



Yours Directly

The Europe Direct networks newsletter

Enthusiasm at the heart of Europe

The European Union is a constantly evolving project that has always placed citizens at the heart of decision-making. Huge advances have been made in just over half a century towards achieving things such as a Single Market and visa-free travel. These achievements have been shaped and influenced by the ever-changing needs of citizens.

The speed of change has been such that it is sometimes hard to imagine what life would be like without the EU, or to remember why the need for a united Europe arose in the first place. It is therefore important sometimes to take a step back, in order to see how far we have come and, of course, to figure out where we are going.

*This is why this edition of **Yours Directly** focuses on Europe Day, marking the date upon which French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman made his famous speech 61 years ago. This speech set in motion the chain of events that would one day lead to the creation of what we now know as the European Union.*

We focus on how Europe Direct members across Europe celebrated Europe Day, with activities ranging from dances to debates. Whether in a rural village in Spain or a further education college in the UK, citizens showed their eagerness to engage with Europe, and to learn more about the EU.

We also take the opportunity to introduce the Commission team responsible for the Europe Direct network, and have some tips on how to access useful information and documents.

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➤ *Food for thought*

Remembering our shared values

The dream of a united Europe emerged from the ashes of the Second World War, along with the conviction that closer co-operation was vital to ensure a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future. A significant moment in making this dream a reality came on 9 May 1950, when French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman called on European nations to pool their coal and steel production. Some 61 years later, the 'Schuman Declaration', as it became known, is widely seen as the blueprint for what would become the European Union and, as a result, 9 May is now Europe Day.

Celebrated since 1985, Europe Day remains important for a number of reasons. The occasion provides European citizens with the opportunity to consider just

how far Europe has come in over half a century, assess the role the EU plays in their lives and celebrate the benefits of a closer union. These points were touched upon by Commission President José Manuel Barroso, speaking ahead of this year's Europe Day.

"Robert Schuman was a visionary pragmatist," he said. "He knew that Europe would not be built in one day, but in different steps and through concrete achievements. We owe it to him and the other founding fathers to cherish our achievements, to preserve them and develop them further in a spirit of mutual solidarity and responsibility and for the benefit of our citizens."

Indeed, the EU has always been capable of adapting to the contemporary demands of its citizens. In the face of the current economic crisis, for example, the EU

has changed the way economic and budgetary policies are coordinated, while further steps have been taken towards establishing a genuine economic union. The recent relaunch of the Single Market, in view of its 20th anniversary, will help fully exploit Europe's potential for growth and jobs, too.

Europe Day is also an opportunity to look at how a united Europe has become an important player in global events. President Barroso pointed out that at the global level, "...the European Union has become a credible political and economic actor and is shaping

globalisation". Similarly, it has become a beacon of democracy and co-operation, the very values upon which a united Europe was first built. Indeed, the EU has been highly vocal in its support for democratic transition in the Arab world.

Some 61 years since Robert Schuman issued his declaration, the European Union is more relevant than ever. Europe Day serves to remind us of the origins of the European project, and the values that continue to drive it forward.

► The birth of Europe

On 9 May 1950, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman issued a declaration calling France, Germany and other European countries to pool their coal and steel production as "the first concrete foundation of a European federation". It proposed primarily that Franco-German production of coal and steel be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an "organisation open to the participation of the other countries of Europe". This would provide the foundations for economic development as a "first step in the federation of Europe".



The Robert Schuman declaration

The declaration contained the seeds of what would become the Single Market, stating that "the movement of coal and steel between member countries will immediately be freed from all customs duty, and will not be affected by differential transport rates". It also foresaw Europe's eventual role as a benevolent world player. "With increased resources, Europe will be able to pursue the achievement of one of its essential tasks, namely, the development of the African continent," Schuman declared.

► Good practice and life of the networks

Celebrating in style

Here, Europe Direct members share their experiences of celebrating Europe Day, and discuss what the occasion meant for them.

Involving the community

EDIC Vratsa (Bulgaria) organised a 'European Week' of activities involving the whole community, ranging from reading to children to providing stimulating activities for the elderly. Schoolchildren and library workers volunteered to read short passages from children's books, covering topics such as European history and flora and fauna in different European countries. The events were captured on film and uploaded on to YouTube.

In addition, over 25 people from two pensioner clubs and a club for disabled people took part in a discussion about Europe, debating issues with volunteers, such as how EU

membership has benefited them and what they think about volunteering in Bulgaria today. Volunteers will continue to meet with this group at EDIC Vratsa each month.



All generations were included in the European Week of activities

Finally, another volunteer campaign to mark Europe Day, entitled 'Give me a smile!', was organised by EDIC Vratsa – in partnership with five beauty salons – to provide free beauty care training sessions for active young job-seekers and disadvantaged people. Those participating in the event hope to repeat the campaign, which was also captured on film and posted on YouTube.

