

May 2017



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

EU integration process in CEE countries

Investment Plan for Europe: EIB and BGK establish Investment Platform for social and affordable housing in Poland

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK), the Polish development bank, have signed an agreement to establish an Investment Platform to contribute to social inclusion by support social and affordable projects in different municipalities across Poland. The platform is backed by the Juncker's Commission's Investment Plan for Europe, the so-called "Juncker Plan".

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/katainen/announcements/investment-plan-europe-eib-and-bgk-establish-investment-platform-social-and-affordable-housing_en

Questions and Answers on the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review

The implementation process reflects the way in which the EU and its partners in the East and the South have been working to promote stabilisation (through building up resilience) focussing on the key priorities identified in the ENP Review adopted in November 2015: good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights; economic development for stabilisation; security; and migration and mobility.

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-17-1381_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-1381_en.htm)

Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership

Commission issues country-specific economic recommendations

Commission sets out economic policy guidance and calls on Member States to pursue structural reforms, boost investment and strengthen public finances. The European Commission has set out its economic policy guidance to Member States for the next 12-18 months, in its 2017 country-specific recommendations (CSRs). The economy in the EU and the euro area is proving resilient, but challenges continue. The Commission wants Member States to strengthen the fundamentals of their economies by implementing the common economic and social priorities of boosting investment, pursuing structural reforms and ensuring responsible fiscal policies.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/commission-issues-country-specific-economic-recommendations_en

May infringements package

In its monthly package of infringement decisions, the European Commission ('Commission') is pursuing legal action against Member States for failing to comply with their obligations under EU law. These decisions, covering various sectors and EU policy areas, aim to ensure the proper application of EU law for the benefit of citizens and businesses. The key decisions taken by the Commission are presented below and grouped

by policy area. The Commission is also closing 65 cases in which the issues with the Member States concerned have been solved without the Commission needing to pursue the procedure further.

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-17-1280 en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-1280_en.htm)

Relocation and Resettlement: Commission calls on all Member States to deliver and meet obligations

The Commission adopted its twelfth progress report on the EU's emergency relocation and resettlement schemes, assessing actions taken since 12 April 2017. As a result of the increased efforts of Member States, the number of persons relocated so far in 2017 is almost as many as in the whole of 2016. The total number of relocations now stands at 18,418, proving that relocation works if there is the will to abide by what was agreed together in a spirit of sincere cooperation. However, whilst most Member States are active and relocate regularly, some have still not relocated at all, disregarding their legal obligation. On resettlement, Member States have continued to make significant progress, with safe and legal pathways being provided to 16,163 persons so far, beyond two thirds of the agreed resettlements under the EU scheme. Building on the recommendations from the previous month, today's report is in particular focusing on those Member States that are not delivering on their commitments.

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release IP-17-1302 en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1302_en.htm)

General development of the EU

Digital Single Market: EU negotiators agree on the WiFi4EU initiative

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission reached a political agreement on the WiFi4EU initiative and its funding which supports installing free public Wi-Fi hotspots in local communities across the EU: in public squares, piazzas, parks, hospitals and other public spaces. As stated by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, the WiFi4EU initiative will contribute to the vision of having "every European village and every city with free wireless internet access around the main centres of public life by 2020." Vice-President in charge of the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip welcomed tonight's agreement and said: "The Digital Single Market strategy aims to build a fully connected Europe where everyone has access to high-quality digital networks. The WiFi4EU initiative will improve connectivity in particular where access to the internet is limited. WiFi4EU is a welcome first step, but much more needs to be done to achieve high-speed connectivity across the whole EU territory – such as improving Europe-wide coordination of spectrum and stimulating investments in the high-capacity networks that Europe needs."

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release IP-17-1470 en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1470_en.htm)

European Semester 2017 Spring Package: Commission issues country-specific recommendations

The European Commission presented its 2017 country-specific recommendations (CSRs), setting out its economic policy guidance for individual Member States for the next 12 to 18 months. The economy in the EU and the euro area is proving resilient, but challenges, such as slow productivity growth, the legacies of the crisis – including persisting

