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The Youth European Network

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Bimonthly newsletter:

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

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1. Protecting all children in migration: Commission outlines priority actions

Over the past two years, a growing number of children in migration have arrived in the EU, many of them without their families.

While EU and Member States' legislation provide a solid framework for protection, the recent surge in arrivals has put national systems under pressure and exposed gaps and shortcomings. This is why the Commission is setting out actions to reinforce the protection of all migrant children at all stages of the process. It is necessary to ensure that migrant children are swiftly identified when they arrive in the EU and that they receive child-adequate treatment. Trained personnel need to be available to assist children during their status determination and children should be provided with sustainable long-term perspectives through better access to education and health care. Child protection is a central priority in the European Agenda on Migration and the Commission will continue to support Member States' efforts through training, guidance, operational support and funding. First Vice-President **Frans Timmermans** said: *"The number of children arriving in the EU with or without their families has increased dramatically. We need to make sure that children who need protection actually receive it. And we need to do it now. This is our moral duty as well as our legal responsibility. Children should be our top priority as they are the most vulnerable, especially when they have nobody to guide them. That is why we are setting out a number of concrete actions to better protect, support and take care of the best interests of all children who are arriving in the European*



*Union." Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship **Dimitris Avramopoulos** said: "One in three asylum seekers in Europe is a child. Children are the most vulnerable migrants and ensuring their protection from the moment they leave their home countries should be mainstreamed in our migration policy. This means that we need a comprehensive and stepped-up response. We propose concrete actions to support our Member States in addressing the needs of all children at all stages of migration: to improve the identification of children, to train involved personnel, to step up relocation, but also to ensure swift family tracing in countries of origin and measures to enhance early integration. Both the Commission and our EU agencies stand ready to move forward to implement these actions." Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality **Věra Jourová** added: "When speaking about child migrants, we should never forget that first and foremost they are children. Their best interests must be taken into consideration at all stages of the migration process. Child migrants, especially those who are unaccompanied, should be supported by guardians or foster families, as early as possible. The integration of these children into our societies depends on how fast they can go back to a more stable life. We will continue to support Member States to give these children the childhood they deserve." Drawing on expertise from all relevant policy areas, the Commission is proposing a number of priority areas for Member States to focus on, supported by the Commission and EU Agencies, to improve the protection of children in migration and ensure a closer link between the asylum and child protection services:*

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- **Swift identification and protection upon arrival:** A person responsible for child protection should be present at an early stage of the registration phase and in all reception facilities hosting children and **child protection officers should be appointed in each hotspot**. Member States should put in place the necessary procedures to systematically report and exchange information on all **missing children**.
- **Adequate reception conditions for children:** The needs of each child must be assessed as early as possible upon arrival and all children need to have **access to legal assistance, healthcare, psychosocial support and education** without delay and regardless of their status. For unaccompanied minors, the possibility of **foster or family-based care** should be provided. Everything must be done to provide **alternatives to administrative detention** for children.
- **Swift status determination and effective guardianship:** The role of **guardians** for unaccompanied minors should be strengthened. To this end, the Commission will establish a **European guardianship network** to exchange good practices. To support the implementation of **reliable age-assessment procedures** by all Member States, EASO will update its guidance

shortly. Concerted efforts should also be made to **speed up family tracing and family reunification procedures**, within or outside the EU. In all procedures related to the migration process, cases with children should always be given priority. This goes for **relocation of unaccompanied migrants** from Greece or Italy as well.

- **Durable solutions and early integration measures:** The Commission will further promote the integration of children through **funding and the exchange of good practices**. Member States are called upon to **step up resettlement** of children in need of protection and to ensure that **family tracing and reintegration measures** are put in place for those children who are to be returned.
- **Addressing root causes and protecting children along migrant routes outside the EU:** The EU has stepped up its work with partner countries on mainstreaming child protection in migration under the **Migration Partnership Framework**. Further efforts are needed to support partner countries in strengthening national child protection systems and in **preventing child trafficking**. A timely follow-up to the recently-renewed **EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of the rights of the child**, including in countries of origin and transit, should be ensured.

A **determined, concerted and coordinated follow-up** to the key actions set out in this Communication is required at **EU, national, regional and local level**, also in cooperation with civil society and international organisations. The Commission will closely monitor this process and report regularly to the Council and European Parliament.

Background

In the context of the migration crisis, the number of child migrants arriving in Europe has increased significantly. In 2015 and 2016, 30 percent of asylum applicants in the EU were children. As children in migration are exposed to high risks of violence, trafficking or exploitation along migration routes or may go missing, or become separated from their families, they require a specific protection. Children have the right to be protected, in line with relevant provisions of EU law, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and with international law on the rights of the child. The **child's best interests** must be the primary consideration in all actions or decisions concerning children. This Communication follows up on the European Agenda on Migration and the Communication on the State of Play of Implementation of the Priority Actions under the European Agenda on Migration. It builds on progress made under the Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010-2014) as outlined in the Staff Working Paper accompanying the Communication. It also builds on the 10th European Forum on the rights of the child organised by the Commission in November 2016 and on the "Lost in Migration" conference from January 2017, which have underlined the need for urgent targeted actions to better protect children in migration.

2. Commission acts on misleading travel booking websites

While it becomes more and more common to book hotels and flights online, consumers are encountering a growing number of problems with online travel services. These services are now among the most frequent consumer complaints according to the European Consumer Centres.

The European Commission and EU consumer protection authorities launched a coordinated screening of 352 price comparison and travel booking websites across the EU in October 2016. **They found that prices were not reliable on 235 websites, two thirds of the sites checked.** For example, additional price elements were added at a late stage of the booking process without clearly informing the consumer or promotional prices did not correspond to any available service. Authorities have asked the websites concerned to bring their practices in line with EU consumer legislation, which requires them to be fully transparent about prices, and present their offers in a clear way, at an early stage of the booking process. **Věra Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice,



Consumers and Gender Equality, said: *"The Internet provides consumers with plenty of information to prepare, compare and book their holidays. However, if the reviews on comparison websites are*

biased or prices are not transparent, these websites are misleading consumers. The companies concerned need to respect the European consumer rules, just like a travel agent would. Consumer authorities will now require the websites to solve these issues. Consumers deserve the same protection online as offline."

Key findings

- **What you believe you'll pay, is it what you will actually pay?** In one third of the cases, the price first shown is not the same as the final price.
- **Is it an offer or is it just bait?** In one fifth of the cases, promotional offers were not really available.
- **Puzzled mind or puzzled price?** In almost one third of the cases the total price or the way it was calculated was not clear.
- **Last cheap room in the hotel or simply last promoted room on that website?** In one in four cases, websites did not specify that statements about scarcity (e.g. "only 2 left", "only available today") applied strictly to their own website.

Next steps

The 235 websites with irregularities will have to correct the irregularities. Consumer Protection Cooperation authorities will ensure they comply by activating their national enforcement procedures.

