

#14  
2022

# BRUSSELS' PULSE



## HIGHLIGHTS

**COP15: THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN, AND PACIFIC STATES CALL FOR AN AMBITIOUS GLOBAL AGREEMENT**

At the United Nations Biodiversity Conference COP15 meeting in Montréal, from 7 to 19 December the European Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS) will support the adoption of an ambitious, comprehensive and transformative post-2020 global biodiversity framework to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. Expectations for this landmark meeting were discussed between ministers from the European Union, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific who gathered in Brussels on 29 November at the occasion of the Joint Council of Ministers between the OACPS and the EU. To be successful, the future framework will need to include quantifiable targets, supported by a robust monitoring and review framework and adequate means to support its implementation. More: [here](#).

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## LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO DELIVER ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

The European Committee of the Regions has listened to citizens' expectations and is actively following up on the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe, which cannot be fully implemented without the active involvement of the local and regional level. This is the core message of EU local and regional leaders ahead of the event where the three EU institutions leading the Conference will present to the citizens how they have been following up on their proposals. The European Committee of the Regions also highlights its achievements at local and regional levels and across policy fields in its latest report. In a declaration, the delegation of the European Committee of the Regions and of European associations of local and regional authorities stress the need for the further involvement of regions and cities in this new chapter for European democracy. More: [here](#).

## NEWS

### AGRICULTURE

#### THE EUROPEAN UNION LAUNCHES A NEW ADVISORY SERVICE WITH EUR 30 MILLION TO GREEN INVESTMENTS

The European Commission launched GREEN ASSIST, the Green Advisory Service for Sustainable Investments Support. Funded with EUR 30 million from the LIFE Programme, GREEN ASSIST helps beneficiaries to prepare green or greener investment projects, across diversified sectors, for instance by integrating nature-based solutions or circular economy principles. GREEN ASSIST will provide free, easy-to-access, tailor-made advisory services to those beneficiaries looking for help to invest in environmental priorities and green their projects, and to achieve tangible benefits from better integrating environmental considerations. Project promoters and/or their investment teams, financial institutions and their intermediaries will be able to count on the services of experts registered on a roster of experts to support them in developing their projects even at an early stage (i.e. capacity building, project design, pre-investment phase, etc.). More: [here](#).





# INDUSTRY

## BUILDING AN ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FIT FOR THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

The European Commission has adopted a Communication setting out orientations for a reformed EU economic governance framework. Taking into account the key concerns over the current framework, these aim to strengthen debt sustainability and enhance sustainable and inclusive growth through investment and reforms. The orientations seek to ensure that the framework is simpler, more transparent and effective, with greater national ownership and better enforcement, while allowing for reform and investment and reducing high public debt ratios in a realistic, gradual and sustained manner. In this way, the reformed framework should help build the green, digital and resilient economy of the future, while ensuring the sustainability of public finances in all Member States, in line with President von der Leyen's 2022 State of the Union address. More: [here](#).



# EDUCATION

## BUILDING THE EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA: PROGRESS REPORT PUBLISHED

The European Commission adopted on 18 November the report on progress to achieve the European Education Area by 2025 – an area where barriers to learning are gone and everyone has better access to quality education. The report looks at actions such as: strategic policy initiatives across all education sectors; EU-funded projects such as Teacher Academies, the Education for Climate Coalition or Centres of Vocational Excellence; expert groups on issues such as disinformation or quality investment; measures to make the Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps more inclusive. These actions are reinforcing the initiatives taken by Member States, thanks to a common commitment to the European Education Area. More: [here](#).



# CULTURE

## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AGREES ON NEW EU WORK PLAN FOR CULTURE 2023-2026

On 29 November the Council of Culture Ministers of the EU adopted a Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026. Over the past few months, the Czech Presidency and the Member States, with support from the European Commission, have been working on the preparation of this new Work Plan for Culture.

