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### Top News

#### **Antitrust: Commission opens investigation into Insurance Ireland data pooling system**

The European Commission has opened a formal antitrust investigation into Insurance Ireland to assess whether the conditions of access to its Insurance Link data pooling system may restrict competition, in breach of EU rules. EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said: "We are investigating whether companies wishing to offer their services on the Irish motor insurance market may have been unfairly prevented from accessing a data pool managed by Insurance Ireland for its member companies. This could potentially reduce Irish drivers' choice of motor insurance policies at competitive prices."

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#### **€50 million EU Fund for Irish Beef Farmers**

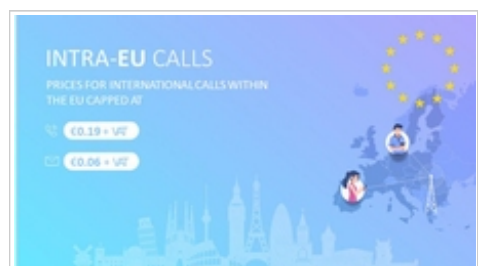
A fund of €50 million for Irish beef farmers has been agreed by the European Commission. The Irish government will have the possibility to match this fund, which should bring the total amount of financial support for Irish beef farmers to €100 million. Speaking this afternoon, the EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan, said that "this fund recognises the particular difficulty that Irish beef farmers have experienced during an unprecedented and sustained period of low prices, principally driven by events beyond their control. This fund will support a fragile but very important sector and protect its long-term viability. The European Commission has concluded that the sector is in need of an immediate response."

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#### **Phone calls and text messaging costs fall further**

From yesterday (15 May), a new maximum price applies to all international calls and text messages within the EU. Irish consumers making a phone call, either from a mobile or a landline, to another EU country will pay a maximum of 19 cents per minute (+VAT) and 6 cents per text message. (+VAT). Telecoms operators across the EU will have to notify consumers of the new price caps. The maximum price is capped only for personal usage, i.e. for private customers. Business customers are excluded.



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## Ten local authorities around Ireland to receive Wifi4EU vouchers under second round

Ten local authorities around Ireland have qualified for a total of 22 Wifi4EU vouchers under the second call for applications. They are: Galway, Kilkenny, Leitrim, Meath, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo, South Dublin, Westmeath and Wicklow. This brings the share of Irish local authorities to have benefited from the scheme to over 50%. The vouchers, which are each worth €15,000, are to be used to cover equipment and installation costs of Wi-Fi hotspots in public areas such as libraries, public parks, etc.

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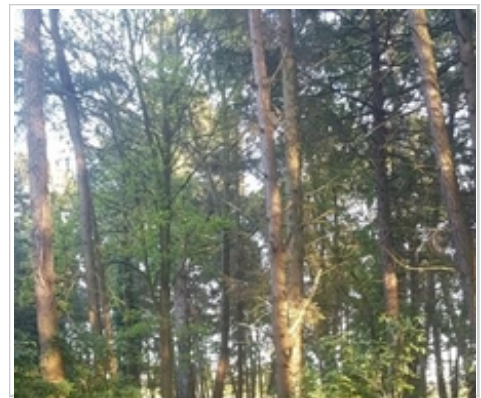


## Other news

### Commissioner Hogan proposes "Farm Carbon Forest" initiative

EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan has called on Member States to look into the possibility of a 'Farm Carbon Forest Initiative' to reward farmers who successfully reduce, save, store or sequester carbon. He said: "Emissions from agriculture account for around 10 per cent of total non-CO2 emissions in the EU. If we want to achieve carbon neutrality by mid-century, as promised in the Paris Agreement, we have to use all means at our disposal to not only increase carbon efficiency but to also bring absolute emissions down whilst also securing food security."

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### Huge turnout at Waterford Citizens' Dialogue

A huge crowd turned out for a Citizens' Dialogue in Dunhill Ecopark (Co Waterford) earlier this week on the theme: "Revitalising Rural Ireland - Empowering Communities through Social Enterprise". The event was organised by the Waterford Europe Direct Information Centre, with support from the European Commission Representation in Ireland. Speakers at the event included: Gerry Kiely, Head of the Representation; Patrick Klein, from the Commission's Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs; Brendan Whelan, CEO of the Social Finance Foundation; and Janet O'Toole from Connemara West. The event was moderated by Damien Tiernan, presenter at WLR FM.

