



EURO-NET

The Youth European Network



Bimonthly newsletter:

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

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Contents

1. First College meeting of the Juncker Commission	2
2. European Day for People with Disabilities	2
3. Budget 2015: Commission makes new proposal to Parliament and Council	3
4. EU launches Investment Offensive to boost jobs and growth	4
5. Towards a work programme for a new start for Europe	5
6. Closing ranks with President Tusk and national parliaments	6
7. Switzerland and EU join forces in science and research	7
8. EU Commissioner Mimica announces new support for fighting Ebola	7
9. Matera to be 2019 European Capital of Culture in Italy	8
10. Investment Offensive for Europe	9
11. The European Charlemagne Youth Prize	11
12. Writing Competition: "So similar, so different, so European."	11
13. "Hostthinking:" a design award	12
14. European Economic and Social Committee offers traineeships	12
15. Our manager elected for the "New Pan-European Working Group"	13
16. Started a new stage in our association	13
17. The project VET4START-UP starts	13
18. Facebook: over 4500 new friends in 2014	14
19. LinkedIn: over 2500 contacts!	14
20. We Share named "STAR PROJECT" from the "Italian National Agency"	14
21. Project "Fame": news and events	15
22. The Project MY WAY: seminar of the peer education in Hannover	15
23. In Hungary the first meeting : "The artist within – Applied eMOTION"	15

1. First College meeting of the Juncker Commission

After the approval vote of the European Parliament on 22 October 2014, the Commission took up office on 1 November. The Commission consists of political heavy-weights including 9 former



Prime Ministers or Deputy Prime Ministers, 19 former Ministers, 7 returning Commissioners and 8 former Members of the European Parliament, all with solid economic and finance background, and for some of them with extensive foreign relations experience. The new, strong and experienced team gathered around the large oval table on the 13th floor of the Berlaymont building to get down to work. This Commission has committed to a new start for Europe. President Juncker insisted that it would "*not only look different, but would also work differently*". For example, the collective work of the College of Commissioners is

organised in project teams which will ensure a dynamic interaction of all Members of the College, breaking down silos and moving away from static structures. The first task of the new College will be to rebuild bridges in Europe after the financial and economic crisis, and to restore European citizens' confidence. "*Europe needs a broad-based agenda for reform to strengthen its competitiveness and stimulate investment for job creation*", President Juncker told the European Parliament. This should be achieved through a clear focus on ten political priorities where the European Union can make a real difference. In this spirit, the College had a general debate today on the challenges lying ahead on the economic front, after a presentation by Vice-President Katainen and Commissioner Moscovici. External relations have been discussed with a special focus on Ebola, and a note was presented by Commissioner Stylianides detailing his priorities as newly elected EU Ebola Coordinator. The last point on the College agenda was a general discussion on the new way of working together in project teams.

2. European Day for People with Disabilities

On the occasion of the European Day for People with Disabilities, the European Commission is pleased to announce that the Swedish city of Borås is the winner of the 2015 Access City Award. The Award recognises Borås's comprehensive and strategic approach to creating an accessible city for all; a good example of local action to help removing the many barriers that people with disabilities still face in their daily life. On this occasion, Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility underlined: "*People with disabilities should be able to fully participate in society. Job creation and accessibility are top priority for the European Commission and I am personally committed to taking action in these areas. I would like to congratulate Borås for leading the way in making life more accessible for all.*" The Award was handed out during the conference organised each year by the European Commission to celebrate this date, in cooperation with the European Disability Forum. This event brings together people with disabilities, their representative organisations, EU policy makers, service providers, think tanks, trade unions and employers, to discuss the key areas of employment, accessibility and challenges for the future. The Access City Award is one of the actions foreseen in the EU disability strategy that aims at making Europe barrier-free. It is organised by the Commission together with the European Disability Forum. The Award aims to encourage cities with at least 50,000 inhabitants to share their experience and to improve accessibility for the benefit of all. Since 2010, 189 EU cities have participated in the 5 editions of the Access City Award. This year, **Helsinki (Finland)** took the **second prize**. The **third prize** was awarded to **Ljubljana (Slovenia)**. The European Commission awards special mentions to cities that are pioneers in achieving accessibility in terms of built environment, transport, information and communication technology and public facilities and services. This year, the special mentions are given to:



- **Logroño**, Spain, was awarded a special mention in the field of the built environment and public spaces,
- **Budapest**, Hungary, received a special mention for its work in the field of transportation.
- **Arona**, Spain, and **Luxembourg** got a special mention for public facilities and services.

Background

The Access City Award

The Access City Award was launched in 2010 to raise awareness of disability and promote accessibility initiatives in European cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants. The prize is about ensuring equal access to city life for people with disabilities. The initiative aims to encourage cities to inspire one another to innovate and to share good practice. The Award is part of the EU's wider efforts to create a barrier-free Europe: improved accessibility brings lasting economic and social benefits to cities, especially in the context of demographic ageing. The Award is given to the city that has demonstrably and sustainably improved accessibility in fundamental aspects of city living, and that has concrete plans for further improvements.

EU policy on accessibility

One in six people in the European Union – around 80 million – have a disability that ranges from mild to severe. Over one third of people aged over 75 have disabilities that restrict them to some extent. These numbers are set to rise as the EU population grows progressively older. Most of these people are all too often prevented from fully participating in society and contribute to the economy because of physical or other barriers, as well as discrimination. The EU is party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This Convention is the first international legally binding instrument setting minimum standards for a range of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights for people with disabilities around the world. It is also the first comprehensive human rights convention to which the EU has become a party. The European Commission published in June the first report on how the EU is giving effect to the UN Convention. The report shows that the ratification of the Convention by the EU has tangible impacts on the ground and gives examples. The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, adopted by the Commission in November 2010, sets a concrete agenda of actions to implement the UN Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Strategy contains actions in the areas of accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health and external action. The European Commission services are currently working on a European Accessibility Act. It aims to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services for the benefit of people with disabilities.

