

INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Contents

EU Recovery Plan.....	4
Next generation EU	4
New Multiannual Financial Framework	5
Priority areas	5
COVID-19 Crisis	7
Free circulation within the EU Internal Market	7
External Schengen borders	8
Macroeconomic Measures	9
Safety at the Workplace	12
Data protection	12
INTERNAL MARKET.....	13
Construction Products Regulation (CPR)	13
Pressure Equipment Directive (PED)	14
Digitalisation	15
Machinery Directive (MD)	16
Outdoor Noise Directive (OND)	17
Low Voltage Directive (LVD)	17
Electromagnetic Compatibility Directive (EMCD).....	17
New Legislative Framework (NLF)	18
Regulation on market surveillance and compliance	18
Standardisation Policy	19
MARKET ACCESS	20
Brexit	20
Foreign Direct Investments	20
ENVIRONMENT.....	21
RoHS2 Directive.....	21
WEEE2 Directive	22
Circular Economy Policy.....	23
Waste Framework Directive	23
SCIP Database (previously ECHA Waste Database).....	24

Eco-Management and Audit Scheme	25
REACH	25
Green Public Procurement	27
Revision of the Drinking Water Directive	27
ENERGY	28
Renewable Energy Sources	28
Energy Efficiency	28
Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD)	28
Energy Labelling Regulation	30
Ecodesign Directive	30
Ecodesign Directive - Update on Lots / implementing measures	31
DECARBONISATION & CLIMATE CHANGE	33
National Energy and Climate Plans	33
EU Climate Law	33
EU 2030 Climate Targets	34
Sustainable finance	34
PUBLICATIONS & EVENTS	36
PUBLICATIONS	36
EVENTS	40

EU Recovery Plan

On 27 May, the European Commission presented in a Communication “Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation” a set of [proposals](#) on an EU post-Covid19 crisis recovery plan. This plan is based on [a new recovery instrument, “Next Generation EU”](#), and a new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the 2021-2027 period, for a total of €1.850 billion.

It aims to address the expected drop by 7% in the EU GDP in 2020, and a raise of unemployment to 9% of the EU's active population.

Next generation EU

Investments will be made across three pillars:

1. Support to Member States with investments and reforms:

A new **Recovery and Resilience Facility of €560 billion** will offer financial support for investments and reforms, including in relation to the green and digital transitions and the resilience of national economies. Linking these to the EU's priorities and national recovery plans. It will be equipped with a grant facility of up to €310 billion and will be able to make up to €250 billion available in loans. Support will be available to all Member States but concentrated on the most affected and where resilience needs are the greatest.

A new **REACT-EU initiative, granted with €55 billion on the top of the current cohesion policy programmes will focus on areas most affected by the** socio-economic impacts of the crisis, with criteria such as the level of youth unemployment and the relative prosperity of Member States.

A proposal to strengthen the **Just Transition Fund up to €40 billion** will further assist Member States in accelerating the transition towards climate neutrality.

2. Kick-starting the EU economy by incentivising private investments:

A new **Solvency Support Instrument** will mobilise private resources to urgently support viable European companies in the sectors, regions and countries most affected. It will have a budget of €31 billion, aiming to unlock €300 billion in solvency support for companies from all economic sectors and prepare them for a cleaner, digital and resilient future.

InvestEU will be upgraded to a level of €15.3 billion to mobilise private investment, with a new Strategic Investment Facility to generate investments of up to €150 billion in boosting the resilience of strategic sectors, notably those linked to the green and digital transition, and key value chains in the internal market.

3. Addressing the lessons of the crisis:

A new **Health Programme, EU4Health**, will strengthen health security and prepare for future health crises with a budget of **€9.4 billion**. **RescEU, the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism**, will be reinforced with **€2 billion** to equip the EU to prepare for and respond to future crises.

New Multiannual Financial Framework

Most programmes envisaged under the new MFF for 2021-2027 will be reinforced, including **Horizon Europe with** an amount of **EUR€94.4 billion** to fund research in health, resilience and the green and digital transitions. [Other instruments](#) will be reinforced to make the EU budget more flexible and responsive.

Priority areas

1. The European Green Deal as the EU's recovery strategy:

- A massive renovation wave of buildings and infrastructure and a more circular economy, aiming to create local jobs
- Rolling out renewable energy projects, especially wind, solar and kick-starting a clean hydrogen economy in Europe
- Cleaner transport and logistics, including the installation of one million charging points for electric vehicles and a boost for rail travel and clean mobility in our cities and regions
- Public investments in the recovery should respect the green oath to "do no harm"; investment should be guided by the priorities identified in the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)
- The new Strategic Investment Facility will invest in technologies key for the clean energy transition, such as renewable and energy storage technologies, clean hydrogen, batteries, carbon capture and storage and sustainable energy infrastructure

- The Connecting Europe Facility, InvestEU and other funds will support financing the installation of one million charging points, clean fleet renewals by cities and companies, sustainable transport infrastructure and enable the shift to clean urban mobility.

2. Strengthening the Single Market and adapting it to the digital age:

- Investments in more and better connectivity – rapid deployment of 5G.
- Investment in strategic capacities and capabilities, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, secured communication, data and cloud infrastructure, 5G and 6G networks, supercomputers, quantum and blockchain
- Legislative action on data sharing and governance, followed by a Data Act on the conditions for better access to and control of industrial data; creation of Common European data spaces in key sectors and areas
- Improvement of the legal framework for digital services, with clear rules for online platforms, with a Digital Services Act
- A new Cybersecurity Strategy, aiming at boosting EU-level cooperation, knowledge and capacity. This will accompany the review of the NIS Directive
- A budget of €8.2 billion for the Digital Europe Programme.

3. A fair and inclusive recovery for all:

- The short-term **European Unemployment Reinsurance Scheme** (SURE) will provide €100 billion to support workers and businesses;
- A **Skills Agenda for Europe** and a **Digital Education Action Plan** will ensure digital skills for all EU citizens;
- **Fair minimum wages** and **binding pay transparency measures** will help vulnerable workers, particularly women;
- The European Commission is stepping up the fight against **tax evasion** and this will help Member States generate revenue.

Background documents on the whole Recovery Plan can be found [here](#).



