEU.

Paolo **Gentiloni**, Commissioner for Economy, said: *"Securing a sustainable, digital, and inclusive economy requires substantial and continuous investment. I welcome the crucial role InvestEU is playing in this context. This agreement will provide SMEs in Spain with the necessary resources, helping them to grow and create jobs, while advancing important goals such as gender equality, energy efficiency and rural development."*

The [InvestEU programme](#) provides the EU with long-term funding by leveraging private and public funds in support of EU policy priorities. As part of the programme, the InvestEU Fund is implemented through financial partners who will invest in projects using the EU budget guarantee and thus mobilising at least €372 billion in additional investment.

A press release is available [online](#).

(For more information: Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 2 298 65 00; Flora Matthaes – Tel.: +32 2 298 39 51)

Le Conseil européen de l'innovation et l'Institut européen d'innovation et de technologie lancent un nouveau prix européen pour les femmes innovatrices

Le [Conseil européen de l'innovation](#) (EIC) et [l'Institut européen d'innovation et de technologie](#) (EIT) ont renforcé leur partenariat et lancé aujourd'hui un nouveau prix européen pour les femmes innovatrices. Ce concours commun récompensera une communauté encore plus large de femmes innovatrices, en mettant à l'honneur leurs réalisations et en leur offrant davantage d'opportunités. Les prix seront décernés aux femmes entrepreneures les plus inspirantes dont l'innovation a un impact positif sur notre société et notre planète.

Margrethe **Vestager**, vice-présidente exécutive chargée d'une Europe adaptée à l'ère du numérique, a déclaré : « *Ce nouveau prix sera décerné pour inspirer l'Europe et les femmes innovatrices. Lancé par le Conseil européen de l'innovation et l'Institut européen d'innovation et de technologie, ce prix vise à éliminer les obstacles auxquels se heurtent les femmes dans le monde des affaires et de la technologie. Je me réjouis de voir de nombreuses contributions.* »

Margaritis **Schinus**, vice-président chargé de la promotion de notre mode de vie européen, a déclaré : « *Ce nouveau prix est un excellent moyen pour l'Europe de montrer son engagement commun en faveur de l'innovation et de l'égalité des sexes. C'est une cause qui rapprochera l'EIC et l'EIT, alliés naturels pour faire tomber les barrières auxquelles se heurtent les femmes dans le monde des affaires et de la technologie. J'espère qu'un grand nombre de femmes innovatrices et entrepreneures participeront à la compétition, afin que nous puissions montrer la diversité de la technologie*

européenne. »

Trois lauréats seront annoncés lors du sommet du Conseil européen de l'innovation en mars 2024 dans chacune des catégories suivantes : Femmes innovatrices, Innovatrices montantes, et Leadership féminin de l'EIT. Les candidatures seront ouvertes jusqu'au 27 septembre 2023.

Plus d'informations sont disponibles [ici](#).

(Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tél.: +32 2 295 86 15; Marietta Grammenou – Tél.: +32 2 298 35 83)

EU moves forward with Critical Minerals Agreement negotiations with the US

Yesterday, the European Commission adopted its negotiating directives for a **Critical Minerals Agreement (CMA) with the United States**. The objective is to foster **EU-US supply chains in critical raw materials needed in the production of electric vehicle batteries**. In 2022 alone, the **EU exported €8.3 billion** worth of critical raw materials relevant to this industry.

Concluding an EU-US CMA will ensure that **as an ally, the EU is granted a status equivalent to US free trade agreement partners** pursuant to the US Inflation Reduction Act. **EU firms will then be able to compete on a level playing field with US and third country competitors** on the US market, such as Chile, the Republic of Korea, and Japan.

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Executive Vice-President and Commissioner for Trade, said: *"Negotiating a Critical Minerals Agreement with the US is key to ensuring that the EU, as an US ally receives an FTA-like treatment under the IRA. It will ensure that the EU mining and chemical companies have fair and frictionless access to the US market and are able to supply both EU and US electric vehicle producers. We need rapid progress on this targeted agreement so that EU companies are treated the same way as US companies under the IRA. It will also **strengthen our cooperation on developing clean technologies** as part of the green transition, and expand access to **sources of critical minerals that are sustainable, trusted and free of labour abuses.**"*

A press release is available [online](#).

