

EUROPE DIRECT

Weekly Guidelines for the EUROPE DIRECT centres

[Video message from Alessandro Giordani](#)

TO KEEP YOU IN THE BIG PICTURE

European Semester Spring Package... or Recovery around the corner: On 2 June the Commission presented the [European Semester Spring Package](#). In the words of Vice-President Dombroskis: “We are presenting this ‘Special Edition’ of the Spring Package at a pivotal moment, with our recovery around the corner but with the road ahead still paved with unknowns. We will therefore continue to use all tools to get our economies back on track. We are **prolonging the general escape clause in 2022**, with a view to deactivating it in 2023. We are encouraging Member States to **maintain supportive fiscal policies** this year and next, preserving public investment and making the most of the funding from the Recovery and Resilience Facility to boost growth”.

NextGenerationEU: Commission to start raising resources to finance Europe's recovery: Following the approval of the Own Resources Decision by all Member States, the Commission has announced that it will now go on the market to raise around €80 billion of long-term bonds in 2021, to be topped up by tens of billions of euros of short-term EU-Bills. Thanks to the EU's high credit rating, the Commission will be able to borrow resources on the market (**European debt for European public goods!**) on advantageous conditions. It will then pass the benefit on to the EU Member States directly when providing them with loans and grants. Details [here](#).

On 2 June the Commission presents a new strategy to strengthen the Schengen area: The 2015 refugee crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in many Member States reintroducing internal border controls, at times jeopardising the very functioning of the Schengen area. Restoring the Schengen area without controls at internal borders is of paramount importance for the European Union as a whole. And this is where the new [Commission Strategy](#) enters the scene. Some of the main key areas targeted by the Strategy revolve around the effective management of the Union's external borders, police and judicial cooperation, improve preparedness and governance, completing the enlargement of the Schengen area. The common migration and asylum policy, with a specific focus on permanent solidarity mechanism, is also part of the Strategy. More can be found in the [Questions and Answers](#) and the [fact page](#).

CALL FOR ACTION THIS WEEK ...

Update your audiences on the EU Digital COVID Certificate progress: On 1 June, [the EU Digital COVID Certificate](#) reached another important milestone with the go-live of the system at EU level, which allows to verify certificates in a secure and privacy-friendly way. The EU certificate was [proposed by the Commission](#) to resume safe travelling this summer. What was the Certificate all about? – You have either 1. Been vaccinated against COVID-19 2. Received a negative test result 3. Recovered from COVID-19. Key features: 1. Digital and/or paper format 2. With QR code 3. Free of charge 3. In national language and English 4. Safe and secure 5. Valid in all EU countries. Seven Member States – Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia and Poland – have decided to connect to the gateway and started issuing first EU certificate already! If you are a centres in these Member States, you have something very concrete to tell!

Showcase the ambition of the Commission in the field of digital transformation by sharing President von der Leyen's speech: On 2 June the Commission President set out the Commission Digital ambition in a [speech](#) at the 2021 Digital Assembly, which this year took place under the motto 'Leading the Digital Decade' in Portugal. The President stressed the importance of four cardinal points: Digital skills, Infrastructures, Businesses, and e-Government. She emphasized the ambition of Europe to be the global leader of digital transformation. More information on the Assembly [here](#).



Conference on the Future of Europe: Your role

On 1 June, the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFE) published two notes on the practical modalities of the European citizens' panels and on how to organise national citizens' panels in the context of the Conference. [Link](#).

The deadline for submitting the first CoFE reports was 31 of May. Consider the following:

- Send your reports to the network correspondent in your Commission Representation;
- Do not report activities on CoFE in the reporting tool;
- Register on CoFE online platform only thematic participatory events on CoFE topics aimed at producing concrete proposals/ideas. Such proposals should be registered in the "IDEAS" section of the online platform and linked to the events where they were formulated.
- Do not register on the CoFE online platform promotional events on CoFE and info sessions.

Make full use of the list of stakeholders you have identified. It is a precious wealth of "real people" who will make the difference for demonstrating that CoFE is not a top-down exercise. **Contact** these people and **promote** the CoFE with them, **train** them on the use of the platform, and **encourage** them to place their own events and ideas there.

The latest figures from the report analysing the volume of activity on the digital platform suggest that **extra efforts have to be made with the participation of women and young people**. For this we count on all of you. You know your region and you know how to sensibilise these particular layers of society!