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COVID-19 Crisis

The European Union continued to act throughout the months of April and May to provide economic support and coordinate Member States' action to fight and overcome the sanitary, economic and social crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Free circulation within the EU Internal Market

On 13 May, the Commission presented a package of guidelines and recommendations to coordinate and support the gradual lifting of travel restrictions and allow tourism businesses to reopen while respecting health precautions. Of most direct interest for the whole economy and the technology industries in particular is the [common approach](#) to restoring free movement and lifting restrictions at EU internal borders in a gradual and coordinated way. This document **aims to** give people the ability, confidence and safety to travel again.

Member States are invited to replace blanket restrictions to free movement by more targeted measures, in a phased and coordinated approach that starts by lifting restrictions between areas or Member States with sufficiently similar epidemiological situations. The approach is meant to be flexible, including the possibility to reintroduce certain measures if the epidemiological situation requires. Member States should act based on the following 3 criteria:

- **epidemiological**, notably focusing on areas where situation is improving, based on guidance by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and using the regional [map developed by the ECDC](#);
- the ability to apply **containment measures** throughout the whole journey including at border crossings, including additional safeguards and measures where physical distancing may be difficult to ensure and
- **economic and social considerations**, initially prioritising cross-border movement in key areas of activity and including personal reasons.

The Commission also insists on the principle of non-discrimination: when a Member State decides to allow travel into its territory or to specific regions and areas within its territory, it should do so by allowing travel from all areas, regions or countries in the EU with similar epidemiological conditions. Likewise, any restriction must be lifted without discrimination, to all EU citizens and to all residents of that Member State

regardless of their nationality and should be applied to all parts of the Union in a similar epidemiological situation.

The Commission's [Tourism and Transport package](#) also includes:

- An [overall strategy](#) towards recovery in 2020 and beyond;
- A [framework](#) to support the gradual re-establishment of transport whilst ensuring the safety of passengers and personnel.

As a reference, the European Parliament services published a [briefing](#) describing and analysing measures undertaken by the European Commission on mobility and transport to keep free circulation of goods, services and workers despite the Member States closing of the internal EU borders. A link to the main texts is provided, such as

- Communication on temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU.
- Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services
- Interpretative guidelines on EU passenger rights regulations in the context of the developing Covid-19 pandemic
- Communication on the implementation of 'green lanes' to expedite traffic under the guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services.
- Guidance on the implementation of the temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU, on the facilitation of transit arrangements for the repatriation of EU citizens, and on the effects on visa policy.
- Guidelines concerning the exercise of the free movement of workers during the Covid-19 outbreak.

External Schengen borders

On 30 March, the European Commission issued [a guidance](#) document on the implementation of the [temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU](#). Together with the other document on [free movement of critical workers](#), it helps facilitate transit arrangements for repatriated citizens by assisting border guards and visa authorities, providing advice on the implementation of the **temporary restriction at the border**, on facilitating transit arrangements for the **repatriation of EU citizens**, and on **visa** issues. Detailed practical guidance is provided for border

authorities on key issues, such as: **criteria for refusing entry, exemptions, security, exit checks, transit and repatriation, or visa applications and overstay.**

On 8 May, the European Commission proposed in a new [Communication](#) to Schengen Member States and Schengen Associated States to extend the temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU for another 30 days, until 15 June. The communication insists that the lifting of travel restrictions should be phased, starting with internal border controls, which should start being lifted gradually and in a coordinated manner before restrictions at the external borders can be relaxed in a second stage.

Macroeconomic Measures

Economic Support

On 9 April, the Finance Ministers of the Euro Area - joined by the other EU Finance Ministers - agreed upon a package of measures to support the economy. The package consists of

- **A Fund of €200 billion in loans** for companies experiencing treasury difficulties, to be set up by the European Investment Bank
- An agreement to the European Commission's proposal for a **€100 billion plan (SURE)** to assist Member States to address sudden increases in public expenditure to preserve employment. SURE will provide financial assistance in the form of EU loans and will be an EU-wide scheme helping Member States to cover the costs directly related to the creation or extension of national short-time work schemes, and other similar measures they have put in place for the self-employed as a response to the COVID-19 crisis; it will also help with certain health-related issues. The Regulation establishing the [European instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency \(SURE\)](#) was definitely adopted by the Council on 19 May.
- **a credit line of up to 2 percent of the respective Euro Area Member State's economic output** to be drawn from the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). These **€240 billion** in credit lines will only be available for COVID-19 crisis related expenses (and accessible within two weeks. More precisely: "The only requirement to access the credit line will be that Euro Area Member States requesting support would commit to use this credit line to support domestic financing of direct and indirect healthcare, cure and prevention related costs due to the COVID 19 crisis".

This agreement was based on a broader set of proposals presented by the Commission on 2 April (- [CRII+ package](#)) that also included:

- A proposal to provide maximum flexibility to allow Member States to use the European Structural and Investment Funds to cope with the crisis: this flexibility means: no limit on transfers between funds or between regions, no limits on spending per policy objective, no requirements on co-financing.
- A proposal to set up the an additional €3.08 billion of EU funds for healthcare ([the Emergency Support Instrument](#)) and emergency medical capacity ([rescEU](#));
- **EU Emergency Support Instrument for the healthcare sector, a new EU solidarity instrument granted with €3 billion from the EU budget**, in order to
 - directly purchase or procure emergency support on behalf of Member States and distributing medical supplies such as masks and respirators;
 - financially support and co-ordinate pressing needs such as the transportation of medical equipment and of patients in cross-border regions;
 - support the construction of mobile field hospitals.

To generate economies of scale wherever possible, the Commission will directly procure on behalf of Member States and focus the help where the needs are.

These measures will be completed by the Commission's [country-specific recommendations](#) (CSRs) made in the framework of the European Semester Spring Package, providing economic policy guidance to all EU Member States. These recommendations presented on 20 May are structured around two objectives: in the short-term, mitigating the coronavirus pandemic's severe negative socio-economic consequences; and in the short to medium-term, achieving sustainable and inclusive growth which facilitates the green transition and the digital transformation. Further information on the package can be found on the detailed [Q&A](#) and the succinct [factsheet](#).