3. Budget 2015: Commission makes new proposal to Parliament and Council

The European Commission has adopted a new draft EU budget for 2015 after negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council (the EU Member States) did not result in an agreement at the end of the budgetary conciliation period on 17 November. The new draft budget for 2015 foresees €145.2 billion in commitments (+1.8% on 2014) and €141.3 billion in payments (+0.7% on 2014). The proposal has been transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council and with a view to continuing negotiations early. *"Our new budget proposal takes into*



account the views of the European Parliament and the Council, thus providing a sound basis for the renewal of negotiations", said Kristalina Georgieva, Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources. *"It will hopefully pave the way for agreement on the 2015 EU budget and on the pending draft amending budgets for 2014, which we have proposed to help tackle the growing problem of unpaid bills. I've said it before and I'll say it again: this is not a budget for Brussels. Businesses, researchers, students, NGOs as well as towns and regions across the EU await*

the outcome of these talks, in order to have access to much needed funding. The Commission as an honest broker in these discussions will do everything in its power to provide Europe with a budget that serves our half a billion EU citizens." The talks will cover the 2015 budget proposal, but also Draft Amending Budgets (DABs) for 2014. The Commission proposed the DABs for 2014 to cover legal obligations in research and innovation, education and support for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as unusually high reimbursement claims from Member States in cohesion policy. This would come at no extra cost to national budgets, because of unexpected revenue, mostly from competition fines. The proposal for a new Draft Budget 2015 is focused on supporting in particular those policies in favour of competitiveness and economic convergence, thus contributing to growth and jobs, as well as those budget lines which allow Europe to address crises especially in its neighbourhood.

Background

The procedure regarding the EU budget is as follows: first the Commission presents the draft budget (done on 11 June this year); then the Council reacts; then the Parliament reacts. If the Council cannot agree to the Parliament's position, a 21-day conciliation procedure follows to find a compromise between the two institutions. If the conciliation procedure fails, as happened in

2010, 2012 and this year, the Commission must present a new draft budget. The College of Commissioners empowered Vice-President Georgieva to adopt the new draft budget. Today's proposal will be followed by meetings between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission ("trilogues") to seek to reach an agreement in time for the European Parliament to formally adopt the 2015 EU budget at its last plenary session of the year. In case of no agreement by 31 December 2014, from 1 January 2015 the EU would operate under the system of the "provisional twelfth". In short, the budget appropriations for each chapter of the budget would be funded monthly by one twelfth of its 2014 budget or the relevant amount in the 2015 draft budget, whichever is less. The system of twelfths would have consequences for the perception of the ability of the EU to act. In particular, it would put on hold any new initiative or body that didn't have a budget for 2014.

4. EU launches Investment Offensive to boost jobs and growth

The European Commission announced a € 315 billion Investment Plan to get Europe growing again and get more people back to work. The Plan is built on three main strands

- the creation of a **new European Fund for Strategic Investments**, guaranteed with public money, to mobilise at least € 315 billion of additional investment over the next three years (2015 - 2017);
- the establishment of a credible **project pipeline** coupled with an **assistance programme** to channel investments where they are most needed;
- an ambitious **roadmap to make Europe more attractive for investment** and remove regulatory bottlenecks.

According to European Commission estimates, taken as a whole, the proposed measures could add € 330 - € 410 billion to EU GDP over the next three years and create up to 1.3 million new jobs. Commenting on the Plan, European Commission President **Jean-Claude Juncker** said: *"If Europe invests more, Europe will be more prosperous and create more jobs – it's as simple as that. The Investment Plan we are putting forward today in close partnership with the European Investment Bank is an ambitious and new way of boosting investment without creating new debt. Now is the time to invest in our future, in key strategic areas for Europe, such as energy, transport, broadband, education, research and innovation. I am now counting on the European Parliament and on Member States to pitch in and do their part to get the new European Fund for Strategic Investments up and running as soon as possible. Europe needs a kick-start and today we are supplying the jump cables."* Vice-President **Jyrki Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness said: *"We need fresh investments in Europe and for this we need to mobilise extra private finance. The new European Fund for Strategic Investments will act as a multiplier. Every public euro mobilised in the Fund will generate about € 15 of investment that would not have happened otherwise. The Fund will start with a very significant firepower and will be able to expand its activities further as more stakeholders join. The Commission calls on Member States and National Promotional Banks to join in to multiply the impact of the Fund and trigger even more significant positive knock-on effects for the European economy."* In detail, the new Investment Plan will be built on three strands:



1. Mobilising additional finance for investment

The Investment Plan will unlock public and private investments in the real economy of at least € 315 billion over the next three years (2015-2017). At a time when public resources are scarce while financial liquidity exists in financial institutions and on the bank accounts of individual and corporations, ready to be used, the challenge is to break the vicious circle of under-confidence and under-investment. The Investment Plan foresees a smart mobilisation of public and private sources of finance – where every euro of public money is used to generate additional private investment, without creating new debt. A new **European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)** will be set up in partnership with the European Investment Bank (EIB). It will be built on a guarantee of € 16 billion from the EU budget, combined with € 5 billion committed by the EIB. Based on prudent estimates from historical experience, the **multiplier effect of the Fund will be 1:15**. In other words, for every public euro that is mobilised through the Fund, € 15 of total investment, that would not have happened otherwise, is generated. The focus of the Fund should be to invest in infrastructure, notably broadband and energy networks as well as transport infrastructure in industrial centres;

education, research and innovation; and renewable energy and in SMEs and middle capitalisation companies. Establishing the Fund within the existing structure of the EIB-Group will allow it to be set up rapidly in spring 2015. The Fund has the potential to mobilise over € 315 billion of additional finance over the period 2015-2017. The objective is that the Fund is operational by mid-2015. In addition, this investment will be complemented by maximising the leverage of the **European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020**, using loans, equity, and guarantees rather than traditional grants. This will increase the leverage ratio to between 1:3-1:4. By doubling the amount of innovative financial instruments and using the leverage effect thus created, **€ 20 and € 35 billion** in terms of additional investments in the real economy could be mobilised between 2015 and 2017.

