



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

**YEAR 14 - NUMBER 2
OF 20TH APRIL 2019
ENGLISH NEWSLETTER**

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.

**NEWSLETTER REALISED BY
THE ASSOCIATION EURO-NET
AS EUROPE DIRECT BASILICATA CENTRE**



Contents

1. Better Regulation principles: heart of the EU's decision-making process	3
2 EU-funded scientists unveil first ever image of a black hole	4
3. The Energy Union: from vision to reality	5
4. Artificial intelligence: EC takes forward its work on ethics guidelines	7
5. Environmental Implementation Review	8
6. Rule of Law: debate to strengthen the rule of law in the EU	10
7. Road safety: agreement on new EU rules to help save lives	11
8. EC calls to join efforts to ensure free and fair elections in Europe	12
9. Commission delivers on Circular Economy Action Plan	14
10. Statement on the Code of Practice against disinformation	16
11. European Youth Award 2019	17
12. Youth4Regions – the programme for aspiring journalists	18
13. Grants for young designers “Textile heritage inspiring creatives”	18
14. Trainees at the BEREC Office	20
15. North-South Centre of the Council of Europe traineeship opportunities	20
16. The training course and the fourth meeting of the "More Than Words"	21
17. Concluded the first "m-Game" meeting in Potenza	21
18. Concluded the meeting of the SME project in ARAD	21
19. Important decisions during the PEACE LENS meeting in Potenza	22
20. PERFORMACTION: results of the meeting in Leipzig	22
21. New meeting in Poland for EU-ACT	23
22. Concluded the first meeting of the project “Youth Capacity”	23
23. Concluded the first meeting of "Elblag Educators for Seniors (EEFS)	24
24. Concluded the first meeting of "BIM" in Madrid	24
25. “STEREOSCIFI” Project: fourth meeting in Lithuania	24
26. ISDL: third meeting in Suceava in Romania	25
27. The dates of the LARP youth training were decided	25
28. First meeting of the CDPR project in Malta concluded	25
29. After the first meeting IMPROVE in Potenza the website is ready t	25

1. Better Regulation principles: heart of the EU's decision-making process

The European Commission is taking stock of the measures introduced under the Juncker Commission to deliver better results for EU citizens and businesses through more open, transparent and evidence-based policy-making.

This report shows that the efforts to put better regulation at the heart of the decision-making process have been successful. This success should be consolidated and sustained so that we



can continue to make further improvements. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *“There is widespread recognition that we are leading by example, and people call on us to sustain our commitment to better regulation. Better regulation is now embedded in the DNA of European decision making. Now we must nurture and strengthen our efforts, especially in a post-fact world where the very fabric of our*

democratic debate and scientific authority is being challenged.” The Juncker Commission, learning the lessons of the past, committed to acting only where the EU adds value and to do so on the basis of the best available evidence, looking at economic, social and environmental impacts together and avoiding unnecessary costs. Our efforts have been recognised internationally by the OECD, which ranked the EU's regulatory policy as one of the very best in 2018. After presenting the Better Regulation Agenda in 2015, it is now the right moment to take stock of the Commission's efforts to consolidate and sustain this new institutional culture and draw lessons for the future.

Lessons learnt and future improvements

The results of the stocktaking exercise are clear: better regulation has improved the way EU policy is made. There is a widespread demand for better regulation to continue to be an integral part of the Commission's way of working while being further improved:

- **Opening up policymaking:** Since 2015, the Commission organised over 400 public consultations engaging millions of Europeans. For instance, the consultation on summertime arrangements received 4.6 million responses and the consultation on the evaluation of the Birds and Habitat Directive more than half a million. The new “Have Your Say” portal, a one-stop-shop for Europeans to contribute to EU policy-making was visited almost 900,000 times in 2018. In the future, we should look for ways to raise awareness about different opportunities to contribute to EU policy making. This would then help involve the public in policy-making more effectively.
- **Better tools for better policies:** Impact assessments and evaluations provide a sound basis for political decision-making whilst not substituting it. The newly established Regulatory Scrutiny Board guarantees the quality of such supporting analyses. Overall, we carried out impact assessments in the vast majority of cases that needed one. In 75% of cases, this assessment relied on an evaluation of what is already in place – demonstrating the “evaluate first” principle is increasingly applied. At the same time, some situations required adaptations and exceptions to better regulation practices when it was necessary to respond to urgent political needs, such as during the height of the migration crisis. In addition, the quality and timelines of better regulation tools can still be improved.
- **Making EU legislation fit for purpose:** The Commission presented some 150 simplification initiatives reducing unnecessary administrative burdens while supporting policy goals. The Commission also responded to nearly 90 opinions from the newly established REFIT Platform. Simpler and less burdensome legislation improves implementation, compliance and enforcement, eventually leading to better results, especially for small and medium enterprises. But we need to be better at sharing and deepening our practices.
- **Better regulation is a shared effort:** It is a joint responsibility of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, and the Member States to deliver and implement high-quality EU legislation that is fit for purpose and without unnecessary layers of complexity. The Commission can facilitate certain improvements but it cannot ensure them entirely by itself. For instance, public consultations can reach a much wider audience if other institutions at EU, national, regional and local level are involved. Additionally, the impact of amendments by the

Parliament and/or Council to Commission proposals need to be more systematically analysed. Member States could also report more transparently on national measures taken to implement EU law in particular when such measures go beyond what is required by EU law (so-called “gold-plating”).

On 29 April, the Commission will hold a conference to take stock of the better regulation efforts, exchanging views with communities of stakeholders from civil society, business, research, public authorities and social partners and discuss possible ways forward.

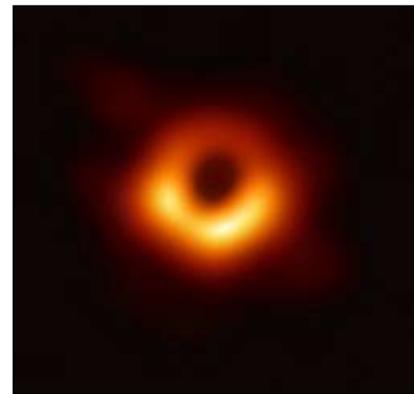
Background

Better Regulation underpins the Commission's work to deliver on President Juncker's 10 political priorities, ensuring that the Commission acts only where the EU brings added value, and does so in the most effective and least burdensome way possible. In 2015, the Commission adopted its Better Regulation Agenda transforming its internal working methods and planning processes. We incorporated better regulation into all stages of the planning and programming cycle and delivered streamlined annual work programmes. Better regulation is about professionalising every aspect of our policy-making and keeping it fit for today's world. The Better Regulation Agenda brought the following changes, among the others: Have Your Say now enables citizens to participate in the legislative process at all stages, including feedback on draft implementing and delegated acts. The Regulatory Scrutiny Board, ensures the objectivity and credibility of the evidence base underpinning the Commission's political decisions; The Commission committed to always evaluate an existing law before revising it (“Evaluate first” principle); There is now a platform to gather feedback from civil society on how to improve existing EU laws and make suggestions the European Commission is committed to answer to – the REFIT Platform.

2 EU-funded scientists unveil first ever image of a black hole

The Commission revealing the first ever image of a black hole taken by Event Horizon Telescope, a global scientific collaboration involving EU-funded scientists. This major discovery provides visual evidence for the existence of black holes and pushes the boundaries of modern science.

The first ever observation of a black hole is the result of the large scale international research collaboration Event Horizon Telescope (EHT), where EU-funded researchers have played a key role. This major scientific achievement marks a paradigm shift in our understanding of black holes, confirms the predictions of Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity and opens up new lines of enquiry into our universe. The first image of a black hole successfully captured was unveiled in six simultaneous press conferences across the globe. Commissioner Carlos **Moedas**, responsible for Research, Science, and Innovation, said: *“Fiction often inspires science, and black holes have long fuelled our dreams and curiosity. Today, thanks to the contribution of European scientists, the existence of black holes is no longer just a theoretical concept. This amazing discovery proves again how working together with partners around the world can lead to achieving the unthinkable and moving the horizons of our knowledge.”*



President of the European Research Council (ERC), Professor Jean-Pierre **Bourguignon**, added: *“I congratulate the scientists across the globe who made this inspiring discovery and pushed the frontiers of our knowledge. I'm especially glad to see that scientists funded by the European Research Council contributed decisively to this breakthrough. The EU's bold approach to funding such paradigm-shifting blue-sky research leads once more to a success story. It also further validates the ERC's objective to fund high-risk/high-gain research.”* EU funding through the European Research Council (ERC) has provided crucial support to the EHT. In particular, the EU has provided funding for three of the leading scientists and their teams involved in the discovery, as well as supported the development and upgrading of the large telescope infrastructure essential to the success of the project. This results add to the many achievements of the EU's research and innovation funding programmes Horizon 2020 and its predecessor Framework Programmes. Building on this success, the Commission has proposed Horizon Europe, the most ambitious EU programme yet to keep the EU at the forefront of global research and innovation.