Background

An EU-wide screening of websites ("sweep") is a set of checks which are carried out simultaneously by consumer protection authorities in different countries. These checks reveal whether EU consumer protection laws are respected. If the checks find a breach of EU consumer law, then the consumer protection authorities contact the companies involved and ask them to make corrections. Previous "Sweep" actions have focused so far on: airlines (2007), mobile content (2008), electronic goods (2009), online tickets (2010), consumer credit (2011), digital contents (2012), travel services (2013), guarantees on electronic goods (2014) and consumer rights directive (2015)." Every year the Commission coordinates the screening of websites for a particular sector, with the



help of the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) network which brings together the consumer authorities of 28 countries (26 EU countries, Norway and Iceland). The authorities are responsible for enforcing EU consumer protection laws in the EU.

The results of the 2016 screening of travel comparison and booking websites

The CPC authorities of 28 countries (26 EU countries, Norway and Iceland) checked a total 352 websites comparing offers and prices, mainly in the travel sector. Out of the total number of websites, 23.6% compared accommodation prices, 21.3%

compared tickets prices (air, boat, train, bus), 5.1% compared car rental prices, whilst 44.6% offered a combined comparison of products and services (tickets, accommodation, holiday packages, etc.).

The screening revealed a series of irregularities in online comparison tools. The main irregularities related to the price and the way it was calculated and presented:

- in 32.1% of cases, the price on the page of the comparison list was not the same as the price ultimately displayed in the booking page;
- on 30.1% of the websites, the total price (inclusive of taxes) or the way this was calculated was not clear;
- 20.7% of the websites presented special prices, which were not then available as advertised through the actual booking page;
- 25.9% of the websites gave the impression that certain offers were scarce (e.g. "only 2 left", "only available today") without specifying that this scarcity applied strictly to their own website.

Other irregularities identified by the CPC authorities were related to:

- the identity of the provider of the comparison tool: 22.7% only gave limited information (e.g. name, address of establishment), while 4% did not provide any information at all;
- the user review process: 21.3% of the websites presented consumer reviews in an unclear or untransparent way (and/or included elements that could question their truthfulness);
- the coverage of the comparison: 10.5% of the websites did not provide material information that was important for the comparison.

The least problematic issue was the presentation of advertising and marketing. Only 2.8% of the websites contained this type of irregularity.

3. New EU rules on medical devices to enhance patient safety

The Commission welcomes the adoption of its proposal for two Regulations on medical devices which establish a modernised and more robust EU legislative framework to ensure better protection of public health and patient safety.

The new Regulations on medical and in-vitro diagnostic medical devices proposed by the Commission in 2012 will help to ensure that all medical devices - from heart valves to sticking plasters to artificial hips – are safe and perform well. To address this, the new rules will improve market surveillance and traceability as well as make sure that all medical and in vitro diagnostic devices are designed to reflect the latest scientific and technological state-of-the art. The rules will also provide more transparency and legal certainty for producers, manufacturers and importers and help to strengthen international competitiveness and innovation in this strategic sector.



Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: *"I'm extremely happy that our push for stricter controls of medical devices on the EU market will now become a reality. Whether for medical devices, cars or other products, we must ensure stronger supervision in the interest of our citizens. We should not wait for another scandal instead we should start a discussion how to strengthen European oversight over Member States' market surveillance activities."* The two new Regulations bring a number of improvements for medical and in-vitro devices:

- **Improve the quality, safety and reliability of medical devices:** The new rules will impose tighter controls on high-risk devices such as implants, requiring a pool of experts at the EU level to be consulted before placing the device on the market. Controls will also be tightened on clinical trials as well as on the bodies that can approve the marketing of medical devices. The new rules will also cover certain, previously unregulated aesthetic products (e.g. coloured contact lenses that do not correct vision). In addition, a new system for risk classification in line with international guidelines will apply to *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices.
- **Strengthen transparency of information for consumers:** The new regulations will make sure that vital information is easy to find. For instance, patients will receive an implant card with all the essential information, and a unique device identifier will be mandatory for every product so that it can be found in the new European database of medical devices (EUDAMED).
- **Enhance vigilance and market surveillance:** Once devices are available for use on the market, manufacturers will be obliged to collect data about their performance and EU countries will coordinate more closely in the field of market surveillance.

Background

There are over 500,000 types of medical devices and *in-vitro* diagnostic medical devices on the EU market. Examples of medical devices are contact lenses, x-ray machines, pacemakers, breast implants and hip replacements and sticking plasters. *In vitro* diagnostic medical devices, which are used to perform tests on samples, include HIV blood tests, pregnancy tests and blood sugar monitoring systems for diabetics. The existing regulatory framework dates back to the 1990s and consists of three Directives. However, problems with divergences in the interpretation and application of the rules, technological progress as well as incidents involving malfunctions of medical devices—i.e. the PIP breast implant scandal- highlighted the need for revision of current legislation. The Commission is also currently working on more structural and horizontal solutions for better market surveillance within the broader frame of a goods package reform. To address this, the European Commission presented two legislative proposals on medical and in-vitro diagnostic on 26 September 2012. This was followed by extensive expert consultations that resulted in an agreement on the general approach to the medical devices package among Member States' health ministers on 5 October 2015. The adoption of the package by Parliament, following vote in plenary, fully reflects the position of the Council reached in its first reading and in turn the agreement of the co-legislators from June 2016, therefore allowing to conclude the legislative process. To allow manufacturers and authorities to adapt, the new rules will only apply after a transitional period, namely 3 years after publication for the Regulation on medical devices and 5 years after publication for in the Regulation on vitro diagnostic medical devices.

4. EU Justice Scoreboard 2017: justice systems becoming more effective

The European Commission publishes the 2017 EU Justice Scoreboard which gives a comparative overview of the efficiency, quality and independence of justice systems in the EU Member States.

Its aim is to assist national authorities to improve the effectiveness of their justice systems. Compared to previous editions, the [2017 Scoreboard](#) looks into new aspects of the functioning of



justice systems, for example, how easily consumers can access justice and which channels they use to submit complaints against companies. For the first time, it also shows the length of criminal court proceedings relating to money laundering offences. *"The 5th edition of the EU Justice Scoreboard confirms that effective justice systems are essential to build trust in a business and investment-friendly environment in the single market"* said **Věra Jourová**, EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality. *"I encourage Member States to ensure that any justice reform respects the*

rule of law and judicial independence. This is key for citizens and businesses to fully enjoy their rights. An independent and well-functioning justice system is a fundamental pillar of every democracy." Key findings of the 2017 edition include:

