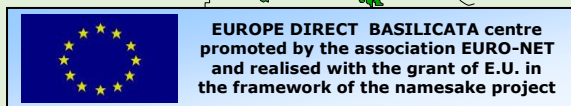




EURO-NET

The Youth European Network



**YEAR 19 - NUMBER 4
OF 20TH AUGUST 2024
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. European Artificial Intelligence Act comes into force



On 1st August took place, the European Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), the world's first comprehensive regulation on artificial intelligence, enters into force. The AI Act is designed to ensure that AI developed and used in the EU is trustworthy, with safeguards to protect people's fundamental rights.

The regulation aims to establish a harmonised internal market for AI in the EU, encouraging the uptake of this technology and creating a supportive environment for innovation and investment. The AI Act introduces a forward-

looking definition of AI, based on a product safety and risk-based approach in the EU:

- **Minimal risk:** Most AI systems, such as AI-enabled recommender systems and spam filters, fall into this category. These systems face no obligations under the AI Act due to their minimal risk to citizens' rights and safety. **Companies can voluntarily adopt additional codes of conduct.**
- **Specific transparency risk:** AI systems like chatbots **must clearly disclose to users that they are interacting with a machine.** Certain AI-generated content, including deep fakes, must be labelled as such, and users need to be informed when biometric categorisation or emotion recognition systems are being used. In addition, providers will have to design systems in a way that synthetic audio, video, text and images content is marked in a machine-readable format, and detectable as artificially generated or manipulated.
- **High risk:** AI systems identified as high-risk will be required to comply with **strict requirements**, including risk-mitigation systems, high quality of data sets, logging of activity, detailed documentation, clear user information, human oversight, and a high level of robustness, accuracy, and cybersecurity. Regulatory sandboxes will facilitate responsible innovation and the development of compliant AI systems. Such high-risk AI systems include for example AI systems used for recruitment, or to assess whether somebody is entitled to get a loan, or to run autonomous robots.
- **Unacceptable risk:** AI systems considered a clear threat to the fundamental rights of people will be **banned**. This includes AI systems or applications that manipulate human behaviour to circumvent users' free will, such as toys using voice assistance encouraging dangerous behaviour of minors, systems that allow 'social scoring' by governments or companies, and certain applications of predictive policing. In addition, some uses of biometric systems will be prohibited, for example emotion recognition systems used at the workplace and some systems for categorising people or real time remote biometric identification for law enforcement purposes in publicly accessible spaces (with narrow exceptions).

To complement this system, the AI Act also introduces rules for so-called general-purpose AI models, which are highly capable AI models that are designed to perform a wide variety of tasks like generating human-like text. General-purpose AI models are increasingly used as components of AI applications. The AI Act will ensure transparency along the value chain and addresses possible systemic risks of the most capable models.

Application and enforcement of the AI rules

Member States have until 2 August 2025 to designate national competent authorities, who will oversee the application of the rules for AI systems and carry out market surveillance activities. The Commission's AI Office will be the key implementation body for the AI Act at EU-level, as well as the enforcer for the rules for general-purpose AI models. Three advisory bodies will support the implementation of the rules. The European Artificial Intelligence Board will ensure a uniform application of the AI Act across EU Member States and will act as the main body for cooperation between the Commission and the Member States. A scientific panel of independent experts will offer technical advice and input on enforcement. In particular, this panel can issue alerts to the AI Office about risks associated to general-purpose AI models. The AI Office can also receive guidance from an advisory forum, composed of a diverse set of stakeholders. Companies not complying with the rules will be fined. Fines could go up to 7% of the global annual turnover for violations of banned AI applications, up to 3% for violations of other obligations and up to 1.5% for supplying incorrect information.

Next Steps

The majority of rules of the AI Act will start applying on 2 August 2026. However, prohibitions of AI systems deemed to present an unacceptable risk will already apply after six months, while the rules for so-called General-Purpose AI models will apply after 12 months. To bridge the transitional period before full implementation, the Commission has launched the AI Pact. This initiative invites AI developers to voluntarily adopt key obligations of the AI Act ahead of the legal deadlines. The Commission is also developing guidelines to define and detail how the AI Act should be implemented and facilitating co-regulatory instruments like standards and codes of practice. The Commission opened a call for expression of interest to participate in drawing-up the first general-purpose AI Code of Practice, as well as a multi-stakeholder consultation giving the opportunity to all stakeholders to have their say on the first Code of Practice under the AI Act.

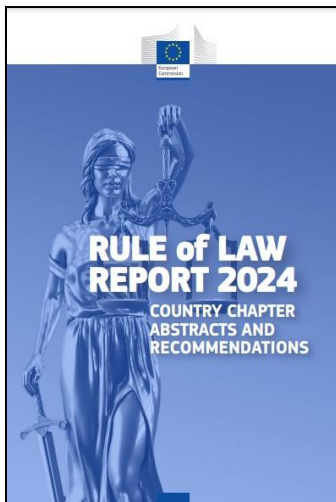
Background

On 9 December 2023, the Commission welcomed the political agreement on the AI Act. On 24 January 2024 the Commission has launched a package of measures to support European startups and SMEs in the development of trustworthy AI. On 29 May 2024 the Commission unveiled the AI Office. On 9 July 2024 the amended EuroHPC JU Regulation entered into force, thus allowing the set-up of AI factories. This allows dedicated AI-supercomputers to be used for the training of General Purpose AI (GPAI) models. Continued independent, evidence-based research produced by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) has been fundamental in shaping the EU's AI policies and ensuring their effective implementation.

2. Rule of Law Report 2024

The Commission has published its fifth annual Rule of Law Report, examining systematically and objectively rule of law developments in all Member States on an equal basis. In comparison to the first issue of the Rule of Law Report adopted in 2020, Member States and the EU as a whole are much better prepared to detect, prevent and address emerging challenges.

This contributes to the resilience of our European democracies and to mutual trust in the EU. It



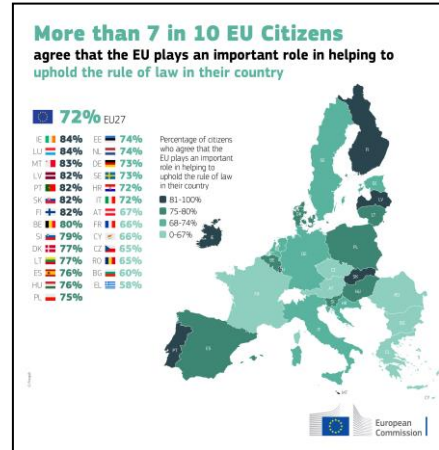
also contributes to a good functioning of the single market and benefits a business environment that fosters competitiveness and sustainable growth. Since its first publication in 2020, the report has become a true driver of positive reforms: Two thirds (68%) of the recommendations issued in 2023 have been, fully or partially, addressed. However, in some Member States systematic concerns remain and the situation has further deteriorated. These concerns are addressed in the recommendations of this year's report. There are no recommendations for enlargement countries in this report as recommendations for these countries are issued exclusively in the context of the annual Enlargement Package. This year's report includes, for the first time, four country chapters on developments in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Including these enlargement countries in the Rule of Law Report, the most advanced in the process, will support their reform efforts, help authorities to make further progress in the accession process and to prepare for the continuation of work on the rule of law as a future

Member State. More than 7 in 10 EU citizens agree that the EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in their country, according to a Special Eurobarometer survey. Close to 9 in 10 EU citizens consider important that all EU Member States respect the core values of the EU, an opinion stable since 2019. In addition, the feeling of being informed about the EU's fundamental values has improved significantly in many countries: overall, 51% EU citizens feel well informed about the EU's fundamental values and rule of law, compared to 43% in 2019. The 2024 report, as every year, includes a Communication examining the situation in the EU as a whole and 27 country chapters looking at significant developments in each Member State. The report also includes an assessment of last year's recommendations and, on that basis, provides, once more, specific recommendations addressed to all Member States. The report covers four pillars: national justice systems, anti-corruption frameworks, media freedom and pluralism as well as other institutional checks-and-balances.

