



# EURO-NET

## The Youth European Network



EUROPE DIRECT BASILICATA centre  
promoted by the association EURO-NET  
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### *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.

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## 1. EU budget: Making the EU fit for its role as strong global actor

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**For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the European Commission is proposing to increase the external action budget to €123 billion, to significantly simplify its structure, and make it much more flexible and effective to address global challenges.**

The external action budget will be the EU's main tool to support its partner countries in their political and economic transformations towards sustainable development, stability, consolidation of democracy, socio-economic development and the eradication of poverty. It will also allow the EU to continue to provide humanitarian assistance all over the world. As regards the EU's neighbourhood, this will also be the tool to help the neighbourhood countries in their economic approximation to the EU's Single Market. High Representative/Vice-President, **Federica Mogherini**, said: *"We propose a budget for the external action of the European Union of €123 billion for the next seven years: an increase of 30% that is an unprecedented investment in our global role. More resources for more action as a reliable, predictable, cooperative global player - exactly what our citizens and our partners expect in these troubled times. It is*



*recognition of the added value of the EU work on foreign policy. Together we can have an impact that no Member State alone can have in today's world."* Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, **Johannes Hahn**, highlighted: *"The increased and reformed budget will allow us to continue working with those countries that are engaged to join the EU, as well as maintaining our special relationship with our Eastern and Southern neighbours.*

*This will support our strategic goal to achieve a space of stability, security and prosperity close to the EU's borders."* Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development **Neven Mimica** added: *"The EU is a key promoter of the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. Our proposals set out the financial basis for the EU to maintain its role as the leading development actor, assisting our partners to eradicate poverty and respond to global challenges, while ensuring we leave no one behind."* Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management **Christos Stylianides**, said: *"As humanitarian emergencies in the world are increasing every year and becoming more complex, the EU is reinforcing its leading role as a major humanitarian aid provider. With an increased budget, we will continue showing solidarity with millions of people in need."* Key elements of the new external budget proposal:

- **Increased funding:** The funding will increase from €94.5 billion in the period 2014-2020 to €123 billion from 2021-2027, up by 30%.
- **Simplification:** The Commission proposes to reduce the number of instruments, as well as to integrate the European Development Fund into the EU budget. This will allow for more coherence and a clearer focus on political objectives and engagements with partners, in line with the EU's values and priorities.
- **Flexibility:** The new budget structure will allow the use and re-use of unutilised funds on a multi-annual basis. This will enable the EU to better respond to changing circumstances in line with its priorities of eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable development, prosperity, peace and stability.
- **Increased transparency and democratic scrutiny:** for example by incorporating the European Development Fund in the EU budget.

The new proposed instruments for EU external action:

- **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) with €89.2 billion:** This new streamlined instrument will consist of three pillars: 1. A *geographic pillar*, with particular focus on the Neighbourhood area and Sub-Saharan Africa, will be considerably increased to jointly address global challenges such as human development including gender equality, climate change, environmental protection, migration and food security; 2. A *thematic pillar* which will complement the geographic pillar through support for human rights and democracy, civil society, stability and peace inasmuch as they have to be addressed at global level, as well as other global challenges that would not be

covered under the geographic pillar; 3. A *rapid response pillar* which will allow the EU to swiftly respond to crises, as well as to support conflict prevention, strengthen the resilience of states, societies, communities and individuals, the linking of humanitarian aid and development action, as well as early action to address other foreign policy objectives.

- A new **European Instrument for Nuclear Safety**: With **€300 million**, this will complement the activities under the new streamlined instrument on the basis of the Euratom Treaty;
- The **Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III)**: **€14.5 billion** will offer increased support to EU candidate countries and potential candidates on their path towards fulfilling the EU accession criteria through deep and comprehensive reforms;
- The **humanitarian aid instrument**: **€11 billion** will allow for EU assistance on a needs-basis in order to save and preserve lives, prevent and alleviate human suffering and safeguard the integrity and dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises;
- The **Common Foreign and Security** budget, with **€3 billion**. This funding will be used to respond to external conflicts and crises, to build the capacity of partner countries and protect the EU and its citizens.
- Cooperation with **overseas countries and territories** including **Greenland**, with **€500 million**. This funding will support and strengthen the economic, political and cultural ties between the EU and the 13 overseas countries and territories linked to the EU Member States.
- The remaining amount of approximately €4.5 billion consists of the budgetary margin (€3.2 billion) and other budgetary items, such as macro-financial assistance grants, evaluation and audit measures or work related to international organisations and decentralised agencies.
- The Commission proposal includes an **investment framework for external action** with an increased fire-power of **up to €60 billion**. Building on the successful experience of the EU's External Investment Plan, it will help to raise and leverage additional financial resources for sustainable development from the private sector.
- In addition, and outside the EU budget, the High Representative, with the support of the Commission, is proposing to establish a **European Peace Facility**, with **€10.5 billion**. The European Peace Facility will fund operational actions under the Common Foreign and Security Policy that have military or defence implications, and therefore cannot be financed under the EU's budget. It will strengthen the Union's ability to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in line with the Treaty on European Union and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

#### Next steps

A swift agreement by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on the overall long-term EU budget and its sectoral proposals, in order to ensure that EU funds deliver results on the ground as soon as possible. Delays similar to the ones experienced at the beginning of the current 2014-2020 budgetary period could result in severe constraints to meet EU's international obligations and commitments towards partners. An agreement on the next long-term budget in 2019 would provide for a seamless transition between the current long-term budget (2014-2020) and the new one and would ensure predictability and continuity of funding to the benefit of all.

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## 2. EU works to build resilience and better counter hybrid threats

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**Following the Salisbury attack, and at the invitation of the European Council, the European Commission and the High Representative are today proposing further steps to build on the work already carried out in response to hybrid and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats.**

They are further reporting on the overall implementation of the Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats. The Commission is also taking stock of the progress made on key security files, including the CBRN Action Plan. High Representative/Vice-President **Federica Mogherini** said: "*In times of new challenges around the world, we are reinforcing our work within the European Union to counter hybrid threats – be it in the field of cyber, on disinformation or counter intelligence. Together with our Member States and partners, such as NATO, we are working to strengthen our capabilities*



to address these challenges and build up our resilience to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear-related risks, to effectively protect our citizens." Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: "Security has been our priority since day one – but we need to do more to deny hostile foreign actors and terrorists the means and the space to act. We are further accelerating our efforts to cut off their access to life-threatening chemical substances – building a more resilient Europe, fully equipped to face complex and dynamic security threats." Commissioner for Security Union, **Julian King** said: "The Salisbury attack was a stark reminder that the threat posed by chemical, biological radiological and nuclear risks is very real. We are following up our CBRN Action Plan from last year to be better prepared for such threats as well as other hybrid threats, which can cause serious harm and spread instability. We need to be especially vigilant in view of upcoming elections."

