

EUROPE DIRECT WEEKLY

Monday morning news for the Europe Direct network

CONTENTS

WEEKLY MESSAGE FROM DG COMM

THE BIG PICTURE & WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

LIFE OF OUR NETWORK

LOOKING AHEAD

Q&A



Weekly message from DG COMM

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Dear European EDICs,

What a week! Since the last newsletter to you, a landmark European Council projected the EU in a new era just a bunch of days before the hardest deadline: 31/12/2020. Hard for the end of the current **MFF**, hard for the end of the Brexit transition period. The European Council managed to sign off in a definitive way the next multiannual budget 2021-2027 and, most unprecedentedly, **Next Generation EU**, the whole being worth 1.8 trillion euro (€1.800.000.000.000). As you know, the Rule of Law mechanism will apply to all of these funds, with the caveats and conditions crafted in a compromise also widely available.

This is not all: last week's European Council was a landmark one also because of its endorsement of a binding EU target of **reduction of at least 55% in greenhouse emissions by 2030**. The EU is now credible in its way towards climate neutrality in 2050 and can lead the world in its post-Paris endeavours. Please note that the breakthrough on MFF and NGEU is not unrelated to this: by securing these resources, the EU now has the means to accompany the transition with the *Just Transition Mechanism*, and leave no one behind in the reconversion efforts.

Lastly, **Brexit**. Yesterday President von der Leyen and Boris Johnson jointly declared that talks will continue until the bitter end simply because it is worth, after all the sincere efforts endured, giving it a last try for an agreement.

Against this frantic background, watch the clock (31 December) and don't forget the **European Parliament**: the achieved (MFF + NGEU) and the so far unachieved (Brexit agreement) will have to be ratified before 31 December.

You have plenty of things to tell and explain to the wider public: **great achievements, difficult negotiations and high expectations from the people. That's the EU!**

The big picture

- **Frontrunners on climate change.** In its conclusions, the European Council endorsed the Commission's proposal to **reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions** in the EU by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. With this decision, the EU takes yet another step to raise its ambitions on the way to climate neutrality by 2050.
- **Move cleanly, move smartly.** A few days before the European Council's conclusions, the Commission presented its new **Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy**. The proposal lays the ground for a green and digital transport system fully in line with the European Green Deal.
- **Safer together.** The recent tragic events served as a grim reminder that terrorism remains a real and present danger. To fight against this threat, the Commission unveiled last Wednesday a **Counter-Terrorism Agenda**, which focuses on strategies to anticipate risks, prevent radicalisation and make our cities safer.



Smart and sustainable: this is the future of European mobility! (European Union 2020, EC - Audiovisual Service, P-044579/00-10)

What's in it for you?

- **Please explain to citizens the importance of the Council's decision on climate change.** Do not forget: resources from NGEU will be devoted in large part to the green transition. So, far from political rhetoric, the new 55% target will be the “pole star” setting the long-term direction for how the Next Generation EU package will be implemented across our countries and regions.
- **Accompany citizens into the European Climate Pact!** There will be no green transition if citizens and stakeholders are not on board. This is why the Commission has also launched a European Climate Pact: an EU-wide initiative that offers regions, local communities, schools and civil society a space to connect and discuss how to move toward a more sustainable future. There is **plenty of material you can use**: a website in all EU languages, an official launch event on Wednesday, and even a short film.
- **Help us publicize some examples of what the EU has done to help citizens weather the crisis.** A first set of 12 recovery stories is available online for you to share, touching different sections of our society: from farmers, small business owners and researchers to the most vulnerable among us. The first 12 stories will be translated in all EU languages in the coming days, and new stories will follow soon.

Life of our network

Now more than ever before, it is vital to reinforce the message that EU policies are based on solid scientific evidence!

This is why we would like to invite you to follow closely **"Science Flash For You"**, the new tool for institutional communication launched by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the scientific service of the European Commission.

As you know, many EU policies rely heavily on scientific research, from the green and digital transitions to the fight against the pandemic. Through the Science Flash you will have a useful overview of such activities in all EU languages, **specifically fine-tuned for policy-makers, scientific partners, but also universities and schools, as well as journalists.**

Since last summer, EDICs started receiving Science Flash in their national language. If not, jrc-institutional-comm@ec.europa.eu is your contact point.



Take a close look at the JRC "Science Flash For You" (European Union, 2020, EC - Audiovisual Service, P-045969/00-12)

Looking ahead

14-17/12

[European Parliament Plenary Session,](#)
Brussels

16/12

[European Climate Pact launch event,](#)
online

16/12

[Eurogroup,](#) online