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Top News

State of play in the negotiations on the future relationship between the EU and the UK: Keynote address by Michel Barnier

In a keynote address this week to a webinar jointly organised with the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA), the EU Chief negotiator Michel Barnier said: "We are now less than four months away from 1 January 2021. This is the date chosen by the UK itself for its 'economic and commercial Brexit', after the 'political Brexit' in January this year. Because, as you know, the UK refused any extension of the transition period. We have no more time to lose. We must have a final agreement by the end of October if we are to have a new partnership in place by 1 January 2021."

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Four Irish-led consortia selected under 2020 Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) call

There are 4 Irish-led consortia among the 74 selected this week to support international and inter-sectoral collaboration under the EU's 2020 Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) call for proposals. They are: UCC, TCD, TU Dublin and Kelada Pharmachem Ltd. RISE promotes international collaboration through sharing knowledge and ideas between research and markets across the world. In total, 823 organisations (including 117 SMEs) from 137 countries will exchange over 4,000 staff members for research and innovation activities across scientific disciplines and sectors. Researchers at doctoral level, post-doctoral fellows, technicians, managerial and administrative staff will all be involved.

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New rules on cleaner and safer cars apply across Europe from this week

A new EU Regulation on the approval and market surveillance of motor vehicles entered into application across Europe this week. The new rules significantly raise the quality level and independence of vehicle type-approval and testing, increase checks of cars that are already on the EU market and strengthen the overall system with European oversight. Internal Market

Commissioner Thierry Breton said: "Europeans rightly expect to drive the cleanest and safest cars. That presupposes the strictest controls of cars placed on the market and circulating on our roads.... from now on the Commission will be able to carry out checks on cars, trigger EU-wide recalls, and impose fines of up to €30,000 per car when the law is broken."

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Other news

Four Irish researchers awarded European Research Council Starting Grants

Four Irish researchers were this week awarded European Research Council (ERC) starting grants to help them build their own teams and conduct pioneering research. They are: David Courtney of UCD, and Claire Gillan, Lorna Lopez, and Alessandro Lunghi of TCD. In total, 436 early-career researchers from 40 different nationalities were awarded ERC grants worth €677 million. EU Research Commissioner Mariya Gabriel said: "The EU is leveraging the talent and curiosity of some of the best young researchers in Europe. Their ideas are set to break fresh ground and open new ways to deal with pressing challenges in the areas of health, energy and digital technologies, as well as many other fields."

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Copernicus Emergency Management Service mapping Galway floods

Following a request from Ireland, the EU's Copernicus Emergency Management Service was activated to monitor this week's severe flooding in Clifden and other parts of Co Galway and to provide emergency satellite mapping of the areas affected. The Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS) uses satellite imagery and other geospatial data to provide free of charge mapping service in cases of natural disasters, human-made emergency situations and humanitarian crises throughout the world.

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Commission adopts 31st Annual Report on the Protection of the EU's financial interests

The European Commission has adopted its 31st annual report on the protection of the European Union's financial interests. Several important steps were taken to protect the EU budget from fraud in 2019, the report shows. The Director-General of the European Anti-Fraud Office, Ville Itälä, said: "We are well equipped to protect EU taxpayers' money from inefficiencies, irregularities and fraud, but we must do even more to adapt our tools and structures, both at European and national level, to the new situation. The Commission will soon propose new measures to protect the EU budget and the resources invested in the EU's recovery from the coronavirus crisis."

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New EU Action Plan on Critical Raw Materials

The European Commission this week presented a new Action Plan on Critical Raw Materials, the 2020 List of Critical Raw Materials and a foresight study on critical raw materials for strategic technologies and sectors from the 2030 and 2050 perspectives. The Action Plan looks at the current and future challenges and proposes actions to reduce Europe's dependency on third countries, diversifying supply from both primary and secondary sources and improving resource efficiency and circularity while promoting responsible sourcing worldwide.

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€150 million EIB backing for smart meter rollout in Ireland

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the ESB have signed a loan facility to support the roll out of 2.4 million smart meters to every home, farm and business in Ireland by the end of 2024. The new €150 million 15-year loan will support the roll out programme, which started in counties Cork, Laois and Kildare in Autumn 2019 and is being delivered on a phased basis. By the end of 2020 it is envisaged that 200,000 meters will have been replaced and approximately 500,000 meters will be replaced in each of the four years thereafter.

