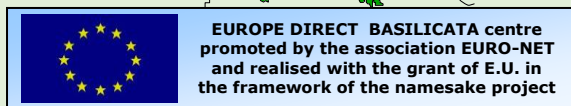




EURO-NET

The Youth European Network



**YEAR 18 - NUMBER 5
OF 20TH OCTOBER 2023
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**



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1. Wolves in Europe

The return of the wolf to EU regions where it has been absent for a long time is increasingly leading to conflicts with local farming and hunting communities, especially where measures to prevent attacks on livestock are not widely implemented.

President von der Leyen said: "The concentration of wolf packs in some European regions has become a real danger for livestock and potentially also for humans. I urge local and national authorities to take action where necessary. Indeed, current EU legislation already enables them to do so." The Commission is launching a new phase in its work on addressing the challenges related to the return of wolves. The Commission is inviting local communities, scientists and all interested parties to submit up-to-date data by 22 September 2023 on wolf population and their impacts. They are invited to use the following email address (active from this afternoon): EC-



WOLF-DATA-COLLECTION@ec.europa.eu. On the basis of the data collected, the Commission will decide on a proposal to modify, where appropriate, the status of protection of the wolf within the EU and to update the legal framework, to introduce, where necessary, further flexibility, in the light of the evolution of this species. This will complement current possibilities under the EU legislation for local and national authorities to take action where necessary, and significant EU funding provided for these measures, as detailed in a joint letter sent by Commissioner Sinkevičius and Commissioner Wojciechowski to all EU Ministers for Agriculture and Environment in November 2021. Some

measures have proven effective in preventing or significantly reducing predation risks when properly implemented and tailored to the specific context in which they are applied. The Commission's review of scientific data on the wolf in the EU forms an integral part of the in-depth analysis the Commission is conducting in response to the European Parliament Resolution of 24 November 2022. In April 2023, the Commission started collecting data from expert groups and key stakeholders, as well as the data reported by national authorities under the existing EU and international legislation. However, this data still does not provide a full picture sufficient for the Commission to design further actions and the Commission is broadening this consultation.

Background

The Commission is aware that the return of the wolf to EU regions where it has been absent for a long time may lead to conflicts with local farming and hunting communities, especially where measures to prevent attacks on livestock are not widely implemented. As a native species, the wolf is an integral element of Europe's natural heritage and plays an important role in its ecosystems. Under the Habitats Directive, most wolf populations in Europe enjoy strict protection, with derogation possibilities. This regime implements the requirements under the international Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, to which the EU and Member States are parties. EU and regional platforms on coexistence allow stakeholders to promote ways to minimize conflicts between human interests and the presence of large carnivore species, by exchanging knowledge and by working together in an open-ended, constructive and mutually respectful way. Furthermore, under the Habitats Directive, Member States may, under certain conditions, derogate from the prohibitions of the strict protection regime, including in order to protect socio-economic interests.

2. European Heritage Days: "Living Heritage"

This year's theme is "Living Heritage", which will showcase the vibrancy, diversity and significance of cultural traditions, knowledge and skills across Europe.

Until November 2023, exceptional sites and monuments will open their doors to visitors. In addition, cultural events, exhibitions, artistic performances, interactive workshops, lectures, and guided tours will take place, all inspired by the theme of "Living Heritage". These activities valorise the cultural traditions and skills in shaping our societies. Jointly organised by the Commission and the Council of Europe, the European Heritage Days is an opportunity for citizens to learn more about Europe's rich and diverse culture and promote the protection of our shared heritage for

present and future generations. This year, the impactful initiatives introduced in 2019 will continue. These initiatives include the engaging European Heritage Days Stories, a platform dedicated to amplifying the voices of heritage professionals and spotlighting the remarkable preservation efforts carried out by individuals and groups across Europe. Another noteworthy initiative, "Young European Heritage Makers," formerly known as European Heritage Makers Week, empowers and provides a genuine platform for children and young individuals, identifying the future champions of European heritage. This initiative has also nurtured European cross-frontier co-operation projects, fostering collaboration among diverse heritage sites. Notably, a dedicated Call for European Heritage Label (EHL) sites was launched, enhancing synergies between these initiatives. These actions are aimed at fortifying the European dimension by endorsing cross frontier activities led by the National Coordinators of the European Heritage Days program. As the legacy continues, the European Heritage Days remain committed to celebrating and safeguarding the rich cultural tapestry of Europe. The European Heritage Days website features detailed event schedules, participating countries, and ways to engage.



Background

Initiated by the Council of Europe in 1985, the European Heritage Days foster cultural diversity, dialogue, and heritage preservation. Taking place annually across participating European nations, the celebrations offer a range of cultural events and activities. In 2022, around 20 million people have participated to the European Heritage Days. Since 1999, jointly organised by the Commission and the Council of Europe, the European Heritage Days stand as a testament to the richness of European cultural heritage, while fostering dialogue, inclusivity, and cross-border activities. European Heritage Days are organised in close cooperation with national coordinators in each of the 48 countries that have ratified the European Cultural Convention. Every year has a distinctive, unifying pan-European theme.

3. Commission facilitates the activities of cross-border associations

The Commission adopted a proposal to facilitate cross-border activities of non-profit associations in the EU.

It will improve the functioning of the Internal Market by removing legal and administrative barriers for non-profit associations that operate or wish to operate in more than one Member State, thus promoting the role non-profit associations play in generating economic and societal values in the EU and allow a level playing field between them. Currently, when non-profit associations engage in activities in another Member State than the one they are established in, they do not receive uniform acknowledgment of their legal personality and capacity and often need to register for a second time or even form a new legal entity in that Member State. About 310 000 non-profit associations currently affected by those obstacles when operating in another country are estimated to reduce administrative costs with the new rules by up to EUR 770 million per year,



potentially amounting up to EUR 8.5 billion within the time frame of 15-years. Moreover, about another 185 000 non-profit associations are potentially expected to engage in cross-border activities, if the identified barriers tackled by the proposal are removed, and could generate up to EUR 4.2 billion added value over a 15-year period. The Commission's proposal introduces an additional legal form of a European cross-border association (ECBA) in Member States' national legal systems, which is specifically designed for cross-border purposes and will reduce legal and administrative burden when it comes to the recognition and establishment of non-profit associations engaging in activities in another Member State. Once established in one Member State, an ECBA will be recognised automatically and will be able to engage in activities in all

Member States, including economic activities, thereby allowing non-profit associations to unleash their full societal and economic potential in the EU. ECBA's will co-exist alongside with other national associations at Member State level. For matters that are not covered by the proposed

Directive, such as taxation treatment, Member States shall treat ECBAs in the same way as comparable national non-profit associations, thereby respecting Member States' traditions in this area and not affecting existing associations.

The new rules will:

- Establish in each Member State a new legal form of non-profit associations specifically designed for cross-border purposes (the ECBA), next to existing national legal forms.
- Allow automatic recognition of this new legal form across the Union once an ECBA is registered in one Member State, thanks to the 'ECBA certificate'.
- Provide for harmonised rules on transfer of registered office, thus allowing non-profit associations to reap the full benefit of the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services, goods, and capital in the Union.
- Ensure the ECBA fully enjoys the benefits of the Internal Market regardless of the Member State of registration by having free and non-discriminatory access to public funding in each Member State it operates.

With the proposed Directive, the Commission also adopted a Regulation of technical nature amending the Internal Market Information System (IMI) and the Single Digital Gateway (SDG) Regulations, to allow cooperation and exchange of information among competent authorities through the IMI system and to conduct digital operations through the SDG allowing access to information about ECBAs available online.

Next Steps

The proposal will be presented to the European Parliament and the Council for approval. Once adopted, Member States will have two years to transpose the Directive into national law.

Background

Non-profit associations create economic and societal value across the Union and conduct activities in key sectors such as health, care and social services, culture, employment services, sports, research and development and education. 3.8 million Non-profit associations exist in EU Member States contributing 2.9% of EU GDP. Acknowledging the need to create an enabling environment for the non-profit sector, the proposal stems from the European Parliament resolution with recommendations to the Commission on a statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations adopted on 17 February 2022. The proposal is embedded in the broader political objectives of the European Green Deal and the Digital Decade 2030 and embraces the political priority for an economy that works for people. The proposal contributes to the objectives of the Action Plan for the Social Economy and is linked to some of its actions, such as the proposal for a Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions in the Member States and the two Commission Staff Working Documents on 'relevant taxation frameworks for social economy entities' and on 'non-discriminatory taxation of charitable organisations and their donors: principles drawn from EU case-law'.

4. Digital Markets Act: Commission designates six gatekeepers

The European Commission has designated, for the first time, six gatekeepers - Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, ByteDance, Meta, Microsoft - under the Digital Markets Act (DMA).

