



Yours Directly

The Europe Direct networks newsletter

Exit crisis, enter prosperity

The recent financial crisis and the broader economic crisis it engendered have been dubbed the 'Great Recession' to reflect its status as the worst economic downturn in generations. The crises have left Europe reeling, with the EU's GDP shrinking by 4% in 2009, and industrial production dipping by a remarkable 15%, leading to higher unemployment, social upheaval and industrial unrest.

However, matters could have been a lot worse had it not been for the coordinated and timely EU response, which has focused on rescuing and then reforming the financial and banking system, saving jobs, reviving growth and building a more stable economy, and promoting European and global recovery.

Nevertheless, while effective, EU interventions have come at a high price: government deficits have ballooned and the burden of public debt has increased by 20%. This will take years to pay off and will involve painful public spending cuts at a time when Europe needs to invest more in people and opportunities.

The financial and economic crises have thrown into stark relief certain structural problems facing the EU, such as competition from rising economic heavyweights like China and India, the greying of the European population, energy security, resource scarcity, as well as environmental and climate challenges.

The Europe 2020 strategy featured in this issue of Yours Directly seeks to address all these challenges, helping the EU to move from crisis to renewed growth, prosperity and well-being.

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➤ *Food for thought*

Smart, green and inclusive

The Lisbon Strategy provided the EU with its blueprint for the first decade of the 21st century. The new **Europe 2020** strategy will act as the Union's master plan for the second decade. From now until 2020, it will guide Europe towards growth that is smart, green and inclusive.

These three pillars were selected to reflect changing realities. For most of the first decade of this millennium, the EU experienced robust economic growth and **created millions of new jobs**. The financial and economic crises have wiped out many of these gains, and now **nearly 10% of the EU's labour force**, or 23 million Europeans, are out of work.

In order to create renewed growth, Europe needs to be innovative (i.e. smart). To ensure that no one gets left behind, this growth must generate opportunities for all,

➤ **A wealth of information on health**

First launched in 2008, the **'Europe for Patients'** campaign seeks to raise awareness of and showcase the various EU healthcare and patient-related policies and initiatives, with the underlying aim of promoting better healthcare for all Europeans. Towards that end, the campaign has had its very own website which was recently revamped and relaunched.

The new site not only has a vibrant new look and feel, but it also acts as a versatile and user-friendly portal for European citizens seeking information on healthcare-related issues. Organised thematically and with information available in multiple languages, the Europe for Patients site provides relevant information in a number of areas, including cancer and rare diseases, cross-border healthcare, patient safety, vaccinations, mental health, and more. It also publishes regular news updates and contains information on interesting events. In addition, links are available to related initiatives, such as the EU Health Prize for Journalists and the Health EU newsletter.

i.e. it has to be inclusive. Moreover, given the EU's commitment to the environment and sustainability, not to mention the economic opportunities eco-innovation presents, this growth needs to be green.

Europe 2020 has five ambitious headline objectives: in employment, to raise the employment rate to 75% of the population aged 25 to 64; in innovation, to boost investment in research and development to 3% of the Union's collective GDP; in terms of the environment, to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20%, extract 20% of energy from renewable sources and boost energy efficiency by 20%. Meanwhile, in the field of education, Europe 2020 aims to bring the school drop-out rate to below 10% and to ensure that at least 40% of 30- to 34-year-olds have completed tertiary education; and in terms of social exclusion, it seeks to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million.

Among the new tools being rolled out to meet these objectives are Europe 2020's seven flagship initiatives, which focus on the areas most in need of attention. In the area of smart growth, there are three flagships: the **Digital Agenda for Europe**, the **Innovation Union** and **Youth on the Move**. Under the green growth banner, there are two flagships: **An Integrated Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era** and a Resource-Efficient Europe. Inclusive growth also has two flagship initiatives: **An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs** and the **European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion**.

Given its breadth, depth and ambition, the Europe 2020 strategy will require action at the **European, national and regional** levels, as well as by **civil society**.

► Pools of expertise

Three Pan-European Working Groups (PEWG) – on media relations, Web 2.0 tools and electronic repositories of EU information – were established last year to enable members of the Europe Direct network to create “pools of expertise” using a bottom-up approach. The knowledge created by members is then re-injected into the network through various activities and publications.

The PEWG on media relations is currently in the process of publishing an e-catalogue of 18 good practices to help network members to improve their media relations. The PEWG on Web 2.0 tools is also in the process of publishing an e-catalogue of good practices which will contain 13 illuminating case studies.

