



EURO-NET

The Youth European Network



EUROPE DIRECT BASILICATA centre
promoted by the association EURO-NET
and realised with the grant of E.U. in
the framework of the namesake project

Bimonthly newsletter:

- to spread European opportunities and initiatives,
- to disseminate the respect of human rights and the awareness about the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity,
- to fight discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance and racism,
- to help, with youth activities, the democratic stability and social inclusion in Europe,
- develop active European citizenship and civil society by giving impetus to the training of youth leaders and youth workers working within a European dimension;
- to promote European youth activities, such as exchanges, seminars, conferences, debates and training courses,
- to encourage exchange of ideas, proposals, experiences and good practises at international level.

YEAR 13 - NUMBER 2
OF 20TH APRIL 2018
ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

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1. Action to better protect workers against cancer-causing chemicals

The European Commission is taking another important step to protect workers in the European Union from workplace-related cancer as well as other health problems.

The Commission proposes to limit workers' exposure to five cancer-causing chemicals, in addition to the 21 substances that have already been limited or proposed to be limited. Estimates show that proposal would improve working conditions for over 1,000,000 EU workers and prevent over 22,000 cases of work-related illness. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: *"The Commission has taken another important step towards fighting work-related cancer and other relevant health problems on the work floor. We*

propose to limit workers' exposure to five additional cancer-causing chemicals.

This will improve protection for over 1 million workers in Europe and help create a healthier and safer workplace, which is a core principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights."

The Commission proposes to include new exposure limit values for five chemicals in the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive.

These limit values set a maximum concentration for the presence of a

cancer-causing chemical in the workplace air. The following five carcinogens of high relevance for the protection of workers have been selected: Cadmium and its inorganic compounds; Beryllium and inorganic beryllium compounds; Arsenic acid and its salts, as well as inorganic arsenic compounds; Formaldehyde; 4,4'-Methylene-bis (2-chloroaniline) (MOCA). The first three carcinogens listed above are extensively used in sectors as cadmium production and refining, nickel-cadmium battery manufacture, mechanical plating, zinc and copper smelting, foundries, glass, laboratories, electronics, chemicals, construction, healthcare, plastics and recycling. Putting in place effective measures to prevent high exposures to the five substances and groups of substances under consideration will have a positive impact, even much broader than cancer prevention alone. Introducing these exposure limit values will not only lead to fewer cases of work-related cancer, but also limit other important health problems caused by carcinogenic and mutagenic substances. For example, exposure to beryllium, in addition to lung cancer, also causes incurable chronic beryllium disease. European limit values also promote consistency by contributing to a 'level playing field' for all businesses and a clear and common objective for employers, workers and enforcement authorities. The proposal therefore leads to a more efficient system of workers' health protection and improved fairness in the single market. The proposal is based on scientific evidence and follows broad discussions with relevant stakeholders, in particular employers, workers and Member States' representatives.



Background

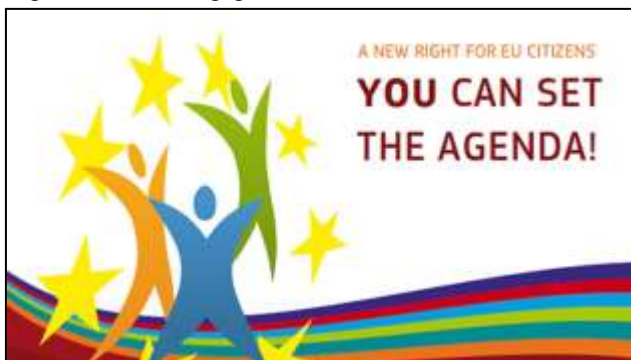
This Commission is committed to further strengthening workers' right to a high level of protection of their health and safety at work. The European Pillar of Social Rights, which was jointly proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission at the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg in November 2017, recognises that workers' right to a healthy, safe, and well-adapted work environment is essential to the upward convergence towards better working and living conditions in the EU. Protection of workers' health, by continuously reducing exposures to carcinogenic and mutagenic substances in the workplace, is a concrete action taken by the Juncker Commission to deliver on this priority. Data show that cancer is the first cause of work-related deaths. 52% of annual work-related deaths are due to cancer, compared to 24% due to circulatory illnesses and 2% due to injuries. Exposure to certain chemical agents at work can cause cancer. While cancer is a complex disease and certain causal factors are difficult to identify, it is clear that cancers caused by exposure to chemical substances in the workplace can be prevented by reducing or eliminating these exposures. To ensure that workers are protected against such risks, in 2004, the EU adopted the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive 2004/37/EC (CMD). This Directive sets out steps to be taken to eliminate or limit exposure to carcinogenic and mutagenic chemical agents and, as such, to help prevent occupational cancers and related diseases. Scientific knowledge about carcinogenic or mutagenic chemicals is constantly evolving and technological progress enables improvements in protection of workers. To ensure that the mechanisms for protecting workers established in the CMD are as

effective as possible and that up-to-date preventative measures are in place in all Member States, the Directive needs to be regularly revised. For this reason, the Commission has supported a continuous process of updating the CMD to keep abreast with the new scientific and technical developments, taking account of Social Partners' and Member States' views. Two previous legislative amendments were proposed by the Commission to the CMD, in May 2016 and January 2017, together identified limit values to 21 carcinogens. The first amendment was adopted as a Directive (EU) 2017/2398 by the co-legislators at the end of 2017. The second proposal for legislative amendments is currently being discussed by legislators. In the EU, around 21 million workers are exposed to at least one of the chemical agents included in the three proposed legislative amendments.

2. Nine million citizens have got involved in EU law-making

The European Commission has adopted its second report on the application of the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation.

Since this new tool entered into force in 2012, an estimated 9 million Europeans from all 28 Member States have now supported a European Citizens' Initiative. Four successful initiatives have so far collected over 1 million signatures each and the Commission has committed to follow-up actions on 3 of them. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"The fact that 9 million people have supported a European Citizens' Initiative in the past 6 years shows that this tool is stimulating participation and debate across national borders, with concrete impact on EU policies. But we need to go further: our recent reform proposal will make it much easier for citizens to launch and support new initiatives, also allowing young people from the age of 16 to have their say."* Non-legislative improvements to the tool have been implemented in the past 3 years. The Juncker Commission has also taken a more political approach, with all requests for registration (before signatures can be collected) now being heard by the College of Commissioners and partial registrations being granted in some cases. These changes have resulted in a significant increase



of the number of initiatives accepted for registration: about 90% of proposed initiatives since April 2015, compared to 60% of all proposals in the previous 3-year period. Among the 4 Citizens' Initiatives that gathered support from over 1 million citizens, the Commission is following up on the 'Stop Vivisection' initiative with non-legislative actions; in response to the 'Right2Water' initiative, the Commission proposed a revised Directive on Drinking Water last February; and following the

initiative 'Ban glyphosate and toxic pesticides', the Commission has announced a legislative proposal to improve transparency in scientific assessments and decision-making. After the Commission's first Report on the Application of the European Citizens' Initiative, in March 2015, a review was launched to improve the effectiveness of the tool, including an open public consultation. The Commission subsequently proposed a new Regulation on 13 September 2017, which must now be adopted by the European Parliament and Council. The new Regulation will make the European Citizens' Initiative more accessible, less burdensome and easier to use for organisers and supporters. The Commission calls for its adoption by the end of 2018 so that it can enter into force in January 2020.

