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Top News

Summer 2020 Economic Forecast: An even deeper recession with wider divergences

The EU economy will experience a deep recession this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, despite the swift and comprehensive policy response at both EU and national levels. The Summer 2020 Economic Forecast projects that the euro area economy will contract by 8.7% in 2020 and grow by 6.1% in 2021 compared to a projected contraction of 7.7% for 2020 in the spring 2020 economic forecast. Meanwhile, the Irish economy is predicted to contract by 8.5% in 2020 and to grow by 6.3% in 2021 compared to a projected contraction of 7.9% for 2020 in the spring forecast. The forecast assumes that lockdown measures in Europe will continue to ease and there will not be a 'second wave' of infections.

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Commission sets out plans for the energy system of the future and clean hydrogen

To help reach its goal of becoming climate neutral by 2050, the European Commission this week adopted new strategies for energy system integration and hydrogen that will pave the way towards a more efficient and inter-connected energy sector. Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson, said: "With 75% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions coming from energy, we need a paradigm shift to reach our 2030 and 2050 targets. The EU's energy system has to become better integrated, more flexible and able to accommodate the cleanest and most cost-effective solutions. Hydrogen will play a key role in this, as falling renewable energy prices and continuous innovation make it a viable solution for a climate-neutral economy."

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President von der Leyen meets with Presidents Sassoli and Michel and Chancellor Merkel

President von der Leyen met this week with European Parliament President David Sassoli, German Chancellor Angela Merkel (rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU) and European Council President Charles Michel. During their meeting, they discussed the economic forecasts for the coming months that point to a severe recession and noted that the crisis will have deep social impacts across the European Union. They reaffirmed their strong commitment to doing everything in their power to mitigate these social impacts and to help the European economy rebound rapidly. They agreed that reaching a swift agreement on an ambitious EU budget and European recovery package is the EU's highest priority for the coming weeks.

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European Research Council Prize win for Irish EU funded researcher

Professor Anna Davies from Trinity College Dublin is one of three researchers to have this week been awarded an ERC Public Engagement with Research Award 2020. This is the first award of its kind, which the European Research Council (ERC) has launched to put the spotlight on how its grantees inspire the public with their research, engaging with audiences beyond the scientific community, in effective and original ways. Professor Davies won the Online and Social Media category for her ERC-funded project, SHARECITY, which studies urban food-sharing practices. The other two categories were: public outreach and press and media relations.

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Other news

Irish people most likely to think that EU freedom of movement has benefited the economy: new Eurobarometer

A new Eurobarometer on EU citizenship and democracy shows that Ireland and Poland (both 90%) have the highest shares of people who agree that the free movement of EU citizens within the EU brings overall benefits to the economy of their country. The EU average is 84% with France in bottom place at 74%. Irish people (94%) were also the most likely to be aware of their right to reside in another EU Member State subject to certain conditions. They were also the 5th highest in the EU to be aware of the term “Citizen of the European Union”, and know what it means. The survey also found that 77% of Irish people, highest in the EU, consider it justified that EU citizens living in an EU country that is not their country of origin should acquire the right to vote in national elections and referendums in their country of residence. The EU average was 63%.

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European Parliament adopts major reform of road transport sector

The European Parliament has backed revised rules to improve drivers' working conditions and stop distortion of competition in road transport. The revised rules for posting of drivers, drivers' driving times and rest periods and better enforcement of cabotage rules (i.e. transport of goods carried out by non-resident hauliers on a temporary basis in a host member state) aim to put an end to distortion of competition in the road transport sector and provide better rest conditions for drivers. The rules will enter into force after they are published in the Official Journal of the EU in the coming weeks.

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Toys most notified product category: EU report on dangerous products

Toys were the most notified product category (29% of total notifications) in 2019 according to the European Commission's latest report on dangerous products. They were followed by motor vehicles (23%) and electrical appliances and equipment (8%). The report also shows that the number of actions taken by authorities following an alert about a dangerous product was up 10% in 2019. While not covered by the report, a number of new alerts have been registered since the start of the coronavirus outbreak concerning face masks, coveralls, hand disinfectants and UV lamps ("sanitising wands").

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Single Market Scoreboard 2020: Member States need to do more to ensure the good functioning of the EU Single Market

The European Commission has published the Single Market Scoreboard 2020, which shows that despite improvements in certain areas, EU Member States need to do more to ensure the proper functioning of the Single Market. The Scoreboard provides a detailed overview of how EU single market rules were applied in the European Economic Area (EEA) in 2019 and evaluates how Member States have performed as regards market openness, governance tools as well as in specific policy areas, based on a number of selected indicators. Ireland performed above average in four of the areas covered by the Scoreboard and average in five others. However, it was below average in the areas of infringements (whose numbers were up compared to previous areas) and EURES (the EU portal for jobs) where it was only partially compliant.

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24 new European Universities reinforce the European Education Area

Six Irish higher education institutions are involved in the 24 newly selected "European Universities" announced this week. European Universities are transnational alliances of higher education institutions from across the EU that come together for the benefit of students, teachers and society. Each alliance must involve a minimum of 3 higher education institutions, from 3 EU Member States or other Erasmus programme countries. The six Irish institutions are: NUI Galway, TU Dublin, Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Athlone IT, Limerick IT and UCC.

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EU increases its funding to fight the severe desert locust outbreak in East Africa

The EU has mobilised a further €15 million to support the United Nations and partner countries in the fight against one of the worst desert locust outbreaks seen in East Africa in decades. This comes in addition to €42 million mobilised in early 2020 for a broad humanitarian-development approach in the region. The desert locust outbreak has had a devastating impact on food security in an already vulnerable region. Efforts to halt the spread of the locust infestation have been further strained due to the coronavirus pandemic.

