

# BRUSSELS' PULSE #5

## NEWS

### **Commission proposes a trusted and secure Digital Identity for all Europeans**

The Commission today proposed a framework for a European Digital Identity which will be available to all EU citizens, residents, and businesses in the EU. Citizens will be able to prove their identity and share electronic documents from their European Digital Identity wallets with the click of a button on their phone. They will be able to access online services with their national digital identification, which will be recognised throughout Europe. Very large platforms will be required to accept the use of European Digital Identity wallets upon request of the user, for example to prove their age. Use of the European Digital Identity wallet will always be at the choice of the user. More: [here](#)

### **Supporting sustainability transitions under the European Green Deal with cohesion policy. Toolkit for national and regional decision-makers**

The European Green Deal is the EU's strategy to make its economy and society fit for a healthy planet. It advocates a policy approach oriented towards the goals of climate neutrality and circular economy. This toolkit attempts to translate this approach into concrete tools, methodologies and steps that can be implemented in the context of the EU's cohesion policy. It focuses on how cohesion policy can support sustainability transitions in the planning and delivery of Partnership Agreements and Programmes, by prioritising available support for the 2021-2027 funding period to facilitate a transition to a climate neutral, green and circular economy. It consists of a set of instruments and questions to guide a strategic reflection and to help deliver the increased ambition of the European Green Deal with the future cohesion policy. More: [here](#)

## Agriculture

### **Agriculture and Fisheries Council, 26-27 May 2021**

The main item on the agenda for the agriculture and fisheries ministers was the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. The overall aim was to reach an agreement on all three regulations that made up the CAP reform package. The meeting was held in parallel with interinstitutional negotiations between the Council and the Parliament. The main discussion points included social conditionality, targeting of payments, and green architecture. Ultimately, although progress was made in several areas, a number of key issues remained outstanding. It was therefore decided to postpone talks until the next meeting of agriculture and fisheries ministers in June. More: [here](#)

## **State aid: Commission publishes results of evaluation of EU State aid rules for agriculture, forestry and rural areas**

The European Commission has published a Commission Staff Working Document summarising the results of an evaluation of the State aid rules for the agriculture and forestry sectors and for rural areas. The evaluation concludes that, overall, the existing rules work well, are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the sectors concerned. However, some targeted adjustments may be necessary to align the current rules with the current EU priorities, in particular the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the European Green Deal. More: [here](#)

## **Industry**

### **Toy Safety: Commission limits the presence of a harmful substance in toys**

The European Commission adopted an amendment to the Toy Safety Directive to limit the presence of aniline, a substance suspected of carcinogenic properties in certain coloured toy material. The new limits will help significantly reduce children's exposure to this substance, which is a component of dyes for textile, leather and finger paints and can therefore be present in toys. The youngest children could put those in the mouth. Today's amendment proposes a limit of 10 mg/ kg for aniline found in finger paints, where it exists in free form, and 30 mg/ kg for aniline detected in textile or leather toy material, which is the lowest concentration at which it can be detected with a specialised test to identify the substance when part of other mixtures. More: [here](#)

### **New practical guidance to help public buyers integrate social considerations into public procurement**

This second edition of 'Buying social: A guide to taking account of social considerations in public procurement' provides practical indications for public buyers to consider the social impact of the goods, services, and works they purchase. The guide is updated to reflect the changes brought about by the 2014 EU directives on public procurement and includes suggestions on how to use public procurement to achieve social goals. It covers the entire procurement process step-by-step, including information on how to set up an organisational strategy for socially responsible public procurement (SRPP), how to plan the tender procedure, as well as elements of contract management. To inspire public buyers, as well as other government and non-governmental stakeholders, each section also includes best practice examples and practical takeaways. More: [here](#)

## **Education**

**Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council, 17-18 May 2021**

Equity in access, inclusion and success for all are basic principles of education and training. However, equity and inclusion are still a challenge for our educational systems, with significant differences within and between member states. As the socio-economic background remains an important factor influencing educational outcomes in the European Union, the Council approved conclusions on this topic. The number of underachievers and early school leavers is still high in the EU. 20.3% of those with disabilities leave education early. Students with fewer opportunities have lower expectations of completing tertiary education (43.4%) than their peers (82.3%). The conclusions call on member states and the Commission to work together on policies to reduce low-achievement, raise competence levels and prevent unemployment. More: [here](#)