Background

European Citizens' Initiatives were introduced with the Lisbon Treaty and launched as an agenda-setting tool in the hands of citizens in April 2012, upon the entry into force of the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation which implements the Treaty provisions. Once formally registered, a European Citizens' Initiative allows 1 million citizens from at least one quarter of EU Member States to invite the European Commission to propose a legal act in areas where the Commission has the power to do so. The conditions for admissibility, as foreseen by the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation, are that the proposed action does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act, that it is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious and that it is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union.

3. A better deal for consumers: Cheap euro transfers in the Union

The European Commission is proposing to make cross-border payments in euro cheaper across the entire EU. Under current rules, there is no difference for euro area residents or businesses if they carry out euro transactions in their own country or with another euro area Member State.

The proposal aims to extend this benefit to people and businesses in non-euro countries. This will allow all consumers and businesses to fully reap the benefits of the Single Market when they send money, withdraw cash or pay abroad. All intra-EU cross-border payments in euro outside the euro area will now be priced the same – with small or zero fees - as domestic payments in the local official currency. Moreover, the Commission is proposing to bring more transparency and competition to currency conversion services when consumers are buying goods or services in a different currency than their own. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *"With the proposal we are granting citizens and businesses in non-euro area countries the same conditions as euro area residents when making cross-border payments in euro. All Europeans will be able to transfer money cross-border, in euro, at the same cost as they would pay for a domestic transaction. The proposal will also require full transparency in currency conversion when consumers are paying by card in a country which does not have the same currency as their own."* Consumers and businesses in the

euro area already benefit from very low fees for cross-border payments in euro, thanks to the introduction of the cross-border payments regulation in 2001. Under current rules, there is no difference for euro area residents or businesses if they carry out euro transactions in their own country or with another euro area Member State. Today's proposal aims to extend this benefit to

people and businesses in non-euro countries whenever they travel or pay abroad, putting an end to the high cost of intra-EU cross-border transactions in euro. In particular, this proposal provides that fees charged for cross-border payments in euro are the same that would be charged for equivalent domestic payments in the local currency. This will bring down fees to a few euro or even cents. For example, a cross-border credit transfer in euro (EUR) from Bulgaria will be priced the same as a domestic Bulgarian lev (BGN) credit transfer. This is a major change, as fees for a simple credit transfer can be exorbitant in some non-euro area Member States (up to EUR 24 for a transfer of EUR 10!). The hefty fees are an obstacle to the Single Market as they create barriers to cross-border activities of households (buying goods or services in another currency zone) and businesses, in particular SMEs. This creates a major gap between euro area residents who benefit from the single currency, and non-euro area residents who can only make cheap transactions within their own country. The proposal will also bring about transparency on payments that involve different Union currencies. At the moment, consumers are usually not informed or aware of the cost of a transaction that involves a currency conversion. The proposal will therefore require that consumers are fully informed of the cost of a currency conversion **before** they make such payment (e.g. with their card abroad, be it a cash withdrawal at an ATM or a card payment at a point of sale, or online). This means they will be able to compare the costs of different conversion options to make a fair choice. Recent findings show that consumers have been complaining about dynamic currency conversion practices - i.e. paying abroad in their home currency – and asking for their ban after having found that they were losing out in the majority of the cases studied. The lack of necessary information to make the best choice often results in consumers being unfairly led towards the more expensive currency conversion option. The European Banking Authority will be tasked with drafting the necessary Regulatory Technical Standard to implement this enhanced transparency. The legislative proposal will now be submitted to the European Parliament and Council for adoption.

Background

A key priority of the Juncker Commission is building a deeper and fairer Single Market, which allows people, services, goods and capital to move freely in an economy with an annual Gross



Domestic Product of EUR 15 trillion. The Single Market also aims to give consumers access to better products and cheaper prices, thanks to greater competition. The European Commission has already taken a lot of steps to empower and protect European consumers in financial services: the Payment Account Directive grants all EU residents access to a basic bank account; the Payment Services Directive brings about significantly increased payment security; and the Commission's proposed pan-European personal pensions (PEPP) Regulation will offer greater choice when saving for retirement. In March 2017, the European Commission published an Action Plan setting out a strategy to strengthen the EU single market for consumer financial services. The Commission is now delivering on the first two actions of this Action Plan: tackling transparency and fees in cross-border transactions. Cross-border payments are crucial for the integration of the EU economy and play an important role in bringing together EU citizens and businesses. Restrictions and excessive costs affecting cross-border payments are an impediment to the completion of the Single Market. To prepare these amendments to Regulation 924/2009, the Commission carried out a public consultation from July to October 2017 to gather stakeholders' views on the best way forward to complete the objective of reducing the cost of cross-border payments in the EU. In responding to the public consultation, payment services users (consumers or businesses) all put forward the high price they pay for cross-border transactions as well as the lack of transparency of fees charged to them. Payment services providers largely insisted on the difference between payments in euro that were straight-through-processed (i.e. processed automatically without manual intervention) and the far less efficient and hence more costly processing of payments in other currencies.

4. WiFi4EU: free wireless internet hotspots in public spaces

The European Commission launched the WiFi4EU web portal. As of now, municipalities all over Europe are invited to register their details ahead of the first call for projects in mid-May, for the chance to benefit from EU financing to build free public wireless internet hotspots.

The WiFi4EU programme offers vouchers worth €15,000 for municipalities to set up Wi-Fi hotspots in public spaces, including libraries, museums, public parks, squares. As stated by President Jean-



Claude Juncker, the WiFi4EU initiative aims at connecting "every European village and every city with free wireless internet access around the main centres of public life by 2020." Municipalities can use the WiFi4EU vouchers to purchase and install Wi-Fi equipment (wireless access points) in their chosen centres of local public life. Costs for maintaining the network will be covered by the municipality. Vice-President for the

Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip said: "By opening the WiFi4EU portal, we are taking a concrete step towards helping municipalities provide free Wi-Fi. While this is important progress, I also strongly encourage the European Parliament and Council to conclude work on the proposed telecoms code to ensure high-speed connectivity across the whole of the EU. This includes Europe-wide coordination of spectrum, and forcefully stimulating investments in the high-capacity networks that Europe needs. Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Mariya Gabriel added: "The WiFi4EU initiative will give thousands of Europeans free internet access in public spaces across the EU. Thanks to the WiFi4EU programme, local communities will be empowered to bring connectivity closer to citizens, allowing them to fully benefit from the endless opportunities of digitisation. It is a concrete step towards the realisation of the Digital Single Market." €120 million is available from the EU budget until 2020 to fund equipment for public free Wi-Fi services in up to 8,000 municipalities in all Member States as well as Norway and Iceland.

How to apply for a WiFi4EU voucher?

- **Registration phase:** As of 20 March 2018, municipalities should sign up on the www.WiFi4EU.eu portal;

- **Application phase:** In mid-May 2018, the first call will be launched and registered municipalities can apply for a first lot of 1,000 WiFi4EU vouchers (€15,000 each). The vouchers will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis;
- **Assignment phase:** ensuring a geographic balance, the Commission will announce the 1,000 municipalities that will receive funding through the first call. Each participating country will receive at least 15 vouchers.
- **In the coming two years,** four more WiFi4EU calls will be launched.

