



NEWS FROM THE COMMISSION MIDDAY BRIEFING
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Wednesday, 11 January, 2012

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[Belgium, Cyprus, Malta and Poland took effective action to correct deficit while Hungary's measures are insufficient](#)

Today the European Commission concluded that Hungary has not made sufficient progress towards a timely and sustainable correction of its excessive deficit. The European Commission proposes to move to the next stage of the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) and recommends that the Council of Ministers decides that no effective action has been taken to bring the deficit below 3% of GDP in a sustainable manner. Subject to this Council decision (under Article 126(8) of the EU Treaty), the Commission will then propose to the Council new recommendations addressed to Hungary (under Article 126(7) of the Treaty) with a view to bringing to an end its excessive government deficit.

[Breaking down barriers to secure and innovative card, internet and mobile payments](#)

Carrying a virtual train ticket or repaying a friend with your mobile phone, buying your groceries online, paying with your debit card abroad – the way European citizens shop and pay is radically changing. A secure and transparent integrated payments environment throughout the EU could create more efficient, modern and safer means of payments – for the benefits of consumers, merchants and payment providers. Based on the Green Paper consultation adopted today, the Commission seeks the views of stakeholders as to which obstacles hinder further market integration and how these could be resolved. The deadline for submitting contributions to the consultation is 11 April 2012.

[Commission takes Council to Court for breaching EU law on Staff Regulations](#)

The Commission has today decided to take the Council to the Court of Justice for failing to adopt the Council Regulation on the annual adjustment to the remuneration and pensions of EU staff as anticipated in the Staff Regulations.

European Border Breakers Awards streamed live on YouTube

The winners of the 2012 European Border Breakers Awards ("the EBBAs"), which highlight the best new music acts in Europe who have achieved cross-border chart success, will be honoured this evening at the Eurosonic Noorderslag music festival in Groningen (The Netherlands). During the ceremony, which will be broadcast live via YouTube from 6.15pm (local time), the name of the artist who has scooped the 'public choice award' will be revealed for the first time. This award is based on an online vote which took place in November and December to select the 'best of the best'. The winners of the 2012 awards are: Elektro Guzzi

(Austria), Selah Sue (Belgium), Agnes Obel (Denmark), Ben l'Oncle Soul (France), Boy (Germany), James Vincent McMorrow (Ireland), Afrojack (Netherlands), Alexandra Stan (Romania), Swedish House Mafia (Sweden), Anna Calvi (UK). To watch the award ceremony live, click here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/EBBAAWARDS> . [European Commission press release announcing this year's winners](#) . [Official EBBA website](#) .

[State aid: Commission opens investigation into French aid to Val'Hor](#)

Brussels, 11 January 2012 - The European Commission has decided to open a formal investigation procedure under EU state aid rules into inter-branch levies in France paid to members of the association for the development of professional horticulture and landscape products and sectors (Val'Hor). The Commission has doubts concerning the compatibility of this measure with EU law. The opening of a formal investigation allows the Commission to examine the measure more closely and gives interested third parties the possibility to submit comments. It does not prejudge the outcome of the procedure.

Commission authorises prolongation of the Danish export credit financing scheme

The European Commission has authorised, under EU Treaty state aid rules, a prolongation of the Danish export credit financing scheme until 31 December 2015. The scheme was initially approved on 9 February 2010 (see [IP/10/143](#)). Due to the financial crisis, several banks exited the export credit business and the banks still active on that market reduced their activities due to difficulties to find long term funding. If banks' tightened liquidity position restricts them from financing a long-term export loan requested by a Danish exporter and/or its client, they can enter into an agreement with the Danish State-owned export finance agency (EKF) for a later assignment of the loan to the Scheme. The Commission found that the scheme provides funding on market terms - in particular, it complies with the Commission's Reference Rate Communication (see [IP/07/1912](#)) - and therefore does not constitute state aid in the meaning of Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

OTHER INFORMATION

- [Speech by Vice President Rehn: "Eurobonds: Stability and Growth for the Euro Area" - rediffusion](#)
- [Memo "Communication on e-commerce – frequently asked questions"](#)
- [Memo "Green Paper 'Towards an integrated European market for card, internet and mobile payments' — Frequently Asked Questions"](#)
- [Memo "Border Arbitration Agreement between Slovenia and Croatia"](#)
- [Speech by Vice President Kroes: "Making online transactions easier, more trustworthy and more transparent"](#)

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