#### Stepping up the EU's response to hybrid threats



Hybrid activities by state and non-state actors continue to pose a serious and acute threat to the EU and its Member States. Election periods, for example, have proven to be a particularly strategic and sensitive target. Whilst building resilience to these threats and bolstering capabilities are predominantly Member State responsibilities, the EU has worked to build up capabilities to counter them, including by working with international partners such as NATO. To further strengthen the collective response to the evolving threats, the Commission

and the High Representative have identified areas where additional steps should be taken:

- **Situational Awareness:** The Hybrid Fusion Cell, set up in the European External Action Service and already an important asset, receives and analyses information but still needs more expertise to address the full spectrum of hybrid threats. The Cell will thus be expanded with specialised Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN), Counter Intelligence and Cyber analytical components.
- **Strategic Communication:** Building on previous experience, the High Representative and the Commission will further develop the EU's strategic communication capabilities by ensuring systematic interaction and coherence between existing structures. These will be extended to other EU institutions and Member States, and will include the previously announced secure online platform on disinformation;
- **Building resilience and deterrence in the cybersecurity sector:** Over the past year, the EU has proposed means of building up capacities and countering cyber threats, such as a proposal for a framework for cybersecurity certification, mandate for a stronger and modernised European Union Cybersecurity Agency, a "blue print" for cooperation between Member States and EU agencies in case of an attack and the cyber diplomacy toolbox. The Parliament and the Council should accelerate work to conclude the negotiations on the Cybersecurity Act and agree on new rules on gathering electronic evidence. A dedicated training and education platform is being set up to coordinate cyber defence training. The attribution of cyber-attacks is also important and the EU encourages Member States to continue work in this field;
- **Building resilience to hostile intelligence activity:** Coordination between Member States and with international organisations, in particular NATO, is crucial. The EEAS and the Commission will put in place improved practical measures to sustain and develop the EU's interactive ability to counter hostile intelligence activity directed against the institutions. The Hybrid Fusion Cell will be bolstered with counter-intelligence expertise to provide detailed analyses and briefings.

The High Representative and the Commission are also reporting on the implementation of the 22 measures identified under the Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats, which range from improving exchange of information and strengthening protection of critical infrastructure and cybersecurity, to building resilience in our societies against radicalisation and extremism. Member States have received support through the framework, and the EU's response to hybrid threats has been successfully tested jointly with NATO in a number of exercises.

#### Increased preparedness against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear-related threats

In October 2017, the Commission presented an Action Plan to strengthen preparedness and resilience against **Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN)** security risks at EU level. The Salisbury attack and increasing concern about terrorist interest in and ability to use



such substances show that the security challenges posed by CBRN, in particular chemical threats, are real. The EU will explore measures to uphold respect for international rules and standards, including through a possible EU sanctions regime on chemical weapons. In parallel, the Commission with Member States will fast-track further work against chemical threats by the end of 2018, including by:

- Developing a **list of chemical substances** posing a particular security threat;
- Setting up a **dialogue with supply-chain** links to address threats from chemicals that can be used as precursors;
- Improving the **detection of chemical threats** by reviewing threat scenarios and analysing existing detection methods;
- **Raising awareness** among first responders, in particular law enforcement and civil protection personnel;
- Making inventories of **stockpiles of essential medical countermeasures**, laboratory, treatment and other capacities, and regularly mapping their availability across the EU.

#### **Progress on security priority files**

The **Security Union Progress Report** presented by the Commission provides an update on the removal of terrorist content online and the way forward on preventing radicalisation following the final report of the High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation presented on 18 May. The report also reviews progress made in other security priority areas including interoperability, information exchange, cyber security and terrorist financing. Finally, the Commission presenting an **EU Action Plan to improve the security of rail passengers and staff**, delivering on its commitment to better protect public spaces. The Action Plan aims to prevent and respond to possible attacks targeting rail services through a new cooperation and coordination framework between Member States, including through a new **EU Rail Passenger Security Platform**. The Commission has also presented a **report on the impact of possible restrictions on cash payments** which concluded that such restrictions would not significantly prevent terrorism financing. At this stage, the Commission is not considering any legislative initiative on this matter.



#### **Next steps**

Joint Communication on hybrid threats informs the European Council of the work already under way and areas where efforts should be intensified. It is up to EU Member States, the Commission and the High Representative to ensure a swift follow-up. The Commission will continue its work on all security priority files, notably in view of the informal meeting of Heads of State or Government on internal security in September.

#### **Background**

Security has been a political priority since the beginning of the Juncker Commission's mandate – from President Juncker's Political Guidelines of July 2014 to the latest State of the Union address on 13 September 2017. Hybrid activities by State and non-state groups continue to pose a serious and acute threat to the EU and its Member States. Hybrid campaigns are multidimensional, combining coercive and subversive measures, using both conventional and unconventional means and tactics. They are designed to be difficult to detect or attribute to any individual or group. The March nerve agent attack in the UK underlined the wide spectrum of hybrid warfare and the need for greater resilience in this regard.

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### **3. Commission proposes to reinforce the European Solidarity Corps**

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**For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027,**



**the Commission is proposing a new programme for the European Solidarity Corps beyond 2020, with €1.26 billion to broaden the opportunities it offers.**

The new programme will allow at least 350,000 young Europeans to support communities in need between 2021 and 2027 through volunteering, traineeships and job placements. The proposal adopted marks the consolidation of the

Corps for the next budgetary period. Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, **Günther H. Oettinger**, said: "Solidarity is one of the key values in the European Union, and the success of the European Solidarity Corps shows that there's a high demand of young people to participate in solidarity activities. That's why we have significantly increased the financial means for the European Solidarity Corps in the next EU budget." **Tibor Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: "With this proposal, the European Commission has confirmed its commitment to strengthening solidarity and empowering young people. We are putting everything in place to enable the European Solidarity Corps to grow into a broad community of people and organisations ready to support those in need across our continent and beyond, helping to build resilient, cohesive societies. Young people, in turn, will gain skills, new friendships, and a strong sense of what it feels like to be European." Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, **Marianne Thyssen**, commented: "Building on the experience gained so far, this proposal provides for a more inclusive and flexible approach and ultimately a greater freedom of choice for participants, whether they'd like to go on a voluntary or professional placement." The new programme will build on the achievements of the Corps in its first years of existence and creates one single entry point for young people ready to engage in solidarity. In particular, the programme will include:



- **Volunteering activities in support of humanitarian aid operations in non-EU countries:** The addition to the European Solidarity Corps of this well-established EU scheme for humanitarian aid, which has so far operated under the name EU Aid Volunteers, will provide volunteering opportunities outside the EU and will complement existing opportunities under the Solidarity Corps to volunteer individually or as a group, follow a traineeship or get a job in a solidarity field in Europe or beyond;
- **Targeted measures:** These will include additional funding or dedicated activities of shorter duration or within one's own country, for example, to make it easier for disadvantaged young people to take part in the European Solidarity Corps.

### Next steps

A swift agreement on the overall long-term EU budget and its sectoral proposals is essential to ensure that EU funds start delivering results on the ground as soon as possible. Delays could put into question the implementation of the first year of the European Solidarity Corps programme. An agreement on the next long-term budget in 2019 would provide for a seamless transition between the current long-term budget (2014-2020) and the new one and would ensure predictability and continuity of funding to the benefit of all.

### Background

During his 2016 State of the Union address, Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker announced the creation of a European Solidarity Corps, offering young people between the ages of 18 and 30 the opportunity to take part in a wide range of solidarity activities across the EU and beyond. Since its launch on 7 December 2016, almost 64,000 young people have joined the



European Solidarity Corps, and almost 5,000 participants started their activity. During a first phase launched in December 2016, eight different programmes were mobilised to offer volunteering, traineeship or job opportunities under the European Solidarity Corps. In May 2017, the Commission put forward a proposal to equip the European Solidarity Corps with its own financing mechanism and legal framework. The proposal is currently being discussed by the European Parliament and the Council. This will help further increase its coherence and impact. A budget of €376.5 million for the European Solidarity Corps over the period 2018-2020 would allow 100,000 young Europeans to support communities and develop their competences by the end of 2020. Any public or private body adhering to strict quality requirements can propose projects for the European Solidarity Corps. It will be implemented by the European Commission, the Erasmus+ National Agencies in the Member States, and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

## 4. EC proposes major funding increase for stronger borders and migration

**For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission proposes to almost triple funding for migration and border management to €34.9 billion, as compared to €13 billion in the previous period.**

