

Tuesday 13th April 2021

issue 931

The Letter in PDF format

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The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on posted workers: the new posting framework

Authors: Sachka Stefanova-Behlert, Martina Menghi



The revised Posted Workers Directive came into force as planned in July 2020, in the midst of a pandemic. The health situation has led to intensive national inspections and a decrease in the number of postings, creating a danger that Member States will justify national market protection measures on the grounds of public health.

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Foundation :

Table of Health Measures and Travel Conditions in Europe



Restrictions remain in place in several countries such as Germany, France, Spain, Italy and Poland until 18 or 25 April. Schools reopen on 12 April in several countries, including the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Latvia, and Luxembourg has reopened the terraces of bars and restaurants. To follow the development of the situation, the Foundation offers you a summary of the sanitary measures in place and the travel conditions across Europe. An essential, regularly updated resource for you to better understand the situation... [Read more](#)

Belarus: chronology of a revolution in progress



Two political parties have been created since the beginning of April within the democratic movement that opposes the Belarusian regime. To follow the crisis since the August 2020 elections, the Foundation offers a chronology of events and links to European responses and initiatives... [Read more](#)

Commission :

First calls under the European Innovation Council



The Commission launched the first calls under the €1 billion European Innovation Council (EIC) Accelerator on 9 April. The funding aims to accelerate the development of promising start-ups and SMEs, focusing on scientific discoveries or technological breakthroughs that require significant funding over a longer period before they can generate returns. 495 million will be allocated to innovations that support the Green Deal for Europe as well as digital and health technologies... [Read more](#)

New rules for EUROSUR



On 9 April, the Commission adopted new rules aimed at modernising EUROSUR, the European system for monitoring the Union's external borders. Member States will have to publish regular reports and alerts on situations relevant to the management of the Union's external borders. They will have to report on search and rescue incidents and operations to better detect people in danger... [Read more](#)

First use of the REACT-EU programme



On 6 April, the Commission approved the use by the Netherlands and Austria of REACT-EU, Europe's recovery support instrument for cohesion and territories. The two Member States will have access to almost €262 million. This is the first use of this fund established under the NextGenerationEU recovery plan... [Read more](#)

Review of world support against the pandemic



On 8 April, the Commission took stock, one year after its establishment, of the "Team Europe" mechanism, designed to support the efforts of Member States and the Union's external partners in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. This joint action had an initial budget of €20 billion, which has been doubled. The initiative supports the roll-out of vaccination campaigns, through the COVAX mechanism, and ensures full and equitable access to vaccines. It has assisted more than 130 countries worldwide and has helped to strengthen health systems, support the emergency response to humanitarian needs and mitigate the social and economic consequences of the pandemic... [Read more](#)

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123 million € to counter the coronavirus and its variants



The Commission announced on 7 April that it has committed €123 million to coronavirus under Horizon Europe, the EU's new research and innovation programme. The programme will advance the development of promising treatments and vaccines that have already completed pre-clinical development, by strengthening research infrastructures to speed up data sharing and provide rapid support and expertise, as well as research resources... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Conference on the future of Europe: launch of a digital platform on 19 April



The executive committee of the Conference on the Future of Europe announced on 7 April that the multilingual digital platform for citizens to contribute to the debate on the future of the Union will be launched on 19 April. The platform will provide information on the structure and work of the conference, as well as a map of events where citizens can participate. The Committee of the Regions also discussed its own working methods and held a first debate on the draft rules on the composition and work of the plenary sessions of the conference... [Read more](#)

Council :

Meeting of Healthcare Ministers



Health ministers met on 7 April following the European Medicines Agency's announcements on the side effects of the AstraZeneca vaccine. They discussed the need for more pharmacovigilance studies on certain population groups. The Commission and the Portuguese Presidency of the Council called on Member States to work towards a coordinated position on vaccines, and condemned unilateral decisions that affect "everyone"... [Read more](#)

Adoption of an additional budget to counter the pandemic



On 9 April, the Council approved additional funding of €121.5 million to meet urgent needs related to the pandemic. The funds will come from the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve and will support Member States in monitoring the evolution of the epidemic, particularly with regard to the new Covid-19 variants... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Meeting with the Turkish president



European Council President Charles Michel and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen met Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara on 6 April. They discussed a possible strengthening of economic ties between the two sides, as well as cooperation on refugees and migration. The Commission will soon present a new aid plan for Syrian refugees in Turkey and other countries. EU leaders stressed the need for Turkey to respect the principles of the rule of law and condemned Turkey's unilateral actions against Greece and Cyprus... [Read more](#)

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Extension and strengthening of sanctions against Iran



The Council decided on 12 April to extend until 13 April 2022 the restrictive measures put in place in response to the serious human rights violations in Iran, and extended them to 8 persons and 3 entities for their role in the repression of the protest movement in late 2019. These measures consist of an EU entry ban and asset freeze, as well as a ban on exports to Iran of equipment that could be used for internal repression, and of telecommunications surveillance equipment. EU citizens and companies are prohibited from making funds available to listed persons and entities... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Agenda 2025 European Space Agency