Key findings and recommendations

1. Justice reforms

Justice reforms have continued to be high on the political agenda over the last year, with many Member States following up on the 2023 recommendations and implementing reforms agreed in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). Several Member States have initiated or further progressed with important reforms to strengthen judicial independence. They have undertaken legislative efforts to strengthen the independence and effectiveness of Councils of the Judiciary, to improve judicial appointment procedures, including regarding their highest courts, or to strengthen the autonomy of prosecution services. At the same time, some systemic concerns as regards judicial independence persist and specific cases of deterioration have been observed. Member States also introduced measures to improve the efficiency and quality of justice, as well as to facilitate access to justice. However, in several Member States, remuneration of judges and prosecutors is a concern and has led to challenges to recruit qualified judicial personnel. Consequently, this year's report recommends to Member States to address challenges such as the need for safeguards in judicial appointment procedures for both judges at lower instance courts and at high-level positions, the autonomy of the prosecution service or the need to provide adequate resources for the judiciary, including as regards salaries. In the enlargement countries, important reforms, including at constitutional level, have been undertaken to strengthen judicial independence and the quality of the justice systems. However, further works need to be done, notably in areas related to the functioning of the self-governing bodies of the judiciary and on judicial appointments.



2. Anti-corruption frameworks

Corruption remains a serious concern for citizens and businesses in the EU, according to the results of the 2024 Special and Flash Eurobarometer survey on citizens' and businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU. The results of the Special Eurobarometer show that Europeans remain concerned about national governments' efforts to address corruption: 65% of citizens believe that high-level corruption cases are not sufficiently pursued, and only 30% think that government efforts to combat corruption are effective. Similarly, 51% of EU-based companies think that people or businesses engaging in corrupt practices are caught by or reported to the authorities. Of these companies, around three quarters think that too close links between business and politics lead to corruption (79%) and that favouritism and corruption undermine business competition (74%). Across the EU, an average of 68% of citizens and 64% of EU-based companies consider corruption to be widespread in their Member States. Since last year, Member States have improved their institutional landscape to better fight corruption, including by increasing resources on the capacity of law enforcement services, prosecution authorities and the judiciary. At the same time, further action is needed to strengthen preventive frameworks, such as those governing lobbying and conflicts of interest and asset declaration rules, as well as to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of corruption cases. This is reflected in this year's recommendations. In the enlargement countries, legal and institutional arrangements were strengthened, though investigation and prosecution of corruption cases need to be further strengthened.

3. Media freedom and pluralism

Since the last Rule of Law Report, several Member States made concrete steps to improve journalists' safety and working environment, also in the light of Commission initiatives such as the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), already in force and fully applicable as of August 2025, the 'Anti-SLAPP' directive and recommendation and the Recommendation on safety of journalists. Moreover, the tasks and competences of several national media regulators have been expanded and extended, also due to the entry into force of the EU Digital Services Act, as well as new establishment or extension of online ownership registries. However, concerns persist in several Member States as regards the independent governance or financial stability of public service media broadcasters, transparency of media ownership, the right of access to public documents and the transparent and fair allocation of state advertising. The Commission has, once more, issued several recommendations on all these areas, including also the safety of journalists. Challenges exist in enlargement countries, notably as regards transparency of media ownership,

the independence of regulators or public services media and the safety of journalists, though reforms have also been carried out in some of them to address some of these issues.

4. Institutional checks and balances

Member States have continued to improve the quality of their legislative processes and to involve stakeholders in these processes – a trend also noted in the previous Rule of Law Reports. Some Member States bolstered status and resources of National Human Rights institutions, ombudspersons, and other independent authorities. Initiatives to reinforce the framework for and funding of civil society have also continued in several Member States. However, challenges remain in several Member States, such as the excessive use of accelerated procedures or the overall quality of law-making, as well as in consultation of stakeholders. Civil society and human rights defenders have increasingly faced challenges, legal restrictions, and attacks, including systemic restrictions to their operations in certain Member States. This is a worrying trend noted already in the previous report. To address the issues identified, the Commission has issued recommendations related to the functioning of the legislative process, the establishment and functioning of independent authorities and the enabling environment for civil society. In the enlargement countries, challenges remain regarding the systematic follow-up to recommendations of Ombudsperson institutions and other independent bodies. Challenges are also observed in relation to the quality of law-making and stakeholder consultations.

Next steps

The Commission now invites the European Parliament and the Council to continue general and country-specific debates on the basis of this report, also using the recommendations to further examine how concrete progress can be made. The Commission also calls on national



Parliaments, civil society, and other key stakeholders and actors, to continue national dialogue on the rule of law, as well as at European level, with increased citizen's engagement. Finally, the Commission invites Member States to effectively take up the opportunities and challenges identified in the report, as it stands ready to assist them in their efforts to continue the implementation of recommendations. As President von der Leyen announced in her Political Guidelines 2024 – 2029, the Commission will continue to improve its monitoring and reporting, and to strengthen checks

and balances, notably by tracking the implementation of recommendations. To ensure the report looks at all issues across Europe, a Single Market dimension will be added to the report. This will address rule of law issues affecting companies, especially Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), operating across borders. For enlargement countries, the Commission will continue to follow up on the issues identified, including in its next annual reports on enlargement. Further enlargement countries will be included in the Rule of Law Report as and when they are ready.

Background

The rule of law is crucial for every citizen and business in the EU as it is a precondition for the respect of other values. It guarantees that fundamental rights are upheld in line with a set of core democratic values, ensures the application of EU law, and supports an investment-friendly business environment. It is an integral part of the very identity of the European Union. The annual Rule of Law Report is the result of close dialogue with national authorities and stakeholders and covers all Member States and four enlargement countries on the basis of the same objective and transparent methodology, while examining the same set of issues in each country. The qualitative assessment carried out by the Commission focuses on significant developments since the adoption of the fourth annual Rule of Law Report in July 2023, while remaining proportionate to developments. The report is at the centre of the annual Rule of Law Cycle. This yearly cycle is preventive - it serves to promote the rule of law and aims to keep problems from emerging or deepening. It is separate from the other elements in the EU's Rule of Law Toolbox and complements but does not replace the Treaty-based mechanisms allowing the EU to respond to more serious rule of law related issues in Member States. These tools include infringement proceedings and the procedure to protect the founding values of the Union under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union. The fifth edition of the report gives specific recommendations for all Member States, a practice that was introduced in 2022. The analysis also contains a qualitative assessment of the progress made by the Member States towards implementing the 2023 recommendations, taking into account the overall context in the Member States. Depending on the progress made on the various subparts of each recommendation, the Commission concluded its assessment in each case using the following categories to track

developments: no progress, some progress, significant progress and full implementation. This year's recommendations have been prepared based on the assessment in the country chapters and the dialogue with Member States as well as in full respect of the principle of equal treatment. In issuing the recommendations, the Commission has paid close attention to keeping them focused and anchored in European standards and has taken into account national legal systems. In addition, consistency and synergies with other processes, such as the European Semester, the budget conditionality mechanism and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, are ensured. Future editions of the Rule of Law Report will continue to look at the follow-up given to this year's recommendations. The recommendations should be read together with the assessments in the country chapters that examine specific concerns and are meant to guide Member States to take measures to address them. Since 2020, several new EU initiatives have raised common standards in areas with direct relevance for the rule of law, drawing on the results of the monitoring in the context of this report. This includes the European Media Freedom Act and the Anti-Corruption Package, including proposals for new legislation to combat corruption in the EU and to strengthen the EU sanctioning regime for corruption in the EU's external dimension. Following the announcement in the 2023 State of the Union Address, the inclusion of certain enlargement countries in the 2024 Rule of Law Report, alongside Member States, will support these countries' reform efforts to achieve irreversible progress on democracy and the rule of law ahead of accession, and to guarantee lasting high standards after accession. Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia now participate in the Rule of Law Report exercise, reflecting the progress made in their respective accession process, focusing on the advancement of the rule of law. This approach will be extended to other enlargement countries in the future, depending on their progress.



