

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,

We start the first full week of December amidst the last gasps of the **Brexit** negotiations (President von der Leyen and PM Johnson will take stock again today after a weekend of last-ditch talks among negotiators) and attempts to overcome the blockage on **MFF and NGEU** and avoid the “provisional twelfths” regime in 2021. That would mean spending only one twelfth of the 2020 budget each month, in absence of the MFF frame. This can still be avoided.

Beyond this hectic last stretch of the year, nevertheless, there is a lot you can do on the positive side! You will see below the **wealth of material** at your disposal around this **Commission’s first anniversary**. The purpose is not celebration as such, which would sound self-referential to the wider public, but you should rather show how this Commission and the EU have managed to turn a sanitary challenge (and tragedy) into a leap forward in the way Europeans react together at EU level (think of the new paradigm represented by NGEU) while not deflecting from our overarching priorities of the green and digital transition. This will tell very concretely the difference Europe has made in all this.

There is also work for you in presenting in a balanced way the **recommendations** approved last week on the **pandemic over the coming winter**. “Balanced” means explaining clearly the status of *recommendations* in domains that are mostly of Member States competence, and recalling the science-based approach of the Commission.

Have a nice and safe week!

The big picture

- **Working birthday.** So, last Tuesday was von der Leyen Commission's first anniversary. The anniversary offers the occasion to take stock of **what the Commission has achieved** in these unprecedented circumstances. It managed not only to make the difference for all Europeans in this crisis, but also to turn it into a landmark leap forward for European integration and the way the EU funds its resources.
- **Best buddies for the future.** In the United States, the Electoral College vote certifying the victory of Joe Biden in the presidential election is still one week away, but the EU is looking forward to starting to work together. The Commission published last week its **new transatlantic agenda** for global change, which highlights areas of **EU-US cooperation**: a global response to the pandemic, climate change, common standards for trade and technology, etc.
- **Stayin' alive.** This year, the Christmas break comes as many EU countries have just started descending their infection curve. To prevent a third wave before EU citizens get their vaccines, the Commission released last Wednesday a **series of recommendations** for the **sustainable management of the pandemic over the coming winter**.

What's in it for you?

1. **Help us debunk fake and untrustworthy news** on the Commission's recommendations for the management of the pandemic over the coming winter! They are a soft law instrument, whose flexibility and general character make it vulnerable to manipulation and EU bashing. Please remind to the citizens, that **all EU recommendations are strictly fact-based**. One example: when the Commission suggests avoiding communal singing during religious celebrations, it does so not because it despises the Christmas atmosphere but because scientific evidence shows the potential infection risk that this activity entails.
2. **Please make use of** the online materials on the **first year of work of the current Commission**: it shows how this institution has learnt to **adapt to unforeseen challenges and emerging needs**. When von der Leyen took office, all eyes were on the EU Green Deal and the digital transformation of the EU economy. Since the pandemic broke out, this Commission has managed to keep those files among its priorities also within the massive recovery effort represented by Next Generation EU. This is what leadership and *political* institutions do.



Christmas holidays this year will be different: Commission recommendations are there to guide us

Life of our network



European flags in front of the Berlaymont building at half-mast as a tribute to former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, on 04/12/2020

A “reminder of a reminder”, but an important one: as your Representation should have explained, last Friday was the deadline for you to send them all the **information regarding events on Cohesion policy** that you have planned or hosted these last months within the framework of the DG REGIO calls for 2019 and 2020. In case you have not managed to provide this material yet, please do so as soon as possible.

As you know, DG COMM has to report to DG REGIO on the state of play of all events by this Thursday, 10 December.

Looking ahead

07-11/12

[European Space Week 2020, online](#)

09/12

[European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\) Awards 2020, online](#)

10-11/12

[European Council, Brussels](#)



Q&A



DG Regio and online/hybrid events

Many EDICs have come back to us asking for clarifications about their **planned events within the DG Regio partnership** (see “Life of our network”), and specifically **whether they can move them online or not**.

The answer is yes – events that you have planned as part of your commitments for the DG Regio calls for 2019 and 2020 can be held either physically, online or in a hybrid form. What matters is that you provide us in time with all the relevant information.