2. A credible project pipeline coupled with technical assistance to channel the money where it is needed

The Investment Plan will enable finance to reach the real economy through the creation of **a transparent pipeline identifying viable projects at EU level** and providing the necessary technical assistance to support project selection and structuring and the use of more innovative financial instruments. The new Fund will support strategic investments in infrastructure, notably broadband and energy networks, transport in industrial centres, as well as education, R&D, renewable energy and energy efficiency. It will also support risk finance for SME and mid-cap companies across Europe. It will help them to overcome capital shortages by providing higher amounts of direct equity and additional guarantees for SME loans. Member States are already providing the joint Commission-EIB Task Force established in September 2014 with **lists of projects selected according to three key criteria**:

- EU value-added projects in support of EU objectives
- Economic viability and value – prioritising projects with high socio-economic returns
- Projects that can start at latest within the next three years, i.e. a reasonable expectation for capital expenditure in the 2015-17 period.

In addition, listed projects should have the potential to leverage other sources of funding. They should also be of reasonable size and scalability (differentiating by sector/sub-sector). The Commission and the EIB will also launch a major programme of technical assistance to identify projects and help make them more attractive for private investors.

3. A Road Map to tackle barriers to investment

The Investment Plan will contain a Road Map to remove sector specific regulations that hamper investment. To improve the business environment and financing conditions, the plan will focus on measures in the financial sector, for example the creation of a Capital Markets Union, to provide an enhanced supply of capital to SMEs and long term projects. Priority will be given to removing the significant regulatory and non-regulatory barriers which remain across all the important infrastructure sectors, including energy, telecoms, digital and transport, as well as barriers in services and product markets. The Commission will, in December, propose in its 2015 Work Programme a priority list of initiatives specifically linked to the Investment Plan.

Next steps - in the short-term (December 2014/January 2015).

The European Parliament and the **December European Council** are invited to endorse the Investment Plan for Europe which includes a commitment to fast-track adoption of relevant legislative measures. Member States will shortly finalise the **programming of European Structural and Investment Funds** to maximise their leverage, while the **European Investment Fund will be scaled up** thanks to a first additional contribution from the EIB. In parallel, the Commission and EIB will initiate the formal arrangements for the new European Fund for Strategic Investments. The **joint Commission-EIB Task Force** is expected to provide a first list of possible investment projects in the course of December to start building a transparent European pipeline of projects. Technical assistance will be strengthened, together with the EIB and key national and regional actors, to build an investment advisory "Hub" offering one-stop-shop services for project promoters, investors and public managing authorities. All relevant measures should be adopted **so that the new European Fund for Strategic Investments can be set up by mid-2015**. By mid-2016, the European Commission and Heads of State and Government will take stock of the progress made and, if necessary, consider further options.

5. Towards a work programme for a new start for Europe

The Juncker Commission is committed to restoring citizens' confidence by demonstrating that the EU can deliver for them on the big challenges facing European economies and societies. That

starts with setting the right priorities for the 2015 Commission Work Programme. The preparation of the Work Programme was initiated, with First Vice-President Frans Timmermans launching a process of discussion within the College and with the European Parliament and for the first time the Member States in the Council. European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: *"People all around the EU are telling us they want change. They want Europe to focus more where it can help solve the big problems: jobs, growth and fairness in our societies. Citizens want Europe to improve their lives, not meddle with them. Businesses want Europe to enhance their competitiveness, not burden them with red tape. This Commission is committed to a fresh start, with a better prioritisation in what we do and a better way of doing it. Our first Work Programme will concentrate on a limited set of concrete initiatives which can make a positive difference for citizens. And, for the first time, we will work in dialogue with both the European Parliament and the Member States to build support for our programme, because proposals are only useful if they are adopted, accepted and implemented properly on the ground."* The Commission Work Programme will translate



the ten points of the Political Guidelines, the Juncker Commission's political contract with the European Parliament, and the European Council's Strategic Agenda for the Union in Times of Change, into concrete deliverables.

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Next Steps

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has tasked First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, in charge of Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights with overseeing the process of preparing the 2015 Work Programme. First Vice-President Timmermans will lead discussions on the orientations with the European Parliament in the context of the structured dialogue foreseen under the Framework Agreement. For the first time, the Commission will also discuss this with the Member States in the General Affairs Council. President Juncker and First Vice-President Timmermans have written to the Presidents of the European Parliament and the Council to launch the discussion. These exchanges are intended to create a shared sense of priorities across institutions and more effective delivery in areas where citizens expect European responses. The aim is to adopt the 2015 Work Programme in mid-December. Once the Work Programme is adopted, the Commission will work closely with the European Parliament and the Council, as well as stakeholders, including national Parliaments to take forward the initiatives announced and carry them through to provide tangible results for Europe's citizens.

6. Closing ranks with President Tusk and national parliaments

President Juncker met with Donald Tusk, who took up office as the new President of the European Council on 1 December. On the same day First Vice-President Timmermans debated with representatives of national Parliaments from across the European Union.

