



**Brussels, 21 September 2018**

### **EU LEADERS WARN MAY'S CHEQUERS PLAN IS NOT ENOUGH AT INFORMAL SUMMIT**

EU leaders gathered this week in Salzburg to discuss migration, internal security and Brexit, agreeing on priorities for immediate action on the former two fronts. They notably decided to strengthen the European Border and Coast Guard and create an EU-Arab League summit to increase cooperation with Egypt and other northern African countries. On Brexit, EU27 leaders warned that the economic cooperation framework proposed by UK Prime Minister Theresa May undermines the Single Market and hence does not currently represent a workable solution. Leaders will reconvene at the next formal European Council summit in October, by which point 'maximum progress' on Brexit negotiations is expected.

### **CETA TURNS ONE AS EU SEEKS TO MODERNISE WTO RULES**

Today marks the first anniversary of the provisional entry into force of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada. The agreement eliminated tariffs on 98% of products and initial results reveal a 7% rise in exports from 2017. As part of its efforts to champion international trade, the European Commission presented its plans to modernise the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Updating the rule book, strengthening monitoring and overcoming dispute settlement deadlocks are the three priorities of the EU's concept paper, which the EU will now discuss with various WTO partners to prepare concrete proposals.

### **EU ELECTIONS: PARTIES PREPARE FOR SPITZENKANDIDAT PROCESS**

With less than eight months to go before the next European elections, political parties are starting to gear up. In recent weeks, several EU parties have opened and received nominations for their lead candidate position – or Spitzenkandidat – and internal primaries are set to take place between November to February 2019. So far, formal nominations include Manfred Weber (EPP), Maroš Šefčovič (PES), Ska Keller (Greens) and Bas Eickhout (Greens), yet many others are expected over the coming weeks. However, despite parties' eagerness, it remains unclear whether the next European Commission President will be elected under the Spitzenkandidat process, for some groups still contest the procedure.

### **GERMAN CARMAKERS TO FACE INVESTIGATION OVER DIESEL EMISSIONS**

German carmakers BMW, Daimler and Volkswagen will face an EU inquiry for allegedly conspiring to restrict diesel emissions treatment systems in vehicles, the European Commission's Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager announced. The Commission will investigate whether they agreed to limit the development of systems to reduce harmful emissions, resulting in consumers being denied the chance to buy less polluting cars. If the Commission does find that the companies had deliberately misled consumers and regulators, they will likely face heavy fines. The firms were previously raided in 2017 as part of the Commission's earlier investigation.

### **CLEAN ENERGY PACKAGE TO BE FINALISED BY END OF 2018**

The Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union has reiterated its intention to finalise the remaining four files of the Clean Energy Package by the end of 2018. Speaking during an informal

meeting of EU energy ministers in Austria, Environment Minister Elisabeth Köstinger said the conclusion of the package by the end of her country's presidency was a top priority. Currently, the new Electricity Market Design Directive and Regulation, ACER Regulation and Risk-Preparedness in the electricity sector file are undergoing trilogue discussions between the Council and European Parliament. Four other files, including the recast of the Renewable Energy Directive, were adopted earlier this year.

#### **COMING UP NEXT WEEK**

- **23-25 September: Informal meeting of agriculture ministers.** On the agenda: CAP post-2020; sustainable food production; food quality; competitiveness of EU farmers.
- **27 September: UN General Assembly.** On the agenda: multilateralism, human rights and peace; nuclear disarmament.
- **27-28 September: Competitiveness Council.** On the agenda: artificial intelligence and robotics; MFF post-2020; Horizon Europe.

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