

Dear All

The information below is from the euractiv website for more detailed information on these and other items please go to www.euractiv.com

May no 6

EU delays re-approval for weedkiller glyphosate

The EU on Wednesday (18 May) failed to agree on the re-approval of weedkiller glyphosate in Europe amid fresh fears the product could cause cancer. This is the second time that regulators from the 28 EU member states, in addition to the European Commission, have delayed their decision on rolling over the approval for glyphosate amid fierce lobbying from both sides of the issue. Glyphosate was first used in the 1970s as the active ingredient in the Monsanto herbicide Roundup, which is now one of the world's most popular weedkillers. The European Commission, the EU's top regulator, recommended that the bloc greenlight glyphosate for another nine years when its current licence ends on 30 June, sources close to the matter told AFP. But critics, led by Greenpeace, point to research from the World Health Organisation (WHO) that concludes glyphosate may be carcinogenic and are calling for the ingredient's outright ban.

Merkel warns Erdogan his authoritarian drift endangers visa deal

German Chancellor Angela Merkel told President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan yesterday (23 May) of her "deep concern" over the state of democracy in Turkey and voiced doubt that a plan to offer Turks visa-free travel to the EU would be implemented on time. Merkel's blunt comments after highly sensitive talks with Erdoğan on the sidelines of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul revealed the extent of surging tensions between the EU and the Turkish strongman over human rights.

Member states fail to reach deal to tackle company tax avoidance

European Union finance ministers failed on Wednesday (25 May) to agree new rules to counter tax avoidance and deferred until June a possible deal on clamping down on schemes by multinational companies to disproportionately reduce tax bills.

Oi, Eurocrats! Time to wake up to the virtues of bad news

A fatal weakness of the European Commission is its officials' faith in good news. Their misguided thinking is that by trumpeting what they think are the EU's most positive aspects they can counter escalating euroscepticism, writes Giles Merritt. [*Giles Merritt is Secretary-General of Friends of Europe. This opinion piece was taken from his new book, [Slippery Slope: Europe's Troubled Future](#).*]

This is wrong, and not just because it clearly doesn't work. It's wrong because, as everyone knows, good news is no news at all. Stories about the minutiae of EU regulation and the positive economic contribution they make may be of interest to small groups of specialists. But for the rest of us, they're simply more red tape from Brussels. Bad news, on the other hand, is grist to the mill

of journalists, and not only to those accredited to the EU institutions. Spelling out Europe's weaknesses tells people why closer integration is vitally important. We all know that Brussels is often blamed for national governments' shortcomings, and underlining these as bad news would show who really are the foot-draggers.

Spotify spared from Commission's geoblocking plans for now

The European Commission has narrowly avoided a showdown with the music industry and e-book publishers over its new plans to stop e-commerce firms charging buyers more if they live in certain EU countries. Under the rules proposed today (25 May), e-commerce companies based in one EU country will have to sell their products or services to customers in other member states. The Commission wants to get rid of what it calls unjustified geoblocking, when websites block or reroute users because they're in another country.

Release of jailed journalists signals improvement of Azerbaijan-EU relations

Azerbaijan yesterday (25 May) released jailed investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova, who was convicted of corruption charges last year, prompting reactions welcoming the country's move toward press freedom and rule of law. The decision to free Ismayilova was preceded by the amnesty of 14 jailed activists and opposition politicians on 17 March. Another prominent human rights activist was released on 28 March.

Divert 10% of EU funds to deal with refugee crisis, says Germany

Germany wants to divert 10% of the EU budget towards dealing with the refugee crisis, after a lack of joined-up thinking exacerbated the challenges posed by irregular migration to Europe. The German development minister, Gerd Müller, said the EU's current mechanisms for responding to the refugee crisis were not fit for purpose, and suggested appointing a special commissioner to lead a combined European refugee strategy, as well as other global humanitarian challenges.

May No 7

Financial Crisis



Greece: the parliament adopts measure to receive a new loan

The Greek Parliament adopted new measures demanded by the European Union and the IMF on 22nd May. The text notably provides for an automatic adjustment mechanism in the event of any budgetary excesses and additional measures to step up privatisation and increase indirect taxation...

Migration :

Report on the economic benefits brought by the refugees to Europe



A report by the Tent Foundation and the Open Political Economy Network (OPEN) published on 18th May reveals that the wealthy countries of the EU who are hosting refugees can draw huge economic benefit from them...

Council :

Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council



On 23rd May the European Foreign Affairs Ministers repeated that they wanted to stabilise the regions of Syria and Iraq but also to step up their action to counter terrorism. Concerning migration they stressed the need for joint action and prolonged the operation Sophia in the Mediterranean against human trafficking for a further year. Finally they met their Eastern Partnership counterparts and said they were pleased with the progress that had been accomplished

Greece :

Launch of the construction of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline



The ceremony for the launch of the construction of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) took place on 17th May in Thessaloniki. The 878km long pipeline will transport gas from the Caspian Sea towards the markets of Europe as of 2020

Slovenia :

The President of Slovenia supports a Constitution for the EU



On 18th May the President of the Republic of Slovenia Borut Pahor spoke in favour of the creation of a federal European Union..

NATO :

Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers



On 19th and 20th May NATO Foreign Ministers discussed the Warsaw Summit of July 2016, stability in the Organisation's neighbourhood and decided to support the NATO mission in Afghanistan beyond 2016

Studies/Reports :

EU Charter of Fundamental Rights



On 19th May the European Commission published a report on the application of the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights in 2015