EURO-NET

The Youth European Network

YEAR 16 - NUMBER 3
OF 20TH JUNE 2021
ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

Bimonthly newsletter:

➢ *to spread European opportunities and initiatives,*

➢ *to disseminate the respect of human rights and the awareness about the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity,*

➢ *to fight discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance and racism,*

➢ *to help, with youth activities, the democratic stability and social inclusion in Europe,*

➢ *develop active European citizenship and civil society by giving impetus to the training of youth leaders and youth workers working within a European dimension;*

➢ *to promote European youth activities, such as exchanges, seminars, conferences, debates and training courses,*

➢ *to encourage exchange of ideas, proposals, experiences and good practises at international level.*

EUROPE DIRECT
Basilicata

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1. EU clears way for the EU Digital COVID Certificate

The Presidents of the three EU institutions, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission attended the official signing ceremony for the Regulation on the EU Digital COVID Certificate, marking the end of the legislative process. On this occasion Presidents David Sassoli and Ursula **von der Leyen** and Prime Minister

António Costa said: *"The EU Digital COVID Certificate is a symbol of what Europe stands for. Of a Europe that does not falter when put to the test. A Europe that unites and grows when faced with challenges. Our Union showed again that we work best when we work together. The EU Digital COVID Certificate Regulation was agreed between our institutions in the record time of 62 days. While we worked through the legislative process, we also built the technical backbone of the system, the EU gateway, which is live since 1 June. We can be proud of this great achievement. The Europe that we all know and that we all want back is a Europe without barriers. The EU Certificate will again enable citizens to enjoy this most tangible and cherished of EU rights – the right to free movement. Signed into law today, it will enable us to travel more safely this summer. Today we reaffirm together that an open Europe prevails."*

EU Digital COVID Certificate

The aim of the EU Digital COVID Certificate is to facilitate safe and free movement inside the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic. All Europeans have the right to free movement, also without the certificate, but the certificate will facilitate travel, exempting holders from restrictions like quarantine. The EU Digital COVID Certificate will be accessible for everyone and it will: cover COVID-19 vaccination, test and recovery; be free of charge and available in all EU languages; be available in a digital and paper-based format; be secure and include a digitally signed QR code. Member States shall refrain from imposing additional travel restrictions on the holders of an EU Digital COVID Certificate, unless they are necessary and proportionate to safeguard public health. In addition, the Commission committed to mobilising €100 million under the Emergency Support Instrument to support Member States in providing affordable tests. The Regulation will apply for 12 months as of 1 July 2021.

Background

On 17 March 2021, the European Commission presented a proposal to create an EU COVID Certificate to facilitate the safe free movement of citizens within the EU during the pandemic. On 20 May, co-legislators reached a provisional agreement. On 1 June, the technical backbone of the systems, the EU gateway, went live. The gateway allows the verification of the security features contained in the QR codes. Following the official signature, the Regulation will enter into application on 1 July, with a phasing-in period of six weeks for the issuance of certificates for those Member States that need additional time. 13 Member States have already started to issue EU Digital COVID Certificates.

2. Emerging stronger from the pandemic

The European Commission is presenting a Communication on the early lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic over the past 18 months and building on them to improve action at EU and national level.

This will help to better anticipate public health risks and enhance contingency planning leading to swifter and more effective joint responses at all levels. Ten lessons focus on what has to be improved and what can be done better in the future. The ten lessons are not exhaustive, but provide a first snapshot of what needs to be acted upon now for the benefit of all Europeans:

1. Faster detection and better responses require a robust global health surveillance and an improved European pandemic information gathering system. The EU should lead efforts to design a new robust **global surveillance system** based on comparable data. A new and improved **European pandemic information gathering system** will be launched in 2021.

2. Clearer and more coordinated scientific advice would facilitate policy decisions and public communication. The EU should appoint a **European Chief Epidemiologist** and a corresponding governance structure by the end of 2021.

3. Enhanced preparedness requires constant investments, scrutiny and reviews. The European Commission should prepare an annual **State of Preparedness Report**.

4. Emergency tools need to be ready faster and easier to activate. The EU should establish a framework for the activation of an **EU Pandemic State of Emergency** and a toolbox for crisis situations.

5. Coordinated measures should become a reflex for Europe. The **European Health Union** should be adopted swiftly, before the end of the year and coordination and working methods should be strengthened between institutions.

6. Public-private partnerships and stronger supply chains are needed to ensure the flow of critical equipment and medicines. A **Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority** (HERA) should be operational by early 2022 and a **Health Important Project of Common European Interest** should be set up as soon as possible to enable breakthrough innovation in pharmaceuticals. The **EU FAB facility**, should ensure that the EU has enough "ever-warm" capacity to produce 500–700 million vaccine doses per year, with half of these doses to be ready in the first 6 months of a pandemic.

7. A pan-European approach is essential to making clinical research faster, broader and more effective. A large-scale **EU platform for multi-centre clinical trials** should be established.

8. The capacity to cope in a pandemic depends on continuous and increased investment in health systems. Member States should be supported to strengthen the overall **resilience of health care systems** as part of their recovery and resilience investments.

9. Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response is a global priority for Europe. The EU should continue leading the global response, notably through COVAX, and strengthening the global health security architecture by leading on strengthening the World Health Organization. **Pandemic preparedness partnerships** with key partners should also be developed.

10. A more coordinated and sophisticated approach to **tackling misinformation and disinformation** should be developed.

Next Steps

This report on the early lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic will feed the Leaders' discussion at the June European Council. It will be presented to the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, and the Commission will follow up with concrete deliverables in the second half of 2021.

Members of the College said:

President of the European Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen,** said: *"The EU's comprehensive response to the pandemic has been unprecedented in scale and delivered in record time, proving the importance of working jointly in Europe. Together, we have achieved what no EU Member State could have done alone. But we have also learned what worked well and where we could do better in future pandemics. We must now turn these lessons into changes."* Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinas**, said: *"Despite the fact that health policy at European level is still in its nascent years, the EU's response to the pandemic was ample, and has included a wide range of unprecedented initiatives that were designed and delivered in record time. We acted with speed, ambition and coherence. This was achieved also thanks to the unprecedented solidarity demonstrated amongst EU institutions that ensured a united EU response. This is one great lesson we must continue to build on. But there is no time,*

nor room for complacency. Today, we are identifying specific areas where we already know more can and should be done to secure a more effective health response in the future. This crisis can be a catalyst for furthering European integration in the areas where it is most needed." Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella **Kyriakides**, said*: "An unprecedented public health crisis needs to be turned into an opportunity to build back stronger. The key lesson learnt from the COVID-19 crisis is the need to transform the ad hoc solutions that were used to deal with the crisis into permanent structures that will allow us to be better prepared in the future. We need to have a strong European Health Union in place as soon as possible. Time cannot be lost when faced with a public health threat or another pandemic. Emergency action must become structural capacity. Solidarity, responsibility, common effort at European level for the threats that touch all of us equally is what will sustain us through this crisis and the next."*

Background

As the crisis started unfolding, the EU developed a wide range of health policy responses, exemplified by the common approach to vaccines through the EU Vaccines Strategy and initiatives across a range of other policies. The Green Lanes initiative kept food and medicines flowing throughout the Single Market. A common approach to assessing infection rates in different regions made testing and quarantining much more consistent. And more recently, EU Digital COVID Certificates were agreed on and implemented in record time, paving the way for the safe resumption of tourism and travel this summer, and beyond. At the same time, the EU took decisive action to tackle the economic fallout of the pandemic. This drew heavily on the experience and arrangements built to address previous challenges and crises in the economic and financial area. However, these successes do not mask the difficulties that were encountered, notably on the scaling up of manufacturing and production capacities, partly due to a lack of a permanently integrated approach to research, development and production that slowed down the initial availability of vaccines. While this has since been addressed, longer term solutions are needed for mitigating future detrimental health events or crises.

3. NextGenerationEU: raises €20 billion to support Europe's recovery

The European Commission has today, in its first NextGenerationEU transaction, raised a €20 billion via a ten-year bond due on 4 July 2031 to finance Europe's recovery from the coronavirus crisis and its consequences.

This is the largest-ever institutional bond issuance in Europe, the largest-ever institutional single tranche transaction and the largest amount the EU has raised in a single transaction. The bond has attracted a very strong interest by investors across Europe and the world, thanks to which the Commission has obtained very favourable pricing conditions, similarly to the repeatedly successful issuances under the SURE programme. European Commission President Ursula **von der Leyen** said: *"Today is a truly historic day for our European Union. We successfully conducted **the first funding** operation for NextGenerationEU. As a strong Union, we are raising*

money at the markets together and investing in a common recovery from this crisis. It is an investment in our single market. And even more importantly, it is an investment in the future of Europe's next generations as they face the challenges of digitisation and climate change. Money can now start flowing to help reshaping our continent, to build a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe. I will now visit every Member State, to see NextGenerationEU impact on the ground." Commissioner in charge of Budget and Administration, Johannes **Hahn**, said: *"Today, we have reached a key milestone in implementing NextGenerationEU. After laying all the foundation at record speed, we have today successfully conducted the first borrowing operation under the Recovery Plan. This is just a very first step of a long journey, bringing over €800 billion in current prices into the EU economy. NextGenerationEU has now become a reality and is set to drive our collective recovery from the pandemic, setting Europe on a green, digital and resilient path."* The funds will now be used for the first payments under NextGenerationEU, under the Recovery and Resilience Facility and various EU budget programmes. By the end of 2021, the Commission expects to raise some €80 billion in bonds, to be complemented by short-term EU-Bills, as per the funding plan published in June 2021. The exact amount of both EU-Bonds and EU-Bills will

depend on the precise funding needs, and the Commission will revise its initial assessment in the autumn. In this way, the Commission will be able to fund, over the second half of the year, all planned grants and loans to Member States under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, as well as cover the needs of the EU policies that receive NextGenerationEU funding.

Background

NextGenerationEU is a temporary recovery instrument of some €800 billion in current prices to support Europe's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and help build a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe. To finance NextGenerationEU, the European Commission – on behalf of the EU – will raise from the capital markets up to around €800 billion between now and end-2026. €407.5 billion available for grants (under RRF and other EU budget programmes); €386 billion for loans. This will translate into borrowing volumes of an average of roughly €150 billion per year. Given the volumes, frequency and complexity of the borrowing operations ahead, the Commission will follow the best practices used by large and frequent issuers, and implement a diversified funding strategy. This strategy presents a diverse range of instruments and techniques, going beyond the back-to-back approach that the Commission has used so far to borrow from the markets, including in the framework of the SURE programme. Over the past 40 years, the European Commission has run several lending programmes to support EU Member States and third countries. All of these lending operations were financed on a back-to-back basis, mainly through syndicated bond issuances.

Technical section

The new 10-year bond carries a coupon of 0% and came at a re-offer yield of 0.086% providing a spread of -2 bps to mid-swaps, which is equivalent to 32.3 bps over the 0.00% Bund due 02/2031. The final order book was in excess of €142 billion, which meant that the bond has been over seven times oversubscribed. The joint lead managers were BNP Paribas, DZ BANK, HSBC, IMI-Intesa Sanpaolo and Morgan Stanley. Co-leads were Danske Bank and Santander. The demand was dominated by fund managers (37%), and bank treasuries (25%) followed by central banks / official institutions (23%). In terms of region, 87% of the deal was distributed to European investors, 10% to Asian investors and 3% Investors from the Americas, the Middle East and Africa.

4. Commission to invest €14.7 billion from Horizon Europe

The Commission has adopted the main work programme of Horizon Europe for the period 2021-2022, which outlines the objectives and specific topic areas that will receive a total of €14.7 billion in funding.