The PEWG on electronic repositories mapped a number of such resources used by European Documentation Centres, including **Ace**, **ArchiDok**, **European Sources Online (ESO)**, **Ket** and **Portuguese European Gateway**. The members of the group will now investigate the possibilities for interconnection and interoperability between these databases.

Satisfied with the achievements of the working groups in 2010, DG COMM has renewed their mandate for another year.

► *Good practice and life of the networks*

2020: a communications odyssey

Here, Europe Direct members share their experiences of communicating on issues related to the Europe 2020 strategy.

Europe 2020's local face

In order to highlight the local significance of Europe 2020, **EDIC Skåne Nordväst** (SE) has published a series of interviews with stakeholders in the region, including public authorities, academia and youth, focusing on the five headline goals of the strategy. Among those interviewed was an academic at Lund University who spoke about how the dynamic of EU-funded collaborative research was shifting and changing. The latest edition featured a job coach specialised in helping unemployed youth who talked about the challenges facing out-of-work young people in the region.

Europe 2020 explained

In a bid to educate and inform local citizens about the Europe 2020 strategy, **EDIC Pyrénées Languedoc Roussillon** (FR) has produced an in-depth fact sheet explaining the strategy, its three axes, five objectives and seven flagship initiatives. The EDIC also produced a fact sheet outlining the issues at stake relating to the public consultation for the post-2013 EU budget framework. In addition, the EDIC is organising public meetings where it presents the objectives of Europe 2020 and gathers proposals on post-2013 cohesion and agricultural policy.

Learning to be green

To mark the International Year of Biodiversity and to highlight the importance of the environment and sustainability to the Europe 2020 strategy, which seeks to

promote green growth, **EDIC Aveiro** (PT) held a special contest aimed at pupils entitled Green Euroschool.

The goal of the competition was to raise awareness among young people of the importance of protecting and safeguarding the environment, both for their own and for future generations. It also sought to promote individual and collective responsibility within the school community by encouraging co-operation between pupils and teachers and different schools. In addition, it strove to foster changes in attitudes and behaviour, as well as active participation in environmental action.

Pursuits included video presentations on the environment and biodiversity, a quiz and various classroom activities.



Bags of natural fun

EDIC Aberdeen (UK) has been organising special 'Bags of fun' workshops for local children to help them find out what they and their families can do to protect the environment, an important focus of Europe 2020 which aims to promote green growth.

The free workshops – which are widely publicised locally – have been held in various libraries throughout the city, including areas of social deprivation, where environmental awareness is often lower. The workshops enable the EDIC team not only to reach the children but also their parents or carers.



In order to personalise the experience, the children end the event by decorating an environmentally friendly cotton bag to take home as a first step towards becoming a friend of the environment.

For the good of the community

In Rinkeby, one of Stockholm's most impoverished and marginalised neighbourhoods, **EDIC Stockholm** (SE) organised a conference on economic growth, and public and grass-roots welfare mechanisms. Despite Rinkeby's poor reputation, many locals, who are mostly of immigrant origin, see the district differently.

In recent years, researchers and investigators have also started to look differently, and more positively, at neighbourhoods with a high concentration of minority residents. In these so-called 'exclusion zones', where the formal labour market and welfare system are not performing their role effectively, examples abound of what might be called self-organised welfare systems, i.e. informal, non-government channels for social support and assistance.

The conference sought to answer a number of questions, including the role of the informal welfare systems in providing social protection to minorities and how ethnic entrepreneurship can advance the economic and social integration of minority groups. The event attracted significant media interest, including from **SVT**, Sweden's public television broadcaster.



Moving with the mobility groove

EDIC Barcelona (ES) co-organised, in collaboration with Vic city council, a number of meetings between foreign students studying at the city's **Universitat de Vic** and pupils at local secondary schools. The aims of these encounters were to promote greater intercultural understanding and raise awareness of the opportunities presented by mobility, a key focus of the Europe 2020 flagship initiative Youth on the Move.

The foreign students explain their personal experiences as European students in Barcelona. They also introduce their own countries to raise awareness among local youth of the reality of life in other European countries. In addition, the exchanges seek to explain and increase

interest in European mobility at the university level, with a view to encouraging the youngsters to explore such opportunities when they leave school and move on to higher education.