In total, 22 core platform services provided by gatekeepers have been designated. The six gatekeepers will now have six months to ensure full compliance with the DMA obligations for each of their designated core platform services. Under the DMA, the European Commission can designate digital platforms as 'gatekeepers' if they provide an important gateway between businesses and consumers in relation to core platform services. Decisions follow a 45-day review process conducted by the Commission after the notification by Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, ByteDance, Meta, Microsoft and Samsung of their potential status as gatekeepers. In particular, the Commission has established gatekeeper status with respect to the following specific core platform services: In parallel, the Commission has opened four market investigations to further assess Microsoft's and Apple's submissions arguing that, despite meeting the thresholds, some of their core platform services do not qualify as gateways:

- Microsoft: Bing, Edge and Microsoft Advertising
- Apple: iMessage

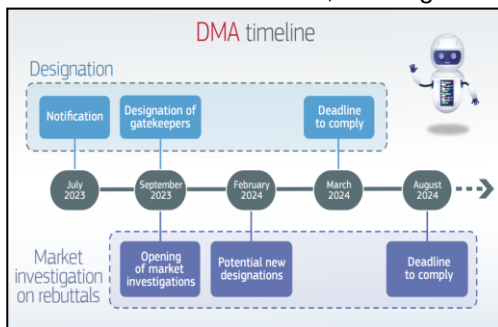


- Under the DMA, these investigations aim to ascertain whether a sufficiently substantiated rebuttal presented by the companies, demonstrate that services in question should not be designated. The investigation should be completed within a maximum of 5 months.

In addition, the Commission has opened a market investigation to further assess whether Apple's iPadOS should be designated as gatekeeper, despite not meeting the thresholds. Under the DMA, this investigation should be completed within a maximum of 12 months. In addition, the Commission has concluded that, although Gmail, Outlook.com and Samsung Internet Browser meet the thresholds under the DMA to qualify as a gatekeeper, Alphabet, Microsoft and Samsung provided sufficiently justified arguments showing that these services do not qualify as gateways for the respective core platform services. Therefore, the Commission decided not to designate Gmail, Outlook.com and Samsung Internet Browser as core platform services. It follows that Samsung is not designated as gatekeeper with respect to any core platform service.

Next steps for designated gatekeepers

Following their designation, gatekeepers now have six months to comply with the full list of do's and don'ts under the DMA, offering more choice and more freedom to end users and business



users of the gatekeepers' services. However, some of the obligations will start applying as of designation, for example, the obligation to inform the Commission of any intended concentration. It is for the designated companies to ensure and demonstrate effective compliance. To this end, they have 6 months to submit a detailed compliance report in which they outline how they comply with each of the obligations of the DMA. The Commission will monitor the effective implementation of and compliance with these obligations. In case a gatekeeper does not

comply with the obligations laid down by the DMA, the Commission can impose fines up to 10% of the company's total worldwide turnover, which can go up to 20% in case of repeated infringement. In case of systematic infringements, the Commission is also empowered to adopt additional remedies such as obliging a gatekeeper to sell a business or parts of it or banning the gatekeeper from acquisitions of additional services related to the systemic non-compliance. In the future, additional companies could submit notifications to the Commission under the DMA, based on their self-assessment with respect to the relevant thresholds. In this context, the Commission maintains constructive discussions with all relevant companies.

Background

The DMA aims at preventing gatekeepers from imposing unfair conditions on businesses and end users and at ensuring the openness of important digital services. Together with the DMA, in December 2020, the Commission also proposed the Digital Services Act, to address the negative consequences arising from certain behaviours by online platforms acting as digital gatekeepers to the EU single market. The DMA, in force since November 2022 and applied since May 2023, aims to ensure contestable and fair markets in the digital sector. It regulates gatekeepers, large online platforms that provide an important gateway between business users and consumers, whose

position can grant them the power to create a bottleneck in the digital economy. Companies providing at least one of the ten core platform services enumerated in the DMA are presumed to be gatekeepers if they meet the criteria listed below. These core platform services are: online intermediation services such as app stores, online search engines, social networking services, certain messaging services, video sharing platform services, virtual assistants, web browsers, cloud computing services, operating systems, online marketplaces, and advertising services. One company can be designated as gatekeeper for several core platform services. There are three main quantitative criteria that create the presumption that a company is a gatekeeper as defined in the DMA: when the company achieves a certain annual turnover in the European Economic Area and it provides a core platform service in at least three EU Member States; when the company provides a core platform service to more than 45 million monthly active end users established or located in the EU and to more than 10,000 yearly active business users



established in the EU; and when the company met the second criterion during the last three years. The DMA defines a series of specific obligations that gatekeepers will need to respect, including prohibiting them from engaging in certain behaviours in a list of do's and don'ts. The DMA also empowers the Commission to conduct market investigations to: designate companies as gatekeepers on qualitative grounds; update the obligations for gatekeepers when necessary; design remedies to tackle systematic infringements of the Digital Markets Act rules.

5. Critical Infrastructure

The Commission is proposing a Council Recommendation for a Critical Infrastructure Blueprint that will enhance the EU's coordination in response to attempts to disrupt our critical infrastructure.

The geopolitical context in which critical infrastructure operates is highly volatile and this not only in view of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, increased hybrid attacks and the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines. Citizens, businesses and authorities in the EU rely on critical infrastructure because of the essential services that the entities operating such infrastructure provide. Such services are crucial for the maintenance of vital societal functions and must be provided in an unobstructed manner in the internal market. The EU has already taken a number of measures to enhance the protection of critical infrastructure to avoid or mitigate the effects of



disruptions in the essential services. Immediately after the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines, the Commission proposed a Council Recommendation to accelerate the work to protect critical infrastructure, proposing to enhance coordination in the response to incidents and crises with a Critical Infrastructure Blueprint. Moreover, the EU-NATO Task Force on resilience of critical infrastructure, launched in March 2023, presented on 29 June a final assessment report which maps out the current security challenges and presents targeted

recommendations to strengthen critical infrastructure resilience. Proposal builds on these actions, and further complements existing EU-level crisis instruments. It also complements the existing Blueprint in the area of cybersecurity and the EU Protocol for countering hybrid threats.

Scope and objective of the Critical Infrastructure Blueprint

In order to ensure a targeted, proportionate and effective approach, the Blueprint, provides a roadmap with measures that can be applied when Member States are faced with significant critical infrastructure incidents.

The Blueprint aims to achieve three main objectives in response to a significant critical infrastructure incident:

- **Improve shared situational awareness**, by better understanding the significant critical infrastructure incident in the Member States, its origin, and its potential consequences for all key stakeholders at operational and strategic/political level.
- **Ensure coordinated public communication** to minimise discrepancies in the messages conveyed to the public after a significant critical infrastructure incident. Clear public communication is also important to tackle disinformation.
- **Provide effective response** by strengthening the response of Member States and cooperation between Member States and with relevant Union institutions, bodies, offices, agencies, will mitigate the effects of a significant critical infrastructure incident and enable swift reestablishment of essential services.

The Blueprint can be applied when:

- The incident has a significant disruptive effect to or in six or more Member States;
- The incident has a significant disruptive effect in two or more Member States, and timely policy coordination in the response at Union level is required, due to the incident's wide-ranging and significant impact of technical or political relevance.

To respond to the significant critical infrastructure incident, the Blueprint sets out several actions that can be taken at EU level, such as the support of the affected Member States through information exchange, the organisation of expert meetings, the preparation of situational awareness reports, and the coordination of public communication lines and of the response. The

coordinated response may also include technical support of other Member States or relevant EU institutions, bodies and agencies, if so requested by the affected Member States, and activation of EU crisis coordination mechanisms and use of EU instruments. Points of contact for matters relating to the Critical Infrastructure Blueprint are foreseen for all actors involved. Member States affected by the significant critical infrastructure incident will share with the rotating Presidency of the Council and the Commission relevant information on the incident. The Recommendation foresees that the Member States, the Council, the Commission and, where appropriate, the EEAS and relevant EU bodies, offices and agencies should apply the Blueprint without delay whenever a significant critical infrastructure incident occurs.

Next steps

This proposal will now be discussed by the Council.

Background

The EU has had a legal and policy framework for the protection of critical infrastructure for almost 15 years. This has been updated with the Directive on Critical Entities Resilience (CER Directive), which entered into force in January 2023. In light of the current security context, a Council Recommendation on a Union-wide coordinated approach to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure was adopted on 8 December 2022 following a Commission proposal. In that Recommendation, the Council highlighted, among others, the need to ensure at Union level a coordinated and effective response to risks to the provision of essential services. It invited the Commission “to draft a Blueprint on a coordinated response to disruptions of critical infrastructure with significant cross-border relevance”. On 25 July 2023, the Commission adopted a Delegated Regulation establishing a list of essential services in those sectors. Based on this list, Member States must carry out risk assessments and then identify their critical entities.

6 Towards a more digital social security coordination

The Commission has proposed concrete steps to further digitalise the coordination of social security systems in Europe, in a dedicated Communication.