On 7 April, the Director General of the European Space Agency (ESA), Josef Aschbacher, presented Agenda 2025, which sets out the Agency's priorities and new objectives for increasing Europe's role in the space economy and trying to catch up with the United States and China. The Agency wants to set up missions in cooperation with the Member States, with companies of all sizes that would increase knowledge and protect the Earth and its orbit... [Read more](#)

The European Prosecutor's Office will take office on 1 June



The European Public Prosecutor's Office will be able to start operations on 1 June, its head Laura Kövesi announced in a letter to the Commission on 7 April. Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders approved the date, subject to the appointment of all deputy European public prosecutors and the conclusion of the final preparatory steps with Member States. The new independent authority will have jurisdiction over corruption and fraud against the EU budget, and will be able to prosecute, investigate and refer criminal offenders to national courts... [Read more](#)

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Opinions regarding the secondary effects of the AstraZeneca vaccine



The European Medicines Agency's Safety Committee concluded on 7 April that certain types of blood clots should be listed as "very rare" side effects of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine. 86 cases, including 18 fatalities, have been reported out of 25 million people vaccinated in the UK and the European Economic Area. Most occurred in women under 60 years of age within 2 weeks of vaccination. Specific risk factors have not been confirmed, and the Agency states that the benefit/risk balance of the vaccine remains "positive"... [Read more](#)

Denmark :

Green Left Party wins in Greenland



On 6 April, the left-wing environmentalist party, Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA), won the parliamentary elections in Greenland with 36.6% of the vote. The party overtook the social-democratic Siumut party (29.4%), which had been in power since 1979. It is expected to win 12 of the 31 seats in Inatsisartut, the unicameral parliament of Greenland, a self-governing Danish territory that is not part of the EU... [Read more](#)

Greece :

Murder of journalist Giorgos Karaivaz



An investigative journalist, Giorgos Karaivaz, was murdered outside his home in Athens on 9 April. The murder, for which no one has claimed responsibility, has been condemned by many European leaders and journalists' and human rights groups. Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has called for a "rapid resolution" of the investigation... [Read](#)

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UK :

Violence in Northern Ireland



On 8 April, the authorities and political parties in Northern Ireland condemned the violence and clashes that have been taking place in the province for several days. Political tensions have increased among both unionists and republicans due to the implementation of customs controls between Northern Ireland and Great Britain under the UK's withdrawal agreement from the European Union... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Rising tension in the Donbass



On 8 April, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited the Luhansk region on the frontline of the conflict with pro-Russian separatists in the east of the country. His visit is linked to an increase in the Russian military presence in Crimea and the regions bordering Ukraine since the end of March, as well as systematic ceasefire violations. On 12 April, the G7 foreign ministers and the EU High Representative issued a joint statement calling Russian troop movements "a threat and a destabilising factor" and calling on Russia to "stop its actions in the region". Russia to "put an end to its provocations and immediately de-escalate tensions"... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Worsening in Human Trafficking due to the pandemic



In the annual report of the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), experts call on States to act in response to the worsening and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on human trafficking. They stress the importance of identifying vulnerable asylum seekers so that they receive the necessary support and protection. The report also calls on Russia to ratify the Convention... [Read more](#)

Call to reform mental healthcare services



The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatovic, issued a call for reform of mental health services in Member States on 7 April. She highlights the devastating impact of the pandemic on mental health and notes that the standards of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are not always met, particularly in access to care... [Read more](#)

Rate of imprisonment continues to decline in Europe



The Council of Europe published its annual report on crime statistics on 8 April. The incarceration rate per 100,000 inhabitants in the 47 states has continued to fall, from 135 incarcerated per 100,000 inhabitants in 2013 to 105 in 2020. The countries with the highest incarceration rates remain Turkey, Russia and Georgia. Men account for 95% of prisoners in Europe. The report raises the cost of incarceration: each person incarcerated costs €63 per day for a total expenditure by prison administrations of €27 billion... [Read more](#)

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ECHR :

Judgment validating obligatory vaccination amongst children



The European Court of Human Rights ruled on 8 April that compulsory vaccination of children against nine childhood diseases in the Czech Republic is "necessary in a democratic society". The applicants considered that the obligation to vaccinate children in order to enrol them in kindergarten was in contradiction with Article 8 of the European Convention on

Human Rights on the protection of private life. The Court concluded that the measures were proportionate and legitimate... [Read more](#)

IMF :

World Economic Outlook



On 6 April, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) raised its world growth outlook to 6% in 2021, compared to 5.2% forecast last October. For the euro area, the IMF lowered its GDP growth forecast to 4.4% in 2021 from 5.2% forecast in October 2020. The gap is widening between the euro area and the US, where the faster vaccination and the \$1.9 trillion stimulus package will have a faster impact on economic recovery than in Europe. The IMF notes that there will be divergences in the recovery between countries depending on the extent of support given to the economies, as well as uncertainties about the evolution of the health crisis that could undermine the economic recovery... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Study on the German Constitutional Court and the European Recovery Plan



