



## Top News

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### **Coronavirus: EU channels critical support to India**

The European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre earlier this week coordinated a shipment of urgently needed oxygen, medicine and equipment to India. The shipment included 700 oxygen concentrators, 1 oxygen generator and 365 ventilators from Ireland. Belgium, Romania, Luxembourg, Portugal and Sweden also provided equipment and medicines. Today, Thursday, the Commission announced further support packages from France, Italy, Austria and Finland, as well as additional supplies from Ireland.

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### **President von der Leyen on the outcome of the high-level meeting between the EU and Turkey**

In an address to the European Parliament this week on the conclusions of the March European Council and the outcome of the high-level meeting between the EU and Turkey, President von der Leyen said: "I cannot find any justification for the way I was treated in the European Treaties. So, I have to conclude, it happened because I am a woman. Would this have happened if I had worn a suit and a tie? In the pictures of previous meetings, I did not see any shortage of chairs. But then again, I did not see any woman in these pictures, either."

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### **Winners of the 2021 Model Council of the European Union Debate announced**

St Joseph's Secondary School, Tulla, Co. Clare have won the 2021 Model Council of the European Union. The event took place online last Friday, 23 April. Second place went to St Mary's College, Naas, Co. Kildare, and third place to St Columba's College, Stranorlar, Co. Donegal. These three schools rose above 24 other schools from all over Ireland, while discussing a coordinated response at EU level to serious cross-border threats to health. The debate was opened by Minister for European Affairs, Thomas Byrne, TD and chaired by Martina Fitzgerald, CEO of Scale Ireland. It was judged by Noelle O'Connell of European Movement Ireland and Mary McCaughey of Eurofound. The prizes were announced by Green Party MEP, Grace O'Sullivan.

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### **European Parliament adopts position on Digital Green Certificate**

The European Parliament adopted this week its negotiating position on the proposal for a certificate to reaffirm the right to free movement in Europe during the pandemic. MEPs agreed that the new "EU COVID-19 certificate" - instead of Digital Green Certificate - should be in place for 12 months and not longer. Both the European Parliament and Council are now ready to begin negotiations. The aim is to reach an agreement ahead of the summer tourist season.

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## **European Parliament formally approves EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement**

The European Parliament this week voted with a large majority in favour of granting its consent to the agreement setting the rules of the future EU-UK relationship. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement, agreed last December by EU and UK negotiators, establishes the terms for future EU-UK cooperation. To minimise disruption, the agreement has been provisionally applied since 1 January 2021. Parliament's consent is necessary for the agreement to enter into force permanently before its lapse on 30 April 2021.

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## **Other news**

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### **Better Regulation: Joining forces to make better EU laws and to prepare for the future**

The Commission has adopted a Communication on Better Regulation, proposing several improvements to the EU law-making process. Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight, said: "The Commission already has one of the best Better Regulation systems in the world but we still need to do more. Therefore, we are stepping up efforts to simplify EU legislation and reduce its burden, while making better use of strategic foresight and supporting sustainability and digitalisation."

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### **New rules adopted for quick and smooth removal of terrorist content online**

The European Commission has welcomed the adoption by the European Parliament this week of new rules on the quick and smooth removal of terrorist content online. The new regulation will target content such as texts, images, sound recordings or videos, including live transmissions, that incite, solicit or contribute to terrorist offences, provide instructions for such offences or solicit people to participate in a terrorist group. Hosting service providers will have to remove or disable access to flagged terrorist content in all member states within one hour of receiving a removal order from the competent authority.

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### **Migration management: New EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration**

The European Commission this week adopted the first EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration. The Strategy promotes voluntary return and reintegration as an integral part of a common EU system for returns, a key objective under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. Vice President Margaritis Schinas said: "Returns are more effective when they are voluntary and accompanied by genuine reintegration options for returnees and this Strategy will develop a more uniform and coordinated approach among Member States to unlock their full potential."