It lays out actions to make access to social security services quicker and simpler across borders by making full use of digital tools, reducing administrative burden for citizens and business. This will improve the exchanges of information between national social security institutions and speed up the recognition and granting of eligible benefits across borders. It will thus make it easier for Europeans to live, work and travel abroad, for companies to do business in other EU countries, and for national administrations to coordinate social security across borders. Despite previous initiatives to improve the cross-border flow of social security information, national institutions, healthcare providers and labour inspectorates still face difficulties accessing and sharing data, due to insufficient interoperability between national systems. Costs are also incurred, for instance, when issuing and verifying entitlements documents. Communication takes stock of the progress achieved so far in digitalising the coordination of social security, presents the ongoing initiatives in this area, and proposes future actions to make full use of the benefits that digitalisation can provide.



Key measures proposed

The Commission calls on Member States to:

- Accelerate the national implementation of the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI) so that it is fully operational by the end of 2024 across Europe. EESSI digitalises the exchanges among national social security institutions, to move away from paper-based, time-consuming and cumbersome procedures.
- Deliver more social security coordination procedures fully online, to make it even easier for people to move and work abroad, and ensure they get fast access to their eligible benefits. Member States can build on the Single Digital Gateway Regulation, which foresees a fully online delivery of some important administrative procedures to citizens and businesses by 12 December 2023 at the latest.
- Fully engage in the European Social Security Pass (ESSPASS) pilot activities, which explore how to simplify the issuance and verification of citizens' social security entitlements across borders.

- Work towards introducing EU Digital Identity (EUDI) wallets, which will allow EU citizens to carry digital versions of entitlement documents, such as the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), making it easier for social security institutions, labour inspectorates and healthcare providers to instantly verify these documents.

The Commission will support EU Member States in implementing these actions by providing technical assistance, including through the Technical Support Instrument, and making available EU funding, for instance through the Digital Europe Programme, InvestEU, the European Regional Development Fund, and the European Social Fund Plus. The European Labour Authority will also play an active role by collecting best practice examples and facilitating regular exchanges among national authorities.

Next steps

The Commission invites the European Parliament and the Council to endorse the approach set out in this Communication and calls on Member States and all stakeholders to work together to implement its actions. The Commission will support and monitor the implementation of this Communication in annual meetings with national representatives. Advancing the digitalisation of social security coordination is also important in the context of ongoing negotiations by co-legislators on the revision of EU social security coordination rules. The Commission calls on the European Parliament and on the Council to swiftly reach an agreement on the revision, to modernise this legal framework, and will continue to support co-legislators to achieve this objective.

Background

EU nationals are entitled to travel, work and live in another EU country. In 2021, 16 million people from the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA)/European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and Switzerland lived and/or worked in another EU, EEA/EFTA country and Switzerland. EU rules (Regulation No 883/2004 and Regulation No 987/2009 on its implementation) protect people's social security rights when moving within Europe, for instance when it comes to healthcare, family benefits and pensions, and make sure they get access to their eligible benefits as quickly as possible across the EU. In 2021, around 235 million people in Europe held a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which helped them get unforeseen necessary medical support while abroad. Also, 6 million pensions were disbursed to pensioners who reside in another country. In addition, national administrations received 3.6 million requests for a proof of social security coverage in cross-border situations. Thanks to the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI) system, social security institutions in Member States have handled more rapidly and securely 16.5 million social security cases of people traveling, living, studying, and/or working in another EU country since 2019. 2.5 million electronic messages are exchanged each month. Currently, 12 Member States' institutions are piloting ESSPASS to digitally issue and verify citizens' social security entitlements across borders, such as the 'Portable Document A1' for work purposes and the EHIC in healthcare.



7. Summer 2023 Economic Forecast

The European Commission has presented the Summer 2023 Economic Forecast.

The EU economy continues to grow, albeit with reduced momentum. The forecast revises growth in the EU economy down to 0.8% in 2023, from 1% projected in the Spring Forecast, and 1.4% in 2024, from 1.7%. It also revises growth in the euro area down to 0.8% in 2023 (from 1.1%) and 1.3% in 2024 (from 1.6%). Inflation is expected to continue to decline over the forecast horizon. Harmonised index of consumer prices (HICP) inflation is now projected to reach 6.5% in 2023 (compared to 6.7% in the spring) and 3.2% in 2024 (compared to 3.1%) in the EU. In the euro area, inflation is forecast to be 5.6% in 2023 (compared to 5.8%) and 2.9% in 2024 (compared to 2.8%).

A reduced growth momentum

Latest data confirm that economic activity in the EU was subdued in the first half of 2023 on the back of the formidable shocks that the EU has endured. Weakness in domestic demand, in particular consumption, shows that high and still increasing consumer prices for most goods and services are taking a heavier toll than expected in the Spring Forecast. This is despite declining energy prices and an exceptionally strong labour market, which has seen record low unemployment rates, continued expansion of employment, and rising wages. Meanwhile, the

sharp slowdown in the provision of bank credit to the economy shows that monetary policy tightening is working its way through the economy. Survey indicators now point to slowing economic activity in the summer and the months ahead, with continued weakness in industry and fading momentum in services, despite a strong tourism season in many parts of Europe. The global economy has fared somewhat better than anticipated in the first half of the year, despite a weak performance in China. However, the outlook for global growth and trade remains broadly unchanged compared to spring, implying that the EU economy cannot count on strong support from external demand. Overall, the weaker growth momentum in the EU is expected to extend to 2024, and the impact of tight monetary policy is set to continue restraining economic activity. However, a mild rebound in growth is projected next year, as inflation keeps easing, the labour market remains robust, and real incomes gradually recover.



Inflation to further decline

Inflation continued easing in the first half of 2023 as a result of declining energy prices and moderating inflationary pressures from food and industrial goods. In the euro area, it reached 5.3% in July, exactly half of the peak level of 10.6% recorded in October 2022, and remained stable in August. Energy prices are set to continue declining for the remainder of 2023, but at a slowing pace. They are projected to increase slightly again in 2024, driven by higher oil prices. Inflation in services has so far been more persistent than previously expected, but it is set to continue moderating as demand softens under the impact of monetary policy tightening and a fading post-COVID boost. The prices of food and non-energy industrial goods will continue contributing to easing inflation over the forecast horizon, also reflecting lower input prices and normalising supply chains.

An outlook challenged by risks and uncertainty

Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine and wider geopolitical tensions continue to pose risks and remain a source of uncertainty. Furthermore, monetary tightening may weigh on economic activity more heavily than expected, but could also lead to a faster decline in inflation that would accelerate the restoration of real incomes. By contrast, price pressures could turn out more persistent. Mounting climate risks, illustrated by the extreme weather conditions and unprecedented wildfires and floods in the summer, also weigh on the outlook.

Background

The Summer 2023 Economic Forecast provides an update of the Spring 2023 Economic Forecast, which was presented in May 2023. This is an interim forecast, containing GDP and inflation projections for the six largest EU Member State economies, the euro area and the EU as a whole. The latest economic developments for 21 other Member States are addressed in the overall analysis and are factored into the calculation of the EU and euro area aggregates. The Summer Forecast is based on a set of technical assumptions concerning exchange rates, interest rates and commodity prices with a cut-off date of 30 August 2023. For all other incoming data, including assumptions about government policies, this forecast takes into consideration information up until and including 7 September 2023. The Commission publishes two comprehensive forecasts (spring and autumn) and two interim forecasts (winter and summer) each year. The 2023 edition of the summer forecast is being presented later than on previous occasions to enable it to incorporate several key data releases in July and August. The Commission's next forecast will be the Autumn 2023 Economic Forecast. This is scheduled to be published in November 2023.

8. Championing Europe's SMEs

The Commission is presenting a series of initiatives to address the needs of Europe's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the current economic environment.

Representing 99% of Europe's businesses, SMEs are essential drivers of Europe's green and digital transitions, but continue to face unpredictability and volatility as a result of a number of crises in recent years. The SME Relief Communication put forward today proposes new measures that will provide short-term relief, boost SMEs' long-term competitiveness, and strengthen fairness in the business environment across the Single Market. As part of these measures, the Commission is today also publishing new proposals for a Regulation on late payments in

commercial transactions and a Directive establishing a Head Office Tax System for SMEs. Additional initiatives aim at further boosting SMEs' access to finance, improving the business environment and supporting SMEs' growth into mid-caps to unleash their full economic potential. In particular, the new Regulation on combatting late payments in commercial transactions tackles payment delays, an unfair practice that compromises the cash flow of SMEs and hampers the competitiveness and resilience of supply chains. The new rules will repeal the 2011 Directive on late payments and will replace it with a Regulation. The proposal introduces a stricter maximum payment limit of 30 days, eliminates ambiguities and addresses the legal gaps in the current Directive. The proposed text also ensures an automatic payment of accrued interest and compensation fees and introduces new enforcement and redress measures to protect companies against bad payers. The Head Office Tax System for SMEs will give SMEs operating cross-border through permanent establishments the option to interact with only one tax administration – that of



the Head Office – instead of having to comply with multiple tax systems. This proposal will increase tax certainty and fairness, reduce compliance costs and distortions in the market that influence business decisions, while minimising the risk of double and over taxation and tax disputes. The expected decrease in compliance costs should, in particular, foster investment and cross-border expansion in the EU. SMEs operating in different Member States will be able to fully maximise the freedom of establishment and the free movement of capital without being hindered by unnecessary

tax related obstacles. In addition, the Commission's SME Relief Communication proposes several non-legislative measures to support SMEs and ensure their full economic potential is harnessed:

- **Improve the current regulatory environment for SMEs** by building on the successful first full year of application of the 'one in one out principle' (€7,3 billion net cost savings), improving the application of the SME Test and consistently considering SME needs across future EU legislation, for example through longer transition periods for SMEs. The Commission will appoint an EU SME Envoy to provide guidance and advice to the Commission on SME issues, and advocate SME interests externally. The EU SME Envoy will report directly to the President (while also reporting to the Internal Market Commissioner on SME-related activities supported by his services), and will participate in Regulatory Scrutiny Board hearings with Directorates-General on initiatives that have a high potential impact on SMEs. The Commission will also promote the use of regulatory sandboxes to foster SMEs' experimentation and innovation.
- **Simplify administrative procedures and reporting requirements for SMEs** by launching the Once-Only Technical System (part of the Single Digital Gateway) by the end of 2023, allowing SMEs to complete administrative procedures across the Single Market without the need to re-submit documents. The Commission will simplify and digitalise cumbersome procedures, such as declarations and certificates for the posting of workers (such as the so-called A1 document on social security rights). In addition, the Commission will build on the initial steps taken before the summer towards the 25% reduction in reporting obligations announced in March 2023, with further proposals in the coming weeks, as well as measures to systematically map such burdens and develop targeted rationalisation plans for future years.
- **Boost investments available for SMEs**, on top of more than €200 billion available to SMEs under the EU's various funding programmes running until 2027. Build on the success of the SME window of InvestEU by encouraging Member State transfers to national compartments in that window and ensuring that part of the proposed €7.5 billion EU guarantee under a new dedicated Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) window of InvestEU is also available for SMEs. A simple and standardised methodology will support SMEs in reporting on sustainability topics, thereby facilitating access to sustainable finance.
- **Enable a skilled workforce for SMEs to flourish** by continuing to support training actions provided by the Large Skills Partnerships under the European Pact for Skills and other support initiatives to match skills with the needs of SMEs from the European labour market.
- **Support SMEs' growth** by reviewing, by the end of 2023, the current SME definition thresholds and developing a harmonised definition and potentially adapting certain obligations for small mid-cap companies to unleash their full economic potential.

Background

Europe's 24 million small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent 99% of all businesses and two thirds of private sector jobs in the EU. They are central to Europe's economic and social

fabric, drive Europe's green and digital transitions and support our long-term prosperity. SMEs have been disproportionately affected by the sequence of crises over the past years: from COVID, Russia's war against Ukraine, the energy crisis and the rise in inflation. SMEs still face volatility and unpredictability, as well as supply constraints, labour shortages and, often, unfair competition and an unequal level playing field when doing business in Europe. Payment delays in commercial transactions prevent investments and growth and contribute to uncertainty and mistrust in the business environment. The recent SME performance report shows that SME value added for 2023 is still forecast to remain at 3.6% (against 1.8% for large enterprises) below its 2019 level, while SME employment has barely recovered to pre-crisis levels. To unleash the power of the EU's SMEs in the Single Market and beyond, the Commission put forward a comprehensive set of actions under its 2020 SME strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe. Most of these actions have been completed or are ongoing. In addition, SMEs play a crucial role in the co-creation and implementation of transition pathways, which aim to support the green and digital transition across industrial ecosystems. SME-friendly provisions form part of all key EU legislative initiatives, while further support measures for SMEs are being rolled out by the Enterprise Europe Network, the Cluster Collaboration Platform and other partners. In terms of funding, the Commission expects to make more than €200 billion available to SMEs under its various funding programmes running until 2027. This includes substantial amounts under the EU's Cohesion Funds (€665 billion) and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (€45.2 billion) dedicated to direct and indirect measures in support of SMEs, helping them become more resilient, sustainable and digital.



9. Syndicated transaction of 2023

The European Commission, which issues EU-Bonds on behalf of the EU, has raised a further €5 billion of EU-Bonds in its 9th syndicated transaction for 2023. The single tranche transaction consisted of a new 7-year bond due on 4 December 2030. Market conditions leading up to the transaction were more subdued, with investors awaiting clarity on further changes in euro-interest rates. However, the deal was met with strong interest from investors, who placed bids in excess of €46 billion, making for an oversubscription rate of over 9 times and showing continued solid market access for the European Commission. The proceeds of this transaction will be used to support both the NextGenerationEU recovery programme and the Macro-Financial Assistance+ programme for Ukraine, in line with the Commission's approach of issuing single branded "EU-Bonds" rather than separately labelled bonds for individual programmes. With the transaction, the Commission has completed approximately 28% of its €40 billion funding target for the second half of 2023.



A full overview of all EU transactions executed to date is available online. A detailed overview of the EU's planned transactions for the second half of 2023 is also available in the EU funding plan.

Background

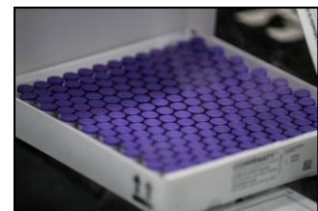
The European Commission borrows on international capital markets on behalf of the European Union and disburses the funds to Member States and third countries under various borrowing programmes. EU borrowing is guaranteed by the EU budget, and contributions to the EU budget are an unconditional legal obligation of all Member States under the EU Treaties. Since January 2023, the European Commission has been issuing single branded EU-Bonds rather than separately labelled bonds for individual programmes. The proceeds of these single-branded bonds are allocated to relevant programmes according to the procedures set out in the applicable agreements. On the basis of EU-Bonds raised since mid-2021, the Commission has so far disbursed € 153.38 billion in grants and loans to the EU Member States under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, on top of further support to other EU programmes benefitting from

NextGenerationEU funding. The Commission has also disbursed €12 billion to Ukraine under the Macro-Financial Assistance + programme, with a further disbursement of €1.5 billion scheduled for later this month. This programme – which will deliver €18 billion to Ukraine over the whole of 2023 - follows the disbursement of €7.2 billion by the Commission in emergency MFA loans to Ukraine in 2022. Prior to that, the EU had provided over €5 billion to Ukraine through five MFA programmes since 2014. To further boost the secondary market liquidity of EU-Bonds, the Commission has introduced a framework to provide investors with pricing quotes for EU securities on electronic platforms. EU Primary Dealers will start quoting prices for EU Bonds as from November 2023. The Commission is also working on a facility to support the use of EU-Bonds as an instrument for repurchase agreements (to be implemented by mid-2024).

10. Member States' autumn vaccination campaigns

The Commission has authorised the Spikevax XBB.1.5-adapted COVID-19 vaccine, developed by Moderna.

This is another important step in the fight against the disease. It is the third adaptation of this vaccine to respond to new COVID-19 variants. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) carried out a stringent evaluation of the vaccine under the accelerated assessment mechanism. Following this evaluation, the Commission authorised the adapted vaccine under an expedited procedure so that Member States can prepare in time for their autumn-winter vaccination campaigns. In line with previous recommendations by the EMA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), adults and children from 5 years of age who require vaccination are invited to take a single dose, irrespective of their COVID-19 vaccination history.



Background

With the EU Vaccines Strategy, the Commission continues to ensure that Member States have access to the latest authorised COVID-19 vaccines to protect the vulnerable members of their population and deal with the epidemiological evolution of the virus. Moderna has adapted its COVID-19 vaccine to target the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron strain XBB.1.5. This is in line with ECDC-EMA statement on updating COVID-19 vaccines composition for new SARS-CoV-2 variants. The adapted vaccine is also expected to increase the breadth of immunity against current dominant and emerging variants.

11. International photography competition promoted by EDF

International photography competition promoted by EDF, the European Disability Forum which aims to challenge participants to present images that break down stereotypes and preconceptions surrounding women with disabilities from different cultural, background and/or ethnic contexts.