WiFi4EU-funded networks will be free of charge, free of advertising and free of personal data harvesting. Funding will only be provided to networks that do not duplicate existing free private or public offers with a similar quality in the same public space.

Background

Announced by President Juncker in his State of the Union address in September 2016, the WiFi4EU initiative is part of the ambitious overhaul of EU telecoms rules including new measures to meet Europeans' growing connectivity needs and boost Europe's competitiveness. The EU has been quick to achieve important agreements on the end of roaming charges on 15 June 2017 for all travellers in the EU, on the portability of content which will allow as of early 2018 Europeans to travel with the films, the music, the video games or the e-books they have subscribed to at home and on the release of the 700 MHz band for the development of 5G and new online services. Negotiations over 14 legislative proposals in the Digital Single Market strategy – one of the top priorities of the Juncker Commission – are ongoing. The Commission has encouraged the European Parliament and the Council to swiftly act on all of the proposals already presented.

5. Erasmus+ goes virtual

Erasmus+, one of the EU's iconic and most successful programmes, adds an online version to its mobility actions, to link more students and young people from European countries and the Southern neighbourhood of the EU.

The European Commission has launched Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange, a project to promote intercultural dialogue and improve the skills of at least 25,000 young people through digital learning tools over the next two years. The project covers the 33 Erasmus+ programme countries and the Southern Mediterranean region covering Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine*, Syria and Tunisia. The online version of Erasmus+ will complement the traditional physical mobility programme and could in the future be extended to other regions of the world. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, said: *"While a very successful programme, Erasmus+ is not always accessible to everyone. Through Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange we will facilitate more contacts between people, reach youth from different social backgrounds and promote intercultural understanding. This online tool will connect more young people from the EU with their peers from other countries; it will build bridges and help develop skills such as critical thinking, media literacy, foreign languages and teamwork."*



Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange will connect young people, youth workers, students and academics from European countries and the Southern neighbourhood of the EU through moderated discussions, transnational project groups, open online courses and advocacy training. For instance, young people from different countries will be able to connect once a week to discuss topics such as economic developments or climate change facilitated by a moderator and on the basis of preparatory material distributed beforehand. All activities will take place as part of higher education programmes or organised youth projects. During its preparatory phase, Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange raised interest among universities and youth organisations and 50 partnerships have already been set up and 40 people have been trained as facilitators to moderate debates. Contacts and exchanges with peers from abroad are a great opportunity to acquire new knowledge and skills as well as to enhance tolerance and mutual acceptance. Virtual Exchange promotes intercultural dialogue between young people, in line with the Paris Declaration agreed at the informal meeting of EU Education Ministers in March 2015. The Declaration aims at promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education.

Background

During the pilot phase, with a budget of €2 million until December 2018, Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange will reach at least 8,000 young people. If successful, the aim is to renew it until the end of 2019 to reach 17,000 more people. In the future, Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange could become a regular action and be expanded to reach even more young people in other regions. Erasmus+ already supports learning and teaching mobility between the EU's Southern Neighbourhood and the EU. Since 2015, over 1,000 projects have been funded between European and Southern Mediterranean universities, which plan to enable around 15,000 students and staff from the Southern Mediterranean to come to Europe, while over 7,000 Europeans will teach or study in those countries. In addition, around 2,200 young people from countries in the Southern neighbourhood of the EU and youth workers are involved in non-formal learning projects each year.

6. The key role of education in the inclusion of immigrant students

A new report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and mandated by the European Commission, confirms the need to promote inclusive education and common values.

The report's main findings highlight that immigrant students are struggling to integrate in schools in many Member States, often due to lower socio-economic status and language barriers. For example, in the EU overall, 72.3% of native students achieve baseline academic proficiency, while this is only the case for 54.3% of immigrant students. Moreover, the report provides new evidence that students with an immigrant background often lack a sense of belonging to their school community and are more likely to be affected by schoolwork-related anxiety. While two thirds (66.5%) of native students experience a sense of belonging at school, this is only the case for less than 60% (58.6) of first generation immigrant students. At the same time, however, they tend to show higher aspirations to succeed than native students. While 57.55% of native students have



high aspirations to achieve, this is true for almost two thirds (65.8%) of immigrant students. The report also underlines the significant role education systems, schools and teachers can play in helping immigrant students integrate into their communities. In addition, it confirms that education is crucial in enabling immigrants to acquire skills and contribute to the economy, that it has a big role to play in fostering their social and emotional well-being and is key in sustaining their motivation to participate in the social and civic life of their new communities. Commissioner for Education,

Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, said: *"This report shows that we are on the right track when promoting active citizenship, common values and high quality, inclusive education. The European Commission strives to provide everyone in Europe with real opportunities. This is why our first package of measures to build a European Education Area presented in January included a proposal on promoting inclusive education and common values. And I will shortly present a second package of initiatives including proposals to promote quality in early childhood education and care and in language learning. All these initiatives can help pupils and students overcome disadvantages linked to an immigrant background."* Migration flows are profoundly changing the composition of classrooms. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results reveal that in 2015, almost one in four 15-year-old students in OECD countries reported that they were either foreign-born or had at least one foreign-born parent. These numbers exclude the tens of thousands of refugees who have recently arrived in many of the countries that participated in PISA. Inclusive education based on common values is at the core of the Commission's work towards building a European Education Area by 2025. It was also one of the main topics discussed at the first European Education Summit, which Commissioner Navracsics hosted in Brussels in January and brought together around 450 stakeholders. In spring 2018, the Commission will present further initiatives, including proposals on the mutual recognition of diplomas, language learning, and a quality framework for early childhood education and care.

Background

European leaders have in recent months expressed their strong support for ensuring a smooth and full integration of immigrants as well as establishing common values and inclusive societies. The Country Reports published by the European Commission on 7 March 2018 in the context of the European Semester highlight the challenges for pupils with an immigrant background in many Member States. In January, as part of its first package of measures to build the European Education Area by 2025, the Commission proposed a Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching. This builds on the Paris Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education adopted at the informal meeting of Education Ministers on 17 March 2015. To guide its proposal, the Commission held a public consultation in 2017.

7. How science and innovation can benefit European cultural heritage

In the context of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, the Commission is organising a High-Level Horizon 2020 Conference on Innovation and Cultural Heritage to present some of the most promising innovations to preserve and treasure Europe's cultural heritage for the next generations.

Research and innovation can nurture smart and technologically advanced solutions to the challenges Europe is facing in trying to protect and benefit from its cultural heritage. Among the topics to be discussed are the actions taken by the European Commission in order to contribute to long-term synergies between science, research, innovation and culture for the benefit of cultural heritage. These include providing digital access to physically inaccessible sites, helping preserve priceless artefacts, and exploring new ways of valuing cultural heritage for creative industries. Commissioner **Navracsics** in charge of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"We need to*

preserve our cultural heritage for the next generations. Research and innovation are our great allies – they offer advanced solutions and technologies to achieve this. We are using the occasion of the European Year of Cultural Heritage to highlight long-term projects aimed at protecting and promoting heritage."

