

---

#### In this issue - 21 May

- [Top News](#)
- [Other news](#)
- [Agenda](#)
- [Calls for Tender/Proposals](#)
- [Public consultations](#)

---

#### Top News

##### **Commission proposes country-specific economic policy recommendations**

The European Commission this week published country-specific recommendations providing economic policy guidance to all EU Member States in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. The recommendations are structured around two objectives: mitigating the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and achieving sustainable and inclusive growth. For Ireland, the Commission recommends, among other things: taking all necessary measures to effectively address the pandemic, sustain the economy & support recovery; improving the accessibility of the health system and strengthening its resilience; addressing the digital divide; increasing the supply of social and affordable housing; continuing support for SMEs; focusing investment on the green and digital transition; and broadening the tax base.

[Read more...](#)

---

##### **European Commission adopts new strategies to halt biodiversity loss and build a healthy and sustainable food system**

The European Commission this week adopted a comprehensive new Biodiversity Strategy and a new Farm to Fork Strategy. The new EU-wide Biodiversity Strategy will, among other things, establish protected areas for at least 30% of land and sea in Europe as well as restore degraded ecosystems at land and on sea. The new Farm to Fork Strategy sets concrete targets to transform the EU's food system, including a reduction by 50% of the use and risk of pesticides, a reduction by at least 20% of the use of fertilizers, a reduction by 50% in sales of antimicrobials used for farmed animals and aquaculture, and reaching 25% of agricultural land under organic farming.

[Read more...](#)

---

##### **Coronavirus: Irish led EU-funded research project brings new rapid diagnostic to the market**

One of the first 18 research and innovation projects funded by the EU to tackle the coronavirus is already delivering results. Researchers involved in the Irish-led “HG nCoV19 test” project, selected for funding from the EU research and innovation programme Horizon 2020 under the special call launched in January, have obtained approval to put a new rapid point-of-care diagnostic for COVID-19 on the market. This week, HiberGene, the Irish company coordinating the project, announced that it had obtained the CE marking required for medical devices to be put on the market.

[Read more...](#)

---

### EU Council adopts €100 billion SURE instrument

The European Council this week adopted SURE, a temporary scheme which can provide up to €100 billion of loans under favourable terms to EU Member States. The instrument enables Member states to request EU financial support to help finance the sudden and severe increases of national public expenditure, as from 1 February 2020, related to national short-time work schemes and similar measures, including for self-employed persons, or to some health-related measures, in particular at the work place in response to the crisis. SURE will become available once all Member States have provided their guarantees. The instrument will then be operational until 31 December 2022.

[Read more...](#)

---

## Other news

---

### Remarks by Michel Barnier following the latest round of negotiations with the United Kingdom

In a statement following Round 3 of negotiations for a new partnership between the European Union and the United Kingdom, the EU Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier said: "... with the exception of some modest overtures, we failed to make any progress on any of the other more difficult topics. Despite its claims, the United Kingdom did not engage in a real discussion on the question of the level playing field – those economic and commercial “fair play” rules that we agreed to, with Boris Johnson, in the Political Declaration. On this topic, this was a round of divergence, with no progress."

[Read more...](#)

---

### Winners of the 2020 'Aistritheoirí Óga' contest announced

The winners of the 'Aistritheoirí Óga 2020' (Young Translators) contest were announced this week. Five secondary school students made the list - one from each of the four provinces in Ireland (translations from English to Irish) and one who was selected for her excellent translation from French to Irish. It was the Connacht winner, Bláthnaid Ní Fhátharta from Galway, whose translation was chosen as the best overall translation in the country. Senator Seán Kyne, Government Chief Whip and Minister of State for the Irish language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands said: "This competition is a wonderful opportunity for young people to gain a first insight into the work of a translator."

[Read more...](#)

---

### EU Jobs and Social Rights Commissioner addresses online event on EU Social Policy

EU Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit addressed a joint IIEA/Representation webinar last Friday (15 May) on Social Policy for a sustainable and fair recovery. The Commissioner began by outlining some of the upcoming proposals to support a fair, sustainable and “people-centred” recovery - including those to tackle youth unemployment, fight poverty and invest in workers’ skills for a greener and more digitalised future. Finally, he reflected on plans for the further implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, including the new Action Plan in 2021. You can watch a video of the webinar at the Youtube link below.

[Read more...](#)

### **Coronavirus global response: EU allocates additional €50 million in humanitarian aid**

The European Commission announced an additional €50 million in humanitarian aid to help respond to the dramatic increase in humanitarian needs caused by the Coronavirus pandemic globally. The new funding will help vulnerable people facing major humanitarian crises, notably in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, the Central African Republic, the Great Lakes region in Africa, Eastern Africa, Syria, Yemen, Palestine and Venezuela, as well as the Rohingya. It will provide access to health services, protective equipment, water and sanitation.