These investments will help accelerate the green and digital transitions and will contribute to sustainable recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and to EU resilience against future crises. They will support European researchers through fellowships, training and exchanges, build more connected and efficient European innovation ecosystems and create world-class research infrastructures. Moreover, they will encourage participation across Europe and from around the world, while at the same time strengthening the European Research Area. Margrethe **Vestager**, Executive Vice-President for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age, said: "*This Horizon Europe work programme will support European researchers, deliver top quality, excellent research and innovation, for the benefit of us all. Covering the full research and innovation cycle, from the lab to the market, it will bring researchers and innovators from all over the world closer together, to address the issues*

we are facing." Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"With 40% of its budget devoted to making Europe more sustainable, this Horizon Europe work programme will make Europe greener and fitter for the digital transformation. Horizon Europe is now fully open for business: I would like to encourage researchers and innovators from all over the EU to apply and find solutions to improve our daily lives."*

Horizon Europe delivers on climate neutrality and digital leadership

More than **four in ten euros** - around **€5.8 billion in total** - will be invested in research and innovation to support the **European Green Deal** and the Union's commitment to make the **EU the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050**. The funds will support projects that advance the science of climate change, and that develop solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the changing climate. For example, activities will accelerate the transition towards clean energy and mobility in a sustainable and fair way, help adapt food systems and support the circular and bio-economy, maintain and enhance natural carbon sinks in ecosystems, and foster adaptation to climate change. Making this decade **Europe's Digital Decade** and laying the groundwork for new digital enterprises even further into the future are also core objectives of the programme, which will ensure a substantial increase of investment in this area. For instance, it will help maximise the full potential of digital tools and data-enabled research and innovation in healthcare, media, cultural heritage and creative economy, energy, mobility and food production, supporting the modernisation of industrial models and fostering European industrial leadership. The development of core digital technologies will be supported with around **€4 billion** over 2021-2022. Finally, this work programme will direct investments of around **€1.9 billion** in total towards helping repair the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. In line with **NextGenerationEU**, the funding will contribute to building a post-coronavirus Europe that is not only greener and more digital but also more resilient for the current and forthcoming challenges. This includes topics that aim to modernise health systems and contribute to research capacities, in particular for vaccine development.

International cooperation for bigger impact: strategic, open, and reciprocal

International cooperation in research and innovation is essential for tackling global challenges and to enable Europe to access resources, know-how, scientific excellence, value chains and markets that are developing in other areas of the world. In May 2021, the Commission presented a Global Approach to Research and Innovation, Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world. With this, the EU aims to deliver solutions and facilitate global responses to global challenges, based on multilateralism, openness and reciprocity. The work programme of Horizon Europe for 2021-2022 includes dedicated actions to support and strengthen **cooperation through multilateral initiatives** in areas such as biodiversity and climate protection, environmental observations, ocean research or global health. It also includes targeted actions with key non-EU partners, including the first ever ambitious and comprehensive "**Africa Initiative**". Horizon Europe is by default **open to the world**. The association of non-EU countries to Horizon Europe will enlarge the geographical scope of the overall programme and will offer additional opportunities for researchers, scientists, companies, institutions or other interested establishments to participate, with generally the same conditions as those of the Member States. In order to safeguard the EU's strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security, and in line with Article 22.5 of the Horizon Europe Regulation, the programme will limit participation in a very small number of actions. Such limitation will be exceptional and duly justified, in agreement with the Member States and in full respect of the EU's commitments under bilateral agreements.

Next Steps

The first calls for proposals will open on the Commission's Funding and Tenders Portal on 22 June. The European Research and Innovation Days on 23 and 24 June mark the occasion to discuss Horizon Europe amongst policymakers, researchers, innovators and citizens. Horizon Europe Information Days targeting potential applicants take place between 28 June and 9 July.

Background

Horizon Europe is the EU's **€95.5 billion** research and innovation programme for 2021-2027 and the successor of Horizon 2020. The Horizon Europe work programme is based on Horizon Europe's Strategic Plan, which was adopted in March 2021 to set the EU's research and innovation priorities for 2021-2024. Most of the funding is allocated based on competitive calls for proposals, set out in work programmes. New funding opportunities have already opened up since early 2021: in February the Commission launched the first European Research Council calls under Horizon Europe and in March it launched the new European Innovation Council. Furthermore, in April, it quickly mobilised €123 million for research and innovation into coronavirus variants.

5. Final adoption of EU external action budget for 2021-2027

The European Commission welcomes the European Parliament's decision to adopt the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – "Global Europe" for the period 2021-2027.
This is the final step of the adoption process following the negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. With this decision, the EU will be able to use €79.5 billion in current prices to foster global recovery over the next seven years. This envelope will be used for international partnerships on sustainable development, climate change, democracy, governance, human rights, peace and security in our neighbouring countries and beyond. With an overall allocation of €79.5 billion in current prices, the new instrument will cover the EU cooperation with third countries. The total allocation will be divided as follows: €60.38 billion for geographic programmes (at least €19.32 billion for the Neighbourhood, at least €29.18 billion for Sub-Saharan Africa, €8.48 billion for Asia and the Pacific, and for the Americas and the Caribbean €3.39 billion); €6.36 billion for thematic programmes (Human Rights and Democracy, Civil Society Organisations, Peace, Stability and Peace Conflict Prevention and Global Challenges); €3.18 billion for rapid response actions. A "cushion" of unallocated funds of €9.53 billion could top-up any of these programmes and the rapid response mechanism, to address unforeseen circumstances, new needs or emerging challenges and back new priorities. The new instrument will particularly support countries most in need to overcome their long-term developmental challenges and will contribute to achieving the international commitments and objectives that the Union has agreed to, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals, the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. It merges several current external financing instruments under the EU budget. NDICI-Global Europe also unifies grants, blending and guarantees, which will allow the EU to promote public and private investment worldwide in support to sustainable development. Investment will be backed by a €53.4 billion External Action Guarantee, which will also cover the Western Balkans.

Next steps: Programming and financing decisions
The NDICI-Global Europe will enter into force shortly, on the date of its publication, with retroactive effect from 1 January 2021. The implementation of the NDICI-Global Europe follows a two-step process. As a first step, Commission services, together with the European External Action Service (EEAS), work on the EU medium-long term planning for each country, region and thematic programme, called "programming". The programming of NDICI-Global Europe was launched in November 2020 and it should be completed by the end of this year with the adoption by the Commission of geographic and thematic multi-annual indicative programming documents. After discussing with partner countries, civil society, EU Member States, other donors and concerned stakeholders, the Commission and the EEAS establish the basis for future EU interventions in the medium-long term. It notably sets the priority areas, specific objectives, expected results and indicative allocations for EU actions at country, regional and thematic level. A second step will identify and formulate specific interventions in a given country/region (geographic programmes) or theme (thematic programmes) on an annual basis, and adopt financing decisions accordingly. Through the Team Europe approach, initiatives with Member States at country and regional level are being identified, where actions financed from the EU and from the Member States may have transformational impact. The European Parliament and the Commission are now engaging in an informal geopolitical dialogue on broad programming

orientations. In line with NDICI-Global Europe, the Commission will adopt a delegated act to frame the programming exercise that will enter into force in 2021, subject to the non-objection by the European Parliament and Council.

Members of the College said

High Representative/Vice-President, Josep **Borrell**, said: *"With this new policy-driven and flexible financing instrument, we will be able to tackle global challenges, including the post COVID-19 pandemic recovery. The new instrument will contribute to support the EU's role externally in the promotion of its values and interests. It underpins the EU's commitment to cooperation, as a reliable global actor and demonstrates its determination to achieve its international commitments to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and to the Paris Agreement."* As lead negotiator for the European Commission, Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta **Urpilainen**, declared: *"For the first time in 50 years of development policy, all external financing instruments will be simplified and consolidated into a main one to better serve our political priorities. This crucial change will nurture international partnerships as never before and help the countries most in need, including those affected by conflict and instability. Together with our partners, we seek to foster a sustainable and inclusive recovery, while promoting the EU's values and interests worldwide. I am particularly committed to supporting human development, access to education and health, youth and fighting inequalities."* Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér **Várhelyi**, noted: *"The EU's new external action financial instrument will be a game changer to boost the resilience and prosperity of our closest neighbours. It will underpin our renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, helping to unlock the untapped economic potential of the region and support its post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery, as well as that of our partners to the East, boosting growth and jobs, digital and green transformations as well as human development and opportunities for youth. The EFSD+, with a capacity to guarantee up to €53.4 billion in investments, will now also benefit the Western Balkans."*

Background

The EU's long-term budget (Multiannual Financial Framework - MFF), coupled with NextGenerationEU, the temporary instrument designed to boost Europe's recovery, will be the largest stimulus package ever financed through the EU budget. A total of €1.8 trillion (in 2018 prices) will help rebuild a post-COVID-19 Europe. It will be a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe. NDICI-Global Europe incorporates the cooperation with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific into the budget, which has been financed for decades by the European Development Fund. This Fund was directly financed by the EU Member States, not by the EU budget, and was therefore not subject to the scrutiny of the European Parliament.

6. European Partnerships: Commission invests €22 billion

The Commission launched 11 new European Partnerships together with industry, to boost investments in research and innovation and to overcome major climate and sustainability challenges, towards making Europe the first climate neutral economy and delivering on the European Green Deal.

In line with the goals of the "twin" green and digital transition, the Partnerships will also deliver on the EU's digital ambitions for the next decade, Europe's Digital Decade. They will receive over €8

billion from Horizon Europe, the new EU research and innovation programme for 2021-2027. The total commitments, including those from private partners and from Member States, amount to around €22 billion. This critical mass of funding allows the Partnerships to pursue innovative solutions on a large scale, for example to tackle emissions from energy-intensive industries and hard-to-decarbonise sectors, such as shipping and steel-making, as well as to develop and deploy high-performance batteries, sustainable fuels, artificial intelligence tools, data technologies, robotics, and more.

Pooling in efforts, resources and investments jointly and on a large scale under the Partnerships will also generate long-term positive impacts, boost European competitiveness and technological sovereignty and create jobs and growth. The eleven European Partnerships are:

1. **European Partnership for the European Open Science Cloud**. It aims to deploy and consolidate by 2030 an open, trusted virtual environment to enable the estimated 2 million European researchers to store, share and reuse research data across borders and disciplines.
2. **European Partnership for Artificial Intelligence, Data and Robotics.** To deliver the greatest benefit to Europe from Artificial Intelligence (AI), data and robotics, this Partnership will drive innovation, acceptance and uptake of these technologies, for the benefit of citizens and businesses.
3. **European Partnership for Photonics (light-based technologies).** It aims to speed up photonic innovations, securing Europe's technological sovereignty, raising the competitiveness of Europe's economy and promoting long-term job creation and prosperity.
4. **European Partnership for Clean Steel – Low Carbon Steelmaking.** It supports EU leadership in transforming the steel industry into a carbon-neutral one, serving as a catalyser for other strategic sectors.
5. **European Partnership Made in Europe.** It will be the driving force for European leadership in sustainable manufacturing in Europe, by applying the principles of the circular economy (zero-waste and others), digital transformation and climate neutral manufacturing.
6. **European Partnership Processes4Planet.** Its vision is that European process industries are globally leading on the 2050 climate neutrality goal with a strong focus on low-carbon technologies, circularities, such as circularity hubs and competitiveness.
7. **European Partnership for People-centric Sustainable Built Environment (Built4People).** Its vision is high-quality, low-carbon, energy and resource-efficient built environments, like buildings, infrastructure, and more, which drive the transition towards sustainability.
8. **European Partnership towards Zero-emission Road Transport (2Zero).** It aims to accelerate the development of zero-emission transport with a systems approach, supporting a climate neutral and clean road transport system.
9. **European Partnership for Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility.** Its goal is to accelerate the implementation of innovative, connected, cooperative and automated mobility technologies and services.
10. **European Partnership for Batteries: Towards a competitive European industrial battery value chain.** It aims to support the development of a world-class European research and innovation ecosystem on batteries, and to foster European industrial leadership in the design and production of batteries for the next generation of both stationary and mobile applications.
11. **European Partnership for Zero Emission Waterborne Transport.** It aims for the EU to lead and accelerate the transformation of maritime and inland waterborne transport to eliminate all harmful environmental emissions, including greenhouse gas, air and water pollutants, through innovative technologies and operation.

