

# BRUSSELS' PULSE #4

## NEWS

### European Green Deal: Commission aims for zero pollution in air, water and soil

On the 12th of May 2021, the European Commission adopted the EU Action Plan: "Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil" – a key deliverable of the European Green Deal and the main topic of this year's EU Green Week. It sets out an integrated vision for 2050: a world where pollution is reduced to levels that are no longer harmful to human health and natural ecosystems, as well as the steps to get there. The plan ties together all relevant EU policies to tackle and prevent pollution, with a special emphasis on how to use digital solutions to tackle pollution. Reviews of relevant EU legislation are foreseen to identify remaining gaps in EU legislation and where better implementation is necessary to meet these legal obligations. More: [here](#)

### Porto Social Summit: all partners commit to 2030 social targets

Partners have signed up to the three 2030 headline targets set in the Commission's European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan in a joint Porto Social Commitment: (1) At least 78% of people aged 20 to 64 should be in employment, (2) At least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year, (3) The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million, including at least 5 million children. This commitment was taken at the first day of the Social Summit in Porto by the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Parliament, the Portuguese Prime Minister currently holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU, the European social partners and civil society organisations. They have further pledged to do their utmost to build a more inclusive, more social Europe. They welcomed the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and strengthened the commitment to transform its principles into action to set in motion a strong, fair and job-rich recovery. More: [here](#)

### The European Regions for Smart Communities Summit

The European Regions for Smart Communities Summit took place from the 3rd to the 9th of May. The Summit organized by AURORAL H2020 project gathered more than 130 speakers, the summit gathered great and vast participation of high-level politicians: Member of EU Parliament and Commission, President of the CoR, Presidency's Ambassadors, Regional Presidents, Mayors, as well as other elected politicians from across Europe. It was a moment for celebrating the success and achievements across Smart Communities and an

opportunity to commit to cooperation mutually. The Summit has concluded with the presentation of a common memorandum that presents an initial definition of Smart Communities and proposals for their implementation and role in Europe. More: [here](#)

## Agriculture

### Action Plan for the development of organic production

On 25 March 2021, the European Commission presented to the European Parliament the Action Plan for the development of organic production, an initiative announced in the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. More: [here](#)

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### Support available for young farmer

Only 11% of all farm holdings in the European Union are run by farmers under 40 – and persuading more young people to begin farming is a significant challenge. Faced with an ageing farming population, the EU is stepping up its efforts to encourage young people into farming. Young farmers are given a helping hand to get their business off the ground with start-up grants, income support and benefits such as additional training. Supporting the next generation of European farmers not only enhances the future competitiveness of EU agriculture; it also helps guarantee Europe's food supplies for years to come. More: [here](#)

## Industry

### Updating the 2020 Industrial Strategy: towards a stronger Single Market for Europe's recovery

The Commission updates the EU Industrial Strategy to ensure that its industrial ambition takes full account of the new circumstances following the COVID-19 crisis and helps to drive the transformation to a more sustainable, digital, resilient and globally competitive economy.

The updated Strategy reaffirms the priorities set out in the March 2020 Communication, published the day before the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic, while responding to the lessons learned from the crisis to

boost the recovery and enhance the EU's open strategic autonomy. It proposes new measures to strengthen the resilience of our Single Market, especially in times of crisis. More: [here](#)

## **InvestEU Fund**

The InvestEU Fund combines 13 centrally managed EU financial instruments and the European Fund for Strategic Investments into 1 instrument. Under the InvestEU Fund, there is a single fund with a strong financial capacity and a single set of coherent requirements, which applies throughout the financing cycle to the benefit of final beneficiaries and financial intermediaries. Thanks to its centralised nature, InvestEU is able to deliver on EU policy objectives, minimise overlaps and ensure synergies. More: [here](#)

## **Education**

### **Deadline extensions for Erasmus Mundus, KA2 Sport Actions and Cooperation Partnerships submitted by European NGOs**

Due to technical issues, the submission deadlines for the following actions managed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) have been postponed to the following new dates: cooperation partnerships submitted by European NGOs in the fields of education and training, 15 June, 17.00 Brussels time, Cooperation partnerships submitted by European NGOs in the field of youth- 15 June. More: [here](#)

### **Second EU-Japan Policy Dialogue on Education, Culture and Sport**

On 10 May, the 2nd EU-Japan Policy Dialogue on Education, Culture and Sport took place as a half-day online event jointly organised by the Japanese Minister for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the European Commission's DG EAC. More: [here](#)

## **Culture**

## **Creative Europe programme 2021-2027**

Creative Europe 2021-2027 is the continuation of the Creative Europe programme, the only European Union programme directly targeting cultural and audiovisual activities. The EU competence in this domain is to help Member States address common challenges in these sectors, respect cultural and linguistic diversity, and safeguard cultural heritage across the EU. Its funding of only 0.14 % of the EU budget limits its scope, mainly to supporting networks, platforms, cooperation or innovation projects, and the development of common data and studies. More: [here](#)

