



NEWS FROM THE COMMISSION MIDDAY BRIEFING
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[Mergers: Commission blocks proposed merger between Deutsche Börse and NYSE Euronext](#)

The European Commission has prohibited, on the basis of the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed merger between Deutsche Börse and NYSE Euronext, as it would have resulted in a quasi-monopoly in the area of European financial derivatives traded globally on exchanges. Together, the two exchanges control more than 90% of global trade in these products. The Commission's investigation showed that new competitors would be unlikely to enter the market successfully enough to pose a credible competitive threat to the merged company. The companies offered, in particular, to sell certain assets and to provide access to their clearinghouse for some categories of new contracts, but overall, the commitments were inadequate to solve the identified competition concerns.

Intellectual property rights : Winners of "Hands off my Design" competition announced

Counterfeiting and piracy are a growing threat for the economy. Between 2005 and 2010, the number of registered cases at the EU borders of goods suspected of infringing intellectual property rights (IPR) increased from 26,704 to over 80,000. Meanwhile, the creative industry estimates that piracy has cost the European music, movie, TV and software industry €10 billion and more than 185,000 jobs in 2008 alone. In order to draw attention to this phenomenon the European Observatory on Counterfeiting and Piracy launched an EU-wide contest named "Hands off my Design". Design students and professionals were asked to submit posters and videos that highlight the negative impact of counterfeiting and piracy on Europe's economy and society. – **EMBARGO UNTIL 17:30 CET**

[Launch of 2012 EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue](#)

The 2012 EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue will be officially launched today by Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, and Cai Wu, Minister of Culture of the People's Republic of China. The Year will see a large number of events and projects hosted by EU Member States and China, with the aim of strengthening intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding through cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts. The EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue also offers opportunities for Chinese and EU cultural institutions, organisations and other stakeholders to establish and develop structured and sustainable cooperation during 2012 and beyond.

[Health : Commission announces winners of the 3rd EU Prize for Journalists](#)

Last night, four prizes were awarded to European journalists for the best articles on health issues, selected from nearly 500 submitted by journalists from all 27 Member States. The top articles were on: antimicrobial resistance, the importance of exercise in helping tackle depression, breast cancer, and the harmful effects of smoking. The prizes were awarded in the context of the **2011 EU Health Prize for Journalists**, which aims to showcase and reward the work of journalists from across the European Union that raise awareness on important health issues that affect the lives of all EU citizens. The main theme of the prize was the 'Europe for Patients' campaign, which comprises a wide range of healthcare and patient safety-related topics. In addition, this year's competition included a special prize for articles on smoking cessation, to support awareness about what smoking means and does to people's health.

[Commission wants your views on how we can produce and consume more sustainably](#)

By 2050 the global population is set to reach 9 billion people and worldwide demand for food, feed and fibre is forecast to increase by 70%. To thrive in that context, economies will need to use natural resources in a far more efficient manner. The way we consume and produce will be key to Europe's success or failure in this process. This is why the Commission intends to revise the EU's Consumption and Production policies and has launched a public consultation that will remain open until 3 April.

[Flash estimate – January 2012 - Euro area inflation estimated at 2.7](#)

Euro area annual inflation is expected to be 2.7% in January 2012 according to a flash estimate issued by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. It was also 2.7% in December 2011.

Letter from President Barroso to eight member states' leaders on youth unemployment

The informal European Council on 30 January 2012 agreed on the need to take immediate action to boost growth and employment. One of the specific ideas President Barroso brought to the European Council was to set up "action teams", bringing together the Commission, national authorities and national social partners in the eight countries with youth unemployment levels significantly above the EU average – namely Spain, Greece, Slovakia, Lithuania, Italy, Portugal, Latvia and Ireland. The objective is to develop by mid-April targeted plans to be included in the National Reform Programmes in which each Member State outlines its economic policy priorities in the context of the European Semester. On 31 January 2012, President Barroso sent **[letters to the leaders of these eight Member States](#)**, outlining the proposed steps to be taken, including: the nomination of a contact person by national authorities, a visit by the Commission team in February, and the identification of the necessary elements of a youth employment plan and the support schemes for SMEs which could be accelerated or benefit from funding not yet committed from within the national Structural Funds allocation.

Commissioner Andor visits the US

In his first visit to the US as EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor will leave for Washington and New York City on February 1st. During his visit, Mr Andor will meet with key US labour counterparts, prominent think tanks and academics, including economist Joseph Stiglitz. The trip will be an opportunity to explore ways to deepen dialogue and cooperation with the US on such critical issue as jobs in the context of the economic and financial crisis. The Commissioner will be stressing the importance of employment in the political debate on both sides of the Atlantic and will raise common issues for discussion like green jobs, skills anticipation/matching, as well as health and safety

issues. He will meet with Mme Christine Lagarde at the IMF to discuss joint initiatives in the field of employment, in particular the need to cooperate further as part of the G20-ILO framework on strengthening the employment and social dimension of globalisation. He will also meet with Mr Philippe Le Hourerou, Regional Vice-President at the World Bank. In New York, Commissioner Andor will take part in the Youth Employment panel at the 50th anniversary session of the UN Commission on Social Development.

Commissioner for Climate Action Connie Hedegaard visits India 2-4 February

Commissioner for Climate Action Connie Hedegaard will travel to India from 2 to 4 February to attend the 12th Delhi Sustainable Development Summit, where she will give a keynote speech on 3 February. The Summit is an annual high level event, which this year focuses on the upcoming Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, which will take place in Brazil from 20 to 22 June. Commissioner Hedegaard will also participate in the presentation of the report of the UN High Level Panel on Global Sustainability on 2 February. In the margins of the Summit, Commissioner Hedegaard will discuss the next steps in the international climate negotiations and other climate-related themes with Indian media, NGOs and think tanks; and have bilateral meetings with several Indian ministers and the Maldives' Minister for Housing and Environment.

Commission clears acquisition by EDF of ERSA

The European Commission has granted clearance under the EU Merger Regulation to the acquisition by Electricité de France S.A of sole control of Elektrownia Rybnik S.A. ("ERSA") of Poland. Currently EDF and Energie Baden-Württemberg AG ("EnBW") jointly control ERSA, which is active only in Poland. ERSA's main activities are the generation, wholesale trading and retail supply of electricity. EDF is active in the energy sector, including generation, transmission, distribution and supply of electricity. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure.

OTHER INFORMATION

- [Memo "Mergers: Commission prohibits proposed merger between Deutsche Börse AG and NYSE Euronext – frequently asked questions"](#)

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