

Media advisory – Video conference of youth ministers, followed by video conference of education ministers of 30 November 2020



Indicative programme

Video conference of youth ministers

Chair: Franziska Giffey, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

10.00

Beginning of the video conference of youth ministers (in [public session](#)).

Agenda

1. Youth mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond – Revitalising international youth exchanges and cross-border volunteering activities
Policy debate
2. Any other business

At the end of the meeting (+/- 13.00) **press conference** in [live streaming](#).

Video conference of education ministers

Chair: Anja Karliczek, Federal Minister of Education and Research

15.00

Beginning of the video conference of education ministers.

Agenda

1. Commitment to freedom of expression and European values
Expression of solidarity for the victims of the terrorist attacks in Europe
2. Shaping the European Education Area and the next strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training – the way forward
Policy debate
3. Any other business

At the end of the meeting (+/- 18.00) **press conference** in [live streaming](#).

Arrangements for the press conferences

Please note that there will be no physical press conference. EU accredited

journalists will be able to ask questions remotely using these links:

[Press conference following the video conference of youth ministers](#)

- **Deadline for registration: Monday, 30 November 2020, 12.00**

[Press conference following the video conference of education ministers](#)

- **Deadline for registration: Monday, 30 November 2020, 17.00**

Those who already registered for the previous video conferences of youth or education do not need to do it again.

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants approximately half an hour after the deadline.

[Article – Plenary highlights: consumer rights, homelessness, media freedom](#)



In a [debate on Wednesday](#), MEPs urged member states to agree on the [2021-2027 budget](#) and thus allow EU funds to flow to help [alleviate the Covid-19 crisis](#). They also pointed out that Parliament needs time to consider and vote on any EU-UK deal.

MEPs set out their priorities for a [future industrial strategy](#) sustaining sovereignty, strategic autonomy, competitiveness and research and innovation

in the EU. In a [resolution adopted on Wednesday](#), they urge the Commission to come up with a revised proposal reflecting the impact of the pandemic in the industrial sector and supporting businesses, especially SMEs through the necessary green and digital transitions.

On Tuesday, MEPs urged the EU to [end homelessness by 2030](#). They want measures to integrate homeless people into the labour market and provide them with equal access to health care and education.

MEPs discussed the [new EU pharmaceutical strategy](#) on Thursday. Parliament has called for increased manufacturing capacity in Europe to ensure [safe and affordable medicines](#) for all.

On Tuesday, Parliament approved [€823 million to assist](#) in rebuilding after an earthquake in Croatia and floods in Poland as well as helping seven countries tackle the Covid-19 health emergency: Portugal, Greece, Croatia, Germany, Spain, Hungary and Ireland.

[Commission consults Member States on new child rights strategy](#)

The group seeks to support preparations for the new comprehensive EU child rights strategy that the European Commission plans to be adopted during the first quarter 2021.

The meeting aimed at sharing the ideas and content of the six pillars of the strategy with government officials. It explored how Member States can help deliver on the strategy including at the local level.

Given its longstanding work on children's rights and experience with child and youth participation, FRA provided insights and relevant findings from its work, such as [child-friendly justice](#) and the views of young people from its [Fundamental Rights Survey](#).

[Italy: EIB and Italian Ministry of Justice join forces to promote social inclusion of convicts through a social](#)

impact bond



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- **The project aims to curb the reoffending rate of ex-convicts and ensure smooth reintegration into society**
- **EIB experts will work with the Italian Ministry of Justice to assess the possibility to launch a social impact bond**
- **The geographical focus of this agreement is limited to the Lombardy Region, but bears the potential to be adopted at a larger scale**

The European Union, through the European Investment Advisory Hub will advise the Italian Ministry of Justice on the implementation of innovative financing and procurement methodologies, aimed at curbing reoffending rates of ex-convicts. The European Investment Advisory Hub, funded by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank, will support the Ministry in its mission to ensure a smooth transition of inmates back into society through innovative financing models, such as social impact bonds.

The agreement, reached within the context of the [Advisory Platform for Social Outcomes Contracting](#), was signed this week by the Advisory Services Department of the EIB and the Department of Penitentiary Administration of the Italian Ministry of Justice. Through this agreement, EIB experts will perform a comprehensive feasibility study on the launch of a social impact bond, an innovative, outcome-oriented financing solution which foresees private investors' participation – and risk sharing – in labour market initiatives with a measurable outcome.

The agreement is signed in the context of the Investment Plan for Europe, which enables the EU Bank to support projects that present particular added value owing to their nature or structure. Whilst the geographical focus of this agreement is limited to the Lombardy Region, the EIB and the Italian Administration cooperation set out to deliver a blueprint that can be adopted at a larger scale.