Debating the future

EDIC Steiermark (Austria) held a rather cerebral event to mark Europe Day, by inviting the philosopher and writer Martin Pollack, novelists Dževad Karahasan, Martin Krusche and Gerhard Melzer, among others, to debate the future of Europe. An audience of 200 followed the two-hour discussion, which also touched upon topics such as mobility, identity and the impact of a border-free Europe on the cultural sector.



The Europe Day debate

Stands were set up at the event to inform audience members about European programmes designed to promote domestic and international co-operation.

Europe in black and white

EDIC Marseille (France) marked Europe Day by helping to produce a supplement entitled 'Europe in the region' for a daily paper, which went out to over 1 million readers. The publication included an interview with Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding and a feature on '10 untrue stories about Europe'.

The supplement also described how regional Structural Funds work, and provided concrete examples of projects financed by the EU. In addition, there was an interview with the president of the regional council, who discussed the importance of the EU to the region, and a feature on the European Year of Volunteering.

Promoting cultural ties

EDIC Aragon (Spain) celebrated the occasion by holding a workshop entitled 'Europe's contribution to education and training in Aragon – key issues for socio-economic success'. The event gathered together politicians, civil servants, technicians and others who, in one way or another, are positively affected by European education and training policy.

Participants ranged from regional foreign affairs office staff to members of a juggling association and from university researchers to employment agents. Thus, the event provided participants with an opportunity to explain their activities and exchange experiences with others with little or no previous knowledge of their sector.

The event also demonstrated that the EU affects citizens' lives in a myriad of ways, and thus can help to develop educational and cultural ties. Events such as this, which enable specialist networks to engage and share best practice, are key to helping Europe achieve the objective of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as promoted by the Europe 2020 strategy.

Rural pursuits

EDIC La Rioja (Spain) marked Europe Day by linking two important 2011 initiatives – the European Year of Volunteering and the International Year of Forests – under the theme of 'rural'. In the village of Tricio, pupils and staff from the Juan Manuel Encio School joined Europe Direct members in activities which ranged from drawing and poetry to sack races and online games.

The celebrations centred around a quiz entitled 'What do you know about Europe?' with questions prepared by schoolchildren. Responding to the challenge were a green team (symbolising the countryside), a yellow team (stars) and a blue team (the European flag), with the latter finally emerging victorious. A workshop on volunteering was also held at the school.



Team spirit wins through

Keep on running

EDIC South Devon College (UK) sponsored a community fun run and 10-km race on 7 May to mark Europe Day. The event, held at South Devon College in the south-west of the country, also highlighted the European Year of Volunteering 2011, which was promoted with the official logo on runners' t-shirts and on the information distributed to participants.

Europe Day itself was celebrated at the College on 9 May with interactive quizzes and activities testing students' knowledge of the EU. Displays were also set up celebrating the history of the Union.



The race is on for Europe

Songs for Europe

To mark Europe Day, **EDIC Corsica (France)** held various events across the island including a showcase of songs sung in French, Spanish and Italian. This event was accompanied by an information stand designed to highlight the EDIC's work, and to encourage greater interaction between young Europeans. A European buffet was also served.

Other events on the island included a European Week at the l'Université de Corse Pascal Paoli. This week-long celebration included a conference on mobility and multilingualism, in which foreign Erasmus students participated. European Week was marked at other educational centres in Corsica, too: for example, the Lycée Laetitia Bonaparte d'Ajaccio staged an exhibition about the European institutions and the 27 Member States, which was followed by a quiz.

Europe Day stand in the Berlaymont

Europe Day Brussels

Both the Europe Direct network and the Europe Direct Contact Centre were represented at the EU's annual Open Day on 7 May, an open-doors event in the Commission's main building in Brussels, which this year pulled in over 30 000 visitors. Antonis Papacostas, head of the DG COMM unit responsible for Europe Direct, explains why the Network's presence at such events is so important, and why this year was more significant than most.

"For several years there has been a Europe Direct network stand at Open Days, organised jointly with the Europe Direct Contact Centre," explains Mr Papacostas. "This year, however, was the first time the event was held jointly with both Centres organised within the same [Commission] unit. Both Centres – for the first time – fall within the Citizenship portfolio, which is a clear political statement – the Networks are no longer considered a logistical issue, but very much a citizen-oriented one."

The Open Day, which was held the Saturday before Europe Day, gave citizens the opportunity to visit the

European institutions and find out more about the EU. To this end, the Europe Direct stand provided plenty of promotional material and information, with staff on hand to answer any questions. The unit trainee, Veronika Brazdilova organised a special kids' activity corner which included a very popular competition to redesign the EU flag. Members from two Belgian EDICs, Jeroen Jochems from Antwerp and Karen Salaets from Leuven, completed the team and were of great help on the busy stand.