The Commission's proposal is a response to increased migratory, mobility and security challenges, with more flexible funding instruments to address unforeseen migratory events and border protection at the core of the new budget. A new separate fund for integrated border management will be created and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency will be further strengthened with a new standing corps of around 10,000 border guards. The new border fund will also help Member States carry out customs controls by financing customs control equipment.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"Based on past experience and the knowledge that migration will remain a challenge in the future, we are proposing an unprecedented increase in funding. Strengthening our common EU borders, in particular with our European Border and Coast Guard, will continue to be a big priority. Increased flexibility of our funding instruments means we are ready to support Member States quickly; where they need it, when they need it – particularly in the event of crisis."* Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"Better managing our external borders and migration will remain key priorities for the EU, the Member States and our citizens in the years to come. Bigger challenges need bigger resources – this is why we propose to almost triple the budget in this area. The reinforced funding will be pivotal in ensuring that we can implement these political priorities: further secure our external borders,*

*continue to grant protection to those who need it, better support legal migration and integration efforts, counter irregular migration, and effectively and swiftly return those who have no right to stay."* Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, **Pierre Moscovici** said: *"The EU's 115,000 customs officials are on the frontline in protecting our citizens from counterfeit or unsafe goods and other forms of illicit trade. To support them in that vital task, we are today proposing a new fund worth €1.3 billion, for EU countries to acquire the most cutting-edge customs equipment. The EU's Customs Union celebrates its 50th anniversary next month: we must ensure that it continues to go from strength to strength."* During the refugee crisis of 2015 and 2016, the financial and technical support that the EU provided to Member States was essential in supporting Member States under pressure, developing search and rescue capacities, stepping up returns and better managing the external borders. Learning the lessons of the past, the Commission is proposing to almost triple funding for the crucial areas of migration and border management.

### 1. Securing the EU's external borders

The effective protection of the EU's external borders is crucial to manage migration and ensure internal security. Strong external borders are also what allow the EU to maintain a Schengen area without internal border controls. The Commission proposes to allocate **€21.3 billion** to border management overall and create a **new Integrated Border Management Fund (IBMF)** worth more than **€9.3 billion**. The key features of the new fund are:

#### The right set of priorities:

- **Strengthening Europe's external borders:** The new fund will continue and build on the work of the past years to better protect the EU's borders with the roll-out of the European Border and Coast Guard, systematic checks at the borders, new large-scale and interoperable IT systems, including a future Entry/Exit system. Funding will be channelled towards tackling migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings as well as intercepting and stopping those who pose a threat, support for search and rescue at sea, equipment and training for border guards, and swift operational support for Member States under pressure;





- **Stronger and more efficient visa policy:** The fund will also ensure the EU's visa policy continues to evolve and modernise, whilst strengthening security and mitigating irregular migration risks.

**Support to Member States:** The new fund will devote **€4.8 billion** in long-term funding to support Member States' border management measures and visa policy. The funding will acutely reflect Member States' needs and a review at mid-term will take account of new or additional pressures. Each Member State will receive a fixed sum of €5 million with the remainder distributed based on the workload, pressure and threat level at external land borders (30%), external sea borders (35%), airports (20%) and consular offices (15%); **A flexible and fast response: €3.2 billion** will be devoted to targeted support to Member States, EU-level projects and to address urgent needs. The new fund has been designed to ensure sufficient flexibility to channel emergency funding to Member States when needed and address new and critical priorities as they emerge; **Better customs control equipment on external borders:** The new instrument will devote **€1.3 billion** to help Member States purchase, maintain and replace state-of-the-art customs equipment such as new scanners, automated number plate detection systems, teams of sniffer dogs and mobile laboratories for sample analysis; **Reinforcing EU border management agencies:** Outside of this fund and to be presented separately, more than **€12 billion** will be dedicated to further strengthening the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and EU-LISA.

## 2. Migration: supporting a robust, realistic and fair policy

The Commission is proposing to **increase funding for migration by 51% to reach €10.4 billion** under the **renewed Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF)**. The Fund will support Member States' efforts in three key areas: asylum, legal migration and integration, and countering irregular migration and returns. The key features of the new fund are:

**The right set of priorities:** The new fund will continue its vital support to national asylum systems and will place a renewed focus on channelling EU funding to the most pressing issues, such as:

- **A stronger and more efficient European asylum system:** The fund will help strengthen and develop all aspects of the Common European Asylum System, including its external dimension;
- **Greater support for legal migration and integration:** The fund will devote additional resources to support the early integration of non-EU nationals staying lawfully in the EU in the short-term, complemented by funding under the Cohesion funds for longer-term socio-economic integration;
- **Faster and more frequent returns:** The fund will support a more coordinated approach to countering irregular migration, improve the effectiveness of returns and further intensify cooperation with non-EU countries on readmission;

**Support for Member States:** The fund will devote **€6.3 billion** in long-term funding to support Member States in managing migration, reflecting Member State's needs. A review at mid-term will take account of new or additional pressures. Each Member State will receive a fixed sum of €5 million with the remainder distributed based on an assessment of the pressures faced and taking into account proportions in the area of asylum (30%), legal migration and integration (30%) and countering irregular migration and return (40%); **Better preparedness: €4.2 billion** will be reserved for targeted support to Member States, projects with a real European added value such as resettlement or for responding to urgent needs and channelling emergency funding to Member States when and where they need it; **Greater coordination across EU funding instruments:** The asylum and migration fund will be complemented by the additional funds dedicated under the EU's external policy instruments to stepping up cooperation on migration with partner countries, including efforts to tackle irregular migration, improve opportunities in countries of origin, enhance cooperation on return and readmission and legal migration; **Reinforcing EU agencies:** Outside of this fund and to be presented separately, almost **€900 million** will be dedicated to further strengthening the **new European Union Agency for Asylum**.



**Next steps**  
A swift agreement on the overall long-term EU budget and its sectoral proposals is essential to ensure that EU funds start delivering results on the ground as soon as possible. Delays could



jeopardise the European Union's ability to respond to future crises should they arise and could starve projects of vital funds – such as the EU-wide Assisted Voluntary Return and Readmission programmes and the continuation of EU-funding for resettlement. An agreement on the next long-term budget in 2019 would provide for a seamless transition between the current long-term budget (2014-2020) and the new one, and would ensure predictability and continuity of funding to the benefit of all.

### Background

Border management and migration have been a political priority since the beginning of the Juncker Commission's mandate – from President Juncker's Political Guidelines of July 2014 to the latest State of the Union address on 13 September 2017. However, the scale and urgency of 2015-16 refugee crisis took Europe by surprise. To avert a humanitarian crisis and enable a joint response to this unprecedented challenge as well as new security threats, the EU used all flexibility in the existing budget to mobilise additional funds. From the original allocations for 2014-20 of €6.9 billion for the AMIF and ISF (Borders and Police) funds, an additional €3.9 billion was mobilised to reach €10.8 billion for migration, border management and internal security – and this does not even include the large amount of funding mobilised to address the refugee crisis outside the EU. Learning the lessons from the past, the Commission is now proposing to double funding across the board, with €10.4 billion for migration, €9.3 billion for border management, €2.5 billion for internal security and €1.2 billion for safer decommissioning of nuclear activities in some Member States – reaching over €23 billion overall. In addition, support to EU Agencies in security, border and migration management will be increased from €4.2 billion to €14 billion.