Finally, on 15 May, the European Investment Bank [approved](#) a total of €3.4 billion of new financing to support companies most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and priority public health projects, alongside energy, transport, water and education projects, of which

- COVID-19 business resilience and public health (€880 million)

- Artificial intelligence, corporate innovation and business investment (€1.2 billion)
- Renewable energy and sustainable transport
- Enhancing education opportunities

State Aid

On 8 May, the European Commission adopted a [second amendment](#) to extend the scope of the State aid [Temporary Framework](#) adopted on 19 March 2020 to enable Member States to support the economy in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. Based on these horizontal rules and in close cooperation with Member States, the Commission has already approved an estimated €1.9 trillion in State aid to the EU economy – to provide liquidity for companies, support jobs, enable research and development and ensure the supply of products to fight the coronavirus outbreak. This second amendment complements the types of measures already covered by the Temporary Framework and existing State aid rules, by setting out criteria based on which Member States can provide recapitalisations and subordinated debt to companies in need, while protecting the level playing field in the EU.

Public Procurement

On 1 April, the European Commission published a [guidance document](#) related to the use of all the flexibilities offered by the EU public procurement framework in the emergency situation caused by the coronavirus outbreak. It provides an overview of the choice of tendering procedures available to public buyers and applicable deadlines, points out possibilities (considerable shortening of the generally applicable deadlines, procuring without prior publication of tender notices in exceptional circumstances, etc...) and provides clarification on how in situations of scarcity of key supplies public buyers could find alternative solutions and ways of engaging with the market.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

On 25 March, the European Commission published a set of [guidelines](#) aiming to preserve EU companies and critical assets, notably in areas such as health, medical research, biotechnology and infrastructures that are essential for Europe's security and public order. These guidelines are based on the EU FDI Screening Regulation

adopted in March 2019, setting up a mandatory exchange information between Member States and the Commission.

Safety at the Workplace

The EU Agency for Safety at Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has published two guidance documents related to the workers' safety at the workplace:

- A "[COVID-19: guidance for the workplace](#)", covering such aspects as a) how to help prevent spread of respiratory infections including COVID-19, b) what to do if someone with suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in the workplace, c) advice on travel and meetings, and d) further information and resources.
- A [guidance document](#) on the return to work after the lockdown period. The document covers several areas:
 - Risk assessment and appropriate measures
 - Involving workers
 - Taking care of workers who have been ill
 - Planning and learning for the future
 - Staying well informed
 - Information for sectors and occupations

Data protection

On 17 April, the Commission published a [guidance](#) document on the development of new apps that support the fight against coronavirus in relation to data protection. The guidance accompanies an [EU toolbox on contact tracing apps](#) published on 15 April.



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INTERNAL MARKET

Construction Products Regulation (CPR)

- **CPR Review**

The European Commission is still working on the revision of the Construction Products Regulation. The evaluation showed systemic challenges for which remedies are missing, notably the ineffective market surveillance and insufficient quality of harmonised standards, which form the CPR backbone and cannot be fixed under the current framework. The Commission reiterated that environmental aspects, safety and digitalisation should also be addressed in this review. Ms Raffaelli, Head of Unit in charge of the CPR, has shared an [online presentation](#) in which she explains the revision objectives and process.

In this context, the Commission has identified 5 main scenarios for the review. These scenarios show a wide range of possibilities from improving this regulation through guidance, to repairing, focusing or enhancing the CPR, and even repealing it. The [DG GROW document](#) thoroughly explains how each scenario will concretely materialise. This will structure the work on the CPR Review throughout 2020.

A [public consultation](#) on these future options is running until, at least, the end of August. The Commission initiated a similar consultation with Member States in March (see [summary of the 4th of March meeting with national experts](#)). DG GROW underlined the need for thorough consultations with all the stakeholders.

As a reminder, the European Commission has launched a supporting study for the impact assessment. An informal consultation was run at the end of 2019; [preliminary results](#) have now been published. As a next step, an official public consultation will follow to collect new evidence on impacts of the 5 identified revision scenarios for the future legislation. In addition, a stakeholder workshop and/or conference may take place after the summer break.

- **Digitalisation**

Meanwhile, different projects have been launched to facilitate the digital transformation of the Construction sector. First, the DigiPLACE project aims to create

a Reference Architecture Framework (RAF) for the digital industrial platform for the construction sector (read more [here](#)). In addition, a study has been launched to develop buildings' digital logbook (see [tender specifications](#)). This is led by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

- **Standardisation**

CEN-CENELEC is organising a workshop on 'Adaptation to Climate Change' on 5-6 October 2020. It will bring together stakeholders involved in standards for the infrastructure sector (construction, energy, transport, ICT).



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Pressure Equipment Directive (PED)

The latest meeting of the Working Group Pressure (WGP) took place on 12 March (limited physical participation). As the Commission intends to turn this working group into an expert group (with a new name "expert group on Pressure Equipment"), members of the WGP were invited to provide comments on the draft rules of procedure which were presented to them. One of the major points of discussion was the PED Guideline C-13 which concerns the interface between the PED and the Machinery Directive (MD). The PED ADCO Chair explained that there is a lack of a global conformity assessment which is required for assemblies under PED, arguing that what needs to be further clarified is that for certain types of machinery both the MD and PED apply. Orgalim challenged this position stating that a machine incorporating a pressure equipment does not become a pressure equipment and that all risks including those related to pressure are sufficiently dealt with by the machinery manufacturer under the MD. The Guideline C-13 will also be discussed in the next Machinery expert group meeting, with the aim of arriving at a common understanding on the matter in both the MD and the PED groups. For further background, the minutes of the WGP meeting and the relevant working documents are available from the [secretariat](#).

The next WGP meeting is scheduled to take place in Q2 2021.



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Issues of General Interest

Digitalisation

Draft Council Conclusions

The EU Council is finalising a set of Conclusions on the European Commission Communication of 19 February on “Shaping Europe’s digital future”. The current draft reflects upon the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on the EU and the importance of the digital transformation in the economic recovery.