European Commissioner for the Economy, Paolo Gentiloni, said: *“The support and technical assistance provided through the Investment Plan for Europe’s Advisory Hub will enable the Italian Ministry of Justice to facilitate the social inclusion of convicts, at first in Lombardy but later hopefully in other regions too. This will be achieved through new financing solutions like social impact bonds. It will not only help the social and economic reintegration of former inmates, but also reduce the costs for the public administration.”*

EIB Vice-President Dario Scannapieco, responsible for EIB’s operations in Italy, commented: *“We are pleased to support the Italian Ministry of Justice in their efforts to facilitate the reintegration into society of convicts, through the use of innovative financing models, such as social impact bonds. We are very proud to share our knowledge in this field and to see that more and more EU Countries show their interest in such innovative ways of financing social services. Supporting an inclusive economic growth that leaves no one behind is the way forward.”*

Italian Minister for Justice, Alfonso Bonafede said: *“This kind of contracts put Italy at the forefront of social policy, as they enable us to carry out innovative projects by sharing the risk with private counterparts. If successful, such innovative approach could be replicated and allow the public administration to better fulfil the re-educational mission of its penitentiary system. Working together with qualified partners, such as the EIB, is crucial to head towards reducing the reoffending rate of ex-convicts, which nowadays has reached ca 68%, resulting in social costs of around EUR 130 million per year. We know that enhancing inmates’ capability to develop a sustainable career after serving their sentences would increase their chances of social and working inclusion. Social entrepreneurs and investors know that the Italian Ministry of Justice is keen on supporting their pilot projects. This is a very promising form of public-private cooperation, and we are proud to be able to count on the backing of the EIB, which we thank for its commitment.”*

The Head of the Department of Penitentiary Administration, Bernardo Petralia said: *“As Head of the Department, I welcome this partnership, the first in Europe, between the Ministry of Justice and the EIB targeting the penitentiary system. We hope that this collaboration will lead to the development of a new financial and organisational model involving private capital and European funds to address social objectives; a model that can be replicated, after Lombardy, in other Italian regions as early as 2021 “.*

Social impact bonds can be a testbed for innovative actions that, on one side, fulfil the re-educational mission of the sentences and, on the other side, provide inmates with soft skills and specific knowledge that increase

their chances of finding a job upon their release. Ultimately, work inclusion of former inmates would reduce costs for the public administration and would ensure an income to targeted individuals.

About the Social Outcomes Contracting Advisory Platform

The support will be provided under the Advisory Platform for Social Outcomes Contracting created in early 2020 and funded by the Advisory Hub. The platform aims at fostering the development and use of social outcomes contracting methodologies (supported, for example, by social impact bonds and other innovative financing options) as a strategic and operational tool to address social inclusion issues and thus contribute to improving EU citizens' welfare.

About the Social Outcomes Contracting Advisory Platform:

<https://eiah.eib.org/about/initiative-social-outcomes-contracting>

About the European Investment Advisory Hub

The European Investment Advisory Hub is a partnership between the European Investment Bank Group and the European Commission under the Investment Plan for Europe. The Advisory Hub is designed to act as a single access point to various types of advisory and technical assistance services. It supports the identification, preparation and development of investment projects across the EU. Its advisers work directly with project promoters to prepare a tailor-made advisory package to support investment projects.

For more info on the European Investment Advisory Hub: <https://eiah.eib.org/>

About the Department of Penitentiary Administration

The Department of Penitentiary Administration (Dipartimento dell'Amministrazione Penitenziaria – DAP) is one of the four departments into which the Italian Ministry of Justice is divided. Ensured by the Italian Penitentiary Police, the key role of the DAP is to safeguard order and safety within prisons. DAP duties include, inter alia, the performance of the tasks related to the execution of the precautionary measures of custody in prison, sentences and detention security measures, alternatives measures to detention. DAP is divided into regional penitentiary board administrations responsible for the management of adults penitentiary institutions across all Italian regions.

About Social Outcome Contracting

Social Outcome Contracting (SOC), which includes more specific arrangements such as Social Impact Bonds, consists of innovative methodologies where the public administration procures services based on desired, achievable social outcomes, which are pre-agreed with the service provider. The relationship between the procuring public administration and the service provider is structured around pre-agreed social outcome (for instance, reduction of re-offending rates, social inclusion of vulnerable groups, etc.), and not merely on outputs.

SOC models typically envisage the involvement of private investors, financing innovation in social service delivery and payments which are subject to the actual achievement of contracted outcomes.

This contracting and financing methodology ensures transparency and better control over the results, as it is necessary to establish a system of metrics upfront, to measure the extent to which the objectives have been achieved.