## 5. EU budget: Stepping up the EU's role as a security and defence provider

**For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing to increase the EU's strategic autonomy, bolster the EU's ability to protect its citizens and make the EU a stronger global actor.**

A €13 billion European Defence Fund will provide the financial firepower for cross-border investments in state-of-the-art and fully interoperable technology and equipment in areas such as encrypted software and drone technology. In addition, the High Representative, with the support of the Commission, is proposing a new €10.5 billion European Peace Facility, an instrument outside of the EU's long-term budget, which will help improve the EU's ability to prevent conflicts, build peace and guarantee international security. **Federica Mogherini**, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission,



said: *"The European Union has over the past couple of years taken steps in security and defence that seemed unthinkable before. We can now support research and cooperation to develop defence capabilities. We are taking measures that will facilitate the rapid movement of Member States' forces in Europe. Furthermore, with the Commission's support, I am proposing the establishment of a European Peace Facility that will improve the financing of EU military operations and improve our support for actions by our partners."* Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-President in

charge of Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"What we are proposing will help the EU take its destiny into its own hands. We are taking greater ownership in defending and protecting our citizens. For the first time in the history of the European Union, a part of the European budget is devoted to investing collectively to develop new technologies and equipment to protect our people. The European Defence Fund is a true European tool to encourage joint investments and amplify Member States' efforts in defence."* **Elżbieta Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, added: *"The European Defence Fund is a game changer for defence cooperation in Europe. Based on the first initiatives tested these last two years, we are now scaling it up into an ambitious European instrument to support collaborative defence projects throughout their entire development cycle. The €13 billion Fund shows that this Commission is serious about building a Europe that defends and protects its citizens."*

### The European Defence Fund

The new €13 billion European Defence Fund will provide €4.1 billion to directly finance competitive and collaborative research projects, in particular through grants. Beyond the research phase, €8.9 billion will be available to complement Member States' investment by co-financing the costs for prototype development and the ensuing certification and testing requirements. The Fund will place the EU among the top 4 defence research and technology investors in Europe, and act as a catalyst for an innovative and competitive industrial and scientific base.

The main features of the European Defence Fund are:

- Financing of projects which help make the EU safer and which correspond to **priorities agreed by Member States** within the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy and other regional and international organisations such as NATO;
- **Only collaborative projects** involving at least 3 participants from 3 Member States are eligible;
- The EU will only co-fund the development of common prototypes where Member States **commit to buying the final product**;
- **Cross-border participation of SMEs and mid-caps** is strongly incentivised by providing higher financing rates, favouring projects by consortia which include SMEs and, if necessary, launching dedicated calls for proposals;
- **Targeting breakthrough innovation**, with 5% of the funds dedicated to disruptive technology and innovative equipment allowing the EU to boost its long-term technological leadership;
- **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)** projects may, if eligible, receive an additional co-financing bonus of 10%, but funding is not automatic.

### The European Peace Facility

The High Representative, with the support of the Commission, is proposing with the European Peace Facility a new off-budget fund worth €10.5 billion that will draw together existing off-budget mechanisms devoted to security and defence to overcome existing gaps and limitations. It will increase the effectiveness of financing for Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military missions and operations. It will facilitate the EU's contributions to peace operations led by partners and it will broaden the scope of the military and defence support the EU can offer. It will cover expenditure that cannot be financed under the EU's budget because of its military and defence implications.

### Next steps

A swift agreement on the overall long-term EU budget and its sectoral proposals is essential to ensure that EU funds start delivering results on the ground as soon as possible. Delays similar to those experienced at the beginning of the current 2014-2020 budgetary period would mean that calls for proposals for collaborative projects in areas such as metamaterials, encrypted software, drone technology or satellite communication would have to be delayed. An agreement on the next long-term budget in 2019 would provide for a seamless transition between the current long-term budget (2014-2020) and the new one and would ensure predictability and continuity of funding to the benefit of all. After obtaining the Commission's support, the High Representative will present the proposal for a European Peace Facility to the Council, who will need to take a decision on it by unanimity.



### Background

In his political guidelines in June 2014, President **Juncker** made strengthening European citizens' security a priority. He announced the creation of a European Defence Fund in his 2016 State of the Union address. The Commission presented the first version of the European Defence Fund in June 2017, which has allowed defence cooperation at EU level to be tested by means of the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) for 2017-2019 and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) for 2019-2020. The proposal on the European Defence Fund delivers on the commitment made in June 2017 to scale up initial funding in the period up to 2020 with a more substantial Fund. The European Defence Fund will complement other EU programmes, in particular the budget of €6.5 billion earmarked for the Connecting Europe Facility to enhance the EU's strategic transport infrastructures to make them fit for military mobility, and the new €100 billion research and innovation programme Horizon Europe.

## 6. Boosting cooperation between tax & customs authorities for a safer EU

**For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing measures to make tax and customs cooperation between Member States better and more efficient.**

Continued funding of these programmes will help the EU to progress in offering businesses unfettered and easy access to the EU's Single Market so that trade can flourish, protect citizens



from dangerous goods entering the Union at our external borders and ensure that Member States are equipped to fight tax avoidance and tax evasion. Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"Protecting the European Union's customs territory and implementing our common rules on taxation require strong cooperation between the relevant national authorities. Our new Customs and Fiscalis programmes will help to make that happen. At minimal cost, they provide a true European added value, offering*

*unprecedented advantages to Member States' tax and customs authorities as they work together in the interests of our citizens and businesses."* The Commission is proposing a continued financial commitment of €950 million for the EU's customs programme and €270 million for the EU's Fiscalis programme, representing just 0.07% and 0.02% of the next EU budget respectively. The new **Customs Programme** will help put in place a modern Customs Union which puts the interests of EU business and citizens at its heart, by:

- **Increasing information and data exchange** between national customs administrations to better detect the flow of dangerous and counterfeit goods: a total of 2.7 million pieces of ammunition and 188,000 pieces of explosives were seized at EU borders in 2017;
- **Supporting customs authorities** in protecting the financial and economic interests of the Union, as well as in the correct collection of customs duties, import VAT and excise duties: The new programme will improve the capacity of customs administrations to deal with growing trade and changing economic and working models such as e-commerce and blockchain and will enhance cooperation and training across sectors;
- **Devising better risk management strategies** to protect the EU's financial interests; and help the EU better respond to security threats and transnational crime;
- **Continuing to facilitate growing levels of trade:** EU customs authorities handled 331 million declarations last year.

The new **Fiscalis Programme** will support cooperation between Member States' tax administrations and better contribute to the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance, by:

- **Putting in place better and more connected IT systems**, which each Member State would otherwise have to develop individually. This includes developing and maintaining interoperable and cost-effective IT solutions to support tax authorities in implementing EU legislation;
- **Sharing good practices** and training to boost efficiency: this includes helping prevent unnecessary administrative burdens for citizens and businesses (including SMEs) in cross-border transactions and significantly adding to the 423,000 tax professionals trained since 2014;
- **Putting in place joint actions in risk management and audits** – 1,000 of which have been organised between Member States since 2014;
- **Fostering Union competitiveness**, boosting innovation and facilitating the implementation of new economic models.

### Next steps

A swift agreement on the overall long-term EU budget and its sectoral proposals is essential to ensure that EU funds for ongoing programmes, including those dedicated to strengthening the Customs Union and the fight against tax avoidance and tax evasion can continue to deliver results on the ground. Delays similar to the ones experienced at the beginning of the current 2014-2020 budgetary period would mean that the EU loses out on revenues to the EU budget from an efficient collection of EU customs duties, that customs authorities are less able to keep our borders safe, and that citizens are less protected from dangerous and counterfeit goods. An



agreement on the next long-term budget in 2019 would provide for a seamless transition between the current long-term budget (2014-2020) and the new one and would ensure predictability of funding to the benefit of all.

### Background

The EU's Customs Programme has already boosted the ability of customs authorities to keep our borders safe, while facilitating trade and protecting EU citizens from dangerous and counterfeit goods. It has also enabled better and more efficient collection of EU customs duties, which in 2017 made up almost 16% of the EU's overall budget. As the EU Customs Union prepares to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018, the proposal would ensure continued improvements to the backbone of the EU's Single Market. In parallel, the EU's Fiscalis Programme has also proven itself indispensable in helping tax administrations to cooperate better across the EU to improve tax collection and fight tax fraud. First designed in 1993 purely as a training and exchange programme for tax officials, Fiscalis has become a game-changer for the EU's taxation landscape over the last 20 years. It offers a flexible and simple environment for tax cooperation, with a substantial EU added value and impact despite its relatively limited size. In one year alone (2015), it helped Member States to assess over €590 million in taxes for possible recovery through joint EU controls. The proposal for a new "Fiscalis" programme comes at a time where public sentiment against tax avoidance runs high, with EU governments needing to recoup more than €50 billion a year lost to Value Added Tax (VAT) fraud. A strengthened programme will help address this issue.