Antonis Papacostas runs the Europe Direct stand

“Promotional events such as this are so important for us,” continues Mr Papacostas. “We may be providing a good service, but if we are not visible, we will miss out. Europe Direct should be considered like a brand name, and these events help get our name out there.”

The event proved highly successful, with the team – which included representatives from Lot 1 subcontractor ESN – informing large numbers of citizens who visited the stand about the Europe Direct service and handing out promotional products such as mugs, bags, posters and USB keys.

“For most people, this was the first time they had discovered Europe Direct,” adds Mr Papacostas. “All this is important, as we want to create a reference for citizens to Europe Direct, in line with establishing the service as a one-stop-shop operation.”

Of course, promotional activities do not stop after Europe Day; Mr Papacostas adds that a Europe Direct Information Centre-oriented video clip will be released soon, providing yet another opportunity for EDICs to communicate with citizens directly.



The promotional materials prove to be very popular at the Europe Direct stand

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► Introducing the team

At your service

The European Commission sector responsible for the Europe Direct network is on hand with resources and expertise to help EDICs, EDCs and Team Europe volunteers reach out to the citizens of Europe. With a number of recent arrivals reinforcing the team, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves.

► Head of Unit Antonis Papacostas

Greek, participated in creating the concept and establishment of Europe Direct Contact Centres. "It is now a real pleasure for me to take on the responsibility of the Europe Direct network and to face the challenge of establishing operational relation and synergy between the two complementary services." He speaks Greek, French and English.



► Petya Popova

Bulgarian, responsible for the unit secretariat, arrived recently from the EC Representation in Bulgaria. "Having gained experience in the field, I am now happy to face new challenges working at the headquarters and coordinating with EDICs."

Petya speaks Bulgarian, English and German.

► Head of Sector Martina André-Kaut

German, is in charge of planning and strategic development, relations with other DGs and institutions, and streamlining the networks. "Having worked for 16 years in DG COMM on various dossiers (the Europa website, human resources, internal communication, promotion, corporate identity), the Europe Direct network world is a totally new and great challenge for me!" She speaks German, French and English.



► Mauno Hanninen

Finnish, is responsible for the intranet, Team Europe and European Documentation Centres. "I have spent seven years in the network team, 12 years in the Commission and have a background in cultural heritage work, archives and IT support."

He speaks Finnish, English and French.

► Teresa Frontan

Spanish, is responsible for training and networking, Europe Direct Information Centres and the annual general meeting. "I have been working for the Commission since 1994 and among my dossiers the 'relais' has always been one of the most engaging. From my time in the Representation in Spain and in France, I remember the Carrefours, the IPEs, the EDCs and also the first generation of EDICs. Now, in the headquarters, I am ready to contribute to the design of the next generation." She speaks Spanish and French.



► Mariyana Nacheva

from Bulgaria, is in charge of network correspondents in the Representations, training session logistics and administrative support. "I came to the Commission in 2007 after nearly eight years spent in the private sector. The majority of my tenure with the Commission has been with DG COMM where I have worked as administrative assistant and currently as communication officer dealing with the Europe Direct network." She speaks Bulgarian, English, French and German.



► Paulo Martins

Portuguese, is responsible for financial management, contracts and the Help Desk for Representations on ED grant management issues and for ED network members on issues related to publications. "I started working at the Commission in 1987. Following 10 years in the Commission Representation in Lisbon (head of administration and information assistant), I am back in Brussels with the Europe Direct network team."

Paulo speaks Portuguese, French and English.

► Lena De Visscher

Swedish, is in charge of information management, communication and promotion, publications and promotional material and training support. "I have worked for 15 years in the Commission in the field of environment and climate change, organising events and, for the last four years, as a press officer. I'm very much looking forward to this new challenge and I will, of course, try to bring some environmental touches to our work!"

She speaks Swedish, English, French and Spanish.



► Veronika Brazdilova

Czech, is our trainee until the end of July. Unfortunately, traineeships end after five months so we will soon have to say goodbye to Veronika. With her enthusiasm, hard work and excellent communication knowledge she has been a great asset to the team and will be sorely missed. We take the opportunity to wish her all the best for her future career. "I was very happy to join this sector. The more I learn the more I am a fan of Europe Direct and of the amazing work the Centres are doing. I enjoyed very much my internship which unfortunately finishes at the end of July, but I strongly believe that in the future I will have occasion to work with Europe Direct again."