The draft then goes through a number of policy areas which cover a large part of the spectrum of EU activities in this field and provides input on the future Commission policy activities, including on :

- Data and cloud, notably a “consistent horizontal framework for data access, based in particular on lowering transaction costs, the protection of critical European data, a “cloud rulebook” providing a coherent framework around the applicable rules and self-regulation for cloud services
- Artificial Intelligence, insisting on the positive role this technology can play to address societal challenges while underlining risks that need to be addressed in some applications, underlining the role of Digital innovation Hubs, calling upon the Commission to put forward concrete proposals, including where necessary a regulatory approach
- Enabling Technologies and Digital Value Chains, with a need to foster investments in High Performance Computing (HPC) infrastructure, and the recognition of the European microelectronics industry
- Cybersecurity, insisting on the shared responsibility between all players, welcoming the Commission’s plans to review the Directive on security of networks and information system and to strengthen the Internal Market for cybersecurity products, insists on the need to develop cybersecurity standards and, where appropriate, certification schemes of ICT products, services and processes
- 5G/6G and connectivity, with a need to boost investments to achieve the EU’s 2025 Gigabit connectivity objectives, a call to the Commission to review the current EU legislation to facilitate the deployment of high capacity

connectivity (investments and permitting processes in particular) and to implement the 5G cyber-security toolbox conclusions

- Sustainability, with a focus on fostering digital eco-systems with low environmental footprint and smart digital solutions improving energy efficiency and accelerating the transition to a circular economy
- Digital Services Act, supporting the Commission's intention to propose a package clarifying the respective roles of players in the platform economy and providing legal certainty
- Skills and education, insisting on a strong cooperation between the EU and Member States to provide basic digital skills, developing digital competences particularly on data,

The draft Conclusions also contain developments on e-Health, digital public services and blockchain, the Media Policy and the international dimension. The Croatian Presidency of the Council aims to have the Conclusions adopted early June.



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Machinery Directive (MD)

DG GROW made available the minutes and working documents of the last Machinery Directive (MD) WG meeting held in Brussels on 19-20 February 2020. These files are available from the [secretariat](#). Further to the meeting, in preparation for the revision of the MD, the Commission collected detailed comments from Member States and stakeholders concerning specific articles/requirements of the Directive which may need to be updated/improved. Most comments received pertain to the question of whether new requirements on emerging technologies (AI, cybersecurity) may have to be integrated in the MD or not.

As regards the revision process itself, according to the [revised](#) Commission work programme 2020, the legislative proposal, including the impact assessment report will be delayed until Q1 of 2021, taking into consideration the current impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Outdoor Noise Directive (OND)

The revision process of the Outdoor Noise Directive (OND) is on hold. The publication of the Commission's evaluation conclusions has been delayed due to the current pandemic crisis. No new desk officer has been designated to work on this file in DG GROW. We expect further clarification on the revision process timing in the next weeks.



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Low Voltage Directive (LVD)

The meeting of the Low Voltage Directive Working Party initially scheduled on 19 June has been cancelled due to the current circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis. No new date has been proposed yet.



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Electromagnetic Compatibility Directive (EMCD)

The EMC Working Party meeting and an online workshop on the EMCD evaluation, which had been initially scheduled on 15 May were cancelled. The workshop will be replaced by future online discussions in smaller groups via webinars on specific topics related to the evaluation and selected products/installations. To date, there is no information about the timeline for these online discussions.

On the evaluation of the EMCD, the Commission is planning to launch the open public consultation and the targeted questionnaire in the framework of the evaluation study in the coming months. The consultant in charge of the study (CSES) intends to finalise the study report by December 2020.



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New Legislative Framework (NLF)

The European Commission informed that a stakeholder consultation on the revision of the Blue Guide, as well as a public consultation on the future of the NLF had been initially planned on 20 May. Due to the Coronavirus outbreak these initiatives are currently on hold. However, it is still foreseen that the work on the revision of the Blue Guide will be completed by the end of 2020.



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Regulation on market surveillance and compliance

The Commission has created a Task Force to implement Article 9 of the Regulation 2019/1020 (joint activities between market surveillance authorities and economic operators). As a reminder, these joint activities should be carried out in accordance with the principles of impartiality, independence and without bias. With this in mind, the aim is to follow the two steps below:

- Agree on a **set of criteria for joint activities**, which ensure that the joint activities do not lead to unfair competition between economic operators and do not impinge on the objectivity, independence and impartiality of the parties. This would be carried out taking into account past or ongoing similar joint activities;
- Develop a **"template agreement"** with a set of different provisions in this template agreement, depending on the type of joint activities envisaged (promoting compliance, identifying non-compliance, raising awareness and providing guidance on Union harmonisation legislation and with respect to specific categories of products, including those that are offered for sale online, etc...).

The Commission requested stakeholders to provide input into this exercise by mid-May. A meeting of the Task Force was scheduled on 19 May, with the aim of discussing the feedback received and agreeing on how organisations representing businesses could be involved in the criteria for joint activities and also the "template agreement", which would then be validated by the EU Compliance network.



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Standardisation Policy

Orgalim will host virtual event entitled "[Strengthening the internal market: time for a new deal for European standardisation?](#)", which will take place on 2 June between 10.00-11.00, followed by live Q&A (30 minutes).

This webinar will look at the economic dimension of the European standardisation systems, investigating the following key questions: why the European standardisation system is necessary to all economic operators to provide society with the necessary business continuity and emergency management, which is even more important to prepare Europe's economic recovery in the context of the current global pandemic; and why the industry calls for [shaping a 'new deal' for standardisation](#). Regarding the latter, the event seeks to discuss what the European Commission and other stakeholders can do to ensure that harmonised standards remain attractive and relevant for companies operating in the Single Market, and at the same what the consequences of a failure to act would be. The registration to this event can be done [here](#).



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MARKET ACCESS

Issues of General Interest

Brexit

Over the past months, the EU and UK have continued their rounds of negotiations to find an agreement on the free trade agreement that will regulate the future cooperation between the two parties as of 1 January 2021.

The last [round of negotiations](#) took place on the week of 11 May. Meanwhile on 19 May, the UK published the draft legal text for the [proposed EU-UK FTA](#), along with annexes for specific areas, as well as the proposed [MFN tariff regime](#) to apply from 1 January 2021. The next round of negotiations is scheduled on the first week of June.

[Here](#) more information about the negotiation and [here](#) several Readiness notices.



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Foreign Direct Investments

On 25 March, the European Commission issued [guidelines](#) to ensure a strong EU-wide approach to foreign investment screening with the objective to preserve EU companies and critical assets. The guidelines encourage Member States with already existing screening mechanisms in place to make full use of them in order to prevent capital flows from non-EU countries that could undermine Europe's security or public order. In addition, the EC invites Member States without screening mechanism to set one up, as well as cooperation between them in cases where foreign investments can have implications for the EU single market.



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ENVIRONMENT

RoHS2 Directive

- **Evaluation**

The evaluation phase of the RoHS Directive is nearly finished. Ecorys, the external consultant, presented the main findings of its evaluation study on 30 March.