The Commission adopted Memoranda of Understanding to launch the Partnerships, which will start their operations immediately. A signature ceremony for the Memoranda of Understanding will take place at the European Research and Innovation Days on 23 June.

Members of the College said:

Margrethe **Vestager**, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age, said: *"Cooperation is key when it comes to overcoming the challenges in Europe's green and digital transition. And digital technologies are driving this transition towards a climate-neutral, circular and more resilient economy. The eleven partnerships, that the Commission and the industry has proposed together today, will mobilise significant resources, around €22 billion, so that we can jointly identify trustworthy artificial intelligence, data, robotics and many more technological tools to reach our environmental and climate goals, for a cleaner and healthier future."* Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"These Partnerships are all about pooling research and innovation resources and ensuring that research results are turned into useful innovations for the citizens. With Horizon Europe we are committed to emerge from the climate crisis, provide sustainable solutions to major environmental challenges and accelerate a sustainable recovery. This will benefit all Europeans."* Thierry **Breton,** Commissioner for Internal Market, said: *"With the new Partnerships Europe is coming at the forefront of global technological developments, building*

key industrial capacities and accelerating its twin green and digital transitions. This will help put Europe on a path towards climate-neutrality by 2050 and a circular economy. Through their work, the Partnerships will also put an emphasis on developing the digital technologies needed for supporting Europe's industrial leadership."

Background

The eleven Partnerships for which Memoranda of Understanding have been adopted are so-called "co-programmed" European Partnerships - partnerships between the Commission and mostly private, but sometimes also public, partners. They will run from 2021 to 2030, allowing them to provide input into the last calls of Horizon Europe and wrap up their final activities afterwards. The Memorandum of Understanding is the basis for the cooperation in a Partnership, as it specifies its objectives, the commitments from both sides and the governance structure. The Partnerships also provide the Commission with input on relevant topics to be included in the Horizon Europe Work Programmes. Implementation runs first and foremost through the Horizon Europe Work Programmes and their calls for proposals. Private partners develop additional activities, which are not funded through Horizon Europe, but which are included in the Partnership's Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas and focus on issues such as market deployment, skills development or regulatory aspects. These "co-programmed" European Partnerships are different, but also complementary to the more complex so-called "institutionalised"' European Partnerships, which are based on a legislative proposal from the Commission and have a 'Dedicated Implementing Structure'. Earlier this year, in February the Commission proposed to set up 10 new 'institutionalised' European Partnerships between the European Union, Member States and/or the industry. With an investment of nearly €10 billion, which the partners will match with at least an equivalent amount, they aim to speed up the transition towards a green, climate neutral and digital Europe, and to make European industry more resilient and competitive.

7. Antitrust: initial findings of consumer Internet of Things sector inquiry

The European Commission has published the preliminary results of its competition sector inquiry into markets for consumer Internet of Things (IoT) related products and services in the European Union.

The Preliminary Report confirms the rapid growth of these markets, but also identifies potential concerns put forward by the respondents to the sector inquiry. Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy said: *"When we launched this sector inquiry,*

we were concerned that there might be a risk of gatekeepers emerging in this sector. We were worried that they could use their power to harm competition, to the detriment of developing businesses and consumers. From the first results published today, it appears that many in the sector share our concerns. And fair competition is needed to make the most of the great potential of the Internet of Things for consumers in their daily lives. This analysis will feed into our future enforcement and regulatory action, so we look forward to receiving further feedback from all interested stakeholders in the coming months." The consumer IoT sector inquiry was launched on 16 July 2020 as part of the Commission's digital strategy and following an announcement in the Commission's Communication on Shaping Europe's digital future. During the inquiry, the Commission has gathered information from over 200 companies of different sizes, operating in consumer IoT product and services markets and based across Europe, Asia and the United States. Furthermore, these companies have shared with the Commission more than 1000 agreements. This information forms the basis of the Preliminary Report.

Main Findings of the Preliminary Report

The findings of the Preliminary Report on the sector inquiry on the consumer IoT cover: the characteristics of consumer IoT products and services, the features of competition in these markets, the main areas of potential concern raised by respondents in relation to the current functioning of consumer IoT markets, as well as to their future outlook.

Characteristics of consumer IoT products and services

The Preliminary Report indicates that, while the consumer IoT is a relatively new area, it is growing rapidly and becoming more and more a part of our everyday lives. In addition, there is a trend towards increasing availability and proliferation of voice assistants as user interfaces enabling interaction with different smart devices and consumer IoT services.

Features of competition in the markets for consumer IoT products and services

The majority of respondents to the sector inquiry indicate the cost of technology investment and the competitive situation as the main barriers to entry or expansion in the sector. According to the replies, technology investment costs are particularly high in the market for voice assistants. With respect to the competitive situation, a large number of respondents has reported difficulties in competing with vertically integrated companies that have built their own ecosystems within and beyond the consumer IoT sector (e.g. Google, Amazon or Apple). As these players provide the most common smart and mobile device operating systems as well as the leading voice assistants, they determine the processes for integrating smart devices and services in a consumer IoT system.

Main areas of potential concerns

Respondents raised concerns regarding certain **exclusivity and tying practices** in relation to voice assistants, as well as practices limiting the possibility to use different voice assistants on the same smart device. The Preliminary Report sets out a number of potential concerns raised by respondents in respect of the position of voice assistants and smart device operating systems as **intermediaries** between users, on one side, and smart devices or consumer IoT services on the other side. This position, combined with their key role in the generation and collection of data, would allow them to control user relationships. In this context, respondents have also raised concerns in relation to the discoverability and visibility of their consumer IoT services. Providers of smart device operating systems and voice assistants seem to have extensive access to **data**, including information on user interactions with third-party smart devices and consumer IoT services. The respondents to the sector inquiry consider that this access to and accumulation of large amounts of data would not only give voice assistant providers advantages in relation to the improvement and market position of their general-purpose voice assistants, but also allow them to leverage more easily into adjacent markets. According to respondents, the prevalence of proprietary technology, leading at times to the creation of "*de facto* standards", together with technology fragmentation and lack of common standards, raise concerns as to the **lack of interoperability** in the Consumer IoT sector. In particular, a few providers of voice assistants and operating systems are said to unilaterally control interoperability and integration processes and to be capable of limiting functionalities of third-party smart devices and consumer IoT services, compared to their own.

Next steps

The Preliminary Report on the findings of the sector inquiry will now be subject to a public consultation for a period of twelve weeks, until 1 September 2021 (Modified on 9 June, at 15:55). All interested parties will be able to comment on the findings of the sector inquiry, submit additional information or raise further areas of concern. The Commission aims to publish the Final Report in the first half of 2022. The information collected in the context of the sector inquiry on the consumer IoT will provide guidance to the Commission's future enforcement and regulatory activity. Any competition enforcement measure following the sector inquiry would have to be based on a case-by-case assessment. The findings of this sector inquiry can also contribute to the ongoing legislative debate on the Commission's proposal for the Digital Markets Act. For further background, please see the Q&A and the sector inquiry website.

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8. Protecting people working through platforms

The Commission launches the second-stage consultation of European social partners on how to improve the working conditions for people working through digital labour platforms.

This follows the first-stage consultation, which was open from 24 February to 7 April 2021, to which the Commission received replies from 14 EU-wide social partners. Based on the replies received, the Commission concluded that there is a need for further EU action to ensure basic labour standards and rights to people working through platforms. President **von der Leyen** announced in

her Political Guidelines the need to improve working conditions in platform work. This has been further highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis and the accelerated uptake of platform business models. Margrethe **Vestager**, Executive Vice-President for A Europe fit for the Digital Age, said: *"Digital labour platforms play a key role in the digital transition of the European economy. Online just as offline, people should be protected and allowed to work safely and with dignity. We will now get the social partners' views on how to ensure that work through platforms has decent working conditions, while supporting the sustainable growth of digital labour platforms in the EU."* Nicolas **Schmit**, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, said: *"Online platforms bring innovation and new services to consumers. But they must also offer those people working through them the high level of social standards that we expect. We continue our consultation with social partners to find a smart, balanced approach that provides certainty and common standards to platforms and those working through them. Like this, we will ensure the digital transition is fair and sustainable."* Digital labour platforms play a key role in the digital transition of the European economy and are a growing phenomenon. The size of the digital labour platform economy in the EU has grown almost fivefold from an estimated €3 billion in 2016 to about €14 billion in 2020. Digital labour platforms bring innovation, create jobs and enhance the EU's competitiveness. They provide additional income to people, including to those whose access to the labour markets may be more difficult. Yet, platform work may also result in precarious working conditions and inadequate access to social protection for many people working through platforms. The key challenge in platform work relates to employment status. It is a key determinant of the access of people working through platforms to existing labour rights and protection. Moreover, people working through platforms can be subject to automated decisions made by algorithms without a possibility to question the decision and seek redress. They also often have limited access to collective representation and bargaining. Finally there are also challenges related to the cross-border nature of platform work and the possibility to trace in which country work is performed. In light of these challenges, the aim of the second-stage consultation is to get the social partners' views on how to ensure that people working through platforms have decent working conditions, while supporting the sustainable growth of digital labour platforms in the EU. Social partners will be consulted on a possible content of the EU-

level initiative, in areas such as: facilitating **employment status** classification and access to labour and social protection rights; improving information, consultation and redress, notably when it comes to the use of **algorithmic management** in platform work; providing clarity on applicable rules for all people working through platforms operating **across borders**; strengthening **enforcement, collective representation and social dialogue**. The consultation also asks for social partners' views on possible instruments for EU action. The

Commission is considering both legislative and non-legislative instruments. Social partners are invited to respond to the questions in the consultation by 15 September 2021. The next step to this second-stage consultation is either negotiations between social partners with a view to concluding an agreement under Article 155 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) or the presentation of a proposal by the European Commission by the end of 2021. A possible EU initiative would be designed in full respect of national competence, the diversity of labour market traditions in Member States, and the autonomy of social partners. Any initiative on platform work should respect national definitions of 'worker'. There is also no intention to create a 'third' employment status (neither self-employed, nor worker) at EU level, while respecting the choice made by some Member States to introduce it in their national legislation.