3. New guidelines for more clarity on air passenger rights

The Commission is publishing revised interpretative guidelines on air passenger rights that will facilitate compliance with regulations and harmonise enforcement by national bodies. Since 2016, the Commission has been providing guidelines to address common concerns raised by national enforcement bodies, passengers and their associations, and industry representatives.

This revision notably takes into account rulings by the Court of Justice since 2016 that clarify certain provisions, allowing for more effective and consistent enforcement of the rules. A new



section on massive travel disruptions has also been added. Revised interpretative guidelines on the rights of persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air have also been published. Passenger rights defined at EU level are applied by transport providers and enforced by national bodies. Disparities between national practices can create confusion for passengers when they face challenges during their journey, especially if it spans EU borders. It can also be difficult for passengers to

understand the necessary steps and find appropriate assistance. This guidelines will help improve implementation and complement the Commission's efforts to raise awareness of passenger rights, including through regular online awareness-raising campaigns, the [Your Europe](#) web pages and a [passenger rights mobile app](#).

Passengers in need of more information about their rights

This guidelines come together with the release of a new Eurobarometer survey, which highlights that most Europeans still feel that they lack sufficient information on their passenger rights, even if awareness increased compared to five years ago. Results highlight that respondents were most likely to feel well informed about passenger rights for travel by rail (33%), followed by air (30%), coach (27%) and then ship/ferry (16%). The survey also shows that 84% of respondents

requesting assistance for persons with disabilities or reduced mobility were satisfied with the response. 35% of travellers have seen information about passenger rights, up 13 percentage points since 2019. Most commonly, this was in railway stations (9%, +5). 75% of plane passengers received pre-travel information on their rights, compared to 61% for rail, 51% for coaches, and 54% for ships/ferries. Awareness-raising remains extremely important. Satisfaction with how significant disruptions were handled is highest for flights (66%, +12 pp), followed by ships/ferries (53%, -3 pp), rail (52%, +8 pp), and coaches (50%, +8 pp). Use of single tickets for multimodal journeys remains limited at 11% (unchanged), with rail/coach (39%, +9 pp) and air/rail (25%, +1 pp) the most common combinations. 32% (+7 pp) faced issues, 13% (+4 pp) almost missed a connection, and 11% (+3 pp) actually missed a connection.



Next steps

The guidelines can now be used by operators and national enforcement bodies. In addition, the results of the Eurobarometer survey, as well as the guidelines, are available to the co-legislators as they consider the two Commission proposals of November 2023 on enforcing passenger rights and on passenger rights in the context of multimodal journeys, as well as the Commission's 2013 legislative proposal on air passenger rights.

Background

The EU is the only area in the world where passengers are protected by a full set of rights - whether they travel by air, rail, ship or bus and coach. Passenger rights are based on three cornerstones: non-discrimination; accurate, timely and accessible information; immediate and proportionate assistance. This protection is unique in the world. Eurobarometer is the polling instrument used by EU institutions and agencies to regularly monitor the state of public opinion in Europe on issues related to the European Union as well as attitudes on subjects of political or social nature. This Eurobarometer survey was conducted between 12 January and 4 February 2024, with interviews of 26,601 citizens.

4. Democracy and economic power as key strengths of the EU

A new Eurobarometer survey published today shows that Europeans identify respect for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law (38%) and economic, industrial, and trading power (34%) as the main strengths of the EU, followed by the good relationships and solidarity between the EU Member States (28%).

As areas the EU should address as a priority, respondents most frequently mention the environment and climate change (33%) and irregular migration (also 33%), followed by security and defence (29%) and the war in Ukraine (25%). At the same time, the war in Ukraine ranks first in terms of challenges that the EU is facing, mentioned by 50% of the respondents. Irregular migration and environmental issues and climate change follow in second and third place, respectively, with 41% and 35%. When asked about the values that are best embodied by the EU compared to other countries in the world, Europeans clearly indicate respect for fundamental rights and values and freedom of speech and expression (each at 53%).



Overall optimism about the years to come

58% of Europeans tend to be optimistic about the future of the EU, while 37% tend to be pessimistic. 55% of them say they are very or somewhat confident in the strength of the EU's democracy in the next five years, while 41% are somewhat or very unconfident. On the other hand, 64% of EU citizens tend to be concerned about the EU's security in the next five years. Finally, 51% express confidence in the performance of the EU's economy in the next five years, while 45% are more sceptical.

Background

The Flash Eurobarometer 550 was conducted between 25 June and 2 July 2024 across the 27 Member States. 25,658 EU citizens were interviewed online.

For More Information: [Flash Eurobarometer 550 "Challenges and priorities in the EU"](#).

5. New European Bauhaus (NEB) Investment Guidelines

The European Commission has adopted the New European Bauhaus (NEB) Investment Guidelines, a tool to illustrate how public and private investments can integrate the values of sustainability, inclusion and aesthetics promoted by the NEB to transform Europe's built environment.

The NEB Investment Guidelines result from close cooperation between the Commission and JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions), an advisory programme funded by the Commission and the European Investment Bank. The guidelines provide investors and developers with best practices and quality guarantees to put the NEB into practice and boost



investments that transform buildings, open spaces and neighbourhoods while incorporating aesthetical aspiration, commitment to sustainability and affirmation of social values, inclusion, affordability and accessibility. The guidelines support the NEB's goals, helping shape projects that back the positive transformation of societies. All EU Member States are expected to go through large rounds of investments in the built environment to address challenges such as climate neutrality, adaptation to climate change, rapid urbanisation, response to humanitarian crises, as well as accessibility and affordability of sustainable high-quality housing, construction and renovation.

Advice and recommendations to redirect investments towards NEB-inspired projects

Implementing the NEB values and principles in private and public investments can bring benefits if additional efforts are put towards higher quality. By embracing the NEB values and principles, the guidelines help investors understand qualitative benefits and mitigate costs, supporting them in implementing projects that would be long-lasting, going

beyond purely financial considerations. By integrating aesthetics, sustainability and inclusiveness, the NEB adds a unique quality to investment projects, making them appealing to investors seeking sustainable and impactful projects. In particular, the guidelines put forward a number of NEB Investment Recommendations, which help shape high-quality projects aligned with the NEB values and principles.

Next steps

The New European Bauhaus Investment Guidelines are conceived as a practical tool that will support increased investment in NEB projects along the NEB Facility and other EU programmes as well as other funding supporting NEB implementation in the years ahead. They are expected to facilitate crowding in investments to urban and rural regions, including remote or marginalised areas, thereby providing economic opportunities and fostering inclusive growth for communities on the ground and promoting balanced territorial development.

Background

Launched by the European Commission in 2021, the New European Bauhaus is an EU policy and funding initiative that aims at transforming the built environment, leading to holistically thought and designed buildings, open spaces and neighbourhoods under the EU Green Deal transition. It is looking for solutions that are not only sustainable, but also inclusive and beautiful, while respecting the diversity of places, traditions, and cultures in Europe and beyond. The built environment as a major economic sector heavily impacts resources, the environment and climate change. It faces high demand for new and updated assets due to population growth and increasing urbanisation. At the same time, it impacts individual well-being and societal function. The New European Bauhaus builds upon these characteristics and needs, offering innovative solutions for transforming the built environment towards sustainability, inclusion and aesthetics.