"Very happy to see my good friend Donald Tusk take up office at the European Council - the start of a good cooperation". With these words on Twitter President Juncker inaugurated a new

working relationship with Donald Tusk, the former Prime Minister of Poland, who took up office on 1 December 2014. *"I come here with a strong sense of purpose. In these difficult times Europe needs success."* said the new European Council President Tusk during the handover ceremony with the outgoing President Herman Van Rompuy. The first official meeting of the new President of the European Council Donald Tusk was with the Commission President Juncker. On the same day, European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans attended the Conference of European Affairs



Committees (COSAC) plenary session in Rome which brought together representatives of national Parliaments from across the European Union. Deepening the relationships between national Parliaments and the European Commission is a priority of the Juncker Commission. This meeting was a good opportunity to share views with Parliamentarians on how best to achieve this goal. Mr Timmermans is charged with "coordinating and strengthening the interaction of all Commissioners with national Parliaments as a way of bringing the European Union closer to citizens and forging a new partnership with national Parliaments."

7. Switzerland and EU join forces in science and research



The European Union and Switzerland on 5 December 2014 are signing a comprehensive international agreement associating Switzerland to parts of Horizon 2020, Research and Training Programme of Euratom and the ITER project. This will see Switzerland participate in project consortia in eligible programmes on an equal footing with EU Member States, while financially contributing to these programmes with an estimated €400 million until the end of 2016. Commenting on the signature of the agreement, Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Science, Research and Innovation said: *"This agreement is of paramount importance for our scientific communities. EU researchers benefit from access to excellent Swiss research facilities and institutions. At the same time, access to schemes for researcher mobility like Marie Skłodowska-Curie or to excellent research in programmes like ERC and Future and Emerging Technologies is vital for the Swiss. Furthermore, with this agreement Switzerland renews its commitment towards our long standing and fruitful collaboration."* As part of the Horizon 2020 programme, Swiss beneficiaries will be able to participate with an associated status in actions under the "Excellent Science" pillar, which contains the European Research Council, Future and Emerging Technologies, Research Infrastructures and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions as well as in actions under the specific objective "Spreading excellence and widening participation". In addition, Switzerland will also participate as an associated country in the Euratom Programme and the ITER project. The participation of Switzerland is effective from 15 September 2014 until 31 December 2016. Beyond 2016, association to these programmes will depend on Swiss measures to ensure the non-discrimination of Croatian citizens and researchers. If Switzerland resolves the issue of the free movement of persons by February 2017, the association will expand to the whole of Horizon 2020 including the parts not yet covered. Otherwise, the whole agreement will be automatically terminated.

Background

Cooperation in research and technology between the European Union/Euratom and Switzerland has a long history. Switzerland has been associated to the two previous framework programmes while in fusion it has been associated since the start of the programme in 1978 ("historic partnership" for Euratom). In the last programme (FP7, 2007-2013) Switzerland has had a very active participation with 4,457 participations from Switzerland in 3,404 signed grant agreements, which ranks Switzerland at first place amongst the Associated Countries in terms of number of participations and budget share. The Swiss participants have been particularly active in areas such as: nanotechnologies, ERC, Marie Curie actions, food, agriculture, fisheries and biotechnologies and ICT. Switzerland has been a valuable partner for Euratom research, and it is the only third country associated to the entirety of the previous Euratom research programme (2012-2013). By virtue of its association to Euratom, the ITER Agreement applies also to Switzerland. In relation to cooperation in fusion under the Euratom Programme the new agreement will replace the 1978 Fusion Cooperation Agreement.

8. EU Commissioner Mimica announces new support for fighting Ebola

EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, has announced €61 million of new support in response to the Ebola crisis in the affected countries of West Africa, during a visit to Guinea. This will include direct support to the governments of Guinea and Liberia to help them cushion the impact of the economic effects of the outbreak, as well as measures to address security issues in affected countries. In addition, existing health and awareness programmes will be refocused to specifically tackle the challenge of Ebola. Commissioner Mimica also launched the overall EU funding for Guinea for the years 2014- 2020.

Commissioner Mimica commented: *"Our new pledge will help the countries affected by Ebola to better deal with the multiple challenges that arise from this crisis. The EU stands firmly side by side with the people of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone; both in overcoming Ebola, as well as over the medium and long term. We need to make sure that the countries can quickly recover from this crisis and get back on a path of sustainable development."* He added: *"With the overall support for Guinea*

that we have now launched up to 2020, we will respond to the important needs of the people. Reinforcing the health system is an absolute priority but we also need to address development needs on a broader scale.” During his visit to Guinea (5-7th December), the Commissioner met President Alpha Condé, met Foreign Affairs Minister, François Lounceny Fall, and Minister of Economy and Finance, Mohamed Diare. Discussions with government representatives covered, among other topics, the country’s needs arising from the Ebola crisis, as well as its longer term development. The Commissioner also visited sanitation and health projects. The joint signature of Commissioner Mimica of the National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Guinea with Minister of Economy and Finance, Mohamed Diare, paved the way for overall EU funding from the so-called 11th European Development Fund (EDF) for the period 2014-2020. EU cooperation during this period will amount to €244 million, focusing on health, urban sanitation and the rule of law. The signature reaffirms the EU’s commitment, beyond Ebola, to contributing to the eradication of the root causes of the country’s fragility, which allowed the epidemic to take hold and spread.

Background

The **new Ebola pledge** of development support contains the following elements:

- Budget support for Guinea (€11million) and Liberia (€14 million) to help cushion the economic effects of the outbreak
- Redirecting a health project launched in late 2013 in Guinea (€20 million) to address the Ebola crisis. Activities include improving access to quality basic health services in Forestry Guinea, one of the areas particularly affected by Ebola. Health facilities are supported, among other activities, through the training of health workers as well as the rehabilitation of facilities and equipment.
- Ebola preparedness support (€11 million) in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Togo, Ivory Coast, Mauretania
- Measures to prevent violence and reduce and mitigate tensions that may arise from the outbreak in border areas of the affected countries (€4.5 million).