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Coronavirus Global Response: Commission joins the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX)

The European Commission is to participate in the COVAX Facility for equitable access to affordable COVID-19 vaccines everywhere and has announced a contribution of €400 million in guarantees to support COVAX and its objectives. President Ursula von der Leyen said: "Global collaboration is the only way to overcome a global pandemic. Under the Coronavirus Global Response and the Global Goal Unite campaign, we have seen the world come together as one. Almost €16 billion have been pledged so far and the most talented researchers and organisations are pooling their efforts to deliver vaccines, tests and treatments, which will be our universal, common good."

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119 foiled, failed and completed terrorist attacks reported by EU Member States in 2019: Europol

According to Europol's 2020 EU Terrorism Situation and Trend report, a total of 119 foiled, failed and completed terrorist attacks were reported by a total of 13 EU Member States in 2019. Ten people died because of terrorist attacks in the EU and 27 people were injured. All deaths and the injuries of 26 people were the result of jihadist attacks; one person was injured in a right wing terrorist attack. Outside the EU, 17 civilians from EU Member States died in a terrorist attack (in Sri Lanka on 21 April 2019).

[Read more...](#)

Shareholder rights: new rules to improve the communication between companies and their shareholders enter into force

New EU rules entered into application this week that will improve communication between companies and their shareholders. Under the new Shareholder Rights Directive, institutional investors and asset managers have to publish information on their investment strategies and engagement policies. Didier Reynders, Commissioner for Justice and Consumers, said the new rules "will ensure that shareholders are provided with all the right information in a transparent manner to exercise their powers fully – including voting rights, wherever they are."

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Number of Venezuelans applying for asylum in the EU up 43,000% since 2013

According to a new EU report, asylum applications by Venezuelan nationals in the EU+ (EU member states plus Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) have risen from 105 in 2013 to 45,675 in 2019; an increase of over 43,000%. In fact, Venezuela has now become the third largest country of origin of asylum seekers in the EU+ following Syria and Afghanistan. The vast majority (about 90%) of applications by Venezuelans are lodged in Spain. The Report also highlights a systematic and widespread policy of repression in Venezuela for those who are critical of the government.

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Monday 7 September: Webinar - The EU Cyber Crisis Cooperation Framework – An ENISA Perspective

Juhan Lepassaar, Executive Director of the EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), will address an online event organised by the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) on Monday lunchtime, 7 September. In his address, Mr Lepassaar will provide an overview of the EU Cyber Crisis Cooperation, also known as Blueprint and will discuss some of the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic which provided an opportunity to test parts of the Blueprint and draw valuable conclusions.

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Thursday 10 September: Interactive Breakfast Webinar ahead of the State of the European Union Debate – We want to hear from Ireland!

Together with the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland and the European Movement Ireland, the European Commission Representation in Ireland is hosting an interactive webinar with stakeholders and MEPs on the upcoming State of the Union debate in the European Parliament, which will be opened by Commission President Ursula von den Leyen on 16 September. This event will provide the opportunity for key Irish stakeholders and webinar participants to have their say on what they want to hear in this year's State of the Union address and debate. It will take place on Thursday 10 September from 9am – 10.15am. Prior registration via the link below is essential.

[Read more...](#)

Friday 11 September: Eurogroup meeting

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

[Read more...](#)

Monday 13 to Thursday 17 September: European Parliament Plenary Session

Information on this meeting is available at the link below.

[Read more...](#)

Wednesday 16 September: President von der Leyen to deliver her first State of the Union address

Every year in September, the President of the European Commission delivers the State of the Union address before the European Parliament, taking stock of achievements of the past year and presenting priorities for the year ahead. The President also sets out how the Commission will address the most pressing challenges the European Union is facing and ideas for shaping the future of the EU. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, will deliver her address on 16 September 2020 at 8 am (Irish time). The speech will be followed by a plenary debate with members of the European Parliament.

