

# EUROPE DIRECT WEEKLY

*Monday morning news for the Europe Direct network*

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## Weekly message from DG COMM

by Alessandro Giordani

*Head of Unit, Networks in the Member States*

Dear European EDICs,

Let me start this week's Newsletter by referring to the statement of our President von der Leyen, issued on Saturday evening, to congratulate Mr **Joe Biden** on his victory in the US presidential election. In a sign of unity and coordination, the other European leaders did the same in a matter of minutes. Prospects of renewed transatlantic relations are in sight: think of trade wars and tariffs, the Paris goals on climate change and relation with the World Health Organization, to quote but a few.

But this was also **a week of good progress**, with a deal in sight on the **rule of law** mechanism - one of the elements that threatened to delay the approval of NGEU and the MFF. Negotiators from the EP and the German presidency meet again today to try to reach a deal on the **MFF**, and prospects are not so bad.

This is also the week of the final rush on **Brexit**, if the EP is to have the time, at all, to ratify an eventual deal.

Also this week, with the presentation of the **Autumn Economic Forecast**, we kick-start a special European Semester that will be characterised for the first time by the plans submitted by Member States to receive the funds under Next Generation EU.

Finally, get ready to spend some efforts on the **incoming vaccination campaign** that the Commission is preparing on the development and distribution of vaccines.

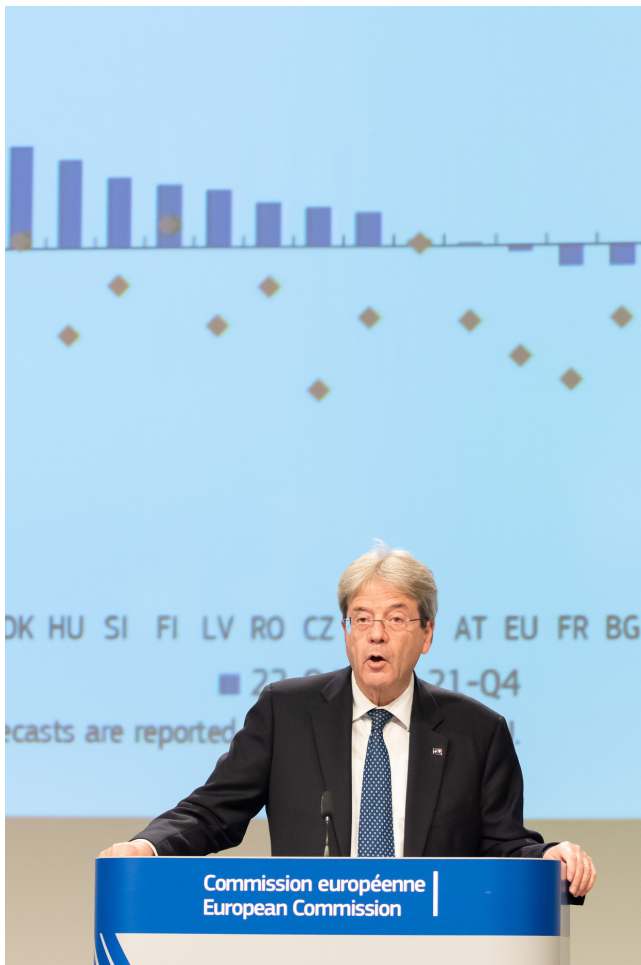
Have a nice busy week and stay safe!

## The big picture

**Deal in sight on the rule of law.** Negotiators from the Council and the Parliament reached a provisional agreement last Thursday on a **mechanism to shield NGEU and the next seven-year EU budget from rule of law breaches**. It will allow to protect EU funds from breaches of the principles of the rule of law which can affect their sound financial management. See the respective announcements of the **Council** and of the **Parliament**: the agreement brings the recovery package one step closer to its finalization.

**Long winter for the EU economy.** The Commission published last Thursday the new **Autumn Economic Forecast**. It projects euro area economy to contract 7.8% this year. A rebound is expected for 2021 and 2022, but we still won't be back to pre-pandemic levels by then. Forecasts, however, do not fully include the benefits of Next Generation EU, as national plans are still in definition. These conclusions were also presented by Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni, who recalled what needs to be done and what has been done so far.

## What's in it for you?



Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni presents the Autumn 2020 Economic Forecast, on 05/11/2020

1. **Please try to explain to your audience** that this Autumn Economic Forecast kick-starts a **special European Semester**. The *recovery and resilience plans* to be submitted by Member States in the framework of NGEU, in fact, will be fully part of the cycle! Please refer to the 2021 European Semester cycle and explain that the *recovery and resilience plans* under NGEU will not be drawn up in a vacuum, but will need to address the reforms demanded by the EU in the country-specific recommendations of the previous Semesters. So: not just support against Covid, but a unique occasion to overcome at last the bottlenecks that hinder growth in each Member State!
2. **Let the people know:** the **European Citizens' Initiative Week** will take place online from 16 to 20 November 2020 and will bring together institutional representatives, members of the civil society and organisers to discuss the new rules that, since January, make it easier for **citizens to call upon the Commission to propose legislation**. It will be an event of great interest not only for you and the citizens around you, but also for your fellow European networks; so, spread the word around!

## Life of our network

As it has often happened, and will probably happen again, you are about to be once again called upon to adapt your Annual Communication Plans to **emerging communication priorities**: this time, to contribute to the **vaccination campaign** that the Commission is about to deploy.

The aim will be to **raise awareness** about the **development and distribution of potential vaccines** and **increase trust in their safety and efficacy**. Authorities, healthcare professionals and key messengers will be involved in the effort to spread the message.

Your role in such a campaign can be to **identify local ambassadors** that help us achieve the EU communication goals and **coordinate with other relevant EU networks** (which, as you know, is something we would like you to do anyway). We will come back to you in the coming weeks with more details about this upcoming communication campaign - so stay tuned!



*The European Commission is outlining a vaccination campaign against the coronavirus*

## Looking ahead

**9-12/11**

[International Product Safety Week, online](#)

**11-13/11**

[European Parliament plenary session, Brussels](#)

**12/11**

[President von der Leyen at the Paris Peace Forum, online](#)

**16-20/11**

[European Citizens' Initiative Week, online](#)



## Q&A



As more and more regions across Europe are **restricting physical meetings and public gatherings**, we received questions about the possibility for EDICs to **move online** the activities that they have scheduled for the coming months - or to replace them with other activities when online conversion proves impracticable.

Consulting with your Network Correspondents remains the best way ahead in this process, and we trust that you will **put the same outreach efforts in the virtual mode as in the default one**.