The EU’s overall Ebola response

To ensure an efficient and coherent EU response as part of the larger international action, the European Council appointed Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Christos Stylianides, the EU’s Ebola Coordinator. The EU’s total financial contribution to fight the epidemic is over **€1.1 billion**. This includes funding from the Member States and the European Commission. The Commission has given more than €434 million to fight the disease - covering emergency measures and longer-term support. These funds contribute to epidemic surveillance, diagnostics, treatment and medical supplies; they enable deployment of doctors and nurses and training of health workers; they raise awareness about the disease among the population and promote safe burials; they support the preparedness of other countries in the region and they aim to help stabilise the affected countries and assist them in their recovery.



9. Matera to be 2019 European Capital of Culture in Italy



The selection panel of independent experts responsible for assessing the Italian cities competing to be European Capital of Culture in 2019 has recommended that Matera should be awarded the title. The other five cities short-listed after the initial pre-selection round in November 2013 were Cagliari, Lecce, Perugia, Ravenna and Siena. The formal designation of Matera by the EU’s Council of Ministers

is expected to take place next year.

Androulla Vassiliou, the European Commissioner responsible for culture, stated: *“I congratulate Matera on its successful bid. The competition for the title in Italy was one of the strongest ever, with 21 initial contenders narrowed down to six finalists. This number is a testimony of the immense popularity of this European Union initiative. I am confident that Matera will attract more visitors from Europe and all over the world to discover the city, its history and the cultural diversity which is one of strengths of our continent. I am convinced that the title will bring Matera and its surrounding area*

significant long-term cultural, economic and social benefits, as we have seen with previous European Capitals of Culture."

Background

In accordance with the Decision of the European Parliament and the EU's Council of Ministers, which sets out the criteria for the European Capital of Culture, Bulgaria and Italy are the two Member States which will share the title in 2019. The final selection in Bulgaria took place in September, with the panel recommending that Plovdiv should be awarded the title.

The criteria state that cities should prepare a cultural programme with a strong European dimension, which fosters the participation of citizens in the city, its neighbourhood and the whole country. The programme must have a lasting impact and contribute to the long-term cultural and social development of the city. The European dimension is reflected in the chosen themes and in the way events in the programme are organised. Cooperation between cultural operators in different EU countries is encouraged. The process for selecting a European Capital of Culture begins with a pre-selection phase after which an initial shortlist of bidding cities is drawn up. The final selection takes place nine months later. The city chosen by the panel is then officially designated by the EU's Council of Ministers. The panel assessing the cities is made up of 13 independent cultural experts - six appointed by the Member State and seven by the European institutions. The members of the panel appointed by the European institutions currently are:

- Appointed by the European Commission: **Suzana Žilič Fišer** (Slovenia), professor and head of media communications at the University of Maribor and Director General of Maribor – European Capital of Culture 2012; **Ulrich Fuchs** (Germany), deputy artistic director of Linz 2009 and Marseille-Provence 2013.
- Appointed by the Council: **Anu Kivilo** (Estonia), managing director of the International Arvo Pärt Centre; **Norbert Riedl** (Austria), head of department for cultural affairs at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture.
- Appointed by the European Parliament: **Jordi Pardo** (Spain), responsible for cultural projects in the field of international culture; **Steve Green** (United Kingdom), who has an extensive experience of international cultural relations and the role of culture and languages in society with EUNIC (European Network of National Cultural Institutes) and the British Council.
- Appointed by the Committee of the Regions: **Elisabeth Vitouch** (Austria), who represents the Commission for Culture and Education of the Committee of the Regions and is a member of the Vienna City government.

Following Umeå (Sweden) and Riga (Latvia) this year, Mons (Belgium) and Plzeň (Czech Republic) will be European Capitals of Culture in 2015, Wrocław (Poland) and Donostia San Sebastián (Spain) in 2016, Aarhus (Denmark) and Paphos (Cyprus) in 2017 and Valletta (Malta) and Leeuwarden (Netherlands) in 2018.

10. Investment Offensive for Europe

The EU Task Force on Investment published a report showing that there is significant potential for investment in Europe. It identifies around 2,000 projects **across Europe worth some €1.3 trillion of potential investments**, out of which over €500 billion worth of projects could potentially be implemented over the next three years. Many of these projects are currently not being realised due to financial, regulatory or other barriers. Vice-President **Jyrki Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"The report shows there are huge investment needs and viable projects that could lift economic growth and open up more job opportunities in Europe. There has been a severe disconnect between the available investment and credible projects on the ground. We are now taking a big step to restore investor confidence and connect the two."* EIB President **Werner Hoyer** said: *"The work of the Task Force demonstrates that there are enough investment projects in Europe. Member States provided a great number of proposals on which we can build upon to create a pipeline of projects and ensure we put money where it can best meet demand. Now we need to assess the projects and select those that are economically viable and can best foster the competitiveness of Europe's economy. The EIB stands ready to finance those projects on the list, as well as any other, that meet the relevant viability and strategic relevance criteria. It is also urgent to tackle the significant non-financial barriers identified by the Task Force that prevent investment for viable projects from materialising."*



A transparent pipeline of investment projects

The report recommends immediate action to create a transparent pipeline of investment projects. The identification of projects by the Task Force is a first step towards creating a forward-looking and transparent pipeline of investable projects. This is an essential measure to restore confidence and encourage investors to invest and build expertise in Europe. The lack of credible and transparent information about projects is currently a major barrier to investment. The central idea is to provide a pipeline of trustworthy projects which will restore investor confidence and unlock private sector investment to complement finance from Member States and the EU. Projects may successfully access funding from the private sector alone, through Member States or other sources of EU funding, including the newly created European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The Task Force focused on projects in **key growth-enhancing areas**: knowledge, innovation and the digital economy; energy union; transport infrastructure; social infrastructure; and natural resources and the environment. It has also analysed investment with regard to the SMEs and Mid-Caps, the backbone of the EU economy in terms of job creation, innovation and growth. The lists of projects provided by the Member States and Commission to the Task Force, published today, is a starting point. It does not exclude other potentially viable investments from being included at any given time. Any project identified by the Task Force will have to be assessed thoroughly before being considered for finance. **There are no automatic financing commitments by the European Commission or the EIB for projects identified by the Task Force** and these projects are not entitled to preferred access to national or European resources.