## **Research for CULT Committee - Towards a European education - Critical perspectives on challenges ahead**

This study offers an in-depth exploration of pressing themes for European educators and policymakers in the 21st century: learner mobility, citizenship education and the role of digital and virtual learning. Increased opportunities for all young people to engage in mobility programmes will generate benefits in terms of employability, reduced social inequalities and more open, responsible and environmentally aware European citizens. More: [here](#)

## **Environment**

### **New handbook: nature-based solutions for water security**

The handbook provides guidance on developing an investable business case for nature-based solution projects for water security, climate mitigation and adaptation and other key societal challenges: it explains how to choose a mode of governance for the project, as well as a funding, financing and procurement strategy. More: [here](#)

### **Commission launches public consultation to update rules on urban wastewater**

The Commission has launched an online public consultation to seek views on the update of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive. Search for available translations of the preceding linkEN••• Untreated wastewater can put human health and the environment at risk and pollute lakes, rivers, soil and coastal and groundwater. Under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, EU countries are required to ensure that urban wastewater is collected and treated appropriately. More: [here](#)

## Health

### **EU countries should ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health**

In the draft report approved by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality by 27 votes in favour, 6 against and 1 abstention, MEPs point out that the right to health, in particular sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), are fundamental women's rights which should be enhanced and cannot in any way be watered down or withdrawn. More: [here](#)

### **Digital health data and services – the European health data space**

Members of the public, stakeholders and organisations are welcome to contribute to this consultation. National public health, digital health and data protection authorities, existing data authorisation bodies, healthcare professionals and providers, health insurers, organisations representing patients and civil society active in digital health, academia and research institutions, ethics committees, trade unions, as well as the digital, pharmaceutical and medical devices industries might have a particular interest to contribute. More: [here](#)

## Digital

### **Public Consultation: Declaration of Digital Principles – the 'European way' for the digital society**

To follow up on the Digital Compass Communication, this initiative proposes a set of principles that should define the 'European way' for the digital society. The goal is to inform people and provide a reference for policymakers and digital operators in their actions in the digital environment. The initiative proposes to include these principles in a joint inter-institutional solemn declaration by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. More: [here](#)

## **The Commission launches the European News Media Forum with a dialogue on the safety of journalists**

The European Commission launched a dialogue on the protection of journalists in the EU with a wide range of stakeholders, including journalists and their associations, news media companies, representatives of media councils, European Parliament, Member States and regulatory authorities as well as international partners. More: [here](#)

## **Maritime**

### **Briefing European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund 2021-2027**

As part of the EU budget framework for the 2021-2027 period, the European Commission proposed in June 2018 a regulation to continue the fund dedicated to the Common Fisheries Policy and the Integrated Maritime Policy. On 4 April 2019, Parliament adopted its first-reading position on the file. After lengthy interinstitutional negotiations, started after the 2019 elections, political agreement was reached on 4 December 2020. The new fund allows for more flexibility in national programmes. A greater focus on aquaculture is reflected in its inclusion in the name of the fund. A thorny issue in the negotiations was support for investment in fishing vessels, on which the co-legislators wanted to go beyond the proposal. More [here](#)

### **Call for good practices on ocean plastic pollution**

Interreg Europe is looking for good practices for a policy brief on the hot topic of ocean plastic pollution which they are currently putting together. In recent years, the topic of ocean plastic pollution has been climbing high on the European political agenda (European Green Deal, European Plastics strategy) and COVID has further worsened the problem. At the same time, scientific evidence shows that we need a complete system change if we want to save marine eco-systems as well as the economy and jobs that are depending on it. Policy makers and civil society at all levels need to act now in order to stop an ever-growing plastic pollution from flowing into the ocean. More: [here](#)

## **Mobility**

## **Public Consultation on Sustainable Transport**

To help the EU build on its 2013 urban mobility package and meet its 2050 climate target, this initiative proposes measures to encourage EU countries to develop urban transport systems that are safe, accessible, inclusive, affordable, smart, resilient and emission-free. The initiative also addresses transport pollution and congestion, and draws lessons from COVID-19's effect on public transport to help with the transition to a climate-neutral economy and emission-free transport at local level. More: [here](#)

## **European Commission welcomes adoption of new rail passenger rights**

The European Parliament took the final step to modernising rail passenger rights within the EU. The European Commission welcomes the new legal framework, which will strengthen passengers' protection in case of disruptions. European Commissioner for Mobility and Transport Adina Vălean said: "I welcome the agreement reached today. The new rules will significantly improve rail passengers' protection in case of delays, cancellations, missed connections. Also, the new regulation responds better to the needs of people with disabilities or reduced mobility. Strong rail passenger rights are essential to improving the sector's image and attracting more people to rail, two of our objectives for the European Year of Rail. More: [here](#)

## **Cities**

### **Public Consultation on strategic partnership with the outermost regions**

The initiative aims to adapt the strategic partnership with the EU outermost regions to the new EU priorities, e.g., green and digital transition and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these regions. It would also support these regions in seizing the specific opportunities enshrined in EU policies, regulations, programmes and funds; strengthen the dialogue with these regions; and renew the commitment to mainstreaming their specificities across EU policies. More: [here](#)