All submissions are due on the 15 of December 2023, 23:59 h CET. The competition is open to all EU/EEA citizens or residents of all ages and there is no entry fee. You participate individually. The competition is open to anyone who wishes to help represent the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities around the world. Images are required that capture their daily lives, their struggles and their achievements, covering a wide range of topics, including gender and social

equality in: work, sports, health, education, culture, accessibility, activism and leadership, motherhood and personal identity. **The three finalists will receive:** 1st place prize: 500 euros; 2nd place prize: 300 euros; 3rd place prize: 200 euros. All participants must send a single original high resolution photo (300 dpi) with a description of the image. Permissions: editing, filters, built-in camera effects. Not allowed: Collages (more than one photo), watermarks, text, or other elements added to the photo. A short description in English that includes the author's name, the city and the country where the photo was taken. [More information](#)

12. Competition for emerging filmmakers and video artists

The Next Generation Short Film Festival is a short film competition aimed at emerging and independent filmmakers and video artists. The competition is created by the union of several associations active in the cultural and cinematographic field by the Department of Tourism and Cultural Industry of the Puglia Region and the Municipality of Bari. The competition is divided into two parts: the Cinema section is dedicated to works created with a purely cinematic mould; the Artist's Films section is dedicated to those more hybrid works, that is, which use video language as a tool of expression in a free and broad sense, such as documentaries, video clips, 3D animations, etc. The objective of the festival is to offer spaces of expression to give voice to the "generation to come" both in a personal and artistic sense. The look of the festival wants to give space to a generation capable of bringing new, unprecedented visions, without the link of continuity with the past. The theme of the festival is "Esprit" as strength, the representation of power, of the wit of reasoning. Esprit is that spirit that drives exploration, to trigger the creative act. The creative spirit that guides the artistic representation and vision of the world. The competition is open to all citizens resident in, domiciled or born in Italy. The important thing is that your project has a duration of no more than 30 minutes including the credits. The short films and artist films that pass the pre-selection will be screened publicly during the final event of the festival which will be held in Bari in December 2023. The total amount of prizes up for grabs is 4,000 euros and will be distributed at the discretion of the Artistic Direction and the Jury among the winning works. Furthermore, the finalist directors/artists must be present at the awards ceremony. Film duration no longer than 30 minutes. Regardless of the competition section in which it is nominated, the work must respond to the Esprit theme. You can participate as individuals, co-authors or collectives. Present a single work, not necessarily unpublished. **The deadline for registrations of 12 November 2023.** Pay the participation fee of 15 euros (for filmmakers and artists aged less than or equal to 25 years the fee is 12 euros). More information can be found at the [following link](#).



13. Traineeships at ECHA

The Governance, Strategy and Relations Unit works with the management team, units across the Agency, and partners in Institutions, Member States and third countries, benefitting from a variety of professional profiles, experience on the job, trustful ways of working and increasing integration of ECHA's activities to support the Agency in fulfilling its objectives in a coherent, effective and efficient way. The GSR Unit:

- Enables the Management Board to fulfil its duties, and to provide strong governance and strategic steer to the Agency as a precondition to deliver its mission and vision;
- Provides a support and advice capacity to the management team to navigate through change, uncertainty and risks, promoting compliance and adapting to developing institutional demands;
- Provides corporate management systems and tools, integrating the ISO certified quality scheme with the EU agencies framework for internal control, audits, evaluations, risk management, and performance management;
- Manages an alignment and prioritisation management body and a business network for the main products involved in the Integrated Regulatory Strategy bridging IT and business aspects;
- Manages ECHA's strategic planning and reporting cycles, to deliver on its strategy, plan the resources and activities for existing and new tasks in a consistent, transparent and performance-orientated manner, and reliably report on the outcome;
- Engages with policy stakeholders in European Union Institutions, Member States and other EU agencies to understand their viewpoints and expectations, foster ECHA's reputation, advocate its interests and identify strategic opportunities;



- Liaises with third countries and international organisations to increase the awareness of ECHA's impact, and develop international activities

Deadline for applications: 30 October 2023 at noon 12:00 Helsinki time.

[More information.](#)

14. Internship at the European ombudsman

The European Ombudsman is an independent and impartial body that works to promote good administration at EU level. The Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration by EU institutions and bodies, and also proactively looks into broader systemic issues. Our guiding principles are accountability, transparency, and trust. The European Ombudsman is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from anybody who meets the eligibility criteria and required qualifications. We will try to accommodate the needs of applicants with disabilities. Candidates should be nationals of a Member State of the European Union, or of an accession/candidate country. Candidates should not have benefitted, for more than eight consecutive weeks or two full months, from a previous paid traineeship or work contract in a European institution, body, agency, office, service, delegation, representation, including the office of a Member of the European Parliament or of a European political group. Candidates should either (i) have a Master's/Engineer degree in software development or (ii) be in the process of completing it. In the latter case, the traineeship can be part of their master/engineer programme. Candidates should have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the EU and very good knowledge of another. The working languages are English and/or French. The traineeship will take place in Strasbourg. The starting date can be agreed with the selected trainee but the traineeship should ideally start in February or March 2024. The traineeship has a maximum duration of 12 months. A shorter duration may be agreed upon request. Trainees receive a monthly grant in accordance with the conditions defined in the Decision of the European Ombudsman concerning traineeships (see: additional information). The grant for the Strasbourg-based trainees is approximately €1750 per month. Additionally, trainees receive a €40 monthly supplement as support for their internet connection. **Deadline for applications: November 6, 2023.** [More information.](#)



15. The second meeting of the “Learn STEM” in Paderborn, Germany

The second meeting in the presence of the project, “Innovative Model of learning STEM in secondary schools” – acronym “Learn STEM” – initiative approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Turkey as action no. 2022-1-TR01-KA220-SCH-000087583., it took place at the University of Paderborn in Germany. The transnational meeting is aimed at taking stock of the state of development of the project and its products (in particular, at this moment, on the existing good



practices in STEM teaching in the various countries) and at planning the new work steps of the entire partnership, which is made up of the following organizations: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi (Turkey), Ingenious Knowledge GmbH (Germany), Universität Paderborn (Germany), IEK Kavala (Greece), Liceul Tehnologic “Haralamb Vasiliu” (Romania), Ahi Evran Anadolu Lisesi (Turkey), Yusuf Demir Bilim Ve Sanat Merkezi (Turkey) and EURO-NET (Italy). The project, in fact, aims to strengthen the ability of secondary schools to promote skills in STEM subjects

(science, technology, engineering and mathematics) through innovative and interactive pedagogical methods and approaches, in particular, through the use of the IoT (Internet of things): the European partnership is working to develop a pedagogical model, a teacher training program and an online eLearning platform. More information can be found here: www.learnstem.eu

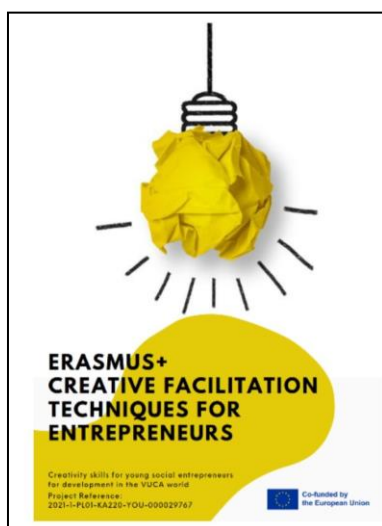
16. Italy completed all dialogue dinners planned FOR “Food For Change”

In the first half of August, the EURO-NET association completed the development in Italy of the "Dialogue Dinners" foreseen in the "Food for Change" project (acronym "FFC"), approved by the competent National Agency in Denmark within the Erasmus Plus program KA220-YOU – Cooperation partnerships in youth as initiative n.2022-1-DK01-KA220-YOU-000089325. In this particular action of the project (referred to in the attached images) food was used as a means and tool to develop an intercultural dialogue (with young people from different backgrounds in terms of race, gender and socio-economic class) on topics that transcend national borders. In this way, it was possible to bring young people out of their social bubbles and online echo chambers, where they often take refuge in solitude, to make them compare directly and "de visu" with their peers and allow them to share their stories, experiences and worldviews. Through the dinners (a new, particular and innovative way of carrying out training and dialogue), the values of tolerance, inclusion and respect for diversity were promoted to prevent radicalisation, racism and discrimination among young people. The dinners also served to strengthen the capacity of the organizations involved and interested parties (such as educational institutions, public schools and youth organizations) to work with young people. The intercultural dialogue developed during the dinners on personal, social and political topics also made it possible to strengthen the sense of initiative and active European citizenship of young people in their local communities, increasingly opening them up to acceptance and inclusion, primary values of common being together and on which the entire Union is founded. The six dialogue dinners, held between 3 August and 9 August, were organized and "led" by the Italian project managers, Drs Veronica Summa and Maria Schirone, and recorded the presence, in total, of 48 participants (8 for each evening, to which must always be added the 2 mentioned facilitators of the EURO-NET association).



17. New meeting in Poland for the project CREAIVENTER

On 9th September, a new meeting of the project “Creativity skills for young social entrepreneurs for development in the VUCA world”, acronym “CREAIVENTER”, was held in Warsaw, Poland, an initiative approved in Poland by the competent National Agency as action 2021-1 -PL01-KA220-YOU-000029767 under the Erasmus Plus Cooperative Partnerships in Youth programme. The objective of the meeting was to share in plenary the products created in Result 2 (a manual aimed at developing creative skills) and to verify the state of the art of Result 3 (a chatbot, i.e. software that simulates and processes conversations written or spoken with a digital assistant to support the creativity of those who want to try their hand at developing a company), thus being able to support the training activities planned for young people in the various participating countries and being able to develop 5 multiplier events (one for each project partner) with the ultimate goal of helping at least 120 young social entrepreneurs develop key skills for the development of their business. Partners of the project are the following organizations: FUNDACJA MARKI POLSKIEJ IM. PROF. WITOLDA KIEŻUNA, (Poland – project coordinator), SPÓŁDZIELNIA SOCJALNA OSÓB PRAWNYCH CENTRUM USŁUG ŚRODOWISKO-WYCH (Poland), EMBAIXADA DA JUVENTUDE (Portugal), UKRAINIAN CENTER OF THE FUTURE (Ukraine) and EURO-NET (Italy). More information on the project is available on the initiative's official Facebook page at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/Creativity-skills-for-young-social-entrepreneurs-100380882687233>.



