



**Brussels, 3 May 2019**

### **EU ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN CONTINUES WITH TWO SPITZENKANDIDATEN DEBATES**

During two debates held in the run up to the European elections, the lead candidates (*Spitzenkandidaten*) of the EPP, S&D, ALDE and Greens presented their priorities on a broad range of issues, such as digitalisation, sustainability, social Europe, migration, and security and foreign policy. Whilst candidates disagreed on issues such as the need for a European army, a consensus emerged on most topics, including increased cooperation on taxation, migration and the fight against climate change. The next and final debate will be held on 15 May, just over a week before election day.

### **COMMISSION LAYS OUT AMBITIONS FOR FUTURE OF EU ON FIVE KEY AREAS**

Ahead of the upcoming informal European Council summit to be held in Sibiu on 9 May, the European Commission set out several policy recommendations for the EU's strategic agenda for 2019-2024. Overall, the report includes an overview of progress achieved under this Commission, as well as a set of recommendations in the five specific fields: security, competitiveness, social issues, sustainability and external affairs. The Sibiu summit is meant to define the political aspirations for the EU going forward and prepare the June formal summit, where Heads of State are expected to outline the EU strategic agenda for the next five years.

### **EU AND US HOST BUSINESS TO BUSINESS ENERGY FORUM TO INCREASE LNG TRADE**

The EU-US Energy Council Forum on liquefied natural gas (LNG) was held this week, with top sector executives discussing ways to enhance transatlantic LNG trade. US LNG exports are up by 272%, and the forum explored the role competitively-priced US LNG plays in the EU market, and growing prospects for LNG in the transport sector. Increased imports of US LNG enhance EU diversification of energy supply. The EU estimates that by 2022 all Member States (but Malta and Cyprus) will have access to three sources of gas and 23 Member States will have access to the global LNG market.

### **15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 2004 EU ENLARGEMENT**

Wednesday 1 May saw the fifteenth anniversary of the EU's largest accession, with ten countries (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) joining the bloc. In a statement, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker stated that "the accession of the Central and Eastern European countries, and the courage of their people in preparing for that accession, is what allowed us to reconcile our continent's geography with its history". "I remain an ardent fan of enlargement today," he added. By 2020, the EU will have invested €365.2 billion in these countries since accession.

### **ECJ CONFIRMS COMPATIBILITY OF CETA WITH EU TREATIES**

The European Court of Justice confirmed this week that the Investment Court System (ICS) provisions of the CETA trade deal between the EU and Canada are consistent with EU treaties. EU Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmström stated: "International investment rules and dispute settlement have an important role to play in encouraging and retaining investment. The Investment Court System guarantees that this is done fairly, effectively and transparently." The opinion coheres with the Opinion

of the Advocate General in January that the ICS is fully compatible with EU law, meaning no changes must be made to the EU-Canada agreement text.

**COMING UP NEXT WEEK**

- **9 May: Informal European Council in Sibiu, Romania.** On the agenda: EU's next strategic agenda for 2019-2024.

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