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### **New interactive tool to monitor and anticipate demographic change in the EU**

The European Commission has launched an EU 'Atlas of Demography' – an interactive online tool to visualise, monitor and anticipate demographic change in the European Union. The atlas provides quick and easy access to a comprehensive body of demographic data and knowledge, collected at EU, national, regional and local level. It will help improve the understanding of demographic change and anticipate demographic dynamics. By better understanding demography in the EU, the Commission can improve its policies.

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### **EU Space Regulation ready to take off**

The EU institutions this week adopted the new EU Space Regulation. The Space Programme, with the largest budget ever for Space, €14.88 billion, encompasses all EU space activities in one single Space Programme Regulation. It will ensure the continuity and evolution of the three existing flagship programmes Galileo, Copernicus and EGNOS. It will also support new initiatives on space surveillance, including Space Surveillance and Tracking, Space Weather and Near Earth Object, and satellite communications.

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### **A strengthened EU Civil Protection Mechanism endorsed by European Parliament**

The European Parliament has voted for strengthening the role of the European Union in crisis management through a legislative revision of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. This allows for faster and more effective European solidarity operations in response to large-scale emergencies or disasters that affect several countries at the same time. The EU will have at its disposal additional financial means for civil protection and will strengthen emergency tools such as the rescEU medical reserve of protective equipment.

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### **Large majority of Irish people believe coordinated EU action has helped Irish response to coronavirus: Eurobarometer**

A new Eurobarometer on Civil Protection reveals that 71% of Irish people, 5th highest in the EU, believe that EU coordinated action has helped Ireland to respond more effectively to the coronavirus pandemic. The survey also shows that 92% of Irish people, 6th highest in the EU, believe that coordinated action should be increased in the future to better deal with disasters. A large majority of Irish (96%) and EU citizens (92%) also agree that their country should provide help when a disaster strikes in another EU country that is too big for them to deal with on their own.

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### **Large Irish support for tackling poverty in developing countries: Eurobarometer**

According to a new Eurobarometer survey 93% of Irish people, 4th highest in the EU, believe that it is important for the EU to partner with other countries to reduce poverty around the world. The survey also shows that 81% of Irish people believe that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU while 64% think it should be one of the main priorities of the Irish government. Across the EU, 77% of respondents agreed that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU while 62% thought it should be one of the main priorities of their national government.

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## **Agenda**

**Léargas Webinar Wednesdays - free events series for beneficiaries of and newcomers to European programmes**

Are you interested in starting a European project, or looking for ways to improve the quality of your current project work online? Léargas Webinar Wednesdays explore the possibilities of European projects and innovative ways to carry them out. Each webinar focuses on a different theme and sector, so whether you have a lot of experience or just want to find out more – there will be something for you.

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### **Thursday 6 May: Foreign Affairs Council (Defence)**

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

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### **Friday 7 May: Finance for the Future: A Europe Day Address by Commissioner Mairead McGuinness**

In her address, Commissioner McGuinness will reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on how we bank and access finance, and the long-term consequences for the banking sector. Is cash still king? Are FinTechs the future? And what about Big Tech and digital currencies? She will address recent changes in banking, including in the Irish market, and will assess the role of the financial system in meeting our Green Deal goals for a more green and digital future. This online event is co-organised by the Institute for International and European Affairs and the European Commission Representation in Ireland. It takes place from 1 to 2 pm.

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### **Saturday 8 May: EU-India leaders' meeting, Porto**

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

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### **Saturday 8 May: Informal meeting of heads of state or government, Porto**

EU leaders will meet in Porto on 8 May to discuss social issues, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The informal European Council will follow the high-level conference held by the Portuguese presidency on 7 May. The EU leaders' discussion will focus on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights at EU and national level, as established by the EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024. The Action Plan presented by the Commission in March 2021 provides guidance on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, including in the areas of employment, skills and social protection.

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### **Sunday 9 May: Europe Day 2021**

Europe Day held on 9 May every year celebrates peace and unity in Europe. The date marks the anniversary of the historic 'Schuman declaration'. At a speech in Paris in 1950, Robert Schuman, the then French foreign minister, set out his idea for a new form of political cooperation in Europe, which would make war between Europe's nations unthinkable. To celebrate Europe Day 2021, the European Commission Representation in Ireland is organising and participating in a number of virtual events. Click on the link below for details.