- **Shorter civil and commercial court proceedings:** including in a number of Member States whose justice systems are facing challenges. This improvement is clearer over the five-year period than in the short-term.
- **Analysis of consumer protection enforcement:** Member States are responsible for the enforcement of EU consumer law. The Scoreboard shows that the length of administrative proceedings and judicial review in this field varies a lot depending on the country. It also shows that many consumer issues are solved directly by consumer authorities and they don't need to go to courts.
- **Analysis of the fight against money laundering:** As required by the 4th Anti-Money Laundering directive, Member States have provided for the first time data in this area. It shows a large variation in case length – from less than half a year to almost three years- for proceedings dealing with anti-money laundering offenses.
- **Limited access to justice for poorer citizens:** the Scoreboard shows that in some Member States, citizens whose income is below the poverty threshold do not receive any legal aid in some types of disputes.
- **Use of ICT tools still limited in some countries:** while it's widely used for communication between courts and lawyers in half of the Member States, the use of ICT for electronic signature is very limited in over half the EU countries. New data on how lawyers use ICT when communicating with courts again underlines the importance of electronic communication for well-functioning justice systems.
- **Improved or stable perception of judicial independence among the general public:** this is the case in more than two-thirds of Member States, compared to 2016. The trend is the same for businesses' perception since 2010. Among the reasons for the perceived lack of independence of courts and judges, the interference or pressure from government and politicians was the most stated reason. The 2017 edition also presents data on the safeguards in place in the different Member States to guarantee the judicial independence of judges. This reflects the strong importance of rule of law for the EU.
- **Quality standards:** Most Member States have standards fixing time limits or timeframes to avoid lengthy judicial proceedings. However, such standards are not in place in certain Member States with less efficient justice systems.

Next steps

The findings of the 2017 Scoreboard are being taken into account for the ongoing country-specific assessment carried out within the 2017 European Semester process. The country reports for Member States were published on 22 February 2017 and include findings on the justice systems of a number Member States (Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia).

Background

The Scoreboard mainly focuses on litigious civil and commercial cases as well as administrative cases in order to assist Member States in their efforts to pave the way for a more investment, business and citizen-friendly environment. The Scoreboard focuses on the three main elements of an effective justice system:

- **Efficiency:** indicators on the length of proceedings, clearance rate and number of pending cases.
- **Quality:** indicators on legal aid, court fees, training, monitoring of court activities, budget, and human resources.
- **Independence:** indicators on the perceived judicial independence among companies and the general public, and on safeguards relating to judges.

Improving the effectiveness of national justice systems is a well-established priority of the European semester — the EU's annual cycle of economic policy coordination. The EU Justice Scoreboard helps Member States to achieve this by providing an annual comparative overview of functioning of national justice systems. This overview is complemented by country-specific assessments carried out through bilateral dialogue with the national authorities and stakeholders concerned. This assessment may lead to country-specific recommendations on the improvement of national justice systems. In the 2016 European semester, based on a proposal from the Commission, the Council addressed country specific recommendations to six Member States in this area (Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal and Slovakia). The Scoreboard uses different sources of information. Main sources of data are provided by the Council of Europe Commission for the Evaluation of the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). Other sources of data include European networks such as the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary and the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the EU, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) and various committees in specific areas of EU legislation.

5. Actions for the sustainable development of the blue economy

The European Commission launches a new initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean region.

The region covers economic hubs like Barcelona, Marseille, Naples and Tunis. It also includes tourist destinations like the Balearic Islands, Sicily and Corsica. The sea's biodiversity is under severe pressure with a recent [report](#) by scientists from the Joint Research Centre indicating that 50% has been lost in the last 50 years. In addition to this are recent security and safety concerns from the increase in migration from the South to the North. This initiative will allow EU and neighbouring countries to work together to increase maritime safety and security, promote sustainable blue growth and jobs, and preserve ecosystems and biodiversity.

Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries said: *"Millions of holiday makers have a happy association with the Western Mediterranean. Like the millions more who live across the region, they understand the fragile link between conserving national habitats and traditions and ensuring economic viability. Blue economy is important for each of*



the countries involved and they have recognised the strength of working together." **Johannes Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, said: *"This new regional initiative recognises and taps into the economic potential of the Mediterranean Sea and its coast lines to further enhance economic growth, contribute to job creation and eventually the stabilisation of the region. It is an important step towards closer coordination and cooperation among participating countries."* The initiative is the fruit of years' of dialogue between ten countries of the Western Mediterranean region who are ready and willing to work together on these shared interests for the region: five EU Member States (France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Malta), and five Southern partner countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). It follows up on the Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy endorsed by the Union for Mediterranean (UfM) on 17 November 2015.

The goals of the initiative

By fostering cooperation between the ten countries concerned, this initiative has three main goals:

1. A safer and more secure maritime space
2. A smart and resilient blue economy
3. Better governance of the sea.

Gaps and challenges have been identified and a number of priorities and targeted actions have been set for each goal. For **Goal 1** priorities include cooperation between national coast guards and the response to accidents and oil spills. Specific actions will focus on the upgrade of traffic monitoring infrastructure, data sharing and capacity building. For **Goal 2** priorities include new data sourcing, biotechnology and coastal tourism. For **Goal 3**, priority is given to spatial planning, marine knowledge, habitat conservation and sustainable fisheries. The initiative will be funded by existing international, EU, national and regional funds and financial instruments, which will be coordinated and complementary. This should create leverage and attract funding from other public and private investors. This "Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy of the Western Mediterranean" is another example of the EU's successful neighbourhood policy. Barely three weeks ago, the EU secured a 10-year pledge to save Mediterranean fish stocks. The MedFish4Ever Declaration, signed by Mediterranean ministerial representatives from both Northern and Southern coastlines on 30 March, involves 8 Member States (Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, and Cyprus) and 7 third countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Albania, Montenegro). The two projects will enhance each other in protecting the region's ecological and economic wealth.

Background

The initiative is based on the Commission's long-standing experience with sea basin and macro-regional strategies (such as the Atlantic Strategy, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region). It is also based on over two decades of work within the 5+5 Dialogue, which has created strong ties between the participating countries. Furthermore, the initiative builds on other EU policies linked to the region, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy Review priorities and the recent Communication on International Ocean Governance. The initiative is presented in two documents. A Communication outlines the main challenges, shortcomings and the possible solutions. A Framework for Action presents the identified priorities, actions and projects in detail, with quantitative targets and deadlines to monitor progress over time. Some of the actions could extend well beyond the countries in question and even beyond the sub-basin.

6. Imports of organic products subject to EU electronic certification system

A new system of electronic certification to better monitor imports of organic products becomes applicable tomorrow, making the EU a global leader in traceability and in the collection of reliable data on trade of these products.

This pioneering e-certification system will contribute to enhancing food safety provisions and reducing potential fraud. It will also reduce the administrative burden for operators and authorities, and provide much more comprehensive statistical data on organic imports. Both paper and e-



certification will be used during a 6-month transition period. As of 19 October 2017, organic imports will be covered only by e-certification. EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development **Phil Hogan** said: "Our commitment to stringent certification and inspection measures is an important component in the EU's food safety standards. These high standards have allowed us to become the best address for food in the world, but we must always strive to find new and better ways to do even more. These new rules will improve the traceability of organic products, which is an important growing

market." In practical terms, the changes will require the addition of these import certificates into the Trade Control & Expert System ([TRACES](#)) – the existing EU electronic system for tracking movements of food products across the EU. Accessible 24/7, the TRACES system has been shown

to facilitate trade by enabling trade partners and competent authorities to easily obtain information on the movements of their consignments, and speeding up administrative procedures. It also proved to be an invaluable tool in facilitating the rapid reaction to health threats by tracing the movements of consignments and facilitating the risk management of rejected consignments.