It sets out priorities to address the main challenges facing the cultural and creative sectors today and corresponding actions to address them. The implementation will involve the close cooperation between the Member States, the Commission and the Presidencies of the Council. More: [here](#).

# ENVIRONMENT

## BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR 2030

The EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy calls for greater efforts to restore freshwater ecosystems and the natural functions of rivers. Besides calling for better implementation of existing legislation on freshwater, the Biodiversity Strategy sets the target to make at least 25 000 km of rivers free-flowing again by 2030, by removing primarily obsolete barriers and restoring floodplains and wetlands. This document aims to support Member States and other actors involved in river restoration as they seek to achieve this target. The document seeks to clarify the terms and concepts of the target and its objectives, while recognising the need for such definitions to be translated into operational terms. It also provides general principles, and examples of existing approaches and methods that could be used to select and prioritise barriers that would need to be removed in order to reach the target of at least 25 000 km of free-flowing rivers in the EU. Finally, the document sets out an overview of the different EU funding mechanisms that could support river restoration projects. More: [here](#).





# HEALTH

## EU GLOBAL HEALTH STRATEGY TO IMPROVE GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY AND DELIVER BETTER HEALTH FOR ALL

The Commission adopted a new EU Global Health Strategy to improve global health security and deliver better health for all in a changing world. With the Strategy, the EU deepens its leadership and reasserts its responsibility for tackling key global challenges and health inequalities head-on: the unfinished agenda in global health and combating health threats in the age of pandemics. The Strategy positions global health as an essential pillar of EU external policy, a critical sector geopolitically and central to EU strategic autonomy. It promotes sustainable, meaningful partnerships of equals drawing on the Global Gateway. As the external dimension of the European Health Union, the strategy is designed to guide EU action for ensuring better preparedness and response to health threats in a seamless way. More: [here](#).



# DIGITAL

## DIGITAL RIGHTS AND PRINCIPLES: A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR EU CITIZENS

The Commission welcomes the agreement reached with the Parliament and the Council on the European declaration on digital rights and principles. The declaration, proposed in January, establishes a clear reference point about the kind of human-centred digital transformation that the EU promotes and defends, at home and abroad. It builds on key EU values and freedoms and will benefit all individuals and businesses. The declaration will also provide a guide for policymakers and companies when dealing with new technologies. The declaration focuses on six key areas: putting people at the centre of the digital transformation; solidarity and inclusion; freedom of choice; participation in digital life; safety and security; and sustainability. More: [here](#).