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### **Sunday 9 May: Europe Day - Short Shorts From Europe 2020**

To celebrate Europe Day on Sunday May 9th, the EUNIC Ireland Network (European Union National Institutes for Culture) is delighted to present a free online screening of its 2020 Short Shorts from Europe programme. Action, animation, drama – expect this and more from Short Shorts – a selection of European short films from the home countries of eight members of EUNIC Ireland. Let Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Spain and the UK entertain you with a variety of genres from contemporary,

cutting-edge filmmakers. Shorts from Cork International Film Festival, the IFI and Limerick School of Art and Design will also be part of the selection. After the screening you will be asked to vote for your favourite film using your phone

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### **Tuesday 11 May: IIEA webinar on EU Trade Policy in a Post-COVID World with Commission Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis**

At this webinar, organised by the Institute of International and European Affairs, Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis will outline the EU's trade policy for a post-COVID world in the context of the EU's recently published Trade Policy Review. The Trade Policy Review aims to chart a course for EU trade policy in this new global context and aid it in asserting its open strategic autonomy, supporting its economic recovery and promoting an open, rules-based international trading order. This discussion will cover a wide range of topics, including EU trade and economic policy, European open strategic autonomy, and the EU's transatlantic relations. The event takes place from 12.30 to 1.30 pm. Entry is free of charge. Advance registration is required.

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### **Thursday 20 May: NWE networking event: A Greener North-West Europe**

Interreg North-West Europe is hosting a networking webinar on the theme of a "Greener North West Europe" on Thursday morning, 20 May. A second workshop will be held on 22 June on the theme of "Innovative and Inclusive" project ideas. Full details at the link below.

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## Public consultations

### **Youth volunteering - working on projects in other EU countries**

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on the mobility of young volunteers across the EU. The consultation will collect citizens' views and identify new challenges and opportunities in the field of youth volunteering. It is open until 21 July 2021.

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### **Industrial Designs and EU-wide Geographical indications for products**

The European Commission has launched two public consultations delivering on its actions presented in the Intellectual property Action Plan. The first public consultation refers to industrial designs protection, that is to the rights which protect the appearance of a product resulting from its attributes such as shape, colours or materials. The second public consultation refers to EU-wide protection of geographical indications for non-agricultural products (i.e. handicrafts and industrial goods). Both public consultations will remain open until 22 July 2021 included.

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## Competitions

### **EESC launches the Civil Society Prize 2021 on climate action**

Applications are now open for the European Economic and Social Committee's Civil Society Prize 2021. Choosing climate action as the theme of its prize, the EESC will select the winners from creative and innovative initiatives which aim to promote a just transition towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy. Applications can be submitted by all civil society organisations officially registered within the European Union and acting at local, regional, national or European level. The prize is also open to individuals who reside in the EU. Eligible initiatives and projects have to be

carried out in the EU. The deadline for entries is 10 a.m. (Brussels time) on 30 June 2021. A total of €50,000 will be awarded to a maximum of five winners.

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### **Commission launches first New European Bauhaus prizes**

The European Commission has launched the first set of New European Bauhaus prizes to showcase good practices, examples, and concepts that clearly illustrate sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion. The New European Bauhaus prize entries must, either, already be implemented, or - if from students and young professionals (aged 30 or under) - are paving the way to the future. The prizes will be given in ten different categories, with two parallel competition strands in each: The 'New European Bauhaus Awards' - for existing completed examples; and 'New European Bauhaus Rising Stars' - for concepts or ideas submitted by young talents. The deadline for submissions is 31 May 2021.

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### **REGIOSTARS Awards 2021**

The REGIOSTARS Awards are a yearly competition, organised by the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, aimed at identifying good practices in regional development and highlighting innovative, EU-funded projects, which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions and project managers. There are five REGIOSTARS Award categories for 2021: increasing the competitiveness of local businesses in a digital world; green and resilient communities in rural and urban settings; fostering inclusion and anti-discrimination; promoting green, sustainable, circular food systems in functional urban areas; and enhancing green mobility in the regions: European Year of Rail 2021. The deadline to apply is 9 May.

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