Background

Following recommendations from the European Court of Auditors and a request from Member States to address concerns about monitoring the movements of organic products and the consistency of import checks, the new rules are aimed at improving the traceability of organic products and reducing potential fraud. The Commission implementing regulation (EU) 2016/1842 was published on 14 October 2016, amending Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 as regards the electronic certificate of inspection for imported organic products and certain other elements, and Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 as regards the requirements for preserved or processed organic products and the transmission of information.

7. Commission reports on how the EU Cohesion Policy

In a report published on EU regions which are lagging behind in terms of growth or wealth, the Commission identifies clear paths to support regional growth strategies, with the help of EU funds.

The report assesses what supports or hinders the competitiveness of these regions and why they have not yet reached the expected levels of growth and income for the EU. More importantly, the report identifies the investment needs of the regions, namely human capital, innovation, quality of institutions, better accessibility, as well as the tools available within the framework of EU Cohesion

Policy that could support them in their future. Regional Policy Commissioner **Corina Crețu** said: *"For each obstacle to development, there is a Cohesion Policy answer. Tailor-made regional development strategies, combined with preconditions for successful investment, can make these regions attractive places for residents, workers and businesses. This is what we do: we help regions identify their needs and their competitive assets and we provide them with the tools for better-policy making."* 47 regions in eight Member States were carefully studied and



categorised either as being 'low-growth regions', with a GDP per capita of up to 90% of the EU average but with a persistent lack of growth, or 'low-income regions', where GDP per head is growing, but is still below 50% of the EU average. These regions are home to 83 million inhabitants, i.e. 1 out of 6 EU residents. One group is clustered mostly in southern Europe, and a second group is concentrated in the east.

Low-income regions' economies can be boosted by an effective mix of investments in innovation, human capital and connectivity

Smart specialisation strategies can help improve the innovation capacities of regions which score poorly on the Regional Competitiveness Index and where there is a lack of efficient interaction between academia and the local business sphere. Investments in human capital and improving the skills of the labour force, via vocational training and lifelong learning, both of which can be supported by Cohesion Policy funds, should be incentivised. By doing this, the depreciation of skills and mismatches between educational supply and labour market demand can be avoided. Making a region more attractive to young talent and businesses also means linking the regions cities better, as well as its fringes and rural areas. This will generate more spill over from the main economic poles to the benefit of the entire region. Many low-income regions face significant gaps in their infrastructure which is why investments in key transport networks should be prioritised.

Low-growth regions would gain from stronger institutional capacity and structural reforms

The report provides further evidence that development policies can only deliver full results in an investment-friendly environment and only if they are carried out by solid administrations in a transparent, accountable and efficient way. This is especially relevant for low-growth regions, which

have demonstrated limited improvement in their institutional capacity, have not been able to make the most of Cohesion Policy interventions and have consequently grown less and been more exposed to the effects of the economic crisis. To enhance the impact of EU, national and regional spending, horizontal and sectoral barriers that hinder investments should be broken down. The Cohesion Policy preconditions for successful investments can be powerful incentives to address the main obstacles to investments identified in the report. Priorities should be to make business environments more flexible, with less red-tape, time and costs involved in setting up start-ups and running SMEs, increasing the efficiency, transparency and accountability of public administrations and services and modernising public procurement with digital procedures.

Background

In June 2015, the Commission launched an initiative to examine the factors that hold back growth and investment in the low-income and low-growth EU regions. In line with this initiative, the report published analyses the investment needs, growth determinants, macro-economic framework and need for structural reforms of these regions. The initiative and this report are part of a wider commitment of the Commission to provide tailor-made assistance to regions in order to help them improve the way they manage and invest Cohesion Policy funds and foster more ownership, coordination and prioritisation in regional investment and development strategies.

8. Relocation and Resettlement: more efforts needed to meet targets

The Commission adopted its eleventh progress report on the EU's emergency relocation and resettlement schemes, assessing actions taken since 2 March 2017.

Member States have made steady progress on relocation, setting a new monthly record with an additional 2,465 persons relocated. The total number of relocations now stands at 16,340. However, more efforts are needed from all Member States to ensure that all people eligible are relocated over



the coming months. On resettlement, Member States have continued to make significant progress, with safe and legal pathways being provided to 15,492 persons so far. To help improve the relocation and the resettlement process, this report includes targeted recommendations for Member States. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship **Dimitris Avramopoulos** said: *"In March, we reached a new record number of people relocated. This is solidarity in action and a demonstration of responsibility. Now is the time for our Member States to deliver on their commitments and to intensify their*

efforts. They have a political, moral and legal duty to do so. I call on those countries that have not yet joined this common effort to do so. Relocating all people eligible from Greece and Italy over the coming months is perfectly feasible. At the same time, we managed to resettle over two thirds of the 22,500 people we committed to offer a safe and legal path to in July 2015. This is welcome news. We are delivering on our commitments to share responsibility with third-countries such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon."

Relocation

The pace of relocations has continued to increase, resulting in a 27% improvement on the best previous month – with more than 1,600 from Greece and more than 800 from Italy, March saw a total of, 2,465 persons relocated. As of 10 April, 16,340 relocations have now been carried out in total; 5,001 from Italy and 11,339 from Greece. However, despite this positive progress, the current pace of relocation is still well below the targets set to ensure that all people eligible are relocated over the coming months. With around 14,000 relocation candidates remaining in Greece and around 3,500 registered for relocation so far in Italy, the total number of people eligible for relocation who are present in the two countries is well below what was foreseen in the Council Decisions. Given these figures, if the European Council-endorsed targets of at least 3,000 monthly relocations from Greece and the target set by the Commission of at least 1,500 monthly relocations from Italy are met, relocating all eligible applicants currently present in Greece and Italy by September 2017 is perfectly achievable. With the preconditions and operational infrastructure for relocation to work being fully in

place in both countries, and the EU agencies and international organisations having increased their capacities to meet the targets set, it is now up to the Member States to demonstrate political will and intensify and coordinate their efforts to deliver on their obligations. With the aim of removing the remaining operational and logistical bottlenecks in the relocation procedure, this report includes targeted recommendations for specific Member States on how to improve the process all the way from making the pledge until the transfer takes place.

To improve the relocation procedure, Member States should notably:

- Pledge on a monthly basis, increase the overall numbers pledged, increase their capacity to process relocation requests and reduce the response time;
- Avoid overly restrictive preferences and delays and limit requirements causing delays in the transfer procedure;
- Show more flexibility regarding the possibility, in the case of Italy, and, in the case of relocating Member States, the necessity to conduct additional security interviews;
- Give priority to applications concerning vulnerable people, in particular unaccompanied minors;
- In addition, in the case of Italy, the registration and identification of all eligible candidates should take place as soon as possible.