Background

In her Political Guidelines, President **von der Leyen** stressed that "digital transformation brings fast change that affects our labour markets". She undertook the commitment to "look at ways of improving the labour conditions of platform workers". The Communication a Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions noted that the sustainable growth of the platform economy requires improved working conditions of platform workers. The Commission Work Programme 2021 announced a legislative initiative on improving the working conditions of platform workers by the end of 2021. This initiative will support the implementation of principles contained in the European Pillar of Social Rights. The commitment by all partners to a strong social Europe was renewed at the Porto Social Summit 7-8 May 2021. The Commission's first-stage

consultation of social partners on how to improve the working conditions for people working through digital labour platforms was open from 24 February to 7 April 2021. After considering the replies, the Commission has concluded that there is a need for EU action. Therefore, the Commission is now launching the second-stage consultation of the social partners, representing trade unions and employers' associations at EU level, in accordance with Article 154(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). This consultation does not address the issue of the applicability of EU competition law to collective bargaining by self-employed. This issue is tackled through a separate but complementary initiative, for which an Open Public Consultation closed on 31 May 2021. The purpose of the latter is to ensure that EU competition law does not stand in the way of collective agreements that aim to improve the working conditions of self-employed in a weak position, while guaranteeing that consumers and SMEs continue to benefit from competitive prices and innovative business models, including in the digital economy.

9. EU Budget

The EU budget has helped ensure a swift and comprehensive EU response to the coronavirus crisis and its consequences, while supporting overarching EU priorities.
This involved mobilising financial resources rapidly and flexibly to address the most pressing needs, without making any compromise on applying the highest standards of financial management. The Commission presents two complementary pieces on EU budget performance reporting:

- an **Annual Management and Performance Report for the EU budget**;
- and a **forward-looking Communication on the performance framework for the EU long-term budget 2021-2027.**

The first document **– the Annual Management and Performance Report** – has shown that, despite its relatively small size, the EU budget is capable of achieving major results, and can play a critical role in times of crisis. The robust internal control framework of the Commission ensured that the EU budget remained well and effectively protected throughout the year. The **performance framework** – the subject of the second document – will make sure that the European Commission preserves the strong focus on the achieved results in the future, starting from the effective implementation of the current multiannual financial framework, complemented by the NextGenerationEU recovery instrument. Taken together, the two represent the largest stimulus package ever financed from the EU budget. Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner in charge of the EU Budget and Administration, said: "*2020 was an extremely challenging year due to the coronavirus pandemic but once more, the EU demonstrated its ability to cope with this challenge. Thanks to the EU budget, the EU put forward an unprecedentedly swift and comprehensive response to help overcome the health, economic and social repercussions of the pandemic, while extending our solidarity well beyond our borders. While fighting the pandemic, we kept our focus on our priorities and met all our budgetary goals, including in terms of climate and biodiversity. As for the forthcoming years, the Commission has a great responsibility to continue to implement*

effectively the long-term EU budget and NextGenerationEU. Even in times of crisis it remains our objective to maximise the effectiveness of EU spending besides continuing to deliver for EU citizens and partners beyond."
The EU's Annual Management and Performance Report (AMPR) for the EU budget for 2020
The Annual Managament and Performance Report for the EU budget is the document through which the Commission takes overall political responsibility for the management of the previous' year EU budget. The 2020 Annual Managament and Performance Report demonstrates that the EU used its 2020 budget rapidly and effectively to mitigate the coronavirus crisis and its consequences. In only a few weeks, the EU mobilised every single available euro within its budgetary remit to alleviate the impact of the crisis. Funds were deployed rapidly through new flexibility in existing programmes, such as the structural funds, or through new initiatives, including the Emergency Support Instrument or the innovative SURE. The budgetary response to coronavirus pandemic and its consequences was comprehensive,

addressing the immediate health crisis as well as its socio-economic impact. Centralised EU procurement helped ensure safe and effective vaccines for all EU Member States. SURE provided financing to Member States to support employment, reaching an estimated 25-30 million workers. The EU has also taken the lead in providing equitable access to vaccines around the world through the efforts of Team Europe and its support to the COVAX facility. While fighting the pandemic, the EU continued making progress on its political priorities through the EU budget: It supported the green transition, by spending 20.1% of its 2014-2020 budget (€216 billion) on the fight against climate change — thus delivering on its 20% objective—and 8% (€85 billion) on biodiversity. It supported the digital transition, for example by helping connect 25 million households to high-speed internet through cohesion funds and the European Fund for Strategic Investments. The EU budget was able to achieve these results while at the same time safeguarding taxpayers' interests thanks to effective measures against fraud and irregularities. The report also shows that the EU Budget was well-managed in 2020, thanks to: a strong internal control framework; a constant monitoring of the risks (in particular those related to the coronavirus crisis); its well-established multiannual control cycle and other mitigating measures. In particular, the risk of mistakes when paying out funds to our partners and beneficiaries is estimated at 1.9% of the overall volume. Many of these errors, estimated to correspond to 1.0% of the overall volume, are actually found and corrected before the programmes are closed. That leaves us with a risk for actual mistakes of 0.9% of the overall volume, which is well below the 2% materiality threshold, as applied by the European Court of Auditors.

Performance Framework for the EU's 2021-2027 long-term EU budget

Spending the EU resources effectively is all the more important given the unprecedented size and role of the EU Budget post-2020 and the creation of the Recovery Instrument NextGenerationEU.

The performance framework described in the Communication's Communication will assist the Commission and its partners to implement and steer the budget even more effectively. It comprises the concrete objectives that each programme in the 2021-2027 long-term budget and NextGenerationEU needs to achieve and indicators and targets to measure progress and regularly report on results. A modern performance framework is also a critical management tool. It will provide the necessary information to identify emerging issues early, so that timely corrective actions can be taken, and to inform reallocation of resources when new priorities emerge – within the limits envisaged by the legal framework. The Commission cannot implement a modern and strong performance framework alone. Boosting the effectiveness and transparency of EU programmes requires a coordinated effort. The Commission warmly welcomes the increasing emphasis placed on the performance of EU spending by the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Court of Auditors and the Member States. Working together will help ensure that this EU budget of unprecedented size and ambition delivers its full potential, to the benefit of EU citizens.

Background

Annual Management and Performance Report (AMPR)

Through the **Annual Managament and Performance Report**, the Commission takes overall political responsibility for the management of the previous' year EU budget. It is foreseen by Article 318 TFEU and Article 247 of the Financial Regulation, and is part of the Integrated Financial and Accountability Reporting (IFAR) package, which the Commission submits in support of its request for discharge to the European Parliament. The discharge is the procedure through which the European Parliament evaluates the implementation of the EU Budget by the Commission. The Annual Managament and Performance Report is based on: Annual Activity Reports; Programme Statements; Evaluation of EU programmes; Work of the Internal Auditor; Work of the Audit Progress Committee; Work of the European Court of Auditors. The Commission is publishing the Annual Managament and Performance Report on the implementation of the 2020 budget at the same time as the Draft Budget for 2022. This provides stakeholders with one comprehensive set of performance information, consistent across both the draft budget and the discharge procedures. The Commission thus emphasizes its focus on performance and the role of performance information in budgetary planning. The main report has been purposefully kept very short (10 pages) to maximize its accessibility and readership. This enhances the Commission's accountability. The annexes provide valuable additional information. In particular: Annex 1, "Performance and Results", presents a high-level summary of the performance of the

EU budget in 2020; Annex 2, "Internal Controls and Financial Management", describes how the Commission protected EU resources despite the challenges brought about by the coronavirus pandemic; and Annex 3, "Programme Performance Overview" includes short and reader-friendly performance fiches for each EU spending programme. The Commission Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the Performance Framework for the EU Budget under the 2021-27 MFF highlights the importance the Commission attaches to the effective implementation of the budget. The Commission issues this Communication in the context of the transition between two multiannual financial frameworks, which provides an opportunity to explain the performance framework and the Commission's plans for its further improvement.

10. Commission proposes a trusted and secure Digital Identity

The Commission proposed a framework for a European Digital Identity which will be available to all EU citizens, residents, and businesses in the EU.
Citizens will be able to prove their identity and share electronic documents from their European Digital Identity wallets with the click of a button on their phone. They will be able to access online

services with their national digital identification, which will be recognised throughout Europe. Very large platforms will be required to accept the use of European Digital Identity wallets upon request of the user, for example to prove their age. Use of the European Digital Identity wallet will always be at the choice of the user. Margrethe **Vestager**, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age said: *"The European digital identity will enable us to do in any Member State as we do at home without any extra cost and fewer hurdles. Be that renting a flat or opening a bank account outside of our home country. And do this in a way that is secure and transparent. So that we will decide how much information we wish to share about ourselves, with whom and for what purpose. This is a unique opportunity to take us all further into experiencing what it means to live in Europe, and to be European."* Commissioner for Internal Market Thierry **Breton** said: *"EU citizens not only expect a high level of security but also convenience whether they are dealing with national administrations such as to submit a tax return or to enroll at a European university where they need official identification. The European Digital Identity wallets offer a new possibility for them to store and use data for all sorts of services, from checking in at the airport to renting a car. It is about giving a choice to consumers, a European choice. Our European companies, large and small, will also benefit from this digital identity, they will be able to offer a wide range of new services since the proposal offers a solution for secure and trusted identification services."*
The European Digital Identity framework
Under the new Regulation, Member States will offer citizens and businesses digital wallets that will be able to link their national digital identities with proof of other personal attributes (e.g. driving licence, diplomas, bank account). These wallets may be provided by public authorities or by private entities, provided they are recognised by a Member State. The new European Digital Identity Wallets will enable all Europeans to access services online without having to use private identification methods or unnecessarily sharing personal data. With this solution they will have full control of the data they share. The European Digital Identity will be: **Available to anyone who wants to use it:** Any EU citizen, resident, and business in the Union who would like to make use of the European Digital Identity will be able to do so. **Widely useable:** The European Digital Identity wallets will be useable widely as a way either to identify users or to prove certain personal attributes, for the purpose of access to public and private digital services across the Union. **Users in control of their data:** The European Digital Identity wallets will enable people to choose which aspects of their identity, data and certificates they share with third parties, and to keep track of such sharing. User control ensures that only information that needs to be shared will be shared. To make it a reality as soon as possible, the proposal is accompanied by a Recommendation. The Commission invites Member States to establish a common toolbox by September 2022 and

to start the necessary preparatory work immediately. This toolbox should include the technical architecture, standards and guidelines for best practices.

Next Steps

In parallel to the legislative process, the Commission will work with Member States and the private sector on technical aspects of the European Digital Identity. Through the Digital Europe Programme, the Commission will support the implementation of the European Digital Identity framework, and many Member States have foreseen projects for the implementation of the e-government solutions, including the European Digital Identity in their national plans under the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

Background

The Commission's 2030 Digital Compass sets out a number of targets and milestones which the European Digital Identity will help achieve. For example, by 2030, all key public services should be available online, all citizens will have access to electronic medical records; and 80% citizens should use an eID solution. For this initiative, the Commission builds on the existing cross-border legal framework for trusted digital identities, the European electronic identification and trust services initiative (eIDAS Regulation). Adopted in 2014, it provides the basis for cross-border electronic identification, authentication and website certification within the EU. Already about 60% of Europeans can benefit from the current system. However, there is no requirement for Member States to develop a national digital ID and to make it interoperable with the ones of other Member States, which leads to high discrepancies between countries. The current proposal will address these shortcomings by improving the effectiveness of the framework and extending its benefits to the private sector and to mobile use.

11. Climate Change PIX – 2021 photo competition

Our climate is changing. We might not be aware of it, but climate change affects us all. For this year's photo competition, the European Environment Agency (EEA) invites you to capture what it means to live in a changing climate in Europe, to share your take on climate change.