18. Meeting in Finland for the CoCo project

On 11st and 12nd September, a new transnational meeting of the “Conscious Consumption” project (acronym “CoCo”) was held in Kouvola, Finland, approved in Germany by the German National Agency Erasmus Plus within the “KA220-ADU” program Cooperation partnerships in adult education” as action n.2021-1-DE02-KA 220-ADU-000033718. At the meeting the entire partnership of the project composed of COMPARATIVE RESEARCH NETWORK EV (Germany - coordinator of the initiative), EURO-NET (Italy), DR. LUDWIG INTELLIGENT PROJECTS GMBH (Germany), KAAKKOIS-SUOMEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU OY (Finland), BLUE ROOM INNOVATION SL (Spain), ERASMUS LEARNING ACADEMY (Italy) and FUNDACJA OTWARTY PLAN (Poland) met to verify the final work steps and plan the next actions to be developed. The meeting which was obviously also attended by some staff members of the organization EURO-NET, will be held in 2 different locations: on 11 September at the Kohoa Synergiakeskus (a hub for local entrepreneurs, coworking and training centre) and on 12 September at the English language) in business and game design. Also on the dissemination activities within the WP2. The Polish coordinator and the partners of the initiative - Ekpaideftiria Kaloskami S.A. (Greece), Aidlearn, Consultoria em Recursos Humanos Lda (Portugal), Erasmus ME Academy gGmbH (Germany) and EURO-NET (Italy) – have therefore presented the work carried out in the various European countries and have defined the next step for the project implementation. The “IntCult AE” project has started in November 2022 and will conclude at the end of February 2025; it aims at improving the intercultural competencies of adult educators through an innovative online course, a multimedia catalogue, and some workshop guides for those who wish to conduct their own courses by using the project outputs. Furthermore, the project aims at developing intercultural competencies by improving adult educators’ ability to move in complex environment, thus enabling them to learn more effectively and strengthening their role in inspiring, instructing and advising students.



19. Meeting in Potenza for the project GREEN URBAN PATHS

The second meeting was held in Potenza for the project “GREEN URBAN PATHS” (acronym “G&PS”), approved in Denmark by the competent Erasmus Plus National Agency within the “KA220-ADU Cooperation transnational meeting” programme, which was hosted by the Youth Europe Service association (one of the two Italian partners of the initiative) in the headquarters of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, this meeting brought together the six partners of the project – KØGE BUSINESS COLLEGE (Denmark – coordinator of the initiative), TQC SRL and YOUTH EUROPE SERVICE (both from Italy), COMPARATIVE RESEARCH NETWORK EV (Germany), ASSOCIACIÓ EDUCATIVA I CULTURAL BLUE BEEHIVE (Spain) and STANDO LTD (Cyprus) to verify the state of the work developed so far and to be able to plan the new steps .



The “GREEN URBAN PATHS” project is aimed at operators, educators and mediators who wish to know, understand and support the dynamics for the development of innovative, dynamic and attractive sustainable tourism paths, capable of making the territory highly green and intends to implement the creation of paths to improve tourism skills, improving

accessibility in adult education, using new digital generation products (Apps and platforms) combined with theatrical storytelling to develop products capable of promoting eco-friendly solutions in the cities of Denmark, Germany, Spain, Italy and Cyprus.

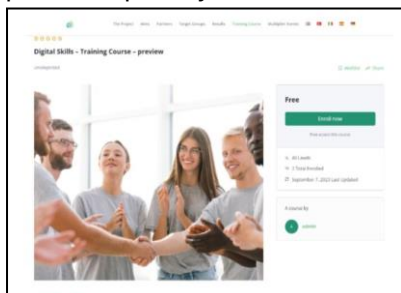
20. Launch of the cooperation portal “Building Better”

APS Sharing Europe, Florentine partner of the Erasmus+ project n. 2020-1-DE04-KA227-YOU-020835 entitled “Building Better”, between 2021 and 2023 worked for the development and strengthening of youth and cultural networks through the creation of a new virtual collaboration space to stimulate intercultural engagement and creative minds. The cooperation portal is an online participatory space where local policy makers, youth workers, arts educators, cultural managers and NGO professionals working for young people can connect to acquire information and tools for supporting and raising awareness of young people or to promote cultural information. The information and resources are not limited to the project partner cities: Dresden, Florence, Heraklion, Larissa and Nicosia as it also includes learning resources, cultural information, methods and tools developed by the project partner organizations located in the aforementioned cities and by other organizations that are not included in the project consortium and are located across Europe. Portal users have the unique opportunity, after registering for free, to also upload resources such as cultural information, events and activities taking place in their cities, tools and methods for supporting and raising awareness of young people, as well as resources and materials learning they have developed so that they can better disseminate the results of their projects. More information is available at the following link: <https://building-better.eu/it/il-lancio-del-portale-di-cooperazione-building-better/>



21. Digi4You: the partners are working on the platform and the App

In these days the European consortium of the project “Digital skills development toolkit for young NEETS to increase employability”, acronym “Digi4you” (initiative approved in Turkey by the National Agency of the same country within the Erasmus+ program KA220-YOU Cooperation partnerships in youth as action n. 2021-2-TR01-KA220-YOU-000047996), is working, under the

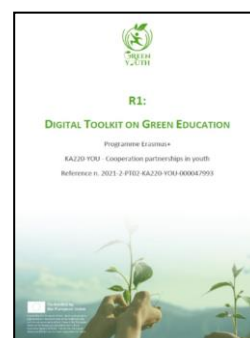


careful guidance and supervision of the staff of the EURO-NET association, for years an absolute leader at European level in this specific sector, on the development of the platform multilingual web eLearning (referred to in the attached image) and the App for Android mobile phones (which will also be downloadable from the Google Play Store as soon as it is ready). The partnership, which includes Bilim ve İnsan Vakfı (project coordinator – Turkey), EURO-NET (Italy), INDEPCIE SCA (Spain) and ESICA (Austria), all companies and associations very active in the youth sector and experts in the

field of innovative digital productions, is working with commitment and professionalism to provide those who work with young people with tools to help them find a job or build an entrepreneurial future. More information on the European initiative is available on the website <https://www.digi4you.eu/> or on the project's official Facebook page at the link <https://www.facebook.com/digi4youproject>.

22. “Green Youth” project: the Digital Tool-Kit is almost ready

The “Digital Tool-kit of the European project “Green Youth – Educational materials for environmental sustainability”, acronym “Green Youth”, an initiative approved as action no. 2021-2- PT02-KA220-YOU-000047993, in Portugal by the competent National Agency, as part of the actions envisaged in the Erasmus+ program – KA220-YOU – Cooperation partnerships in youth is nearing completion. The partners – ASSOCIACAO JUVENIL DA ILHA TERCEIRA (Portugal – coordinator of the entire project), YOUTH EUROPE SERVICE (Italy), INSTITUTE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT (Greece), AVRASYA YENİLİKÇİ TOPLUM DERNEĞİ (Turkey) and VAEV (Austria) – are completing the various sections of the manual, which is created under the guidance and



supervision of the Italian association, and will shortly be published and distributed to all possible beneficiaries. The “Green Youth” project is fully in line with the EU Green Deal and, specifically, actively contributes to “transforming climate and environmental challenges into opportunities and making the transition just and inclusive for all”. Furthermore, the project also responds to the need for more accessible and eco-friendly education, providing tools and methodologies for youth workers to better engage young people in issues related to sustainability and environmental challenges. “Green Youth” covers a wide range of tangible and practice-oriented environmental topics and initiatives. Finally, the use of non-formal education methodology supports the creation of modern, accessible and engaging materials to guide both young people and youth workers on their path towards greater attention to the environment and the environment.

23. An important event for Basilicata region

The event held on 15th September in Matera, in the splendid setting of the Ridola Museum, and relating to the "European opportunities for the relaunch of Basilicata" allowed an interesting debate and comparison between European institutions; Basilicata Region and local stakeholders. The event, strongly supported by the European Parliament and the European Commission, which availed itself of the support of the EURO-NET association (Europe Direct Basilicata centre) for the interface with the highest regional institution in Lucania interested, instead, in the organization of the event, saw the participation of important supranational representatives, including Carlo Corazza (Director of the European Parliament Office in Italy), Antonio Parenti (Head of Representation in Italy of the European Commission), Denis Nesci (European Parliamentarian), Mariateresa Di Giacomo (Head of Unit at European Investment Bank for Financial Instruments) and Andrea Nuzzi (Head of Enterprises and Financial Institutions Cassa Depositi e Prestiti). For the Basilicata Region, the Councilor Casino intervened and, welcomed the opening of the event, communicated to the entire assembly of those present the warm greetings of President Bardi, who was unable to participate at the event due to further unexpected commitments institutional. The event, which was also attended by the Director of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, Antonino



Imbesi (who shared with the participants his extraordinary professional experience in community planning and the ability to take up the challenges of European tenders), was focused on the observation that the EU offers many resources to the Regions to fill gaps and create new development and on the need to be able to seize these chances and use all the tools in a combined way, reconciling local and national capacities to make the Lucanian territory more equitable and prosperous for the entire South Italy. The Regions are, in fact, fundamental actors in the use of European funds, while there are many sectors of possible interventions in the Basilicata Region: ranging from cultural and creative industries to rural development, from tangible and intangible infrastructures to training and so on. But from this perspective, it is obviously fundamental to listen to the territories in order not to waste energy, to be ready at the right time for the many tenders available (including, among others, Next Generation EU, PNRR, ERDF, FSE+ and EIB) and try to seize all opportunities. At the conclusion of the Matera meeting, Councilor Casino, on behalf of the

Basilicata Region, confirmed that he intends to create shortly, a proficient debate between the official centers of the European Commission in Lucania to meet the needs that emerged from the territory.