### **SDGs as a Framework for Covid-19 Recovery in Cities and Regions - A CoR/OECD survey**

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) invite representatives of local and regional authorities across Europe to participate in

a survey on the Sustainable Development Goals. The consultation is open until Friday 11 June 2021. More: [here](#)

## EVENTS

### **EU Green Week 2021**

The European Green Week 2021 will be dedicated to the 'zero pollution ambition'. It will also look at other relevant European Green Deal initiatives, such as the climate initiatives, the upcoming Chemicals Strategy, as well as initiatives in the fields of energy, industry, mobility, agriculture, fisheries, health and biodiversity. EU Green Week 2021 will be an opportunity to engage with all stakeholders and interested citizens on how we can work together to make the ambition for a zero pollution and toxic-free environment a reality. More: [here](#)

### **Covenant of Mayors Investment Forum - Energy Efficiency Finance Market Place**

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy, Directorate-General for Climate Action, and the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) are jointly organising the 2021 edition of the Covenant of Mayors Investment Forum - Energy Efficiency Finance Market Place, which will take place online on 15 June (10:30 to 18:00 CET) and 16 June (08:30 to 17:00 CET). More: [here](#)

### **European Research and Innovation Days 2021**

The Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation announces today the third edition of the European Research and Innovation Days to be held virtually on 23 and 24 June 2021. More: [here](#)

### **European Development Days on The Green Deal for a Sustainable Future**

This year's EDD will take place on 15 - 16 June 2021 and will be fully digital. Biodiversity loss, climate change and environmental degradation are defining challenges of our generation and require more coordinated and



incisive international efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the interlinkages between human health and a healthy planet. The post COVID recovery should be an opportunity to build back greener and more inclusive societies and economies. More: [here](#)

## **Regions in Recovery**

The Festival will address themes related to the re-emergence of regions and cities from the pandemic. It includes longer-standing challenges to society of climate change, geopolitical manoeuvrings, the rise of populism, the financial implications of these shifts, migration crises, new challenges to the survival of pandemic struck firms and city centres. More: [here](#)

## **CALLS**

### **EU Prize for Women Innovators**

The opportunities created by novel technologies and disruptive innovations promise to deliver the fair and sustainable recovery Europe needs. But Europe risks missing out on these opportunities if half its population is overlooked as a source of innovation and creative talent. The EU Prize for Women Innovators celebrates the women entrepreneurs behind game-changing innovations. In doing so, the EU seeks to raise awareness of the need for more female innovators, and create role models for women and girls everywhere. More: [here](#)

### **InnovationProcurementAwardPrize-2**

Public and private procurement represent an untapped potential to stimulate the demand for innovation. The public and private sectors could offer new opportunities for suppliers, and provide better, more efficient services. Therefore, innovation procurement would boost transforming research into innovative solutions targeted at societal needs, and support innovative companies to commercialise their ideas. More about the prize: [here](#)

### **EU Health Policy Platform calls for proposals: 2021 Thematic Networks**

The European Commission is inviting public health stakeholders to submit initiatives for a new cycle of Thematic Networks under the EU Health Policy Platform. The purpose of a Thematic Network is to produce a Joint Statement within a year, summarising the common position of a group of stakeholder organisations in one of the following selected public health areas: Adaptation actions on climate change and health; Health inequalities with regard to ethnic minorities and racism and many others. More: [here](#)

### **Call for proposals to promote equality and to fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination**

The objective is to support a comprehensive and intersectional approach and specific actions to prevent and fight against intolerance, racism, xenophobia, and discrimination, in particular on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, including when this manifests in the form of antigypsism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, Afrophobia and LGBTIQ phobia, offline and online. More: [here](#)

### **Call for proposals limited/restricted to national Data Protection Authorities on reaching out to stakeholders in data protection legislation**

Building on experience gained from the calls for proposals launched in the Framework of the 2014-2020 REC Programme (2017, 2019 and 2020) and in view of implementing the conclusions of the above-mentioned report on the GDPR, actions under this call should aim to further support activities carried out by national data protection authorities. More: [here](#)

### **The New European Bauhaus Prizes**

The Prizes recognize and celebrate existing achievements and support the younger generation to further develop emerging concepts and ideas. They give visibility to examples and concepts that illustrate how beautiful, sustainable, inclusive places already exist in our territories, our communities and in our practices, paving the way to the future. There will be Prizes in 10 different categories. More: [here](#)

## **“... and more”**

### **Two EU-funded films awarded in the 2021 Berlin International Film Festival**

Two EU-supported films received awards at the 71st Berlin International Film Festival that took place online: The Silver Bear for Best Director went to Dénes Nagy for 'Natural Light' (Természetes fény) and the Special Jury Award in Encounters went to 'Taste' (Í), by Lê Bảo. Nine EU-supported films and series were nominated for award. More: [here](#)

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