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### Antitrust: Commission fines Barclays, RBS, Citigroup, JPMorgan and MUFG for participating in foreign exchange spot trading cartel

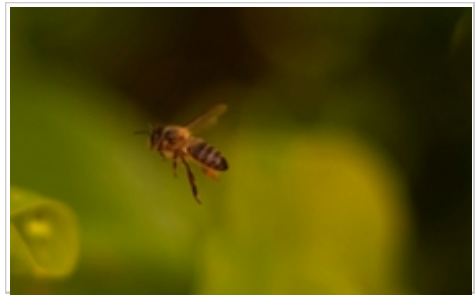
In two settlement decisions, the European Commission has fined five banks for taking part in two cartels in the Spot Foreign Exchange market for 11 currencies - Euro, British Pound, Japanese Yen, Swiss Franc, US, Canadian, New Zealand and Australian Dollars, and Danish, Swedish and Norwegian crowns. The first decision imposes a total fine of €811,197,000 on Barclays, The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), Citigroup and JPMorgan. The second decision imposes a total fine of €257,682,000 on Barclays, RBS and MUFG Bank (formerly Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi).

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## **Commission registers European Citizens' Initiative to "Save the bees!"**

The European Commission is to register a European Citizens' Initiative entitled 'Save the bees! Protection of biodiversity and improvement of habitats for insects in Europe'. The organisers are calling on the Commission to 'adopt legislation to maintain and improve habitats for insects as indicators of an undamaged environment'. Once the registration has taken place on 27 May, the organisers will have one year to collect a minimum of one million statements of support from at least seven Member States.

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## **Commission to harmonise last pioneer frequency band needed for 5G deployment**

The European Commission this week adopted the Implementing Decision to harmonise the 26 GHz frequency band for wireless networks. The decision finalises the EU-wide coordination of all three pioneer bands (700 MHz, 3.6 GHz and 26 GHz) needed for 5G rollout in the Member States.

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## **Rise in share of young Irish adults living with their parents**

New Eurostat figures show that the share of young Irish adults (25-34) still living with their parents rose from 20% in 2009 to 28.5% in 2017. Young adults (25-34) in Denmark (3.2%), Finland (4.7%) and Sweden (6.0%) were the least likely to still be living with their parents while those in Croatia (59.7%), Slovakia (57.0%) and Greece (56.3%) were the most. The EU average was also 28.5% - although higher for young men than young women. The figures also show that the average age of a young Irish person leaving the parental home is now just over 26 years.

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## **New tool to help EU countries crack down on VAT fraud**

The European Commission has launched a new tool to allow Member States to rapidly exchange and jointly process VAT data, leading to earlier detection of suspicious networks. Commissioner Moscovici said: "This new tool will increase the speed at which authorities can uncover and act on suspicious activity. But this progress does not lessen the need for deeper and more fundamental reform of the EU's VAT system, to ensure it can cope with the vast amounts of trade taking place across borders in the EU."

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## **Three Irish partners in EU-funded renewable energy project**

UCD, WIT and ESB Networks Ltd are all partners in the EU-funded RE-SERVE project. The project is developing ways to tackle the technical electricity-grid-based challenges that stand in the way of achieving 100% renewable electricity in Europe. Electricity grids are not currently designed to meet the needs of renewable energies. The project, which also includes partners in Germany, Romania and Italy, has received almost €5 million in EU funding and will conclude this September.

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## **Irish ocean energy project reaches finals of EU Sustainable Energy Awards**

Galway based project Foresea (Funding Ocean Renewable Energy through Strategic European Action) has been shortlisted for a European Sustainable Energy Award. The Foresea project, which has received €11 million in EU funding, is working to bring marine energy technologies closer to commercialisation. If you would like to help Foresea win a Citizens' Award, you can vote for them at the link below. The winners will be announced on 18 June.