Whereas some Member States (Luxembourg and Portugal) are steadily progressing on their obligations for Greece and Italy, others (Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovakia) are relocating on a very limited basis. Whilst Austria has announced it will start relocating soon, others (Hungary and Poland) are still refusing to participate in the relocation scheme at all. So far, only two Member States (Malta and Finland) are on track to meet their obligations for both Italy and Greece in time. The Commission therefore urges Member States to follow up its recommendations and targets to ensure an increased rate of relocations in a coordinated manner before the next report in May 2017. As stressed in the previous report, if Member States do not increase their relocations soon, the Commission will not hesitate to make use of its powers under the Treaties for those which have not complied with the Council decisions, noting that the legal obligation to relocate those eligible will not cease after September. The Commission stands ready to assist Member States in making progress towards meeting these obligations.

Resettlement

The resettlement scheme continues to be on track. With 15,492 persons resettled to 21 countries as of 10 April, more than two thirds of the agreed 22,504 resettlements under the EU resettlement scheme have already been carried out. Since 28 February 2017, 1,070 people have been resettled, mainly from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. While some Member States and Associated Countries have already fulfilled their targets (Estonia, Ireland, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) and several more having joined the ranks of resettling states through the EU scheme, the responsibilities are still unevenly distributed. Nine Member States (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Croatia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) have yet to start resettling within the ongoing EU-level schemes. The pace of resettlements from Turkey, included in the overall figure of resettlement, has continued to accelerate over the past weeks with 1,053 Syrians resettled since the last report. A total of 4,618 Syrian refugees have so far been provided with safe and legal passage to Europe under the EU-Turkey Statement. Member States are advancing well on preparations for further resettlements and pledges now stand at 26,112, a significant increase compared to the last report. Indeed, Austria and Romania are currently preparing their first resettlements under the scheme. There are, however, Member States that have neither resettled nor undertaken any actions to resettle from Turkey (Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom). Whilst significant progress has been achieved, Member States who are still far from reaching their targets and those Member States who have not yet resettled under the EU schemes should step up their efforts to resettle as soon as possible to contribute to the joint efforts to provide safe and legal pathways to the EU for persons in need of international protection and to implement the EU-Turkey Statement.



Background

The temporary emergency relocation scheme was established in two Council Decisions in September 2015, in which Member States committed to relocate persons in need of international protection from Italy and Greece. The relocation decisions concern the commitment to relocate 98,255 people, after the Council adopted an amendment to the 2nd Council Decision on relocation on 29 September 2016 to make 54,000 places not yet allocated available for the purpose of legally admitting Syrians from Turkey to the EU.

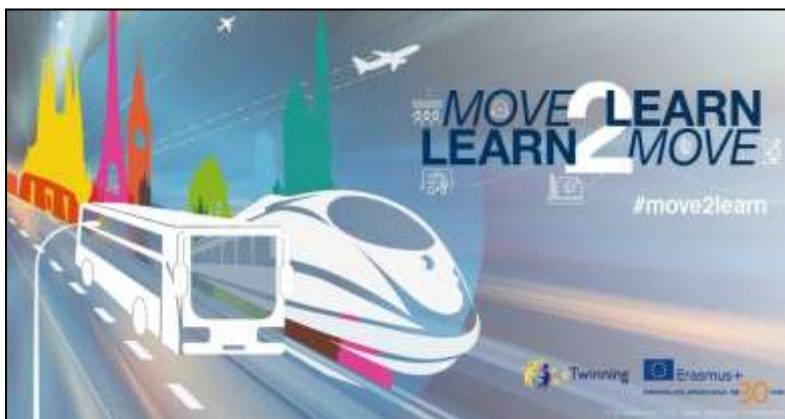


On 8 June 2015, the Commission adopted a proposal on a European Resettlement Scheme, which was followed by an agreement among the Member States on 20 July 2015 to resettle 22,504 persons in clear need of international protection. The European Council on 7 March 2016 called for an acceleration of the implementation of relocation in order to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Greece. In its conclusions of 20 and 21 October, the European Council reiterated its call for further action to accelerate the implementation of the relocation and resettlement schemes in light of the urgent need to provide support to Greece and Italy. The European Council on 15 December endorsed the Joint Action Plan on the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, which included the relocation target for Greece of 3,000 monthly transfers and reiterated its call to further intensify efforts to accelerate relocation, in particular for unaccompanied minors, and existing resettlement schemes. The EU Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016 provides that for every Syrian being returned from Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU. This principle applies as of 4 April 2016. Priority is given to migrants who have not previously entered or tried to enter the EU irregularly. The Commission on 13 July 2016 proposed a permanent EU Resettlement Framework to establish a common set of standard procedures for the selection of resettlement candidates and a common protection status for persons resettled to the EU to streamline and better focus European resettlement efforts in the future.

9. Commission gives a boost to youth mobility in Europe

The European Commission presented an initiative under the Erasmus+ programme which further supports learning and mobility of young Europeans.

The European Commission presented an initiative under the [Erasmus+ programme](#) which further supports learning and mobility of young Europeans. Called "[Move2Learn, Learn2Move](#)", it will enable at least 5,000 young citizens to travel to another EU country in a sustainable manner – individually or together with their school class. The one-off initiative, which is linked to the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus programme, is consistent with two central priorities of the Commission: to put a renewed focus on Europe's youth, and to facilitate EU citizens' mobility, particularly low emission mobility. Move2Learn, Learn2Move builds on an idea put forward by the European Parliament in 2016. It will be implemented through eTwinning, the world's biggest



teachers' network. Part of Erasmus+, it enables teachers and pupils across Europe to develop projects together through an online platform. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, **Tibor Navracsics**, said: "*Building on the success of eTwinning, this initiative will enable young people to discover and experience first-hand different countries and cultures across Europe. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Erasmus, this will be another example of this EU*

success story bringing people together, helping them to develop a feeling of what it means to be European." Commissioner for Transport **Violeta Bulc** said: "Transport is not about tracks, ships or motorways; it is about people. We want to give young Europeans the chance to discover Europe. We also want to encourage them to travel in an environmentally friendly way, which is why CO2 emissions will be taken into account. I am also happy that we can count on the active participation of transport operators to help strengthen the initiative." The initiative will be open to school classes of students aged 16 and above taking part in eTwinning. They are invited to indicate whether they want to be considered for free travel tickets which will be awarded for the best eTwinning projects in each participating country. Social inclusion will be an important criterion in the selection of the best projects. Once the winners have been picked, they will be able to travel from August 2017 until December 2018, at a date of their choice. Students will either travel in a group as part of a school trip or individually, depending on the decision of parents and teachers. All transport modes, operators and lines can be selected, taking into account sustainability criteria and points of departure and destination of the participating students. Some operators are supporting the initiative by offering a special rebate to the participants. These operators are: Aegean Airlines, Air Dolomiti, ALSA Grupo, Azores Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Comboios de Portugal, Croatia Airlines, Deutsche Bahn, Hahn Air, Iberia Express, Interrail, Luxair, Naviera Armas, Olibus, SNCF, Transferoviar Calatori, Trenitalia, Vueling and Westbahn. The Commission encourages other operators to join the initiative.