► Interview with Amadeu Altafaj-Tardio

A decade of major challenges and opportunities

Yours Directly talks with Amadeu Altafaj-Tardio, the spokesperson for Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn, on how effective EU efforts to exit the financial and economic crisis have been, and how Europe can put itself back on track to healthy growth and job creation.

What are likely to be the main economic challenges facing Europe in the coming decade?

Fiscal consolidation and structural reforms. We need both to create the basis for economic growth that is more sustainable and that generates jobs. Consolidation and growth go fundamentally hand in hand in today's Europe. Without intensified fiscal consolidation, we are at the mercy of market forces, as we have seen. And without substantial changes in the way the European economy functions, Europe will face stagnation for a decade, and will be condemned to the vicious circle of high unemployment, high public debt, and low economic growth.

How will the Europe 2020 strategy help the EU exit the crisis and return to healthy growth?

The Europe 2020 strategy sets the guidelines to transform our economies into more sustainable, knowledge-based and competitive ones, while preserving our unique social model to which our citizens are so attached, and rightly so.

When communicating Europe 2020 to citizens, what are the main messages that Europe Direct members should bear in mind?

Our economies are interdependent, particularly in the euro area, which means that reforms (or the lack of them) in some countries affect the performance of all the others. Similarly, as we emerge from the crisis, no single Member State can address the challenges effectively by acting alone.

We need growth based on knowledge and innovation: this means improving our productivity by increasing our R&D and innovation performance. We also need

► About Amadeu Altafaj-Tardio



A journalist by profession and training, Amadeu Altafaj-Tardio is the spokesperson for Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn. Prior to joining the Commissioner's team, he worked for the European Commission's spokesperson's service, specialising in external relations. Before joining the Commission, he worked as the EU affairs correspondent for *ABC Tasks*, a newspaper in his native Spain.

an inclusive, high employment society: this means empowering people through job creation, using flexicurity, modernising labour markets and social protection, making lifelong learning more accessible, promoting more openness of education systems for non-typical learners, and better matching supply and demand, including removing obstacles to labour mobility. We must boost greener growth: this means building a competitive and sustainable economy, tackling climate change, accelerating the roll-out of smart grids and genuine EU-scale networks, modernising the EU's industrial base, and turning the EU into a resource-efficient economy.

What are the main challenges and opportunities for communicating Europe 2020?

Communicating Europe 2020 in these difficult times is a real challenge for several Member States. More generally, explaining that "more Europe", the euro, enhanced economic governance, and completing the single market are parts of the effective response to the crisis is a challenging task. But for the same reason, these present difficulties provide that opportunity.

What action has the EU taken and what action does it plan to take to help prevent future financial bubbles and crises from emerging?

The EU has put in place new bodies to improve the transparency and supervision of financial entities.

Furthermore, the Commission's legislative proposals to reinforce economic governance in the EU foresee the extension of our surveillance to macro-economic imbalances and divergences in competitiveness. These imbalances include situations where real estate or financial bubbles emerge.

Putting our public finances back on track while supporting economic recovery and promoting sustainable growth and jobs – this is the great challenge and the policy vision set out in our Europe 2020 strategy.

How effective has the Greek package been to date? Will Ireland's be as effective?

The adjustment programmes of Greece and Ireland have been negotiated with the Greek and Irish governments. It is true that Greece and Ireland, and also other countries, are going through painful adjustments. But the alternative is economic collapse, which would certainly hurt the most vulnerable. Weak competitiveness and unsustainable public finances are the number one threat to social justice: if we cannot create jobs, people are forced into unemployment and unemployment is the surest way to poverty and exclusion.

Greece is undergoing its most serious economic transformation since World War II. And Greece is on track. The Greek adjustment programme contains a wide agenda of structural reforms in which labour reform features prominently.

And Ireland is building the foundations of a healthier economy, including a viable and more transparent banking sector that will contribute effectively to support the real economy. It's a demanding task, but both countries can count on the solidarity of their European partners and EU institutions.

▶ About DG ECFIN

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) strives to help improve the economic well-being of EU citizens through crafting policies designed to promote sustainable economic growth, a high level of employment, stable public finances and financial stability. It also monitors the economies of EU Member States, and in particular the euro zone.

▶ Training and resources

A team effort

For three days at the end of 2010 (13-15 December), Team Europe members from across the EU attended a training seminar in Brussels on how to communicate the EU's complex and multifaceted master plan for the coming decade, the Europe 2020 strategy.

