

#12

2022

BRUSSELS' PULSE



HIGHLIGHTS

STATE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: REGIONS AND CITIES ANSWER THE CALL AND STAND READY

Vasco Cordeiro, the President of the European Committee of the Regions made a statement after the SOTEU 2022 speech: "President von der Leyen' speech on the State of the European Union is a good sum up of the challenges Europe is facing and a clear demonstration of political will and ambition to overcome them. On behalf of regions and cities from all the Union, represented by the European Committee of Regions I would like to make it clear that we answer her call to win over these challenges and we stand ready to do our part in the European common effort. "The challenges highlighted by President von der Leyen are also the ones local and regional authorities across the European Union face every day. Mayors, governors, councilors are working tirelessly to find solutions and improve people's lives". More: [here](#).

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROPOSES SECOND €5 BILLION TRANCHE OF MACRO-FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE

The European Commission has proposed a further €5 billion in macro-financial assistance (MFA) loans to Ukraine as the second part of the exceptional MFA (macro-financial assistance) package of up to €9 billion announced in the Commission's communication of 18 May 2022 and endorsed by the European Council of 23-24 June 2022. The Commission disbursed the first €1 billion of this MFA package in early August. The remaining up to €3 billion will be provided as soon as possible. The proposal is part of the extraordinary effort by the EU, alongside the international community, to help Ukraine to address its soaring financial needs following the unprovoked and unjustified aggression by Russia. More: [here](#).

NEWS

AGRICULTURE

COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY 2023-2027: THE COMMISSION APPROVES THE FIRST CAP STRATEGIC PLANS

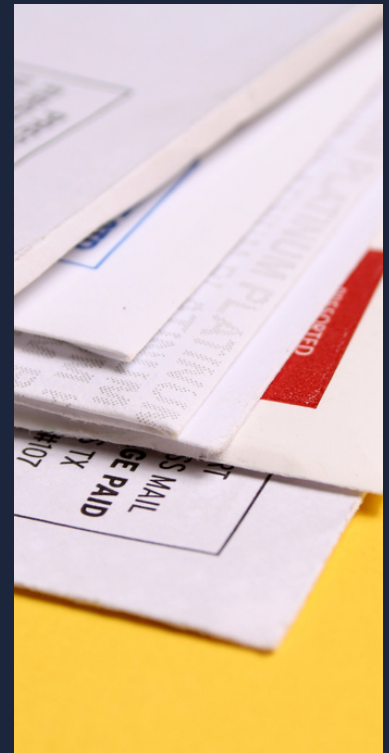
The European Commission approved the first package of CAP strategic plans for seven countries: Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, and Spain. This is an important step for the implementation of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) on 1 January 2023. The new CAP is designed to shape the transition to a sustainable, resilient and modern European agricultural sector. Under the reformed policy, funding will be more fairly distributed to small and medium-sized family farms, as well as to young farmers. Moreover, farmers will be supported to take up new innovations, from precision farming to agro-ecological production methods. By supporting concrete actions in these and other areas, the new CAP can be the cornerstone for food security and farming communities in the European Union. More: [here](#).



INDUSTRY

ENERGY PRICES: COMMISSION PROPOSES EMERGENCY MARKET INTERVENTION TO REDUCE BILLS FOR EUROPEANS

The Commission is proposing an emergency intervention in Europe's energy markets to tackle recent dramatic price rises. The EU is confronted with the effects of a severe mismatch between energy demand and supply, due largely to the continued weaponisation by Russia of its energy resources. To ease the increased pressure this puts on European households and businesses, the Commission is now taking a next step in tackling this issue by proposing exceptional electricity demand reduction measures, which will help reduce the cost of electricity for consumers, and measures to redistribute the energy sector's surplus revenues to final customers. This follows on from previously agreed measures on filling gas storage and reducing gas demand to prepare for the upcoming winter. The Commission is also continuing its work to improve liquidity for market operators, bring down the price of gas, and reform the electricity market design for the longer term. More: [here](#).