Climate Change PIX calls for photos focusing on climate change in our lives. To participate in the competition, **send us your best photos** by 1 August 2021 in any of these four categories under two overarching headings — impacts and solutions:

Impacts of climate change

Climate change affects our health, environment, and economy. Some of its impacts are visible and dramatic — such as the destruction of homes after a landslide or a devastating flood or wildfire. Others are less visible — such as increase in ocean acidity — and impact some people

and areas more than others. For example, the elderly are more vulnerable to heatwaves or southern Europe is more susceptible to droughts. Climate change impacts like drier or wetter seasons can favour some species over others, affecting their ability to survive in these new conditions. Climate change also impacts many socioeconomic sectors, including agriculture, forestry, energy production, tourism, and infrastructure. Fish species migrating north can result in high unemployment in local economies. Less rainfall in certain seasons can impact crop yields or power production in dams. Show how climate change has impacted your life and surroundings under these two categories: **Impacts on nature**: How does climate change affect our environment? Can you see how it has impacted air, land, water and wildlife? **Impacts on society**: How does climate change affect our society? Can you photograph its impacts on human health, lifestyles, infrastructure and the economy?

Solutions to climate change

Climate change may be one of the most complex issues we are facing today. However, solutions do exist to reduce our carbon footprint and protect us from climate change. Apart from infrastructures and technological advances, many of us are adjusting our lifestyles and learning to cope with some of the impacts, such as extreme temperatures. Show what an individual, a community, a city or a country, or an economic sector (e.g.: transport, forestry, agriculture) do to

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stop, slow down or adapt to climate change under these two categories: **Solutions – society:** Many communities and cities are taking action to reduce their carbon footprint and adapt to climate change. These could include investments in new infrastructures or infrastructure improvements (e.g.: building cycling paths across the city) or adoption of nature-based solutions (e.g.: planting trees along riverbanks to reduce floods or green spaces in cities to absorb excess rainwater). Can you capture what your community is doing? **Solutions – individual action:** What can you do about climate change? Capture low-carbon lifestyles and decisions that are within your reach (e.g.: flying less, going car-free altogether; changing what you buy and eat – going on a plant-based diet; using energy efficient products or preparing your home for floods, droughts or heat waves).

Eligibility criteria

Citizens of the following countries are eligible to enter the competition: EU 27 Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey; under the stabilisation and association agreements: North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The photos must be taken in the countries mentioned above. All participants must be 18 or older. You must have full copyrights to the submitted material. By submitting an entry, you will be presumed to have agreed to accept the Competition rules and the Terms and Conditions. One entrant may submit maximum 5 entries in total in the competition. As each entry will be handled separately, you need to fill out the online submission form for each entry if you chose to submit more than one entry. *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence. The winners in each category (Impacts on nature, Impacts on society, Solutions - society, Solutions - individual action) will be awarded a cash prize of EUR 1000, while EUR 500 is on offer for both the Public Choice Award and the Youth Prize. The Youth Prize will be awarded to the winning entry, selected among those submitted by persons aged between 18 and 24 (born between calendar years 1997-2003, both included) to any of the three competition categories. All finalists will be put forward for the Public Choice Award and may also feature in future digital and print material from the EEA and its European partners. The copyright of the materials submitted for this competition remains with the respective participants. However, each entrant grants the EEA and its partners the right to use the submitted materials in its environmental communication, crediting the copyright owners. **Submission deadline: 1 August 2021 at 23.59 (CEST).** For more information please consult the following **link.**

12. Biumor 2021

The Municipality of Tolentino convenes and organises Biumor 2021 the 31a Biennale Internazionale dell'Umorismo nell'Arte (31st Festival of Humour in Art) – a prize contest focused on humour in art. The contest is divided into two sections: 1 – "**Premio Internazionale Città di Tolentino**" **("City of Tolentino International Award") – for humorous art themed around**

"Envy". Envy is wishing evil on others. Envy is when our heart feels sorrow for the achievements of those around us. Envy is resenting other people's success. Envy is a feeling of person-to-person or social discontent that thrives in contemporary society. Envy comes from the Latin in – adversative – and videre, and translates as to 'look against', "unfavourably" or better yet 'to frown upon' and refers to an unfailing emotion of

human soul that has a timeless quality and cuts across all social groups. The theme aims at sparking critical thinking about the malevolent side of social relations.2 – "**Premio Luigi Mari**" **("Luigi Mari Award") for caricatures of illustrious figures.** The contest comprises: a selection of the competing entries by a qualified jury. The artworks so singled out will be exhibited at the venue of the 31a Biennale Internazionale dell'Umorismo nell'Arte, from November 25, 2021 throughout January 30, 2022; publication of a complimentary catalogue that will be presented to the authors of the selected works; a prize awarding event. Against the backdrop of the festival is a commendation for Humour on the internet awarded for products at the cutting edge of communications technology that shatter the stereotypical patterns typical of traditional comedy. The contest is open to contemporary artists of any nationality and any age, who are allowed to

enter a maximum of three works which must be unreleased and authentic, free in size and technique, and performed in whatever form of visual art, material and support – pictorial, graphics, sculpture and installation, photography and video. Computer-aided digital visuals, as well as photographic source artworks with purely structural digital fix are also allowed to enter the contest as long as they are produced in paper format and are autographed and numbered by the authors The deadline to enter the contest is October 11, 2021, by which time all entries will have to have been sent to the address below: Segreteria della "31a Biennale Internazionale dell'Umorismo nell'Arte" – Palazzo Europa – Via Tambroni n. 4 – 62029 TOLENTINO (Italia). After having filled out and signed the entry form, the contestants are requested to attach it to their works prior to shipment. Artworks must be authentically signed and provided with the special coupon. The works must be shipped carriage free – they will only be accepted on condition that they are not subject to any taxes or customs fees – the local municipality will not bear any fees due. The Jury will award below prizes: **"Premio Internazionale Città di Tolentino" ("City of Tolentino International Award") for humour in art themed around "Envy"** 1st Prize – € 3,000.00, will be awarded to the winner of the 2021 contest. In case of a tie, the prize money awarded will be split among the winners. 2nd Prize – € 1.000,00; 3rd Prize – € 500,00; **"Premio Luigi Mari" ("Luigi Mari Award") for caricatures of illustrious figures** 1st Prize – € 1.000,00; 2nd Prize – € 500,00. Other special commendations may possibly be awarded by the jury. **Deadline: 11 October 2021**. For more information please consult the following **link**.

13. International Award for the Best Short Film

An international award for Best Short Film, dedicated to the late director Ermanno Olmi, to support and promote the works of young filmmakers. The award is addressed to **filmmakers of all nationalities and not older than 30** on the date of the open call deadline. The maximum length of each submission (fiction, documentary or animation) **must not exceed 15 minutes**. All entries must have been **produced in 2020 or 2021.** Each filmmaker can submit a single entry.

The competition awards the following: Ermanno Olmi Award 1st Prize: € 1200; Ermanno Olmi Award; 2nd Prize: € 500; Ermanno Olmi Award; 3rd Prize: € 300. A **special mention** will also be assigned to the most significant film dedicated to environmental themes, issues very relevant today and constantly present in Ermanno Olmi's body of work, including the short film *Il Pianeta che ci ospita* (*Our Host Planet*), presented during Expo 2015. The **Ermanno Olmi Award jury** is composed as follows: 2 members appointed by the City of Bergamo, 1 member appointed by the Olmi family, 1 member appointed by FIC – Federazione Italiana Cineforum, 1 member appointed by Bergamo Film Meeting Onlus. The **winners' announcement** and award ceremony will be held on **December 2nd, 2021**, at the Auditorium in Piazza della Libertà, Bergamo, or another suitable venue. Should there be still, on the appointed date, containment measures due to the Covid-19 emergency, the award ceremony and the screening of the finalist films will be broadcast online, on a dedicated streaming platform. **Deadline: 16 October 2021**. For more information please consult the following **link**.

14. The OECD offers traineeships

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation comprised of 37 member countries, that works to build better policies for better lives. Our mission is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. Together with governments, policy makers and citizens, we work on establishing evidence-based international standards, and finding solutions to a range of

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social, economic and environmental challenges. From improving economic performance and creating jobs to fostering strong education and fighting international tax evasion, we provide a unique forum and knowledge hub for data and analysis, exchange of experiences, best-practice sharing, and advice on public policies and international standard-setting. The OECD Internship Programme is designed to bring highly qualified and motivated students with diverse backgrounds into the Organisation to work on projects linked to the Strategic Orientations of the Secretary-General and to support the corporate functions of the Organisation. Its main goal is to give successful candidates the opportunity to improve their analytical and technical skills in an international environment. Successful candidates will carry out research and provide support to Policy Analysts in one of the following areas. For internships in the Corporate functions, successful candidates will be involved in one of the following areas: Communications, Media & Public Relations; Event Management; Finance, Budget and Accounting; Human Resources; Information Technology; Legal services; Office Administration; Translation.

Candidate profile

Academic Background
- Full time student in a discipline related to the work of the OECD.

Professional Background
- International experience through studies, internships or professional activities would be an asset.

Tools
- Solid quantitative and computer skills. Knowledge of Microsoft Office.

Languages
- An excellent command of one of the two official languages of the OECD (English and French) and working knowledge of, or willingness to learn the other. Knowledge of other languages would be an asset.

Key Competencies
- **Strong analytical** skills demonstrated by academic success and professional achievements.
- Strong interest in the work of OECD in promoting international co-operation.
- Ability to plan and conduct research independently.
- Good organisational skills, ability to work effectively on the basis of general instructions, with the capacity to prioritise tasks, often according to tight deadlines.
- Proven ability to work in a multicultural and team oriented environment and to adapt to changing working methods and technologies.
- Very good drafting and communication skills.

Contract Duration

The duration of the internship is for a period between one and six months (renewable for another six months up to a total of twelve months), on a full-time basis. Please indicate your availability clearly in your application form. For more information on the OECD Internship Programme please visit our Frequently Asked Questions webpage. **Disclaimer**: Due to the high volume of applications expected, the OECD Internship Office is not in a position to provide individual feedback. Therefore, **only shortlisted candidates will be contacted by Directorates for an interview**. If you are not contacted by Directorate hiring teams within three months following your application's submission, you can assume your application has not been retained on this occasion and you can apply again according to the calendar on our website. Please remember you will still need to be enrolled as a student during the internship period. **Application Closing Date: 31-08-2021, 11:59:00 PM.** For more information and applications please consult the following link.

15. Traineeships at the ECML

The ECML offers traineeships, lasting in general 6 months, twice a year. According to their field of interest applicants can choose the main area in which they would like to be involved: organisation of events and meetings (Programme), documentation and resources (DRC), the Centre's website (Website) and finances and general administration

(Administration). Traineeships are aimed at students who recently graduated. They must belong to or study in one of the ECML member states.

Areas and tasks

- **Administration traineeship:** Assistance in the further development of a relational "Projects" database (linked to the existing mailing database); assistance in the implementation of Windream (Document Management Software), in particular development of a training guide; processing of financial documentation; photocopying/scanning, classification according to budgetary article, registration of mailings, preparation of mailing to Strasbourg; entering of bank details into ECML database; preparation of workshop documentation relating to prepaid tickets, hotel reservation forms; preparation of reimbursement forms and assistance in registration of participants prior to workshops, network or expert meetings.

- **Website traineeship:** Working with websites sounds a lot more complicated than it actually is! You don't need to have programming experience to apply. As a webtrainee you will be assisting Chris in working on the visual output of the Centre. This involves many different and interesting areas, mainly working with websites; adding/updating information and learning how to develop the various sites of the ECML and its projects; working on publications and flyers learn how to layout and edit documents.