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## EU-funded colorectal cancer project to begin trials in Cork, Dublin and Galway

The EU-funded Colossus colorectal cancer research project is currently carrying out patient trials in hospitals in Cork, Dublin and Galway. Prof Annette Byrne (RCSI) said: "We aim to identify new treatments and develop diagnostic assays for this intractable disease. Metastatic colorectal cancer is a highly prevalent, and complex pathology with a high economic impact both within a European and global context." The COLOSSUS project is led by the RCSI and includes partners in seven other countries as well as Ireland (RCSI, UCD, Irish Clinical Oncology Research Group and Pintail Ltd). The trials are sponsored and coordinated by Cancer Trials Ireland.

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## EU adopts measures to support generic pharmaceuticals producers

The European Council this week adopted a regulation introducing an exception to the protection granted to an original medicine by a supplementary protection certificate (SPC) for export purposes and/or for stockpiling. This means that EU-based manufacturers of generics and biosimilars will be entitled to manufacture a generic or biosimilar version of an SPC-protected medicine during the term of the SPC either for the purpose of exporting to a non-EU market where protection has expired or never existed or (during the six months before the SPC expires) for the purpose of creating a stock that will be put on the EU market after the SPC has expired.

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## Council adopts measures to reduce risk in the banking system

The European Council has adopted a comprehensive legislative package to reduce risks in the banking sector and further reinforce banks' ability to withstand potential shocks. The package contains amendments to the capital requirement legislation (regulation 575/2013 and directive 2013/36/EU) which reinforce the capital and liquidity positions of banks, and strengthens the framework for the recovery and resolution of banks in difficulty (directive 2014/59/EU and regulation 806/2014).

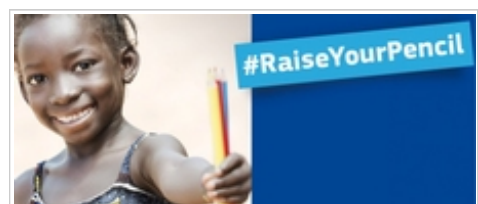
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## EU Commission launches #RaiseYourPencil campaign

The European Commission has launched a new campaign to raise awareness about the need to guarantee access to education for crisis-affected children around the world.

Using the pencil, a universal symbol for school and learning, the Commission encourages everyone to #RaiseYourPencil on social media to promote #School4All. The campaign will run until September.

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## Agenda

### Exhibition - "45 Stories celebrating Ireland's 45 years of EU membership"

This exhibition illustrates just some of the ways in which Ireland has benefitted from EU membership over the past four and a half decades. It includes stories from every county and across many sectors, including agriculture, culture, education, business, environment, health and consumer protection. The exhibition is on a nationwide tour until July 2019. The exhibition is on display in Nenagh Library from 1 to 28 May.

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### **Friday 17 May: Address by Guy Verhofstadt on The Future of Europe: New Agenda, New Institutions, Gresham Hotel, Dublin 1**

Guy Verhofstadt will present his vision for the reform of the European project at an event in the Gresham Hotel on Friday 17 May (12.45 pm - 2.00 pm) organised by the Institute of International and European Affairs. He will also give his views on the future relationship between the EU and the UK after Brexit. Mr Verhofstadt is President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and the European Parliament's lead negotiator on Brexit. This event is open to the public as part of the IIEA's Future of the EU27 Project, which is supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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### **Friday 17 May: Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Brussels**

Ministers will hold a debate on digital taxation in the international context. The Council presidency and the Commission will present the main outcomes of the G20, IMF and World Bank spring meetings and finalise preparations for the June G20 meeting in Japan. The Commission is also set to present the outcome of the first meeting of the coalition of finance ministers for climate actions. Also on the agenda: Excise duties, Economic and Monetary Union and the European Semester in 2019.

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### **Monday 20 May: European Economic Area Council, Brussels**

The EEA Council will discuss the overall functioning of the Agreement on the European Economic Area. It will also hold an orientation debate on climate change, focusing on the long-term strategies towards 2050 and the implementation of the Paris Agreement. For more info, see the agenda at the link below.