EDUCATION

EU CONTEST FOR YOUNG TRANSLATORS: SCHOOLS CAN NOW ENROLL

Secondary schools in all EU countries can now enroll for Juvenes Translatores, the European Commission's annual translation contest. From 12:00 CET on 2 September, schools can register online for their students to compete with peers around the EU. This year, contestants will translate texts on the topic 'European youth'. The contest will be run online on 24 November 2022 in all participating schools. Participants can translate between any two of the EU's 24 official languages (552 possible language combinations). Entering the contest is a two-stage process. In the first stage, schools need to register by 12:00 CET on 20 October 2022. Teachers can complete the registration form in any of the EU's 24 official languages. More: [here](#).



CULTURE

2022 EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS SHINES LIGHT ON SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE

This edition encourages Europeans to protect their rich and diverse heritage in the context of environmental changes and related risks. The event series also focuses on the role of heritage in building more sustainable and resilient communities. A wide range of exhibitions, workshops, performances, guided tours, and many other activities are taking place from mid-August to early November in participating countries of the 2022 edition of European Heritage Days. At events happening across Europe, visitors can understand the impact that historic buildings have in preserving local identities. The events are also an opportunity to learn how at-risk heritage sites can be restored or re-purposed using traditional renovation techniques, skills, and materials as part of socially and environmentally sustainable urban development. More: [here](#).

ENVIRONMENT

COMMISSION AND EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK UNLOCK UP TO €10 BILLION TO SUPPORT PUBLIC INVESTMENTS IN THE TERRITORIES IN TRANSITION TOWARDS A CLIMATE-NEUTRAL ECONOMY

The Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have signed an agreement on the Public Sector Loan Facility, the third pillar of the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM), to pave the way for public sector entities in the EU territories and regions that need most support in Europe's transition to a climate-neutral economy to benefit from €1.5 billion grants from the Commission and €10 billion of EIB loans. The Public Sector Loan Facility is one of the three pillars of the JTM, which is part of the European Green Deal to achieve EU climate neutrality by 2050. More: [here](#).



HEALTH

COVID-19: COMMISSION RALLIES MEMBER STATES TO PREPARE FOR AUTUMN AND WINTER

The Commission proposed concrete measures to avoid a surge of COVID-19 cases in the upcoming season. The main aim of the measures is to increase the uptake of vaccines, including adapted and new vaccines, and to ensure that all citizens are well protected. In addition, based on the recommendation of the European Medicines Agency, the Commission authorised the adapted vaccines from BioNTech, Pfizer and Moderna in the EU. More actions were suggested such as surveillance, non-pharmaceutical intervention, strengthening healthcare systems, research on post-COVID conditions, and much more. More: [here](#).



DIGITAL

EU CYBER RESILIENCE ACT

The Cyber Resilience Act is a first ever EU-wide legislation of its kind: it introduces common cybersecurity rules for manufacturers and developers of products with digital elements, covering both hardware and software. It will ensure that wired and wireless products that are connected to the internet and software placed on the EU market are more secure and that manufacturers remain responsible for cybersecurity throughout a product's life cycle. It will also allow the customers of these products to be properly informed about the cybersecurity of the products they buy and use. More: [here](#).



MARITIME

EU COHESION POLICY: €467 MILLION FOR COOPERATION ACTIONS IN THE NORTH WEST EUROPE, ATLANTIC AND ARCTIC AREA

Thanks to the adoption of three Interreg transnational programmes, the Commission will invest €467 million from the European Regional Development Fund in the 2021-2027 programming period for cooperation actions in the North West Europe, Atlantic and Arctic area – especially, in the field of environment and resilience against climate change. The Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic programme worth €43 million, will promote projects in the field of energy efficiency in climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and in the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy. Interreg North West Europe programme, worth €310 million, will finance projects on smart climate and environmental resilience, smart and just energy transition and transition towards a place-based circular economy. Finally, the Interreg Atlantic Area programme, worth €113 million, will support stakeholders to cooperate on both green and blue economy – for example, by investing in projects on innovation, social matters for youth employability and governance. More: [here](#).

CITIES

COMMISSION JOINS FORCES WITH LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS TO BOOST SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The European Commission has signed framework partnership agreements with five global associations of local authorities: the Association Internationale des Maires Francophones (AIMF), the Commonwealth Local Governments Forum (CLGF), Platforma/Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA). The five renewed partnership agreements, that will be in force until 31 April 2026, recognise the contribution of local and regional governments to the design and implementation of policies that are required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular for making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. More: [here](#).