- **Traineeship at the communication, documentation and resource centre (CDRC):** The CDRC is mainly targeted at academic users and professionals working in the field of language education. Its information, communication, documentation and editing role: The centre supplies information on the ECML and its activities; disseminates ECML documentation; maintains a library of all ECML project publications, Council of Europe publications in connected areas, and the John Trim collection (Council of Europe work in 1971-1997 and other materials in the field of language education); contributes to the ECML's external communication (social media, coordination of the ECML e-newsletter "The European Language Gazette", drafting e-news); and is involved in publishing work (copyright issues, proofreading of ECML publications).

- **Programme traineeship:** Our role, in programme and logistics, is to take care of all the practical aspects of the organisation of workshops and meetings, so that the project teams can concentrate on the project itself.

Application deadlines

28 February for the period July to December; **31 August** for the period **January to June of the following year**. Although we do not systematically follow the careers of our trainees, from our ongoing contacts we see that many have continued to work in the area of international cooperation. We would like to think that their stay at the Centre has influenced their decision in this respect. For more information please consult the following **link**.

16. Second on line meeting of the "ACTE " project

In date 22/04/2021 took place the second on line meeting of the project "Active Citizenship Through Education" (acronimo ACTE), in which participated for EURO-NET our director Antonino Imbesi. During the project meeting, the partners discussed how to develop new meeting activities and products still to be completed. The main aim of the project is to exchange good practices in
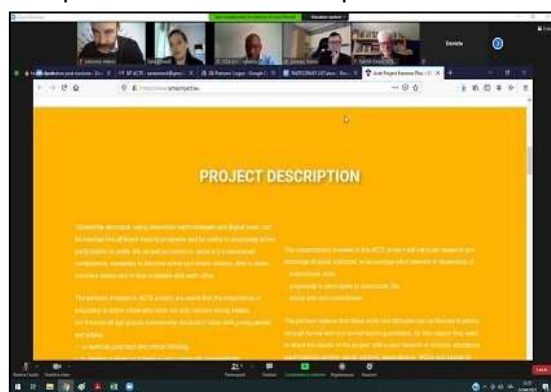

the field of Active Citizenship Education. The results of the intense work of exchange of good practices in the ACTE project, will flow into the construction of a Handbook, which will be published in the form of an E-Book and will be the main result and object of dissemination, summarising all the good practices and methodologies analysed, the research and the inputs provided by the partners, in English and in own languages of the partners. The aim is to produce a useful tool and therefore many (free) downloads are expected from teachers, training centres and people involved in adult education in

various ways. The partnership is composed of the following organisations: Informamentis Europa (Italy); EURO-NET (Italy); Interacting S.L. (Spain); Namoi (Russia); Geoclube (Portugal); IYDA

(Germany); Biedriba "Logos Latvija" (Latvia). The initiative can be followed on the project's official Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/projectacte/?modal=admin_todo_tour or website at the following address https://www.acteproject.eu/.

17. Realized the 4th multiplier event of the "My Community 2020" project

The fourth multiplier event of the above-mentioned project entitled "Digital competence development, cultural heritage promotion and migrant integration. My Community 2020" took place in date 22 April. This time the event was completely online (other events were developed in presence) and took place thanks to the active and professional collaboration of CSV Basilicata. During the event, after the greetings of the director of CSV Gianleo Iosca, the people who worked on the project (in particular Antonino Imbesi, Maria Cristina Porfidio, Pegah Moshir Pour and Federico Liguori) explained the various activities developed

during the Erasmus Plus strategic partnership initiative that ended at the end of April.
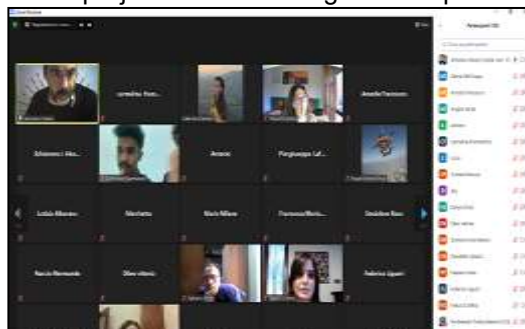
18. New project approved under the Erasmus Plus programme

We are pleased to inform you that one of our projects has been approved by the National Agency Erasmus Plus in Spain. It is the project "MUSICLAJE: Emprendimiento social con instrumentos reciclados" (MUSICLING: Social entrepreneurship with recicled instruments), a KA227 Youth. More information about the project will be available in the next issues of our newsletter.

19. Online workshop of the "CDTMOOC" project

In date 03/05/2021 took place another workshop in the project "Creative and Design Thinking MOOC" (acronym "CDTMOOC"), approved as action no. 2019-1-FI01-KA203- 060718, in the framework of the programme under Erasmus Plus - Key Action 2 - Strategic Partnerships in Higher Education. The partnership, which for Italy involves the association EURO-NET, also includes the University of Turku (Finland), Succubus Interactive (a company active in the creation of interactive educational games in France), Art Square Lab (a Luxembourg-based creative and technological innovation and consultancy agency), MSS 42 (an Icelandic training centre operating

in the field of continuous and entrepreneurial training). The project aims to provide new tools and methodologies in line with the moderni-sation and complexity of today's world of work, starting with the creativity of ideas as a new skill to be developed and cultivated by students. The project idea is based on preliminary research carried out by the project partners, which shows an ever-increasing need to cope with technolo-gical changes and rapid changes in the world of production. The activities and products to be developed in the project are based on the use

of some successful methodologies (such as creative problem solving and Design Thinking) with a practical and interactive approach, aimed at making people understand how to use these valuable skills on a daily basis. The project intends to provide both theoretical and practical tools such as: a free online course on transversal competences based on Creative Problem Solving and Design Thinking methodologies; guides on creativity for entrepreneurship; detailed reports on
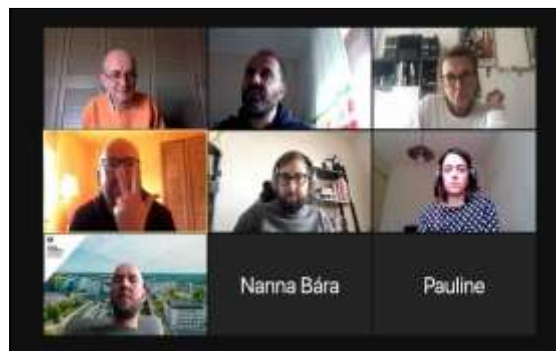
the real innovation needs of the market across Europe. At the end of the project, the developed products and results will be disseminated in the European Union and beyond, thanks to an attractive platform with several game elements (so-called gamification) and the already active website (www.cdtmooc.eu) which will contain a rich database of materials and interactive guides in several languages, and through a series of seminars in each partner country to present the intellectual products created. More information on the project is also available on the official Facebook page at the web address: https://www.facebook.com/cdtmooc.

20. Online for the first meeting of the new Europe Direct Italia network

In date 05/05/2021 took place online the first meeting of the new generation of Europe Direct Italia centres for the period 2021-2025. For Italy, 45 centres will be active, helping the European Commission and the European Parliament to bring information about the opportunities offered by the European Union to all regions of our country. For the first time, EUROPE DIRECT centres will be set up in Taranto, Padua, Salerno, Ravenna, Latina, Camerino, Capo d'Orlando, Tolmezzo and Borgo Valbelluna. New centres are also set up in the Vesuvius area of Naples and at the University of Roma Tre in Rome. The new generation will have a broader mandate than in the past. EUROPE DIRECT centres will promote coordination with all European networks present at regional level in order to facilitate citizens' and businesses' access to information on European calls, initiatives and projects, and will be in constant contact with local media to provide useful content on EU priorities and policies. They will listen to the needs of the territories, to enable the Commission to better understand the concrete impact of EU policies and activities on citizens, and provide 360° information on the European Union, from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic to NextGenerationEU and the green and digital transitions. They will work with schools and teachers to promote active European citizenship and will promote dialogues and debates on European issues, including in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Since 1 May, it is possible to locate the new EUROPE DIRECT centres in Italy and throughout the EU on the following interactive_map.

## 21. Inauguration of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre

In date 6 May, at the presence of the highest municipal and regional authorithies, the Europe Direct Basilicata centre was inaugurated, sanctioning a new perspective of institutional and social cooperation. It will be the only official information point for citizens of the European Commission in the region for the next five years. "*The Europe Direct Basilicata centre* - explained the director Mr Antonino Imbesi - *has built up a very broad partnership from an institutional and social point of view to try to build an increasingly strong synergy between places and institutions, between citizens and European bodies. As many as 85 public and private subjects have joined the partnership (including regional bodies, municipalities, ANCI, APT, universities, schools, employers' organisations, Chamber of Commerce, associations, etc.) with whom we intend to build a common path of cooperation and collaboration.*" After the inauguration and the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony by the Mayor of Potenza, Mario Guarente, as well as the Director Antonino Imbesi and the Mayor himself, all the invited guests gathered at the press conference table, including Donato Del Corso (Director General of the Agriculture Department, replacing Councillor Francesco Fanelli, Vice-President of

the Basilicata Region and Councillor for the branch, Michele Somma (President of the Chamber of Commerce), Giuseppe Romaniello (Director of the University of Basilicata), Matteo Restaino (President of the V Council Commission of the Municipality of Potenza), Leonardo Vita (President of CSV Basilicata) and Giuseppe Giuzio (Councillor for Planning of the Municipality of Potenza).

22. "Infoday Erasmus+: new funding programme for European mobility"
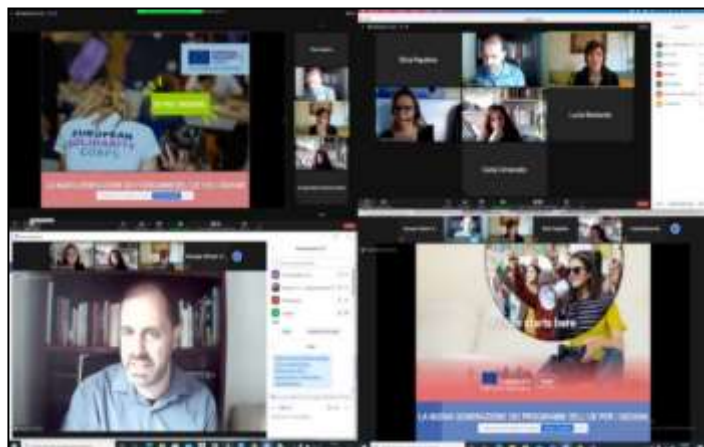
In date 6 May, at 6 p.m., took place the webinar "INFODAY ERASMUS PLUS: the new funding programme for European mobility". This event was realized in cooperation among Europe Direct Venezia and Europe Direct Basilicata, with the participation also of the Italian National Youth Agency. Speakers were ms. Silva Papalino (Europe Direct and Eurodesk centres of the Municipality of Venice) and mr. Peppino Franco (Europe Direct Basilicata). During the event were presented all the opportunities that Erasmus Plus programme will offer for the next 7 years for young people.

23. Europe Day in Potenza

In date 8 May, our Europe Direct Basilicata centre - Eurodesk Antenna Potenza, in order to commemorate Europe Day, organised an event at the school institute "Einstein - De Lorenzo" in Potenza, in which it was possible to meet directly the students to promote and celebrate the presentation of Robert Schuman's Declaration, considered the starting act of the European Community. The meeting was held class by class (to limit the risk of contagion) to inform young people about the study and training opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme and about the European Solidarity Corps (an initiative that offers young people aged between 18 and 30 new opportunities to participate in a wide range of solidarity activities addressing difficult situations across Europe). In particular, our Vice-President, Dr. Peppino Franco, presented to the young people the main features of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme.