Background

eTwinning offers a platform for school staff (such as teachers, head teachers, librarians) to communicate, collaborate and develop projects as part of a learning community in Europe. In this way, eTwinning promotes collaboration between schools and pupils, and offers teachers opportunities for free and continuous online professional development. It has already connected more than 450,000 teachers. Launched in 2005 as the main action of the European Commission's eLearning Programme, eTwinning has been part of Erasmus+, the European programme for education, training, youth and sport, since 2014. It is supported and operated by European Schoolnet, an international partnership of 30 European Ministries of Education developing approaches to learning for schools, teachers and pupils across Europe. eTwinning is further supported at national level by 37 National Support Services.

10. European Solidarity Corps

Three months after the European Solidarity Corps was launched and interested young Europeans could start to sign up, accredited organisations that will provide solidarity placements can now use the database to find potential employees, trainees or volunteers for their activities.

Several hundred placements will be available as of this spring and thousands more will follow in the months ahead. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, **Tibor Navracsics**,



said: "The European Solidarity Corps is taking a huge step towards delivering on the ground. Now that we are opening our database to organisations and public authorities, matching can start and the first young Europeans will soon begin their activities. I am proud to see that many young people have already joined the Corps and are ready to make a difference. Now I encourage organisations to follow suit and provide as many placements a possible." Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, **Marianne Thyssen**, said: "We lay another building block of the European Solidarity Corps. With the opening of the online matching tool to organisations and partners providing placements European Solidarity Corps members can start making a positive impact on the ground while acquiring invaluable skills for their future life and career." A wide range

of organisations can offer European Solidarity Corps placements: non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, national, regional and local authorities or social enterprises, for example. In this first phase, organisations interested in participating in the European Solidarity Corps can apply for funding through existing EU funding programmes. Currently, eight programmes support the European Solidarity Corps. More information is available in this [fact sheet](#). To participate, each

organisation will need to subscribe to the European Solidarity Corps Mission Statement and its Principles, and to adhere to the European Solidarity Corps Charter that sets out the rights and responsibilities during all stages of the solidarity experience. Organisations who are already accredited with one of the funding programmes have access to the online tool automatically. The online system of the European Solidarity Corps allows for direct matching between organisations and young people interested in a solidarity placement. When registering, apart from their personal details, young people can indicate their skills, experiences, availabilities, preferences, and motivation, as well as upload their CVs.

Background

On 7 December 2016, the Commission launched the European Solidarity Corps. It offers young people between the ages of 18 and 30 fresh opportunities to take part in a range of solidarity activities that address challenging situations across Europe. This will not only allow them to gain invaluable experience and acquire important skills at the start of their careers, but is also a valuable tool to promote and strengthen the value of solidarity, one of the most fundamental values of the European Union. Since the launch, almost 24,000 young Europeans have registered with the European Solidarity Corps – the objective is to have 100,000 young people joining by the end of 2020. In its Communication on the European Solidarity Corps, the Commission adopted a gradual approach, building on existing programmes and instruments in an initial phase, while drawing up a proposal for a self-standing legal instrument for the first half of 2017.

11. European Youth Award (EYA)

The European Youth Award is a pan-European competition among socially committed and creative entrepreneurs, start-up founders, designers, producers, application developers, journalists, writers, students... under the age of 33 who use Internet and Mobile technology to create digital projects to improve society. The **DIGITAL** project, product or application entering the contest must be mainly initiated and executed by young people under the age of 33 (born on or after January 1, 1984) living in one of



the member states of the Council of Europe or the Union for the Mediterranean, Belarus, Kosovo or Syria. Registrants to the contest must hold intellectual property rights to the work submitted and be legal originator of the creative digital project, product or application. They also must have the rights to use the music, sound or audio components used in their digital project. With the registration, contest participants accept the rules of the EYA contest as stated in this document. Any and all legal recourse to rules, actions and conditions of the EYA are entirely excluded. **Please note:** Terms and conditions may be subject to change without notice. They will be published on the EYA website.

Registration procedure

- Registration, including submitting project information, must be completed online via the European Youth Award database (<http://register.icnmdb.at/EYA/2017>). After successful registration, participants receive Login Data and an ID number via e-mail.
- Registration procedure includes signing and transmitting the release form to the EYA office. By signing the release form submitters confirm that they are the rightful owners to the necessary rights to submit the project. These rights include the copyright, right for using pictures, sound or audio components.
- Projects can also be nominated by an EYA Ambassador or former EYA Winners. Nominated projects can be directly sent to online jury round 2 (upon discretion of the nominator).

Language: The submitted digital project, product or application may be in any language. All registration and submission information (such as project description, CV of producer) **must be in English**. The provided information must give a clear picture of the project to serve as a sufficient basis for the evaluation process. **Project entry:** The submitted digital project, product or application must be fully functional and operational at the time of submission and must involve digital technologies. It should be accessible via Internet whether it is designed for fixed line, broadband or mobile use. Submitted projects have to be (at least) in a prototype or beta-version stage. **Digital projects must be submitted in ONE of the eight categories of #EYA17:** Healthy Life; Smart

Learning; Connecting Cultures; Go Green; Active Citizenship; Sustainable Economics; Open Innovation; Special Category 2017: WATER. **Deadline: July 15, 2017.** For further information please consult the following this [link](#).

12. World Forum for Democracy 2017: call for lab submissions

The labs are the heart of the World Forum for Democracy. Their idea is to address specific issues through the critical analysis of tested initiatives. The initiatives will be presented in short speeches of



ten minutes and critically assessed by multidisciplinary panels and participants in the labs. The key conclusions and lessons learnt from the labs will be discussed in a summing up session in order to prepare the overall conclusions for the Forum. The Forum participants will vote to choose the winner of the Democracy Innovation award among the presented initiatives. This year, interested organisations/institutions (and in particular media outlets and political parties) worldwide are invited to express their

interest in presenting an initiative aimed at re-building trust in media and in political parties and promoting changes in their ethos, organisation, funding and operations to bring media and parties closer to citizens and more responsive, and accountable. Submissions should be made by answering the questionnaire in the appendix and sending it to forum_democracy@coe.int by **30 April 2017**. For further information please consult the following this [link](#).

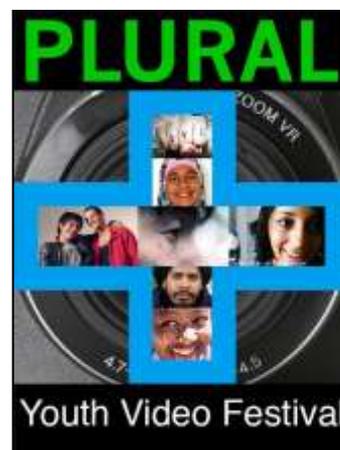
13. Plural + 2017 Youth Video Festival

PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival is a joint initiative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that invites the world's youth to submit original and creative videos focusing on the themes of migration, diversity and social inclusion. By supporting the distribution of youth-produced media, PLURAL+ recognizes youth as powerful agents of positive social change in a world often characterized by intolerance, and cultural and religious divisions.