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## 7. EC proposes most ambitious Research and Innovation programme yet

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**For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing €100 billion for research and innovation.**

A new programme – Horizon Europe – will build on the achievements and success of the previous research and innovation programme (Horizon 2020) and keep the EU at the forefront of global research and innovation. Horizon Europe is the most ambitious research and innovation programme ever. Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said *"Investing in research and innovation is investing in Europe's future. EU funding has allowed teams across countries and scientific disciplines to work together and make unthinkable discoveries, making Europe a world-class leader in research and innovation. With Horizon Europe, we want to build on this success and continue to make a real difference in the lives of citizens and society as a whole."*

Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, added: *"Horizon 2020 is one of Europe's biggest success stories. The new Horizon Europe programme aims even higher. As part of this, we want to increase funding for the European Research Council to strengthen the EU's global scientific leadership, and reengage citizens by setting ambitious new missions for EU research. We are also proposing a new European Innovation Council to modernise funding for ground-breaking innovation in Europe"*. While continuing to drive scientific excellence through the European Research Council (ERC) and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships and exchanges, Horizon Europe will introduce the following main new features:



- **A European Innovation Council (EIC)** to help the EU become a frontrunner in market-creating innovation: The Commission's proposal will establish a one-stop shop to bring the most promising high potential and breakthrough technologies from lab to market application, and help the most innovative start-ups and companies scale up their ideas. The new EIC will help identify and fund fast-moving, high-risk innovations with strong potential to create entirely new markets. It will provide direct support to innovators through two main funding instruments, one for early stages and the other for development and market deployment. It will complement the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).
- **New EU-wide research and innovation missions** focusing on societal challenges and industrial competitiveness: Under Horizon Europe, the Commission will launch new missions



with bold, ambitious goals and strong European added value to tackle issues that affect our daily lives. Examples could range from the fight against cancer, to clean transport or plastic-free oceans. These missions will be co-designed with citizens, stakeholders, the European Parliament and Member States.

- **Maximising the innovation potential across the EU:** Support will be doubled for Member States lagging behind in their efforts to make the most of their national research and innovation potential. Moreover, new synergies with Structural and Cohesion Funds will make it easy to coordinate and combine funding and help regions embrace innovation.
- **More openness:** The principle of 'open science' will become the modus operandi of Horizon Europe, requiring open access to publications and data. This will assist market uptake and increase the innovation potential of results generated by EU funding.
- **A new generation of European Partnerships and increased collaboration with other EU programmes:** Horizon Europe will streamline the number of partnerships that the EU co-programmes or co-funds with partners like industry, civil society and funding foundations, in order to increase their effectiveness and impact in achieving Europe's policy priorities. Horizon Europe will promote effective and operational links with other future EU programmes, like Cohesion Policy, the European Defence Fund, the Digital Europe Programme and the Connecting Europe Facility, as well as with the international fusion energy project ITER.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC), the Commission's science and knowledge service, will continue to contribute with scientific advice, technical support and dedicated research. The proposed budget allocation of €100 billion for 2021-2027 includes €97.6 bn under Horizon Europe (€3.5 bn of which will be allocated under the InvestEU Fund) and €2.4 bn for the Euratom Research and Training Programme. The Euratom programme, which funds research and training on nuclear safety, security and radiation protection, will have an increased focus on non-power applications such as healthcare and medical equipment, and will also support the mobility of nuclear researchers under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

### Next steps

A swift agreement on the overall long-term EU budget and its sectoral proposals is essential to ensure that EU funds start delivering results on the ground as soon as possible. Delays would force Europe's brightest minds to look for opportunities elsewhere. This would imply the loss of thousands of research jobs and harm Europe's competitiveness. From fundamental research to market-creating innovation, key advances in e.g. healthcare, climate action, green transport and



sustainable agriculture would slow down; solutions for cancer treatments, greenhouse gas emissions, smart cars, and healthy diets would be delayed. An agreement on the next long-term budget in 2019 would provide for a seamless transition between the current long-term budget (2014-2020) and the new one and would ensure predictability and continuity of funding to the benefit of all.

### Background

The Horizon Europe proposal builds on the success of the current programme, Horizon 2020. The interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 showed that the programme is on track to help create jobs and growth, tackle our biggest societal challenges and improve people's lives. It shows that the programme has clear European added value, producing

demonstrable benefits compared to national or regional-level support. As of May 2018, it has supported over 18,000 projects with over €31 billion awarded. The proposal also builds on the Commission's contribution to the EU Leaders' meeting on 16 May in Sofia "A renewed European Agenda for Research and Innovation - Europe's chance to shape its future", which highlighted the needed steps to ensure Europe's global competitiveness. About two-thirds of Europe's economic growth over the last decades has been driven by innovation. Horizon Europe is expected to generate new and more knowledge and technologies, promoting scientific excellence, and to have positive effects on growth, trade and investment and significant social and environmental impact. Each euro invested by the programme can potentially generate a return of up to 11 euro of GDP over 25 years. Union investments in R&I are expected to directly generate an estimated gain of up to 100 000 jobs in R&I activities in the "investment phase" (2021-2027).

## 8. The application of the Charter of fundamental rights in the EU in 2017

**The European Commission is publishing its annual Report on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.**

The report highlights that while 2017 was a year of challenges for fundamental rights, the structures and tools in place to make sure the rights of the Charter are a reality have been functioning. Further support to the respect and promotion of fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy, including the support for a free and vibrant civil society, will remain central in 2018. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights. This is a good opportunity to recall that fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law are the three pillars that are the bedrock of the European Union. Our Charter of fundamental rights is not optional. The EU institutions are bound by it and so are the*

*MS when implementing EU law. The Court of Justice of the EU and the national courts play an important role to uphold fundamental rights and the rule of law across the Union."* Věra **Jourová**, EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality added: *"We saw some encouraging developments in 2017, for instance when it comes to tackling racism and other illegal hate speech online through our code of conduct with social media platforms. Also the European Pillar of Social Rights was an important step towards more equality, showing that*



*Europe is much more than a market. It is a Union of values that protects. But we have faced also important challenges in 2017, with the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and the work of civil society organisations under threat in parts of our Union. We will continue to work relentlessly to uphold fundamental rights, the rule of law and our democratic values in our Union."* Some of the key initiatives promoting fundamental rights in 2017 include:

- **Further support democracy and civil society** - The report underlines the need for a renewed support to democracy. The role of civil society and current challenges were put to the fore in 2017. Support to civil society is included prominently in the multiannual financial framework and a new Justice, Rights and Values Fund was adopted on 30 May this year.
- **Boosting social rights**- The report shows some very encouraging strides in the areas of social rights, with the adoption of the European Pillar of Social rights and its follow-up actions. It adopted initiatives to ensure better work-life balance opportunities for people with caring responsibilities. The Commission has proposed to ensure more predictable and transparent working conditions, in particular for workers in non-standard forms of employment such as those with zero-hours or on-demand contracts.
- **Combating discrimination against women.** The EU's signing of the Istanbul convention on preventing and combating violence against women is a significant step. It will now be important to ensure swift ratification by the EU. The Commission also presented an action plan to combat the gender pay gap.
- **Protecting children in migration.** The Communication on the protection of the children in migration presented urgent actions to be implemented at the EU and national level, which were followed by Council conclusions in June 2017. The Commission established a European Network on Guardianship to facilitate cooperation between national authorities.
- **Tackling discrimination and combatting racism, both offline and online** -The Commission strengthened its cooperation with IT companies, national authorities and civil society organisations to ensure that online illegal hate speech is quickly identified and taken down, and assisted Member States in their efforts to step-up enforcement of EU law on hate crime, access to justice, protection and support for victims of hate crime.
- **Improving access to justice and effective remedies** - Following its Communication "Better Results Through Better Application", the Commission assisted Member States in their efforts to step-up enforcement of EU law for the benefit of individuals and businesses. In the context of the European Semester, the Commission addressed country-specific recommendations to help Member States improve their justice systems.

### Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights

The report focuses on the 2017 Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights, which was devoted to "**women's rights under attack**". The Commission committed to a number of actions ranging from putting women's rights and gender equality on the agenda at the highest political level to funding grassroots projects. The **2018 Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights** will be devoted to "Democracy in the EU" and will take place on 26-27 November. Participants will work together to identify ways to foster free and open democratic participation in an era of growing low turnout in elections, populism, digitalisation and threats to civil society. It will be an opportunity to reaffirm one of the EU's key values in the run-up to the European elections.

### Background

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union became legally binding. The provisions of the Charter are primarily addressed to the EU institutions and then to the national authorities only when they are implementing EU law. The Commission adopted a Strategy on the effective implementation of the Charter in which it committed to prepare annual reports covering the full range of Charter provisions. This year's report is the 7th report of its kind. The Commission is working with the relevant authorities at national, local and EU level to better inform people about their fundamental rights and where to find help if their rights have been infringed. The Commission provides practical information on these rights via the European E-justice Portal and has set up a dialogue on handling fundamental rights complaints with ombudsmen, equality bodies and human rights institution.

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## 9. InvestEU Programme to support jobs, growth and innovation in Europe

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**For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission proposes to create the InvestEU Programme, bringing EU budget financing in the form of loans and guarantees under one roof.**

InvestEU will bring together the multitude of financial programmes currently available and expand the successful model of the Investment Plan for Europe, the Juncker Plan. With InvestEU, the Commission will further boost job creation, investment and innovation. President Jean-Claude Juncker said: "*The Investment Plan for Europe has proven a success when it comes to mobilising private investment and creating jobs in Europe. It has already triggered almost €290 billion in investment that would not have been possible without it, and provided financing for 635,000 small businesses. With InvestEU, we are taking this successful model and expanding it*



*across the many EU financing programmes on offer. We are simplifying, doing more with less, and placing a stronger focus on social investments."* Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: "*The InvestEU Programme is a structural reform in the EU budget. It brings the multitude of EU financing programmes into a single structure with a single brand: InvestEU. By building on the success of the European Fund for Strategic Investments, we can continue to boost jobs, innovation and skills in Europe with the added bonus of making it easier and more transparent for beneficiaries. InvestEU will help us achieve our policy goals such as sustainability, scientific excellence, social inclusion and helping our small businesses to scale up, with the aim of mobilising over €650 billion in investments – mostly from the private sector. And we give Member States the option to leverage their EU funds even further through the guarantee fund. A win-win*". The new programme will consist of the InvestEU Fund, the InvestEU Advisory Hub and the InvestEU Portal.

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### 1. InvestEU Fund

Building on the success of the Juncker Plan, the InvestEU Fund will continue to mobilise public and private investment in the EU to help address the still sizeable investment gap in Europe. The new Fund will notably:

- **Do more with less:** The Commission is proposing €15.2 billion be earmarked for the InvestEU Fund. This will allow the EU budget to provide a €38 billion guarantee which will be used to support strategically important projects across the EU. By crowding in private and public

investments, the Commission expects the InvestEU Fund to trigger more than €650 billion in additional investment across the EU over the 7-year period;

- **Create a diversified, flexible portfolio:** The InvestEU Fund supports four policy areas – sustainable infrastructure; research, innovation and digitisation; small and medium-sized businesses; and social investment and skills. InvestEU will also be flexible: it will have the ability to react to market changes and policy priorities that change over time;
- **Streamline and simplify:** The InvestEU Programme will have a single, coherent governance structure and reporting requirements, avoiding overlaps. A single fund will integrate the many different EU-level financial instruments and the subsequent applicable rules that accompany them. This means a strengthened focus on policy areas and objectives. From helping us meet our Paris climate objectives to meeting our commitments in the European Pillar of Social Rights, InvestEU will be strongly linked to EU policy priorities;
- **Capitalise on the local, national and EU-wide expertise of our financing partners:** Given its role as the EU's public bank, its capacity to operate in all Member States, and its experience in managing the EFSI, the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group will remain the Commission's main financial partner under InvestEU. In addition, Member States' national and regional promotional banks and other institutions which can offer specific expertise and experience may become financial partners, subject to conditions;
- **Help Member States leverage their EU funds more effectively:** Member States will have the option to channel some of their allocated Cohesion Policy Funds into the InvestEU budget guarantee. Any funds channelled into the Fund will benefit from the EU guarantee and its high credit rating, giving national and regional investments more firepower. If Member States choose to do this, the funds will be earmarked for that particular country. To facilitate a seamless deployment of the InvestEU fund, the Commission is also working on further streamlining State aid control of Member States' money channelled through InvestEU.

## 2. InvestEU Advisory Hub

Building on the model of the Investment Plan's European Investment Advisory Hub, the InvestEU Advisory Hub will integrate the 13 different advisory services currently available into a one-stop-shop for project development assistance. It will provide technical support and assistance to help with the preparation, development, structuring and implementation of projects, including capacity building.

## 3. European Investment Project Portal

The Investment Plan's European Investment Project Portal gives visibility to investment projects across the EU and will be continued under the InvestEU Programme. The Portal brings together investors and project promoters by providing an easily-accessible and user-friendly database, giving projects more visibility and enabling investors to find investment opportunities in the sector or location of their interest.

### Structural reforms remain essential

EU financing alone will not address the low levels of investment in Europe. Member States should use all the support on offer to address national barriers to investment and to improve their business environments, in particular by implementing the European Semester's Country Specific Recommendations. On 31 May, the Commission proposed to create a Reform Support Programme which will support priority reforms in all EU Member States, with an overall budget of €25 billion. This new programme includes financial support for reforms as well as technical support and expertise.

### Next steps

A swift agreement on the overall long-term EU budget and its sectoral proposals is essential to ensure that EU funds start delivering results on the ground as soon as possible. Delays would mean that we would continue to see low levels of public and private investment in the EU which would have tangible consequences for jobs and growth in Member States. An agreement on the next long-term budget in 2019 would provide for a seamless transition between the current long-term budget (2014-2020) and the new one and would ensure predictability and continuity of funding to the benefit of all.

### Background

The investment conditions in Europe have improved since the Juncker Plan was launched, thanks to structural reforms carried out by the Member States, a more favourable economic





situation and interventions such as the EFSI. However, there is still a sizeable investment gap in Europe:

- Investment in higher-risk activities such as **research and innovation** is still inadequate which can be damaging to the industrial and economic competitiveness of the Union and the quality of life of its citizens;
- **Infrastructure investment** activities in the EU stood at 1.8% of EU GDP in 2016, down from 2.2% in 2009;
- Moreover, we must address the EU's **structural investment needs** in the face of technological change and global competitiveness, including for innovation, skills, infrastructure, small and medium-sized enterprises and the need to address key societal challenges such as sustainability and population ageing.

