

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 week we can really say that **the end (approaching) is a new beginning!** While the current EDIC generation starts its last-but-one week today, we see processes that will accompany us for the next months and years taking new life. **Today** is THE day of the **launch of the online platform for the Conference on the future of Europe**. As of this afternoon interactions begin, events and ideas can be uploaded for this unprecedented exercise, and current (hub)EDICs are an essential engine behind all this as much as new (hub) EUROPE DIRECT centres will be as of the 1st of May. All of you, old and new, will be instrumental to make this major participative exercise a success, involving all possible actors beyond the ones that are already EU-enthusiasts. Another major leap forward as we speak: the Commission unveiled “the engine that will pump the fuel to power **NextGenerationEU**”, and is ready to go to the market and borrow on behalf of the Union up to 800 billion for the recovery of Europe after the pandemic. Stay tuned to the ratification process by the Member States of the Own Resources decision, though, because it is not over yet and it is tightly linked with all this happening.

In the meantime, there are concrete signs in many Member States that **vaccination** starts having a real impact on the overall weekly gloomy numbers, so stay tuned to what the Commission is doing to ease this critical point. With this concrete sign of hope... have a nice week!

The big picture

- **The curtain raises on the CoFE digital platform!:** As you are aware, today (Monday) at 13.00h, Commission Vice-President Šuica and her two co-chairs from the European Parliament and from the Presidency of the Council of the EU, will formally launch the Conference platform - the main hub of the Conference on the Future of Europe. This event will mark the beginning of the debates that will form the Conference. From Monday 13.00 onwards, citizens will be able to log in to the platform, interact with one another and share their ideas on the future of Europe. Platform users will also be able to find events (online or near them) and filter them by topic/location of interest. Event organisers will be able to upload their events to the platform. To find out more about the platform, copy the link **futurEU.europa.eu**. And here's the link to the press conference **<https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/ebs/live/1>**.
- **Bracing for NextGenerationEU:** The Commission is ready to raise up to 800 billion euro to fund the recovery. Please be reminded that the centrepiece of NextGenerationEU is the Recovery and Resilience Facility - an instrument to offer grants and loans to support reforms and investments in the EU Member States with a total value of €723.8 billion in current prices. In addition, NextGenerationEU will reinforce several EU programmes. To finance NextGenerationEU, the EU will borrow on the capital markets, and this is a real game changer for endeavours of this magnitude. Repayment will take place over a long-time horizon, until 2058. Here is the [story](#).
- **Milestones we can be proud of:** An additional agreement with BioNTech-Pfizer for extra 50 million doses of vaccines to be delivered in Quarter 2, 126 million doses of vaccines administered in the Member States...and the Commission pursuing its work in this relentless race against time. You want to find out more about the Commission latest achievements and what lies ahead? Here is the [statement by President von der Leyen](#).

What's in it for you?

- **Mobilise your communities** to share their voice via the **CoFE digital platform** and **make the platform known** to those who do not seem to believe that their voice counts.
- **Check out** the latest Commission strategies on [tackling organised crime](#) and [fighting human trafficking](#).
- **Find out about the Toolkit to bring Green Topics into the classroom**, educational toolkit with concrete classroom activities, including sustainability tips. More [here](#).



Life of our network

- **Jean Monnet programme - opportunities for teachers:** deadline is 2 June 2021: As a strand of the programme, a new set of opportunities was presented on April 15 for Higher Education Institutes and other levels of education. The new module's goal is to integrate EU subject into curricular subjects, facilitating a common understanding on learning methodologies about EU matters. The duration of the fund is of 3 years and the support to participants is part of the grant (travel expenses, learning materials, etc.). More information [here](#).



Vaccination campaign news



- Commission central social media video on milestone of [100 million vaccinations](#) delivered
- Latest [EMA statement](#) on Astra Zeneca vaccine and blood clotting events.
- Latest [EMA statement](#) on Johnson & Johnson vaccine
- Latest EMA infographic on [review status](#) for each vaccine

Looking ahead

- **19/04 at 13.00 CET:** Launch of the Platform for the Conference on the Future of Europe; Press Conference of the 3 Co-chairs of the COFE Executive Board, followed by a technical briefing for selected journalists
- **21/04:** College meeting. On the agenda: Artificial Intelligence package; EU Taxonomy, Corporate Sustainability Reporting, Sustainability Preferences and Fiduciary Duties: Directing finance towards the European Green Deal
- **22-23/04/** New European Bauhaus Conference with participation, on 22/04 at 2 PM, of President of the Commission von der Leyen, President of the Parliament Sassoli and PT PM Costa
- **9/05:** The EU and Europavox will present the 2nd edition of Music Europe Day! #MusicEuropeDay will be broadcast on social media from 7pm until midnight, on the pages of many Commission Representations, the EPLO as well as Europavox's FB. If you are interested in crossposting it on FB, complete this [online form](#)