► At your fingertips

Information at your fingertips

Survey on EU publications

A survey on EU publications was carried out among EDICs to help DG COMM revamp its publications strategy. The EDICs were asked for feedback on whether current publications and topics match citizens' needs, and if the promotion and distribution of the material can be improved. A total of 230 EDICs responded to the survey. The results are available at: <http://ednetwork.ec.europa.eu/?i=ed-intranet.en.home&c=forums&id=6&view=threads&tid=55>

E-catalogue on media relations

An e-catalogue on media relations has been produced in co-operation with EDIC members of the Pan-European Working Group on media relations. This document describes the main trends in EDICs' media relations and includes 18 good practices from network members to illustrate their co-operation with the media at local and regional level. The e-catalogue is available at: <http://ednetwork.ec.europa.eu/?i=ed-intranet.en.home&c=forums&id=13&view=threads&tid=56>

E-catalogue on repositories of online information

An e-catalogue on European electronic repositories has been produced with help from the EDC members of the Pan-European Working Group on European repositories. It presents an overview of four repositories created by the EDC network members. It is available at: <http://ednetwork.ec.europa.eu/?i=ed-intranet.en.home&c=forums&id=15&view=threads&tid=52>

French EDICs promote Europe Day

The EC Representation in France has collected information on the activities of each EDIC in promoting Europe Day. This information has been centralised in tabular format. A detailed overview of the French EDICs' Europe Day activities is available at: <http://ednetwork.ec.europa.eu/?i=ed-intranet.en.home&c=forums&id=16&view=threads&tid=62>

How to order publications

The publication survey and the questions the network team receives regularly highlight the fact that most EDIC and EDC managers do not know how to order publications from the EU Bookshop. This may be due to rotation of staff or lack of guidelines. We would like to remind readers that the manual for ordering publications can be found in the ED intranet library "Manuals and Guidelines" section: <http://ednetwork.ec.europa.eu/?i=ed-intranet.en.library&c=library&id=259037>

Citizens have your say!

Public consultations are important features of European policy-making, and provide a good opportunity to actually take part in the decision-making process. DG Employment has launched a public online consultation on 'the enforcement of the right to free movement of workers'. The consultation is now available online and will remain open until 12 August 2011.

The aim of this consultation is to assess how to best ensure the enforcement of the right to free movement of workers and contribute to the removal of obstacles. The European Commission would like to gather input from relevant stakeholders and citizens for possible future initiatives and actions in this regard. More information: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=699&langId=en&consultId=8&visib=0&furtherConsult=yes&preview=cHJldmld0VtcGxQb3J0YWwh>

European Green Capital Awards

Is your city next in line for an award? The European Commission has launched its search for the European Green Capital 2014. Deadline for applications is 14 October 2011. More information: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/index_en.html



Discussions between PEWG members on good practices in media relations

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Upcoming events

- A steering committee has been formed to organise a number of volunteer fairs to take place across North Tipperary, Ireland in July:
<http://ednetwork.ec.europa.eu/?i=ed-intranet.en.members-events&c=events&id=43832>
- EDIC Central and Southern Burgenland is holding a tour of the Burgenland spa pools and lakes in July and August:
<http://ednetwork.ec.europa.eu/?i=ed-intranet.en.members-events&c=events&id=44000>
- EDIC Modena is hosting a series of meetings in July focusing on the European Year of Volunteering 2011:
<http://ednetwork.ec.europa.eu/?i=ed-intranet.en.members-events&c=events&id=41294>

Communicators' toolkit

- The Schuman Declaration: http://ec.europa.eu/publications/booklets/eu_documentation/04/txt01_en.htm
- Statement of European Commission President José Manuel Barroso on Europe Day: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/312&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
- European Parliament press release on Europe Day: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/pressroom/content/20110509IPR18943/html/Opening-of-the-session-Europe-Day-no-to-homophobia-death-penalty-in-Gaza>
- Video of speech by European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek: <http://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=39754b19-2388-4074-a0b2-9ede014a0e71>
- Answer given by Commissioner Reding on behalf of the Commission concerning Europe Day: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2011-002540&language=EN>
- Festival of Europe in Parliament: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/headlines/content/20110429STO18378/html/Festival-of-Europe-Parliament-opens-its-doors>
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control marks Europe Day 2011: http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/press/news/Lists/News/ECDC_DispForm.aspx?List=32e43ee8%2De230%2D4424%2Da783%2D85742124029a&ID=431&RootFolder=%2Fen%2Fpress%2Fnews%2FLists%2FNews
- Europe Day symbols: http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/gallery_en.htm
- Europ TV portal, Portugal: <http://sicnoticias.sapo.pt/sites/europ-tv/>
- Day of Europe+Youth on the move campaign in Praça do Rossio (Lisbon), organised with DG EMPL: http://ec.europa.eu/youthonthemove/events/2011/20110429-lisbon_en.htm