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VON DER LEYEN UNVEILS ALLOCATION OF COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATES' PORTFOLIOS

European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen unveiled the allocation of portfolios and the structure for her team of Commissioner-designates. The next Commission will be a 'geopolitical' one and will have eight Vice-Presidents, of which three will have the title of 'Executive Vice-President' (Frans Timmermans, Margrethe Vestager and Valdis Dombrovskis), and 18 regular Commissioners. In the coming weeks, the Commissioners-designate will attend a series of hearings in the European Parliament's committees ahead of a vote on the composition of the College of Commissioners as a whole on 23 October. The new Commission is set to take office on 1 November.

IRELAND'S PHIL HOGAN WILL BE TASKED WITH NEGOTIATING FTA WITH UK POST-BREXIT

After announcing that Ireland's Phil Hogan will be the next Commissioner for Trade, and hence in charge of negotiating the future free trade agreement (FTA) with the UK, Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen insisted that the next steps in the Brexit process remain entirely down to the UK. Meanwhile, in the European Parliament, MEP Richard Corbett (S&D, UK) submitted a motion for a resolution on Brexit which calls on the EU to give maximum flexibility for the UK to resolve the internal British crisis on this issue and, if necessary, extend the Article 50 deadline. The motion will be debated and voted on next week.

EUROGROUP CONTINUES DISCUSSIONS ON EUROZONE BUDGET WITH NO BREAKTHROUGH

During an informal gathering in Helsinki, EU Finance Ministers continued discussions on the eurozone budget, which is intended to be anchored within the next long-term EU budget (2021-2027). The debate focused on governance, financing, allocation methodology, modulation procedure, and arrangements for non-participating Member States. The Eurogroup also held a discussion on the quality of public finances and reviewed the outcomes of the Commission's post-programme surveillance mission to Ireland. Discussions amongst EU Finance Ministers will continue today and tomorrow during the informal ECOFIN hosted by the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

EUROPEAN SATELLITE NAVIGATION SYSTEM GALILEO REACHES 1 BILLION SMARTPHONE USERS

The Europe's Global Navigation Satellite System 'Galileo' has reached 1 billion smartphone users worldwide. This number has been achieved even though Galileo has been in its initial establishment phase since December 2016. Galileo provides so-called 'initial services' which assist citizens and businesses with accurate positioning, navigation and timing signals. The system is expected to become fully operational in 2020. European authorities estimate the number of Galileo users to reach 2.7 billion by 2029.

EU MEMBER STATES HAVE NO CONCRETE PLANS TO PHASE OUT FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES

Draft National and Energy Climate Plans 2030 (NECPs) submitted by Member States to the European Commission in 2018 reveal that Member States show little ambition to end fossil fuel subsidies. Despite long-standing commitments to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, most Member States do not foresee to put an end to them. Moreover, five Member States (Germany, Greece, Poland, Slovenia, UK) plan to introduce new subsidies for fossil fuels. EU Member States are now reviewing their NECPs and will

provide further clarity on any subsidy. Member States will have to submit their final Plans to the Commission by the end of 2019.

COMING UP NEXT WEEK:

- **16 September: General Affairs Council.** On the agenda: MFF 2021-2027, enhancing respect of the rule of law, Poland and Hungary.
- **16-19 September: European Parliament plenary session.** On the agenda: UN climate action summit, foreign electoral interference and disinformation in elections, Amazon forest fires, Brexit, anti-money laundering legislation.
- **20 September: Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Transport).** On the agenda: transport and climate change (land transport, aviation and shipping).
- **22-24 September: Informal meeting of agriculture ministers.** On the agenda: soil carbon sequestration in agriculture.

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