In short, the RoHS Directive is widely effective, efficient and relevant in reducing the use of hazardous substances. It contributes to protecting health and the environment and the well-functioning of the internal market. The process to grant new exemptions and renew them needs to be improved. The revision process will also explore coherence with other pieces of legislation, contribution to the circular economy, and transformation into a regulation. The consultant also highlighted compliance issues for low-cost products and online shops.

Once Ecorys has finalised its evaluation report, the European Commission will publish it, either separately or together with the evaluation conclusions, in the summer 2020.

- **Revision of methodologies and restriction of 7 substances**

In parallel, the Öko Institut is finalising the revision of the RoHS methodology to assess requests for new or renewed exemptions submitted by the industry. This [draft updated manual](#) describes the different phases of the assessment process; it is supposed to reflect current practices.

In addition, the Öko Institut presented the final assessment of 7 substances on 27 April (all presentations and final reports are available [here](#)). The consultant recommends restricting the use of 2 flame retardant chemicals: 1. Medium-chain chlorinated parafins (MCCPs) used in PVC insulations, electrical cables and wires; 2. TBBP-A used in printed wiring boards and thermoplastic EEE components. They suggest restricting specific applications of beryllium that may release dust, such as sliding brushes in high power electrical motors. In addition, they also recommend further assessment for nickel and its compounds as well as halogenated flame retardants and diantimony trioxide (ATO).

After the final discussion with stakeholders, the Öko Institut is now finalising the revised exemption methodology and its conclusions for the 7 substances. They have also published a final [Substance Inventory and Prioritisation List](#). Once the final results are delivered, the Commission will decide whether or not to launch a legislative procedure to further restrict substances under the RoHS Directive.

- **Renewal of exemptions**

The Commission has published an [overview](#) of RoHS exemptions, including their validity status and submitted exemption requests. This tool is updated on a regular basis ([here](#)).

- **Harmonised standard to demonstrate compliance**

On 18 May, the European Commission published a [new harmonised standard](#): EN IEC 63000:2018, which will supersede the existing one on 18 November 2021. This standard sets out specifications for the technical documentation required for assessing materials, components and electrical or electronic equipment with respect to the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances.



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WEEE2 Directive

On 15 May the European Commission hosted a final workshop on the study on quality standards for WEEE treatment. The objective of this study was to provide the Commission with input in the preparation of an Implementing Act laying down requirements for the quality treatment of WEEE in the EU complementing those in the WEEE Directive, or any other policy option to be identified. The study will also assist in the preparation of a Delegated Act laying down the criteria for the assessment of equivalent conditions for the treatment of WEEE outside the EU.

One of the conclusions of the workshop was that imposing mandatory WEEE treatment standards could have significant environmental impacts, including increasing of the collection rate, and could lead to further job creation. The presentation from the workshop is available from the [secretariat](#).



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Circular Economy Policy

- **Circular Economy Action Plan**

Following the publication of the Circular Economy Action Plan in March, the work on many of the follow-up actions has been temporarily slowed down due to the COVID-19 response. Commissioner for Environment, Virginijus Sinkevičius, advanced during an exchange on 12 May with the European Parliament's Environment Committee that the European Commission is going to place a special emphasis on greening European industry through the Circular Economy as part of its recovery strategy (recording available [here](#)).

During the exchange the Commissioner informed of the Commission's ongoing efforts to develop a Sustainable Product Policy based on the Ecodesign Directive. Although in the Circular Economy Action Plan it appeared that the Commission would seek to expand the Ecodesign Directive to non-energy related products, the latest intelligence indicated that the Commission may be evaluating this approach. The reason is that many stakeholders have expressed that the Ecodesign framework would not be suited for other types of products, and that a new framework would be a more effective method for addressing sustainable products. The Commission will continue working on their policy proposal which is expected to be published in 2021.

- **Circular Plastics Alliance**

The work of the Circular Plastics Alliance is advancing. The EEE Working Group which is chaired by Orgalim is focusing on the following thematic areas: a) design for recycling, b) research and development, c) collection and sorting, and d) recycled content. Each of these thematic groups are working on a series of deliverables which are due either this year or next year. The work of the Circular Plastics Alliance will help to guide future proposals the Commission may present to address plastics in products and in the environment.



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Waste Framework Directive

The European Commission published in April [guidelines](#) to support Member States with ensuring continuity in the area of waste management in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. These guidelines focus on the management of municipal waste,

waste from healthcare facilities and on the health and safety of waste management operators.

SCIP Database (previously ECHA Waste Database)

The European Commission will host on 2 July a joint meeting of the expert groups on Waste and CARACAL (REACH & CLP - meeting documents available from the [secretariat](#)). This meeting had to be rescheduled from early April due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The objective of the meeting is to discuss the state of play in the development of the database and to discuss with Member States on the appropriate level of reporting to the database. Furthermore, Member States will provide feedback on the current state of play in the transposition to national legislation. In preparation for this meeting, the European Commission reached out to stakeholders, including Orgalim, to provide input on the estimated costs and resources needed in order to comply with the requirements. The Commission then intends to present during this meeting a report with their findings.

In parallel, ECHA continues with the development and refinement of the IT tool. It hosts regular meetings with IT experts from relevant stakeholder associations. The latest one took place on 23 April and amongst other issues covered an update on the development of the tool in view of COVID-19 and new tools available. The documents from all the meetings are now publicly available on the [dedicated website](#). Furthermore, ECHA will host the online [Safer Chemicals Conference](#) which will contain several presentation on how to track substances in the supply chain, how to prepare the notifications for the SCIP database etc. No registration is needed, and it will be free of charge. A recording will also be accessible after the meeting.

Lastly, many industry groups, including Orgalim, have requested the European Commission a one-year extension to the requirement to submit information into the database. This request is based on the challenges industry is facing during the COVID-19 crisis with many supply chain disruptions and challenges to maintain operations. As of the time of writing, the Commission has not indicated any potential changes to the legal requirement to submit data as from 5 January 2021.



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Eco-Management and Audit Scheme

The Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a voluntary system introduced in 2009 to promote environmental best practices in organisations. The EMAS Regulation requests the Commission to produce Sectoral Reference Documents for best practices for a number of sectors, among which the Fabricated Metal Products manufacturing sector.

The [Commission Decision adopting the sectoral reference document on waste management](#) was published on 14 April 2020 in the Official Journal of the EU and will come into force on 12 August 2020. The text lists the best environmental management practices, sector environmental performance indicators and benchmarks of excellence specific to the sector. It is addressed to both public and private waste management companies, including companies implementing producer responsibility schemes, and public administrations in charge of waste management at local level.