6. Commission enforcement of EU law in 2023

The European Commission adopted its Annual Report on Monitoring the Application of EU Law.

The report outlines the enforcement actions taken by the Commission in 2023 to guarantee the protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals and businesses across the EU. It highlights also the areas where Member States successfully achieved compliance with EU law and identifies those where additional efforts are necessary. The Commission also adopted its regular package of decisions on infringements.



Ensuring compliance with EU law in 2023

The report shows that in 2023, the Commission acted decisively to ensure that EU rules in all policy fields were applied correctly across the EU, fostering trust among citizens and businesses, and facilitating the growth of a cohesive, fair, and efficient Union. Over the last year, the Commission opened 529 new infringement procedures and closed over 1 000 cases as Member States have achieved compliance with EU law. 95% of the closed cases were resolved at the early stage of the infringement process. By avoiding lengthy litigation, citizens and businesses can enjoy the benefits of EU law sooner. However, as the report shows, the Commission does not hesitate to take Member States to the

Court of Justice of the European Union where necessary. In 2023, the Commission decided to refer a total of 82 infringement cases to the Court and asked the Court to impose financial penalties against several Member States in 45 of these 82 cases. This is a record in the last decade, demonstrating the Commission's determination to enforce EU law.

Supporting Member States' early compliance with EU law

The early implementation of the EU rules by Member States is crucial for ensuring the rights of the citizens and business across the EU and for upholding the effectiveness and credibility of the EU. The Commission's early support to Member States for correct implementation and application of EU rules is crucial. In 2023, the Commission provided practical guidance to Member States, businesses, stakeholders, and the public on how to understand and apply specific aspects of EU law. It promoted compliance with EU law in hundreds of transposition workshops, expert group and committee meetings with Member States. Following up on the 2023 stocktaking exercise, the Commission together with Member States defined ways to improve the transposition of directives. Through the Technical Support Instrument, the Commission promoted administrative capacity building in Member States, helping to ensure a correct implementation of EU laws and policies.

Strengthening a sustainable and competitive economy

The Commission remained firm in safeguarding the integrity of the single market in 2023, for example through ensuring the free movement of goods in the agricultural and construction sectors. It also took far-reaching enforcement actions to remove barriers for service providers in the single market, which account for around 70% of the EU's GDP and an equal share of its employment. The Commission's enforcement measures improved the recognition of professional qualifications across the EU and addressed the issue of late payments of procured goods and services. As this report shows, the Commission committed to provide clean, affordable and secure energy, to achieve its climate goals and boost economic development. In 2023, the Commission's enforcement measures promoted clean air, water and transport, and a circular economy. The Commission helped Member States and farmers under the common agricultural policy. It achieved progress on the EU's energy union and continued work to keep nuclear energy safe. The Commission also used infringement procedures to promote the security of EU gas supply. Informing and assisting people and businesses is key for making full use of the single markets potential. In 2023, SOLVIT centres assisted over 2 200 people and businesses with their problems, with more than 88% of the open cases solved. Your Europe Advice, which informs people and businesses of their single market rights, was consulted over 26 000 times. And Your Europe was the most popular Commission website, with 32 million visitors in one year.

Upholding the EU's common values, fundamental rights and the rule of law

The Commission acted decisively to uphold the rule of law, defend democratic values and enforce non-discrimination legislation across the EU. It took steps to guarantee Member States' full

implementation of EU rules on the protection of children, consumer rights, cross-border protection of patients and safer transport. The Commission strengthened the implementation of the European Security Union policy and opened or continued infringement cases to improve Member States' compliance with EU migration and asylum rules. The Commission's enforcement actions in 2023 brought concrete improvements to people's rights. Member States stepped up protection of consumers, guaranteed the rights of whistle blowers and improved the criminalisation of hate speech. Enforcing EU rules also ensured better protection of workers' rights and fairer working conditions.

Background

Since 1984, following a request made by the European Parliament, the Commission presents an annual report on monitoring the application of EU law during the preceding year. The European Parliament then adopts a resolution on the Commission's report. In the division of responsibilities between the European institutions, the Commission has the general responsibility of initiating the legislative process. The European Parliament and the Council decide on the Commission's proposals. Member States are responsible for timely and correct application and implementation of EU law in the national legal order. The Commission closes this circle: once proposals are adopted and become EU law, it monitors whether the Member States are applying this law correctly and may take action if otherwise.

7. RescEU firefighting airplanes production launched

The production of twelve amphibious firefighting planes to make up the permanent rescEU fleet has been launched following agreements signed by a number of EU Member States with the Canadian Commercial Corporation.

The planes will be financed by the European Commission and will become the new backbone of the EU's crisis response to tackle forest fires. Aircraft from the rescEU reserves can be rapidly deployed in case a country is facing severe wildfires that require additional support. This is in line with the EU's long-term strategy to establish a permanent rescEU firefighting fleet hosted by Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Ten additional firefighting planes are being purchased by Member States directly to reinforce their national fleets. Welcoming the success of this coordinated effort by the Commission and Member States, Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**, said: *"This is a historic moment in European civil protection in this age of climate crisis. As wildfire seasons become longer, deadly and more unpredictable, we have been working tirelessly to bolster the EU's firefighting response capacities. Today's announcement proves that Europe is committed to strengthening and deepening these efforts. I want to thank all the Member States with whom we have worked to speed up the purchase of much-needed firefighting planes. Thanks to our collaboration, we are well on track with the timeline set by the European Commission to acquire a new, permanent fleet of firefighting aircraft of planes and helicopters."* The estimated delivery of the first batch of these new planes is expected at the end of 2027.

Background

Wildfires have recently become a pan-European concern, and the fire risk is expected to further increase due to climate change. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism coordinates pan-European assistance and ensures that all EU Member States and participating states to the Mechanism receive timely information in times of crises and emergencies. Since 2019, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been progressively reinforced with the rescEU fleet, a European reserve that includes firefighting planes and helicopters and is 100% financed by the EU. The EU funds will enable the acquisition of a total of 12 new firefighting planes, which will be distributed among six EU Member States (Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain), and a number of helicopters. These will become the 'permanent rescEU fleet'. The first airplanes are expected to be delivered in 2027. A first batch of helicopters are expected to arrive in 2026.



8. First set of global rules on digital trade negotiated

The European Commission welcomes the publication of the text of an E-commerce Agreement negotiated in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The publication follows five years of dedicated negotiations by over 90 WTO Members. The EU played an active role in the negotiation of these first global rules on digital trade. Once integrated into the WTO legal framework, the E-commerce Agreement will be the basis for global rules on digital trade among a broad range of WTO Members. The agreement will benefit both consumers and businesses, and support digital transformation among participating WTO Members by: facilitating cross-border electronic transactions, reducing barriers to digital trade, and promoting innovation in e-commerce. In addition, it will bolster digital inclusiveness and the economic growth of developing and least developed participating Members. The Commission welcomes this outcome and looks forward to working with participants to incorporate the Agreement into the WTO legal framework. The EU will also engage with other WTO Members to encourage their participation.