Background

Black holes are extremely compressed cosmic objects, containing incredible amounts of mass within a tiny region. Their presence affects their surroundings in extreme ways, by warping spacetime and super-heating any material falling into it. The captured image reveals the black hole at the centre of Messier 87, a massive galaxy in the constellation of Virgo. This black hole is located 55 million light-years from Earth and has a mass 6.5-billion times larger than our sun. To allow the direct observation of a black hole's immediate environment, the Event Horizon Telescope has sought to upgrade and connect a worldwide network of eight telescopes across the globe. These are located at challenging high-altitude sites, including in the Spanish Sierra Nevada, volcanoes in Hawaii and Mexico, mountains in Arizona, the Chilean Atacama Desert, and Antarctica. More than 200 researchers from Europe, Americas and East Asia are participating in this major international operation. The EU's European Research Council has provided funding to scientists involved in the EHT collaboration through the following projects under the EU's Horizon 2020 and 7th Framework Programme:

- The €14 million **BlackHoleCam** project which aims at capturing the image, measuring and understanding black holes. Since 2014, this six year research project is being carried out by three lead scientists and their teams; namely Professors Heino Falcke from Radboud University Nijmegen (also Chair of EHT Science Council), Michael Kramer from the Max Planck Institute for Radioastronomy, and Luciano Rezzolla from Goethe University Frankfurt.
- The **RadioNet** project supports a consortium of 27 institutions in Europe, the Republic of Korea and South Africa that aim to integrate world-class infrastructures for research in radio astronomy. This includes radio telescopes, telescope arrays, data archives and the globally operating European Network for Very Long Baseline Interferometry (EVN). The project is coordinated by the Max Planck Institute for Radioastronomy. In the past 15 years, the EU invested €30.3 million in RadioNet.

The European Research Council, set up by the EU in 2007, is the premiere European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. Every year, it selects and funds the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based in Europe. The ERC offers four core grant schemes: Starting, Consolidator, Advanced and Synergy Grants. With its additional Proof of Concept grant scheme, the ERC helps grantees to bridge the gap between grantees' pioneering research and early phases of its commercialisation.

3. The Energy Union: from vision to reality

The fourth report on the State of the Energy Union shows that the Commission has fully delivered on its vision of an Energy Union strategy guaranteeing accessible, affordable, secure, competitive and sustainable energy for all Europeans.

Europe is already a global leader in fighting climate change. European policies implemented over the last five years in all policy areas have put the EU on the right track to fully embrace the



clean energy transition, seizing the economic opportunities that it offers, creating growth and jobs and a healthier environment for consumers. Beyond modernising European energy and climate policy, the Energy Union boosts the clean energy transition of the European economy in key sectors, in line with our commitments under the Paris Agreement, while ensuring a socially fair transition. Building a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate and energy policy has been one of the political priorities of the Juncker Commission. Today we take stock of the successful implementation of what was but a vision in 2014 of a unified, interconnected, secure and sustainable Energy Union. The report is accompanied by two documents showing progress made in renewable energy and energy efficiency. In parallel the Commission is also putting forward a report on the implementation of the strategic action plan on batteries and a communication for more efficient and democratic decision making in EU energy

and climate policy. Vice-President **Maroš Šefčovič**, in charge of the Energy Union, said: *"The Energy Union is Europe at its best: tackling together the big energy security and energy transition we can't solve within national borders. From the daunting challenge of the energy transition we made an economic opportunity for all Europeans. To do this, we had to truly transform our energy and climate policies: not just tweaks at the margins but systemic change. No Member State could have delivered on its own. Our report shows how all the Energy Union measures combine to make our policy fit for the future. Our framework redirects investments into future oriented technologies and solutions. We have also kick-started measures for industry such as battery manufacturing in Europe, while making sure we're not leaving any European behind in the transition. It is now for each Member State to follow suit and rapidly integrate national measures on energy, climate, mobility and all other related areas, so Europe leads the way towards climate neutrality by mid-century."* Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy **Miguel Arias Cañete** said: *"Europe has now in place the world's most ambitious and advanced climate and energy framework. We agreed all the legislation to meet our 2030 targets, with higher targets for renewables and energy efficiency. But the Energy Union is more than rules and policies: we mobilised record levels of clean energy investments in Europe, we brokered the Paris Agreement and triggered its quick entry into force, we further integrated the European energy market, and we set a long-term vision for climate neutral Europe by 2050. But we still have a long way to go. We need to keep up the deployment of renewable energy across Europe and step up efforts to save more energy. We must*



embark in a process of transformation with a much greater sense of urgency than I see today. With our climate-neutral strategy by 2050, we have sketched out how this can be done, and presented a solid analysis of why and how Europe can achieve climate neutrality; why this model can be replicated by other countries in the world; how climate neutrality, economic prosperity and social fairness can and must go together." The Energy Union has strengthened the internal energy market and increased the EU's energy security by investing into new smart infrastructure (including, cross-border), providing a new state-of-the-art market design and introducing a cooperation mechanism between the Member States based on solidarity to respond to potential crises in a more effective and efficient manner. As the Commission has recently set out in its Communication "A Clean Planet for All", the energy transition requires a comprehensive economic and societal transformation, engaging all sectors of the economy and society to achieve the transition to climate neutrality by 2050. The Energy Union framework puts Europe on the right path to become a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy. The Juncker Commission has put in place a brand new legislative framework for the Energy Union. The updated legislative framework has enabled the EU to maintain its leadership in climate action by increasing its level of ambition for 2030 in a number of energy related sectors, from increased targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency, to targets on emissions from cars, vans and lorries. In addition to the new legislative framework, the Commission has put in place an enabling framework of supporting measures to ensure a smooth transition for European industries, regions and cities. A number of targeted initiatives have been created to guarantee all regions and citizens benefit equally from the energy transition. One of these initiatives is the European battery alliance. The European battery industry has been identified as a strategic value chain for the EU in the context of a strengthened industrial policy strategy. The Energy Union report is accompanied by a separate report on the implementation of the strategic action plan on batteries. A second Communication published calls for a strengthening of the democratic accountability of the decision-making process under the Euratom treaty. The European Commission will establish a High Level Group of Experts to assess the state of play of the Euratom Treaty with a view to considering how, on the basis of the current Treaty, its democratic accountability could be improved. In the same communication, the Commission asks the European Parliament and the Council to reflect on how energy taxation could better contribute to the EU's energy and climate policy objectives, and how a move to qualified majority voting (QMV) decision-making amongst Member States could help to unlock progress in this area. This strand of work builds on the Commission's blueprint for a gradual transition to QMV decision-making in all areas of taxation, first published in January.

4. Artificial intelligence: EC takes forward its work on ethics guidelines

The Commission presents next steps for building trust in artificial intelligence by taking forward the work of the High-Level Expert Group.

Building on the work of the group of independent experts appointed in June 2018, the Commission is launching a pilot phase to ensure that the ethical guidelines for Artificial Intelligence (AI) development and use can be implemented in practice. The Commission invites industry, research institutes and public authorities to test the detailed assessment list drafted by the High-Level Expert Group, which complements the guidelines. This plans are a deliverable under the AI strategy of April 2018, which aims at increasing public and private investments to at least €20 billion annually over the next decade, making more data available, fostering talent and ensuring trust. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** said: *“I welcome the work undertaken by our independent experts. The ethical dimension of AI is not a luxury feature or an add-on. It is only with trust that our society can fully benefit from technologies. Ethical AI is a win-win proposition that can become a competitive advantage for Europe:*



being a leader of human-centric AI that people can trust.” Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** added: *“We are taking an important step towards ethical and secure AI in the EU. We now have a solid foundation based on EU values and following an extensive and constructive engagement from many stakeholders including businesses, academia and civil society. We will now put these requirements to practice and at the same time foster an international discussion on human-centric AI.”* Artificial Intelligence (AI) can benefit a wide-range of sectors, such as healthcare, energy consumption, cars safety, farming, climate change and financial risk management. AI can also help to detect fraud and cybersecurity threats, and enables law enforcement authorities to fight crime more efficiently. However, AI also brings new challenges for the future of work, and raises legal and ethical questions. The Commission is taking a three-step approach: setting-out the key requirements for trustworthy AI, launching a large scale pilot phase for feedback from stakeholders, and working on international consensus building for human-centric AI.

Seven essentials for achieving trustworthy AI

Trustworthy AI should respect all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a series of requirements; specific assessment lists aim to help verify the application of each of the key requirements:

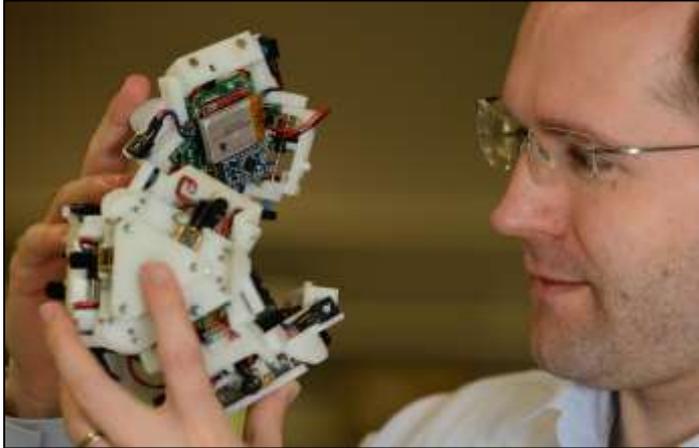
- **Human agency and oversight:** AI systems should enable equitable societies by supporting human agency and fundamental rights, and not decrease, limit or misguide human autonomy.
- **Robustness and safety:** Trustworthy AI requires algorithms to be secure, reliable and robust enough to deal with errors or inconsistencies during all life cycle phases of AI systems.
- **Privacy and data governance:** Citizens should have full control over their own data, while data concerning them will not be used to harm or discriminate against them.
- **Transparency:** The traceability of AI systems should be ensured.
- **Diversity, non-discrimination and fairness:** AI systems should consider the whole range of human abilities, skills and requirements, and ensure accessibility.
- **Societal and environmental well-being:** AI systems should be used to enhance positive social change and enhance sustainability and ecological responsibility.
- **Accountability:** Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure responsibility and accountability for AI systems and their outcomes.