In a study published by the European Policy Center, Jean-Claude Piris, member of the Foundation's Scientific Council, explains why the German Constitutional Court suspended Germany's ratification of the text authorising the loan to finance the European recovery plan NextGenerationEU. He stresses that the Court, seized by the German far right whose arguments are weak, should not call into question the recovery plan... [Read more](#)

Report on macro-financial assistance to Ukraine



On 9 April, the Commission published its evaluation report on the third macro-financial assistance operation (MFA-III) in favour of Ukraine. It examines the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence and European added value of the operation voted in 2015 for an amount of €1.8 billion. The Commission acknowledges that the conditions of the assistance attached to the reforms should have been fewer, but stresses that the operation has been instrumental in helping Ukraine to address its balance of payments problems and to carry out structural reforms in order to stabilise the economy and strengthen the sustainability of its external position... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Unemployment rate stable in February



The February unemployment rate was 7.5% in the EU and 8.3% in the euro area, unchanged compared to January, according to figures released by Eurostat on 6 April. The youth unemployment rate was 17.2% in the EU and 17.3% in the euro area... [Read more](#)

Decline in life expectancy due to the pandemic



While life expectancy at birth had been increasing over the last decade in the EU, the pandemic has changed the trend. In the vast majority of Member States, life expectancy at birth decreased in 2020, according to Eurostat. The largest decreases were recorded in Spain (-1.6 years compared to 2019), Bulgaria (-1.5), Lithuania, Poland and Romania (-1.4)... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

Bafta Awards



Nomadland won the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (Bafta) Best Film award on 11 April, and its director, Chloe Zhao of China, won the Best Director award. Frances McDormand and Anthony Hopkins won best actress and actor... [Read more](#)

Symphonic Orchestra of Vienna on ARTE



On 18 April, Arte will broadcast a concert by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra dedicated to the Austrian composer Franz Schubert under the direction of Philippe Jordan. Baritone Matthias Goerne will perform

Shubert's Lieder, poems set to music, in their orchestral version, in particular "An Silvia - who is Silvia?" after Shakespeare, and "Erlkönig - King of the Alder" after Goethe... [Read more](#)



Strinbert Theatre online



Chester's Storyhouse Theatre is showing August Strindberg's Mademoiselle Julie every night until 17 April on its website... [Read more](#)



Rock Concert in Warsaw



On 18 April, Warsaw's Club Progresja is uniting 3 generations of bassists on stage, Wojtek Pilichowski, a Polish bass star who has played with great rock musicians; Bartek Królik, founder of the band Sistars; and Kinga Glyk. The concert will be performed in front of a limited audience but will be broadcast online... [Read more](#)



Work on paper by Alechinsky

ART BRUSSELS

The Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels are presenting "Carte Canta", an exhibition of works on paper by the Belgian artist Pierre Alechinsky, with a focus on colour and spontaneity, until 1 August... [Read more](#)



The Buontalenti Grotto at 360



The Uffizi Gallery Museum in Florence offers a 360° virtual tour of the Buontalenti grotto in the Boboli Gardens. The artificial grotto is considered a masterpiece of Mannerist architecture and culture (1520-1580) and represents a unique blend of architecture, painting and sculpture... [Read more](#)



Art and Myth. The Gods of the Prado



Classical mythology has always been a source of inspiration for artists. Gods, heroes, nymphs, satires and maenads are intertwined in stories full of human vices and virtues. The Caixa Forum in Tarragona is showing the exhibition "Art and Myth. The Gods of the Prado", which offers a broad look at these mythological characters and their representation throughout the history of art... [Read more](#)



Satiric drawing at the Tomi Ungerer Museum



As part of the 6th edition of the Rencontres de l'illustration, the Tomi Ungerer Museum in Strasbourg, in partnership with the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, is organising an online exhibition on satirical drawing in France from 1960 to 2003. Until 4 July, it is possible to wander through the various virtual rooms of the exhibition on the museum's website... [Read more](#)



Napoleon's Bicentenary :

Napoléon and Joséphine



Bertram Fields' book "Destiny: A Novel Of Napoleon & Josephine" explores the relationship forged by the daring, brilliant Corsican who rose to become Emperor of the French, with the beautiful, elusive Joséphine. Cynical at first, she came to adore him, as he adored her. Set against a sweeping background of intrigue, terror and war, this is the story of loyalty, betrayal, and tempestuous love... [Read more](#)



Exhibition in Liège



Until 9 January 2022, the museum space at Liège-Guillemins station is exhibiting "Napoleon - beyond the myth", a collection of 350 original items, such as the emperor's clothes and bathtub or a dress worn by Josephine, from private collections and Belgian and foreign institutions... [Read more](#)



Agenda :



16 April 2021
Videoconference
Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers
Videoconference
Eurogroup Meeting



19 April 2021
Videoconference
Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers

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N° ISSN : 2729-6482

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