[#CohesionAlliance mobilises to back the European Parliament in the final stretch to secure a strong and participated cohesion policy 2021-2027](#)



The #CohesionAlliance partners met online on 26 November to discuss the current state of the trilogue negotiations of the cohesion policy package with representatives from the European Parliament, the European Commission and the German Council Presidency. The partner organisations representing cities, regions and regional assemblies voiced their concern about macroeconomic conditionality, the risk of centralisation and the full implementation of cohesion and REACT EU programmes over the upcoming years and urged for cohesion as a fundamental value.

The negotiations between European Parliament and Council on the rules for cohesion policy 2021-27 are entering the final phase. Cities, towns and regions and the European Parliament have converged on key demands and successfully advocated for strong cohesion policy beyond 2020.

“Concluding the negotiations on all cohesion policy programmes is more urgent than ever. It’s less than one month until Christmas, so national governments should stop playing games and listen to their cities and regions. A delay in the negotiations on the cohesion policy regulation risks a postponement of the start of programmes. This would have a direct impact on our citizens, who urgently rely on the EU support. These funds are essential for local and regional authorities to take action against the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and accelerate a sustainable and socially-fair recovery”, said Isabelle Boudineau, Chair of the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER) of the European Committee of the Regions.

Younous Omarjee, MEP, Chair of the REGI committee: *“The European Union is going through an economic and social crisis on an unprecedented scale. The conditions for recovery in 2021 are unknown. More than ever, cohesion policy must be powerful, because today what is threatening is the distortion of*

economies and divergence. The logic of cohesion and solidarity must take precedence over that of competition. The principles of cohesion must be at the heart of the recovery, and we must plead for a recovery that is sustainable, but also fair and equitable."

During the debate with Marc Lemaitre, Director-General DG REGIO, European Commission, and Heinz Hetmeier, Deputy Director-General for European Economic Policy, EU Structural and State Aid Policy, and Twinning at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, the #CohesionAlliance partners voiced their concern about some remaining key issues in this last phase of the negotiations. In particular, towns, cities and regions worry that macroeconomic conditionality introduces significant uncertainty on future investment once the Growth and Stability Pact comes back into force. Furthermore, a narrow definition of the scope of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) would make key investment ineligible and an ill-conceived flexibility would allow for centralisation and weakening of key tools such as the European Social Fund.

At the same time, managing authorities will face significant implementation challenges as the new programmes 2021-2027 will run in parallel with the current prolonged programmes 2014-2020. The #CohesionAlliance partners therefore call on the European Parliament and the Council to simplify the new regulations as much as possible as well to speed up their adoption.

Further interventions from the conference (alphabetical order):

- Magnus Berntsson, President of the [Assembly of European Regions](#) (AER): *"In this crisis, it is time to practice the leadership that our citizens expect from the EU and national governments. Time to promote new jobs, competitiveness, sustainable and inclusive growth to drive the recovery. To achieve this, funding must reach our regions, villages and cities immediately. And they must have a say in how best to use the funds."*
- Wim Dries, Mayor of Genk and member of the Policy Committee of [Council of European Municipalities and Regions](#) (CEMR): *"Even when all Member States will agree in the Council, Europe's next long-term budget and Recovery Plan will still have to go through parliaments to become fully adopted and operational. The resulting delay will clash with our urgent needs, in terms of public services delivery and finances. National associations of local and regional governments can help convey the urgency of swift local action to our parliaments."*
- Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the [Association of European Border Regions](#) (AEBR): *"The difficulties for recovery in regions with different pre-existing handicaps such as border regions, peripheral, sparsely populated, mountainous, etc., should be considered when planning the allocation of new or extended EU programmes. Territorial cooperation programmes and a new generation of integrated territorial instruments should receive the necessary inputs to accelerate the economic recovery of all territories of the EU and, thus, serve as laboratories for a strengthened European integration. The participation of local and regional authorities and stakeholders in the design and management of*

these programmes will mean a better identification of the needs to address and the best way to proceed, adding a great value to their implementation while guaranteeing high-quality delivery."

- Ricardo Rio, Mayor of Braga and member of the Executive Committee of [EUROCITIES](#): *"We can maximise the impact of future investments, if we target the local needs in times of crisis. For this to happen, cities must have a seat at the table when the decisions about programming priorities are taken. When we work closely together across levels of government, we can ensure that cohesion policy is invested where it makes a positive difference to the quality of life locally."*
- Ana Martinez Vidal, Vice-President of the [Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions](#) (CPMR) and Regional Minister of the Region of Murcia: *"As Cohesion Alliance Partners, we should keep our efforts to voice the view of the local and regional authorities. A sustainable economic recovery will only be achieved if local and regional authorities have a central role in designing and delivering the investments under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The Partnership principle and multilevel governance become more important than ever."*

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