



**Brussels, 19 July 2019**

### **URSULA VON DER LEYEN ELECTED AS COMMISSION PRESIDENT WITH SLIM MAJORITY**

The European Parliament elected former German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen as the first female President of the European Commission with 383 votes in favour, 327 against and 22 abstentions – the smallest majority since 1994. The President-elect is expected to present her agenda for the next Commission and allocate the portfolios of the future College of Commissioners on the basis of candidates put forward by Member States by the end of August. The European Parliament will then host a series of hearings with the Commissioners-designate in September/October, before voting on the College as a whole on 22-24 October.

### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2018 COMPETITION REPORT REVIEWS PROGRESS OVER LAST YEAR**

The European Commission published its report on Competition Policy for 2018, presenting its most important policy and legislative initiatives, as well as key decisions adopted over the past year. The report notes that promoting a competitive internal market benefits both EU consumers and companies. It pays particular attention to the effectiveness of competition enforcement, challenges in the digital economy, fostering a more resilient financial sector and a fair and non-discriminatory taxation of firms active in the EU, as well as on promoting a global competition culture.

### **FINNISH COUNCIL PRESIDENCY PRESENTS POLICY PROGRAMME**

Antti Rinne, Prime Minister of Finland, presented policy priorities of the Finnish Council Presidency during the European Parliament's plenary session. During his intervention, he stressed that a top priority is to strengthen the EU's position as a global leader in climate action, aiming for Member States to commit to climate neutrality by 2050 by the end of 2019. Other priorities include protecting the rule of law, making the EU more competitive while ensuring social inclusion and, finally, providing security for EU citizens with a particular focus on hybrid threats. The Finnish Presidency ends on 31 December 2019.

### **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CALLS FOR MORE SANCTIONS ON VENEZUELA**

The European Parliament called for Member States to impose additional sanctions against Venezuelan authorities. According to the adopted resolution, these authorities are "responsible for human rights violations and repression". Parliament also reiterated support to the Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido, as well as the ongoing process led by Norway to facilitate a solution to the current impasse. 455 MEPs voted in favour of the position, 85 against and 105 abstentions.

### **€800 MILLION TO INNOVATIVE SMEs IN SOUTH EASTERN AND EASTERN EUROPE**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and ProCredit Group provided €800 million to innovative small and medium-sized companies (SMEs), under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the so-called "Juncker Plan". The financing will target companies using new technologies and producing new products in one of the eleven countries where the facility is available (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Moldova, the Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine). As of last month, the Juncker Plan had mobilised nearly €410 billion of additional investment, currently supporting some 952,000 SMEs across Europe.

**COMING UP NEXT WEEK:**

- No important events

***WE WISH YOU A SUNNY AND RELAXING SUMMER! THE EU INSIGHT WILL BE BACK AT THE END OF AUGUST.***