[Read more...](#)

---

### **Coronavirus transport measures: Council adopts temporary flexibility for licences and port services**

The EU is adapting certain rules for different transport sectors to help companies and authorities cope in the extraordinary circumstances created by the coronavirus crisis. The European Council this week adopted temporary measures enabling the extension of the validity of certain certificates and licences in road, rail and waterborne transport, and relaxing the rules on charging ships for the use of port infrastructures. Both legal acts will enter into force the day after they are published in the EU Official Journal, which is expected to take place next week.

[Read more...](#)

### **Coronavirus: Commission boosts urgently needed research and innovation with additional €122 million**

The Commission has mobilised another €122 million from its research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, for urgently needed research into the coronavirus. Projects funded under this call should repurpose manufacturing for rapid production of vital medical supplies and equipment needed for testing, treatment and prevention, as well as develop medical technologies and digital tools to improve detection, surveillance and patients care. The deadline for submissions is 11 June 2020.

[Read more...](#)

### **Coronavirus: ECDC publishes guidance on surveillance of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities in the EU**

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has published guidance to Member States for the development of COVID-19 surveillance in long-term care facilities. This follows high-level exchanges between the European Commission and representatives of social service providers and users on their particularly challenging situation. Persons aged 65 years and above, especially those with preconditions, and persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

[Read more...](#)

### **More work needed to fully transpose EU rules on victims' rights and European Protection Order**

The European Commission has recently published reports on implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive and the Directive on European Protection Order. Under the Victims' Rights Directive, victims of crime have rights to protection, support and access to justice. The Directive on the European Protection Order (EPO) allows for an extended protection to persons in danger who are travelling or moving to another EU country. The reports show that EU Member States still need to do a lot to tap into the full potential of these instruments.

[Read more...](#)

---

### **Irish women 4th oldest in Europe on birth of first child**

First time mothers in Ireland are the 4th oldest in Europe after Italy (31.2 years old), Spain (31.0 years) and Luxembourg (30.9 years) according to new data from Eurostat. The mean age of Irish women at the birth of their first child was 30.5 years in 2018, up from 28.9 years in 2008. The EU average was 29.3 years with the mean age being lowest in Bulgaria (26.2 years) and Romania (26.7 years).

[Read more...](#)

### **Annual inflation down to 0.3% in the euro area in April**

The Euro Area annual inflation rate fell to +0.3% in April 2020 (down from +0.7% in March) while the EU rate fell to +0.7% (down from +1.2% in March) according to new Eurostat figures published this week. In Ireland, the rate fell to -0.3% in April (down from +0.5% in March). Compared with March, annual inflation fell in twenty-six Member States and remained stable in one.

[Read more...](#)

---

### **Housing overburden 3rd lowest in Ireland**

New Eurostat figures show that 9.6% of the EU population spent 40% or more of their household income on housing in 2018. The figures show that in Ireland, however, only 3.4% of people lived in households that spent more than 40% of the disposable income on housing, 3rd lowest in the EU, and down from 6.5% in 2012. The housing overburden rate was highest in Greece at 39.5% followed by Bulgaria (17.9%), Denmark (14.7%) and Germany (14.2%).

[Read more...](#)

### **COVID-19 puts unprecedented strain on family life: Eurofound**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is having a profound impact on families and working life across Europe according to a new report from Eurofound. In addition to the health implications, many people are now required to balance caring for and educating children, while at the same time continuing to manage work responsibilities. In the EU, over a quarter of people working from home live in households with children under 12, and more than one in five (22%) living with children under 12 report difficulties concentrating on their job.

[Read more...](#)

---

## **Agenda**

### **Friday 22 May: IIEA webinar - The Future of the EU post-COVID-19: An Economic Perspective**

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised a number of important questions about the future of the EU. In his address to the IIEA webinar on Friday 22 May, Minister for Finance & Public Expenditure and Reform Paschal Donohoe will reflect on some of the key economic debates taking place in Europe at the moment, and discuss the pragmatic role that Ireland can play in shaping the EU post-COVID-19. The event, which is free and open to the public, takes place from 10.30 to 11.30 am. Advance registration required.

[Read more...](#)

## **Monday 25 May: Video conference of the Members of the European Economic Area Council**

The members of the EEA Council will discuss, via video conference, the overall functioning of the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement) and the effect of COVID-19 on the internal market. The members of the EEA Council will also hold an orientation debate on the European Green Deal, with the participation of Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission. On the margins of the informal meeting of the members of the EEA Council, the ministers will hold an informal exchange of views on the EU-UK negotiations with Michel Barnier, Head of the Task Force for Relations with the UK. The ministers will also discuss the external dimension of the COVID-19 crisis.