Setting the ground rules

The negotiated E-commerce Agreement is a balanced, inclusive, and commercially significant agreement. It is also of strategic importance for the WTO. It will benefit consumers and businesses involved in digital trade, especially SMEs, from both developed and developing countries. The negotiated E-Commerce Agreement includes a set of ground rules on digital trade:

- Initiatives to promote seamless digital trade both within and across borders, including on electronic signatures and electronic invoices;
- Provisions to improve trust in the digital trade environment for both consumers and businesses, notably by strengthening consumer protection online;
- Provisions to make the international digital trade environment more reliable and affordable, including collaboration on cybersecurity risks;
- A prohibition of customs duties on electronic transmissions, which is of great commercial importance and is a key priority for industry worldwide; and
- Initiatives to facilitate participation of consumers and companies from developing countries in digital trade.

Next Steps

The EU and other participants of the Joint Statement Initiative will take necessary steps towards integrating the E-commerce Agreement into the WTO rulebook, which will require consensus by all WTO Members. The EU stands ready, as part of its digital development activities, to support developing countries in assessing their needs for assistance and implementation of the Agreement.

Background

Digital Trade accounts for around 25% of all international trade and has been growing at a faster pace than traditional trade. The EU is the world's leader in both exports and imports of digitally deliverable services, which amounted to €1.3 trillion in 2022, or 54% of the EU's total trade in services. At the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11) held in Buenos Aires in December 2017, a group of 71 WTO Members (including the EU) sponsored a Joint Ministerial Statement calling for the start of exploratory work toward future WTO negotiations on trade-related aspects of electronic commerce. Negotiations started formally in January 2019, when 76 WTO members confirmed their intention to “seek to achieve a high standard outcome that builds on existing WTO agreements and frameworks with the participation of as many WTO members as possible”. Since then, additional WTO members have joined the initiative, bringing the total to 91 participants, who collectively account for over 90% of global trade. Participation remains open to all WTO members. The initiative is chaired by Japan, Australia, and Singapore, acting as “co-convenors”.



9. Second report on the State of the Digital Decade

The Commission has published the second report on the State of the Digital Decade, providing a comprehensive overview of the progress made in the quest to achieve the digital objectives and targets set for 2030 by the Digital Decade Policy Programme (DDPP).

This year, for the first time, the report is accompanied by an analysis of the national Digital Decade strategic roadmaps presented by Member States, detailing the planned national measures, actions and funding to contribute to the EU's digital transformation. The Commission's analysis shows that, in the current scenario, the collective efforts of Member States will fall short of the EU's level of ambition. The identified gaps include the need for additional investments, both at EU and national levels, in particular in the areas of digital skills, high-quality connectivity, uptake of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data analytics by enterprises, semiconductor production and start-up ecosystems. Both the EU and Member States have an important role to play in enforcing the new legal framework, take action to foster the dissemination of digital technologies and ensure its citizens are equipped with adequate digital skills to fully benefit from the digital transformation. That is why this year's report is a call for strengthened action to Member States to be more ambitious, as achieving the Digital Decade goals in digital infrastructure, businesses, skills and public services is critical for the EU's future economic prosperity and societal cohesion. In this context, the Commission also updated country-specific and cross-cutting recommendations for every EU Member State to address the identified gaps.



A competitive, sovereign, and resilient EU: digital infrastructure and businesses

Adopting and developing innovative technologies is crucial for Europe's competitiveness, particularly in the current geopolitical landscape and due to increasing cybersecurity threats, demanding enhanced resilience and robust security measures. The report highlights that the EU is far from achieving the connectivity targets set by the DDPP: Fibre networks, critical for delivering gigabit connectivity and enabling the take-up of cutting-edge technologies such as AI, cloud, and the Internet of Things (IoT), only reach 64% of households. High-quality 5G networks today only reach 50% of the EU's

territory and their performance is still insufficient to deliver advanced 5G services. To address these challenges, Member States and the Commission should work together to foster a truly functional Digital Single Market. In 2023, the uptake of AI, cloud and/or big data by European companies was also well below the Digital Decade target of 75%. Under current trends, only 64% of businesses will use cloud, 50% big data and only 17% AI by 2030. To achieve the digitalisation of the business sector, it is paramount to incentivise the take-up of innovative digital tools by SMEs, in particular cloud and AI, as well as mobilise further private investments in high-growth startups. This is crucial to maintain Europe's competitiveness with regards to data-driven innovation, efficiency, and growth. Another major challenge faced in the EU's digital transformation remains the limited spread of digital technologies beyond large cities. To tackle this digital divide, it is fundamental to foster cooperation between European actors at cross-border and local level, for example through Multi-Country Projects, European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) and European Digital Infrastructure Consortia (EDICs). A series of successes have been achieved since last year in this regard, with three EDICs established by the end of May 2024.

A digital policy for people and society: digital skills and public services

Putting people at the centre of the digital transformation of our societies and economies is at the core of the Digital Decade and the first principle of the Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles. At present, the digital skills targets set by the Digital Decade are still far from being achieved, with only 55.6% of the EU population having at least basic digital skills. According to the current trend, the number of ICT specialists in the EU will be around 12 million in 2030, with a persisting gender imbalance. To reach the targets, Member States should follow a multi-faceted approach to foster digital skills at all levels of education, and incentivise young people, particularly girls, to take interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematic (STEM) disciplines. Member States are progressing towards the target of making all key public services and electronic health records accessible to citizens and businesses online, as well as providing them with a secure electronic identification (eID). Despite uneven take-up across Member States, eID is currently

available to 93% of the EU population and the EU Digital Identity Wallet is expected to incentivise its use. However, in a business-as-usual scenario, achieving 100% of digital public services for citizens and business by 2030 remains challenging.

Next Steps

Member States will now have to review and adjust their national roadmaps to align with the ambition of the Digital Decade Policy Programme before 2 December 2024. As set out in the DDPP, the Commission will monitor and assess the implementation of these recommendations and report on the progress made in the next State of the Digital Decade report, in 2025.

Background

Proposed in September 2021, the Path to the Digital Decade sets a clear way forward to achieve the digital transformation in the European Union. In December 2022, the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles complemented it by establishing the principles and commitments the EU's digital transformation should follow. The first State of the Digital Decade report was published in September 2023. This year's report is accompanied by a comprehensive package of staff working documents, reports, and studies, further presenting the progress in the different dimensions of the DDPP. The Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) also contributed to this monitoring exercise, providing the methodology to aggregate national digital targets at EU level and mapping the amount of investment from EU funding instruments that goes to initiatives that have a digital component. During the current mandate, the EU has taken significant action to advance on the targets and objectives of the Digital Decade. With the proposal and adoption of key legislations, it has actively promoted a safer online space for European citizens and fostered consumer protection, while safeguarding the innovation potential of European companies. Significant EU funding has also been made available to foster the digital transformation, in particular through the Recovery and Resilience Facility (EUR 150 billion), DIGITAL Europe (EUR 7.9 billion), and Connecting Europe Facility 2 Digital (EUR 1.7 billion).

10. Europe's innovation performance steadily improving

The innovation performance of the European Union continues to improve at a steady pace, reaching a 10% increase since 2017 and a growth of 0.5% between 2023 and 2024.

According to the 2024 edition of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS), most EU Member States have boosted their innovation performance, but the increase varies strongly from one to another.