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### **Monday 20 May: Pre-European elections event organised by the Union des Français de L'Etranger, Europe House, Dublin 2**

The "Union des Français de L'Etranger "(UFE) in Ireland is organising a pre-European Parliament elections event in Europe House on Monday evening, (6-7.30 pm) 20 May. On the agenda: screening of several short European Commission films on the EU followed by an exchange of views on the workings of the European Parliament and the elections moderated by Charlotte Denise and Michael Bruton from the European Parliament Liaison Office in Dublin. Entry is free but advance registration is required. Email [charles.m.eder@gmail.com](mailto:charles.m.eder@gmail.com) to reserve a seat.

### **Tuesday 21 May: General Affairs Council, Brussels**

The Council will hold a policy debate on the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027. The debate will focus on the EU budget for external action, in particular on funding for development policy and the European neighbourhood policy. Ministers will also start preparations for the European Council meeting on 20-21 June 2019 by discussing an annotated draft agenda.

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### **Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 May: Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council, Brussels**

On the agenda: young people and the future of work; the teaching and learning of languages; early childhood education and care systems; upskilling pathways for adults; fostering young people's access to culture; and access to sport for persons with disabilities.

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### **Monday 27 May: Annual funding seminar on Support for European Cooperation Projects organised by the Creative Europe Desk Ireland**

The Creative Europe Desk Ireland – Culture Office is hosting its annual funding seminar on Support for European Cooperation Projects, the main culture funding strand of the Creative Europe Programme. This FREE seminar is open to arts, culture and heritage organisations interested in learning more about how Europe supports culture projects. This event takes place from 10.30 am to 3 pm on 27 May in the Wood Quay Venue, Dublin City Council Civic Offices. Click on the link below for further information and to register.

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## **Monday 27 May: Seminar on European Funding for Arts & Culture Sectors, Dublin**

Creative Europe Ireland is hosting a free seminar on Creative Europe funding for the arts and culture sectors with a spotlight on the cultural and creative sectors in Georgia. The seminar is open to arts, culture, heritage, craft and design organisations who wish to learn more about European support for culture projects. The seminar takes place from 10.30 am to 3 pm at the Wood Quay Venue, Dublin City Council Civic Offices. For more information and to register, click on the link below.

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## **Tuesday 28 May: Informal meeting of heads of state or government, Brussels**

After the European Parliament elections EU heads of state or government will meet for a summit on 28 May 2019 in Brussels. They will discuss the outcome of the vote and start the nomination process for the heads of the EU institutions.

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## **Wednesday 29 May: Panel discussion - "May 2019 elections: Now What?", Dublin**

The European Commission Representation in Ireland and the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland are jointly organising a panel discussion to take stock of the 2019 European Parliament elections and assess their implications in Irish and European Politics. This event takes place on Wednesday morning 29 May at the Royal Irish Academy, Dawson Street, Dublin 2. This event is free of charge but prior registration is required. Anyone interested in attending should email: Events-EPDublin@europarl.europa.eu.

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## **Wednesday 12 June: Public information session about the new call for tender for freelance translation services at the European Commission**

On Wednesday 12 June, the European Commission Representation in Ireland will host a public information session about the new call for tender for freelance translation services at the European Commission. The event will comprise two sessions: Main features of the new tender ('cascade', communication, performance assessment, testing) and Freelance translation into Irish for the European Commission. It will take place at Europe House, 12-14 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2 from 9.30 am to 3.30 pm. Anyone interested in attending is invited to register by emailing DGT-GA-0-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu before 3 June 2019.

## **Friday 21 to Saturday 21 June: Maynooth University Jean Monnet Summer School, Maynooth**

The Maynooth University Jean Monnet Summer School takes place this year from 21 to 29 June on the theme: 'Vulnerability and Human Rights in the EU'. The event features a number of very interesting and high profile speakers from the worlds of law and politics and may be of interest to anybody going on to do a Masters Degree in any of these areas.

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## **Job opportunities**

### **Administrators in the field of Audit**

The European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) has launched an open competition to recruit young talented graduates (AD 5) and experienced specialists (AD 7) in the field of audit. They will work primarily in the European Commission in Brussels and the European Court of Auditors in Luxembourg. To apply for the graduate profile, you need a university degree or a professional qualification in a relevant field. To apply for the specialist profile, you will also need at least 6–7 years' relevant professional experience of which at least 3–4 years in the field of audit (depending on your level of education).

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