

# 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,

**A special reference of gratitude on this 8th of March to our women EDIC managers!** This special day involves the EU under many respects: for example, the European Parliament's plenary session will open today with two special guests, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris and the Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern. Besides this, the past week was also a week of relaunch for global hope, in two very different domains.

Firstly, our President von der Leyen stated in an interview that as from April onwards, the quantities of **vaccines** could double again according to the manufacturers' plans, also because further vaccines are about to be approved.

Secondly, following a phone call between **Joe Biden** and our President, the EU and the US will suspend retaliatory tariffs in the Airbus and Boeing dispute, another sign of new light in the global arena. Our President also invited Biden at the Global Health Summit in Rome on 21 May.

But also: the past week relentlessly demonstrated the **social nature of our Union** (take a look at the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with **Disabilities** and at the proposal on **equal pay** for equal work), but don't forget the newly adopted communication on the conduct of **fiscal policy in the period ahead**: this is the place where the discussion on the future of the Stability and Growth Pact after the pandemic starts.

Other than this, brace for an imminent start of the **Conference on the Future of Europe** (Joint Declaration to be signed on 10 March at 13.00) and have a nice week!

## The big picture

- **No one left behind!** The European Commission raised the curtain for an ambitious Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure their full participation in society. [Full details](#)
- **Commission pushes for equal pay for equal work!** The Commission presented a [proposal](#) on pay transparency to ensure that women and men in the EU get equal pay for equal work. A [political priority](#) of President von der Leyen, the proposal sets out pay transparency measures, such as pay information for job seekers, a right to know the pay levels for workers doing the same work, as well as gender pay gap reporting obligations for big companies. [Further information](#)
- **Sketching the future of fiscal policy!** On 3 March the Commission adopted a Communication providing Member States with broad guidance on the conduct of fiscal policy in the period ahead. It provides general indications on the overall fiscal policy, including the implications of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) for fiscal policy. Most interestingly, the communication sets out the Commission's considerations regarding the deactivation of the general escape clause for the Stability and Growth Pact. The clause allowed Member States to undertake measures to deal adequately with the crisis, while departing from the budgetary requirements that would normally apply. [Here's the story](#).

## What's in it for you?

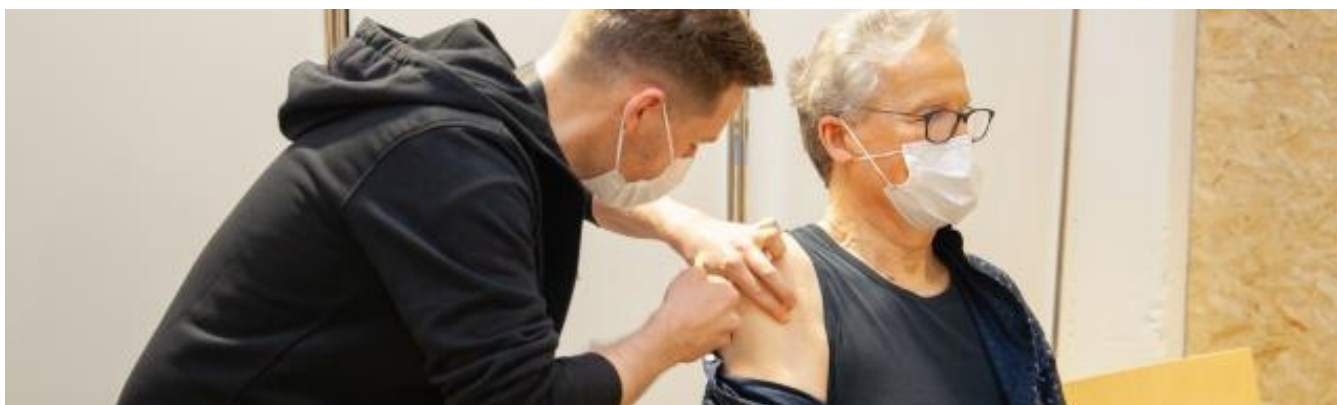


*European Union 2021, Source: EC Audiovisual Service, Helena Dalli, ID: P-050471/00-01 Date: 04/03/2021, Photographer: Dati Bendo*

Consider promoting the Commission [proposal](#) on pay transparency together with the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. Just like the proposal on pay transparency, the [plan](#) is sure to get a warm welcome by your constituencies because it shows the social, human and inclusive face of Europe. It outlines specific actions to boost the implementation of the [Pillar's principles](#), focuses on jobs and skills for the future and paves the way for a fair, inclusive and resilient socio-economic recovery.

## Life of our network

**CoFE in sight:** Group leaders in the EP have endorsed the text of the declaration paving the way for the launch of the Conference. Translation: Hub EDICs and the rest of the network stay tuned to all developments as these are now going to move into a higher gear. [Backstory of the CoFE](#) main objectives and [EP Press release](#)



*European Union 2021, Source: EC Audiovisual Service, A woman getting vaccinated against COVID-19, Helsinki, Finland, ID: P-049489/00-06  
Photographer: Virpi Velin, 01/02/2021.*



### ***Vaccination campaign news***



- Stay tuned to the latest information on vaccination via the [Commission page](#)
- EMA's official statement on start of [rolling review for Sputnik V](#)

## Looking ahead

- **8-11/03.** The European Parliament Plenary Session. [Agenda](#)
- **10/03, 1 PM.** Conference on the Future of Europe: signature of the Joint Declaration