Commissioner **Moedas**, in charge of research, Sciences and Innovation, said: *"Cultural heritage is a limitless source of innovation where traditions*



meet with cutting-edge technologies. Our ambition is to make Europe the world leader in heritage-based innovation with support from Horizon 2020, the EU's research and innovation funding programme." Commissioner **Gabriel**, in charge of Digital Economy and Society, said: *"Technological and digital innovations have a unique potential because they facilitate the access to our heritage in a way that has never been achieved in our history. For example, the online platform Europeana is not just a digital vault that preserves our cultural heritage but a channel and an open door to our past, present and future."* The Commission will also present its policy review 'Innovation in Cultural Heritage Research', which assesses EU-funded research on cultural heritage and proposes improvements to the European Research Framework after 2020. Between 2014 and 2020, the EU is expected to invest €500 million in research and innovation on cultural heritage. The policy review is one element of the so-called innovation pillar of the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The innovation pillar consists of three projects – run by the Commission with EU Member States, the Council of Europe and European universities – to improve Europeans' skills on cultural heritage, involve citizens better in making decisions about cultural heritage, and promote the role of science and technologies in cultural heritage.

Background

Cultural heritage consists of cultural and creative resources of a tangible or intangible nature, with a value for society that has been publicly recognised in order to preserve them for future generations. It includes natural, built and archaeological sites, museums, monuments, artworks, historic cities, literary, musical, audiovisual and digital works, and the knowledge, practices and traditions of European citizens. Over 300,000 people are employed in the EU cultural heritage sector, and with 453 inscribed sites, Europe as a region accounts for almost half of UNESCO's

World Heritage List. In addition, 7.8 million jobs in the EU are indirectly linked to heritage (for instance in tourism, interpretation and security). This is why, especially at a time when cultural treasures are under threat and are being deliberately destroyed in conflict zones, the Commission considered that cultural heritage deserved a European Year in 2018. The Council and European Parliament Decision designating 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage was adopted on 17 May 2017, based on the Commission's proposal of 30 August 2016.

8. VentureEU: venture capital investment in Europe's innovative start-ups

The European Commission and the European Investment Fund (EIF) have launched a Pan-European Venture Capital Funds-of-Funds programme (VentureEU) to boost investment in innovative start-up and scale-up companies across Europe.

Europe boasts a wealth of talent, world-class researchers and skilled entrepreneurs, but it can do better at turning that excellence into success stories. Access to risk capital for innovation plays a key role. The Commission and the EIF are announcing six participating funds to receive EU support in their mission to invest in the European venture capital market. Backed by EU funding to the tune of €410 million, the funds are aiming to raise up to €2.1 billion of public and private investment. In turn this is expected to trigger an estimated €6.5 billion of new investment in innovative start-up and scale-up companies across Europe, doubling the amount of venture capital currently available in Europe. Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"In venture capital, size matters! With VentureEU, Europe's many innovative entrepreneurs will soon get the investment they need to innovate and grow into global success stories. This means more jobs and growth in Europe."* Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, added: *"VentureEU is a key element of the Open Innovation strategy that we launched three years ago. It is vital for Europe to remain an industrial leader and an economic powerhouse."* Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, stated: *"VentureEU will increase the amount and average size of venture capital funds. It will help our high-potential start-ups stay and grow in Europe, taking full advantage of the Single Market."* Pier Luigi **Gilibert**, Chief Executive of the EIF, added: *"VentureEU is an important addition to the European equity scene. Whilst we have supported more than 500 funds to date, this is the first time that the EU has created such a unique programme. EIF is proud to be part of this initiative."* Venture capital (VC) is vital to a well-functioning Capital Markets Union, but remains underdeveloped in Europe. In 2016, venture capitalists invested about €6.5 billion in the EU compared to €39.4 billion in the US. Moreover, VC funds in Europe are too small – €56 million on average compared to €156 million in the US. As a result, these companies move to ecosystems where they have better chances to grow fast. The number of companies reaching the "unicorn" status of more than \$1 billion market valuation at the end of 2017 was 26 in the EU compared to 109 in the United States



and 59 in China. VentureEU will provide new sources of financing, giving European innovators the opportunity to grow into world-leading companies. Around 1,500 start-ups and scale-ups are expected to gain access across the whole EU. The EU will provide cornerstone investments of up to €410 million – including €67 million of EIF own resources: €200 million from the Horizon 2020 InnovFin Equity, €105 million from COSME (Europe's programme for small and medium-sized enterprises), and €105 million from the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – the so-called Juncker Plan. The rest of the financing will be raised by the selected fund managers primarily from independent investors. The six funds will take stakes in a number of smaller investee funds and cover projects in at least four European countries each. These investee funds will help finance small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and mid-caps from a range of sectors such as information and communication technologies (ICT), digital, life sciences, medical technologies, and resource and energy efficiency. The EU investment in VentureEU will be managed by the EIF under the supervision of the Commission and rolled out via six professional and experienced fund managers ensuring a fully market-driven approach. This will attract more

investments and significantly increase the availability of VC funding for start-ups and scale-ups in the EU.

Background

The Commission announced the creation of a Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds Programme (VentureEU) under the Capital Markets Union (CMU) and the Start-Up and Scale-Up Initiative. The initiative was first proposed by Commissioner **Moedas** as part of the Open Science, Open Innovation and Open to the World strategy in 2015. In November 2016, the Commission and EIF launched a call for expression of interest for which it received 17 applications by the 31 January 2017 deadline. As a first step, the Commission assessed all investment proposals and conducted the pre-selection based on their policy fit with the programme. Soon after, the EIF conducted its standard due diligence process of the pre-selected candidates, six of which were selected for funding and invited to enter into negotiations with the EIF late in 2017. The first two signatures took place in Brussels between IsomerCapital and EIF, and Axon Partners Group and the EIF. The remaining four – Aberdeen Standard Investments, LGT, Lombard Odier Asset Management and Schroder Adveq – are expected to be finalised in the course of 2018. VentureEU is part of the wider ecosystem that the EU is putting in place to give Europe's many innovative entrepreneurs every opportunity to become world leading companies. In particular, as part of the Capital Markets Union Action Plan, the Commission has presented a series of measures to improve access to finance for small and growing companies to create jobs and growth. The Investment Plan for Europe also aims to improve the business environment in the EU by making smarter use of financial resources and removing barriers to investment. On 1 March 2018, new rules on venture capital investment (EuVECA) and social entrepreneurship funds (EuSEF) entered into application, making it easier for fund managers of all sizes to run these funds and allowing a greater range of companies to benefit from their investments. The new rules will also make the cross-border marketing of EuVECA and EuSEF funds less costly and will simplify registration processes. As announced in the renewed Industrial Policy Strategy, the Commission is exploring to set up a complementary European Scale-Up Action for Risk Capital (ESCALAR) to enable venture capital funds to increase their investment capacity. In November 2016, the Commission proposed a Directive on business insolvency which focuses on facilitating early restructuring and second chance. The Commission is also working to advance on its agenda to put in place a robust single EU VAT area. This includes a recent proposal for targeted measures to help SMEs that operate cross-border in the EU. New rules have also been agreed at EU level which should simplify VAT obligations for thousands of SMEs that sell goods online across the Union.

9. Italian scheme to support recovery in regions affected by earthquakes

The European Commission has found a €43.9 million Italian aid scheme to support investments in regions affected by earthquakes in 2016 and 2017 to be in line with EU State aid rules. The aid will contribute to the economic recovery of central Italy without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market.

Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The people and economy of Central Italy are still recovering from the dramatic effects of several earthquakes over the past years. The Italian authorities want to support this recovery with a measure contributing to the economic recovery of these areas. We found this measure to be well targeted to support affected businesses and the people living in these regions."* In 2016 and 2017, four major earthquakes hit central Italy, affecting around 600,000 people in an area of around 8,000 km². Today, the region is still being affected by abnormal seismic activity, leading to a progressive desertification of the affected areas. This is unlikely to be addressed by compensation measures alone. The Italian aid scheme approved aims at complementing such measures, to mitigate the economic and social damages in the areas which have been affected by i) a significant drop of GDP, ii) a substantial loss of employment, iii) a reduction of economic activity by more than 50%, and iv) a significant



decline in companies' turnover compared to pre-earthquakes levels. This concerns 140 municipalities in the Italian regions of Lazio, Umbria, Marche and Abruzzo. The aid takes the form of a tax credit for all companies making initial investments in the area. Support to large companies will be limited to aid for setting up a new company, diversifying a company's activity or acquiring the assets of a company that has closed. The scheme has an overall budget of €43.9 million and will run from 2018 to 2020. Given its limited duration, budget, and geographical scope, the Commission found that the aid scheme will contribute in a proportionate manner to the promotion of economic development and recovery in central Italy. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the scheme is in line with EU State aid rules.

Background

The EU already supports the reconstruction of the affected areas in Italy through several measures related to compensation for earthquake damage. In particular:

- An exceptional co-financing rate of 95% has been approved to fund reconstruction operations with the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).
- The Commission has proposed €1.2 billion of financial aid for the affected regions under the EU Solidarity Fund, the highest sum ever allocated to a country under this fund.

The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.48571 in the State aid register on the Commission's competition website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. New publications of State aid decisions on the internet and in the Official Journal are listed in the State Aid Weekly e-News.

10. A New Deal for Consumers: EU consumer rights and enforcement

The European Commission is proposing a New Deal for Consumers to ensure that all European consumers fully benefit from their rights under Union law.

While the EU already has some of the strongest rules on consumer protection in the world, recent



cases like the Dieselgate scandal, have shown that it is difficult to enforce them fully in practice. The New Deal for Consumers will empower qualified entities to launch representative actions on behalf of consumers and introduce stronger sanctioning powers for Member States' consumer authorities. It will also extend consumers' protection when they are online and clarify how EU law to clarify that dual quality practices misleading consumers are prohibited. First Vice-

President **Timmermans** said: *"The New Deal is about delivering a fairer Single Market that benefits consumers and businesses. We introduce a European collective redress right for when groups of consumers have suffered harm, like we have seen in the recent past, with proper safeguards so there can be no misuse. Consumers will know who they are buying from online, and when sellers have paid to appear in search results. The majority of traders who play fair will see burdens lifted. The handful of traders who deliberately abuse European consumers' trust will be sanctioned with tougher fines. Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality added: "In aglobalised world where the big companies have a huge advantage over individual consumers we need to level the odds. Representative actions, in the European way, willbring more fairness to consumers, not more business for law firms. And with stronger sanctions linked to the annual turnover of a company, consumer authorities will finally get teeth to punish the cheaters. It cannot be cheap to cheat."* The New Deal for Consumers will mean:

1. Strengthening consumer rights online

- **More transparency in online market places** –When buying from an online market place, consumers will have to be clearly informed about whether they are buying products or services from a trader or from a private person, so they know whether they are protected by consumer rights if something goes wrong.
- **More transparency on search results on online platforms** –When searchingonline, consumers will be clearly informed when a search result is being paid for by a trader. Moreover, online marketplaces will have to inform the consumers about the main parameters determining the ranking of the results. **New consumer rights for “free” digital services** –When paying for

a digital service, consumers benefit from certain information rights and have 14 days to cancel their contract (withdrawal right). The New Deal for Consumers will now extend this right to 'free' digital services for which consumers provide their personal data, but do not pay with money. This typically would apply to cloud storage services, social media or email accounts.

2. Giving consumers the tools to enforce their rights and get compensation

- **Representative action, the European way** – Under the New Deal for Consumers it will be possible for a qualified entity, such as a consumer organisation, to seek redress, such as compensation, replacement or repair, on behalf of a group of consumers that have been harmed by an illegal commercial practice. In some Member States, it is already possible for consumers to launch collective actions in courts, but now this possibility will be available in all EU countries.

For example, in a Dieselgate-type scenario, victims of unfair commercial practices, such as misleading advertising by car manufacturers not in compliance with Union regulatory framework for type approval of vehicles or environmental legislation will be able to obtain remedies collectively through a representative action under this Directive. Such collective redress was previously not provided under Union law. This model has strong safeguards and is distinctly different from US-style class actions. Representative actions will not be open to law firms, but only to entities such as consumer organisations that are non-profit and fulfil strict eligibility criteria, monitored by a public authority. This new system will make sure European consumers can fully benefit from their rights and can obtain compensation, while avoiding the risk of abusive or unmerited litigation.



- **Better protection against unfair commercial practices** – The New Deal for Consumers will ensure that consumers in all Member States have the right to claim individual remedies (e.g. financial compensation or termination of contract) when they are affected by unfair commercial practices, such as aggressive or misleading marketing. This protection currently varies greatly across the EU.

3. Introducing effective penalties for violations of EU consumer law

EU consumer authorities are not well equipped to sanction practices creating 'mass harm situations' that affect a large number of consumers across the EU. Currently, the level of penalties differs widely depending on the Member State, and is often too low to actually have a deterrent effect, particularly on companies operating cross-border and on a large scale. Under the proposal, national consumer authorities will have the power to impose effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties in a coordinated manner. For widespread infringements that affect consumers in several EU Member States, the available **maximum fine will be 4 % of the trader's annual turnover** in each respective Member State. Member States are free to introduce higher maximum fines.

4. Tackling dual quality of consumer products

Following up on the Commission's guidelines from September 2017, the New Deal for Consumers will update the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive in order to make explicit that national authorities can assess and address misleading commercial practices involving the marketing of products as being identical in several EU countries, if their composition or characteristics are significantly different.

5. Improved conditions for businesses

The New Deal will remove unnecessary burden for businesses, including by lifting obligations on companies as regards the consumer's withdrawal right. For instance, consumers will no longer be allowed to return products that they have already used instead of merely trying them out, and traders will no longer have to reimburse the consumers before actually receiving the returned goods. The new rules also introduce **more flexibility** in the way traders can communicate with consumers, allowing them to also use web forms or chats instead of e-mail, provided the consumers can keep track of their communication with the trader.

Next Steps

The Commission's proposals will be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council.

Background

The New Deal for Consumers will build on what the Juncker Commission has already achieved to improve consumer protection. Under the Digital Single Market Strategy, the Commission has delivered on many initiatives that adapt consumer rules to the online world, for instance by putting

an end to roaming charges or unjustified geoblocking. Also, the modernised Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation, adopted in 2017, will improve the public enforcement and cross-border cooperation of consumer authorities. However the review of EU consumer rules and recent EU-wide breaches of these rules last year showed that there was still room for improvement to better protect consumers.