EVENTS

CONGRESS "GREEN DEAL - CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION IN BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG AND THE EUROPEAN UNION"

We would like to inform you that the Ministry of Food, Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection of Baden Württemberg is organising an international congress on the Green Deal and the challenges for the Common Agricultural Policy from 2023 onwards. The congress "Green Deal - Challenges, Opportunities and Implementation in Baden-Württemberg and the European Union" will be held on Wednesday, 28th September 2022, from 12.00 - 5.30 pm in Stuttgart, Germany. Register and learn more: [here](#).

ANNUAL POLIS CONFERENCE 2022

The Annual POLIS Conference 2022 will take place on 30 November and 1 December in Brussels, Belgium. It provides an opportunity for cities and regions to showcase their transport achievements to a large audience of mobility experts, practitioners and decision-makers.

Across two days, the Annual POLIS Conference 2022 will offer a mix of 32 parallel sessions, 8 deep-dive panels, and 2 plenaries focused on some of the hottest topics that are high on the mobility agenda of cities and regions. You will have plenty of opportunities to discuss and explore the critical challenges affecting urban mobility with some of the world's most innovative thinkers. More: [here](#).

EUROPEAN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DAYS

European Research and Innovation Days is the European Commission's annual flagship Research and Innovation event, bringing together policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs and the public to debate and shape the future of research and innovation in Europe and beyond. This year's European Research and Innovation Days gives you the opportunity to discuss and shape new solutions to strengthen Europe's resilience and its strategic autonomy.

Join us to debate how research and innovation deliver on the European Commission's priorities. The event will take place online on 28 and 29 September 2022, allowing everyone to get involved from anywhere. More: [here](#).

JUST TRANSITION PLATFORM CONFERENCE

This event will be co-hosted by DG REGIO and DG ENER. It will provide a forum for sharing views and experiences on the just transition process with stakeholders from national, local and regional authorities as well as economic and social partners, the wider society and representatives from the European Commission.

The two-day conference (24 and 25 October) will facilitate exchange between stakeholders on the journey of a just transition towards a climate-neutral Europe. The event will highlight the shift from preparation to implementation of the Just Transition Mechanism, the importance of creating a strong project pipeline as well as the need to accelerate the phase-out of fossil fuels to reduce Europe's dependence on imports in times of energy crisis. More: [here](#).

REGISTRATION TO #EUREGIONSWEEK 2022 IS OPEN!

The 20th edition of EURegionsWeek under the motto New Challenges for Europe's cohesion is ready to take off. This year's hybrid programme includes a virtual exhibition and sessions online and onsite dedicated to: Green transition; Territorial Cohesion; Digital transition; Youth empowerment.

Over 1000 speakers will take the floor from all over the EU and beyond during 386 hours of interactive conferences spread over 4 days, and more than 80 video clips will show stories and testimonials about concrete projects. Registering for a session on the onsite programme gives access to the online session too, but physical seats are ensured on a first-come first-served basis. We are looking forward to welcoming you from 10 to 13 October! Register and learn more: [here](#).



OPEN CALLS

CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ACTION - OPEN CALL FOR GOOD PRACTICES

We want to share your best practices throughout Europe and beyond. If you are part of the administration of a city, region or a rural area in the EU, this is your chance to highlight your work in cultural heritage. All you need to do is fill out a short form with a description of a practice in your area. About 30 practices will then be selected for publication and promotion through the EU-funded Cultural Heritage in Action programme. This call is open to local and regional administrations of all sizes (rural areas, medium size cities, large and capital cities, regions) from the 27 European Union countries as well as the UK. Deadline date: 15 October 2022. More: [here](#).



PSFL PROJECTS (JTM-2022-2025-PSLF)

This is a call for proposals for EU action grants in the field of the just transition towards a climate neutral economy under the Public Sector Loan Facility (PSLF) of the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM). The call is launched in accordance with the 2021-2025 Work Programme and will be managed by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) ('Agency'). The topic of the call targets projects addressing serious social, economic and environmental challenges deriving from the transition towards the EU's 2030 climate and energy targets and the objective of climate neutrality in the EU by 2050 at the latest, for the benefit of the EU territories identified in the Territorial Just Transition Plans. Deadline date: 19 October 2022, 17:00, Brussels time. More: [here](#).

TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION PLANS AND STRATEGIES IN MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS (LIFE-2022-CET)

The topic aims to provide local and regional authorities with the necessary capacity to deliver and implement plans and strategies for the clean energy transition. To successfully support the achievement of European energy and climate targets, transition plans and strategies need to be institutionalised, cross-sectoral and tailored to the level of innovation, ambition and specific geographic context of the involved authorities. Proposals should address one or both of the following areas of work: Actions should provide support to regional and local authorities and build their capacities to deliver, implement and monitor ambitious short and medium-term clean energy plans and strategies for 2030; Actions should aim at institutionalising holistic, integrated and collaborative energy planning in local and regional authorities, seeking approaches that facilitate the integration of clean energy, and thus reduce fossil fuels consumption. Deadline date: 16 November 2022, 17:00, Brussels time. More: [here](#).

2022 CEF TRANSPORT CALLS NOW OPEN

A call for proposals launched under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for Transport programme makes EUR 5.12 billion available for projects targeting new upgraded and improved European transport infrastructure. Projects funded under this call will help to increase the sustainability of the transport network, putting the EU on track to meet the European Green Deal objective of cutting transport emissions by 90% by 2050.

The call supports the European Commission's vision of sustainable, smart and resilient mobility. As the transport sector recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now the time to further develop sustainable transport modes and to fully exploit digital technologies. Deadline date: 18 January 2023. More: [here](#).

PERFORM EU (CREA-CULT-2022-PERFORM-EU)

This call for proposals will select one single project which will support a minimum of 35 projects over max. 36 months from all performing arts sectors, sub-sectors and disciplines (excluding live music performances).

The applications need to demonstrate that they are building on the pilot project implemented between December 2020 and June 2021, by providing touring opportunities for artists and companies as well as festivals and venues in diversifying and internationalising their programmes. Applications will also need to address the challenges and the needs in the performing arts sectors (excluding live music performances) and strive to reduce inequalities and imbalances in cross-border touring and digital distribution of performing arts works.

Deadline date: 08 November 2022, 17:00, Brussels time. More: [here](#).



"... AND MORE"

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE: NEW TOOLKIT FOR CITIES AND REGIONS NOW ONLINE

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has published the first Green Deal Handbook with a focus on climate adaptation. The Handbook is an interactive toolkit that provides information on financial aid and technical instruments to deploy climate adaptation measures based on different geographical areas and regional specificities. The objective is to equip LRAs with a set of tools and recommendations to better adapt to climate change, minimize vulnerabilities and build resilience to reduce disaster risks as well as loss and damages. A Handbook is available for every EU Member State. It provides assistance in finding the right measures to deal with the hazards of climate change. More: [here](#).



COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

On the 14th of September, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, delivered the State of the Union Speech 2022. During her address, she summed up the achievements of the past year, and above all considered the challenges for Europe for the coming year. Yes, Europe faces a perfect storm of challenges, indeed.

If existential, challenges have to be tackled without delay. War of aggression against Ukraine – so against our core Union of values – energy crisis, record inflation, industrial capacity, geopolitical position are on the menu. "This is not only a war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine. This is a war on our energy, a war on our economy, a war on our values, and a war on our future. This is about autocracy against democracy" – said the President call for all Europeans, regardless of backgrounds, regions or nations to unite.



Unity and democracy work better once the regions are part of the governance. Economy works better when regions flexibly unite according to common challenges to scale up and succeed. Future is brighter when we do better manage talent, skills and motivation according to the free affirmation of regional competitiveness, creativeness and openness to cooperate.

That may be a point when the President voiced the need of a deep internal reform and called for a European convention. The Europe 2.0 emerging from these challenging times – and from the convention – is the one of freedom, unity and democracy. And these three are pillars to which regional dimension is totally indispensable.

Von der Leyen's speech is clear: these are times with no parallel in EU's history. The response is unity and freedom; creativeness and innovation; strength and resolve; strong, sovereign green and bright views. New Europe, rising from crisis and victory, must be one with more regional initiative and less obstacles; one with more freedom and options for both citizens and regions!

Let's all of regions, namely Alentejo, be prepared to match all upcoming European challenges!

MARCOS ANTÓNIO NOGUEIRA.



AURORAL



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