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Issues of General Interest

REACH

- **Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability**

The European Commission has launched a [public consultation](#) on the upcoming Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. This initiative was already announced in the European Green Deal Communication as part of the Commission's "zero pollution ambition." Within the inception impact assessment, the Commission states that the objective is to address gaps and improve synergies in European legislation, such as simplifying the substance assessment methods. Particularly the strategy should address emerging concerns such as endocrine disruptors, hazardous chemicals in products and very persistent chemicals. The deadline for comments is 20 June and the strategy should be published Q3 2020.

- **Restriction**

The Commission launched a [public consultation](#) on the update to the list of restricted substances which closed on 25 May. This initiative has 3 main objectives: a) including substances which have recently been classified as carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction (CMRs), b) facilitating the implementation of the current restriction on azocolourants by adding a reference to new test methods and c) removing existing obsolete provisions and references.

- **Authorisation**

The Commission has granted authorisations for several uses of chromium trioxide, potassium dichromate and dichromium tris(chromate) (see full list of [granted authorisations](#)). As regards the status of the CTAC Sub Consortium's application for authorisation of chromium trioxide, it was discussed during the REACH Committee meeting on 13 May. The new draft implementing regulation imposes new administrative burdens on the downstream users. They must notify their key functionalities and justification thereof to ECHA together with their Article 66 notification. As a next step, Member States will vote on the application via a written procedure.

- **Evaluation**

ECHA published on 13 May the annual report on the [Integrated Regulatory Strategy](#) 2019. The report highlights ECHA's actions on evaluating substances in groupings of structurally similar substances. Compared to the individual substance evaluations approach, this new approach, which was implemented in 2019, has been found effective in making the substance evaluation more agile. The report also includes recommendations for authorities and industry on how to manage the risks. Further information is available in the [press release](#).

- **UK withdrawal**

In preparation for the end of the transition period, ECHA has published on their website updated guidance documents. Within these documents are information tools for companies to assess the impact of Brexit for their operations. All these documents are available on the [dedicated website](#).



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Green Public Procurement

The European Commission has published new voluntary [EU GPP criteria for data centres, server rooms and cloud services](#). The new criteria include comprehensive environmental elements (design, use and end-of-life) and address the procurement of data centre products and services, including building and/or equipping a data centre, expanding or consolidating the infrastructure of a new ICT product, outsourcing (i.e. procuring services), operating and maintaining facilities.

The Commission Joint Research Centre has published [guidelines on EU GPP Criteria for Textile Products and Services](#). It covers the purchase of textile products, laundry, maintenance and take-back.



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Revision of the Drinking Water Directive

Following the endorsement in the Environmental Council in March and the adoption of the EP ENVI Committee in February, the legal-linguistic review of the text of the Drinking Water Directive has not yet been finalised. The publication process will therefore still take some months and the Directive is expected to enter into force in December 2020.

In parallel, on 30 April the Expert Group on the Implementation of the Drinking Water Directive held a [meeting](#) on the implementation of Article 11 on materials in contact with drinking water. The European Agency ECHA and the Member States are now starting to work on the compilation of current national regulations and positive lists.



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ENERGY

Renewable Energy Sources

On 6 May the European Commission launched a [public consultation](#) on a draft Implementing Regulation on financing mechanism for EU-wide renewable energy projects. The proposal presents a detailed system for the funding and allocation of projects in different Member States. Most notably, it allows a distinction between hosting countries and contributing countries. Participation to these projects could help in the emission reduction calculations of contributing countries even if the projects are not hosted within their borders. The deadline for feedback is 3 June.



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Energy Efficiency

Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD)

- **Renovation Wave Initiative**

The European Commission launched on 11 May a [public consultation](#) on the upcoming **Renovation Wave**. The Renovation Wave was announced in the Green Deal Communication published last December. The Renovation Wave aims to promote the scaling-up of building renovations in order to help minimise the emissions of the EU building stock. The objective of the consultation is to gain stakeholder feedback on structural, regulatory and other types of barriers for implementing measures to improve the energy efficiency of buildings. The deadline for comments is 8 June.

As a next step, the Commission is expected to publish in the autumn a communication and action plan on the Renovation Wave which will address key issues such as: tools and mechanisms to stimulate investment towards building renovations, addressing worst-performing buildings, energy poverty, supporting skills and employment strategies and promotion and uptake of smart technologies in buildings.

- **European Commission study on building renovation and modernisation**

The Commission (DG ENVI) has launched a one-year study on **“Lessons learned to inform integrated approaches for the renovation and modernisation of the built environment”**. This study is being conducted by a consortium formed by BPiE, CLIMACT, CREARA and Ecologic. The objective of the study is to inform policy-makers on building-related policies, drawing on the experience of 23 countries, and to understand the best-practices and barriers for success. Part of the study will explore “the relevance, feasibility and possible scope of additional measures at EU-level in favour of mandatory minimum requirements (MMR) for existing buildings.”

As a first step, the study team launched a short stakeholder survey to gain initial input on their positions relating to mandatory minimum requirements for buildings. The results of this survey were presented during an online stakeholder workshop on 14 May (presentation available from the [secretariat](#)).

- **EP Own-Initiative report on Energy Efficiency in Buildings**

The European Parliament’s ITRE Committee is working on an Own-Initiative report on “Maximising the energy efficiency potential of the EU building stock”. The rapporteur is MEP [Ciarán Cuffe](#) (IE, Greens/EFA). The [draft report](#) was published on 28 April and the deadline for members to submit amendments was 12 May. In parallel, the ENVI Committee also published in May a [draft opinion](#) on this issue.

The report examines the potential of maximising energy efficiency gains in buildings, including for heating and cooling. Furthermore, the report looks at how improving energy efficiency of buildings could help in the recovery efforts following the COVID-19 crisis in terms of creating local jobs and upskilling of professionals. As it is an own-initiative report the findings are not legally binding but will provide direction to the European Commission on future measures on this topic.

As a next step, the report will be voted during the ITRE Committee meeting on 6 July. This would be followed by a vote during the Plenary Session – date to be confirmed.

- **Smart Readiness Indicator (SRI)**

The study team is expected to publish their final report in June with a finalised building services catalogue. The publication of the final Delegated and Implementing Acts in the Official Journal is still foreseen for September.