On the first day, having been welcomed by Martin Territt, who is the policy officer for Commission Representations at DG COMM, Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn's spokesman Amadeu Altafaj-Tardio gave the participants the latest on the EU's financial situation. Then, Marcel Haag of the Commission's General Secretariat introduced the various facets of Europe 2020. In the last session of the day, Joost van Iersel of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) talked about the EESC's role in communicating and implementing the Europe 2020 strategy.

On day two, a number of parallel sessions took place highlighting different approaches to communicating the various elements of Europe 2020, including Youth on the Move, the Digital Agenda, the Single Market Act, the Innovation Union, Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era, and an Agenda for New Skills and Jobs. The participants also visited the Council of Ministers.

The final day focused on how Team Europe members could use new technologies and the social media in their efforts to communicate the EU and Europe 2020, and they also received a presentation of the new Europe Direct intranet.

Participants generally reacted positively to the event. Below, some of them speak about their experiences communicating Europe 2020 to citizens:

Heinz Schaumann – senior lecturer at the University of Koblenz (DE), Team Europe Bonn (DE)

"Our national network meetings cover Europe 2020 and the Representations in Berlin and Bonn send us regular information. I organise special Jean Monnet lectures, two to three per semester, to which I invite prominent Europeans to speak on different EU-related topics. Last summer, we organised an excursion to Bonn, where the head of the Representation, Stephan Koppelberg, spoke about Europe 2020.

"In one of my lectures at the university, I used a speech given by Commission President José Manuel Barroso on the state of the Union to show my students how the EU works. In it, he talked about Europe 2020.

“My students are very interested in the EU and their future prospects, especially regarding the job market. After taking part in the round table on the Digital Agenda and the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, I am now thinking of inviting speakers to talk about them in the next semester.”

Deimante Silickaite, Structural Funds officer at the Lithuanian Central Project Management Agency, Team Europe Vilnius (LT)

“In my role as a lecturer for civil servants on different EU subjects, I’ve covered the topic of Europe 2020. For example, I dedicated part of a two-day seminar to the strategy. People were interested in the theme and some even went during the break to check the statistics on how countries are performing in the different areas covered by Europe 2020.

“The most useful aspects of this training seminar for my work were the sessions on the Digital Agenda and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The choice of subject was more useful than usual this time.”

Karl-Heinz Wanker, specialist in EU law at WKO, the Austrian federation of chambers of commerce, Team Europe Vienna (AT)

“As an EU information multiplier in Austria, I try to explain Europe 2020 to entrepreneurs, as well as teachers and pupils. Teachers have been very interested in the subject. This is illustrated by the fact that they attended a course on Europe 2020 and other European policies. Teachers are particularly interested in Youth on the Move, not to mention the Erasmus, Comenius and other Lifelong Learning programmes. This is because they are primarily interested in issues they can use in the classroom.

“For young people, calling the EU the ‘union of peace’ is not relevant because they’ve known nothing but peace. You have to show them how the Union benefits them.

“I found the sessions on the EEAS and the intranet the most useful.”



Communicators' toolkit

- [Europe 2020 FAQs](#)
- [Guide to Digital Agenda](#)
- ['My big idea for the Digital Agenda'](#)
- [Statistics for internet access and use in 2010](#)
- [Video: 'The digital agenda... a revolution in the making'](#)
- [Youth on the Move video](#)
- [Youth on the Move personal stories](#)
- [Your Europe – education and youth](#)
- [European Youth Portal](#)
- [Innovation Union videos](#)
- [Innovation Union: why, key initiatives and what it means to me](#)
- [Innovation: made in the EU](#)
- [Innovation Union: tales from the future](#)
- [Europe 2020's smart growth targets](#)
- [Europe 2020's sustainable growth targets](#)
- [Europe 2020's inclusive growth targets](#)
- [Citizens' summary of 'An industrial policy for the globalisation era'](#)

Upcoming events

- Germany, 18 February 2011, '[A Christian Democratic perspective on Europe 2020](#)': Peter Altmaier, a member of the German Bundestag will provide a Christian Democrat's view of Europe 2020 at this talk organised by EDIC Saarbrücken.
- UK, 3 March 2011, '[Food sustainability and climate change](#)': Organised by EDIC Leeds, this event seeks to engage professionals and ordinary citizens (both young and old) in a debate on food, farming, waste and sustainability.