Key findings

Between 2023 and 2024, the national innovation performance has increased for 15 Member States, while it has declined for another group of 11. Croatia remained stable. Compared to the last edition: Denmark remains the most innovative EU country followed by Sweden, which led the rankings between 2017-2022. Two countries now belong to a different performance group. Estonia became a Strong Innovator following a steady growth pattern since 2017. Belgium, which was an Innovation leader in 2023, moved down to the Strong Innovators' category, although it maintained its fifth position in the rankings overall. A broader analysis, including other European countries and selected global competitors, shows a changing international landscape. Switzerland is the most innovative European country and South Korea remains the most innovative global competitor in 2024, while China has surpassed Japan and is progressively closing the gap with the EU. In the global context, the EU maintains a robust position, demonstrating strong performance in most indicators including in SMEs introducing product and process innovations and environment-related technologies. The EU still faces challenges compared to its main global competitors in areas such as intellectual assets, collaboration among innovative SMEs and R&D expenditure in the business sector. The Innovation Leaders have particularly attractive research systems and are strong in digitalisation. The Strong Innovators demonstrate significant strengths in their innovation ecosystems (product and business innovations). Among the Moderate Innovators, there is a range of positive trends, in particular the



development of collaboration in research; whereas Emerging Innovators have shown an overall positive trajectory in innovation performance, but they are still lagging. Although the performance differences have slightly narrowed among the Strong Innovators and Moderate Innovators between 2017 and 2024, they became more pronounced among the Innovation Leaders and Emerging Innovators. There are also persistent geographic differences in innovation performance, with Innovation Leaders and most Strong Innovators predominantly located in Northern and Western Europe, and many of the Moderate and Emerging innovators in Southern and Eastern Europe.

Background

The European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) is an annual publication by the European Commission that provides a comparative assessment of the innovation performance of EU Member States, neighbouring European countries and selected global competitors. The EIS is based on 32 indicators covering the economy, business and entrepreneurship, innovation profiles, governance and policy framework, climate change and demography. The EIS 2024 covers all EU Member States, 12 neighbouring European countries including Moldova for the first time and, with a smaller set of indicators, 11 global competitors. The EIS 2024 categorises Member States in four innovation groups based on their scores: Innovation Leaders (performance is above 125% of the EU average), Strong Innovators (between 100% and 125% of the EU average), Moderate Innovators (between 70% and 100% of the EU average) and Emerging Innovators (below 70% of the EU average). The scoreboard aims to support policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders in understanding the innovation landscape, finding strengths and weaknesses, and formulating evidence-based policies to enhance innovation across Europe. The EIS 2024 is accompanied by an updated and revamped interactive tool which offers customised comparisons visualising country profiles and showcasing relative strengths, weaknesses and trends, as well as exploring correlations between indicators. The New European Innovation Agenda, launched in 2022, is key to bridging the innovation gap by accelerating the development of cutting-edge technologies and fostering a dynamic environment for startups and established businesses throughout Europe. Substantial efforts have been made in carrying forward initiatives under the Agenda's key priorities, such as implementing new directives in the financial sector, introducing new mechanisms and funds to encourage venture capital, and providing training opportunities for deep tech talent.

11. European Prize for Women Innovators now open for applications

The European Innovation Council (EIC) and European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) are launching the 2025 edition of the European Prize for Women Innovators. This joint initiative celebrates the outstanding achievements of women entrepreneurs driving positive change for people and the planet through their innovative ventures. The European Prize for Women Innovators highlights the pivotal role women play in driving innovation. By showcasing their success, the prize inspires girls and women everywhere and demonstrates the importance of inclusivity in technology and business. Get to know the last edition's winners and their ground



breaking innovations. Systemic barriers still hinder women's advancement in technology and business sectors. The EIT and the EIC are committed to breaking these barriers and promoting women's empowerment. Recognising their indispensable role in creating a better future is just a small part of what the EIC and EIT do to help women in business and tech. Prize categories: EIC Women Innovators category: Open to women founders and co-founders from the EU and Associated Countries. Three prizes

of EUR 100 000, EUR 70 000 and EUR 50 000 are awarded to the three highest-ranked applications; EIC Rising Innovators category: Targeting promising innovators under the age of 35. Three prizes of EUR 50 000, EUR 30 000 and EUR 20 000 are awarded to the three highest-ranked applications; EIT Women Leadership category: Focused on women with a direct link to the EIT Community. Three prizes of EUR 50 000, EUR 30 000 and EUR 20 000 are awarded to the three highest-ranked applications. **Application deadline: 25 September 2024 – 17:00 CET.** More information can be found at the following [link](#).

12. Bursaries for conference interpreting students

Each year, the Directorate-General for Interpretation (DG Interpretation, also known as SCIC) offers a number of scholarships. DG Interpretation scholarships are available to students of all disciplines who have been accepted for a full-time postgraduate training course in conference interpreting offered by a recognised university or university-level institution. If successfully completed, this course will lead to a qualification certifying that you are able to work as a professional conference interpreter in both consecutive and simultaneous modes. You may be eligible for a bursary if you: are enrolled in a master's/postgraduate degree in conference interpreting or intend to enrol in one (for courses that last more than one year, you will need to be enrolled in your last year) and are a national of an EU Member State or of one of the candidate countries and need to pay / have paid an enrolment fee for your course (tuition fee and/or administration fee) and if you meet one of the following requirements: you are registered in the course with one of the following active languages ('A' language): Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Maltese, Portuguese, Slovak or Slovene; you are registered in the course with a retour into English, French or German from one of the following active languages: Hungarian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Spanish or Swedish. In any case, your passive languages and/or retour language will need to be in line with the preferential profiles as published in the call for applications. The financial contribution proposed for master's/post-graduate studies in Conference Interpreting consists of one single payment and will amount to the equivalent of the enrolment fee (tuition fee and/or administrative fee) paid for academic year 2024-2025, with a maximum amount of 3.000 €. **Deadline: Thursday 26 September 2024.** More information can be found at the following [link](#).



13. Traineeships in the European Economic and Social Committee

The Economic and Social Committee (ESC) organises long-term (five months) and short-term (one to three months) internships. The ESC is an advisory body offering Europe's economic and social partners (e.g. employers, trade unions, representatives of small businesses, farmers' associations, consumers, etc.) the opportunity to formally express their opinion on EU policies. The main objectives of the traineeship are to: complete and concretely apply the knowledge acquired by the trainee during the study/work course; provide the trainee with a practical knowledge of the work carried out in the various areas of the ESC; to enable the trainee to gain experience through the numerous contacts established during daily work.



1. Long-Term Traineeships

Applicants must have a university degree and have acquired in-depth knowledge of one of the fields of activity of the ESC during their studies or in any other way: dissertation, research, other periods of European training, etc. Applicants must have a thorough knowledge of one Community language and a sufficient knowledge of another Community language (for applicants from a non-member country, a good knowledge of English or French is required). The duration of the traineeship is five months. Unemployed trainees may receive a monthly subsidy. Trainees will receive a monthly grant of EUR 1,376.89.

2. Short-Term Traineeships

Applicants are university students who experience a one- to three-month traineeship during their course of study, in order to complete their university career, or recent graduates. Applicants must have a thorough knowledge of one EU language and a satisfactory knowledge of another EU language. Applicants from non-EU countries may only have a thorough knowledge of English or French. Short, unpaid traineeships can take place at any time of the year. What is offered: a monthly grant corresponding to 50% of the monthly amount granted to long-term trainees; a mobility allowance; a travel allowance (if applicable).

Deadlines: 30 September (spring session February-July). More information can be found at the following [link](#).

14. Traineeships at the Committee of the Regions

Each year, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) provides a limited number of internships for young citizens, from Europe and beyond, and offers them the opportunity to gain work experience in a European institution. Two types of traineeships are available: CoR traineeships or short study visits. The objective of the traineeships is to: provide first-hand experience of the work of the CoR and the European institutions in general; provide practical knowledge of the work of the different offices; work in a multicultural and multilingual environment; provide trainees with the opportunity to organise a study visit to a European or local authority, in connection with the CoR's political priorities; enable trainees to develop and put into practice the knowledge acquired during their studies or personal careers. Traineeships run from 16 February to 15 July (spring traineeships) or from 16 September to 15 February (autumn traineeships) for a duration of five months. Applicants must: be a citizen of the European Union (except in certain cases); hold a university degree or equivalent at the closing date for applications; have a thorough knowledge of one official Community language and a good knowledge of another EU working language (English or French). CoR trainees are entitled to a monthly allowance of approximately EUR 1,418. For the next session, applications must be submitted by **30 September** (midnight). More information can be found at the following [link](#).