Eligibility

- Entrants to PLURAL+ must be of maximum 25 years of age at the time of the production of the video submitted to PLURAL+.
- People appearing in the video do not have to be youth. However the videos must reflect the youth's opinions or reflections about migration, diversity and social inclusion.
- Multiple youth may work together to make one video, as long as all members of the group are maximum 25 years of age at the time of the production of the video submitted to PLURAL+.
- Only minimal roles of any adults (over the age of 25) involved in the making of the video (e.g. educators, teachers, instructors, etc.) is acceptable (group coordination, technical support, renting equipment, etc.). It is understood that particularly for the age group of up to 12 years, educators could have a more substantial role in the production of the video.
- If multiple youth work together on one video then the video will be judged in the age category of the entrant who has a primary role in the creation of the video.
- Immediate family members (siblings, children and grandchildren) of IOM, UNAOC and the jurors for the PLURAL+ Video Festival are not eligible to enter.

Format



- All videos should be submitted as a file (preferably as “.mov”) via a file hosting website like dropbox.com, WeTransfer, Google Drive, etc. The entrant may also choose to mail a DVD of the video entry to PLURAL+ mailing address.
- Videos that are not in English must have English subtitles.
- All videos must be five (5) minutes maximum of running time, including title and end credits.

Consent and Copyright

- All videos must be accompanied by a signed entry form.
- If the entrant is a minor in his/her country of residence then the entry form must be co-signed by the entrant’s parent or legal guardian.
- PLURAL+ will seek written consent of the parents or legal guardians of the makers of the winning videos.
- Entrants must obtain the consent of everyone appearing in their videos if their faces are recognizable.
- Entrants must obtain the consent of everyone whose copyrighted, patented or trademarked material, including music, appears or is included in their videos.
- Videos do not have to have been made specifically for the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, but videos must have been completed after January 2015.

Deadline: Packages containing DVD entries must be posted by Sunday, **4 June 2017**. For further information please consult the following this [link](#).

14. Journalism internships

Internships are possible in all areas where DW journalists work: television, online, radio, communications and DW Akademie.



Multimedia Regions department in Bonn offers radio and online internships in 30 languages. Multimedia Global department offers television internships in Berlin. The television programs are produced in Arabic, German, English and Spanish. The internships last one to six months and begin on the first working day of the month. Try to involve you as much as possible in the department’s daily routine. Taking on journalistic or editorial tasks depends on the journalistic experience

you already have. DW Welle internships are generally remunerated. The pay reflects your qualifications and starts at 310 euros per month. **To be eligible for a DW internship you must:** have completed at least four academic semesters; have initial journalism experience in TV, radio and/or online. You will also need to submit (by post or email) the following documents in German or English:

- A letter stating the desired timeframe, editorial department and area (news, business, sports, culture or current affairs);
- Your curriculum vitae and photo;
- Confirmation of enrolment;
- A description of your practical journalism experience;
- Written and published work samples (3 - 5 samples); we do not accept electronic data carriers for this;
- Proof of language skills if you are interested in working in a foreign language department.

Contact:

Deutsche Welle
 Aus- und Fortbildung
 Kurt-Schumacher-Straße 3
 53113 Bonn
 E: [internship\(at\)dw.com](mailto:internship@dw.com)

For Berlin television internship running between January and June you will need to apply the previous October; we will notify you of our decision in November. For internships running between

July and December you will need to apply in April; we will notify you of our decision in May. You can send your application via post or email. For further information please consult the following this [link](#).

15. Internships at the European Court of Justice

Every year, the Court of Justice of the European Union offers a limited number of paid traineeships of a maximum duration of five months. Traineeships are generally undertaken in the Research and Documentation Directorate, the Communication Directorate, Seminars and Visits Unit, the Directorate-General for Translation, the Registry of the General Court or the Interpretation Directorate (for detailed rules regarding interpreting traineeships, see below).



There are two traineeship periods:

- from 1 March to 31 July (form to be sent no later than 30 September);
- from 1 October to 28 February (form to be sent no later than **30 April**).

Applicants, who must hold a degree in law or in political sciences (majority content, law) or, for traineeships in the Interpretation Directorate, a diploma in conference interpreting, must complete and then print and sign the application form [EN / FR](#) and send it to the following e-mail address: Stages.services@curia.europa.eu, together with a detailed curriculum vitae and copies of diplomas and/or certificates. All attachments must bear the first name and surname of the applicant and must be numbered consecutively. **Please note that the combined size of all attachments must not exceed 5 MB.** If you have any problems in opening the form, download it as a local version and use the Adobe Reader software instead of your browser to read it. In view of the nature of the working environment, a good knowledge of French is desirable. Interpreting traineeships, which last from 10 to 12 weeks, are primarily aimed at newly qualified conference interpreters whose language combination is of interest to the Interpretation Directorate. The aim is to enable newly qualified interpreters to be supervised as they perfect their interpreting skills, particularly in legal interpreting, which involves the preparation of case-files, terminological research and practical exercises in a 'silent booth'. The ability to read French is required. Please note that no hearings are held during [judicial vacations](#). For further information please consult the following this [link](#).

16. Nefele: complete the project activities

Last month, we completed the activities of the project "Networking European Festivals for Mental Life Enhancement" approved under the Creative Europe program. The project aimed to strengthen all kinds of artistic creations related to the field of mental health by trying to broaden cultural activities for the benefit of artists by enriching therapeutic procedures and combating the stigma of those with mental health problems and society in general. NEFELE's main goal was to promote the creation of festivals that would create synergies between the arts and mental well-being in the countries where these activities did not exist and an improvement of existing festivals. Other objectives were: to encourage the participation of artists and the creation of new professional opportunities; to promote the participation of the most important local authorities and to increase the level of interest among the communities. One of the latest end products developed by the project was a 24-minute documentary produced for the first European Athens Festival in multiple languages, including Greek, English, Spanish, Italian, Lithuanian and French. More information about the project can be found at www.nefeleproject.eu.



17. EuroYouth project MEDIALAB: second meeting in Bulgaria

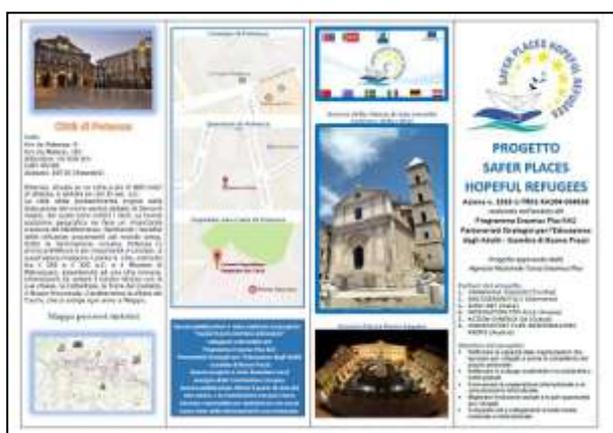
From May 15 to 19, Bulgaria will hold the second meeting programmed under the EuroYouth MEDIALAB project approved under the Erasmus Plus KA2 program. The EuroYouth MEDIALAB project is finally in realization in Italy, where there was some delay due to the recording of our staff employment contracts. The project, approved by the French



National Agency sees the participation of Europe Direct centers of the following 10 partner countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Spain, Finland, France (coordinating country), Poland, Slovakia, Ireland North (UK), Sweden and Italy. The purpose of the project is to develop and realize media workshops with local youth groups to talk about Europe and the problems that afflict it today. In the last weeks, as mentioned earlier, the first actions foreseen in the project started also in Potenza and different meetings with the group of 20 young people who is participating in the initiative as a "local group." Below you can see one of the videos made with the local group of young people involved in the European initiative during the meetings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQAfLU7sCkg> More details on the actions carried out and those to be carried out will be provided in our next newsletter.