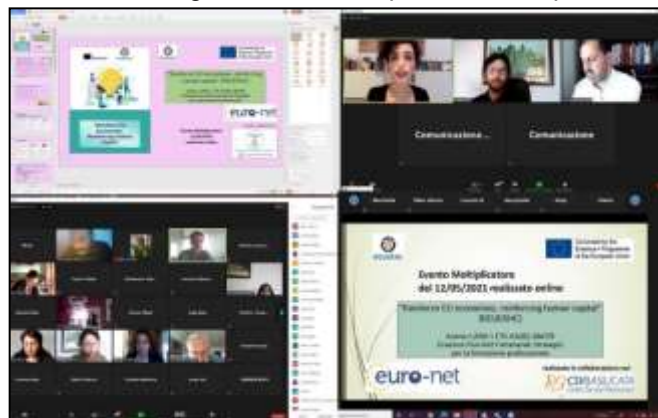## 24. "SPAHCO" project: awarded as a good practice

The "SPAHCO" project has been awarded as good practice by the European Commission and the Spanish Erasmus Plus National Agency. The project "Stronger Parents - Healthier Communities" (SPAHCO), was a two-year initiative approved under the Erasmus Plus programme KA2 actions for adult education, aimed at developing innovative IT tools and methodologies for adult educators and aimed at reaching parents, providing them with parenting skills, making them aware of the importance of

leading healthier lifestyles and offering them activities and tools to achieve these goals. EURO-NET, in addition to all good practice collection and dissemination activities, also developed, on behalf of the entire partnership, all the technical products there were the heart of the entire awarded project.

25. Multiplier events of the "REUERCH" project

EURO-NET organised 4 multiplier events planned till today in the project "Reinforce EU Economies, Reinforcing Human Capital" (acronym REUERHC), approved in the framework of the programme Erasmus Plus KA2 VET by the Erasmus Plus National Agency INAPP as action 2018-1-IT01-KA202-006739. The project aims to help the integration of the target group but also to support the national economies of migrant-hosting countries. The project partnership is composedby University of Venice Ca' Foscari (Italy); EURO-NET (Italy), S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L. (Romania), Crossing Borders (Denmark), Mobilising Expertise (Sweden) and Kirsehir Valiligi (Turkey). For more information, please visit the project's official Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/reuerhc or the website at the link https://reuerhc.eu.

26. Multiplier events and last project meeting "EU-ACT" project

In date 24 May and 1 June took place two multiplier events planned in the framework of the European project "Europe City Teller - cultural mediation and storytelling for tourism, between theatre, multimedia and narration" - acronym "EU-ACT" - approved, as action n.2018-1-IT02-KA204-048011, within the programme Erasmus Plus KA2 for Adult education by the Italian National Agency INDIRE. During the first online Multiplier Event in Italy, realised by EURO-NET with the collaboration of CSV Basilicata, there was an excellent participation of the public (41 people connected). The 4 speakers were Antonino Imbesi, Luigi Vitelli, Raffaele Messina and Andrea D'Andrea. The second Multiplier Event was developed by the association EURO-NET in cooperation with ASNOR (Associazione Nazionale Orientatori) and it was a real success 130 people participated at this second ME onliner. More information on the project is available on the website (www.europecitytellers.eu) or on the Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/Europe-City-Teller-1552751178163969/).

27. Online event: Funds, programming and investments for a new start

In date 26 May at 06:00 pm took place an online event on how to organise the restart, the funds available and a unitary network that could involve businesses, citizens and institutions. These were the topics of the "Laboratorio delle Idee", whose guests were Giacomo Bloisi (the director of

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IVL24) Ilaria D'Auria (a young expert in EU projects), Antonino Imbesi, (Director of the Euro-pe Direct Basilicata centre), Giovanni Matarazzo (President of the Tourism section of Confindustria Basilicata), Gaetano Mitidieri (Director of Gal- Cittadella del sapere) and Fabrizio Boccia (local public administrator in Lauria Municipality),. The Europe Direct Basilicata Centre took part in the meeting in order to try to understand which strategic and financial tools our territory can equip itself with in order to face the post-pandemic recovery, from an economic, social and cultural point of view. All those interested can review the recorded event at the following YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VELIbK0JtsM.

28. Online the cartoon of the "LearnEU" project

We are pleased to inform you that the first product of the cartoon (the interactive part is still missing) envisaged in the framework of the project "LearnEU" has been realised. LearnEU is an initiative approved to the EURO-NET Association as action n.2020-1-IT02-KA201-079054 by the Italian National Agency Erasmus Plus Indire within the Erasmus Plus Strategic Partnerships for School Education programme. You can see the cartoon at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0iMPVhx5bA which will then also be translated into 7 languages by the various partners. More details on the project can already be found on the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Learneu-117725843430250/ or on the website https://project-learn.eu/.

29. "Ruralities": online training to create the prototype of the game

In last days of May took place the online training that will lead the European partnership to create the prototype of the game to be developed within the project "Ruralities", an initiative approved in France as action n.2019-1-FR01-KA204-063000, in the framework of the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships program for Adult Education. The main objective of the project is to enable citizens of rural and remote areas to become real actors for the improvement of social and physical living conditions in their localities. The project partnership is composed by Ipso Facto (France) - coordinator, EURO-NET (Italy), Comparative Research Network Ev (Germany), Panepistimio Thessalias (Greece), Arbeit Und Beben Lag Mv (Germany) and Krajowy Instytut Polityki Przestrzennej I Mieszkalnictwa (Poland). More information on the project can be found the website www.ruralities.eu nor on the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/ruralitieserasmusplus/ .

30. Online meeting of the "AKTIF" project

In date 7 June took place the on line meeting of the project Aktif yaslanma kapsaminda mültecilerin yasam kalitesinin arttirilmasi" (in English "Increasing the quality of life of refugees under active aging") approved within the framework of the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education - Exchange of Good Practices programme by the Erasmus Plus National

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Agency in Turkey. The project aims to improve the living conditions of refugees in old age. During the meeting, the partners took stock of the activities already developed and defined the steps of the activities to be developed in the coming months. The project partnership is composed by Kirsehir Aile Calisma Ve Sosyal Hizmetler Il Mudurlugu (Turkey); Kirsehir Il Milli Egitim Mudurlugu (Turkey); Kirsehir Ahi Evran Universitesi (Turkey); EURO-NET (Italy); Aristotelio Panepistimio Thessalonikis (Greece); Genista Research Foundation (Malta); Municipio De Lousada (Portugal).

31. First intellectual product of "EASYNEWS project completed"

The project "Periodismo Digital Accesible y Educación Mediática para Personas con Discapacidad Intelectual" (in English "Accessible Digital Journalism and Media Education for People with Intellectual Disabilities"), acronym " EASYNEWS "), approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Spain as part of the programme Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education as action n. 2020-1-ES01-KA204-082417, has completed the first IO and now is started it dissemination and promotion. The project aims to encourage the interest of people with intellectual disabilities (DI) for journalism and reading media and communication; through the creation of a methodology supported by an ICT tool to adapt and read newspaper articles, magazines and other digital information for easy reading. "*The project* - said Antonino Imbesi, responsible for the development of the EASYNEWS project in Italy, as well as director of the Europe Direct Basilicata Centre - *fits perfectly into the strategy of the European Commission aimed at the inclusion of disabled people also through innovative and digital products, such as those that the strategic partnership in question is developing. In the first intellectual output, the partners, working as a team, developed a collaborative reading methodology, supported by a platform called "EASYNEWS Digital Portal*." The European partnership, that is realizing the project under the coordination of APADIS, consists of Asociación para la atención de las personas con discapacidad intelectual de Villena y comarca (Spain), EURO-NET (Italy), ASOCIACION DE INVESTIGACION DE LA INDUSTRIA DEL JUGUETE CONEXAS Y AFINES (Spain), AUSTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF INCLUSIVE SOCIETY (Austria), SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PUZZLE (Greece) and FUB Stockholm (Sweden). "*The Strategic Partnership* - concluded Antonino Imbesi - *began in October of last year (2020), unfortunately exactly in the middle of the explosion of the second flow of the covid-19 pandemic, but it is moving forward smoothly thanks to the great professionalism of all partners and the desire to develop important and innovative products that can be really useful for people with disabilities. At the moment there are no delays of any kind in the project development and we plan to conclude all the activities and products envisaged, as in the initial plan, by September 2022.* " More information on the project and its activities and products can be found on the official web site at the following web address: https://easynewserasmusproject.es/ or on the Facebook page at the link https://www.facebook.com/Easynews108569271011998.

32. "Queer Migrants" the project enters the heart of the activities

The "Queer Migrants: Addressing gaps in adult education and social cohesion" project (acronym "Queer Migrants"), approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in the United Kingdom as part of the Erasmus Plus KA2 program Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education as action n.2020-1-UK01-KA204-079101, is now entered in the heart of its activities. The European initiative, well coordinated by the IARS Institute (Independent Academic Research Studies International Institute) in London, is aimed at improving social cohesion and allowing the inclusion of LGBTQI migrants. A highly respected partnership works on the project which, in addition to IARS, includes the following partners: EURO-NET (Italy), Symplexis

(Greece), Astiki Mh Kerdoskopiki Etaireia Helping Hand (Greece) and CSI Center for Social Innovation LTD (Cyprus). "*The idea of the project* – said Antonino Imbesi, responsible for its development in Italy on behalf of the EURO-NET association and director of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre of the same organisation) - *arose from the observation that an increasing number of LGBTQI people are forced to flee their country of origin in search, elsewhere, of greater sexual equality or even as a result of persecution suffered in their respective countries of birth given that even today, unfortunately, the LGBTQI identity is criminalized in more than 70 countries around the world. Obtaining reliable statistics on the number of LGBTQI asylum seekers is very difficult, as most EU Member States do not collect specific data but certainly the numbers of LGBTQI are relevant because according to EUROSTAT at 01/01/2018 lived in the EU with 28 countries around 22.3 million foreign nationals, while the number of people residing in Europe born outside the EU was over 38 million. It is easy to understand that even the numbers of LGBTQI are certainly high and that being subject to various types of discrimination, they need specific support and inclusion actions from below.* " In the first of the two years of activity (the project formally started on 31/12/2020) the partners are working hard to develop the bases of the various intellectual products, also collecting data and analyses at the level of the various countries of origin of the participating organizations to succeed above all to create a clear picture of the needs and problems of the target group, also through specific focus groups. "*The main objective of the project* - underlined Antonino Imbesi *- is to strengthen the capacity of operators (in the social and labour sector) in responding to the needs of LGBTQI people that are refugees, migrants or asylum seekers. This will be achieved by developing a training program that will allow the aforementioned social workers to learn more about the migratory phenomenon and to acquire particular skills relating to the rights and needs of LGBTQI people as well as their starting cultural background in their respective countries of origin in order to provide support as much personalized as possible and a specific inclusion methodology to promote their integration into the "new" reality of the hosting country*. " The EURO-NET association is in charge of coordinating all the dissemination part and therefore plays a decisive role for the entire development of the project, which at the moment can be followed both on the official website at http://queermigrants.netsons.org/ and on the specific Facebook page specially created at the link https://www.facebook.com/queermigrants.

