

# 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,

This week finds you performing your precious duties amidst a patchwork of new regional or national **lockdowns**, **riots** in many towns against this excruciating prospect and signs of a new surge of **terrorism** as we see in Vienna and Nice.

Under these challenging circumstances, it goes without saying that **your communication activities** can and should be **modulated** as much as possible to the legitimate anxieties of your fellow citizens and to their immediate expectations towards the EU. Please don't refrain from adjusting the tone of your plans or of your social media activities if you deem it appropriate. For example, solidarity is very visible already! President von der Leyen said the EU could vaccinate 700 million people with large supplies of vaccines due to begin in April, transfer of intensive care patients across borders is already under way and short term unemployment schemes supported with real EU billions via the SURE mechanism are now a reality. But **also look ahead**, there is not only Covid: the adequate minimum wage proposal adopted last week is there to show that the EU is not completely overwhelmed by the crisis. The EU remains a project about dignity and future, and you are courageously part of it in these difficult days!

## The big picture

**A collective effort: now more than ever.** The members of the European Council met for a video conference on Thursday to coordinate their next moves against the upsurge of the virus. EU leaders discussed how to build a [common approach to testing, quarantine, and the exchange of data](#) at EU level. Hospitals risk being overwhelmed by the second wave of the pandemic. The Commission has made €220 million available to [transfer intensive care patients across borders](#) from overcrowded hospitals to less pressured structures.

**Europe to the rescue.** The Czech Republic is among the hardest hit Member States: following a request for assistance from Prague, the Commission quickly [dispatched a first batch of 30 ventilators](#) from the rescEU common European reserve of medical equipment. Additional ventilators will soon be sent to the Czech Republic, 105 from the Netherlands and 15 from Austria, through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

**Let EU money flow.** The [first instalment of SURE funds](#) raised from the financial markets [has been disbursed last Tuesday](#) to Italy (€10 billion), Spain (€6 billion) and Poland (€1 billion). The Council has so far approved €87.9 billion in financial support under SURE to 17 Member States; further disbursements will follow in the next months, as soon as new bonds are issued.

**Landmark proposal for the dignity of work!** On Wednesday, the Commission adopted a proposal for a directive to ensure that workers in the EU are protected by [adequate minimum wages](#). At EU level, this is unprecedented. More details below.



*Ventilators from the rescEU Reserve are delivered to Bulovka Hospital, Prague, on 24/10/20*

## What's in it for you?

- We need from you an extra communication effort amidst this pandemic:** not only in presenting the Commission's [additional measures against the virus](#) like the EU [vaccination strategy](#), but also countering false, misleading and dangerous information that continues to circulate.
- Don't forget spreading the news about the first round of real money from the SURE mechanism:** it means economic aid from the EU arrives even if the "Next Generation EU" package is not yet finally approved. You should raise awareness on the fact that help is flowing, and it is very concrete ([here](#) a reminder of how SURE works).
- Give adequate relevance to the proposal on adequate minimum wages:** helping Member States establish minimum wages was a promise von der Leyen made in her [State of the Union speech](#) last September. It is understandably a landmark proposal, but you should also stress that its framework fully respects the subsidiarity principle, as well as the autonomy of Member States and social partners when it comes to negotiating minimum wage levels.

## Life of our network



*The banner "Recovery Plan for Europe" on the front of the Berlaymont building in Brussels*

As more and more regions across Europe start **restricting again physical meetings and public gatherings**, we received questions about how to carry on the activities that you have scheduled for the coming months.

The general plea remains to **switch online** as much as you can whenever you are in the impossibility of carrying out planned events physically due to Covid. Since, however, rules and restrictions vary significantly across regions, the need to switch online cannot be certified with a one-size-fits-all criterion. Your Representation remains best equipped to assess with you the practicability of traditional events and, most importantly, the equivalence of your online activities to part of the Annual Communication Plan as it was originally planned.

This, of course, is also true for the four months extension and the communication priorities therein, should preventive rules be still there at the beginning of 2021.

## Looking ahead

**03/11**

**[Eurogroup, online](#)**

**06/11**

**[European conference on housing policy, online](#)**



## Q&A



*We have no questions from your network this week. We will keep answering your questions in the following issues of the Newsletter as they arise.*

*See you next week!*