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## Top News

### **Ireland referred to the Court of Justice over failure to take appropriate conservation measures**

The European Commission has decided to refer Ireland to the Court of Justice of the EU over its failure to designate Special Areas of Conservation, more than five years after the deadline expired. Under the Habitats Directive, Member States must designate Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), with specific conservation objectives and corresponding conservation measures to maintain or restore a favourable conservation status of the species and habitats present. These steps need to be carried out within six years from the inclusion of these sites in the EU list as Sites of Community Importance.

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### **European Commission adopts Youth Employment Support package**

The European Commission this week adopted the Youth Employment Support package. The package is built around four policy elements: reinforcing the Youth Guarantee; future-proofing the EU's vocational education and training policy; renewing the impetus for apprenticeships; and additional measures supporting youth employment. The Commission will allocate funding of €22 billion to help get young people into work over the next five years. EU Jobs and Social Rights Commissioner Nicolas Schmit said: "We owe it to the millions of graduates and those taking their early steps on the labour market to mobilise all the support we can. Our youth deserve the very best opportunities possible to develop their full potential."

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### **European Commission proposes new Skills Agenda**

The European Commission this week presented the European Skills Agenda. The Agenda sets ambitious, quantitative objectives for skills to be achieved within the next 5 years. Its 12 actions focus on skills for jobs by partnering up with Member States, companies and social partners to work together for change, by empowering people to embark on lifelong learning, and by using the EU budget as a catalyst to unlock public and private investment in people's skills.

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## Coronavirus Global Response summit raises €6.15 billion for universal access to coronavirus vaccines

€6.15 billion was raised at last Saturday's Global Goal: Unite for our Future' pledging summit organised by the European Commission and Global Citizen. The funds raised will go towards developing and ensuring equitable access to coronavirus vaccines, tests and treatments as well as supporting economic recovery in the world's most fragile regions and communities.

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## Other news

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### Statement by Michel Barnier following this week's restricted round of negotiations with the United Kingdom

In a statement made following this week's restricted round of negotiations for a new partnership between the European Union and the United Kingdom, the EU Chief Negotiator said: "As agreed two weeks ago at the High-Level Meeting between Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Presidents Ursula von der Leyen, David Sassoli and Charles Michel, the EU sought to inject new dynamics in the talks. Our goal was to get negotiations successfully and quickly on a trajectory to reach an agreement. However, after four days of discussions, serious divergences remain."

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### Commission calls on Ireland to carry out environmental impact assessments for peat extraction

The European Commission is asking Ireland to respect its obligations under EU rules on environmental impact assessment (EIA). Under the EIA Directive, Member States are required to carry out an assessment of the environmental impacts of projects likely to have a significant negative impact on the environment. This includes peat extraction projects. Ireland has three months to bring itself into compliance, otherwise the Commission may decide to refer the matter to the Court of Justice of the EU.

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### Commission sends reasoned opinion to Ireland over compliance with fisheries-related infringements

The Commission has decided to send a reasoned opinion to Ireland over its failure to fulfil its obligations under Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy. Specifically, Ireland has failed to comply with European Union rules on establishing a point system for fisheries-related serious infringements committed by masters and licence holders of vessels flying the flag of Ireland.

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### Commission calls on Ireland to connect to the EU business register tool

The European Commission has decided to send letters of formal notice to three Member States: Bulgaria, France and Ireland for failing to connect their national business registers to the EU business register tool. Not being connected to the tool means that it is complicated and burdensome for EU citizens, enterprises and entrepreneurs to obtain relevant information on companies, although in accordance with EU law this information must be publicly available.

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## **Statement by Commissioner Phil Hogan on election of new WTO Director-General**

In a statement issued on Monday, EU Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan said: "... I have decided that I will not be putting my name forward for the position of Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. I have informed the President of the Commission today. In consultation with, and with the approval of President von der Leyen, I will return to my duties of Trade Commissioner with immediate effect. We will work together to implement our important work programme on behalf of our EU Citizens as well as implementing our Trade Agenda with renewed vigour."

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## **EU Council agrees to start lifting travel restrictions for residents of some third countries**

The European Council this week adopted a recommendation on the gradual lifting of the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU. Travel restrictions should be lifted for countries listed in the recommendation, with this list being reviewed and, as the case may be, updated every two weeks. The criteria to determine the third countries for which the current travel restriction should be lifted cover in particular the epidemiological situation and containment measures, including physical distancing, as well as economic and social considerations.

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## **Commission adopts Implementing Regulation to pave the way for high-capacity 5G network infrastructure**

The European Commission this week adopted new rules paving the way for 5G network infrastructure. They aim to simplify and accelerate the rollout of 5G while protecting people's health and safety. The "fifth generation" of telecommunication systems, or 5G, are one of the most critical building blocks of our economy and society as they will help optimise manufacturing processes and will enable innovations in telemedicine, smart cities, and clean energy management, among other advancements.

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## **EU awards €5 million to blockchain solutions for social innovations**

A joint Irish led project was among the six winners of the European Innovation Council's Prize on Blockchains for Social Good, which aims to recognise and support efforts made by developers and civil society in exploring the applications of blockchains for social innovation. The project, led by Irish Oxfam and French startup Sempo, pioneers a decentralised model of delivering international aid to people affected by disasters.

