

EUROPE DIRECT WEEKLY

The latest news and updates for the Europe Direct network

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Weekly message from DG COMM

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Dear European EDICs, it is with great pleasure that I **inaugurate this Newsletter** designed for you! It will accompany your work every Monday morning as a stimulus, a guideline and hopefully a good hint for keeping you in the big picture of EU affairs. It will be also a means to convey some procedural matters for the life of our network.

We start in a very frantic moment, poised between Covid on the rise again and the impressive EU response of Next Generation EU. At the **European Council** on Thursday, the European Parliament reiterated the conditions to its agreement to the deal. It's about crucial issues, such as new own resources for the EU budget (which will serve the repayment of the loans upon which NGEU is based), an increase in 15 flagship programmes such as Erasmus and EU4Health, and a rule of law mechanism. The latter point may still condition the whole package and delay its adoption. In the meantime, the European Council issued strong words on the last mile on **Brexit**, and came to terms with the ambitious proposal by the Commission on **climate change**, with an emission reduction target of at least 55% by 2030.

Against this turbulent background, you are relentlessly delivering on your Annual Communication Plan, while gearing up to new **challenges** like the **Conference** on the Future of Europe and your structured networking with the **other EU outreach networks**.

From the distance, in the meantime, we hear the first wailings of the next Europe Direct generation... with the deadline for submission of proposals in these very days!

The big picture

- **Things are getting serious.** At last week's [European Council](#), EU leaders agreed to step up their cooperation in fighting the virus and developing treatments and a vaccine. However, no therapy seems to ensure an easy solution to EU-UK relations: both the European Council and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told their citizens to get prepared for a possible no-deal Brexit. Concerning the impressive 55% carbon emission reduction target for 2030 proposed by the Commission, the European Council stated that the updated target should be delivered collectively by the EU in the most cost-effective manner possible.
- **Fingers crossed.** The Commission is working to ensure that a safe [coronavirus vaccine](#), if and once available, will be distributed in all Member States at the same time, according to population size and with priority to vulnerable groups.
- **Changing face?** President von der Leyen put forward two proposals last week. The first, called [European Bauhaus](#), will create a bridge between the worlds of science and technology, art and culture. It will try to bring the European Green Deal closer to people's minds and homes by combining design, technology and sustainability. Five pilot projects next year will mark its beginning. The second example is the new [Renovation Wave](#): a plan to boost renovation rates in the next ten years and make sure renovations lead to higher energy and resource efficiency.



European Parliament President David Sassoli speaks with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at last week's European Council

What's in it for you?

1. After the "Big Bang" announcement on the Next Generation EU plan this summer, EU institutions have started to look into the concreteness of the package and the criteria for its implementation. Once the main pieces of the puzzle have fallen into place, the **recovery outreach campaign** will start – with you EDICs as key players. **Start thinking of how cooperation with the other EU networks in your area could play out on this:** there is a natural division of labour among thematic networks on the various facets of recovery (food, energy, transport, etc). You should be the driving force of this coordination!
2. Finally, don't forget to make people aware of the vast **Renovation Wave** coming up for buildings: huge opportunities there!

Life of our network



Panoramic of the European Commission Building Berlaymont

Don't you hear some baby noise? As you know, the **next generation of Europe Direct** centres will see the light of day next May; the call for proposal to be one of them is nearing its deadline. **By the way:** make sure you have completed all the steps needed for the prolongation of your current grant until the end of April 2021.

Look around: you are not alone! We are steadily advancing in the creation of a **synoptic map of all EU outreach networks**. It will provide citizens with an overview of "Europe around them", amplify the Commission's communication, and facilitate the sharing of information among EU networks.

To help us complete the picture, we need you to step up cooperation with your colleagues from different networks – this is especially true for those of you coming from the Member States involved in the macro-regional pilot project (AT, ES, FR, HU, IT, PL, PT, SE).

Warm up for COFE. Corona permitting, the **Conference on the Future of Europe** is expected to begin later this year. Recently, some 213 of you EDICs were selected across all Member States to act as **COFE hubs**, to engage with citizens and drive the conversation, but this is a whole-of-network exercise and everyone will play its part.

Looking ahead

19-22.10

[EU Green Week, online](#)

21.10

[European Parliament, discussion on the European Council conclusions, Brussels](#)

22.10

[European Parliament, Commission Statement: State of the Energy Union, Brussels](#)

25-27.10

[World Health Summit 2020, Berlin](#)



Q&A



*We have been receiving a number of questions regarding the case of **ED managers** being **elected for public office**. Here are some clarifications (also available on the e-Grants section).*

In general, all elective offices are considered political – and thus incompatible with a role as ED manager pursuant section 2.6 of the call for proposal. Should the situation arise, ED host structures should immediately notify their Representation and suspend the ED manager.

However, case-by-case exceptions may be granted by the Commission according to proportionality criteria.