18. SPHR project brochures

In the last weeks we have realised the project brochure of "Safer Places Hopeful Refugees", an initiative approved under the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnership for Adult Education - Exchange of Good Practices. Existing government policies can not always meet the needs of refugees.



To this end, the project seeks to promote positive actions for refugees with new initiatives at local and international level. The following information was provided in the brochure available in Italian and English: service center for immigrants; data and useful documents to foreigners who intend to come to Italy, to stay and participate in the country's social life; all information regarding the city of Potenza and emergency phone numbers. The objectives of the project are to: Strengthen the capacity of organizations working for refugees and also the skills of their staff. Strengthen sustainable development and solidarity globally. Promote international cooperation

and intercultural communication. Improve social inclusion and equal opportunities for refugees. Develop networks and links at local, national and international level. For more information about the project and planned activities, visit the following website: www.saphor.org.

19. Meeting in Istanbul of the GPEUMP project

The first meeting of the project "Gender Perspectives in EU Mobility Programs" took place from 5 to 8 March in Turkey. The project, approved in the framework of the program Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education by the Turkish National Agency, aims to integrate the gender perspective in the EU mobility programs and thus increase the visibility of gender issues in youth organizations. It is clear, in fact, that gender discrimination is a global / transnational problem and has effects on the entire life of young women all over the world including Europe, where discriminatory actions or sexual harassment still persist against them. Therefore, the project, discussing prevention tips against the measures and the development of reliable solutions, will help increase the quality of women's mobility in exchange programs. During the meeting, we discussed the project activities to be developed in the coming months with the tutor of the Turkish National Agency, who, moreover,



greatly appreciated the presence in the EURO-NET partnership, publicly praising it as one of the best and most professional in Across Europe.



20. Second SPAHCO newsletter

SPAHC (Stronger Parents - Healthier Communities), approved under the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnership for Adult Education, is a 2 year project designed to develop innovative computer tools and methodologies for adult educators to reach the Parents by providing them with parental skills, making them aware of the importance of making healthier lifestyles and offering them activities and tools to achieve these goals. In the last weeks, the second newsletter planned under the project was implemented. More information at www.spahco.eu.

21. The online course for youth leaders started

The training course launched under the project "The suitcase, the map and the voyage of a youth worker", a KA2 Strategic Partnership initiative, approved by the Romanian National Agency Erasmus Plus has begun. The project developed a free online training that wants to certify the skills of those who already carry out or want to play the role of "youth worker". The international partnership made up of Romanian, Italian, English, Spanish, Cypriot and Polish organizations has therefore developed an interesting training course to certify these skills and will end by April. More information on [http://thevoyage.eu/](http://thevoyage.eu)



22. Our 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome



On March 25, 2017, was celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, considered as one of the most significant historical moments of the European integration process. The Department for European Policies has promoted, in coordination with Italian and European institutions, a series of initiatives and events to stimulate debate and reflection on the future of the European project, especially among younger generations. Even our Europe Direct Basilicata centre to remember this event has made a spot that you can see at the

following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoQWwMGRtc>

23. Concluded the EBN meeting in Brussels

Last month, our manager Antonino Imbesi attended a meeting in Brussels at the headquarters of the EBN network offices. Our association is an associate member of the EBN (European Business and Innovation Centre Network) since September 25, 2013. EBN is a European association that represents over 240 organizations active in support of enterprise creation, Innovative entrepreneurship in Europe and beyond. The meeting has been very useful and has produced immediate practical orientation for initiatives that our organization can develop in Italy on behalf of the European network.



24. Second meeting of IV4J project in Potenza



From April 20 to 23, the second meeting of the project "Innovation in VET for Jobs and Employment" (acronym "IV4J") will take place in Potenza. The project, approved

under the Erasmus Plus program, KA2 Strategic Partnership for Vocational Training (VET) aims to develop on-line training activities dedicated to the world of work and business. The first meeting held from 15 to 18 December in Magdeburg (North Germany) was attended by both Italian partner organizations in the project: EURONET and GODESK SRL. More details about the event and the activities developed during the meeting will be available on the next issue of our newsletter.

25. Meeting CREATUSE in Madrid

The fourth meeting of the "CREATUSE" project (realized by the Italian association Youth Europe Service) will be held in Madrid from 23 to 26 April, funded under the Erasmus + KA2 program. Education of adults. The purpose of the meeting is to define the new steps of the project and to check the status of the activities already carried out so far. The objectives of the project are to:



- Carry out an in-depth research and analysis of good practice on creativity and the sharing of urban areas across Europe;
- Develop test and implementation of innovative practices / methodologies on adult education such as: Creative Problem Solving Methodology, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Open Space Technology, World Café and other resources and tools to promote, activate and build a shared city ;
- Transfer knowledge and rich database of materials into national languages to all available partners such as OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE (OER) through an integrated web platform (website, blog, social network);
- Create the figure of an "expert in creativity and shared policies" based on the ECVET system, having the skills recognized and validated by a special memorandum of understanding;
- Encourage Social Entrepreneurship.

The project intends to improve the level of skills of citizens in such a way as to be creative in the urban areas of their cities. More information on the official website of the project: www.creatuse.eu.

26. Meeting Access Angels in Cyprus

"Guardian Angels of Accessible Travelers in Rural Areas" is a project approved under the Erasmus



Plus KA2 program - strategic partnerships for vocational education and training - cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practice The project aims to train young volunteers to act as assistants to visitors with difficulties in accessing rural areas in Europe. The project will develop a package of personal care services (PAS) offered by young volunteers, similar to those offered to disabled tourists in large cities, but tailored to the needs of disabled visitors who want to experience rural tourism. This proposal should attract tourists with difficulties accessing rural areas and could also alleviate the obstacles to the difficult living conditions in many rural areas. **The project has the following objectives:** Contributing to employability, economic growth and social cohesion through vocational training; Offering adults and young people a career

opportunity through vocational education and training; Promoting the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the labor market; Ensuring the sustainability and excellence of vocational education and training; Using VET to support sustainable development and provision of social education for young people; Contributing to the development of rural economies; Increasing awareness of the needs of people with disabilities in rural areas; Fostering active citizenship and volunteering among young people. After completing the collection phase of the questionnaires envisaged in the project, the next project meeting will take place in Cyprus from 9 to 10 May. The goal of the meeting is to define the steps of the project and to plan the activities to be done in the coming months.