The Investment Plan for Europe, the Juncker Plan, was launched in November 2014 to reverse the downward trend of low-levels of investment and put Europe on the path to economic recovery. Operations approved under the Juncker Plan's European Fund for Strategic Investments are expected to trigger €287 billion in investments as of May 2018. Around 635,000 small and medium-sized businesses are expected to benefit from improved access to finance. On 12 December 2017, the European Parliament and Member States agreed on the Regulation to enhance the EFSI and extend the investment target to €500 billion by end 2020. The EFSI 2.0 Regulation entered into force on 30 December 2017. The Commission's Reflection Paper on the future of EU finances of 28 June 2017 highlighted the need "to do more with less" and leverage the EU budget at a time of budgetary constraints. The independent evaluation of the EFSI published in June 2018 concludes that the EU guarantee is an efficient way of increasing the volume of riskier operations by the EIB and it uses fewer budgetary resources compared to financial instruments. It also highlights the need to continue improving access to finance for innovation, as well as to strengthen synergies with other EU funding programmes.

## 10. Commission helps Europe's regions become more innovative

**The Commission is renewing the initiative "Stairway to Excellence", to continue to provide tailored support and expertise to regions lagging behind in terms of innovation.**

The initiative will help regions develop, update and refine their smart specialisation strategies – that is, their regional innovation strategies based on niche areas of competitive strengths – ahead of the start of the 2021-2027 budgetary period. It will also help them identify adequate EU resources to finance innovative projects, and pair up with other regions with similar assets to create innovation clusters. Following the Commission's proposals for the future Cohesion Policy,



the new "Horizon Europe" programme, and in line with the Commission's renewed agenda for Research and Innovation, "Stairway to Excellence" is another way the Commission is helping Europe's regions prepare for the future, with solid innovation strategies supported by EU funds in the next long-term EU budget for 2021-2027. Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"Smart specialisation will be more important than ever in the post-2020 period. For these strategies to express their full potential in the coming years, we need two things: more partnership and more ownership, especially in those regions that need to catch up the most. This*

*initiative will help prepare the ground for solid innovation strategies in the post 2020 period."* Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, added: *"We have just proposed the most ambitious EU research and innovation funding programme yet, Horizon Europe, with €100 billion for 2021-2027. This also means more opportunities for regions to make the most of their research and innovation potential. "Stairway to Excellence" will help them combine EU funding streams to finance innovative projects."* Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"Under this initiative, the Joint Research Centre – the Commission's science and knowledge service – will use its expertise to help regions build on their strengths and priorities, learn from each other and make the most of their most valuable assets:*

*people's talents and creativity.*" The initiative, coordinated by the Joint Research Centre, will give regions four main forms of support:

1. Commission and external experts will help regions **spot areas for improvement** in their smart specialisation strategies, in their regional innovation systems (quality of public research, efficient business-science links and business-friendly environments) and in the way they cooperate with other regions in the fields of research and innovation.
2. Experts will also help them tap into **all potential funding streams**, such as Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and Cohesion Policy funds, and combine them thanks to new opportunities for synergies, offered by the Commission's proposals for EU funds 2021-2027.
3. The Joint Research Centre will help **identify and remedy specific regional bottlenecks to innovation**, such as lack of interaction between local business spheres and academia or low participation in the current Horizon 2020 programme.
4. The Joint Research Centre will also organise networking opportunities and workshops for regions to **meet and exchange good practices** in building regional innovation strategies. This will also facilitate the development of **partnerships for interregional innovation investments**.

#### Next steps

The renewed initiative will start this summer, for 2 years. Regions can flag their interest and participate via the Smart Specialisation Platform.

#### Background

The "Stairway to Excellence" initiative was launched in 2014, in partnership with the European Parliament, when smart specialisation became a requirement under Cohesion Policy rules. It has been renewed every year with different work programmes and priorities. For 2018-2019, it is focused on preparing the next long-term EU budget, building on the method of the 2017 smart specialisation pilot actions. The initiative has a budget of €3 million for these two years, made available by the European Parliament.

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## 11. Europe in My Region Photo Contest 2018

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The European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy hereby invites you to participate in the Europe in My Region Photo Contest, to showcase EU-funded projects around Europe. Participants may enter the Europe in My Region contest by uploading their entries [here](#).

**Eligibility:** Any permanent EU resident or resident of a pre-accession country (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey), is eligible to enter. Employees and immediate relatives of employees of the promoter or of its respective parent, subsidiary or affiliated companies or any other person connected with this competition are excluded from participation. See point 4 of the Terms & Conditions. Entrants must be 18 or over. All entries will be carefully moderated.

**Entries:** Any photo showing an EU-funded project within a member state of the European Union or one of the candidate and potential candidate countries is eligible. Participants may submit as many pairs of pictures as they wish. Each submission must be composed of 2 pictures: one of the EU co-funded project and the second showing the information board (billboard, plaque, EU flag, etc). Each picture has to be clearly named (name of the contestant, type of the project, city, country where the project is located), for example: John Smith\_school\_London\_UK\_Project Photo; John Smith\_school\_London\_UK\_EU Board; Collages – photos of an EU-funded project in the form of a collection – meaning two or more stand-alone images put side by side in an interesting manner, are allowed. Composite images are not eligible: composite pictures contain separate images combined to make one image, thus changing the meaning of the original. Photos may be edited and filters may be applied. Photos shot using various methods (i.e. long exposure, stacking) and camera built-in effects are accepted. Entries that are offensive, defamatory or obscene, or that disclose unnecessary personal information will be rejected from the competition. Images with copyright watermarks and text will be rejected: however, photos where only dates or titles appear are eligible.



**Copyright:** All entries must be original work and the participant must either be the sole owner or the transferee of the copyright. By entering the competition, participants retain full copyright of their images. However, participants also agree to be bound by Gleam's legal terms. Participants also grant the European Commission the right to publish and exhibit uploaded photographs. No fee will be payable by the European Commission for this use. Participants must obtain written consent from any individuals aged 18 or above who are identifiable in a photograph. Participants taking a photograph of anyone under 18 must ensure that they obtain the written consent of that child's parent/guardian. It is the participants' responsibility to ensure that the necessary consent has been obtained. Participants must retain all release forms obtained as they may be asked to prove that consent has been given. Download the [release form](#). Participants should retain the original digital file/negative of their entry as they may be asked to prove ownership of the work, as well as providing the promoter with the photo in the highest possible resolution.

**Moderation:** All photos are checked to make sure that they meet the competition rules before being accepted into the gallery. Only the pictures displaying the project will be added to the gallery (the information board pictures will not appear in the Gleam gallery). However, the winning pictures which will be presented in the exhibition will be accompanied with the information board pictures).

**Entry period:** Entries may be submitted to the competition at any time during the period 23 April to 31 August 2018, 23:59 Central European Summer Time.

**Selection of winners:** 30 winners will be selected by a jury comprised of three photography or social media experts.

**Votes:** Voting begins on the 23 April and ends on the 31st August. There is no limit of votes per person. The number of votes will be an important weighting criterion for the jury. **Jury selection:** **A jury composed of photographers and social media professionals will select the 30 winning photos.** The jury's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into on its decision. At the end of the jury selection period, the thirty jury winners will be notified by email. Each photo that enters the final selection should be made available in high resolution otherwise it may be disqualified.

**Cheating:** Please compete fairly and respect your fellow participants. Any participant reasonably suspected of cheating, including but not limited to the unfair acquisition of votes, will be disqualified from the competition and their entries removed. No correspondence will be entered into on this matter.

**Prizes:** The 30 selected photographs will compose a photo exhibition that will travel across Europe and will receive publicity via the European Commission's channels (website, social media).

**Acceptance of Contest Rules:** By entering this photo contest, the participants agree to be bound by the Contest Rules, including assurances on the copyright of entries. For more information see the following [link](#).