Large-scale pilot with partners

In summer 2019, the Commission will launch a pilot phase involving a wide range of stakeholders. Already today, companies, public administrations and organisations can sign up to the European AI Alliance and receive a notification when the pilot starts. In addition, members of the AI high-level expert group will help present and explain the guidelines to relevant stakeholders in Member States.

Building international consensus for human-centric AI

The Commission wants to bring this approach to AI ethics to the global stage because technologies, data and algorithms know no borders. To this end, the Commission will strengthen cooperation with like-minded partners such as Japan, Canada or Singapore and continue to play



an active role in international discussions and initiatives including the G7 and G20. The pilot phase will also involve companies from other countries and international organisations.

Next steps

Members of the AI expert group will present their work in detail during the third Digital Day in Brussels on 9 April. Following the pilot phase, in early 2020, the AI expert group will review the assessment lists for the key requirements, building on the feedback received. Building on this

review, the Commission will evaluate the outcome and propose any next steps. Furthermore, to ensure the ethical development of AI, the Commission will by the autumn 2019: launch a set of networks of AI research excellence centres; begin setting up networks of digital innovation hubs; and together with Member States and stakeholders, start discussions to develop and implement a model for data sharing and making best use of common data spaces.

Background

The Commission is facilitating and enhancing cooperation on AI across the EU to boost its competitiveness and ensure trust based on EU values. Following its European strategy on AI, published in April 2018, the Commission set up the High-Level Expert Group on AI, which consists of 52 independent experts representing academia, industry, and civil society. They published a first draft of the ethics guidelines in December 2018, followed by a stakeholder consultation and meetings with representatives from Member States to gather feedback. This follows the coordinated plan with Member States to foster the development and use of AI in Europe, also presented in December 2018.

5. Environmental Implementation Review

An initiative to improve the application of EU policies and rules on the circular economy, nature and biodiversity, air quality, and water quality and management.

The Commission published the second Environmental Implementation Review (EIR), part of its initiative launched in 2016 to improve the implementation of European environmental policy

and commonly agreed rules in all EU Member States. Implementing EU environmental policy and law is not only essential for a healthy environment, but also opens up new opportunities for sustainable economic growth, innovation and jobs. Full implementation of EU environmental legislation could save the EU economy around €55 billion every year in health costs and direct costs to the environment. Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and



Maritime Affairs, said: *"The Juncker Commission is committed to building a Europe that protects. Making sure that the air, water and waste management our citizens enjoy are of best quality and our natural capital is protected is our priority. The Environmental Implementation Review is there to help Member States to make that happen by providing them with the information and the tools they need."* The Review maps out the situation of environmental policies and rules

implementation in each EU country and identifies the causes of implementation gaps. It helps to find solutions before problems become urgent and aims to assist national decision-makers by outlining the priorities requiring their attention. All Member States have made use of the EIR P2P PeertoPeer programme established in 2017 which facilitates learning between environmental authorities. The package includes: **28 country reports** showing the state of play in the implementation of EU environmental law, as well as opportunities for improvement in each Member State; and a **Communication** drawing conclusions and defining common trends at EU level, as well as recommendations for improvements to all Member States with key priority actions.

State of play in main policy areas

The Review shows that eighteen Member States continue to struggle with high levels of nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions and fifteen countries need to further reduce emissions of particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀). Given the impact of air pollution on health, in line with its communication of May 2018 “A Europe that protects: clean air for all”, the Commission has engaged in clean air dialogues with several EU countries, in addition to more targeted enforcement actions. While overall the policy framework for the circular economy has been strengthened **waste prevention** remains an important challenge for all Member States. On **waste management**, nine countries are on track and five have already reached the recycling targets, but fourteen are at risk of missing the 2020 municipal waste recycling target. Sound and efficient waste management systems are an essential building block of our circular economy. Where **water** is concerned, much remains to be done to fully achieve the objectives of the water directives, and in particular good status for our water bodies until 2027. Urban wastewater is still not treated properly in two thirds of Member States. Increased investments are essential to meet these objectives and EU funds will continue to back up implementation efforts. When it comes to the protection of **nature and biodiversity**, the Natura 2000 network has continued to expand on land and at sea. The EU has already surpassed the target of defining 10% of its coastal and marine areas as Marine Protected Areas by 2020 as set by the Convention on Biological Diversity. Nevertheless, most Member States need to speed up their efforts for the completion



and management of the Natura 2000 network. Regarding **climate change**, Member States have made good progress in implementing EU climate legislation and the 2020 targets are likely to be met. Nevertheless, efforts in each Member State and at EU level need to be intensified to comply with our international commitments under the Paris Agreement and prevent the worst consequences of climate change. The Environmental Implementation Review put in place a new tool – the **Peer-to-Peer** programme - to stimulate environmental authorities from different Member States to learn from each other's experiences across borders. Since its launch, all Member States were involved in at least one event covering circular economy, air quality, timber regulation, nature and biodiversity, and water quality topics. The Review also assesses some enabling factors that could drastically improve

implementation, such as environmental governance. The Commission calls upon Member States to improve the integration of environmental objectives with other policy goals, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration, and to be more transparent with environmentally relevant information. There is also scope to further engage regional and local authorities and other stakeholders in tackling the main implementation challenges.

Background

The first Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) package was adopted in February 2017. The Environmental Implementation Review works along the Commission's Better Regulation policy, focusing on improving implementation of existing legislation and policies. Since its adoption, many Member States have organised national Environmental Implementation Review dialogues on the priority themes identified in their reports. In many cases, regional and local authorities and key stakeholders have been involved. When commonly agreed rules are not properly implemented, the Commission can take legal action. In order to avoid this route, the Commission works with Member States to enable them to better apply environmental policies and rules, through the process of the Environmental Implementation Review.

6. Rule of Law: debate to strengthen the rule of law in the EU

The European Commission is launching a reflection process on the rule of law in the European Union and setting out possible avenues for future action.

The Communication presented takes stock of the available tools to monitor, assess, and protect the rule of law in the Union. It also looks back at the experience of the past years so that we can start a wider European debate on how the rule of law could be further strengthened. The past experience, in particular, points to the need for better promotion of the rule of law, early prevention of risks or breaches to the rule of law, and effective response when such issues occur in the Union. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *“The Union’s capacity to uphold the rule of law is essential, now more than ever. First because it is an issue of fundamental values, a matter of “who we are”. Second, because the functioning of the EU as a whole depends on the rule of law in all member states. Now is the time to reflect together with all institutions, Member States, different authorities and stakeholders on how to defend and bolster the rule of law in the Union.”* In the last years, the rule of law in Europe has come under



increased pressure. Common and concrete concerns were raised in debates within the Union, at international level and by civil society. It has become clear that more needs to be done to ensure that the rule of law is defended, strengthened and upheld throughout the Union. Building on the ongoing debates and past experience Communication aims to start this process by setting out possible avenues for reflection on future action.

Possible avenues for the future

It is a common responsibility of EU institutions and all Member States to defend, strengthen, and uphold the rule of law in the Union. The Commission has already used a wide range of tools to carefully monitor, assess and respond to rule of law concerns in Member States, including the Rule of law Framework, Article 7(1) TEU procedure, infringement procedures, as well as the European Semester, the EU Justice Scoreboard or the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM). Building on the experience gathered so far through all the instruments, the Commission outlines three pillars which could contribute to further the effective enforcement of the rule of law in the Union:

- **Better Promotion:** rule of law standards and jurisprudence are not always sufficiently known at national level. To address this, increased efforts should be geared towards better promoting knowledge of the rule of law standards and case law at national level. This could be achieved, for instance, through communication activities for the public, common EU approaches that help promote a stronger rule of law culture across institutions and professions, continued engagement with the Council of Europe, and participation of civil society at the regional and local levels.
- **Early prevention:** While the prime responsibility to ensure respect for the rule of law at national level lies with the Member States, the EU can offer important support to build resilience of key systems and institutions. Regular cooperation and dialogue could contribute to a deeper understanding of the rule of law situation and developments in Member States and could contribute to the early resolution of any rule of law issues.
- **Tailored response:** A diversity of rule of law challenges requires a diversity of effective responses. The Commission will continue to ensure the correct application of the EU law via infringement procedures. Different approaches may also be appropriate in specific policy areas such as the Commission's proposal on the protection of EU's financial interest. In addition, some refinement to the existing Rule of Law Framework could be explored, including early information to and support from the European Parliament and the Council, as well as clear timelines for the duration of dialogues.

Next Steps

The Commission now invites the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council, and the Member States as well as relevant stakeholders, including judicial networks and civil society, to reflect on the issues presented in Communication and contribute with concrete ideas

on how the rule of law toolbox could be enhanced in the future. Building on this reflection process and the ongoing debate, the Commission will return to this issue with its own conclusions and proposals in June 2019.