(For more information: Miriam Garcia Ferrer – Tel.: +32 2 299 90 75; Roberta Verbanac – Tel.: +32 2 298 24 98)

Antitrust: Commission sends Statement of Objections to Google over abusive practices in online advertising technology

The European Commission has informed **Google** of its preliminary view that the company breached EU antitrust rules by distorting competition in the advertising technology industry ('adtech'). The Commission takes issue with Google favouring its own online display advertising technology services to the detriment of competing providers of advertising technology services, advertisers and online publishers.

The Commission preliminarily finds that Google is **dominant** in the European Economic Area-wide markets: (i) for **publisher ad servers** with its service 'DFP'; and (ii) for **programmatic ad buying tools for the open web** with its services 'Google Ads' and 'DV360'. The Commission is concerned that Google's allegedly intentional conducts aimed at giving its own ad exchange AdX a competitive advantage and may have foreclosed rival ad exchanges. This would have reinforced Google's AdX central role in the adtech supply chain and Google's ability to charge a high fee for its service. If confirmed, those conducts would infringe **Article 102 TFEU** that prohibits the abuse of a dominant market position.

The Commission preliminarily finds that, in this particular case, a behavioural remedy is likely to be ineffective to prevent the risk that Google continues such self-preferencing conducts or engages in new ones. The Commission's preliminary view is therefore that only the mandatory divestment by Google of part of its services would address its competition concerns. The sending of a Statement of Objections does not prejudge the outcome of an investigation.

Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy said: *"Google has a very strong market position in the online advertising technology sector. It collects users' data, it sells advertising space, and it acts as an online advertising intermediary. So Google is present at almost all levels of the so-called adtech supply chain. Our preliminary concern is that Google may have used its market position to favour its own intermediation services. Not only did this possibly harm Google's competitors but also publishers' interests, while also increasing advertisers' costs. If*

confirmed, Google's practices would be illegal under our competition rules."

A press release is available [online](#).

(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 2 298 70 24; Sara Simonini- Tel.: +32 2 298 33 67)

Antitrust: Commission closes antitrust investigation in the water infrastructure sector

The European Commission has decided to **close its antitrust investigation** into potential anticompetitive practices in the **water infrastructure sector**.

On [14 June 2022](#), the Commission carried out unannounced inspections in a Member State at the premises of companies active in the construction of networks and treatment plants for drinking water and wastewater.

The Commission had concerns the companies involved may have rigged bids in tenders involving EU funds for the construction of networks and treatment plants for drinking water and wastewater, in breach of EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices ([Article 101](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

After a thorough analysis and careful assessment of all the evidence gathered, the Commission has concluded that there is insufficient ground to further pursue the investigation. The closure of the investigation is not a finding that the conduct in question complies with EU competition rules.

More information on the investigation will be available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the public [case register](#) under the case number AT.40581.

(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 2 298 70 24; Sara Simonini- Tel.: +32 2 298 33 67)

Antitrust: Commission closes antitrust investigation in the wood pulp sector

The European Commission has decided to **close its antitrust investigation** into potential anticompetitive practices in the **wood pulp sector**.

On [12 October 2021](#), the Commission carried out unannounced inspections at the premises of companies active in the wood pulp sector. The inspections took place in several Member States.

The Commission had concerns that the companies involved may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices ([Article 101](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

After a thorough analysis and careful assessment of all the evidence gathered, the Commission has concluded that there is insufficient ground to further pursue the investigation. The closure of the investigation is not a finding that the conduct in question complies with EU competition rules.

More information on the investigation will be available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the public [case register](#) under the case number AT.40763.