In parallel, the Topical Group C has been working on a report with a series of recommendations for the future evolution of the SRI and will share it with the

European Commission by the end of the month. This report includes recommendations on how to integrate automated building performance data into future calculations of the SRI.

- **Report by European Court of Auditors**

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) published on 28 April the special report “Energy efficiency in buildings: greater focus on cost-effectiveness still needed” (available in [23 languages](#)). The report assessed whether EU co-funded investments in energy efficiency in buildings contributed to the 2020 energy savings targets in a cost-effective manner. The report found that in many cases this had not been the case, and that building renovation projects occurred with high-costs citing multiple reasons. For the next generation of projects, the ECA recommends improving the project planning and cost monitoring. Further details can be found in the [press release](#).

Energy Labelling Regulation

The European Product Database for Energy Labelling (EPREL) system is being migrated to a new and improved performing environment. In order to perform the migration, new registrations were temporarily halted from 15 to 24 May. The update includes new functionalities and changes to solve issues flagged by suppliers when uploading their models both manually and using system-to-system communication.

Furthermore, the Commission has published a release plan for the different energy labels which were adopted in 2019 including electronic displays, light sources, refrigerating appliances with direct sales function and tyres (available [here](#)).



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Ecodesign Directive

The European Commission has launched the preparatory study for the 2020-2024 Ecodesign work programme. This study is being conducted by a consortium formed by Viegand Maagoe, VHK and Öko Recherche. The study will consider five key aspects:

- Integration of material efficiency aspects in the evaluation methodology such as durability, reparability and transparency of repair information.

- A retrospective assessment of horizontal or omnibus legislation, and whether further such legislation would be needed to improve the application, implementation and monitoring of Ecodesign and Energy Labelling.
- Identification of potential gaps or opportunities in existing Ecodesign and Energy Labelling legislation and voluntary agreements.
- Revisiting of previously-identified “energy-related” rather than “energy-using” to maximise any remaining environmental, economic and social benefits that could feasibly be extracted.
- Exploring new product groups, including complex product groups which may be composed of two or more product groups already subject to an ecodesign or energy labelling measure.

A first stakeholder online meeting is tentatively foreseen for 10 July. During this meeting it is foreseen that the study team will give an indication of all the main product groups to be included in the future action plan. A second meeting is foreseen for October or November. The study is expected to be finalised in December 2020, although the publication of the Work Programme may take place before in September/October. Further updates will become available on the [project website](#).

In parallel, the revision of the MEERP methodology is expected to formally launch in June. It is expected that this revision will be performed by the Joint Research Center.

Ecodesign Directive - Update on Lots / implementing measures

Professional refrigeration, ENTR Lot 1: The European Commission is expected to launch the preparatory study for the revision of this product group in Q3 2020.

Water and Space Heaters, ENER Lots 1 & 2: As a reminder, the study team has organised four stakeholder Working Groups addressing: Hydrogen, Testing Methods, Calculation Methods and Water Heaters. The planning of meetings for these groups is expected to extend to end of year. A Consultation Forum meeting is tentatively foreseen for mid-2021.

Ventilation units, ENTR Lot 6: The second stakeholder meeting took place on 7 May (see minutes on the [website](#)). Stakeholders can submit comments until 7 June to the draft reports. A Consultation Forum is tentatively foreseen after the summer holidays. Should a physical meeting not be possible due to COVID-19, the meeting will take place online.

Air conditioners, ENER Lot 10: The Commission will host on 18 June an informal working group meeting with stakeholders to address their concerns regarding the

current testing method for air-to-air air conditioners and heat pumps. The agenda and discussion document are available from the [secretariat](#).

Fans, ENER Lot 11: Following the final approval of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board of the revised impact assessment, the Commission is expected to launch in June the inter-service consultation. Following this step, the Commission would start drafting the new measure. The earliest possible adoption would be early 2021.

Compressors, ENER Lot 31: The European Commission and its contractor VHK are slightly delayed and are still working on finalising the Impact Assessment, with the objective of having it adopted by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board by the end of the summer. Afterwards, an inter-service consultation would take place before notifying the WTO of the proposed measure (tentatively foreseen in September). A short 4-week public consultation would run in parallel before the final vote by the Regulatory Committee by end of year.

Smart appliances, ENER Lot 33: The European Commission is considering its approach for this product group, considering the conclusions of the study were not good enough to justify developing a regulation. The Consultation Forum meeting has been continuously delayed since January 2019. One of the options under consideration is moving this product group outside of the Ecodesign framework.

Building Automation and Control Systems, ENER Lot 38: The study team has launched a market survey for stakeholders and have started the economic modelling work. As a reminder, the next reports are expected to be published in October with the next stakeholder meeting foreseen for November.

Refrigerated containers (reefers), ENER Lot 39: Following the first stakeholder meeting in March the study team is expected to present their draft final report end of May / early June. The second stakeholder meeting is foreseen for October and the publication of the final report by end of year.



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DECARBONISATION & CLIMATE CHANGE

National Energy and Climate Plans

The deadline to submit the National Energy and Climate Plans for 2021 to 2030 outlined in the Governance of the Energy Union Regulation was 31 December 2019. Four countries have still not submitted their plans as of writing (Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and United Kingdom). All of the plans can be found on the European Commission's dedicated [website](#). As a next step, Member States will need to submit reviews of their plans every two years. The Commission will monitor the progress at EU level and report on the progress achieved in the annual State of the Energy Union report.



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Issues of General Interest

EU Climate Law

Following the European Commission's release of the [proposal for a European Climate Law](#) in March (see Bulletin 01/20), the process is now under discussion in the European Parliament and Council of the EU.

Within the Parliament, this process is being led by the Environment Committee. The selected rapporteur is MEP [Jytte Guteland](#) (SE, S&D). The shadow rapporteurs are: [Mairead McGuinness](#) (IE, EPP), [Nils Torvalds](#) (FI, RE), [Michael Bloss](#) (DE, Greens/EFA), [Sylvia Limmer](#) (DE, ID), [Anna Zalewska](#) (PL, ECR) and [Silvia Modig](#) (FI, GUE/NGL). The [draft report](#) was published on 12 May and the deadline to submit amendments is 3 June.