Background

The rule of law is one of the common values upon which the European Union is founded and embraced by all Member States. It is enshrined as such in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. It is also essential for the functioning of the EU as a whole, for example with regard to the Internal Market, cooperation in the area of Justice and Home Affairs, and ensuring that national judges who are also 'EU judges' can fulfil their role in ensuring the application of EU law and can properly interact with the Court of Justice of the EU in the context of preliminary ruling procedures. The European Commission, together with other institutions and the Member States, is responsible under the Treaties, for guaranteeing the rule of law as a fundamental value of our Union and making sure that EU law, values and principles are respected. The Commission has a wide range of tools to carefully monitor, assess, and respond to the rule of law issues in Member States, among others infringement procedures, the European Semester, the EU Justice Scoreboard or the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM). On 11 March 2014, the European Commission adopted a new Framework for addressing systemic threats to the Rule of Law in any of the EU's Member States. The Framework establishes a tool allowing the Commission to enter into a staged dialogue with the Member State concerned to prevent the escalation of systemic threats to the rule of law. The most emblematic, yet exceptional, tool for defending the Rule of Law is the procedure of Article 7 TEU, which allows the EU to act in case of a serious breach of rule of law in a Member State. The Article 7 TEU procedure was triggered in two cases so far: in December 2017 in case of Poland (by the Commission) and in September 2018 in the case of Hungary (by the European Parliament). The Commission has also launched an infringement procedure by sending a Letter of Formal Notice to Poland regarding the new disciplinary regime for judges.

7. Road safety: agreement on new EU rules to help save lives

The EU institutions have reached a provisional political agreement on the revised General Safety Regulation. As of 2022 new safety technologies will become mandatory in European vehicles to protect passengers, pedestrians and cyclists.

New technologies on the market can help reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on our



roads, 90% of which are due to human error. In May 2018, the Commission proposed to make certain vehicle safety measures mandatory, including systems that reduce the dangerous blind spots on trucks and buses and technology that warns the driver in case of drowsiness or distraction. Advanced safety features will reduce the number of accidents, pave the way towards increasingly connected and automated mobility, and boost the

global innovation and competitiveness edge of the European car industry. Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: *"Every year, 25,000 people lose their lives on our roads. The vast majority of these accidents are caused by human error. We can and must act to change this. With the new advanced safety features that will become mandatory, we can have the same kind of impact as when the safety belts were first introduced. Many of the new features already exist, in particular in high-end vehicles. Now we raise the safety level across the board, and pave the way for connected and automated mobility of the future."* The new mandatory safety features include:

1. **For cars, vans, trucks and buses:** warning of driver drowsiness and distraction (e.g. smartphone use while driving), intelligent speed assistance, reversing safety with camera or sensors, and data recorder in case of an accident ('black box').
2. **For cars and vans:** lane-keeping assistance, advanced emergency braking, and crash-test improved safety belts.

3. **For trucks and buses:** specific requirements to improve the direct vision of bus and truck drivers and to remove blind spots, and systems at the front and side of the vehicle to detect and warn of vulnerable road users, especially when making turns.

The Commission expects that the proposed measures will help save over 25,000 lives and avoid at least 140,000 serious injuries by 2038. This will contribute to the EU's long-term goal of moving close to zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2050 ("Vision Zero"). In addition to protecting people on European roads, the new advanced safety features will help drivers get gradually used to the new driving assistance. Increasing degrees of automation offer significant potential to compensate for human errors and offer new mobility solutions for the elderly and physically impaired. All this should enhance public trust and acceptance of automated cars, supporting the transition towards autonomous driving.

Next steps

The political agreement reached by the European Parliament, Council and Commission in so-called trilogue negotiations is now subject to formal approval by the European Parliament and Council. The new safety features will become mandatory from 2022, with the exception of direct vision for trucks and buses and enlarged head impact zone on cars and vans, which will follow later due to the necessary structural design changes.

Background

In recent years, the EU has introduced a range of mandatory measures, which contributed to an estimated reduction of 50,000 fatal traffic casualties per year. These measures include electronic stability control systems on all vehicles, as well as advanced emergency braking systems and lane departure warning systems on trucks and buses. In 2017, the Commission launched a public consultation to gather stakeholder views on potential improvements to current vehicle safety measures. In May 2018, the Commission then proposed a review of the General Safety Regulation and the Pedestrian Safety Regulation, under the Third "Europe on the Move" set of actions. The revised General Safety Regulation goes hand in hand with an efficient safety management of road infrastructure, where the Commission's proposal was agreed in February 2019. The Commission also presented a Communication on Connected and Automated Mobility to make Europe a world leader for autonomous and safe mobility systems. As a first deliverable for connected mobility the Commission had adopted new rules that step up the deployment of Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS) on Europe's roads. C-ITS allow vehicles to 'talk' to each other, to the road infrastructure, and to other road users – for instance about dangerous situations, road works and the timing of traffic lights, making road transport safer, cleaner and more efficient.

8. EC calls to join efforts to ensure free and fair elections in Europe

In September 2018, as part of the State of the Union, President Juncker proposed measures to bolster European democracy and protect free and fair elections in Europe. Ahead of the European elections, Commissioner Vera **Jourová** has written to national political parties calling

on them to ensure transparency of political advertising, to be ready to face cyberattacks and to respect European data protection rules during the campaign. Frans **Timmermans**, First Vice-President said: *"We know there are forces which are trying to disrupt our societies, meddle in our elections and subvert our democracies. They will most likely step up their malicious activities in the run-up and during the European elections. We cannot be naïve. It's time we too step up our democratic defences as soon as possible so that people will be better informed, and their data better protected."*



Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said, *"Our elections and ultimately our democracies are challenged by new threats. I call on all political parties to play their part in securing free and fair elections. Voters deserve transparency to make an informed choice. Online political advertising should be as*

transparent as the advertising you receive in your mailbox or on the market. Political parties also need to secure their networks to prevent cyberattacks and fully respect data protection rules. I expect all political actors to take their responsibility; at the same time the new sanctions introduced will also ensure the rules are respected." The package of measures adopted in September aims to bolster European democracy and protect free and fair elections in Europe. It includes a series of actions addressed to national and European political parties and foundations. The Commission calls on national parties to ensure **transparency of the sources and amount of campaign funding for online activities** during the upcoming European Parliament election campaigns. To increase this transparency the Commission urges national political parties, foundations and campaign organisations to:

- ensure **citizens can easily recognise online paid political advertisements and communications**, and the party, foundation or organisation behind them;
- **make information available about their spending for online activities on their websites**. This includes paid online political advertisements and communications, as well as information on any targeting criteria used in the dissemination of such advertisements and communications;
- make their **paid online political advertisements** and communications accessible through their websites.

The Commission also reminds political parties and campaign organisations to implement appropriate measures to be able to tackle **cyberattacks** and recalls their obligations concerning the protection of personal data. Political parties that do not respect **data protection rules** to deliberately influence or attempt to influence the outcome of European elections will be subject to **new sanctions**, introduced by the amended Regulation on the European political parties and foundations at the European level, which is expected to enter into force in April. Sanctions could amount to 5% of the annual budget of the European political party or foundation concerned. In addition, those found to be in breach would not be able to apply for funding from the general budget of the European Union in the year in which the sanction is imposed. These sanctions target infringements of rules on the protection of personal data being used by the European political parties or foundations to deliberately influence or attempt to influence the outcome of European elections. The European Commission calls on Member States to introduce similar sanctions at national level.

Next steps

Following the European Parliament elections in May, the Commission will prepare a report, including on the implementation of the Elections' Recommendation, based amongst others on input from the political parties.

Background

In September 2018, President **Juncker** presented the Elections package to better protect our democratic processes from manipulation by third countries or private interests. This came as a response to challenges posed by online campaigning and to threats observed in recent elections



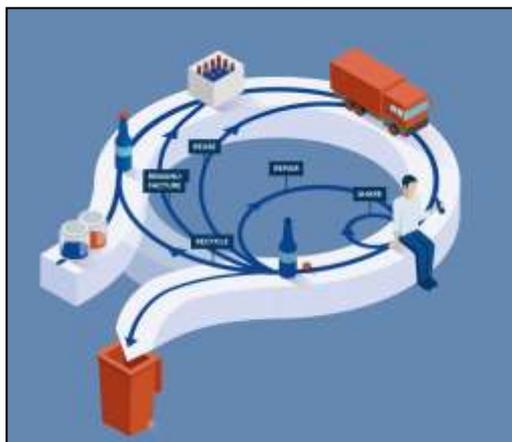
and referenda directed at discrediting and delegitimising elections in Europe. It includes a set of measures which aim to increase transparency in online campaign activities, assist stakeholders in the application of data protection rules in the electoral context, improve coordination between responsible national authorities and among Member States at the European level, and introduce the possibility to impose sanctions for the illegal use of personal data in order to deliberately influence the outcome of the European elections. The European Parliament welcomed the package in its Resolution on the

Facebook-Cambridge Analytica case adopted on 25 October 2018. The Council of national Ministers set out detailed expressions of support and commitments to action on the part of the Member States in its Conclusions on securing free and fair European elections of 19 February 2019. Responding to the Recommendation, Member States have established **national networks** to formalise cooperation among national authorities to jointly identify threats and gaps, share good practices, and exchange on how to apply electoral rules online. These national networks have met twice at a European level as the **election cooperation network**, assisted by the Commission, to share expertise and best practices among the Member States including on threats, gaps and enforcement, most recently on 27 February.

