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The Commission expects economic growth in Europe to remain moderate. According to its spring forecast, euro area growth is expected to be 1.6% and EU growth 1.8% in 2016.



TERRORISM HITS ECONOMIC GROWTH, AS COMMISSION UNVEILS SPRING FORECAST

EURACTIV.COM

Security concerns and the risk of new terrorist attacks are expected to further damage European economies in the next few months, against a backdrop of the weak economic growth seen in the EU over the last years, the European Commission warned in its spring economic forecasts on Tuesday.

The Commission said that output will continue to grow but will not accelerate "significantly" as the boost from the cheap oil and the euro's depreciation will soon fade away.

The executive expects a GDP growth of 1.6% for the eurozone this year and 1.8% in 2017, compared with 1.6% and 1.9% predicted in the winter forecast.

For the EU as a whole, the economy will grow by 1.8% in 2016 and 1.9% in 2017, compared with 1.9% and 2% expected in the previous forecast.

While Europe recently returned to a pre-crisis economic level, the situation could easily worsen as risks and uncertainty are "extraordinarily high", Mario Buti, Director General of Economic and Financial Affairs, wrote in the forecast.

The executive underlined that "the impact on confidence of increased security concerns is set to weigh on the growth outlook particularly in some member states."

The largest impact will be felt in Belgium and France, as the Paris and Brussels attacks in November and March respectively damaged consumer confidence and spending.



PEGIDA LEADER FOUND GUILTY OF INCITING HATRED

THELOCAL.DE



Lutz Bachmann, the head of the anti-Islamic group Pegida, was found guilty by a Dresden court on Tuesday of inciting hatred. The founder of the far-right "Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West" (Pegida) movement, was first charged in October with inciting hatred through a series of widely-shared Facebook posts.

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EU COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND TURKEY VISA-FREE DEAL

BBC.COM



The European Commission is set to recommend granting visa-free travel for Turkish citizens inside Europe's passport-free Schengen area, despite unease among some EU lawmakers.

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LONDONERS DON'T WANT BORIS JOHNSON AS PM

POLITICO.EU

Boris Johnson has been a success as London mayor but shouldn't become prime minister, according to a poll for London's Evening Standard newspaper to mark his final week in office.

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MERKEL PLEDGES TO HELP HINDER FRANCE'S NATIONAL FRONT

EURACTIV.COM

German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited a French school in Berlin yesterday and used the opportunity to announce her intention to support French parties against the National Front in the presidential election next year.

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SPANISH KING SIGNS DECREE CALLING FRESH ELECTION FOR JUNE 26

ELPAIS.COM

The new campaign race will start on June 10, with polls forecasting a similarly fragmented political scenario. The move comes after more than four months of failed cross-party negotiations to form a new government following the inconclusive election of December 20.

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FRANCE'S HOLLANDE SENDS LABOUR BILL TO PARLIAMENT IN FACE OF REBELLION

REUTERS.COM

After weeks of sometimes violent protests, France's socialist government sent a bill to parliament on Tuesday that seeks to soften labour laws despite every chance that rebels within President Francois Hollande's ruling party will shoot it down.

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OVERVIEW: THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S WORK ON TAXATION

EUROPA.EU

The fight for fair taxation in the EU is high on Parliament's agenda following the revelations as a result of LuxLeaks and the Panama papers. At a time when EU countries are struggling to recover from the crisis, MEPs are pushing for greater transparency and an end to tax unfair practices.

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THE AGENDA

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

• On Saturday, **the Open Doors Day** will take part in European Parliament in Strasbourg.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

• On **World Press Freedom Day**, the Commission announced that the theme of the 2016 Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights will be '**Media Pluralism and Democracy**'. This second Annual Colloquium will be held in Brussels on 17-18 November 2016.

• Yesterday, the Commission announced €3 million in humanitarian funding for a **UNICEF and World Health Organisation-led nationwide polio vaccination campaign in Syria**.

• The Commission yesterday launched a public consultation on how to make it easier for service providers to provide services across the EU. As announced in **the Single Market Strategy**, the Commission plans to propose by the end of 2016 a Services Passport to simplify the administrative procedures for service providers who want to expand to other Member States.

• **According to the Eurostat**, In March 2016, compared with February 2016, **industrial producer prices** rose by 0.3% in the euro area (EA19) and by 0.4% in the EU28, according to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In February 2016 prices fell by 0.7% in the euro area and by 0.6% in the EU28.

• **Eurostat estimates** that in 2015 **carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions** from fossil fuel combustion increased by 0.7% in the European Union (EU), compared with the previous year CO2 emissions are a major contributor to global warming and account for around 80% of all EU greenhouse gas emissions. They are influenced by factors such as climate conditions, economic growth, size of the population, transport and industrial activities.

WHO WHEN WHERE

• Commissioner **Vytenis Andriukaitis** gives a speech at European Patients' Rights Day event '**Reducing waste and inefficiency in the Healthcare Systems, increasing quality of patient care**'.

• Commissioner **Miguel Arias Cañete** participates at the **EU-US Energy Council**, in Washington.

• 9:00 '**Open stakeholder meeting on mHealth assessment guidelines**' takes place in Brussels. This open meeting will address the development of guidelines for assessing data validity and reliability of mHealth apps (Avenue de Beaulieu 25, room 0/S1).

• Thursday 18:30 a Conference-debate organised by the **Charlemagne Prize Foundation** and the European University Institute on the future of the European Union with **Donald Tusk**, President of the European Council, **Jean-Claude Juncker**, President of the European Commission and **Matteo Renzi**, President of the Council of Ministers of Italy will hold on Rome (Hall of the Horatii and Curiatii of the Capitoline Museums).

• Friday 12:00 a ceremony awarding the 2016 **Charlemagne Prize** to His

Holiness Pope Francis will take place at the Vatican. It will be introduced by 'laudatio' speeches by European Parliament President **Martin Schulz**, Commission President **Jean-Claude Juncker** and Council President **Donald Tusk**.

• Sunday 19:30 a two-day '**State of Europe Forum 2016. The paradox of freedom - how can we sustain Europe's freedoms in the face of multiple threats?**' starts in Zuiderkerk, Amsterdam.

TODAY CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS



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(31)