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## 12. Global Youth Video Competition

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**Are you 18-30 and taking part in activities to fight climate change? Send a 3 minute video for a chance to be a youth reporter at the UN Climate Change Conference in Poland in December. One winner in each of our two categories:**



### **Category One: Responsible production & consumption**

How we make and use the products and goods we use in everyday life plays an important role in tackling climate change. Taking raw materials from the ground, manufacturing products and then throwing away our used products and waste materials can all add to greenhouse gas emissions. But there are low-carbon ways to design, produce, supply and recycle products. We can live more climate friendly lifestyles if we manage our natural resources sustainably, and be more energy and resource efficient during the entire life-cycle of the goods we consume. **Submit videos that showcase your activities that contribute to responsible production and consumption.** Examples of submissions:

Carrying out climate friendly solutions/ideas on how to promote sustainable production or consumption; Campaigns to promote behavioural change; Initiatives to reduce emissions during the lifecycle of goods, in areas such as: Unnecessary consumption; Sustainable fashion; Sharing

economy; Reusing goods and materials; Transporting goods; Locally focused economy; Reducing waste.

#### **Category Two: Green and climate friendly jobs**

New job opportunities are opening up in a range of environmentally-friendly sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable design, recycling, energy efficiency, electric vehicles or sustainable agriculture. Green jobs can improve energy efficiency, limit greenhouse gas emissions, and help people adapt to the effects of climate change. New business ideas, green industrialization, and education can all add to the creation of safe and meaningful work in a low-carbon economy. **Submit videos that showcase your activities that contribute to creation of climate friendly jobs.** Examples of submissions: Work or new businesses that improve the economy and addresses climate change; Green jobs and careers related to: Renewable energy; Food waste; Construction and infrastructure; Transportation; Green design. Technical and job-based training for green jobs; Educational campaigns promoting sustainable employment; Research to develop a low-carbon economy. **Deadline, 31 August 2018.** For more information see the following [link](#).

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### **13. 2018 EESC Civil Society Prize**

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Theme of the 2018 prize: **"Identities, European Values and Cultural Heritage in Europe"**. The 2018 prize will reward innovative initiatives carried out by civil society organisations and/or individuals on the territory of the EU and aimed at **raising awareness of the multiple layers and richness of European identities, exploiting the full potential of Europe's cultural wealth, facilitating access to European cultural heritage and promoting European values (respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law)**. The aim of the Civil Society Prize, which is awarded annually, is to reward and encourage tangible initiatives and achievements by civil society organisations and/or individuals that have made a significant contribution to promoting European identity and integration. Its **overall objective** is to raise awareness of the contribution that civil society organisations and/or individuals can make to the creation of a European identity and citizenship in a way that underpins the common values that shore up European integration. The prize, which has a total value of 50 000 € and will be awarded on 13 December 2018, is open to civil society organisations officially registered within the European Union and acting at European, national, regional or local level. It is furthermore open to individuals. **The deadline for submitting applications is 7 September 2018.** For the contest rules and the application form, please click [here](#).



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### **14. ELIA is looking for intern**

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ELIA - European League of Institutes of the Arts is a globally connected European network that provides a dynamic platform for professional exchange and development in higher arts education. With over 250 members in 47 countries, it represents some 300.000 students in all art disciplines. Its cross-disciplinary quality makes ELIA unique as a network. ELIA advocates for higher arts education by empowering and creating new opportunities for its members and facilitating the exchange of good practices. ELIA collaborates with partner networks around the world. ELIA is looking for a motivated intern to strengthen the Communication and Membership Team at the ELIA Office. The ideal candidate has some experience or strong interest in communication in the cultural sector and interests in the field of arts education. The Communication Intern must be able to work independently; critical thinking, excellent organisational skills and attention to detail are a must.

#### **The Communication Intern will assist the ELIA Team with:**

- international outreach to our members and potential members;
- supporting the improvement and maintenance of the website and CRM system;
- data collection and database maintenance;



- supporting, when necessary, with producing visuals for media campaigns
- collecting, producing and sharing content for and with all ELIA's communication channels (social media, website(s), partners' sites, newsletter module)

#### **Requirements:**

- Higher education qualification in Communication, Cultural Management or similar;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English and (ideally) in Dutch, and/or another (European) language;
- Ability to effectively communicate and liaise with different groups and cultures;
- Computer literate and knowledge of Microsoft Office;
- Experience with graphic design tools (Adobe Creative Suite) is a pre;
- Self-motivated, pro-active, well-organised, efficient.
- Experience with communications and marketing is a pre.

#### **What ELIA offers:**

- A great professional opportunity in the creative sector filled with challenges and responsibility;
- A worthy upgrade of your resume;
- Fun colleagues and a workplace in Amsterdam in a creative and inspiring workspace;
- A great international network in the arts, culture and education world.

**Please apply in English by e-mail, enclosing a CV and motivation letter to Barbara Revelli, Head of Communications and Membership at [info@elia-artschools.org](mailto:info@elia-artschools.org) by Sunday 8 July 2018.** Interviews will take place between 16 and 19 July 2018, either in person or on Skype. You must have a valid work permit for the Netherlands (according to Dutch Labour Law). You will receive a small fee/reimbursement of costs up to a maximum of 375 Euros gross per month, based on 4 days (32 hours) a week, from which the internship provider will pay the social security premiums, wage tax and national insurance contributions that are due. For more information see the following [link](#).

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## **15. Third meeting in Greece of the SME project concluded**

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From 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June 2018, project took place in Thessaloniki, Greece the third meeting of the "Skills for Migrants Entrepreneurs (SME)" realised in the framework of Erasmus Plus KA2 VET 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. During the third meeting the partners verified the activities developed in recent months and fixed further steps of the project. Also were realised various interviews with a local television.

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## **16. GPEUMP: international meeting in Izmir, Turkey**

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The international meeting of the "Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs" project will take place from 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June in Izmir (Turkey). The project, approved under the Erasmus Plus KA2 Youth program, aims to integrate the gender perspective in the European Union mobility programs and thereby increase the visibility of gender issues in youth organizations. It is evident, in fact, that gender discrimination is a global / transnational problem and affects the whole life of young women all over the world including Europe, where 23 discriminatory actions or sexual harassment against young women still persist. Therefore the project,



discussing the prevention suggestions against such measures and the development of reliable solutions, will contribute to increasing the quality of female mobility in exchange programs. The meeting (a blended mobility) aims to create an operative network among young people interested in gender respect. More information on the meeting will be available on our next newsletter.

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## 17. GPEUMP: multiplier event

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can see in the photos).

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, the multiplier event of the "Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs" project took place in GoDesk in Via della Tecnica, 18 in Potenza (Italy). The strategic partnership project is about to end and the partner organizations, among which there is also EURO-NET, are now involved in developing intense activities of dissemination and promotion of the products realized during the project, organising also multiplier events in all the countries of partnership. In Italy the Multiplier Event was a real success (as you

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## 18. StereoSciFi: second meeting in Poland

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From 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018 will take place in Lodz, Poland, the second meeting of the project "STEREOSCIFI - Stereotypes and Hard Science Fiction." The project was approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Portugal under the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Strategic Partnerships. The main objective is to promote equality and inclusion by improving the social competences of students. The partners of the project are: Aidlearn, Consultoria em Recursos Humanos Lda. (Portugal); Agrupamento de Escolas Emidio Navarro (Portugal); EURO-NET (Italy); Escuela Profesional Otxarkoaga (Spain); Telsiu svietimo centras (Lithuania); Uniwersytet Lodzki (Poland). The second meeting will take stock of the state of development of the initiative and other project activities to be developed in the coming months.




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## 19. More Than Words: the second training in Berlin

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The second training course of the project "More Than Words - Integrating Creativity in Intercultural Training" will take place in Berlin, from 26<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July. The project 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. The project partner organizations are: Border Crossings Company Limited (United Kingdom); Comparative Research Network e.V. (Germany); EURO-NET (Italy); Integralt Kifejezes-es Tancterapias Egyesulet (Hungary); Association of the Egyptiens au Luxembourg (Luxembourg); Stowarzyszenie "Dia Ziemi" (Poland); Network African Rural and Urban Development e.V. (Germany). At the training course will participate 2 representatives of EURO-NET (Italian partner of the European initiative).