9. Commission delivers on Circular Economy Action Plan

All 54 actions under the plan launched in 2015 have now been delivered or are being implemented. This will contribute to boost Europe's competitiveness, modernise its economy and industry to create jobs, protect the environment and generate sustainable growth.

The European Commission published a comprehensive report on the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan it adopted in December 2015. The report presents the main results of implementing the action plan and sketches out open challenges to paving the way towards a climate-neutral, competitive circular economy where pressure on natural and freshwater resources as well as ecosystems is minimised. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, responsible for sustainable development, said: *"Circular economy is key to putting our economy onto a sustainable path and delivering on the global Sustainable Development Goals. This report shows that Europe is leading the way as a trail blazer for the rest of the world. At the same time more remains to be done to ensure that we increase our prosperity within the limits of our planet and close the loop so that there is no waste of our precious resources."*



Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness, said: *"This report is very encouraging. It shows that Europe is on the right track in creating investment, jobs and new businesses. The future potential for sustainable growth is huge and Europe is indeed the best place for an environmentally-friendly industry to grow. This success is the result of European stakeholders and decision-makers acting together."*

Moving from a linear to a circular economy

Three years after adoption, the Circular Economy Action Plan can be considered fully completed. Its 54 actions have now been delivered or are being implemented. According to the findings of the report, implementing the Circular Economy Action Plan has accelerated the transition towards a circular economy in Europe, which in turn has helped putting the EU back on a path of job creation. In 2016, sectors relevant to the circular economy employed more than four million workers, a 6% increase compared to 2012. Circularity has also opened up new business opportunities, given rise to new business models and developed new markets, domestically and outside the EU. In 2016, circular activities such as repair, reuse or recycling generated almost €147 billion in value added while accounting for around €17.5 billion worth of investments.

EU Strategy for Plastics

The EU Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy is the first EU-wide policy framework adopting a material-specific lifecycle approach to integrate circular design, use, reuse and recycling activities into plastics value chains. The strategy sets out a clear vision with quantified objectives at EU level, so that *inter alia* by 2030 all plastic packaging placed on the EU market is reusable or recyclable. To boost the market for recycled plastics, the Commission launched a voluntary pledging campaign on recycled plastics. 70 companies have already made pledges, which will increase the market for recycled plastics by at least 60% by 2025. However, there is still a gap between supply and demand for recycled plastics. To close this gap, the Commission launched the Circular Plastics Alliance of key industry stakeholders supplying and using recycled plastics. The rules on Single-Use Plastics items and fishing gear, addressing the ten most found items on EU beaches place the EU at the forefront of the global fight against marine litter. The measures include a ban of certain single-use products made of plastic (such as straws and cutlery) when alternatives are available and of oxo-degradable plastic, and propose actions for others such as consumption reduction targets, product design requirements and Extended Producers Responsibility schemes.

Innovation and Investments

To accelerate the transition to a circular economy, it is essential to invest in innovation and to provide support for adapting Europe's industrial base. Over the period 2016-2020, the Commission has stepped up efforts in both directions totalling more than €10 billion in public funding to the transition. To stimulate further investments, the Circular Economy Finance Support Platform has produced recommendations to improve the bankability of circular economy projects,

coordinate funding activities and share good practices. The platform will work with the European Investment Bank on providing financial assistance and exploiting synergies with the action plan on financing sustainable growth.

Turning Waste into Resources

Sound and efficient waste management systems are an essential building block of a circular economy. To modernise waste management systems in the Union a revised waste legislative framework entered into force in July 2018. This includes, among others, new ambitious recycling rates, clarified legal status of recycled materials, strengthened waste prevention and waste management measures, including for marine litter, food waste, and products containing critical raw materials.

Circular Design and Production Processes

Smart design at the beginning of a product's lifecycle is essential for ensuring circularity. With the implementation of the Ecodesign Working Plan 2016-2019, the Commission has further promoted



the circular design of products, together with energy efficiency objectives. Ecodesign and Energy Labelling measures for several products now include rules on material efficiency requirements such as availability of spare parts, ease of repair, and facilitating end-of-life treatment. The Commission has also analysed, in a dedicated Staff Working Document, its policies for products, with the intention to support circular, sustainable products.

Empowering Consumers

The transition towards a more circular economy requires an active engagement of citizens in changing consumption patterns. The Product Environmental Footprint (PEF)

and Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF) methods developed by the Commission can enable companies to make environmental claims that are trustworthy and comparable and consumers to make informed choices.

Strong Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is vital for the transition. The systemic approach of the action plan has given public authorities, economic and social players and civil society a framework to replicate in order to foster partnerships across sectors and along value chains. The role of the Commission in speeding up the transition and leading international efforts for circularity was also recognised at the World Economic Forum 2019 where the Commission received the Circularity Award in the Public Sector Category.

Open Challenges

The circular economy is now an irreversible, global trend. Yet, much is still needed to scale up action at EU level and globally, fully close the loop and secure the competitive advantage it brings to EU businesses. Increased efforts will be needed to implement the revised waste legislation and develop markets for secondary raw materials. Also, the work started at EU level on some issues (like chemicals, the non-toxic environment, eco-labelling and eco-innovation, critical raw materials and fertilisers) needs to be accelerated if Europe wants to reap the full benefit of a transition to a circular economy. Interaction with stakeholders suggests that some areas not yet covered by the action plan could be investigated to complete the circular agenda. Building on the example of the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy, many other sectors with high environmental impact and potential for circularity such as IT, electronics, mobility, the built environment, mining, furniture, food and drinks or textiles could benefit from a similar holistic approach to become more circular.

Background

In 2015, the Commission adopted an ambitious new Circular Economy Action Plan to stimulate Europe's transition towards a circular economy, which would boost global competitiveness, foster sustainable economic growth and generate new jobs. It was foreseen that the proposed actions would contribute to "closing the loop" of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use, and bring benefits for both the environment and the economy. The plans would help extract the maximum value and use from all raw materials, products and waste, fostering energy savings and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and would be supported financially by ESIF funding, Horizon 2020, the EU structural funds and investments in the circular economy at national level.

10. Statement on the Code of Practice against disinformation

The European Commission published reports by Facebook, Google and Twitter covering the progress made in January 2019 on their commitments to fight disinformation. These three online platforms are signatories of the Code of Practice against disinformation and have been asked to report monthly on their actions ahead of the European Parliament elections in May 2019.

More specifically, the Commission asked to receive detailed information to monitor progress on the scrutiny of ad placement, transparency of political advertising, closure of fake accounts and marking systems for automated bots. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King**, and Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** said in a joint statement: *"The online platforms, which signed the Code of Practice, are rolling out their policies in Europe to support the integrity of elections. This includes better scrutiny of advertisement placements, transparency tools for political advertising, and measures to identify and block inauthentic behaviour on their services. However, we need to see more progress on the commitments made by online platforms to fight disinformation. Platforms have not provided enough details showing that new policies and tools are being deployed in a timely manner and with sufficient resources across all EU Member States. The reports provide too little information on the actual results of the measures already taken. Finally, the platforms have failed to identify specific benchmarks that would enable the tracking and measurement of progress in the EU. The quality of the information provided varies from one signatory of the Code to another depending on the commitment areas covered by each report. This clearly shows that there is room for improvement for all signatories. The electoral campaigns ahead of the European elections will start in earnest in March. We encourage the platforms to accelerate their efforts, as we are concerned by the situation. We urge Facebook, Google and Twitter to do more across all Member States to help ensure the integrity of the European Parliament elections in May 2019. We also encourage platforms to strengthen their cooperation with fact-checkers and academic researchers to detect disinformation campaigns and make fact-checked content more visible and widespread."* **Main outcomes of the signatories' reports:**



- **Facebook** has not reported on results of the activities undertaken in January with respect to scrutiny of ad placements. It had earlier announced that a pan-EU archive for political and issue advertising will be available in March 2019. The report provides an update on cases of interference from third countries in EU Member States, but does not report on the number of fake accounts removed due to malicious activities targeting specifically the European Union.
- **Google** provided data on actions taken during January to improve scrutiny of ad placements in the EU, divided per Member State. However, the metrics supplied are not specific enough and do not clarify the extent to which the actions were taken to address disinformation or for other reasons (e.g. misleading advertising). Google published a new policy for 'election ads' on 29 January, and will start publishing a Political Ads Transparency Report as soon as advertisers begin to run such ads. Google has not provided evidence of concrete implementation of its policies on integrity of services for the month of January.
- **Twitter** did not provide any metrics on its commitments to improve the scrutiny of ad placements. On political ads transparency, contrary to what was announced in the implementation report in January, Twitter postponed the decision until the February report. On integrity of services, Twitter added five new account sets, comprising numerous accounts in third countries, to its Archive of Potential Foreign Operations, which are publicly available and searchable, but did not report on metrics to measure progress.

Next steps

This reports cover measures taken by online companies in January 2019. The next monthly report, covering the activities done in February, will be published in March 2019. This will allow the Commission to verify that effective policies to ensure integrity of the electoral processes are in place before the European elections in May 2019. By the end of 2019, the Commission will carry

out a comprehensive assessment of the Code's initial 12-month period. Should the results prove unsatisfactory, the Commission may propose further actions, including of a regulatory nature.