# MARITIME

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S REPORT ON BETTER PROTECTION FOR OCEANS AND MARITIME BIODIVERSITY

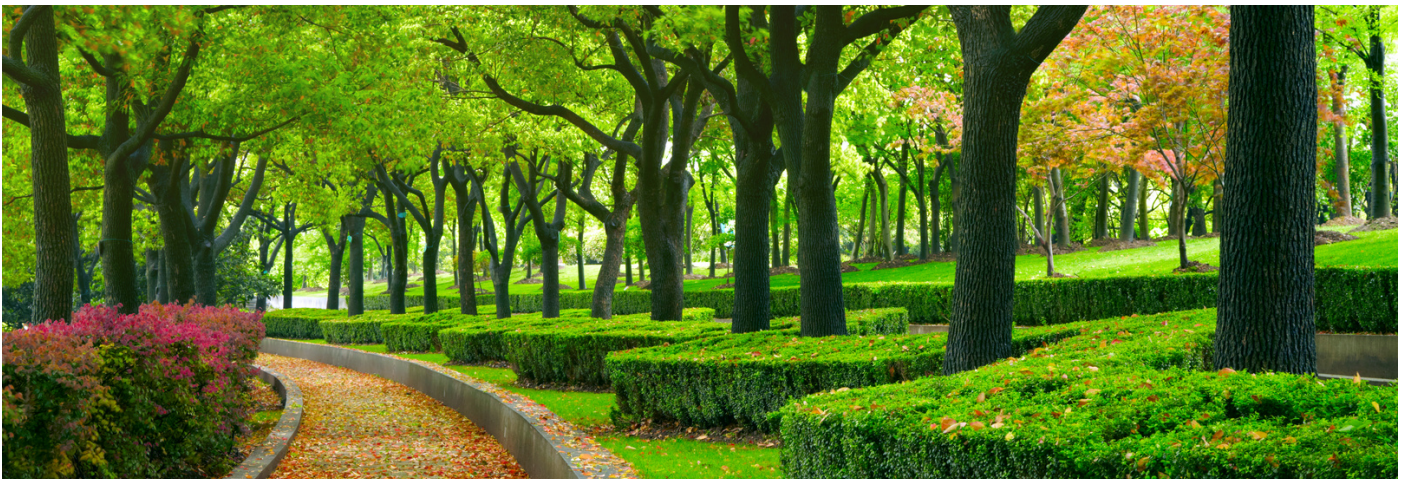
In a resolution approved by the Parliament's plenary in early October, MEPs called on the European Union to be a leader in protecting, restoring and raising awareness of the crucial role of the oceans in combating climate change and maintaining a habitable planet for all. The conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, including areas beyond national jurisdiction, is of crucial importance and was recognised by MEPs, who regret that, despite progress the High Seas Treaty has not been adopted.

They therefore call on the Commission and Member States to urgently resume negotiations on the Treaty so that an ambitious, effective and future-proof international framework can be adopted as soon as possible. More: [here](#).

# CITIES

## CITIES AND REGIONS DEMAND NEW REVENUE SOURCES FOR THE EU BUDGET

Local leaders are worried that the new own resources proposed by the European Commission will not be enough to finance the EU's challenges and repay the debt generated by the Recovery Plan. The budget of the European Union needs new sources of revenue not only to repay the common debt created by the EU Recovery Plan, but also to increase the Union's financial autonomy in a permanent way. However, the new own resources proposed by the European Commission, on which the other EU institution are now negotiating, will not be enough to finance new tasks for the European Union and to keep supporting priorities such as the fight against climate change and territorial disparities. These are the main messages of the opinion on the "next generation of own resources for the EU budget" adopted on 30 November at the plenary of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR). More: [here](#).



# EVENTS

## INNOVATION FUND: FINANCING INNOVATIVE CLEAN TECH CONFERENCE

The European Green Deal has defined the strategy for the development of a globally competitive, resilient and carbon neutral industry by 2050. The European industry is keen to become a front runner of decarbonisation through clean tech solutions with breakthrough technologies and innovative business models which challenge industries' paradigms.

This requires, however, an enabling regulatory framework and investment from both the public and private sectors. The conference builds on the outcomes of the first Financing Innovative Clean Tech conference, held in 2020, designed to raise awareness among the community of public and private financiers about the many business opportunities brought about by the EU Innovation Fund and to promote dialogue with industry. Register and learn more: [here](#).

## EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR R&I - INNOVATION FUND SYNERGIES WORKSHOP

On 8 February 2023, the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), the European Commission's DG Climate Action and Research and Innovation are organising a half-day virtual Workshop on Innovation Fund synergies. The focus of the workshop is to gather participants from mature R&I projects funded under EU R&I funding programmes (notably Horizon 2020) to explore funding opportunities under the EU Innovation Fund to deploy their technologies.

You have the opportunity to present the potential of your project online in one of the breakout sessions within the registration deadline of 16 December 2022. Otherwise you can register to connect and follow the event online. More: [here](#).

## JOIN THE I3 INSTRUMENT INFODAY: 19 JANUARY

The purpose of this event is to inform potential applicants about the call for proposals stemming from the Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument - Strand 2b Capacity Building in Less Developed Regions (LDR) that is open and published on 15 December 2022.