	<p>inequalities – and uncertainty arising mostly from external factors continue. The Commission therefore called on Member States to use this window of opportunity to strengthen the fundamentals of their economies by implementing the economic and social priorities identified in common at European level: boosting investment, pursuing structural reforms and ensuring responsible fiscal policies. Particular attention is paid to the challenges and priorities identified for the euro area. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1311_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to EU institutions and their functioning</p>	<p>Commission registers European Citizens' Initiative entitled 'Let us reduce the wage and economic differences that tear the EU apart' The Commission has decided on the partial registration of a European Citizens' Initiative on tackling wage and economic inequality, concerning legal acts within its competences. The European Citizens' Initiative invites the Commission to propose "<i>Legal acts that clearly demonstrate the EU's intention to eliminate wage inequalities between Member States and which - to achieve this objective - allow for a more efficient cohesion of these states</i>". The formal registration of this Initiative on 22 May 2017 will start a one-year process of collection of signatures of support by its organisers. The Commission's decision to register the Initiative concerns only the legal admissibility of the proposal. The Commission has not analysed the substance at this stage. The Commission's Decision makes clear for which kind of legal acts signatures may be collected, dependent on the competences set out in the Treaties. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1331_en.htm</p> <p>MEPs want to protect citizens from negative effects of globalisation Globalisation puts immense pressure on jobs, wages and standards, while also feeding populism, said many MEPs. They called for better protection for EU industry and workers and urged the EU to take the driving seat in promoting fair global trade. "We must be rule makers, not rule takers", they said. A number of MEPs called for an action plan "to avoid a social race to the bottom" and proposed better redistribution of globalisation's benefits by member states to their citizens. Some MEPs believe that the current form of globalisation is a dead-end street and free trade has seriously undermined democracy, social rights and the environment. "Business as usual" won't help Europeans, they said. Other MEPs called for a fair tax system that would not allow big companies to dodge paying their fair share. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170509IPR73925/meps-want-to-protect-citizens-from-negative-effects-of-globalisation</p>
<p>Introduction to EU law</p>	<p>European Commission reports on the application of the Charter of fundamental rights in the EU in 2016 The European Commission has published its annual Report on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The report outlines the initiatives taken in 2016 by the EU to strengthen fundamental rights. It also looks at how these rights were applied across a range of EU policies and in the Member States in 2016. First Vice-President</p>

	<p>Frans Timmermans said: "The European Union is not just a market or a currency, it is first and foremost a Union of values. As guardian of the Treaties the European Commission has a special duty to uphold the fundamental rights and the rule of law throughout this Union, a responsibility which we share with all the EU's institutions and Member States."</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1336_en.htm</p>
<p>Decentralized management of EU funds</p>	<p>College discusses future defence policy, 2018 budget and Greece Commissioners debated on 24th May the future of EU defence, prepared the 2018 budget, and reviewed the situation in Greece. The College held an Orientation Debate to prepare the Reflection Paper on the future of European Defence by 2025, which is due to be adopted on 7 June. The Paper will open up discussions on how to better use the existing opportunities under the EU Treaties to create improve the security of our citizens. Defence and security is a field that is a top priority for European Union citizens.</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/college-discusses-future-defence-policy-2018-budget-and-greece_en</p> <p>Proper funding for 2018 - European Year of Cultural Heritage MEPs secured €8 million for cultural projects aiming to protect and promote Europe's shared cultural heritage, as part of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage. "This topic is one of the few where doctrinal controversies do not have a place. This initiative goes beyond politics or natural competition between states. The European Year of Cultural Heritage is an initiative which can unite and prove that the European space of our 27 nations is one belonging to a unitary civilisation founded on a common history and benefiting from globally outstanding heritage" said rapporteur Mircea Diaconu (ALDE, RO) after the vote on Thursday.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170424IPR72053/proper-funding-for-2018-european-year-of-cultural-heritage</p>
<p>Multi-level governance</p>	<p>Great expectations: Europeans reveal what they want the EU to do more on A new Eurobarometer survey reveals what issues people want the EU to focus on. Europeans increasingly realise the need for common solutions to the most pressing problems, yet question whether politics will be able to deliver, according to a new survey. The Eurobarometer survey, carried out in March, was commissioned by the European Parliament to get an idea of what people want. Check out the infographic to see in which areas people expect more from the European Union and read on for an overview of the survey's main findings. Europeans demand solutions from the EU.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20170502STO73030/great-expectations-europeans-reveal-what-they-want-the-eu-to-do-more-on</p> <p>Commission welcomes European Parliament vote on extension and reinforcement of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI),</p>

