

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,

This past week many things have happened, which may give rise to **mixed feelings of anxiety and optimism**. If on the one side we saw a reaffirmed deadlock in the negotiations for the next multiannual budget and Next Generation EU and the clock ticking more than ever on Brexit negotiations, on the more positive side we witnessed a fresh new **Action Plan** adopted by the Commission on **integration and inclusion**, more good news on **securing vaccines** for all Europeans and more EU money raised for short term unemployment schemes within **SURE**.

This means that while we are all watching with some apprehension this last mile of 2020, you have also something forward-looking and positive to spread via your social media and engagement activities. Reading the Action Plan, you may also realise that you are part and parcel of the instruments European societies have for integration and inclusion. You are on the ground, you are promoters of the EU dimension of citizenship, hence your **target audience** may also be made of the local **"new Europeans"** addressed in the Action Plan. You may want to reach out to them as well, if you think you can do that!

On our internal side, please read very carefully the *"life of our network"* chapter this week: we absolutely need to give a clear picture on the events staged and planned by you on Cohesion policy.

Have a nice week and stay safe!

The big picture

“**Migrants are us**”. Inclusion is the embodiment of the European way of life, Commissioner Margaritis Schinas explained last Tuesday as the Commission presented its [action plan on Integration and Inclusion](#). The action plan proposes a series of targeted measures to support people with a migrant background, such as inclusive education, the recognition of skills and qualifications, better access to healthcare and affordable housing.

A Modern(a) health strategy. The Commission concluded last week a [sixth contract to purchase doses of a vaccine](#) against COVID-19. This time, the company involved is Moderna, which agreed to sell 80 million doses (with an option for 80 million more) once a candidate vaccine will be approved for use. A new [Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe](#) was also adopted; it aims to ensure access to affordable medicines, support innovation and sustainability, and enhance crisis preparedness across the EU.

More resources? SURE! Last week, the third issuance of bonds to finance the [SURE mechanism raised €8.5 billion euros](#), with investors’ demand exceeding supply more than 13 times.



Commissioner Ylva Johansson presents the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, on 24/11/2020

What's in it for you?

- 1. You can be the instrument of the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion!** As Commissioner Johansson explained, migrants are not integrated by legislation from Brussels, but by “having a job to go to, your children in school, being part of the local church, the choir, the football team”. Since you EDICs are present at the local level, don’t hesitate to **bring migrant communities** stably present in your regions **into your engagement activities**.
- 2. Please follow the building blocks of the EU Health Union.** These last few months, the Commission has used the coronavirus lesson to put forward a series of proposals that aim to enhance Europe’s ability to respond to crises and threats to public health. After the [European Health Union proposal](#), the Pharmaceutical Strategy is the latest addition to a panoply of instruments that will help us prevent and mitigate future dangers. Public health is a relatively new field of action for the EU, so consider **underlining the main steps of this process in your public communication**.
- 3. Tomorrow is the von der Leyen Commission's first birthday!** Seems like ages ago, but the current European Commission entered office on 1 December 2019. Since then, so many crucial events happened that it is fair to say the world has changed. A [dedicated Commission webpage](#) offers an overview of the challenges and achievements of the last 12 months; take a look at it and **join us in celebrating this anniversary**.

Life of our network



Cohesion policy is the EU's main investment policy and one of its most concrete expressions of solidarity

We are in a bit of a hurry. All the **EDICs that planned to implement events on Cohesion policy in 2020** within the framework of the DG REGIO calls for 2019 and 2020 **should urgently contact the Commission's Representations** to provide information on the state of play of planned events.

DG COMM has to report to DG REGIO on the state of play of all events by 10 December.

We also need EDICs to inform the Representations about the planned date of postponed events, their format (online or physical) and if they intend to cancel any events. In case of cancellations, the Representations will start the procedure to de-commit the money.

A final reminder: EDICs should **insert the dates of their planned events on the dedicated page of the *InfoRegio* site** of DG REGIO.

Those EDICs who have already implemented events are reminded to provide a detailed report of the outcome of the event through the reporting tool.

Looking ahead

30/11

[Eurogroup, online](#)

01/12

[World AIDS Day 2020, online](#)

01/12

[Future of Food Conference, online](#)



Q&A



Coronavirus and winter sports

*A hot topic in the domestic debate of several EU countries is whether the Commission will have any say on the decision to **reopen ski resorts and other winter sport venues**.*

*Allowing winter sports in the next months is **Member States' choice**; all the Commission can do is issue cross-sectoral recommendations for a careful approach to the lifting of restrictions, which aim to avoid the resurgence of the pandemic after the winter holidays.*