Background

The monitoring of the Code of Practice is part of the Action Plan against disinformation that the European Union adopted last December to build up capabilities and strengthen cooperation between Member States and EU institutions to proactively address the threats posed by disinformation. The reporting signatories committed to the Code of Practice in October 2018 on a voluntary basis. In January 2019 the European Commission published the first reports submitted by signatories of the Code of Practice against disinformation. The Code aims at achieving the objectives set out by the Commission's Communication presented in April 2018 by setting a wide range of commitments articulated around five areas:

- Disrupt advertising revenue for accounts and websites misrepresenting information and provide advertisers with adequate safety tools and information about websites purveying disinformation.
- Enable public disclosure of political advertising and make effort towards disclosing issue-based advertising.
- Have a clear and publicly available policy on identity and online bots and take measures to close fake accounts.
- Offer information and tools to help people make informed decisions, and facilitate access to diverse perspectives about topics of public interest, while giving prominence to reliable sources.
- Provide privacy-compliant access to data to researchers to track and better understand the spread and impact of disinformation.

Between January and May 2019, the Commission is carrying out a targeted Monthly Intermediate Monitoring of the platform signatories' actions to implement Code commitments that are the most relevant and urgent to ensure the integrity of elections. Namely: scrutiny of ad placements (Commitment 1); political and issue-based advertising (Commitments 2 to 4); and integrity of services (Commitments 5 & 6). The Code of Practice also goes hand-in-hand with the Recommendation included in the election package announced by President Juncker in its 2018 State of the Union Address to ensure free, fair and secure European Parliament's elections. The measures include greater transparency in online political advertisements and the possibility to impose sanctions for the illegal use of personal data to deliberately influence the outcome of the European elections. As a result, Member States have set up a national election cooperation network of relevant authorities – such as electoral, cybersecurity, data protection and law enforcement authorities – and appointed a contact point to participate in a European-level election cooperation network.

11. European Youth Award 2019

The **European Youth Award (contest)** is EYA's flagship initiative. It is a European-wide contest to motivate young people, social entrepreneurs, and start-ups to produce digital projects having an impact on society. It demonstrates their potential to create innovative solutions with Internet and Mobile technology addressing the goals defined by the [Council of Europe](#) and [Europe 2020](#) as well as the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). The annual winners event ([EYA Festival](#)) is a unique event combining knowledge – innovation – networking – inspiration – motivation taking place in Graz at the end of November. It is a public event and everybody is welcome to join. Thus, don't miss the chance and [be part](#) of it! Save the date for the next edition: November 27-30. EYA's global

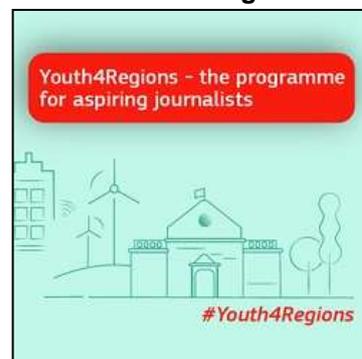


sister project is the [WSA](#). Both initiatives are organized by the [International Center for New Media](#), a Non-Profit Organization based in Salzburg, Austria. If you are near our office, pass by for a coffee! **People who fulfil the following criteria are eligible to participate in the competition:** Creative minds under the age of 33; living in one of the member states of the European Union, Council of Europe, or Union for the Mediterranean, Belarus or Kosovo; who have produced an outstanding, innovative digital project to improve society (ex. website, app, wearable device, digital installation); and **submitted it to the EYA database until July 31** in one of the EYA [categories](#). Check out the full contest rules [here](#).

12. Youth4Regions – the programme for aspiring journalists

Are you studying journalism or are you a young journalist? Are you between 18-30 and a citizen of an EU Member State or an EU neighbouring country? Would you like to gain first hand work experience as a journalist in the capital of Europe?

The European Commission is looking for participants for the third edition of **Youth4Regions** - the programme for aspiring journalists. If you are interested in our fully-funded EU training programme, we encourage you to apply by sending us: a **short original article** (400-1000 words), or a **short video** (2 – 3 minutes) on a project that has been co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund or Cohesion Fund. The short article or the short video you would like to send to us needs to be original and not published before. The winners will be **invited to come to Brussels between 6 - 11 October 2019** for a full week of; training on journalism and EU affairs; working together with established journalists; networking with the EU institutions, European media and fellow peers, and more. **The European Commission will cover travel and accommodation!** Upon completion of the programme participants will **become part of the Youth4Regions Alumni**, a pan-European network of future journalists interested in EU affairs. Please click here to access the [terms and conditions](#). If you have any question, please contact the competition secretariat at youth4regions@euregionsweek.eu. **Deadline for submitting applications: 15 July 2019 at 17:00 (CET). [Apply now!](#)**



13. Grants for young designers “Textile heritage inspiring creatives”



As part of the “Textile Heritage Inspiring Creatives – Createx” European project (www.createxproject.eu), Museo del Tessuto in Prato is awarding 3 grants worth 2000 euros each. These grants will be awarded to 3 young designers under 30 interested in designing contemporary products in a European context, drawing inspiration from archival materials. The grants are aimed at enabling creative residencies abroad and creating textile, fashion or interior design mini collections inspired by textile and clothing heritage. These mini collections will be the subject of an international exhibition in several locations with an accompanying catalogue, giving participants an important opportunity for visibility at a European level. The grant

recipients will be announced in May 2019 at a public event held at the Museo del Tessuto. As part of the event, all of the shortlisted candidates participating in the selection will be invited to present their projects.

The Createx Project at a Glance

The Createx European project, funded under the Creative Europe Programme - Culture/European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (Call 35/2017 Proj. Ref. No. 595936-CREA-1-2018-1-IT-CULT-COOP3), is coordinated by the Prato Textile Museum Foundation in Prato (Italy) in partnership with the City Council of Gironella in Catalonia (Spain), Santo Tirso Municipality (Portugal), Nordiska Textilkademin in Boras (Sweden), and of the Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz (Poland). The project, launched in September 2018 and ending in February 2020, pursues the general objectives of safeguarding and promoting the textile and fashion archives of the territories involved, fostering digitization as a tool for conservation and promotion, and experimenting with the creative use of the same archives as sources of inspiration for contemporary design. In addition to organizing 15 creative residencies in the 5 partner territories reserved for 15 designers, the Createx project also envisages the organization of 10 workshops to foster the promotion and creative use of textile and fashion archives, a digitization campaign involving over 500 objects, an international exhibition in several locations to exhibit the mini collections created by the 15 European designers involved in the residencies, a final conference and a catalogue.

Creative Residencies

For the 3 designers selected by the Museo del Tessuto in Prato, the creative residency programme includes:

- A study trip to inspire participants in Catalonia (Spain) lasting min. 5 - max. 7 days (including travel), taking place in the first week of July 2019. The designers will be based in Gironella and Berga, with study visits to the extraordinary 19th and 20th century textile colonies in the Llobregat Valley, private textile company archives, Barcelona and its museums of applied art, and the textile and fashion museums in Catalonia.
- In the last week of June 2019, the study trip will be preceded by preparatory meetings at the Museo del Tessuto in Prato and by a programme of visits to companies, museums and corporate archives in Prato and Florence together with the 3 designers from the Nordiska Textilakademin in Borås (SE) who are in creative residency at the Museum in Prato.
- The design and creation of a mini collection (min. 2 - max. 5 items) of textiles/clothing/fashion accessories/interior design freely inspired by the textile heritage of the 5 territories involved in the project, which will be available via the specific database or through the study visits planned during the creative residencies. The mini collections and related graphic and photographic documentation must be delivered to Museo del Tessuto in Prato, without exception, by 15 SEPTEMBER 2019. The designers will also participate in marketing and communication training to promote the mini collections.

Participation in all the above-mentioned activities is compulsory for grant recipients.

Grants

The 3 grants awarded will cover the following costs: Return flights (up to a maximum of 400 euros), board and lodging, entrance tickets to museums, local transport during the creative residency in Catalonia (up to a maximum total of 800 euros). Fee/contribution for the creation of the mini collections: an indicative amount of 800 euros gross all-inclusive. Additional facilities for the creation of the mini collections will be made available to the selected designers by the Museo del Tessuto. Payments relating to the expenses referred to in point 1) will be partly paid in advance by the Organizer (return flights and accommodation), and partly reimbursed to the



designers, upon presentation of receipts for the expenses incurred (food, local transport, museums); the contribution referred to in point 2), will be paid upon delivery of the mini collections and adequate design and photographic documentation relating to the creative residencies carried out and the collections made by September 15, 2019. No coverage of costs is foreseen for the activities taking place at the Museo del Tessuto in Prato.

Requirements

Young designers who are under 30 years of age as of 15 May 2019 and who reside or are domiciled in Italy can apply.

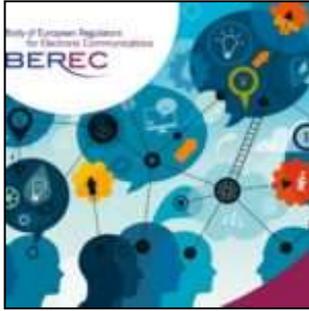
Applications

Interested designers must send their application, via We Transfer, BY 15 MAY 2019 to the email address prato@createxproject.eu.