[Read more...](#)

## **Tuesday 26 May: Video conference of Ministers for European Affairs**

Ministers will discuss the progress achieved in connection with the coordination of de-escalation measures in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. Following up on the leaders' video conference on 23 April, ministers will also share their views on a comprehensive economic and social recovery of the EU, including an adjusted long-term EU budget and the accompanying recovery instrument. Under 'any other business', the European Commission will inform ministers about the preparation of the annual report on the rule of law in the EU.

[Read more...](#)

## **Tuesday 26 May: Video conference of Ministers for European affairs**

Information on this meeting will be available in due course at the link below.

[Read more...](#)

## **Friday 29 May: Video conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs**

Information on this meeting will be available in due course at the link below.

[Read more...](#)

## **Friday 29 May: Video conference of Ministers responsible for Space**

Information on this meeting will be available in due course at the link below.

[Read more...](#)

## **Friday 29 May: Video conference of Ministers for Research**

Information on this meeting will be available in due course at the link below.

[Read more...](#)

## **Thursday 4 June: Free EU funding application workshop for those interested in applying to the Europe for Citizens**

The Wheel is organising a free online workshop for those interested in applying to the Europe for Citizens programme in September 2020 under the "Civil Society Projects" strand. The workshop, which will take place via Zoom, starts at 10 am and runs for 2 hours. For more information and to register, click on the link below.

[Read more...](#)

---

## **Monday 8 June: Webinar - Recommendations for a Sustainable & Fair Recovery in Ireland and Europe**

The European Commission Representation in Ireland and the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) are organising a joint webinar on the European Commission's 2020 Country Specific Recommendations for Ireland on Monday lunchtime, 8 June. This online event will include presentations and panel discussions of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) for Ireland, with speakers/representatives from/of the European Commission, Ireland and Social Partners.

[Read more...](#)

---

## Calls for Tender/Proposals

### **Tender No NP/DUB/2020/4 concerning a negotiated procedure for the production of a short educational film on Ireland and the European Union**

The European Commission Representation in Ireland issued on 22nd April 2020 a call for tenders for the production of an educational film on Ireland and the European Union. The estimated maximum budget attributed to this project is €52,000 (excl. VAT). The tender documents are below. Tenders must be received no later than 23.59 CET on Friday 22nd May 2020.

[Read more...](#)

### **Tender No NP/DUB/2020/5 concerning a negotiated procedure for the organisation of a series of Citizens' Dialogues in Ireland**

The European Commission Representation in Ireland issued on 6th May 2020 a call for tenders for the organisation of a series of Citizens' Dialogues in Ireland. The estimated maximum budget attributed to this project is €44,000 (excl. VAT). The tender documents are below. Tenders must be received no later than 23.59 CET on Tuesday 2nd June 2020.

[Read more...](#)

---

## Public consultations

### **2030 Climate Target Plan**

The European Green Deal aims to make Europe the world's first climate-neutral continent. This consultation aims to collect opinions on the desired ambition level of climate and energy policies, necessary actions in different sectors and specific policy design to increase climate ambition by 2030. It also aims to gather further information, including roadmaps, policy briefs and studies relevant for deeper greenhouse gas emission reductions. The consultation is open until 23 June 2020.

[Read more...](#)

---

### **EU strategy on adaptation to climate change**

The Commission invites all stakeholders and citizens to submit views on the EU's new adaptation strategy in view of increasingly frequent and intense climate change impacts. As part of the European Green Deal, the Commission aims to put forward a new Adaptation Strategy in early 2021, building on the current one, which was adopted in 2013 and positively evaluated in 2018. The consultation is open until 20 August 2020.

[Read more...](#)

### **European Climate Pact**

As part of the EU Green Deal, the Commission has launched a European Climate Pact to give citizens and stakeholders from all parts of society a voice and role in designing new climate actions, sharing information, launching grass roots activities and showcasing solutions that others can follow. The public consultation is open until 17 June 2020.

[Read more...](#)

---

### **Review of EU rules on trans-European energy infrastructure**

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on the review of the EU rules on trans-European energy infrastructure. This will be accompanied by a more targeted consultation for stakeholders. Responses to these surveys will feed into the Commission's deliberations on revising the Regulation on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure – known as the "TEN-E Regulation". The consultation will be open for 8 weeks until 13 July 2020

[Read more...](#)

This is the Newsletter of the Representation of the European Commission in Ireland.  
If this Newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to receive it directly you can subscribe [here](#).  
You can unsubscribe from this newsletter from your [profile](#) or by contacting us at this address: [Functionnal mailbox](#).