

## **Agenda of the European Commission** ***11 – 15 November 2013***

**Background notes from the Spokespersons' service for journalists.  
The European Commission reserves the right to make changes.**

### **Monday 11 November:**

4th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region launches review of governance

### **13-15 November 2013:**

First EU-Myanmar Task Force meeting in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw

### **Thursday 14 November:**

Commission adopts a new Communication on state aid for cinema

***Monday 11 November:***

## **4th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region launches review of governance**

### **The news:**

Representatives of the eight countries making up the Baltic Sea Region, which is the first EU "macro region", will gather in Vilnius on 11 November to hold their 4th Annual Forum. Co-hosted by EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn, the participants will discuss how the environmental challenges faced by Baltic Sea Region, one of the world's environmentally most sensitive maritime regions, can be turned into opportunities for economic growth. This year's Annual Forum comes after the recent endorsement by Member States of the European Commission's evaluation report which stresses the added value of macro-regional strategies. The forum will also launch a review on governance and cooperation in the Baltic Sea Strategy in view of the forthcoming EU programming period.

### **The background:**

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, approved by the European Council in 2009, provides an integrated framework to find common solutions for the specific challenges of the region. Eight countries (Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) have joined forces to work together to tackle the challenges.

The debate also comes at a crucial stage of the negotiations for the future programmes 2014-2020. *"The Baltic Strategy is the first of Europe's macro-regional strategies. It has pioneered a unique kind of co-operation to tackle common challenges that cannot be effectively dealt with at national and local level alone. By taking more leadership to steer the strategy, the countries and regions involved will ensure even more results in the future to the benefit of the citizens in the region".*

The fourth Annual Forum is hosted jointly by the European Commission, the Lithuanian Presidency in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and INTERACT Point Turku. It brings together over 600 people from all the countries around the Baltic Sea, covering the governmental sector, business, civil society and regional organisations.

### **The event:**

- 9.00 – 13.30 am: Fourth Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
- 12.30 p.m.: Key Note Speeches (Commissioner Johannes Hahn, President Dalia Grybauskaitė, Danuta Hübner, Chair of EP Committee on Regional Development)
- Workshops at the event cover such themes as: green and blue growth in the Baltic Sea region, increased use of renewables, sustainable agriculture and clean and safe shipping.
- 13.30 p.m.: Press Conference
- A press release (IP) will be published on Monday, 11 November, via RAPID
- Video and photo coverage will be available on Ebs <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices>

### **The sources:**

- European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperate/baltic/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/baltic/index_en.cfm)
- 4th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR – programme & webstreaming:  
<http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/pages/4th-annual-forum>
- Evaluation Report concerning the added value of macro-regional strategies:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/baltic/com\\_added\\_value\\_macro\\_region\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/baltic/com_added_value_macro_region_strategy_en.pdf)
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***13-15 November 2013:***

## **First EU-Myanmar Task Force meeting in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw**

### **The news:**

The first EU-Myanmar Task Force will take place in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw, 13-15 November 2013. Its purpose is to provide comprehensive support to the transition in Myanmar/Burma by bringing together all of the tools and mechanisms – both political and economic (development aid, peace process support, investments) – available to the EU.

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission **Catherine Ashton** will co-chair the Task Force alongside U Soe Thane, Minister in the President of Myanmar's Office.

European Commission Vice-President **Antonio Tajani** (Industry and Entrepreneurship) and European Commissioners **Andris Piebalgs** (Development and Cooperation) and **Dacian Cioloş** (Agriculture and Rural Development) will also participate in the Task Force.

### **The background:**

The Task Force was announced in a joint statement by President Van Rompuy, President Barroso and President U Thein Sein, during the visit of President U Thein Sein to Brussels in March, 2013. Since then, the EU has lifted all its sanctions with the exception of the arms embargo, re-opened trade benefits under the General System of Preferences and adopted a Comprehensive Framework on EU policies and support to Myanmar/Burma.

### **The event:**

- The meeting takes place over two days. A press conference with the Co-Chairs will follow the end of the Task Force 15 November in Nay Pyi Taw.
- Available on EbS

### **The sources:**

- EU-Myanmar relations: <http://eeas.europa.eu/myanmar>
- Press materials will be available via RAPID next week.

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***Thursday 14 November:***

## **Commission adopts a new Communication on state aid for cinema**

### **The news:**

On 14 November, the European Commission will adopt a new Communication on state aid for films and other audiovisual works.

The Communication contains detailed criteria which define how Member States may financially support the production and distribution of films in line with EU state aid rules. It replaces the criteria which have been applied since 2001 and amends them.

The aim of the Communication is to encourage creation and cultural diversity everywhere in the European Union and to set the conditions for a successful European audiovisual sector, where cross-border productions can be set up easily.

### **The background:**

EU Member States provide an estimated €3 billion per year in film support: €2 billion in grants and soft loans, as well as €1 billion in tax incentives. Around 80% of this is for film production.

Financial support is important to ensure a continued and meaningful European film production. In 2001, the Commission published for the first time rules on the application of the state aid rules to aid for film production (the "Cinema Communication"). These rules expired at the end of 2012.

Therefore, the Commission started a review process in 2011, which led to three public consultations of Member States and stakeholders.

### **The event:**

- Joaquín Almunia, Vice President of the Commission in charge of competition policy, will present the new Cinema Communication at 11:30 CET in the Commission's press room.
- Available on EbS
- A press release and Memo will be available on the day.

### **The sources:**

- Competition website: <http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/open.html>
- Vice-President Almunia's website: [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/almunia](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/almunia)

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