The New Deal for Consumers is composed of two proposals for Directives:

- A proposal to amend Council Directive on unfair terms in consumer contracts, Directive on consumer protection in the indication of the prices of products offered to consumers, Directive concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices and Directive on consumer rights. This proposal's aim is to ensure better enforcement and to modernise EU consumer protection rules, in particular in light of digital developments;
- A proposal on representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers and repealing the Injunctions Directive 2009/22/EC. This proposal aims to improve tools for stopping illegal practices and facilitating redress for consumers where many of them are victims of the same infringement of their rights, in a mass harm situation.

The accompanying Communication includes an action plan to develop and strengthen coordinated enforcement actions among authorities and their international cooperation with authorities from key trading partners. A study on transparency in online platforms supports the New Deal's proposals on online market places. It shows that greater online transparency helps consumers take decisions and increases their trust when buying online.

11. European Enterprise Promotion Awards

The European Enterprise Promotion Awards reward those who promote entrepreneurship and small business at the national, regional and local level. Initiatives from all EU countries, as well as Iceland, Serbia, and Turkey can take part in the competition. Since 2006, over 2,800 projects have entered the awards and together they have supported the creation of thousands of new companies.



The **objectives** of the awards are to: identify and recognise successful activities and initiatives undertaken to **promote enterprise and entrepreneurship**; showcase and share examples of **best entrepreneurship policies and practices**; create a greater awareness of **the role entrepreneurs play in society**; **encourage and inspire potential entrepreneurs**. The winners of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards are announced at an awards ceremony at the [SME Assembly](#), which is part of [European SME Week](#). Learn [how to get involved](#) in the

2018 edition of the awards. **The award categories are:**

- **Promoting the entrepreneurial spirit** - Recognises initiatives that promote an entrepreneurial mindset, especially among young people and women
- **Investing in entrepreneurial skills** – Recognises initiatives that improve entrepreneurial and managerial skills
- **Improving the business environment** - Recognises initiatives that support enterprise start-up and growth, simplify legislative and administrative procedures for businesses
- **Supporting the internationalisation of business** - Recognises initiatives that encourage enterprises and particularly small and medium-sized businesses to benefit more from the opportunities offered by markets, both inside and outside the EU
- **Supporting the development of green markets and resource efficiency** - Recognises initiatives that support SME access to green markets and help to improve their resource efficiency through, for example, green skills development and matchmaking, as well as funding
- **Responsible and inclusive entrepreneurship** - Recognises initiatives that promote corporate social responsibility among small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship among disadvantaged groups such as the unemployed, legal migrants, disabled, or people from ethnic minorities.

The Jury's Grand Prize can be from any category and will go to the entry considered to be the most creative and inspiring entrepreneurship initiative in Europe.

12. Youth4Regions Competition

Journalism students invited to apply for Youth4Regions 2018 Media Programme.

The European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy is inviting students in journalism from all Member States to communicate on real life projects co-funded by the European Regional Development and Cohesion Funds. The lucky winners will be offered a chance to come to Brussels as a part of the media pool communicating on one of the major events of the year: the European Week of Regions and Cities 2018. Applications are open for this year's edition of the Youth4Regions Media Programme. If you are studying journalism send us your best words or images on a project co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund or the Cohesion Fund. You will have the chance to join other 27 students, one from each EU Member State, in Brussels on 7 – 11 October. **What we offer the winners:** Practical work experience as a journalist covering Europe's largest regional development event; Training in journalism, communication and Regional Policy; Mentorship from a professional journalist; The chance to meet other journalism students from around Europe; The opportunity to get published on our website and in a European-wide magazine. Write a short article (400 - 1,000 words) **OR** Upload a video (max 3 mins). Make sure you stick to the subject: The project you are communicating about should be co-financed by the European Regional Development and Cohesion Funds, supporting smart, inclusive or sustainable growth, particularly job creation ([Hints here](#)). [Apply](#) with your original article or video report on an EU-funded project **until 29 June 2018**. Before applying please make sure you read the Conditions for Participation available on the same page. The Youth4Regions Media Programme is an annual event dedicated to preparing the next generation of journalists specialized in Regional Policy. It takes place within the **European Week of Regions and Cities**. The Commission is covering accommodation and travelling.



13. PLURAL+ 2018 Youth Video Festival

[PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival](#) is a joint initiative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that invites the world's youth to submit original and creative videos focusing on the themes of migration, diversity and social inclusion. By supporting the distribution of youth-produced media, PLURAL+ recognizes youth as



powerful agents of positive social change in a world often characterized by intolerance, and cultural and religious divisions. Entrants to PLURAL+ must be of maximum 25 years of age at the time of the production of the video submitted to PLURAL+. **The PLURAL+ JURY AWARD prizes** will be awarded in **three age-based categories**: up to 12 years old; 13 to 17 years old; 18 to 25 years old. The PLURAL+ Jury Awards will be awarded to one entrant per category and will be selected by an independent international jury. One

representative of each PLURAL+ International Jury Award winner will be invited to New York, with airfare and hotel accommodation paid, to present their work at the PLURAL+ 2018 Awards Ceremony in New York in November 2018. Only a youth entrant with one chaperone for each winning video will be flown to New York. PLURAL+ 2018 will also select a video for the **PLURAL+**

Special Award for the Prevention of Xenophobia. The winner of this award will also be invited to New York, all travel expenses paid. Additional awards may be given by [PLURAL+ partners](#) and may include equipment, travel or professional opportunities. IOM and UNAOC or PLURAL+ bear no responsibility regarding partner awards. Winning videos will receive broad recognition and exposure through wide multi-platform distribution of their work, including broadcast, satellite, internet, film festivals and possibly DVD. Winning entrants will be notified no later than 15 August 2018. A prestigious international jury will announce the winners during the PLURAL+ Awards Ceremony in November 2018 in New York. **Deadline: 3 June 2018.**

14. Traineeships for university graduates (Robert Schuman traineeships)

Traineeships for university graduates are intended to enable trainees to build on the knowledge they acquired during their studies and to familiarise themselves with the activities of the European Union and, in particular, the European Parliament. [Three types of traineeships are available:](#)

- the general option, open to any candidate who meets the criteria.
- the journalism option: candidates must provide proof of professional experience, as evidenced either by works published, or by membership of an association of journalists in an EU Member State, or by a qualification in journalism recognised in the EU Member States or in the applicant countries.
- the Sakharov Prize option: This traineeship programme aims to enhance trainees' knowledge of the European Parliament's human rights work and international human rights standards. It is aimed at candidates with a particular interest in human rights.

Applicants for a traineeship for university graduates must: be nationals of an EU Member State or an applicant country, without prejudice to the provisions of Article 5(2) of the Internal Rules; be aged 18 or over on their traineeship starting date; have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the European Union; not have been awarded any other traineeship or have been in paid employment for more than four consecutive weeks the cost of which was charged to the European Union budget. These traineeships are awarded for a period of five months which cannot be extended. Traineeship dates and deadlines for receipt of applications: **Application period: 15 March – 15 May (midnight) -**



Traineeship period: 1 October – 28/29 February. Every year, 25 000 people apply for a traineeship at Parliament and 600 of them are selected.

To apply for the traineeship you must meet [the conditions](#) and complete the [online application form](#).

