

# 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,

Easter is fast approaching and the past few days brought a number of noteworthy news for the EU in these extraordinary times. Some shed lights and hope, others spark concerns. Commissioner Breton announced yesterday that the **Digital Green Certificate**, aimed at speeding up free circulation of EU citizens both within and across EU countries, is meant to see the light on the 15th of June already. That would make a real “EU” difference to citizens’ summer! And remember, he also talked about **collective immunity** achievable by the 14th of July. The way out is still tortuous, however. While the Slovak prime Minister resigned over polemics on the Sputnik vaccine, concerns hang over the continent following the decision of the **German Constitutional Court** to suspend the President’s signature on the ratification of the **EU Own Resources decision**, the one that would allow the Commission to raise the unprecedented amount of money of NGEU. We will see in the coming weeks whether this will trigger delay in the availability of the badly needed funds for EU recovery.

Meanwhile, the importance of the Conference on the future of Europe is yet again confirmed by the positioning of a number of Member States, some warning against duplication of the standard legislative process, but most advocating an open-ended mandate to take strategic decisions out of a transparent dialogue with the citizens. And here, you EDICs can be the engine behind it all. Have a well-deserved Easter holyday, next Newsletter on Monday 12th of April!

## The big picture

- **Statement of the Members of the European Council: A must read:** Following the informal video conference on 25 March 2021, the members of the European Council adopted a statement on a great deal of issues. Items of particular interest to the network are the export authorisations of vaccines, the vaccine-sharing mechanism, the digital certificates and the digital transformation for European recovery. Tune in [here](#).
- **Digital green certificate: Where there is a will, there is a way:** MEPs reached an agreement on “fast-tracking” the in an effort to have the legislation passed before the summer recess. More [here](#).
- **Erasmus+ 2021-2027: Knowledge is power:** On 25 March the Commission adopted the first annual work programme of Erasmus+ 2021-2027. With a budget of €26.2 billion, (compared to €14.7 billion for 2014-2020), complemented with about €2.2 billion from EU's external instruments, the new and revamped [programme](#) will fund learning mobility and cross-border cooperation projects for 10 million Europeans of all ages and all backgrounds. It will seek to be even more inclusive and to support the green and digital transitions, as set out in the [European Education Area](#). Erasmus+ will also support the resilience of education and training systems in the face of the pandemic. [More](#).

## What's in it for you?

- **Spread the new recovery stories** published on the [Commission website](#) to all your audiences. These stories are meant to showcase the European response to repairing the economic and social damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic, with the [NextGenEU](#) leading the way out of the crisis. Be sure to use the hashtag #UnitedAgainstCoronavirus.
- **Help spread the Commission 12-week public consultation** designed to seek input in shaping a new legal instrument to deter and counter coercive practices by non-EU countries. Some background: In recent years, there has been an increasing number of examples of foreign countries seeking to influence the decisions or behaviour of the EU or EU Member States in the area of trade and investment policy. The consultation is part of an overall strategy to strengthen the EU's resilience, protect our economic interests, and enhance our legitimate rights to impose countermeasures, where necessary.



European Union 2021, Source: EC Audiovisual Service, European Council, 21/01/2021, ID: P-048997/00-06, Photographer: Etienne Ensotte

## Life of our network

**Are EU connected?** The French network seems to have been quite busy of late. We found out what has been keeping them so busy when we got the product they have been working on together with the Paris Teaching Federation. The product, entitled "R-EU-Connected" aims to bring the EU institutions closer to students and teachers alike under the Erasmus+ umbrella. Here is [more](#).



### *Vaccination campaign news*



- In an effort to ensure timely access to COVID-19 vaccines for EU citizens, the Commission introduced on 24 March the principles of reciprocity and proportionality as new criteria to be considered for authorising exports under the transparency and authorisation mechanism for COVID-19 vaccine exports. Here is the [story](#).

## Looking ahead

- **31/03: 9 AM – 3.15 PM.** CEPS event with VP Jourová. [50th International Roma Day \(8/04\): Preserving the value of transatlantic relations. A view from the Next Generation.](#)  
[Registration](#).

**Easter is just around the corner. On this occasion your "EDIC Newsletter" will be out of office. Warmest thoughts to you and your family. Happy Easter!**



*European Union 2021, Source: EC Audiovisual Service, Belgium, Liège, Chenée, 20/03/2021, ID: P-050853/00-05, Photographer: Dati Bendo*