33. Questionnaires of the "TELEGROW" project

The project «Telegrow: "Enhancing the Teleworking Digital Skills for the Middle aged employees» (acronym "Telegrow") was approved, as action n.2020-1-ES01-KA204-082417, by the National Agency in Spain in the framework of the programme Erasmus Plus within the special call of October 2020 dedicated to KA226 VET projects in the field of creativity and innovation. The project formally started on the 1st March 2021 and will end on 28th February 2023 after 24 months of activity, involving the following European partnership: Florida Centre De Formació, COOP. V (Spain), project coordinator; Stowarzyszenie Centrum Wspierania Edukacji I Przedsiebiorczosci (Poland); Kainotomia & SIA EE (Greece); E-Seniors: Initiation Des Seniors Aux Ntic Association (France); Markeut Skills Sociedad Limitada (Spain) and EURO-NET (Italy). The European initiative aims to provide trainers and vocational training providers with the necessary knowledge and tools to (re)train and improve the skills of employees aged over 50 and help them work efficiently from home, using teleworking consciously and effectively. Two questionnaires were realised out as part of the project:

1) **Improving digital skills for teleworking VET teacher survey**
   https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1k86qLDQ0Ya2mbrTAkU5RrN0Jat2BJXjRPE-t9rxeeJk/edit?usp=sharing
2) **Improving digital skills for smartworking - VET students and workers**
   https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1z2kOUDhVAI5X_3l_Isk5BqPQCejyzhC9uCfzhJihxvU/edit?usp=sharing

More information on the project and its activities will be avaliable on our next newsteters.

34. SustainAgri e-game

The project "Sustainable Agripreneurship" (acronym "SustainAgri"), an initiative approved in the Czech Republic within the framework of the Erasmus Plus KA2 VET programme as action n.2020-1-CZ01-KA202-078268, sees at work a respectable partnership composed of the following organisations: Ceska Zemedelska Univerzita V Praze (Czech Republic), Youth Europe Service (Italy), Dekaplus Business Services Ltd (Cyprus), Exponential Training & Assessment Limited (Uk), Center For Education And Innovation (Greece), 8D Games Bv (Netherlands) and Trebag (Hungary). "*The project* - said Maria Domenica De Rosa, President of the Youth Europe Service association in Potenza, the Italian partner in the European strategic partnership - *is aimed at developing an innovative training package of materials and tools, including a serious game, adapted to the learning needs of the younger generation that will enable new entrants in* the agricultural sector to implement a sustainable business model by making best use of the 'Triple Bottom Line framework' to guide their agricultural activities towards sustainable development.*" Three intellectual products are envisaged in the project activities, one of which is the development of an electronic educational game: this "serious" game will be used as a training and learning tool as well as an evaluation tool for vocational training providers in the agricultural sector. "*The partnership* - continued the President of the Italian association, Mr. De Rosa - *is now working hard and with great commitment on the development of a training curriculum composed of many professional modules in order to develop a new and attractive training but, at the same time, is also focusing its efforts on various questionnaires that will be basic for the development of the e-game (planned as second product) as well as the final tool-kit (third project output). Technicians and researchers from our association, in particular Vito Verrastro and Antonino Imbesi, two of the best-known innovators in the whole of Basilicata, are doing their best to develop products that are truly innovative and at the same time useful for a sector that is a driving force for our region and deserves more attention from the institutions*". The objectives of the SustainAgri project are diverse and manifold: They range from strengthening the competitiveness of the agricultural sector (by introducing young entrepreneurs to sustainable agriculture) to creating incentives for young people to consider developing and leading agricultural enterprises; from linking sustainability and farm profitability to demonstrating how the adoption of new technologies (smart agriculture) and management practices can reduce environmental impact without reducing farm incomes; from demonstrating the significant role of vocational training in the development of a new generation of sustainable entrepreneurship to improving the awareness of rural communities about social and environmental responsibility; from promoting transnational cooperation between the widest possible range of actors in the agricultural sector to developing better services in the field of sustainable agriculture. More information on the project is available on the official project website at www.sustainagri-project.eu or on the initiative's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sustainableagripreneurship.

## 36. Short online meeting of the "PAESIC" project

In the date 03/05/2021 took place a short online meeting of the project Pedagogical Approaches for Enhanced Social Inclusion in the Classroom" (acronym "PAESIC") approved in Denmark as action n.2018-1-DK01-KA201-047100 in the framework of the programme Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for School Education. During the meeting, the project partners discussed the final products and the Multiplier Events still to be developed by some partners. The partnership of the

initiative consists of University College Of Northern Denmark (Denmark, project coordinator), Crossing Borders (Denmark), Youth Europe Service (Italy), University Of Thessaly (Greece) and Comparative Research Network Ev (Germany). You can find more information on the website https://paesic.eu or on the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/paesic/".

36. RAI service on the animation "The Third Way"

In the date 03/05/2021, RAI3 Basilicata aired during the TGR of 14:00 a beautiful report by the
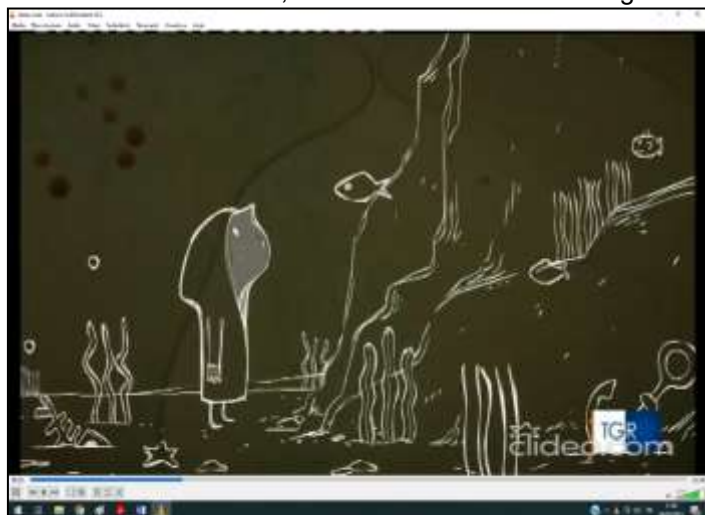

journalist Igor Uboldi, which celebrates the great result achieved by the animation "La Terza Via" and the entire project "Let's work for real migrant inclusion" (a strategic partnership Erasmus Plus KA2 funded in 2018 in the same programme by the National Agency INDIRE in Italy) that has developed many useful products for the integration of migrants and refugees in Europe, including an ebook of good practices on inclusion.The project and all its products can be seen on the website http://migrantinclusion.eu/ and on the official Facebook page of the initiative https://www.facebook.com/LWRMI while the 2D animation can also be viewed directly on the YouTube link https://youtu.be/500xZqrpCts and, shortly, also on the website of the Erasmus Plus National Agency.

37. Fifth meeting of the project "Foster Social Inclusion"

In date 27/05/2021 took place a fifth virtual meeting of the project "Foster Social Inclusion: volunteering, social entrepreneurship and art for social inclusion" (acronym Foster Social Inclusion), an initiative approved by the Polish National Agency as action n. 2019- 1-PL01-KA204- 065375 as part of the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partner- ships for Adult Education - Exchange of Good Practices. During the meeting, the Lithuanian partners presented one of the social inclusion methods, namely the neuro- education method used in their project activities with people in crisis and at risk of social
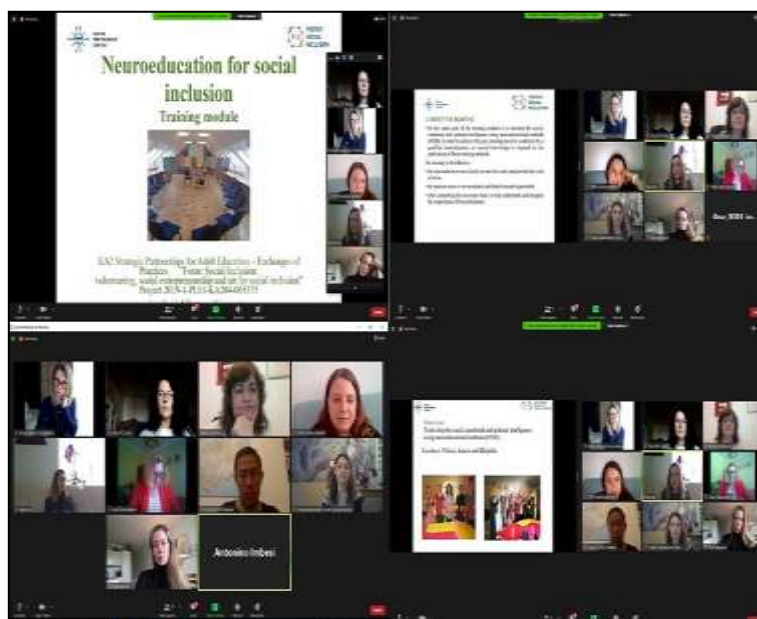
exclusion. In 1992, Italian neurobiologist More information on the project on the official Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Foster-Social-Inclusion-109112230563838/.

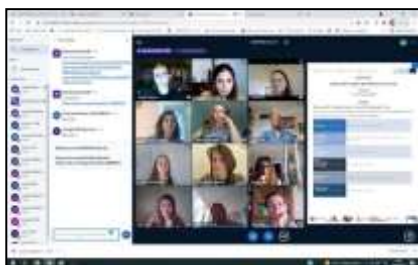## 38. First multiplier event of the "ENTER" project

In date 3 June took place in Italy the first multiplier event planned within the project "ENTER – From problems to achievements in learning and development" (acronym ENTER), action n. n.2018-1-PT02-KA205-005148, approved in Portugal within the framework of the Erasmus Plus Strategic Partnerships for Youth programme. The event was organised by the Italian association Youth Europe Service of Potenza. All interested persons can follow the ENTER activities on the official project's Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/ENTER-725346554497726/?modal=admin_todo_tour or on the website http://www.enterka2.com/, which obviously contains all the information, activities and/or products developed during the project. Anyone interested in the game can contact the Youth Europe Service association which will provide a copy of the game on file.

39. Kick-off meeting of the "CONTINUE" project

In the date 11 June took place the first transnational meeting (official TPM) of the project "Connecting European Youth through Storytelling" (acronym "CONTINUE") approved by the EACEA, as action n.624723-EPP-1-2020-1-DE-EPPKA3-EU-YTH-TOG within the framework of the Erasmus Plus KA3 programme - Call EACEA/10/2020-EU-YTH-TOG - European Youth Together. During the meeting, were presented the project, its development and all the activities or mobilities to be implemented till March 2023. The partnership is composed by Comparative Research Network EV (Germany - coordinator), People's Voice Media (UK), Crossing Borders (Denmark), FAJDP - Porto Federation Youth Associations (Portugal), Per Esempio (Italy), Artemisszió Foundation (Hungary), Youth Europe Service (Italy) and Active Youth (Lithuania). More information about the meeting and the project will be available in the next issues of our newsletter.

40. Training course of the "CDRP" project

In the period 14-16/06/2021 took place a training course of the project "Curriculum Development for Rapid Prototyping in Engineering Education" (acronym "CDRP-EN") approved in the framework of the programme Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for higher education as action n.2018-1-TR01-KA203-059739. The partnership is composed by: Gazi University (Turkey), Danmar Computers sp z.o.o. (Poland), Universitatea Politehnica Din Bucuresti (Romania) Macdac Engineering Consultancy Bureau Ltd (Malta), GODESK SRL (Italy), Association of Academicians (Turkey), Evropska rozvojova agentura s.r.o. (Czech Republic), SC Ludor Engineering SRL (Romania) and Gerade Yazilim Anonim Sirketi (Turkey). The project aims to transfer developments in the field of rapid prototyping to engineering education in the near future by means of a partnership composed of bodies particularly competent in the field. During the training course, implemented by Godesk, the project partners tried to understand why innovation and creativity are so important, analysed methods and techniques to develop creative ideas and innovation and finally talked about innovative examples applied to the 3D printer sector. More information about the project is available on the official Facebook page of the transnational initiative at the link https://www.facebook.com/CDRPEUProject/.