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Wednesday 16 September: Webinar - the State of the European Union 2020

On Wednesday morning, 16 September, the IIEA, the European Commission Representation in Ireland and the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland will host a live-streaming of President von der Leyen's State of the Union address, followed by a webinar panel discussion assessing the key themes explored and President von der Leyen's outlook and priorities for the future of Europe. Speakers will include: Senator Regina Doherty, Leader of Seanad Éireann; David O'Sullivan, Chair of the Governing Board of the European Policy Centre; and Dr Mary C. Murphy, Jean Monnet Chair in European Integration and Lecturer in Politics, University College Cork. The panel will be moderated by Martina Fitzgerald, Journalist and Author.

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Friday 18 September - Online - 'Try a new language' – a European Commission/Languages Connect Culture Night event

The European Commission and Languages Connect invite you to 'Try a new language' during Culture Night – Friday, 18 September. As part of our annual celebration of the European Day of Languages (26 September), we will provide 20-minute online taster classes in the following languages: Dutch, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian and Spanish. This year, we have also added Chinese and Japanese. This online event takes place from 5 to 9 pm.

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Friday 18 September: Competitiveness Council (Internal market and industry)

Ministers in charge of internal market and industry will focus on Europe's recovery from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. They will hold a public policy debate and adopt conclusions on how to deepen the single market for a strong recovery and a competitive, sustainable Europe. This will be followed by a (non-public) policy debate on how to strengthen the international competitiveness of European industry,

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Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 September: Agriculture and Fisheries Council

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

[Read more...](#)

Tuesday 22 September: Webinar - Ireland's Contribution to the Trade Policy Review

Barry Andrews MEP will host a webinar on "Ireland's Contribution to the Trade Policy Review" on Tuesday 22 September from 2.30 to 3.30 pm. Keynote speakers include: Sabine Weyand, Director General of DG Trade; Robert Troy TD, Minister for Trade Promotion; and Professor Michelle Egan, American University as well as a panel of leaders from civil society, industry and trade.

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Tuesday 22 September: General Affairs Council

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

[Read more...](#)

Thursday 24 and Friday 25 September: Special European Council

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

[Read more...](#)

Public consultations

Regenerate our Ocean and Waters by 2030: Ireland - New online survey

A new EU survey has just been launched to gather Irish people's opinions and levels of awareness of oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters. The results of the survey will be used to inform the development of a major flagship 'mission' to be funded by the EU under the forthcoming Horizon Europe programme (2021-2027). The mission will bring together funding, expertise, stakeholders and citizens to help restore our ocean and waters. The online survey is open until Friday, 4 September 2020.

[Read more...](#)

European Child Guarantee

The European Commission has launched a new consultation on a roadmap for a new initiative to ensure basic services for all children in need in Europe: the Child Guarantee. The consultation runs until 7 October 2020.

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Job opportunities

Traineeships at the European Council

Applications are now open for traineeships at the General Secretariat of the Council starting next February. There are 4 types of traineeships to choose from: paid traineeships; compulsory unpaid traineeships; traineeships for students of national administration schools; and, positive action programme for trainees with a disability (paid). Every year, the Council offers around 100 places for paid traineeships, around 20 places for unpaid compulsory traineeships and up to 6 places for paid trainees with a disability.

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Competitions

Registration opens for the 2020 EU Young Translators competition

The European Commission has launched its annual translation contest for secondary school students from across Europe, Juvenes Translatores. This year participating teenagers, who must have been born in 2003, will have to translate a text on the topic "Navigating in challenging times – together we are stronger".

Registration for schools is open until 11 am on 20 October 2020. After that, the Commission will invite a total of 705 schools to the next stage. The number of schools taking part from each country will be equal to the number of seats the country has in the European Parliament, with the schools selected randomly by computer. The contest will be run online on 26 November 2020.

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EESC Civil Society Prize 2020

The EESC (European Social and Economic Committee) Civil Society against Covid-19 prize will reward solidarity initiatives to tackle the coronavirus emergency and its consequences in Europe. The prize will reward up to 29 not-for-profit initiatives carried out by natural persons, civil society organisations or private companies which aim to tackle the Covid-19 crisis and its manifold consequences. Each prize is worth €10,000. The deadline for submitting applications is 30 September 2020 at 11 am (Irish time).

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