

## NEWS FROM BRUSSELS 15/2020

### **European Council conclusions on COVID-19 and climate change**

The European Council assessed the current epidemiological situation and welcomed the progress achieved so far on overall coordination at EU level against COVID-19, including the recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement. It calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to continue the overall coordination effort based on the best available science, notably regarding quarantine regulations, cross-border contact tracing, testing strategies, the joint assessment of testing methods, the mutual recognition of tests, and the temporary restriction on non-essential travel into the EU. The European Council will regularly revert to this matter.

To meet the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050 in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, the EU needs to increase its ambition for the coming decade and update its climate and energy policy framework. In that context, the European Council discussed the Commission's Communication on 'Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition', including the proposed emissions reduction target of at least 55% by 2030, and the actions required to achieve that ambition: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2020/10/15-16/>

### **Commission launches Access2Markets portal to support trade by small businesses**

The European Commission has launched the Access2Markets online portal to help small and medium-sized firms trade beyond the EU's borders. The new portal responds to requests from stakeholders to better explain trade agreements and help companies ensure their products are eligible for duty discounts. It will serve both companies that already trade internationally and those that are only starting to explore opportunities in foreign markets.

The new portal was presented at a high-level, virtual event, 'The road to recovery – empowering small businesses to trade internationally', hosted by Commission Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis and attended by representatives of small and medium-sized companies: <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=2190>

### **Competition policy and the Green Deal**

DG Competition has published a call for contributions on questions about how competition rules and sustainability policies work together. This follows the announcement by Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager of her intention to launch a European debate on how EU competition policy can best support the Green Deal. DG Competition is looking for input from everyone with a stake in this issue – including from industry, from environmental groups, consumer organisations, as well as competition experts until 20 November 2020: [https://ec.europa.eu/competition/information/green\\_deal/index\\_en.html](https://ec.europa.eu/competition/information/green_deal/index_en.html)