The application must include the following attached documents:

The Museo del Tessuto in Prato application form, downloadable at the following link <http://createxproject.eu/project/open-call/> in PDF format, duly signed; Self-introduction video of the candidate in English, lasting up to 1 minute, very briefly illustrating their educational and professional journey, their interests in the textile/clothing/design/archives sector, and every other aspect considered pertinent Design presentation, of max. 10 pages in PDF format, of an idea/project for a mini collection (min. 2 - max. 5 items) of textiles/clothing/accessories/interior design inspired by the textile heritage of the involved territories and materials available at the link <http://createxproject.eu/inspiring-heritage/> (username and password available on the page indicated). The report, which must be written in English, should illustrate the conception, inspiration and creative components, as well as elements related to the practical realization, the production aspects, the marketability and the business model of reference. Candidates will be selected by a special jury of experts set up within the Museo del Tessuto in Prato, which will evaluate the applications and projects received, taking into account the following elements: creative process/idea; originality/innovation; production characteristics; competitive elements and market potential; communication; presentation. The jury will rank the candidates and select a shortlist of those deemed eligible. The three grant recipients will be chosen from this shortlist. The results of the selection will be announced on the project website (www.createxproject.eu) and on the Museum website (www.museodeltessuto.it). In the event a winning candidate relinquishes the grant, it will be awarded to the subsequent name on the shortlist. Further information can be requested by writing to prato@createxproject.eu.

14. Trainees at the BEREC Office



The Agency for Support for BEREC (BEREC Office) would like to invite all interested candidates to submit applications for the selection of trainees for the BEREC Office Traineeship Programme.

The candidates can apply for 6 profiles as follows:

- [Communication](#);
- [Programme Management](#);
- [Human Resources](#);
- [ICT and Logistics](#);
- [Legal and procurement](#);
- [Policies and administration](#).

Candidates must apply by filling in the [online application form](#) and submitting: a covering letter outlining their reasons for applying; a CV drafted using the [Europass CV format](#). **Candidates willing to apply for more than one profile must submit a separate application for each profile.** Applicants are explicitly requested to highlight and give a brief account of their experience and expertise relevant to the traineeship. Applicants are invited to indicate, apart from the duration of studies, the legal length of the diplomas that they hold. Trainees receive a monthly grant calculated at the beginning of each calendar year and published on the [BEREC Office website](#). Training periods are initially offered for a period of six months with the option for prolongation up to twelve months. There is no closing date for applications, however the agency advice **candidates to bear in mind that each year after 30th July**, the received applications are checked towards the eligibility criteria. The indicative starting date of traineeship is 1 October each year. More information are available at the following [link](#).

15. North-South Centre of the Council of Europe traineeship opportunities

The selection process for the first session 2019 is currently underway. Only pre-selected candidates will be contacted for interviews.

The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe offers traineeships twice a year for a period of three (minimum) to five (maximum) months. Each year the sessions take place as follows: First session: between January and June (deadline: 31 October of the previous year); Second session: between July and December (**deadline: 30 April of the year of the traineeship**). Applications that are incomplete or received after the deadline will not be processed. Nationals of the member states of the North-South Centre and/or the Council of Europe. Candidates who have already completed an internship at the Council of Europe or any of its institutions are not eligible.

Requirements: Completion of higher education or successful completion of at least three years of university study; A very good knowledge of one of the Council of Europe's official languages (English and French) and a good knowledge of the other; Good drafting ability.

Duties

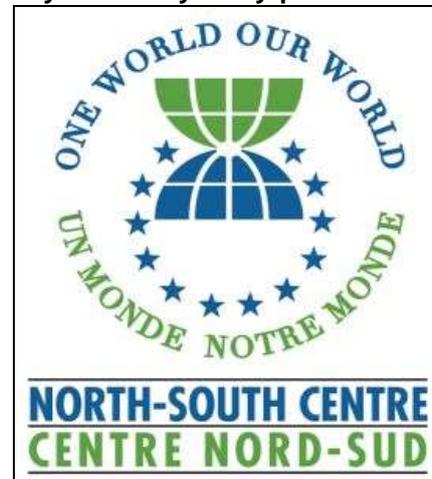
The duties to which trainees are assigned include assisting with the preparation of activities, research, different types of drafting and other day-to-day administrative tasks.

Conditions

The North-South Centre covers its trainees for medical and accident insurance during the traineeship period and a monthly basic allowance of 200€. Trainees are entitled to two days leave per month. The usual working hours are Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 17:30.

How to apply?

Please fill in the available application and follow instructions for sending CV and Motivation Letter. All applications must be completed in either English or French. Applications received in other languages will not be taken into consideration. More information are available at the following [link](#).



16. The training course and the fourth meeting of the "More Than Words"

From 15 to 21 March took place in Cserkeszölő, in Hungary, a new joint staff training event about for the project "MORE THAN WORDS- integrating creativity in intercultural training", that was approved by UK National Agency in the Erasmus+ Programme. From 9 to 12 April took place in Budapest the fourth meeting, attended by two members of our staff, Raffaele Messina and Luca Caggiano. During the meeting the partners defined the activities to be developed and the steps of the project to be implemented in the coming months. This initiative will last 2 years and the partner are: EURO-NET (Italy), Border Crossings Company Limited (UK), Comparative Research Network Ev (Germany), Integralt Kifejezes- es Tancterapias Egyesulet (Hungary), Association des Égyptiens au Luxembourg (Luxembourg), Stowarzyszenie "Dla Ziemi" (Poland) e Network African Rural and Urban Development e.V. (Germany). The activities of the initiative, that is addressed to educators and all people working in social inclusion field in order to improve their intercultural and communication skills, can be checked both on the its website <http://www.motw.eu/> and on Facebook on this page:



<https://www.facebook.com/MoThWor/>.



network African Rural and Urban Development e.V. (Germany). The activities of the initiative, that is addressed to educators and all people working in social inclusion field in order to improve their intercultural and communication skills, can be checked both on the its website <http://www.motw.eu/> and on Facebook on this page:

17. Concluded the first "m-Game" meeting in Potenza

On 29 March was held in Potenza the first project meeting of the project "MOOCs for Mobile Game Development Program" - acronym "m-Game" – that is an action approved in Turkey in the framework of the "Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnership for VET" program. The initiative aims to promote a training module on how to develop e-games online to allow the development of new skills in order to promote employability. The MOOC to be implemented, in fact, will provide new learning outcomes for students with continuous, non-formal and informal training methods, also offering new solutions to teachers, trainers and tutors in the school and work environment. The partners of the project are the following organisations: MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY (Turkey), project coordinator; DamaSistem (Turkey); MILLI EĞİTİM BAKANLIĞI (Turkey); ASOCIACION DE INVESTIGACION DE LA INDUSTRIA DEL JUGUETE, CONEXAS Y AFINES (Spain); INSTITUTO ANAPTIXIS EPICHEIRIMATIKOTITAS ASTIKI ETAIREIA (Greece); EURO-NET (Italy). The project will promote open education and innovative practices in the digital age and will also support new teaching methods and tools for both trainees and educators. It will contribute to job creation, economic growth and social cohesion in Europe. To achieve these results, the MOOC will consist of 15 modules. You can already follow the development of the activities on the official Facebook page of the project at the link <https://www.facebook.com/M-Game-872446363106303/>, that after a few days it already has 238 followers.



18. Concluded the meeting of the SME project in ARAD

From 2 to 5 April took place in Arad in Romania the fifth meeting of "Skills for Migrants Entrepreneurs". The European Union understood the importance of migrants' integration:

migrants could be a very important source for the developing of the countries in which they are guest, overall if they have particular skills, which can be employed in new entrepreneurial challenges. The project will realise tools such as guide, online courses and reports to sustain



integration and new business created by migrants. The aims to reach are: good examples of activities in migrants' inclusion; a real support for innovative education for disadvantaged groups; exchange of good practises and cooperation in refugees camps; trying to have a better behaviours toward migrants; increase competencies and skills of the staff through a joint staff training event; improve knowledge of organizations working with migrants; develop networks local, national and international dimensions; promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;

develop cooperation and transnational communication; improve cultural respect; to promote more modern, dynamic environment inside the organizations. More information are available on the website <http://theskills.eu/> or the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Skills-for-Migrants-Entrepreneurs-SME-466406560422253/>.

19. Important decisions during the PEACE LENS meeting in Potenza

From 15 to 16 of April took place in Potenza the second meeting of the project "Peace Lens-Creation of new generation of peace promoters", approved by the Luxembourg National Agency in KA2 Erasmus+ Programme in youth field, action n° 2018-2-LU01-KA205-037345. The

partnership is composed by: Lisel asbl (Luxembourg); Intercultural Youth Dialogue Association IYDA e.V. (Germany); Crossing Borders (Denmark). The aim of this project is to give to workers in youth fields a powerful tool in order to improve their professional skills and innovative methods to reach better results in their daily activities with young people. Through the game that will be developed during the project, this youth operators will both improve their teaching competencies, therefore they will satisfy better young people



needs, and also will be able to work with intergenerational and intercultural groups. You can already follow project activities on its Facebook page that you can find on this link <https://www.facebook.com/PeaceLens-351960512225188/>.

