

Headlines

Eurozone finance ministers have approved Greece's four-month bailout extension, following a one-hour conference call to discuss a list of reforms proposed by the Greek government on Monday. The extension will still need to be approved by some national parliaments, including the Bundestag in Germany. That vote will take place on Friday. If final approval is given, Greece's funding needs should be covered until early summer. "We call on the Greek authorities to further develop and broaden the list of reform measures, based on the current arrangement, in close co-ordination with the institutions in order to allow for a speedy and successful conclusion of the review," the Eurogroup said in a statement. (EUROPEANVOICE.COM)

Russia's Gazprom said on Tuesday there were serious risks to gas transit to Europe via Ukraine after Kiev failed to pay in advance for supplies as a dispute between the two countries intensified. A „winter package“ between Kiev and Moscow brokered by the European Commission appears to be in jeopardy following a dispute which flared up last week over who would pay for gas to rebel areas. Gazprom said in a statement that Ukraine's prepayment would cover just 219 million cubic metres of gas, enough for only two days. (REUTERS.COM)

Agenda

European Parliament

▶ **15:00 the plenary session takes place in Brussels.** On the final draft agenda: Resumption of session and order of business, Decision adopted on a Strategic framework for the Energy Union - Commission statement, Report of the informal meeting of Heads of State or Government (12 February 2015) - European Council and Commission statements, European Central Bank annual report for 2013 in the presence of **Mario Draghi**, President of the ECB (rapporteur **Pablo Zalba Bidegain**, EPP), One-minute speeches.

▶ A draft law to reform the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, by reducing the surplus of carbon credits available for trading in order to support the price, was backed by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) in a vote on Tuesday. They advocated introducing the mechanism early, by the end of 2018, and also proposed preventing the automatic return to the market, from 2019, of a portion of allowances "back loaded" last year in a separate vote.

▶ MEPs of the ENVI Committee voted yesterday to stand by an original position to cap the use of crops to make biofuel and to account for their negative impact on the climate. They also voted to give **Nils Torvalds**, the MEP leading the process, a mandate to begin negotiations with member states straightaway. (EUROPEANVOICE.COM)

▶ A revised proposal for an EU Passenger Name Records system was published yesterday by the parliament's lead member **Timothy Kirkhope**. ECR MEP Timothy Kirkhope will present the report to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on Thursday morning.

European Commission

▶ The Commission will adopt a **Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union** with a **Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy**. The Energy Union is one of the key priorities of the Commission as laid down by **President Juncker** in his political guidelines. The Energy Union Strategy will go hand in hand with a **Climate Communication "Road to Paris"** and a **Communication reporting on the electricity interconnection target of 10%**.

▶ Thanks to EU funding from the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research last night announced encouraging evidence that the **antiviral drug favipiravir might be an effective treatment against early Ebola disease**.

▶ Following an in-depth investigation, the Commission cleared under the EU Merger Regulation Liberty Global's acquisition of a stake in the Belgian media company De Vijver Media NV.



NEW DIRECTION
THE FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN REFORM




EU Reform - A German Perspective
Tuesday 3 March 2015, 18:30-20:00, Brussels (Stanhope)
Hans-Olaf Henkel MEP & Dr Markus C. Kerber
Registration: rsvp@newdirectionfoundation.org
www.newdirectionfoundation.org

▶ The Commission approved under the EU Merger Regulation the creation of a joint venture by Daimler AG, of Germany, and Kamaz OJSC, of Russia.

▶ **Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness travelled to Prague yesterday. He said "I welcome the Czech government's clear expression of support for the Investment Plan. The unlocking of public and private funds under the Plan will contribute to addressing the current investment gap in the Czech Republic."