(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 2 298 70 24; Sara Simonini- Tel.: +32 2 298 33 67)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Bio-Oils Huelva and Bio Waste Trading by CEPSA

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Bio-Oils Huelva, S.L.U. ('BOH') and Bio Waste Trading, S.L.U. ('BWT') by Compañía Española de Petróleos, S.A. ('CEPSA'), all of Spain.

BOH is active in the production and sale of biofuels. **BWT** is active in the sourcing of food waste and the sale of food waste-derived products. **CEPSA** is an integrated oil and gas company, active worldwide.

The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given its limited impact on the market. 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.11101](#).

(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 2 298 70 24; Marta Pérez-Cejuela – Tel.: +32 2 296 37 70)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control of Ayosa Hoteles, Evertmel and Jamaica Devco by Melia Hotels International and Silver Fawn

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control of Ayosa Hoteles S.L, Evertmel S.L. and Jamaica Devco S.L ('acquired companies'), by Melia Hotels International S.A ('MHI'), all of Spain, and Silver Fawn C 2023 S.à r.l. ('Silver Fawn') of Luxembourg.

The **acquired companies** own seven hotels and one beach club located in Mallorca, Spain. They are jointly controlled by MHI, among others. **MHI** operates hotels worldwide. **Silver Fawn** is a subsidiary of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority ('ADIA'), which is a public institution of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi that manages funds globally.

The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the absence of horizontal overlaps and vertical links between ADIA and the acquired companies. 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.11102](#).

(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 2 298 70 24; Marta Pérez-Cejuela – Tel.: +32 2 296 37 70)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Focus by CD&R and Stone Point

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control of Focus Financial Partners Inc. ('Focus') by funds managed by Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, LLC ('CD&R') and funds managed by Stone Point Capital LLC ('Stone Point'), all from the US.

Focus is a partnership of independent, fiduciary wealth management firms, which provides access to best practices, resources and continuity planning for its partner firms, which are active mainly in the US. **CD&R** is a private equity investment group, which originates, structures and frequently acts as lead equity investor in management buyouts, as well as in strategic minority equity and other strategic investments. **Stone Point** is an investment firm that targets companies in the global financial services industry and related sectors.

The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given that Focus does not have any activities within 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.11094](#).

(For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel.: +32 2 298 70 24; Marta Pérez-Cejuela – Tel.: +32 2 296 37 70)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

L'Eurogroupe et les ministres des affaires économiques et financières se réunissent à Luxembourg les 15 et 16 juin

Les ministres des finances de la zone euro et de l'UE seront à Luxembourg aujourd'hui et demain pour les réunions de **L'Eurogroupe et du Conseil ECOFIN**.

Aujourd'hui, le vice-président exécutif **Dombrovskis** et le commissaire **Gentiloni** représentent la Commission lors de la [réunion de l'Eurogroupe](#) qui commencera cet après-midi, à 16h30. L'Eurogroupe fera le point sur le [projet d'euro numérique](#), sur la base des contributions de la Commission européenne et de la Banque centrale européenne (BCE). En outre, le président de l'Eurogroupe présentera le programme de travail pour la période allant jusqu'en mars 2024; et les

ministres feront le point sur la surveillance post-programme pour la [Grèce](#), [Chypre](#), [l'Irlande](#), le [Portugal](#) et [l'Espagne](#). Le Fonds monétaire international (FMI) participera également aux discussions, et présentera les principaux messages de sa mission dans la zone euro. Par la suite, en configuration « à 27 », le FMI, la BCE et la Commission présenteront leur point de vue sur les performances des marchés européens des capitaux. Le commissaire **Gentiloni** participera à la [conférence de presse](#) qui suivra la réunion.