15. New meeting in Potenza of the “Learn STEM” project

On 26th June 2024 took place at the Europe Direct Basilicata centre in Potenza, Italy, the fourth face-to-face meeting of the project "Innovative Model of learning STEM in secondary schools" - acronym "Learn STEM" - an initiative approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Turkey as action no. 2022-1-TR01-KA220-SCH-000087583. The objective of the meeting was, above all, to

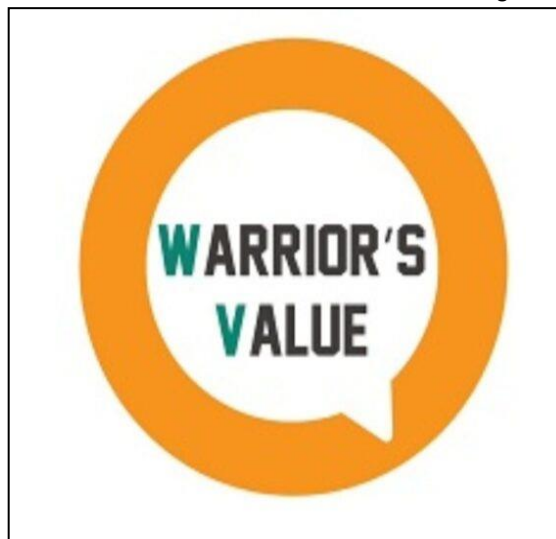


verify the state of the art of the training modules developed in the project by the following partner organisations - Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi (Turkey), Ingenious Knowledge GmbH (Germany), Universität Paderborn (Germany), IEK Kavala (Greece), Liceul Tehnologic 'Haralamb Vasiliu' (Romania), Ahi Evran Anadolu Lisesi (Turkey), Yusuf Demir Bilim Ve Sanat Merkezi (Turkey) and EURO-NET (Italy) - as well as establishing the next steps for implementation and new activities and products to be developed, including a new promotional video. The "Learn STEM" project, moreover, aims to strengthen the capacity of secondary schools to promote competences in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) through innovative and interactive pedagogical methods and approaches, in particular, through the use of IoT (Internet of Things): the European partnership is

working to develop a pedagogical model, a teacher training programme and an online eLearning platform. More information on the project is available at www.learnstem.eu or on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551859486150>.

16. New online meeting for the “WARRIOR” project

On 1st July, took place online meeting of the project "Warrior`s Values: Effective Defence against Fakes and Frauds" - acronym "WARRIOR" - initiative approved by the National Agency for Youth in Italy as project no. 2023-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000153640. This meeting was established by the coordinator of the youth initiative, the association EURO-NET from Potenza, in order to define with the members of the European consortium, i.e. Ukrainian Center of the Future (Ukraine), InnoVed (Greece); Foundation International Center of Dialogue, Innovations and Future (Poland) and Erasmus ME Academy gGmbH (Germany), the next steps for the development of the Work package 3 and the division of roles to be assigned to each partner. The "WARRIOR" project is, in fact, aimed at providing youth workers and young people with an educational manual specifically designed to strengthen the ability to detect false information and manipulation and to train young people to recognise fake news as well as to improve the digital skills of youth workers in order to promote the fight against falsification and manipulation through social media. More information is available on the initiative's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554717032106>.



17. First meeting in Portugal of the “SUSTAIN-EDU” project

On 4th July, took place in Maia (Portugal), the first meeting of the project "Sustainability Education for Empowering Youth in Vocational Education" - acronym "SUSTAIN-EDU" - an initiative approved

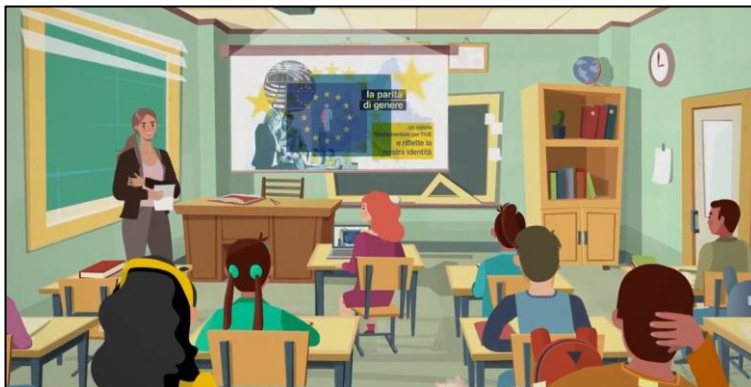


by the Portuguese Erasmus + Agency in the Erasmus Plus Programme KA210-VET - Small partnerships in VET as action no. 2023-2-PT01-KA210-VET-000182244. The SUSTAIN-EDU project focuses on a global approach to sustainability education for young people in vocational training and education and aims to empower young people in vocational training to take local action for global sustainability by developing their leadership skills, raising awareness of sustainable practices and providing practical information and guidance. SUSTAIN-EDU thus aims to create agents of change who actively contribute to a more sustainable future. Partners in the initiative are Agrupamento de Escolas de Águas Santas (Portugal - project coordinator), EURO-NET (Italy) and Intercontinental Development Center IDC (Netherlands). The first meeting, attended

by the director of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, Antonino Imbesi, on behalf of the EURO-NET association, was aimed at planning all the activities envisaged in the small partnership until its conclusion, currently scheduled for 30 June 2025.

18. New cartoon realised by the staff of the Europe Direct Basilicata Centre

Here is our latest production, “Euro-net in cartoons”, realised in the Europe Direct Basilicata | 2024 project with the contribution of the European Union. The subject of the cartoon concerns the European Union’s “Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025” on the promotion and actions taken to achieve this goal. The presentation is intended to be not only an opportunity to learn but also to reflect on how each of us can contribute to creating a more equal and inclusive world for all. The European Union has made significant progress in promoting gender equality, but this progress is not enough. The Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025 sets out key objectives and actions to build a gender-equal Europe. It is based on a dual track: targeted measures and gender mainstreaming. This means integrating a gender perspective into all stages of policy-making and addressing gender inequalities specifically. The production direction of the cartoon was, as always, supervised by Antonino Imbesi (head of our Europe Direct Basilicata centre) while Antonia Bruno took care of the texts and dubbing direction. The voices are by: Antonia Bruno and Sara Rossini; while the storyboard and animation of the images were done by Gianluca Lagrotta. The video is available at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSJ-RUNvsXc>.



19. New “IntCult AE” project meeting in Potenza

On July 11th and 12th took place in Potenza (Italy), at the headquarters of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, a new transnational meeting of the project ‘Intercultural Competence Development for Adult Education’ (acronym “IntCult AE”), an initiative approved as action number 2022-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000087417 by the Polish National Agency within the framework of the



Erasmus+ programme KA220-ADU - Cooperation partnerships in adult education. During the meeting, the state of the art of the products developed so far in the project was reviewed and further activities were planned, including online training on a MOOC platform and the pilot course in Greece. The European meeting, hosted by the association EURO-NET, was attended by the following project partners: Uniwersytet Łódzki (Poland - project coordinator), Ekpaideftiria Kaloskami S.A. (Greece), Aidlearn, Consultoria em Recursos Humanos Lda (Portugal) and Erasmus ME Academy gGmbH (Germany). The “IntCult AE” project, which started in November 2022 and will run until the end of February 2025, aims to improve the intercultural competences of adult educators through the judicious use of several innovative tools, such as an e-

learning course, a multimedia film catalogue and manuals aimed at the development of sectoral workshop activities: in this way, the five partners intend to strengthen the role of adult educators in inspiring, instructing and advising their students.