Member States News

▶ **British troops will be deployed in Ukraine to train soldiers fighting Russian separatists**, **David Cameron** has said, as he delivered an extraordinary warning to **Vladimir Putin** over his continued aggression in eastern Europe. The Prime Minister said that there would be "deeply damaging" consequences for all of Europe if the EU fails to stand up to Mr Putin in Ukraine, predicting that the Russian president could turn against the Baltic states or Moldova if he is not reined in now. (TELEGRAPH.CO.UK)

▶ **Lithuania plans to re-introduce military conscription**, **President Dalia Grybauskaitė** said Tuesday, citing new threats to national security. "We need to strengthen the country's defence capacities," Grybauskaitė said after a session of Lithuania's national security council in the capital Vilnius. The Lithuanian leader, whose country is NATO member, has been among the most outspoken critics of Russia's policies in Ukraine. (EUROPEONLINE.EU)

▶ Lithuania's request to Germany for Boxer tanks was reportedly denied. The German media said the decision has been widely criticised by both sides of the German governing coalition. According to Die Welt am Sonntag newspaper, the decision was made in view of the German military's own requirements. (NEUROPE.EU)

▶ The British government was the only one in the EU to discuss the possibility of Greece exiting the eurozone

(Grexit), Dutch finance minister and Eurogroup chief **Jeroen Dijsselbloem** told MEPs Tuesday. He said the eurozone isn't working on that assumption, but rather on how to get Greece "back on track". (EUOBSERVER.COM)

▶ **Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy delivered the final State of the Nation address** of his current term of office on Tuesday, during which he congratulated himself on turning the nation around from the situation of near-bankruptcy he encountered when he came to power in December 2011 without the need for a European bailout. (ELPAIS.COM)

▶ **France wants to delay a target for bringing its budget deficit below 3 percent of GDP** by three years until 2018, German business daily Handelsblatt reported on Monday. The French government has requested a three-year extension to the 2015 deadline as it wants to keep the debate over unpopular austerity measures and structural reforms out of the 2017 presidential election campaign. (REUTERS.COM)

▶ **The long-disputed Lyon - Turin railway line will be constructed by 2020**, **French President François Hollande** announced. He and his Italian counterpart **Matteo Renzi** signed off on the project to connect the cities during a summit in Paris on Tuesday. The leaders will ask the European Commission to foot 40 percent of the bill, to the tune of around 3.4 billion euros. France will provide 2.2 billion euros of financing and Italy 2.9 billion. Approximately one billion euros has already been put into preparatory work. (EURONEWS.COM)

▶ **Denmark was dubbed the best country in the EU for 'digital performance'** on Tuesday as a new Digital Economy and Society index was unveiled. Behind Denmark was neighbouring Sweden, followed by the Netherlands, Finland and Belgium, Romania came in last. (THELOCAL.DK)

▶ The shooting in the Druzba (Friendship) restaurant in the town of Uhersky Brod yesterday claimed nine dead, seven men and one woman killed by the gunman who eventually shot himself dead. It was the most tragic shooting incident in the Czech Republic. The murderer (62) had a gun licence and he had a clean criminal record. (CESKENOVINY.CZ)

Who When Where

▶ 9:30 the European Commission holds a workshop "Paving the way for advanced manufacturing: technology transfer" (Committee of the Regions, Rue Belliard 99-101, Brussels).

▶ 12:30 the European Centre for International Political Economy holds a lunch seminar "Investor-State Dispute Settlement and Schizophrenia in the EU about International Law" (ECIPE, Rue Belliard 4-6, Brussels).

▶ 16:00 the European Commission holds the webinar on digital tourism "The Importance of Content" explaining the importance of content in tourism marketing and how to plan for, publish and disseminate great content to promote any business.

▶ 16:30 ECR MEP **Ryszard Czarnecki** holds a lecture "Earthworks of Cultures. Sketches of History of the Nations of the Eastern Europe" (ASP - A1H1).

▶ **European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica**, will attend the **13th EU-Overseas Countries and Territories Forum in British Virgin Islands**.

▶ **The eurozone will have a new 20 euro banknote** later this year. The European Central Bank has unveiled the new note which has enhanced security features as well as a fresher look. (EURONEWS.COM)

TODAY CELEBRATING BIRTHDAY

Angélique DELAHAYE - MEP (EPP)