### **The European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 has launched**

The new European Solidarity Corps supports the political priorities of the European Union and engages organisations and young people in projects to address them. The programme promotes inclusion and diversity, aims to incorporate green practices in projects and encourages environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants and participating organisations. It supports the digital transition through projects and activities that boost digital skills and fosters digital literacy. The programme also promotes participation of young people in democratic processes and civic engagement. In addition, the new programme has the flexibility to add annual priorities addressing pressing issues. This year's additional thematic area is health. More: [here](#)

## **Culture**

### **The new Creative Europe programme (2021-2027) has been launched with the adoption of the first annual work programme.**

The Creative Europe 2021-2027 programme brings €2.44 billion of support to the cultural and creative sectors. With its 3 sub-programmes - the Culture strand, the MEDIA strand and the Cross-sectoral strand - Creative Europe aims to: enhance artistic and cultural cooperation at European level; encourage the competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability of the European audiovisual sector; promote cross-sectoral innovative and collaborative actions, including support for media literacy and a diverse, independent and pluralistic news media environment. More: [here](#)

### **Member States pre-select 21 sites for European Heritage Label**

The goal of the European Heritage Label is to raise awareness of European shared history and to highlight education opportunities. The award strengthens people's sense of belonging to the European Union's values and identification with Europe's cultural heritage. Sites which have played a significant role in the history and culture of Europe are eligible for the European Heritage Label award. An independent panel of experts will evaluate the pre-selected sites in order to narrow it down to one site per Member State. The European Commission will formally nominate the selected sites to receive the European Heritage Label in 2022, following the evaluation. More: [here](#)

## Environment

### **Public Consultation on Recycling**

Have your say on the EU rules on calculating, verifying, and reporting data on separate collection of single-use plastic bottles. This consultation is open until June 17th. More: [here](#)

### **Environmental compliance assurance in rural areas-Vade mecum**

The Vade Mecum supports the role of public authorities in ensuring that farmers and other rural land-managers comply with their environmental obligations. This role involves public authorities taking combinations of three different kinds of action. One kind focuses on monitoring compliance and identifying and understanding compliance failures. A second involves responding to compliance failures – through application of sanctions, for instance. This is sometimes referred to as 'enforcement'. The third kind involves authorities promoting compliance – in other words, helping land-managers to comply. The umbrella term for all three kinds of action is 'environmental compliance assurance. More: [here](#)

## Health

### **Informal video conference of Health Ministers**

The Portuguese Minister for Health, Marta Temido, chaired an informal video conference of Health Ministers from Lisbon this Friday, where issues regarding European Union vaccination plans, as well as the SARS-CoV-2 variants in circulation were discussed. Held under the scope of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the meeting focused on collecting and sharing information in order to define the next steps in the vaccination plans of the Member States, aimed at finding the most harmonised position possible in terms of future vaccine procurement agreements, through a common portfolio, and to analyse the technologies that should be given priority in these contracts. More: [here](#)

### **Public health: Stronger rules on medical devices**

New EU rules on medical devices (MDR) enter into application, establishing a modern and more robust regulatory framework to protect public health and patient safety. The new rules start applying after a one-year postponement due to the unprecedented challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, addressing the need for an increased availability of vitally important medical devices across the EU. More: [here](#)

## Digital

### **Public Consultation: EU financial system – supervisory data strategy**

Commission's digital finance strategy adopted in September 2020, aims to improve the collection of supervisory data (i.e., data reported to EU and national authorities for the supervision of the financial system) and make it fit for the future. Better data collection will: help to ensure the integrity and stability of the EU's financial system by enabling proactive and effective data-driven supervision; and reduce the cost and burden associated with reporting. Bring your feedback to this strategy. More: [here](#)