The Task Force has recommended actions to take:

1. **Improve the business environment**
Priority should be given to [removing significant regulatory and non-regulatory barriers](#) across all the important sectors of infrastructure including: energy, telecoms, digital and transport, as well as barriers in services and product markets and further measures to deepen the Single Market. This includes better regulation and deeper, less fragmented capital markets. At the same time, Member States must continue to implement structural reforms that promote a predictable and conducive business climate.
2. **Develop national long-term investment plans**
Member States need to give a political commitment to develop **strategic long-term investment plans** and exchange best practices on economically viable projects. These, together with project pipelines, could be published on dedicated websites.
3. **Provide technical assistance to help develop sound investment projects**
The report recommends that the EU should set up an advisory hub as a one-stop-shop offering a continuous service of advice and expertise for project promoters, investors and public authorities. The EU should also provide advice on project structuring to help promoters attract additional private investment to projects with EU added value.
4. **Carry out value for money assessments**
For viable projects, Member States should carry out value-for-money assessments to identify the most efficient solutions for structuring projects. The Commission and the EIB should provide advice and develop guidelines on this issue.
5. **Promote innovative financial instruments**
The report proposes that the European Commission and the EIB should promote the use of innovative financial instruments to catalyse private investments in projects of EU significance. Member States should also accelerate the use of financial instruments, especially under the European Structural and Investment Funds. The Task Force report concludes that focusing on the right reforms, expanding the role of the private sector and developing an EU infrastructure market will help lift economic growth, competitiveness, employment and social wellbeing.

Background: The Special task force (Member States, European Commission, European Investment Bank) on investment in the EU was jointly led by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) and included representatives of all EU Member States. It was set up in September [at the request of EU Economic and Finance Ministers](#) and was mandated to identify concrete actions to boost investment, including a pipeline of potentially viable projects of European relevance to be realised in the short and medium term. This was [welcomed by EU leaders in October](#), who asked for the report to be presented to them at their next European Council meeting in December.

11. The European Charlemagne Youth Prize

The European Charlemagne Youth Prize" aims to encourage the development of European consciousness among young people, as well as their participation in European integration projects. The Prize is awarded to projects undertaken by young people which foster understanding, promote the development of a shared sense of European identity, and offer practical examples of Europeans living together as one community. "The European Charlemagne Youth Prize" is awarded jointly and annually by the European Parliament and the Foundation of the International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen. The prize for the best project is €5000, the second, €3000 and the third, €2000. As part of the prize, the three final laureates will be invited to visit the European

Parliament (in Brussels or in Strasbourg). Also, the representatives of all the 28 national projects selected will be invited to a four-day trip in Aachen, Germany. The prizes for the best three projects will be presented by the President of the European Parliament and representative of the Foundation of the International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen.

Submission deadline: 2nd February 2015

1. Fill in the personal details for an individual or a group. Add or remove names if necessary.
2. **Important!** Each group or individual must fill in their own form. Forms filled in by other people (e.g. teachers, people older than 30 years, etc) will not be accepted. Download the "[Declaration by the Applicant](#)" Form (Declaration on EU Funding), fill it in, sign it, and upload it as an attachment.
3. For project details, please note that you will need to upload your full description as an attachment.
4. **Important!** If you attach your project as a pdf, please also include a Word file of the same document. If necessary, attach more than one file. Supported formats are: doc(x), pdf, xls(x), ppt, odt, txt, jpg, gif.
5. If possible, please submit your project in one language only.
6. Please do not forget to submit a summary of your project in English (EN), French (FR) or German (DE). **Important!** The summary should be short but exhaustive, covering the main aspects of your project. Often, the summary is the first element the jury observes when evaluating the project.
7. Please note that in the case of group and multinational projects, the project can only be submitted in one country.
8. After you have filled in all required information, click on the SUBMIT button and wait for the confirmation message. Afterwards you may print a copy of the application for your records.
9. Please make sure you delete the browsing history in your browser before submitting your application. Should you encounter any difficulty, please send us a screen shot of the error message by e-mail at the following address: ecyp2015@ep.europa.eu

For more information: <http://www.charlemagneyouthprize.eu/en/form.html>

12. Writing Competition: "So similar, so different, so European."

Did you know that, as a result of successive enlargements, the European Union (EU) is the largest economy in the world, with more than 500 million citizens? It has more weight internationally than ever before. The EU's enlargement policy supports the membership preparations of those European countries which aspire to join the EU. Thereby it helps to make Europe a safer place, and promotes democracy and fundamental



freedoms, while consolidating the rule of law in the aspiring countries. Croatia, the latest country to join the EU, became the Union's 28th Member State in 2013. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland (negotiations with Iceland have been put on hold following the decision of the Icelandic government), Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey are candidates or potential candidates. Some of them are already in the negotiation process or waiting to start, while others have the prospect of membership when they are prepared. The European Commission is keen to learn more about what you think:

- What is your experience in an enlarged European Union?
- How can the enlarged European Union meet the challenges of the future?

Share your views on one or both questions in an article (max 1000 words) and win great prizes!