20. PERFORMACTION: results of the meeting in Leipzig

From 17 to 19 of April took place in Leipzig the third meeting of the project "PerformAction performing arts for education and training" approved in UK as part of the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education as action n.2017-1-UK01-KA204-036779). The role of art and performing arts in formal and non-formal education is relevant to pursuing learning-by-doing methods, reinventing ourselves not only as a person, but also as a group, learning the art to live together through respective differences and attitudes. The specific aims regarding adult education intend to improve and extend the offer of high quality learning opportunities, also extending and developing educators' competences for better outreach and improved learning outcomes. The project partners are: Sirios Training Ltd (UK); Associazione Artemovimento (Italy); EURO-NET (Italy); Ost-Passage Theater e.V. (Germany); Academia Postal 3 Vigo S.L. (Spain); Eesti People To People (Estonia). You can follow the development of activities on the website www.performaction.live or on the facebook page at the link <https://www.facebook.com/PerformAction-1854582148097601/>.



and attitudes. The specific aims regarding adult education intend to improve and extend the offer of high quality learning opportunities, also extending and developing educators' competences for better outreach and improved learning outcomes. The project partners are: Sirios Training Ltd (UK); Associazione Artemovimento (Italy); EURO-NET (Italy); Ost-Passage Theater e.V. (Germany); Academia Postal 3 Vigo S.L. (Spain); Eesti People To People (Estonia). You can follow the development of activities on the website www.performaction.live or on the facebook page at the link <https://www.facebook.com/PerformAction-1854582148097601/>.

21. New meeting in Poland for EU-ACT

From 29 to 30 April will take place in Krakow, Poland, the second meeting of project "EU-ACT" (action n° 2018-1-IT02-KA204-048011), approved by Italian National Agency Indire in Erasmus+ KA2 programme. The aim of this project is to develop a new kind of tourism, to promote local traditions, to pay attention on sustainability, to protect and valorize the cultural heritage, natural beauty and local culture in line with the new tourism market and tourists need. As matter of fact, nowadays, tourist are more and more interested on a different kind of holydays and abroad experiences: they want to



get in touch with local tradition in order to know them deeply and to live authentic experience of learning. With EU-ACT, in particular, partners want to transfer new knowledge and innovative methodologies about cultural mediation, theatrical and digital storytelling to trainers and workers in field of tourism in order to co-create new products and services for tourists. More information on



the project can be found on the official website of the initiative <http://www.europecitytellers.eu> or on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Europe-City-Teller-1552751178163969/>.

22. Concluded the first meeting of the project "Youth Capacity"

From 21 to 23 of February 2019 was held in Cortemilia (in the province of Cuneo) Italy, the first meeting of the project "Enhancing Capacities of Youth Policy Makers Across Europe" (acronym "Youth Capacity"). It is an action approved in Italy by the National Youth Agency in the framework of the program Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnership for Youth. (action No. 2018-2-IT03-KA205-014000). Partner of the project are the following organisations: Unione Montana Alta Langa (Italy), project coordinator; KEK TEHNIKES SHOLES EPIMELITIRIOU IRAKLEIOU (Greece); Federación de Municipios de la Región de Murcia (Spain); AK.T.A. (Cyprus); EURO-NET (Italy). The project aims to create a network of local and regional authorities working with young people to: develop concrete strategic plans; promote the EU's youth policy agenda; plan youth activities allowing the participation and inclusion of young people in society. Policy makers and youth leaders of local



and regional authorities involved in the project will be trained on: transversal skills to improve their collaboration with young people; potential sources of funding for youth projects; youth entrepreneurship; "No-Hate Speech" campaign; opportunities available for youth volunteering. The first meeting permitted the partner to establish the project steps and the activities to be developed during the entire European initiative. During the meeting the partners

discussed the activities to be developed in the coming months, they chose the project logo and developed the initiative's Facebook page, which already counts 435 followers: <https://www.facebook.com/Youth-Capacity-791315631226768/>.

23. Concluded the first meeting of "Elblag Educators for Seniors (EEFS)

From 25 to 27 of February 2019 was held in Poland, the first the meeting of the project "Elblag Educators for Seniors" (acronym "EEFS") that is an action approved by the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Partnership Strategies for Adult Education - Good Practice Exchange. The project is aimed at senior people as well as teachers, tutors and trainers responsible for planning and developing the cultural offer for the target group. The main objective of the project is to improve the educational offer for the elderly, including original and innovative activities and workshops. The partners of the project are the following organisations: Centrum Spotkan Europejskich Swiatowid (Poland), project coordinator; Asociación de Innovación, Formación y Empleo para el Desarrollo sostenible (Spain); International Exchanges Berlin Molinari & Benedetti (Germany); EURO-NET (Italy). During the meeting the partners discussed the activities to be developed in the coming months and defined the steps of the project to be implemented.



24. Concluded the first meeting of "BIM" in Madrid



From 7 to 9 of March 2019 was held in Madrid the kick off meeting of the project "Borders in the Mind-BIM": it is an initiative approved in Spain in the framework of the program Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnership for Adult Education (action n.2018-1-ES01-KA204-050833). The project proposes modern and relevant reception services designed by residents of local communities to inform visitors about where they are located. The partner of the project

are the following organisations: Interacting S.L. (Spain), project coordinator; Youth Power (Cyprus); EURASIA NET (France); Youth Centre of Epirus (Greece); EURO-NET (Italy); Stichting chain foundation (The Netherlands); THE NERVE CENTRE (UK). The main objective of the project is to devise and provide innovative, practical and relevant tools and methodologies to promote tolerance and celebrate difference and identity. During the meeting the partners took stock of the activities to be developed in the coming months and defined the steps of the project to be implemented.

25. "STEREOSCIFI" Project: fourth meeting in Lithuania

The fourth meeting of the "STEREOSCIFI - Stereotypes and Hard Science Fiction" project will be held in Lithuania on 2 and 3 May. This initiative was approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency of Portugal under the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for school education program. StereoSciFi is a European project, that started on 1st December, 2017, and ends on 30th November, 2019. The main goal of the project is to promote social inclusion and equity. The project partners are: AidLearn (Portugal); ESEN (Portugal); EURO-NET (Italy), Otxarkoaga (Spain); Telsiai (Lithuania); ULO (Poland). More information on this interesting project is available on the website www.gracagoncalves2.wixsite.com/stereoscifi-en and on the official Facebook page of the initiative at the link <https://www.facebook.com/StereoSciFi/>.



26. ISDL: third meeting in Suceava in Romania

The third meeting of the "Integration by Social and Digital Learning" project (ISDL acronym) will take place in Suceava, Romania, from 8 to 11 May. This project is focused on the search and exchange of good practises in order to replicate successful activities also in other countries.



Trainers for migrants and unemployed will use the OER products. The main theme are: active citizenship and Community Building; cultural awareness, open government, urban life styles in sharing. The partners are: Euro-Idea Fundacja Spoleczno-Kulturalna (Poland); EURO-NET (Italy); KIRSEHIR IL MILLI EGITIM MUDURLUGU (Turkey); Asociatia Institutul pentru Parteneriat Social Bucovina (Romania); Knuepferwerk e.V. (Germany); Fundacja Biuro Inicjatyw Spolecznych (Poland). You can follow the initiative on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/isdl2017/>. More information on the meeting in Romania will be provided on our next newsletters.

27. The dates of the LARP youth training were decided

From 27 August to 4 September (including travel days) will take place in Potenza the youth



training course of the project "GET YOUR HORIZONS EXPANDED!" - LIFE ACTION PLANNING ROLE GAME STEREOTY-PES & CRITICAL THINKING (acronym "LARP"). The training will bring together 23 young leaders and young people from 6 countries. "LARP" has been approved to the YOUTH EUROPE SERVICE association from the Erasmus Plus National Agency as part of the Erasmus Plus KA1 program as action n. 2018-3-IT03-KA105-014712. More information on the training course, which will involve youth leaders from Italy, Bulgaria, Poland, Cyprus, Latvia, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Germany, will be available in our next newsletter.

28. First meeting of the CDRP project in Malta concluded

From 14 to 14 of March took place in Malta the first meeting of the project "Curriculum Development for Rapid Prototyping in Engineering Education" ("CDRP-EN" acronym) action n. 2018-1-TR01-KA203-059739 approved in the KA2 Erasmus+ Programme Strategic Partnerships for higher education". During the meeting the steps of the project and the activities to be developed up to 2021 were defined. The partnership of the initiative sees as italian partner the company GODESK. The project aims to transfer developments in the field of rapid prototyping to engineering training in the near future thanks to a partnership composed of particularly competent bodies in the sector.



29. After the first meeting IMPROVE in Potenza the website is ready t



From 6 to 7 April took place in Potenza, Italy, the first meeting of the project "Innovative Metodologies and PRactices on VET" ("IMPROVE" acronym) approved by the English Erasmus Plus National Agency under the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships Program for VET as action n. 2018-1-UK01-KA202-047912. The IMPROVE project aims to promote innovative practices and tools in vocational training, in order to encourage people to consider it as "an important choice in their professional path".The project can be followed on the following official Facebook page at the web address <https://www.facebook.com/Innovative-Metodologies-and-PRactices-On-VET-406262400174556/> and on the website <https://www.improveproject.eu/>.