Before applying:

- We advise you to read carefully the 'Internal Rules governing traineeships and study visits in the Secretariat of the European Parliament' and the Frequently Asked Questions before filling in the application form.
- You have 30 minutes to complete each page of the form. Please note that if you leave your application form inactive for 30 minutes, the data you have entered will be lost.
- We advise you not to wait until the last day to apply, as a large number of last-minute applications could overload the system.
- Candidates with a disability must take careful note of the conditions which apply to them.
- The application cannot be modified online. It must be completed and sent in one step. After filling in your application, please make sure that it is correct and complete before submitting it.
- **Please note that any incomplete applications will automatically be rejected.**
- Once you have confirmed/sent your online application, you will automatically receive a confirmation message sent to your email address. The message contains a confirmation number, which you should quote in all future correspondence concerning the traineeship, and the summary of your application in pdf format, a paper version of which will be requested if we offer you a traineeship.

15. Second meeting in Italy of the SME project concluded

From 21st to 24th February 2018, the second meeting of the "Skills for Migrants Entrepreneurs (SME)" project took place in Potenza, Italy (Erasmus Plus KA2 action No. 2017-1-SE01-KA202-034586).



The EU has understood that the integration of immigrants plays a crucial role: human capital is a very important key to the innovative performance of regions and countries and research has shown that the human capital of specialized migrants is a significant source of innovation in the host countries. The project aims to create tools to support the integration and creation of new companies created by skilled migrants through guides, online training and relationships. In the project are foreseen 5 project meetings; 1 staff training event; 6 multiple events; 5 intellectual products.

During the second meeting the partners verified the activities developed in recent months and fixed further steps of the project.

16. SPAHCO project: fifth and sixth meeting in Denmark and in Poland

From 25th to 28th February 2018 the fifth meeting of the "Stronger Parents - Healthier Communities" (SPAHCO) project (approved under the Erasmus Plus KA2 Adult Education programme) took place in Denmark while from 21st to 24th May 2018 the sixth meeting of the project will be realised in Ilawa, Poland. The aim of the project is to develop ICT tools (including an app and an electronic game) and innovative methodologies for parents, to make them more aware of the importance of performing healthier lifestyles and offering them activities and tools to achieve these aims. On the basis of the previous meeting, this meeting will serve to define further developments of the project and to give definitive indications for the intellectual products being implemented.



17. More Than Words: second meeting in Luxembourg concluded



From 1st to 4th March 2018 took place in Luxembourg the second meeting of the project "More Than Words - Integrating Creativity in Intercultural Training", approved in the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education (Action No. 2017-1-UK01-KA204-036613). The project aims to improve intercultural communication skills and the training of educators, social workers and all those involved as professionals or artists to support migrants and other minorities facing problems of integration and communication. At

the meeting participated 2 representatives of EURO-NET (Italian partner of the European initiative).

18. More Than Words: the first training in UK concluded

The first training course of the project "More Than Words - Integrating Creativity in Intercultural Training" took place in London, from 11th to 17th March. It was aimed at improving the intercultural skills of the staff of the Erasmus Plus project partner organizations, which are: Border Crossings Company Limited (United Kingdom); Comparative Research Network e.V. (Germany); EURO-NET (Italy); Integralt Kifejezes-es Tanterapias Egyesulet (Hungary); Association of the Egyptiens au Luxembourg (Luxembourg); Stowarzyszenie "Dia Ziemi" (Poland); Network African Rural and Urban Development e.V. (Germany).



19. Seminar "Youth work for youth development" in Latvia concluded

From 7th to 13th March took place in Rezekne, in Latvia, a seminar approved under the Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility for young people and youth workers. The aim of the seminar was to bring youth leaders together to discuss and exchange experiences in youth work and their impact on the



personal and socio-educational level. For more than 30 years European programs for youth and mobility have promoted European values, such as participation in democratic life, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion, tolerance and solidarity among young people across Europe. These programs have offered young people the opportunity to work on relevant political and social issues, in an attempt to involve them as creators of the changes they want to implement in their local community and in national societies.

However, over the past decade, Europe has experienced unprecedented political challenges: an economic and financial crisis that has had a negative impact on young people, the threat of violent extremism, terrorist attacks, growing intolerance, racism and xenophobia. Young people are losing their trust in peaceful Europe. Racism, xenophobia and intolerance between different nationalities are increasing more and more, especially after the recent terrorist attacks. Youth organizations and their work play a very important role in reducing xenophobia, intolerance and racism. Work can guide young people in the right direction. During this seminar several non-formal educational methods were used: discussions, presentations, round tables, games, group work, practical exercises, intercultural evening, study visits to contribute to the non formal learning process.

20. InfoDay on Erasmus Plus at IIS G.B Pentasuglia of Matera

The 20th April 2018 takes place in Matera, at the IIS G.B Pentasuglia, organized by our organisation that is also Europe Direct Basilicata, an Infoday on the Erasmus + program and on all the initiatives that Europe makes available for young people. 150 children of the fifth classes will take part in the meeting, who will have the opportunity to intervene with questions and curiosity.



21. AccessAngels - meeting in Mikulov, Czech Republic

The fourth meeting of the "Guardian Angels of Accessible Travelers in Rural Areas" project (acronym "Access Angels"), approved in the Erasmus Plus KA2 program, took place in Mikulov, Czech Republic in the days 15 and 16 March 2018. The project is developing a package of

personal assistance services (PAS) offered by young volunteers, similar to those services offered to disabled tourists in large cities, but adapted to the needs of visitors with disabilities who want to experience rural tourism. The project aims to contribute to employability, economic growth and social cohesion through vocational training; offer adults and young people career opportunities through education and vocational training; promote the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the labor market; ensure the sustainability and excellence of vocational education and training; use the VET to support sustainable development and the provision of social education to young people; contribute to the development of rural economies; increase awareness of the needs of people with disabilities in rural areas; fostering active citizenship and volunteering among young people. Further information on the project, of which the Youth Europe Service association is an Italian partner, is available on the following [website](#) or on the initiative's [facebook page](#).



22. "Be a Mentor" TC in Armenia concluded

From 1st to 8th April 2018 the training course "Be a Mentor" took place in Armenia. The 7-day international training course has boosted mentors in European volunteering to provide support for EVS volunteer learning, thus enhancing their skills for future employment. The European voluntary service represents a huge opportunity for young people, regardless of their religion, race, culture, beliefs, economic situation and political affiliation, to learn how to live a new culture, to acquire a unique experience and have a positive impact on community through their activities. A mentor increases the ability of volunteers to apply their knowledge to real life, support educational support and a guide for the development of professional skills. The objective of this project was to improve the knowledge, the transfer of the tools and methods. The course was attended by 21 young people from Armenia, Norway, Estonia, Romania, Poland, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, Italy and Greece.



23. MADE IN EU: secondo meeting in Italy concluded



From 23rd to 24th March, took place in Caserta, in Italy, the second meeting of the "Made in EU" project, of which GODESK SRL and INFORMAMENTIS EUROPA organizations are the Italian partners. This is a project approved under the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education - exchange of good practices. During this second meeting the partners discussed the products under construction (we remember you that GODESK SRL must realize an interactive APP and INFORMAMENTIS EUROPA the project website).