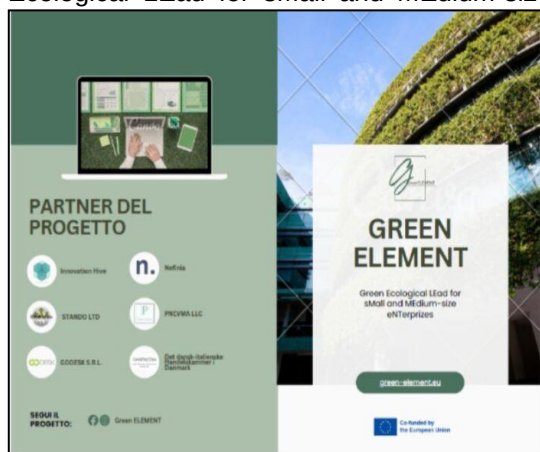
24. Training in Potenza for the project SAFE

From 19th to 21st September the city of Potenza hosted the international training of the project called "Social Awareness For Europe" (acronym "SAFE"), approved in Norway as the action. 2021-1-NO01-KA220-ADU-000029476 in the programme of Erasmus Plus KA220-ADU Cooperation partnerships in Adult Education of the homonymous National Agency. The transnational training course was hosted by the association YOTH EUROPE SERVICE (Italian partner of the project) in the main office of Europe Direct Basilicata (official information center of the European Commission in the region). The training for the European partners' staff, was followed by 14 participants including 4 Italians and 10 foreigners from Spain, Ireland and Norway. Partner's organization, FONIX as Norway; ACADEMIA POSTAL 3 VIGO S.L (Spain); THE RURAL HUB CLG (Ireland) and YOUTH EUROPE SERVICE (Italy), they presented the work carried out in the various project Results and then concentrated on the training activities. The training was characterized by intense and fruitful debates in which the staff of the various organizations, all very satisfied with how this activity developed, highlighted all the strong points of the training action carried out and how it can only produce real benefits for the project target group, which is aimed at reducing intolerance and social exclusion among adults in the European Union, an objective that must be achieved by providing adults with high-quality skills, procedures and tools to manage the aforementioned problems, promoting positive values, avoiding believing fake news and promoting a perspective of inclusion based on respect, equality and social justice. More information can be found at the following link: <http://safe.netsons.org/>



25. The brochure of the project GreenELEMENT is ready

Thanks to the work of the Godesk staff, both the brochure and the first newsletter of the "Green Ecological LEad for sMall and MEium-size eNTERprizes" project (acronym "GreenELEMENT")

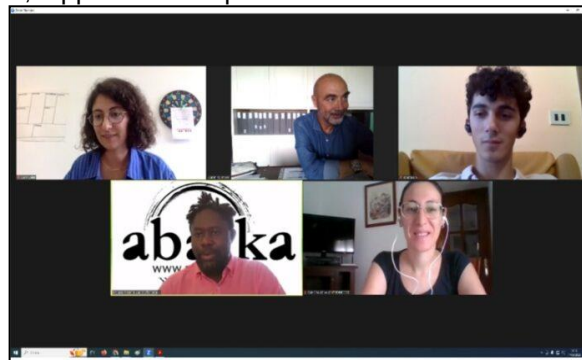


have been available also in Italian. An initiative approved as action n.2022-1-NL01-KA220-VET-000087087 from the Erasmus Plus Agency in the Netherlands as part of the KA220-VET actions – Cooperation partnerships in VET. The project starts from the observation that in the 21st century, it is essential that business leaders face the challenges of sustainability in their companies and promote a "green leadership mentality": for this "Green ELEMENT" intends to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to act responsibly in the market and economy while respecting the environment and society. At this moment the partners, Nefinia (Netherlands), Stando LTD (Cyprus), PNEVMA LLC (Bulgaria), Innovation Hive

(Greece), Danita (Denmark) and Godesk srl (Italy), are engaged in developing the curriculum and creating the e-learning platform. The curriculum will place specific emphasis on providing SME leaders with essential skills to effectively manage their businesses within the framework of sustainability, environmental awareness and social responsibility, while the e-learning platform (interactive and user-friendly) will facilitate engagement and interaction between SME leaders, VET trainers and e-Learning materials. Recognizing the importance of equipping VET trainers with the necessary knowledge and skills, the GreenELEMENT partnership will also shortly organize a training in Cyprus to train 18 training workers. Their experience and insights will play an indispensable role in refining and optimizing your online course content. During the pilot phases, the project will collect feedback from VET trainers and SME leaders, further ensuring the continuous improvement and effectiveness of the training programme.

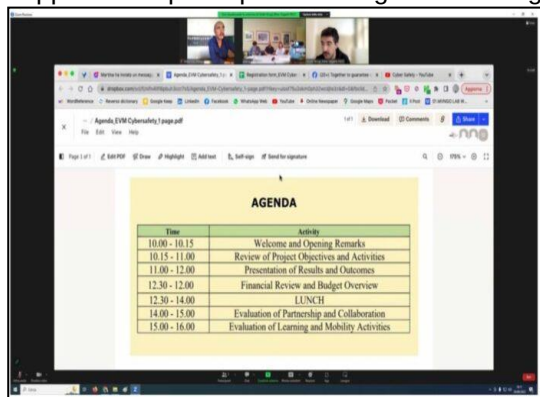
26. Meeting online for the project “ECORUB”

Last 14th September the partners of the “Entrepreneurial Countryside to Boost Rural Businesses” project (acronym “ECORUB”) met online to present their organizations and to begin planning the actions that will have to be developed in the initiative over the course of 13 months of activity and by 30 September 2024. The ECORUB project, approved in Spain within the Erasmus Plus KA210-YOU – Small-scale partnerships in youth program by the competent National Agency, aims to reduce unemployment among young people in rural areas by providing to the same tools to promote their own business. For several decades now, in all rural areas, young people have been forced to abandon their lands due to the lack of job opportunities and one of the consequences suffered by the various countries is the loss of agricultural, livestock and/or forestry traditions, which, instead, respecting nature, they represent a sustainable way of producing food and other goods, while at the same time contributing to mitigating climate change and conserving biodiversity. The project aims to address this challenge by helping young people to take an active role in their lives through the development of non-formal education activities, pilot testing and networking. The project partners – ASSOCIATION DE COOPERATION AL DESAROLLO ABARKA (Spain – project coordinator), Asociatia REVAMA (Romania), Asociación Deportiva y Cultural Entrejuegos (Spain) and EURO-NET (Italy) – during the meeting also discussed and planned the first transnational meeting in person which will take place in Italy in the second half of next November and will be hosted in the headquarters of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre. ECORUB, according to the intentions of the partners, will strengthen the employability of young people, promote inclusion and diversity in the field of education, training, youth and sport by providing tools and skills to 40 youth workers from the 4 mentioned partner organizations and promoting the self-employment and the creation of businesses, consequently also increasing the employability of young people.



27. Last meeting in Sassari for the project “CYBER-SAFETY”

The last meeting of the project “Together to guarantee cyber-safety and prevent cyberbullying in schools” (acronym “CYBER-SAFETY”), an initiative approved in Croatia within the Erasmus Plus program KA220-SCH as action n.2021-1 -HR01-KA220-SCH-000027712, was attempted in Sassari last September. All the delegations of the various partners of the project took part in the meeting in person, except that of the YOUTH EUROPE SERVICE association (which was only able to participate in the meeting online) due to a small road accident, fortunately with minor consequences, which occurred 24 hours before the trip to Sardinia to the staff person who was supposed to participate. During the meeting the partners showed the final results of the various



products developed and discussed the organization of the final Multiplier Events to be held by October 31st. in each nation participating in the European consortium. The CYBER-SAFETY project, in fact, will formally end at the end of the month and, therefore, all the partners –: IVAN CANKAR PRIMARY SCHOOL (Croatia – project coordinator), YOUTH EUROPE SERVICE (Italy), COLEGIUL NATIONAL SPIRU HARET (Romania), LOOSE MINE NGO (Italy) and Van İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü (Turkey) - must now commit to the organization of the important dissemination events aimed at the various target groups foreseen by the Erasmus Plus partnership initiative, which will be aimed at promoting the products developed in a broader manner in the 2 years of activity and aimed at preparing teachers and youth educators to address the problem of cyber-bullying in schools and to promote an awareness campaign among adolescents to prevent and combat this defective phenomenon.