	<p>the heart of the Juncker Plan</p> <p>The European Commission welcomes the vote by Members of the European Parliament's Budgets and Economic and Monetary Affairs committees to agree their position on extending, expanding and reinforcing the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the so-called "EFSI 2.0". The Commission now calls on the Parliament and Member States to continue working towards the final adoption of the EFSI 2.0 proposal as quickly as possible to the benefit of public and private promoters driving investment projects in Europe. European Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: "The European Fund for Strategic Investments has already proven to be an important tool to boost investment, support jobs and spur growth across all 28 Member States. The extension of the EFSI represents an opportunity to build on that success. I look forward to continue working with Members of the European Parliament and Member States in the weeks to come to secure a final agreement."</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1327_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to different negotiation chapters</p>	<p>EU tax rules are not currently prepared for the digital economy</p> <p>EESC debate on taxation of the digital economy and the sharing economy. European tax rules are not currently prepared for the digital economy. They need to be adapted to reality in order to offer the people of Europe a more prosperous future. This was the main message of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) debate on Taxation of the Digital Economy held on 5th May. "The digital economy is no longer just a part of the economy, but is becoming the actual economy itself", stated the keynote speaker, Rita de la Feria, professor of Tax Law, University of Leeds, and renowned tax expert - "Global Tax 50" in 2015 and 2016. She outlined that consumption has changed – an increasing part of consumption is done online and a large part of this is on mobile phones.</p> <p>http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.press-releases.42315</p>
<p>Specific issues relating to the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European arrest warrant • Stockholm programme • Third pillar <p>Recognition of professional qualifications</p>	<p>European Dialogue on Skills and Migration: Employers and Commission together for the integration of migrants</p> <p>The Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen were hosting the second meeting of the European Dialogue on Skills and Migration, at the European Business Summit. The Commissioners officially launched the "Employers together for integration" initiative, in the presence of CEOs and other high-level representatives of several companies committed to fostering migrant integration such as IKEA, Deutsche Telekom, NCC, Accenture, B-post, Scandic hotels, ADECCO and Microsoft as well as representatives of social and economic partners. The initiative aims to promote employers' efforts across the EU to support the integration of refugees and other migrants in the labour market and beyond.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1386_en.htm</p> <p>EU refugee crisis: "Relocation is our shared moral duty"</p> <p>MEPs accused national governments of dragging their feet on the</p>

	<p>relocation of refugees during a debate in plenary on 16 May. The plight of migrants risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean has shaken Europe to the core in recent years. With frontline countries such as Greece and Italy affected the most, relocation is one way to share the burden. Ahead of a September deadline for the relocation of 160,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy to other EU countries, today MEPs accused national governments of dragging their feet on refugee transfers. MEPs vote on a resolution on relocation on 18 May.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170515STO74806/eu-refugee-crisis-relocation-is-our-shared-moral-duty</p>
<p>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy)</p>	<p>Investment Plan for Europe unlocks EUR 177 million in financing for Romanian SMEs</p> <p>The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Raiffeisen Bank, have signed a COSME agreement that will allow the Bank to provide RON 800,000,000 (ca. EUR 177m) in loans to small and medium-sized Romanian businesses. The agreement will allow Raiffeisen Bank, to provide SMEs with loans benefiting from reduced collateral requirements, extended maturities and to support start-ups which have a limited access to lending. Around 2,000 Romanian SMEs are expected to benefit from these loans. This agreement was made possible by the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The EFSI is the central pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe, the so-called "Juncker Plan".</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/katainen/announcements/investment-plan-europe-unlocks-eur-177-million-financing-romanian-smes_en</p> <p>EU Regions and cities start building an Alliance for the Future of Cohesion Policy</p> <p>In view of future negotiations of the EU budget, the European Committee of the Regions join forces with territorial associations and call all relevant actors at EU, national, regional and local level to build an Alliance for a strong and ambitious cohesion policy after 2020. New emerging priorities such as defence, security and border control, and the impact of Brexit on the EU budget risk jeopardising the future of the most powerful investment policy for the 27, worth €454bn until 2020. This is why at the CoR, the idea of a new open alliance was launched. The aim of the Alliance is to cast light on the added value and effectiveness of cohesion policy over the last decade, ensuring that decisions on the next EU budget take into account the voice of hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries from regional and local authorities, SMEs, NGOs, schools, universities, cultural organisations.</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/EU-Regions-and-cities-start-building-an-Alliance-for-the-Future-of-Cohesion-Policy.aspx</p>
<p>Promotion of EU upcoming events and news</p>	<p>Right of persons with disabilities to vote in EP elections</p> <p>07/06/2017/Belgium, Brussels</p> <p>The EESC is working on an information report the aim of which is to investigate how European Parliament election procedures are determined in each Member State, taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities and how this affects their right to vote. In this context, a public</p>

hearing is organized to present the first conclusions of the report and to look into successful projects and practices.

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-disabilities-vote>

Wealth Inequality in Europe: the Profit-Labour Split

23/06/2017/ Belgium, Brussels

In the framework of the preparation of its own-initiative opinion, the Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO) will organise a public hearing on *Wealth Inequality in Europe: the Profit-Labour Split*, on Friday, 23 June 2017, at the EESC premises, starting from 10 a.m. We kindly invite you to join the discussion.

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-wealth-inequality>

An EU Action Plan for nature, people and the economy

06/06/2017/ Brussels

The purpose of the Conference is to present the new EU Action Plan, which follows up the Fitness Check of the Nature Directives, and to discuss its implementation with Member States and stakeholders.

The Conference will be co-hosted by the Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Maltese Presidency. It will involve representatives from public authorities (competent authorities for nature and other authorities) as well as relevant economic sectors and environmental NGOs.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/action_plan/conference_en.htm

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