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Commission launches Women4Cyber, a registry of talents in the field of cybersecurity

The European Commission, together with the Women4Cyber initiative of the European Cybersecurity Organisation, has launched the first online registry of European women in cybersecurity that will connect expert groups, businesses and policy makers to talents in the field. The registry is an open, user-friendly database of women that have expertise in cybersecurity, aiming to address the growing demand for cybersecurity professionals in Europe and the related shortage of talents in the field.

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European Commission authorises first treatment against COVID-19

The European Commission has granted a conditional marketing authorisation for the medicine Remdesivir, making it the first medicine authorised at EU level for treatment against COVID-19. Remdesivir is now authorised for a conditional marketing authorisation, one of the EU regulatory mechanisms created to facilitate early access to medicines that fulfil an unmet medical need, including those for emergency situations in response to public health threats such as the current pandemic.

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Commission and EIB provide CureVac with a €75 million financing for vaccine development and expansion of manufacturing

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and CureVac, a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company developing a new class of transformative medicines based on optimised mRNA, entered into a €75 million loan agreement to support the Company's ongoing development of vaccines against infectious diseases, including its vaccine candidate CVnCoV aimed at preventing SARS-CoV-2 infections. Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: "With our support to CureVac we accelerate our efforts to find safe and effective solutions for everyone in Europe and globally."

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Annual rise in house prices well below EU average in Ireland: Eurostat

House prices were up by 1% in Ireland in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the first quarter of 2019 according to Eurostat. This compares to an EU average rise of 5.5% and a Euro Area rise of 5% over the same period with Luxembourg seeing the highest rise at 14%. When compared to the last quarter of 2019, Ireland (-0.8%) was one of only four EU countries to see a drop with house prices rising by an average of 0.9% in the Euro Area and 1.2% in the EU.

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European Commission revamps its 'Have Your Say' portal

The European Commission has launched a revamped version of the 'Have Your Say' portal. The new version makes it easier for the public to find the Commission initiative they are most interested in, thanks to improved search functionalities. The portal is more user-friendly, so that the public can share their views by accessing directly the newest consultations of high interest on the home page, such as the consultation on Sustainable and Smart Mobility strategy.

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Minimum wage workers on the front line of COVID-19 fallout: Eurofound

Minimum wage workers around Europe are in the simultaneous position of being increasingly called upon to provide essential services during COVID-19 confinement and response measures; as well as being more likely to be made redundant or furloughed due to their concentration in highly impacted sectors according to a new Eurofound report. The report presents the situation with regards to minimum wages in Europe immediately preceding the outbreak of the pandemic, and analyses how recent developments have impacted it further.

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Agenda

Monday 13 July: Foreign Affairs Council

The Foreign Affairs Council will take place in Brussels and will be chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell. The meeting will review recent international developments, and discuss EU relations with Turkey, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

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Tuesday 14 July: The GDPR at Age 2 – Reflections of the Irish DPC

Following the recent 2 year anniversary of the GDPR, the Irish Data Protection Commissioner (DPC), Helen Dixon, will address the IIEA on: "The GDPR at Age 2 – Reflections of the Irish DPC." This talk by the Irish DPC will cover reflections on the GDPR as a legal framework. This will include reflections on the enforcement and litigation experiences, on challenges relating to harmonisation at the European level, on individual complaint-handling and on international transfers of personal data. This online event takes place from 1 to 2:00 pm. Further information and registration at the link below.

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Wednesday 15 July: EU-India summit via video conference

The 15th summit between India and the EU will be held via video conference. The EU will be represented by Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission. India will be represented by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. As the world is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the leaders will discuss global cooperation and solidarity to protect lives, to mitigate the socio-economic consequences and to strengthen preparedness and response capacities. Further information on the link below.

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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.

[Read more...](#)

Wednesday 15 July: Video conference of Ministers for European affairs

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

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Friday 17 and Saturday 18 July: Extraordinary European Council

EU leaders will meet physically in Brussels to discuss the recovery plan to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and a new long-term EU budget. On 19 June, they exchanged views, via video conference, on the proposal for a new recovery instrument and for the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2021-2027, presented by the European Commission on 27 May 2020. Following the meeting, Charles Michel, President of the European Council, held political negotiations with EU leaders. Ahead of the July summit the president will present concrete proposals to be discussed at the meeting.

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Calls for Tender/Proposals

Call for proposals for innovative clean technology projects

The Commission has launched the first call for proposals under the Innovation Fund, one of the world's largest programmes for the demonstration of innovative low-carbon technologies, financed by revenues from the auction of emission allowances from the EU's Emissions Trading System. The first call will provide grant funding of €1 billion to large-scale projects for clean technologies to help them overcome the risks linked to commercialisation and large-scale demonstration.

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Public consultations

Trade Policy Review

The European Commission launched a major review of the European Union's trade policy, including a public consultation seeking input from the European Parliament, Member States, stakeholders and civil society. The Commission's objective is to build a consensus around a fresh medium-term direction for EU trade policy, responding to a variety of new global challenges and taking into account the lessons learned from the coronavirus crisis. The consultation covers all relevant topics to the EU trade policy. The results of this consultation will feed into a communication to be published towards the end of the year. The closing day for submissions is 15 September 2020.

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European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) has launched a new public consultation. This consultation will contribute to the evaluation of the EGF by finding out if there is a need for the EU to be providing this type of support, and whether it has actually helped the people who have benefited from it. The public consultation is open until 16 September 2020.

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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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