Demain, les ministres des affaires économiques et financières de l'UE se réuniront pour le [Conseil ECOFIN](#), qui débutera à 10h30. Le vice-président exécutif **Dombrovskis** et le commissaire **Gentiloni** représenteront la Commission lors de la réunion. Les ministres tiendront un débat sur des questions clés concernant les propositions législatives de la Commission de décembre 2022, relatives à la [taxe sur la valeur ajoutée](#). Les ministres s'efforceront également d'approuver les recommandations et avis concernant les programmes nationaux de réforme et de stabilité ou de convergence actualisés pour 2023, dans le cadre du [Semestre européen](#). De plus, ils procéderont à un échange de vues sur la proposition de réforme du [cadre de gouvernance économique](#), et chercheront également à approuver le plan modifié pour la [reprise et la résilience](#) de l'Estonie. Ils feront le point sur les conséquences économiques et financières de l'agression de la Russie contre l'Ukraine. Enfin, le Conseil donnera des orientations pour préparer les prochaines réunions des ministres des finances et des gouverneurs des banques centrales du [G20](#); et la présidence suédoise présentera l'état d'avancement des propositions législatives dans le domaine des services financiers. Le vice-président exécutif **Dombrovskis** participera à la [conférence de presse](#) qui aura lieu à l'issue de la réunion.

(Pour plus d'informations : Daniel Ferrie – Tél.: +32 2 298 65 00; Veerle Nuyts – Tél.: + 32 2 299 63 02)

Vice-President Schinas in Kyiv to further strengthen EU-Ukraine cooperation on health, education, culture, youth, sports and cybersecurity

Today, Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinas**, is in Kyiv for a visit focused on furthering the EU's cooperation with Ukraine in the fields of health, education, culture, youth, sports and cybersecurity.

Vice-President **Schinas** will meet with Oksen Lisovyi, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine. Together, they will visit the displaced campus of Mariupol University and meet with local students. They will then sign an Arrangement for Cooperation on Education, committing to further cooperation in this crucial sector, given that the Russian aggression against Ukraine has had devastating consequences on the lives and education opportunities of millions of young people and continues to inflict severe damages in the sector of education.

Vice-President **Schinas** will also meet with Viktor Llashko, Minister of Health of Ukraine, and sign an Arrangement for Cooperation on Health, committing to further expand cooperation on both urgent and long-term health priorities. The war has had devastating consequences on the health of thousands of people and destroyed health care facilities and systems. Both of the signature ceremonies and related press statements will be broadcast on [EbS](#) later today.

A press release on the two arrangements for cooperation on education and health will be published this afternoon [here](#).

Whilst in Kyiv, the Vice-President also met with Vadim Gutzeit, Minister of Youth and Sports, and visited the Avantgarde Sport Stadium, a sports complex destroyed as a result of a Russian attack. A joint press release on EU-Ukrainian cooperation on Youth and Sport is available [here](#).

Vice-President **Schinas'** visit is also focused on EU cooperation with Ukraine in the field of cybersecurity. He will visit the CERT-UA cybersecurity centre and meet with Members of the National Security and Defence Council dealing with cybersecurity. The Vice-President will also meet with Oleksandr Tkachenko, Minister of Culture of Ukraine, and jointly visit the art exhibition 'How Are You?' dedicated to the psychological experience of the war. Finally, he will meet with Olena Zelenska, First Lady of Ukraine, to discuss measures to address mental health, as well as the EU's support to Ukraine in terms of education and protecting cultural heritage.

(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 2 295 86 15; Adalbert Jahnz – Tel.: +32 2 295 31 56; Flore Boutier - Tel.: +32 2 296 60 43; Célia Dejond – Tel.: +32 2 298 81 99)

Digital Assembly 2023 kicks off focusing on a digital, open and secure Europe

Today and tomorrow, the Commission together with the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU,

is hosting the Digital Assembly 2023 in Stockholm. The event this year focuses on a digital, open and secure Europe and brings together stakeholders, industry leaders and policy makers to discuss the progress of the [EU's Digital Decade path](#) and the joint EU and national investments needed to succeed in reaching the [2030 goals](#). Swedish Minister for Public Administration, Erik Slottnér, and Swedish Minister for Civil Defence, Carl-Oskar Bohlin, will give keynote speeches.

Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for Internal Market, said: "*The pace of the digital transition has accelerated and the EU has made significant progress. Flagship online platforms legislation is already in force, while key proposals on data, digital identity wallet, cybersecurity and AI are advancing. It is now essential to speed up joint investments in emerging technologies, including in AI, 5G/6G, blockchain, edge cloud, semiconductors, quantum and supercomputers. EU, Member States and business need to work together even more closely – to make sure Europe continues on its path to become a technology leader.*"

On the first day, the Digital Assembly focuses on how Europe can reach the [Digital Decade Policy Programme](#) targets by leveraging tools such as the **European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC)** to kick start multi-country projects and to foster investments and innovation in key strategic areas, including cybersecurity skills, data, multilingual AI (artificial intelligence) and the use of secure blockchain technology in the public sector.

This year's edition will also feature sessions and discussions on the **digital single market for data** in the context of the [Data Governance Act](#) and the upcoming [Data Act](#); the progress in the development of **quantum technologies**; **cyber resilience**; competitiveness of the **European cyber and ICT sectors**, enhancing **secure global digital connectivity**; **General Purpose AI** made in Europe; **Digital Europe Programme funding**; helping SMEs with [European Digital Innovation Hubs](#); the **digitalisation of the public sector**; and the implementation of **digital technologies for public services**, and the [European Digital Identity Wallet](#).

More information about the Digital Assembly 2023 and its sessions is available [here](#). The sessions on both days of the event can also be followed live and online, with the [first day here](#), and the [second day here](#).

(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 2 295 86 15; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 2 298 35 83)

Commissioner Vălean participates in the G7 Transport Ministers' Meeting in Japan

Commissioner for Transport, Adina **Vălean**, is in Japan from today until 18 June to attend the **G7 Transport Ministers' Meeting**, under the theme 'Achieving Accessible and Sustainable Transportation through Innovation'.

Prior to the G7 Ministerial in Ise-Shima, Commissioner **Vălean** will visit the Shinkansen Control Centre on Thursday. She will have bilateral meetings with Japan's Transport Minister, Tetsuo Saito, and the UK's Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper on Friday.

During the G7 Transport Ministers' Meeting on Saturday and Sunday, she will discuss with ministers the latest progress on **Solidarity Lanes** – Ukraine's lifeline for keeping its economy running and avoiding global food shortages – in the context of the special session on Ukraine and will also participate in the public-private session and the session on achieving accessible transport through innovation.

The G7 Transport Ministers' Meeting aims to address critical issues such as decarbonising transport, supporting Ukraine in reconstructing its infrastructure, and enhancing cross-border connectivity for resilient supply chains. Discussions will cover topics such as providing financial support to Ukraine's transport sector, identifying alternative trade routes between Europe and Asia, sustainability, aviation, and maritime transport. The G7 will also focus on developing global policy tools and mid-term measures for a successful climate transition.

(For more information: Adalbert Jahnz – Tel.: +32 2 295 31 56; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 2 295 36 64; Myrto-Amaryllis Lappa – Tel.: +32 2 299 70 98)

Commissioner Kyriakides in Malta to focus on EU pharmaceutical policy

On Friday 16 June, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella **Kyriakides**, will be in Valletta to discuss key files related to the European Health Union, with a focus on [proposals for the reform of the EU pharmaceutical legislation](#) and on ensuring the availability of affordable essential medicine across the EU.

Commissioner **Kyriakides** will hold a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health, Chris Fearne, to discuss the EU's pharmaceutical policy, the [new comprehensive approach to mental health](#) and ongoing cooperation on global health initiatives. Together with Deputy Prime Minister Fearne, Commissioner **Kyriakides** will visit the Medichem manufacturing hub in Hal Far.

Finally, Commissioner **Kyriakides** will deliver a keynote address at the [28th Medicines for Europe Annual Conference](#).

(For more information: Adalbert Jahnz – Tel.: +32 2 295 31 56; Célia Dejond – Tel.: +32 2 298 81 99)

[Liste des points prévus](#) à l'ordre du jour des prochaines réunions de la Commission

Veillez noter que ces informations sont données sous réserve de modifications.

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[Eurostat](#): communiqués de presse

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