

EUROPE DIRECT WEEKLY

Monday morning news for the Europe Direct network

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Weekly message from DG COMM

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Dear European EDICs,

As you are all aware, last week was **THE week** for the setting into motion of the **CoFE**, with the **Joint Declaration** signed between the 3 EU Institutions. This means a lot for Europe and for the opportunity of a fresh out-of-the-box thinking about where we are heading for, but it also means a lot to you and to your future activities. Headquarters and Representations will guide you through this major exercise, and we will rely on your sense of purpose and the thorough knowledge of your area for one of the most difficult tasks: reach out, during the CoFE, to those who would normally not be positively involved in EU issues and EU enthusiasms. Unless you do it, no one will. To help you get a foretaste, take a look at the first results of the Special Eurobarometer n. 500 (chapter III on CoFE) to see how people expectations look like. You can easily google it.

Other than this, and looking ahead, this week will be the week of the Commission's proposal on the **Digital Green Certificates** for the movement of vaccinated citizens. Don't miss it because it will spark discussions for sure.

Last but not least, you will have noticed the reply of the Commission over the weekend to Member States lamenting an uneven allocation of doses of vaccines among them. Since Member States decided to depart from the pro rata allocation based on population proposed by the Commission, the latter pointed out that "it would be up to the Member States to find an agreement if they wished to return to the pro rata basis".... this may be food for thought under the health strand of the CoFE, under the angle "division of competences" between the EU and the Member States



Have a nice week!

The big picture

- **Here comes the Conference on the Future of Europe!:** On 10 March EP President Sassoli, Prime Minister Costa for the Council and Commission President von der Leyen signed the Joint Declaration setting in motion the Conference on the Future of Europe. The Conference-related events will give people from all walks of life a voice in reflecting on the challenges faced by the EU, with young people playing a central role in the process. Civil society and stakeholders at national, regional and local level, academia and social partners will also be closely involved in the events. Physical gatherings and digital formats will cater for exchange of ideas on the future of Europe in citizens-focused, bottom-up approach. Input from the events will be collected by means of a multilingual digital platform. A feedback mechanism will help feed the ideas shared throughout the Conference into recommendations for EU action. Follow the [story](#), including the [Joint Declaration](#), the backstory and the objectives, as well as the Commission President's [speech](#).
- **The future is digital:** Digital decade by 2030: On 9 March the Commission presented its vision for a successful digital transformation of Europe by 2030. The vision is critical for the achievement of a climate neutral, circular and resilient economy. The vision follows [President von der Leyen's call](#) to make the next years Europe's 'Digital Decade'; responds to the [European Council's call](#) for a 'Digital Compass'; and builds on the Commission's [digital strategy](#) of February 2020. [Further information](#).

What's in it for you?

IT IS (ALMOST) YOUR TURN NOW: The EU institutions have “crossed the Rubicon” - the Conference on the future of Europe is gaining momentum and your help in bringing it close to people in the regions will be much needed. We trust that **you will be following all developments**, from the official EU messages, through the national translation of the events, to the specific calls from Commission headquarters to the Representations on your role in this unique exercise. Don't miss any single opportunity to **promote each important milestone of the Conference on your channels**. **Encourage your audiences**, including young people, to follow you on the message front.



European Union 2021, Source: EC Audiovisual Service, Signature of the Joint Declaration on the Conference on the future of Europe, ID: P-050649/00-13, Photographer: Etienne Ansotte

Life of our network

As you are aware, just above 200 EDICs have been appointed “hubs” for the deployment of the **Conference on the Future of Europe** on the ground. They will have a special role in promoting and organising the involvement of civil society in the Conference across catchment areas which may be broader than the area they typically serve as EDICs. Nevertheless, **all of you are directly concerned with this major bottom-up exercise**. Please **reach out to your closest “hub-EDIC”** as soon as the Commission will inform you about the possibility to stage and promote events in the framework of the Conference, and of course be prepared to be active yourself, as you see fit.

We won't fail to involve the rest of EU outreach networks in the exercise. More is to come!



Vaccination campaign news



- The Commission has reached an agreement with BioNTech-Pfizer for the supply of four million more doses of COVID-19 vaccines for Member States in the next two weeks in order to tackle coronavirus hotspots and to facilitate free border movement.
- The Commission authorizes fourth safe and effective vaccine against COVID-19. More [here](#)

Looking ahead

- **17/03: College:** Communication on COVID-19, Proposal for a Regulation on a framework for the issuance, verification and acceptance of interoperable certificates on vaccination, testing and recovery to facilitate free movement during the COVID-19 pandemic (Digital Green Certificates), Recommendation on a common approach to establish a systematic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 and its variants in wastewaters in the EU
- **18-19/03:** EESC [youth event](#) “Your Europe, Your Say” on climate change
- **19/03:** Virtual European Anti-Racism Summit with Cssrs Jourová & Dalli; Launch of the new Erasmus+ programme with Csr Gabriel