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## **New assistance package to support vulnerable groups and address COVID-19 in North Africa**

The European Commission has adopted a new €110 million assistance package to protect migrants, stabilise local communities and respond to COVID-19 in North Africa. The new funding will also strengthen the immediate response capacity, reinforce the health systems and services in the North African partner countries, mitigate the socio-economic impact of the crisis, as well as allow for the continuation of actions to protect refugees and migrants and stabilise local communities.

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## **Commission prolongs EU State aid rules and adopts targeted adjustments to mitigate impact of coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has prolonged the validity of certain State aid rules which would otherwise expire at the end of 2020. In this context, and to take the effects of the current crisis into due consideration, the Commission, after consulting Member States, has decided to make certain targeted adjustments to the existing rules with a view to mitigate the economic and financial impact of the coronavirus outbreak on companies.

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## **56,000 persons surrendered since 2005 under European Arrest Warrant**

The European Commission has published a report assessing the transposition of the European arrest warrant in 27 Member States and the UK from 2004 until now. While the report shows that the European Arrest Warrant is an essential tool in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal matters, there are a number of compliance issues concerning in particular additional grounds for refusal and non-observation of time limits.

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## **New Europass tool**

The European Commission has launched a new Europass tool to help learners and workers take the next step in their careers. The new tool offers: guidance in CV-writing, suggests tailored jobs and learning opportunities, provides information on trends in skills, and is available in 29 languages (including Irish).

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## **Commission takes further steps to promote European audiovisual works and protect vulnerable viewers**

The European Commission has adopted guidelines to help Member States implement the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive. The guidelines will offer a practical tool to ensure the promotion of European works in media content, thereby supporting cultural diversity and greater choice for European consumers. They will also help better protect users of video-on-demand and video-sharing platforms, particularly minors, against hate speech and harmful content. EU Member States have until 19 September 2020 to transpose the revised Directive into national law.

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## **Vaccine against Ebola: Commission grants new market authorisations**

The European Commission has granted marketing authorisations to the company Janssen, a Johnson & Johnson company, for a vaccine against Ebola. EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides said: "This is the second Ebola vaccine that the Commission authorises in less than a year and confirms once again that the EU remains at the forefront of the global effort to save lives from this virus."

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## **Collective bargaining for the self-employed**

The European Commission has launched a process to ensure that the EU competition rules do not stand in the way of collective bargaining for those who need it. The initiative seeks to ensure that working conditions can be improved through collective agreements not only for employees, but also for those self-employed who need protection. Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager said: "... in today's labour market the concept "worker" and "self-employed" have become blurred. As a result, many individuals have no other choice than to accept a contract as self-employed. We therefore need to provide clarity to those who need to negotiate collectively in order to improve their working conditions."

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## 2021 set to be European Year of Rail

The European Council has approved a proposal to designate 2021 as the European Year of Rail. The aim of the Year will be to promote rail transport as a key element in the shift to sustainable and smart mobility. It will feature a range of events and campaigns to attract more people and goods to railways. The incoming German Presidency of the Council of the European Union will now discuss further with the European Parliament.

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## Agenda

### Tuesday 7 July: Discussion on the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union hosted by the European Movement Ireland

The European Movement Ireland is organising a briefing on the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union with H.E. Ms. Deike Potzel the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Ireland. At this event, Ambassador Potzel will provide an overview of the plans and priorities of Germany's Presidency, which runs from 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020. The event takes place on Tuesday 7 July at 11.30 am. For more information and to register, click on the link below.

[Read more...](#)

### Tuesday 7 July: Webinar on the Europe for Citizens application form

The Wheel is organising a free online webinar on the Europe for Citizens application form – highlighting problem areas, giving tips on language and troubleshooting. This event takes place on Tuesday 7 July from 10 to 11 am. It is aimed at fundraisers, grant writers, project managers, and project officers.

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### Wednesday 8 July: Meeting on the EU Recovery Package

President von der Leyen has invited David Sassoli, the President of the European Parliament, and Angela Merkel, German Chancellor, in her capacity as rotating Presidency of the Council, as well as Charles Michel, the President of the European Council, to a meeting on 8 July to take stock of progress on the proposed European recovery package and prepare the intensive political negotiations that lie ahead.

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### Thursday 9 July: Eurogroup meeting

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

[Read more...](#)

### Friday 10 July: Video conference of Economics and Finance Ministers

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

[Read more...](#)

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### Wednesday 15 July: Webinar - 'A Summer Like No Other For The EU'

The European Movement Ireland (EMI) is organising an in-studio conversation with EMI Board members, Catherine Day, former Secretary-General of the European Commission and Rory Montgomery, former Second Secretary General at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Permanent Representative to the EU, who will share their insights in a moderated discussion with Professor Gavin Barrett of the UCD Sutherland School of Law. The webinar takes place just before the special meeting of the European Council on 17/18 July and will

include discussion on the European Recovery Plan and the Multi-Annual Financial Framework, Brexit, climate change and the Green New Deal, and the EU's relations with the US and China. More information and registration at the link below.