For detailed rules, click [here](#). Please download the promotion kit [here](#). Should you have additional questions or you may encounter some difficulties while applying, please don't hesitate to contact our helpdesk: SoEuropean@writingcompetition.eu.

13. "Hostthinking:" a design award



The international competition sponsored by Host - Fiera Milano and POLI.design, under the patronage of ADI, the Association for Industrial Design. Deadline for application March 30, 2015. Deadline for delivery of projects is April 30, 2015. Total prize money: € 7,000 and an exhibition in HOST 2015.

In contemporary **Professional Hospitality** an increasing role is played by planning understood as

the ability to combine technical innovation, functionality and aesthetics, to create products and formats that respond in an effective and engaging way to the demands of increasingly demanding and "design-aware" consumers. And that has always been found in **Host - International Hospitality Exhibition, at Fiera Milano in Rho, from Friday 23 to Tuesday, October 27, 2015**: the reference point where companies from around the world present a preview of the new cutting edge. From this concept and reflection on its evolution and on practices and trends, once again we present **"HOSTthinking, a design award"** a new edition of the international competition held by **Host-Fiera Milano and POLI.design, Consorzio del Politecnico di Milano**, to reward the best in the field of new formats of hospitality. After a successful first edition, which saw 180 applications, 71 projects and 18 proposals presented in the exhibition at HOST 2013, we repeat open challenge to designers and professionals from around the world to present their **innovative visions for a place in the professional hospitality field HO.RE.CA (Hotel, Restaurant, Catering) and Retail. What's New for the 2015 edition, the opening of applications also to the architects of companies active in this field** which could join in the competition in person or in a group. Specifically, the design concept should propose a **service that involves a new experience and an increased involvement of consumers, as well as new ways of using**, based on the trend of the evolution of consumption and presenting a complete scenario and futuristic in terms of services, products, artwork, space, equipment etc. the concepts must be able to **conjugate service and experience, products offered and space/container in such a way as to offer a complete and coherent project. All participants will have until March 30, 2015 to submit their personal or group applications, while the delivery of projects is fixed instead at April 30, 2015. The projects should in every case be new and developed specifically for this contest.** Then it's up to a **jury of experts** made up of representatives from academics, industry professionals and experts in the field of hospitality, who will identify a shortlist of a maximum of 15 proposals that will be broken down by quality and relevance to the initiative. Each designer selected at this point will produce a scale model of their projects and presentation boards that will be **on display in a dedicated area within HOST 2015**, The International Exhibition of the Hospitality Industry, the world's leading Ho.Re.Ca and Retail trade show, at Fiera Milano, Rho, from Friday 23 to Tuesday, October 27, 2015. Within HOST 2015 **an ad hoc event will be dedicated to announcing the 3 finalists and the winning proposal**. For more information: <http://www.host.fieramilano.it/en/hostthinking>

14. European Economic and Social Committee offers traineeships

Twice a year the European Economic and Social Committee offers traineeships for a period of five months to university graduates who are nationals of the Member States of the European Union, as well as to a number of university graduates from non-EU countries. These periods of in-service training offer an opportunity to learn about the EESC's roles and activities and to acquire professional experience in a multicultural environment. They begin on 16 February and 16 September of each year and take place in the Committee's offices in Brussels.

As the EESC receives far more applications than places available it is important:

- That you read carefully the [provisions regarding traineeships at the European Economic and Social Committee](#);

- That you complete the [on-line application](#) form correctly and receive a registration number. **Please be aware that for security reasons this form is not accessible with Safari 5.1.10 on a Mac version 10.6.8. Also some older browsers might be blocked. Please make shure that you use a recent version of your web browser;**
- That you respond to emails from the European Economic and Social Committee accurately and on time;
- That you do not contact (either by e-mail or by telephone) any of our services but you should first wait until you receive an answer from us.

If your application has been pre-selected, you will receive an email which will inform you about this.

At this point, you are required to send copies of relevant documents (**university diplomas, contracts of previous employment, identity card or passport**).



Please do not send your documents as long as you do not have the status of "pre-selected". Candidates who are not in possession of a university diploma can send a letter provided by the university, stating that they have successfully completed the course of study in question. Please note that your application can be updated until your status is "application registered". It is not necessary to have certified copies made of your university degree certificate(s). You must also send **originals** of a **police record**, as well as a **medical certificate** (trainees have to prove that they are medically fit to serve during the training period). Other documents (e.g. detailed curriculum vitae or references) may optionally be attached to your application form in support of your application and must reach the training office **before the closing date**. Make sure that you keep copies of all documents sent to the training office. **Do not send the originals of your degree certificate(s) or other supporting documents (except where specified above).** It is not advisable to send an e-mail to our mailbox or directly to any of our services in order to support your application. The selection procedure is anonymous and personal contacts are not allowed.

15. Our manager elected for the "New Pan-European Working Group"



We are pleased to announce that our manager Antonino Imbesi has been elected by the Representation of the EC in Italy as a representative of Europe Direct in Italy for the "New Pan-European Working Group". We thank all the Representation for this latest acknowledgment towards our manager and we wish him good work!

16. Started a new stage in our association

Our association take, as stager, dr. Federica Bruno with the opportunity offered by the European opportunity known as Youth Guarantee, initiative for the youth occupation promoted by the European Social Fund. The stager will participate with her skills to work in our information centre through the teaching of method learning – by doing. The stager work with the supervision of a business tutor, who supervise her activities, suggesting suitable solutions for each initiative or informative action to develop.