20. Dissemination event of “The first steps in STEM” project in Potenza

In July, took place in Potenza at the Risorse SRL training centre, a dissemination event of the project “The first steps in STEM, Robotics and Programming”, an initiative approved in Romania by the Erasmus Plus National Agency as action number 2021-1-RO01-KA220-YOU-000029548 within the framework of Cooperative Partnerships in Youth. During the event, in front of a large number of young people, the EURO-NET staff presented the project, the activities implemented so far, and especially the online game “The Robot's Journey e-GAME – SirKwitz”, which makes learning programming easy and fun. SirKwitz - developed by the partnership composed of Asociația Zury (Romania - project coordinator), S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L. (Romania), EURO-NET (Italy), VSI Robotikos Mokykla (Lithuania) and Vantaan Venäläinen Klubi RY (Finland) - is, in fact, an educational and entertaining game (also suitable for beginners and ideal for those who think that coding and programming are scary words) that explores 28 puzzles on four topics to master the fundamental concepts behind programming and develop problem-solving skills. The game, in which ‘players’ explore key programming concepts such as basic logic, loops, orientation, sequences and debugging, can be downloaded free of charge from the link: <https://store.steampowered.com/app/2776550/SirKwitz/>.



21. Last meeting and multiplier event of the “Food For Change” project



On July 23rd and 24th took place in Almada, Portugal, the last transnational meeting of the project “Food for Change” (acronym “FFC”), approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Denmark within the framework of the Erasmus Plus programme KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth as action number 2022-1-DK01-KA220-YOU-000089325. The meeting, hosted by the partner Associação Novo Mundo Azul was also attended by all the other partners of the European initiative: Crossing Borders (Denmark), Kainotomia & Sia Ee (Greece), Associação Asociaciija “Aktyvus jaunimas” (Lithuania), Comparative Research Network Ev (Germany) and EURO-NET (Italy). The meeting was dedicated to the verification of the work done in the various countries and to the

preparation and checking of the documentation required for the Final Report, as well as to the definition or feedback of the last project activities. In addition, the Italian multiplier event planned within the project was held in the first week of July in Potenza; the event was an important moment to promote the products and activities developed in the European partnership to the general public. During the event, the staff of the Italian partnership presented, to some thirty participants, all the work carried out in the two years of project development and collected positive feedback from the participants. More information on the project is available on the website: <https://foodforchange.eu/>.



22. Seminar on digitisation and robotics

At the end of July took place, at the CSV conference hall in Potenza, on the initiative of the association EURO-NET, Europe Direct Basilicata centre, the official information antenna of the European Commission, a seminar focusing on digitalisation and robotics, attended by over 40 young people from all over Italy, aged between 20 and 35, students of a professionalisation course developed by the training organisation Risorse SRL. During the event, the entire digitisation policy of the European Union for the seven-year period 2021-2027 was presented. Furthermore, the participants were also presented with the online game “The Robot’s Journey e-GAME – SirKwitz”



(which can be downloaded free of charge from the website <https://store.steampowered.com/app/2776550/SirKwitz/>), which was realised in the project ‘The first steps in STEM, Robotics and Programming’ (an initiative approved in Romania by the National Agency Erasmus Plus as action no. 2021-1-RO01-KA220-YOU-000029548 within the framework of Cooperative Partnerships in Youth), developed by a partnership composed of Asociatia Zury (Romania- project coordinator), S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L. (Romania), EURO-NET (Italy), VSI Robotikos Mokykla (Lithuania) and Vantaan Venäläinen Klubi Ry (Finland).

23. Meeting in Potenza of the “EQUAL SciTech” project

On 24th June, took place in in Potenza, Italy, the third transnational meeting of the “EQUAL” project SciTech: promoting gender equality in Science and Techonology”, acronym “EQUAL SciTech”, an initiative approved, by the competent Erasmus Plus National Agency in Portugal, as action no.

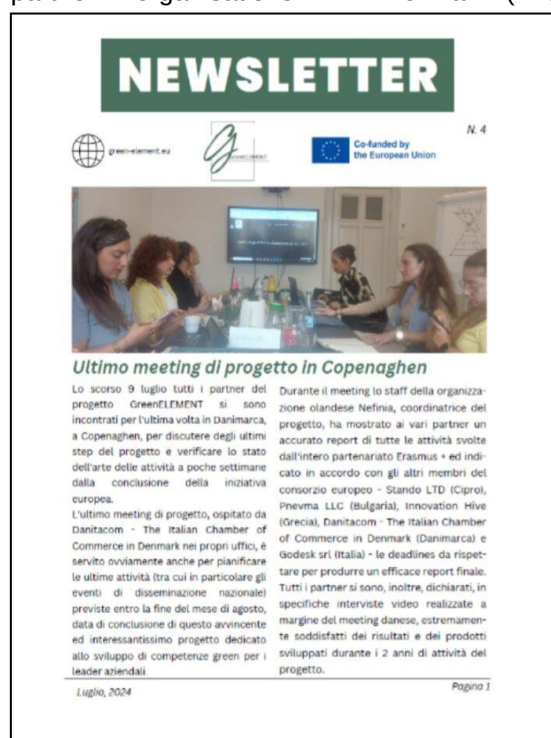


2022-1-PT01-KA220-SCH-000088149, within the framework of the Erasmus Plus programme KA220- SCH - Cooperation partnerships in school education. The organisations that are part of the partnership, namely Agrupamento de Escolas de águas Santas (project coordinator - Portugal), Geoclube – Associação Juvenil de Ciência, Natureza e Aventura (Portugal), I.I.S. ‘G. Fortnato’ of Rionero in Vulture (Italy), Youth Europe Service (Italy), Erasmus ME Academy gGmbH (Germany) and Sredno opstinsko uciliste Pero Nakov (North Macedonia North, were hosted in the offices of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, located in vicolo Luigi Lavista n.3, in the historical centre of the capital city of region. During the meeting, delegates of the various organisations took stock of the state of play on project activities project activities

and planned new developments, also defining the next deadlines of the initiative, which is aimed at improving the interest engagement and achievement of young students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, combating stereotypes presented by students and teachers and, at the same time, encouraging girls to choose, during their school career, careers in STEM.

24. Last meeting and new newsletter of the “GreenELEMENT” project

On 9th July, took place in Copenhagen, in Denmark, the last transnational meeting of the project “Green Ecological LEad for sMall and MEDium-size eNTERprizes” (acronym “GreenELEMENT”), an initiative approved by the Erasmus Plus Agency in the Netherlands within the actions KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in VET as action number 2022-1-NL01-KA220-VET-000087087 and which has recently completed the second brochure foreseen in the initiative (see the attached image). The final meeting of the project was dedicated to the overall verification of the work carried out on the Work Packages by the 6 partner organisations - Nefinia (The



Netherlands), Stando LTD (Cyprus), Pnevma LLC (Bulgaria), Innovation Hive (Greece), Danitacom - The Italian Chamber of Commerce in Denmark (Denmark) and Godesk srl (Italy) - and to the planning of the last activities, in particular the national dissemination events, scheduled by the end of August, the date of conclusion of this exciting and very interesting project dedicated to the development of green skills for business leaders. The fourth newsletter of the project, developed in English and Italian by partner GODESK, has been distributed in the various project partner countries since a few days. It consists of 2 pages and describes the activities of the last transnational meeting in Copenhagen and the first Multiplier Events initiatives developed by some project partners, as well as promoting the use of the green online course platform developed in the project. More information on the project is available on the official website of the European initiative at <https://green-element.eu/> or on the official project Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/greenelementeu>.