### **Council agreement secures EU financing of high-performance computing**

The Council agreed on a general approach to the proposed regulation establishing the European High Performance Computing joint undertaking. "Today's agreement paves the way for the development within Europe of the next generation of digital technologies. Supercomputers and quantum computing are the engines that power the data economy, harnessing technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, and cybersecurity to deliver applications that will lead to breakthroughs in key areas such as health and climate change. Our transition to a digital economy depends on them." Manuel Heitor, Portuguese Minister for Science and Technology and Higher Education. Read [more](#)

## Maritime

### **European Green Deal: Commission adopts strategic guidelines for sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture**

The Commission adopted new strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture. The guidelines offer a common vision for the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to develop the sector in a way that contributes directly to the European Green Deal and in particular the Farm to Fork Strategy. The guidelines will help the EU aquaculture sector become more competitive and resilient, and to improve its environmental and climate performance. More: [here](#)

### **Public Consultation: Maritime sector – revising the EU rules on illegal discharges from ships**

This initiative will revise Directive 2005/35/EC to bring its provisions on illegal discharges at sea into line with Directive (EU) 2019/883, which requires ships to deliver their waste in ports. To ensure enforcement of the provisions on illegal discharges at sea there is a need for: better coordination between the THETIS EU (vessel inspection), SafeSeaNet (maritime surveillance) and CleanSeaNet (pollution monitoring) systems a standard format for reports of illegal discharges. More: [here](#)

## Mobility

### **Rail at the forefront of smart and sustainable mobility – Council adopts conclusions**

The Council conclusions on 'Putting rail at the forefront of smart and sustainable mobility'. The conclusions express member states' shared ambitions for rail and provide guidance for several fields of work in this area, ranging from modal shift to investment and connectivity. "Against the background of the European Green Deal, the sustainable and smart mobility strategy and – of course – the European Year of Rail, now is an ideal time for the Council to take stock of efforts to promote railways and make an ambitious political statement on rail. Putting rail at the forefront has been one of the goals of the Portuguese presidency and perfectly reflects EU policy objectives. It is of great importance to me that when we speak about railways in a policy context, we see its value for greener mobility, as well as its contribution to societal and territorial cohesion, and to industrialisation and economic development." More: [here](#)

### **New Urban Mobility Initiative: Five consultation workshops for stakeholders in June**

The European Commission's new urban mobility initiative, currently under preparation, will operationalise these goals by proposing actions needed to address common urban mobility challenges like pollution, congestion, accessibility and urban road safety, thus improving people's quality of life. Within the framework of the consultation process on its new initiative, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport is organising five consultation workshops on topics of interest for stakeholders and the public. More: [here](#)

## Cities

### **Energy stakeholder dialogues**

The Directorate-General for Energy is organising, together with the Commission Representations in selected EU countries, a series of virtual events 2021 -2022. They will focus on one of the EU top priorities, the European Green Deal, and more specifically on how energy policy can contribute to achieving a climate-neutral Europe by 2050. The package covers a wide range of policy areas, including energy efficiency, renewables, energy performance of buildings and more. The package covers a wide range of policy areas, including energy efficiency, renewables, energy performance of buildings and more. More: [here](#)

### **European Capital of Culture 2026: Oulu is the champion**

Oulu's joy and pride erupted yesterday following the announcement that they will be the European Capital of Culture for 2026, representing Finland after Helsinki in 2000 and Turku in 201. The Capital of Culture year will bring international visibility to both Northern and the whole of Finland's culture that can change Finland into a permanent cultural destination. The Oulu2026 region is wide because Oulu has been joined by 32 Northern Finnish municipalities and cities that share a common history and future. More: [here](#)

## EVENTS

### **Horizon Europe Info Days 2021**

The 10-day event will give the opportunity to prospective applicants, and other stakeholders of EU research and innovation, to get information and ask questions about what's new, main funding instruments and processes of Horizon Europe. More [here](#)

### **Towards a holistic strategy on sustainable and equitable rural and urban development**

On 18 June 2021, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Rural Parliament (ERP) will hold an online public hearing aiming to explore ways to achieve sustainability and prosperity through new ways of cooperation between rural and urban areas, building upon the debate held at the EESC NAT Section meeting of 8 March 2021. More: [here](#)