The objective of the call is to test new approaches in order to increase the capacity of regional innovation ecosystems in less developed regions participating in EU value chains. Actions under this call shall facilitate the cooperation between regions which want to develop and increase their capacity to participate in the Interregional Innovation Investments programme, e.g. for the submission of proposals under the I3 Instrument Strands 1 and 2a calls. More: [here](#).



## EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY WEEK 2023

Under the theme “Accelerating the clean energy transition – towards lower bills and greater skills”, the European Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) 2023 will take place in Brussels and online on 20-22 June 2023. A series of locally-organised Sustainable Energy Days will also be taking place around the world in the leading-up days to the event.

EUSEW is open to international organisations, university associations, national and local authorities, professional associations, NGOs working in the field of sustainable development, consumer associations, research organisations, EU-funded projects, EU institutions, and more. More: [here](#).

## FIRST PLENARY MEETING OF THE INVESTORS DIALOGUE ON ENERGY

The First Plenary Meeting of the Investors Dialogue on Energy aims to update stakeholders on the work of the platform, looking in particular at developments and initiatives related to the implementation of the REPowerEU plan. Facilitated discussions will focus on the current investment landscape and how this can support the financing of new and necessary innovations in the energy sector.

The event will garner high-level representation from the European Commission, including the Commissioner for Energy, Kadri Simson, European Parliament, European Investment Bank and the International Energy Agency. Select founders of the most innovative energy start-ups, coordinators of key EU-funded initiatives and the members of the Investors Dialogue Working Groups are also expected to attend. More: [here](#).



# OPEN CALLS

## MARITIME CLUSTERS AS AN INNOVATIVE ENABLER FOR A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The overall objective of this call is to foster an effective network of maritime clusters across the Mediterranean in order to support medium, small and micro enterprises in the blue economy. This topic aims at contributing to the Goal 2 “A smart and resilient blue economy” of the WestMED Initiative (Priority 2.2. “Maritime Clusters Development”), by building up on clusters currently cooperating (e.g. WestMED Clusters Alliance) or similar cooperation agreements and actions in the region developed by EU networks for industrial policy, interregional collaboration and integration of SMEs into EU and global value chains. Applicants should describe in their proposal the concrete and measurable results within the duration of the project and their expected impact, including indicators for the monitoring and measurement of progress. Deadline date: 31 January 2023, 17:00, Brussels time. More: [here](#).

## EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROJECTS (CREA-CULT-2023-COOP)

This action will support projects involving a large diversity of players active in different cultural and creative sectors, to carry out a broad spectrum of activities and initiatives. The action is anchored in the policy framework of the Culture strand of the Creative Europe programme and its cross-cutting issues (inclusiveness, reduction of environmental impact and gender equality). European cooperation projects are also designed to contribute to the implementation of emerging EU policy initiatives such as the New European Bauhaus. European cooperation projects are open to all the cultural and creative sectors. However, considering that this action aims to pursue the objectives of the CULTURE strand of the programme, projects involving exclusively organisations from the audiovisual sector and projects of an exclusive audiovisual content are not targeted for funding under it. Deadline date: 23 February 2023, 17:00, Brussels time. More: [here](#).

## BLUE CAREERS FOR A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY (EMFAF-2023-BLUECAREERS)

The overall aim of this Call is to contribute to the development of the next generation of blue skills and to provide opportunities for attractive, sustainable maritime careers. The objective is to develop the necessary skills to support the European Green Deal initiatives promoting a sustainable blue economy, e.g. the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy, the EU Offshore Renewable Energy strategy, the Biodiversity Strategy and the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP). More specifically, this Call aims to support innovative cooperation projects, bringing together the blue economy industry and relevant marine and maritime educational/academic institutions and/or vocational training providers at all levels (local, regional, national, transnational), and other stakeholders. Deadline date: 31 January 2023, 17:00, Brussels time. More: [here](#).