24. SURVIVE Project - second study visit in Poland

The second study visit of the "Survive" project will take place in Krakow, Poland from 23rd to 27th April 2018. The aim of the course is to check the state of health of companies in Poland, to visit some companies that operate in specific sectors in which the crisis has been decisive and despite all have managed to take advantage of the difficulties to increase their turnover. Follow the project on www.surviving.eu.



25. SURVIVE: second meeting in Poland concluded



In the days 26 and 27 March 2018, the second meeting of "SURVIVE" (which is coordinated by the company Godesk) was held in Krakow, in Poland. This is a project developed under the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnership for VET program approved by the National Agency Erasmus Plus INAPP. Its goal is to investigate the techniques and methodologies that in a period of crisis allow companies to overcome difficulties and survive them, using the moment of crisis to increase their markets and turnover. During the meeting the website was updated with new information and research on the survivors' good practices was

conducted. The next training event in Krakow was also decided. Follow the project on www.surviving.eu.

26. "Experiential Pedagogy of the Oppressed for Adults": first meeting

The first transnational meeting of the European project "Experiential Pedagogy of the Oppressed for Adults", an initiative approved by the Turkish National Erasmus Plus Agency, took place from 3rd to 6th April 2018 in Gaziantep, in Turkey. The meeting was attended by three representatives of the staff of our association that will work on the KA2 Erasmus Plus project (one of our researcher, one of our technicians and one of our administrative staff). During the meeting the project partners were presented and were defined the steps to develop a pedagogy specifically designed for trainers working with migrants and refugees. The intellectual outputs to be implemented during the project were also defined.



27. ISDL Project: second meeting in Kirsehir, Turkey

From 13th to 16th May 2018, the second meeting of the "INTEGRATION BY SOCIAL AND DIGITAL LEARNING" project, in which the EURO-NET association is the Italian partner, will take place in Kirsehir, in Turkey. This is a project approved under the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnership



Program for Adult Education - exchange of good practice. The selected project topics are: Active Citizenship and Community Building; Cultural awareness; Open government; Urban lifestyles of sharing; Methodology of social communication; Digital literacy; Digital education. The project partners are: Euro-Idea Fundacja Społeczno-Kulturalna (Poland); EURO-NET (Italy); KIRSEHIR THE MILLI EGITIM MUDURLUGU (Turkey); Asociatia Institutul pentru Parteneriat Social Bucovina (Romania); Knuepferwerk e.V. (Germany);

Fundacja Biuro Inicjatyw Społecznych (Poland).

28. INNOVATIVET Project: JSTE in Turku, Finland

From 27th May to 2nd June 2018 will take place in Turku (Finland) the training course foreseen for the "InnovatiVET" project. The project involves the following partners: Erhvervsakademi Sydvest (Denmark); EURO-NET (Italy); TURUN YLIOPISTO (Finland); MEDNARODNI CENTRO ZA PRENOS ZNANJA DOO (Slovenia); FAB LAB LIMITED (United Kingdom). This is a project approved under the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Strategic Partnerships for VET (Action No. 2017-1-DK01-KA202-034250) which intends to: introduce new models of innovation in the VET system, explore innovation in this sector in Europe and create different orientations (interactive, practical and easy-to-use suggestions) on how to introduce a revolution for vocational training that is truly work-oriented.



29. Safer Places Hopeful Refugees: fourth training course in Slovenia

From 10th to 15th April took place in Ljubljana (Slovenia), the fourth training course (foreseen in the project "Safer Places Hopeful Refugees") intended to show good practices in welcoming refugees. The project, approved in the Erasmus Plus program KA2 actions for adult education, has as its main objective to exchange good practices on the reception of refugees and migrants trying to provide support actions to them. The initiative aims to promote positive actions for refugees at local and international level. The objectives of the project are: Strengthen the capacity of organizations working for refugees and also the skills of their staff; Strengthen sustainable development and solidarity at the global level; Promote international cooperation and intercultural communication; Improving social inclusion and equal opportunities for refugees; Develop networks and connections at local, national and international levels. 2 trainers from our organization participated in the course.



30. STRATE.GEES Project: first training course in Greece



NAUK (Poland); Center of non-formal education (Greece); CONFEDERACION ESPANOLA DE CENTROS DE ENSEANZA ASOCIACION C.E.C.E. (Spain); KIRSEHIR VALILIGI (Turkey); MV INTERNATIONAL (Italy); ASOCIATIA MILLENIUM CENTER ARAD (Romania). In the course there are two participants from our association. More information on the meeting will be available on our next newsletter.

The first course of the "STRATE.GEES" project takes place in Thessaloniki from 18th to 22nd April 2018, aimed at exchanging good practices between different partners working in the refugee sector. The project aims to find, understand and share good practices in order to have the opportunity to apply them in local territories, thus helping integration, offering better services and guiding the population to accept and respond positively to all humanitarian needs. The project partners are: KBM Consultants Ltd (United Kingdom); EURO-NET (Italy); SPOLECZNA AKADEMIA



31. Seminar: “Europe that protects, gives strength and defends”



in date 07/04/2018 took place in Potenza, at I.I.S. Einstein - De Lorenzo, organized by our Europe Direct Basilicata centre, a seminar dedicated to “Europe that protects, gives strength and defends”. There was also a debate asked by the students about all the initiatives that Europe makes available to young people. The meeting, which lasted two hours, was attended by 101 students from the fourth and fifth classes of the institutes, who

had the opportunity to intervene with questions and curiosity.

32. Conclusion of the JSTE in Bulgaria in the VET4MIGRE project

From 10th to 14th April 2018, was held in Sofia (Bulgaria) a training course aimed at understanding fast-learning techniques, as part of the "VET4MIGRE" project, approved under the Erasmus Plus program, KA2 Strategic Partnerships for vocational training (action No. 2017-1-DK01-KA202-034224). The project aims to try to include migrants in the European economy by encouraging: strengthening competences in ICT and innovations; the improvement of soft skills and competences; the promotion and exchange of good practices; the development of situations that facilitate better integration. To do this, the project is developing the following 4 intellectual outputs of different types (reports, guides, DVD, Internet platform), on which the whole partnership is working for a period of twenty-eight months: Survey on the inclusion of migrants in local economies of 'EU; Guide for migrant entrepreneurs; Toolkit for migrant trainers; Online entrepreneurship course for migrants. To support the above outputs, the following activities are planned: a training event (precisely the one that took place in Sofia) in which the staff learned the methodology of a rapid teaching in a language course; five transnational meetings to reflect, monitor and evaluate the activities developed and plan new ones; five multiplier events in which all the results will be publicized / disseminated in Denmark, Italy, Greece, Spain and Bulgaria; many products of communication, dissemination and evaluation. Two participants from the Youth Europe Service association staff took part in the course. During the training course was also recorded a radio broadcast that will be on air soon in the radio transmission “Lavoradio”. More information on the project on the official website of the initiative <https://www.vet4migre.eu/>.



33. "Digital inclusion" project: second meeting in Cyprus



From 4th to 6th May 2018, the second meeting of the "Digital Inclusion" project (approved in the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education - Exchanges of Practices) will take place in Cyprus and will be attended by the representatives of the following Italian partner organizations: Informantis Europa and Godesk srl. The project aims to increase knowledge in the digital sector in order to foster integration and inclusion. More information on the start-up

meeting will be provided in the next issue of our newsletter.