28. Meeting in Vienna for the project “Digi4You”

On the 26th of September in Vienna, Austria, a new in-person meeting was held as part of the project “Digital skills development toolkit for young NEETS to increase employability” (acronym “digi4you”), an initiative approved in Turkey by the National Agency of the same country within the Erasmus Plus Partnership Cooperatives for Youth program as action n. 2021-2-TR01-KA220-YOU-000047996. During the meeting the partners discussed the progress of Result 4 of the project (“Digital skills online application”) and Result 5 (“Usability and User Experience Evaluation Tool”), a guide dedicated to those currently in completion. Dr Luigi Vitelli went to Austria to represent the EURO-NET association (Europe Direct Basilicata centre). The other partners present were: - Bilim ve İnsan Vakfı (project coordinator - Turkey), INDEPCIE SCA (Spain) and ESICA (Austria) - the latest developments of the platform and the app under development. Finally, the meeting also discussed dissemination activities and administrative and financial issues, all extremely linked to the reporting to be prepared for the final report. More information on the European initiative is available on the website <https://www.digi4you.eu/> or on the project's official Facebook page at the link <https://www.facebook.com/digi4youproject>.



29. New meeting in Turkey for the project CURIKIDS

A new transnational meeting of the project “Integrated STEM Education with an Interactive Digital Library for Curious Kids” (acronym “CURIKIDS”) was held in Turkey, an initiative approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Turkey as action n.2022-1-TR01-KA220-SCH-000086836 within the Erasmus Plus program KA220-SCH – Cooperation partnerships in school education. The meeting which was attended by all the delegations of the organizations belonging to the partnership, namely AKDENIZ UNIVERSITY (Turkey), UNIBA – University of Bari Aldo Moro (Italy), ANTALYA IL MILLI EGITIM MUDURLUGU (Turkey), AIJU (Spain), COFAC (Portugal) and EURO-NET (Italy), was directed to verify the state of implementation of the work carried out in the first 9 months of activity of the European initiative. Dr. Alessia Di Tolla participated for EURO-NET and spoke about the activities that the association is carrying out for the development of the digital library and animated stories.



30. The training course on European opportunities for businesses

The course on skills aimed at employment on the topic of opportunities for businesses in Europe has started, financed by the ESF OP 2014-2020 as part of the European Year of Skills 2023 and in collaboration with the Regional Education Office for Basilicata. The innovative training course, structured entirely on the didactic use of non-formal European-style cultural methodologies, is managed by the Youth Europe Service association from Potenza, which has scheduled 12 meetings, each lasting 2 days of 4 hours each, in high schools Lucanians who were the first to request participation in the training activities for their students, strictly following the temporal booking method via certified e-mail. The schools that joined the course in time to be admitted are the Liceo Gropius and the IPIAS Giorgi (both located in Potenza), the IIS Gasparrini of Melfi, IIS Battaglini of Venosa, the Liceo Alighieri of Matera and the IIS Fermi of Policoro. Unfortunately, several other schools, despite having sent their own request to participate in the training activities, will not be able to



participate in them, as, with their applications, the maximum number of training days established by the regional announcement requested by the "Managing Authority PO FSE Basilicata 2014-2020". The excluded schools will, however, have the opportunity to follow the training activities as a complete "format" of the lessons will be uploaded onto a special server, so that they can also be used online. The course which starts today has been promoted with various posts on the Youth Europe Service Facebook page and with a very nice video commercial, always uploaded on the association's social channels and visible at the link <https://www.facebook.com/100071680912222/videos/1517552095741583>. Until the second half of November, therefore, over 500 Lucanian students from the schools mentioned above will have the opportunity to follow a qualifying intervention free of charge aimed at developing skills and transversal abilities that are very useful for their future employment: it is an intervention that it is also consistent with the objectives of the European Year of Skills which began on 9 May and in particular with the aim of matching people's aspirations and skills to the opportunities offered by the job market. The initiative will then conclude with a large final public event celebrating the results, already scheduled for November 23rd. at the Principe di Piemonte in Potenza, which will see the participation of a delegation of students (around 300) from all the participating schools, guests and regional and international authorities, as well as testimonials with the possibility of online connections.

31. Meeting in Ravenna for the Europe Direct network

The annual meeting of the Italian Europe Direct network was held from 11 to 13 October in Ravenna, in the prestigious Sala D'Atorre of Casa Melandri and in the equally famous Sala Dantesca of the Classense Library, in which everyone took part. the Europe Direct centers and those of European Documentation (CDE) distributed throughout the national territory (obviously the Director of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, Antonino Imbesi, representing the structure located in Lucania, also participates in the Ravenna meeting). During the event, after the ritual greetings from the Mayor of Ravenna (Michele De Pascale, the Director of the European Parliament's Office in Italy (Carlo Corazza) and the Head of the European Commission's Representation in Italy (Antonio Parenti), in-depth discussions will be scheduled on all the most important actions that the Commission is developing in the last period and the communication priorities for the next year 2024: from the European elections, to the digital challenges of the future, from the A Scuola di OpenCoesione programme, to the synergistic actions implemented to strengthen Together.U.E. The national meeting includes, among others, the speech of Alessandro Giordani (Head of Networks Unit in the member states of DG COMM in Brussels).



During the works, a specific in-depth study is also planned on the 2024 annual Communication Plan that the Europe Direct centers will have to present to the European Commission by November 9th, with an indication of the priorities of planned actions and the new administrative indications for its management.

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32. Meeting in Potenza for the project "Green Youth"

The Youth Europe Service association of Potenza hosted the second meeting of the European project "Green Youth - Educational materials for environmental sustainability", acronym "Green Youth", an initiative approved as action no. 2021-2-PT02-KA220-YOU-000047993, in Portugal by the competent National Erasmus Plus Agency, as part of the actions envisaged in the Erasmus+ program of the same name – KA220-YOU – Cooperation partnerships in youth. During the meeting the partners – ASSOCIACAO JUVENIL DA ILHA TERCEIRA (Portugal – coordinator of the entire project), INSTITUTE OF ENTREPRENEUR SHIP



DEVELOPMENT (Greece), YOUTH EUROPE SERVICE (Italy), AVRASYA YENİLİKÇİ TOPLUM DERNEĞİ (Turkey) and VAEV (Austria) – they discussed the management of the project and the state of implementation of the products/results envisaged in it. In relation to Result 1, i.e. the "Digital Toolkit on Green Education", the project managers on behalf of the Italian association, Donato Viola and Antonino Imbesi, showed their European colleagues the definitive picture of the output, which was highly appreciated by all partners (both those present in person and those who, due to various problems, had to participate in the meeting only online with a virtual connection). During the meeting, the partners also defined the next deadlines to be respected for the delivery of the work due to each organization in the consortium and defined the distribution of tasks on the results not yet completed. Furthermore, at the suggestion of the Austrian and Italian partners, the project coordinator, Decio Santos, announced that he will ask the Portuguese National Agency for an extension of the partnership by at least 6 months: this request is necessary as the activities started with a considerable delay due to the initial bureaucratic delays of the Erasmus Agency itself, which was unable to send the contracts for the initiative within the expected time frame.

33. Meeting in Spain for the project ARES

Last 30th September the partners of the project "ARES – A Radio for Employability Skills" (approved in Italy by the National Erasmus+ Agency INDIRE within the Erasmus+ program KA210-ADU – Small-scale partnerships in adult education as action n. 2022- 1-IT02-KA210-ADU-000081472) met in Spain, in the town of Ibi, for the last meeting planned in the partnership initiative. The meeting was well hosted and organized by the Spanish association Asociacio Educational and Cultural Blue Beehive which welcomed the various delegates from the partner organizations of the consortium with all the honors required. During the work of the European meeting, the project coordinator, Dr. Vito Verrastro, on behalf of the Potenza company leading the initiative, Basilicata Press, took stock of the situation of the work already developed and what still remains to be done before concluding the activities: the partners discussed some appropriate updates for the website and of the collection of all the podcasts, as well as the certification methods



of the eLearning course available online on the Ares platform, noting that the project was a real success having exceeded many of the initial predictions. An important aspect of the meeting, in which obviously the delegation from Bonn of the German partner, Erasmus ME Academy, also actively participated, was the one dedicated to the final reporting of the project (which will formally end on November 1st) and of the expected consequential reporting. During the meeting, Dr. Giulia Maria Provenziale also presented the results of the latest event developed in Italy with the 4 teams that participated in the "ARES challenge", a promotional initiative linked to the production of a podcast on the themes of the European Agenda 2030: each participating team was rewarded by young Ares volunteers with a cap and a branded t-shirt. More information on the project is available on the initiative's website at the link www.aresproject.eu, and on the official Facebook page (Ares Project) at the web address <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087562917983>.