### **Plastics pollution: Are biodegradable plastics a solution?**

Plastic pollution is a worldwide issue of increasing concern. Each year, more and more plastic ends up in the natural environment, raising concerns of risk to the environment, animal and human health. And, while biodegradable plastics could be part of the solution, they also present certain challenges. Many biodegradable plastic products actually biodegrade only in certain specific environments, or only in industrial composting facilities, rather than in the open environment more generally. The event organized by the EC will take place next June 16th online. More: [here](#)

### **What can the shipping industry do to reduce its emissions today and tomorrow?**

With almost 90% of the EU's external freight trade being seaborne, maritime transport and ports play a key role in the EU economy. Furthermore, shipping and ports play an important role for tourism. The EU maritime sector's total economic impact contributed EUR 149 billion to EU GDP in 2018 and supports more than 2 million jobs. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic revealed the necessity of resilient uninterrupted supply chains and highlighted the role of maritime freight as critical infrastructure. This event is hosted by SEArice Vice-Chair for Maritime Transport Jan-Christoph Oetjen and co-moderated by SEArice member Caroline Nagtegaal, the webinar shall bring together SEArice MEPs, representatives from the shipping industry and from the European Commission to discuss available solutions and technologies. More: [here](#)

### **Info-session: New call for proposals-Erasmus+ Alliances for Innovation 2021**

Alliances for Innovation aim to strengthen Europe's innovation capacity by boosting innovation through cooperation and flow of knowledge among higher education (HE), vocational education and training (both

initial and continuous - VET), and the broader socio-economic environment, including research. They also aim to boost the provision of new skills and address skills mismatches by designing and creating new curricula HE and VET and implement a set of sectoral or cross-sectoral activities. With regard to changing job profiles, the focus should be on digital and green skills. More: [here](#)

## **CALLS**

### **EIC Transition Open 2021**

The EIC Transition Open aims at funding innovation activities that go beyond the experimental proof of principle in laboratory. The EIC Transition Open is twofold, supporting both the maturation and validation of a novel technology, and the development of a business case and business model towards the innovation's future commercialisation. More: [here](#)

### **Call for expressions of interest to establish a pool of experts to the Panel for the European Capital of Culture Action**

The European Commission invites interested experts to apply for this open call for expressions of interest for the establishment of a pool of experts for potential members of the panel of experts for the European Union action European Capital of Culture. Applicants should submit their expression of interest through the online form on EU Survey at the latest 3 months before the list expires, on 31/12/20. More: [here](#)

### **Call for TV and Online Content- Creative Europe Programme**

The objective of the support to TV and online content is to increase the capacity of audiovisual producers to develop and produce strong projects with significant potential to circulate throughout Europe and beyond, and to facilitate European and international co-productions within the television and online sector. More: [here](#)

### **Erasmus + Capacity Building in the field of youth**

Capacity-building projects are international cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the field of youth in Programme and Partner Countries. They aim to support the international cooperation and policy dialogue in the field of youth and non-formal learning, as a driver of sustainable socio-economic development and well-being of youth organisations and young people. More: [here](#)

### **Call for proposals to protect and promote the rights of the child**



This call for proposals will contribute to responding to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, by promoting ways to mainstream and embed children’s rights in the responses to this and any other emergency situations and contribute to the implementation of the actions put forward by the EU Strategy on the rights of the child. More: [here](#)

“... and more”

### **Conference “Diversity and competitiveness of the European music sector” – Report published**

On 4-5 March, the European Commission organised an online conference on the diversity and competitiveness of the European music sector. The event brought together Member States’ experts and a range of external speakers from the music sector and beyond. The outcomes of this conference will further inform the EU level discussions on music, especially in the context of Music Moves Europe and regarding future targeted funding for music under the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027. The outcomes of this conference will further inform the EU level discussions on music, especially in the context of Music Moves Europe and regarding future targeted funding for music under the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027. More: [here](#)

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