Compared to the Commission's proposal, the Parliament seeks to significantly increase the level of ambition for emission reduction targets for 2030 to 65% compared to 1990 levels. The Commission's proposal set the objective of 50% to 55%

emission reductions. The Parliament also calls for the establishment of intermediate targets for 2040, which were not included in the Commission's proposal.

Within the Council, there was a kick-off meeting of the Working Party on Environment to discuss the file on 13 March.



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EU 2030 Climate Targets

On 31 March, the Commission launched a [public consultation](#) before proposing legislation to increase the EU's 2030 target for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions to at least - 50% and towards -55% compared to 1990 levels in order to align all objectives with the EU 2050 climate neutrality goal. The Commission will present a comprehensive plan to increase the EU 2030 climate target in the third quarter of 2020.

As part of the Clean Energy Package, the EU has already adopted climate and energy legislation to reduce GHG emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. The [European Green Deal](#), presented in December 2019, announced that the Commission will align all EU policies with the 2050 Climate neutrality objectives. The targets' ambition needs therefore to be raised.

The Commission needs to thoroughly assess the feasibility and the social, economic and environmental impacts of increasing the 2030 target. This public consultation invites citizens and organisations to contribute to the assessment of how to increase the EU 2030 emission reduction ambition "in a responsible way".

The consultation is open for feedback until 23 June 2020.



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Sustainable finance

Taxonomy Regulation

The [Taxonomy Regulation](#) (*still to be formally adopted by the European Parliament*) sets up the framework for defining environmentally sustainable economic activities

for investment purposes – putting the building blocks in place for supporting the European Green Deal plan.

The Regulation requires the Commission to adopt Delegated Acts to establish technical screening criteria for determining how a specific economic activity can be considered as environmentally sustainable. The Commission is currently preparing the first Delegated Act focusing on technical screening criteria for climate change mitigation and adaptation, based on the recommendations in the [report of the Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance](#) (TEG).

Stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal in the context of the public consultation on the Renewed Sustainable Finance Strategy (announced in Q3 2020) and will be again consulted on the Draft Delegated Act once it will be published in Q4 2020.



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PUBLICATIONS & EVENTS

PUBLICATIONS

Author	Date	Title
UNESCO	March 2020	Report – UN World Water Report - Water & Climate Change
European Parliament	March 2020	Study - Promoting product longevity
European Commission	April 2020	Study – Vocational education and smart specialisation strategies
European Commission	April 2020	Study – Shaping a sustainable industry
European Commission	April 2020	Study – Power system flexibility in a variable climate
European Commission	April 2020	Study – B2B platforms : monitoring B2B industrial digital platforms in Europe
European Commission	April 2020	Study – New aspects and challenges in consumer protection
European Commission	April 2020	Study – Sustainable Consumption and

		Consumer Protection Legislation
European Commission	April 2020	Report – Microbiological parameters under the Drinking Water Directive
European Commission	April 2020	Briefing – Carbon emissions pricing - Some points of reference
European Commission	April 2020	Report – GENERAL OVERVIEW OF ACTIVE WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT CASES INVOLVING THE EU
European Commission	April 2020	Report – The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on global and EU trade
European Commission	April 2020	Report – EU's Anti-Dumping, Anti-Subsidy and Safeguard activities and the Use of trade defence instruments by Third Countries targeting the EU in 2019
European Environment Agency	April 2020	Report – Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 – even more from less
European Environment Agency	April 2020	Report – Is Europe living within the limits of our planet?
International Energy Agency	April 2020	Report – Global Energy Review 2020

European Parliament	April 2020	Study – New aspects and challenges in consumer protection
European Parliament	April 2020	Briefing – The White Paper on Artificial Intelligence
European Parliament	April 2020	Briefing – European climate law
European Parliament	April 2020	Briefing – European Green Deal Investment Plan
European Parliament	April 2020	Briefing – Coronavirus and the world of work
European Parliament	April 2020	Briefing – The impact of coronavirus on Schengen borders
European Parliament	April 2020	At a glance – Promoting product longevity
European Parliament	April 2020	At a glance – Impact of coronavirus on energy markets
European Commission	May 2020	Study – Study to support preparation of the Commission's guidance for extended producer responsibility scheme
European Commission	May 2020	Study – Artificial intelligence: Critical industrial applications : report on current policy measures and policy opportunities
European Commission	May 2020	Study – Estimating investments in general purpose technologies: The

		case of AI investments in Europe
European Commission	May 2020	Study – Climate change and Europe's water resources
European Parliament	May 2020	Study – New Developments in Digital Services
European Parliament	May 2020	Study – The legal framework for e-commerce in the Internal Market
European Parliament	May 2020	Study – The e-commerce Directive as the cornerstone of the Internal Market
European Parliament	May 2020	Briefing – EU budgetary and financial response to the coronavirus crisis
European Parliament	May 2020	Briefing – Understanding EU data protection policy
European Parliament	May 2020	At a glance – The Green Deal's growth, financial and regulatory challenges

EVENTS

Organiser	Date	Name & Location
BuildUp EU	2 June 2020	Circular Economy, Reuse and Construction Webinar
ECHA	2 June 2020	Safer Chemicals Conference 2020 Webinar
International Energy Agency	2 June 2020	Modernisation of Energy Efficiency through Digitalisation - webinar 6: Smart, Energy-Saving Consumer Devices Webinar
Copperleaf	4 June 2020	Rapid Scenarios – How Leading Utilities are Planning for a Post-Pandemic World Webinar
Orgalim	4 June 2020	Globalisation, ecosystems and EU's industrial strategy after COVID-19 Webinar
Public Affairs Council	4 June 2020	The New UK-EU Relationship After Brexit and COVID-19 Webinar
European Commission	8 June 2020	Webinars on Liability for Artificial Intelligence

		Webinar
Responsible Investor	15-19 June 2020	Responsible Investor Digital Festival: Summer 2020 Webinar
European Council for an Energy Efficient Economy	16-18 June 2020	Industrial Efficiency 2020 – accelerating decarbonization Gothenburg, Sweden
ForumEurope	18 June 2020	GDPR 2 Years On What has been achieved? What challenges remain? Webinar
European Commission	23-25 June 2020	EU Sustainable Energy Week Webinar
POLITICO EU	1 July 2020	Competitive Europe Summit Brussels, Belgium

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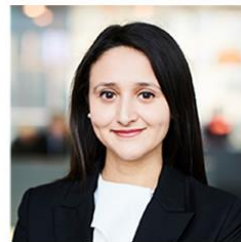
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