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## **Friday 17 and Saturday 18 July: Extraordinary European Council**

EU leaders will meet in Brussels to discuss the Commission's proposal for a new recovery instrument and for the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2021-2027. More information on the meeting will be available at the link below.

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## **Public consultations**

### **Pharmaceutical Strategy**

The European Commission has launched an online public consultation on the Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe. Coming in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Strategy will aim to ensure Europe's supply of safe and affordable medicines to meet patients' needs and support the European pharmaceutical industry to remain an innovator and world leader. The consultation is open until 15 September 2020.

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### **EU green deal – new transport strategy to cut emissions**

The European Commission is working on a comprehensive Strategy for a Sustainable and Smart Mobility that will set a pathway for the sector towards a sustainable and digital transition and build a resilient and crisis-proof transport system for generations to come. In this context, the public consultation seeks to gather the views of citizens and stakeholders on the elements of the Strategy. It is open until 23 September 2020.

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### **European Consumer Policy**

The European Commission has launched an EU-wide open public consultation on the new European consumer policy for the next period, the so-called 'the New Consumer Agenda'. The public consultation will provide valuable insight for the setting up the New Consumer Agenda that the European Commission intends to adopt by the end of 2020. The consultation is open until 6 October 2020.

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### **Market Definition Notice used in EU competition law**

The European Commission has published a public consultation on the Market Definition Notice used in EU competition law. The open questionnaire will contribute to the Commission's evaluation of the Notice to assess whether it requires updating. Stakeholders can submit their views and respond to the open public consultation until 9 October 2020.

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### **Review of EU insurance rules**

The European Commission has launched a consultation on the review of the EU's prudential rules for insurance and reinsurance companies (the so-called "Solvency II Directive"). The Solvency II Directive, which came into effect in 2016, sets out harmonised, risk-based rules across the EU for insurance companies and promotes transparency, comparability and competitiveness in the sector. The consultation is open until 21 October 2020.

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## **Calls for Tender/Proposals**

## **Bringing Europe closer to people on the ground: Commission launches a call for a remodelled EUROPE DIRECT generation**

The the European Commission has launched a call to select the next generation of EUROPE DIRECT centres for the period 1 May 2021 – 31 December 2025. The aim of EUROPE DIRECT is to make Europe accessible to people at the local and regional levels and engage them in the discussions on the EU, on its policies, priorities and future. EUROPE DIRECT will inform citizens about the EU and organise engagement activities like local citizens' dialogues, establish good relations with local partners and media, and help EU institutions to better understand sensitivities, concerns and public opinion in their geographical areas.

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## **Call for proposals to connect Europe digitally**

The 2020-2 Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Telecom call for proposals opened this week. The call makes €36 million available to stimulate and support the deployment of European Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs) in the areas of Business Register Interconnection System (BRIS), Cybersecurity, eArchiving, eHealth, eProcurement, European Digital Media Observatory, European Platform for Digital Skills & Jobs and Public Open Data. A Virtual Info Day on the 2020-2 CEF Telecom call and application process will take place on 16 July 2020.

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## **Call for projects in cybersecurity**

The European Commission has launched a new call, worth €10.5 million, for projects that will work on stepping up Europe's cybersecurity capabilities and cooperation across Member States. In particular, they will work in areas such as on coordinated response to cybersecurity incidents, cybersecurity certification, capacity building and institutional cooperation on cybersecurity matters, as well as cooperation between the public and the private sector. The deadline for applicants to submit their proposal is 5 November 2020 and the allocation of grants is expected to be announced in May 2021.

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## **Calls for proposals to promote sales of crisis-hit agri-food products**

The Commission today launched additional calls for proposals to support promotion activities by agri-food producers most hit in the current crisis. The extra €10 million fund will be available to boost sales of fruit and vegetable, wine, live plants, dairy and certain potatoes both within and outside the EU. Half of that amount will go to promotion activities run jointly by producer organisations from several EU countries and another half, to national activities. Proposals can be submitted by 27 August 2020.

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## **Call for proposals for national fact-checking hubs**

The European Commission has launched a call for proposals for €9 million to further strengthen its support to fact-checkers and researchers. The call will fund the creation of national or multinational research hubs on digital media. The closing day for applications is 5 November 2020. Such hubs will focus on emerging digital media vulnerabilities, which are of special relevance within the territory and linguistic area in which they will operate.

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## **Job opportunities**

### **Competition for Secretaries**

The EU institutions are looking for multilingual and polyvalent secretaries (SC1/SC2) to carry out various secretarial tasks within their departments. Applicants must have a knowledge of at least 2 EU languages: thorough knowledge of Language 1 (one of the 24 EU official languages) and satisfactory knowledge of Language 2 (English or French). They must also have completed secondary education attested by a diploma giving access to post-secondary education, or professional training, followed by at least 3 years' professional experience in the secretarial field (SC1 positions). To apply for the more senior position (grade SC2) you will need at least 7 years of professional experience in the field.

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