17. The project VET4START-UP starts



From the 14th to the 17th December was held In Potenza the first meeting of the project "Vet4Start-up" approved in the framework of the Erasmus +, in the field of Key Action 2 - Strategic Partnerships in VET. The partnership is coordinated by our association Euro-Net (Europe Direct center of EC), and is composed by: University of Wolverhampton (UK); ADESEMA (Spain); Erhvervs Akademi Sydvest (Denmark); Associazione Nazionale Orientatori - ASNOR (Italy); TR-Associates Ltd (Malta). The objectives of the project are the

development of innovative practices and the improvement of methodologies in VET (Vocational Education and Adult Learning) through activities such as:

- an e-learning training course about business start-up useful even through an app for smartphones;
- workshops held with interactive methodologies, simulations and innovative approaches as the "digital storytelling" and the "creative problem solving";
- guides and best practices about business initiatives;
- a website that will contain all the material produced in different languages;
- a Letter of Intent that defines the figure of "European Project manager for start-up" for the staff of the organizations involved.

At the first meeting was discussed about the activity and division of tasks between the partners.

18. Facebook: over 4500 new friends in 2014

Today on our Euro-net Facebook profile we have 4536 "friends", more than 1800 that we had in 2013; also the Facebook page had doubled his numbers: we have 1531 "likes"! Remember that Euro-net is present on Facebook (both as a profile and page).

PROFILE

By the web address shown below, you can go to our Facebook profile:

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?ref=profile&id=100000696594547>

Please note that in order to access the profile Euro net must be enrolled in the social network

PAGE

By the web address indicated below you can go to our Facebook page, which can also be accessed without membership in the social network:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Euro-net/307227906008>



19. LinkedIn: over 2500 contacts!



We are proud about our LinkedIn profile: also on this social network we have passed our goal and we have 2500 contacts. Well, that exponential growth can only be justified with a strong enthusiasm of the people towards our work and with a brilliant judgment on our professionalism. Remember that Euro-net is present on LinkedIn as Europe Direct Basilicata centre, as Eurodesk centre and as Euro-Net Network.

20. We Share named "STAR PROJECT" from the "Italian National Agency"

The project "We Share", realized by the Youth Europe Service association, has received the European recognition as "Star project". The association won this award for 3 different biennial projects for three consecutive years (2011, 2012 and 2013), respectively the first time in Romania and two times in Italy. In short, "We Share" is a project financed with the support of the European Commission in the LLP (Lifelong Learning Programme) Grundtvig Learning Partnerships and which involved 16 partner from other different European Nations. The project had the purpose to share new lifestyle, alternative to the increasing consumerism and turned, thanks to the use of technology, to support the sustainability and promote friendship and trust in the other. Thanks to a continental cooperation too wide it was been possible to have a wide vision and compare different lifestyles of collaborative consumption and condivision in Europe.



21. Project “Fame”: news and events

The project “FAME - ARTISTS 'SCHOOL AND CREATIVE CENTRES' NETWORK” approved to our association EURO-NET in the framework of the regional call “Urban Visions - Projects for the enhancement of the centres for youth creativity” has launched the call for participants at its free courses. The call is available in Italian at the official website www.fameproject.net. The initiative wants to realize a school for artists whose trainers will be our regional artists that can disseminate their expertise in specific areas such as: theatre and acting; drawing; animation in 2D; music and sound; screenplay and creative writing; dubbing and video creation. The



centres that will organize these training activities are: Europe Direct Basilicata centre in Potenza, “Casa Cava” in Matera, “Centro per la creatività della Val Sarmento” in S. Paolo Albanese, “Centro TILT” in Marconia, “Centro Cecilia” in Tito and also “Teatro Piccolo Principe” in Potenza. The goal is the creation of a collaboration between the various areas to develop cooperation also valid at the transnational level. The partnership, coordinated by our association EURO-NET is composed by 11 organizations coming from 5 from different European countries (Italy, Greece, Romania, Austria and Poland) and it is made by various legal entities (NGOs, associations, foundations, companies). For more information, visit the official website. www.fameproject.net.

22. The Project MY WAY: seminar of the peer education in Hannover

“MY WAY” is a “Leonardo da Vinci – Transfer of Innovation” project, developed in the LLP Program of the European Commission and based on the “Council Recommendation” on the politics to reduce the educational wasting on the 28th of June 2011. The project try to implement and develop the Austrian model of “Youth Coaching” (based on advice, matter’s management e career’s planning), trying to solve one of the main challenge in the European countries; how to reach and motivate the youths at high risk to drop out of education or training. Between July and October was made the first workshop with the youths in each country partner (Austria, Poland, Spain, Malta, Germany), to discuss on the NEET’s problems; in the next phase it will be organised a training to instruct some young participants to create workshops for other youths. Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ (Malta) has worked out a curriculum that has been used by all the other partner organisations for their own work with the youths. This training will be run as seminar of the peer education and will take place in the month of January 2015 in Hannover, in Germany.



23. In Hungary the first meeting : “The artist within – Applied eMOTION”

From the 11th to the 14th of December took place in Eger (a pleasant town, chief town of the in the [province of Heves](#), famous for the production of wine) in Hungary, the first meeting of the project “The artist within – Applied eMOTION” approved in the framework of the Erasmus Plus – in the field of key Action 2 – Strategic Partnership. At the meeting in the city of Eger (at about 150 kilometres from the capital Hungarian, Budapest) participated all the project’s partner:



- Association on Refugees and Migrants, ARM-BG (Bulgaria);
- Społeczna Akademia Nauk, SAN (Poland);
- Comparative Research Network e.V., CRN (Germany);
- Theater Vision e.V., (Germany);
- EURO-NET (Italy);

- Hungarian Association for Expressive Arts and Dance Therapy, IKTE (Hungary), which is also the project’s coordinator.

The project aims at the development and integration of different art modalities into the formal and non-formal educational activities and it will last two years. The partners, during the start-up meeting, will have the possibility to know each other and define together the planning steps.