## EUTEENS4GREEN: APPLICATION PERIOD FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS HAS BEEN EXTENDED

EUTeens4Green is one of REGIO flagship projects of the European Year of Youth. It offers the opportunity to young people to participate in decision making in EU cohesion policy. It focuses on the regions that will be most impacted by the transition to climate neutrality, because they are heavily dependent on fossil fuels or on carbon-intensive industries.

Youth can help identify people that are at risk of exclusion as a result of the transition, to propose actions for involvement of these people in their territory and to choose topics close to them. It addresses young people between 15 and 24 years old. They can apply as individuals, groups of individuals or associations. The budget of the call is 700.000 euro and the maximum contribution per project is 10.000 euro. Maximum duration of the project is 12 months. Deadline date: 09 January 2023. More: [here](#).

## "... AND MORE"

### EU TOURISM DASHBOARD

The European Commission launched the EU Tourism Dashboard, a website that aims to support and promote sustainable European tourism. The EU Tourism Dashboard was conceived and developed as an online knowledge tool to collect, publish and provide meaningful information on indicators relevant to tourism, in particular those related to key policy objectives such as the green and digital transition. The indicators identify issues and corresponding supporting policy actions. In addition to providing useful information to users, the Dashboard tracks the progress of tourism destinations over time in relation to policy areas. Currently, the Dashboard's set of indicators starts in 2019 (or the closest available year) and ends in 2021 (or the closest available year), to cover pre- and post-COVID situations. While it does not cover specific indicators for boating and nautical tourism, the data provides relevant information for the sector. More: [here](#).





## COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

The annual meeting of the Regional Initiative for Culture and Creativity (RICC) took place in Brussels on December 6th 2022, in the Permanent Representation of Portugal to the European Union. The event title, "From the European Year of Youth to the European Year of Skills", pointed to the critical issues of correlating policies for skills, culture, creativeness and freedom of expression at regional level, under the broader scope of a more diverse, united, independent and free Europe! Culture and creativity are one of the key directions of the European Union, and recognizing it as a powerful bridge between people, the EU believes that it should become an essential part of the EU's political dialogue with member countries as well as with non-EU countries, as it can help strengthen civil society, prevent conflicts and promote EU values. Affirming culture as part of the European civilizational stance is also an expression of our collective will of standing for freedom and democracy.



The current war shows Europe the antagonism of two worlds: that of values of freedom, democracy and creativeness prevalent over the darkness of repression, criminality and barbarism. Thus, culture and creativity is not a lateral, but indeed a central topic for the European Union construction which made this year's RICC annual meeting even more significant. In accordance with the principles of free cooperation between regions, subsidiarity and co-responsibility, the Regional Initiative for Culture and Creativity (RICC) aims to give European regional Governments a strategic European platform to advocate for the regional dimension of cultural and creative policies in the current and new EU cultural agenda. The region of Alentejo's representative in Brussels chairs the co-leaders' committee. This is a special responsibility in a moment that Évora is announced as future Capital of Culture, the Year of Skills is succeeding the one of youth and the whole future of Europe hangs from unity, determination, and affirmation of its cultural values. RICC is crucial in promoting social inclusion, cultural tourism, regional cooperation and growth, innovation, competitiveness, sustainability, protection, and the development of new skills throughout Europe constituting a critical element in the permanent dialog between the Commission and the European Regions. It also helps to strengthen a sense of belonging to a single European environment by increasing understanding of shared values and history, as it was very well apparent in many of the high-level invited interventions, notably that – recorded under risk of shelling – by the Ukrainian speaker.

All RICC co-leaders are grateful to the opening address from CCDRA's Vice President Carmen Carvalheira, and the closing speeches from the Cabinet of Commissioner Maryia Gabriel and MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho, who disclosed her critical role on setting up the European Parliament's decision that launched EIT's Culture KIC.

MARCOS ANTÓNIO NOGUEIRA.



**AURORAL**



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