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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance.

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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance.

I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

of 8 December 2022

on early childhood education and care: the Barcelona targets for 2030

(2022/C 484/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 292, in conjunction with Article 153(1), point (i), thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to remove disincentives to female labour-market participation, in 2002 the European Council in Barcelona established targets on childcare to be achieved by 2010: namely to provide early childhood education and care ("ECEC") to at least 33 % of children under three years of age and to at least 90 % for children between three years of age and the mandatory school age⁽¹⁾. While those targets have been reached as a European Union average, significant differences persist between and within Member States, in particular for children from lower income households and for the youngest group of children.
- (2) The objective of this Recommendation is to encourage Member States to increase participation in accessible, affordable and high-quality ECEC while taking into account the demand for ECEC services and in line with national patterns of provision, in order to facilitate women's labour-market participation and enhance the social and cognitive development of all children, in particular of children in vulnerable situations or from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- (3) Care responsibilities for children, particularly for very young children, are a significant constraint on female labour-market participation. In 2021, in the Labour Force Survey, 27,9 % of women outside the labour force indicated that looking after children or adults in need of care was their main reason for not seeking employment, compared to only 8,0 % of men. In 2019, before the pandemic, those figures stood at 32,6 % and 7,6 %, respectively⁽²⁾. At the same time, the employment rate for people with children below six years of age was 90,1 % for men compared to 67,2 % for women. Unpaid care responsibilities keep around 7,7 million women in Europe from participating in the labour market, compared to only 450 000 men. Women's disproportionate share of care work is also one of the main root causes of the gender pay gap⁽³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Barcelona European Council of 15 and 16 March 2002 (2002), SN 100/1/02 REV1.

⁽²⁾ Eurostat database table LFSA_IGAR, 'Care of adults with disabilities or children and other family or personal reasons', percentage of population outside the labour force and wanting to work, age group 15-64.

⁽³⁾ Report by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): 'Gender inequalities in care and consequences on the labour market', 12953/20 ADD 1.

- (4) Women are also more likely to adapt their working patterns to care responsibilities. This has a lasting impact on their careers and contributes to the gender pay gap and to the pension gap. Employed women spend on average 90 minutes more than employed men on housework and direct care activities on a daily basis. Addressing gender gaps in employment represents a clear business case as it contributes to growth and is likely to generate positive impacts on productivity. In addition, addressing gender gaps has well-established positive impacts on poverty reduction and social inclusion and offers a way to respond to the problem of a shrinking workforce.
- (5) The availability of affordable and high-quality care services has a significant positive impact on the employment situation of carers, in particular women. As the provision of ECEC increased across the Union, the gender employment gap was reduced from 17,7 percentage points in 2002 to 10,8 percentage points in 2021. However, progress has stalled in recent years.
- (6) The European Pillar of Social Rights (the 'Pillar') highlights the importance of gender equality, work-life balance and ECEC as key objectives of the Union. The Pillar states that equal treatment and opportunities between women and men must be ensured and fostered in all areas, including as regards participation in the labour market, terms and conditions of employment and career progression. It also recognises children's right to affordable ECEC of good quality, children's right to protection from poverty, and the right of children from disadvantaged backgrounds to specific measures to enhance equal opportunities.
- (7) The Pillar action plan proposes that at least 78 % of the population between 20 and 64 years old should be in employment by 2030. To achieve that target, the action plan sets the goal of at least halving the gender employment gap compared to 2019, including through increased provision of formal ECEC. The action plan acknowledges that increasing the provision of formal ECEC would support stronger female labour-market participation and a better reconciliation between work, family and private life.
- (8) There is a significant divergence among Member States in the way they provide support to parents. In some Member States, more emphasis is placed on offering adequately paid or compensated parental leave schemes for at least the first 12 months of the child's life, resulting in very high take-up rates of parental leave. Other Member States focus more on providing ECEC services to children from a very young age. In the latter group of Member States, children typically participate in ECEC already in their first year, and paid or compensated parental leave does not exceed the minimum required by Union law. The new target for children below three years of age set out in this Recommendation aims at striking a balance between those divergent approaches. In the light of those considerations, for the group of children below three years of age, the overall target is a 45 % participation rate towards which all Member States should strive.
- (9) However, Member States that are below the previous target of 33 % are not necessarily expected to reach the previous or new target by 2030. Instead, it is recommended that they increase their participation rates by at least a specific percentage which reflects the baseline situation of each Member State concerned and its pattern of parental leave take-up. This should realistically allow those Member States to get closer to the 45 % target. Member States that are further away from reaching the target are expected to make a greater effort to catch up.
- (10) Given the significant fluctuation of ECEC participation rates from one year to another, and the fact that 2021 data still reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in some Member States, the average ECEC participation rate over the last five years prior to the adoption of this Recommendation (according to EU SILC data) was chosen as a baseline for determining the minimum increase in ECEC participation for Member States that have not yet reached the previous target.

- (11) At Union level, several recommendations and directives in the areas of gender equality and working conditions address certain issues that are relevant for the Barcelona targets. Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁴⁾, for instance, creates a framework for a gender-balanced take-up of parental leave and flexible working arrangements, as well as of carers' leave.
- (12) Several Union initiatives have highlighted the importance of ECEC for children. This Recommendation builds upon those policy initiatives, namely Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) ⁽⁵⁾, that includes a Union-level target whereby at least 96 % of children between three years of age and the starting age for compulsory primary education should participate in ECEC; Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems ⁽⁶⁾, that helps Member States to improve ECEC services and underlines that such services must be inclusive, accessible, affordable and of high quality; Commission Communication on the 'EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child' ⁽⁷⁾, that includes a series of key actions to be taken by the Commission to better promote and protect children's rights and recognises the role of ECEC as beneficial for children's cognitive and social development; and Council Recommendation of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee ⁽⁸⁾, that aims to ensure that children at risk of poverty or social exclusion have free and effective access to key services, including ECEC, in all regions, including remote and rural areas.
- (13) When investing in ECEC services, Member States should take into account a number of dimensions beyond the mere availability of places, such as the time-intensity of participation, the share of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion participating in ECEC, as well as the accessibility, affordability and quality of the services provided. This Recommendation therefore sets out measures to tackle those aspects.
- (14) To facilitate labour-market participation for primary carers, predominantly women, the number of ECEC hours attended should be sufficient to allow parents to meaningfully engage in paid work. Participation should be encouraged, taking into account the best interests of the child, while also allowing for gender-equal parental choice regarding work-life balance and the use of ECEC services. Where children do not yet attend ECEC full time, both parents should make use of the rights to parental leave and flexible working arrangements provided for in Directive (EU) 2019/1158, such as part-time work, flexible working hours and telework, so as to ensure that care responsibilities are equally shared, and participation should gradually increase with the age of the child. Given the importance of that dimension, it is important to monitor the time-intensity of child participation in ECEC together with participation in ECEC in general.
- (15) Furthermore, women with low professional skills, migrant women, women from low-income households with children, and female single parents face more barriers to training and to finding a job and more disincentives to enter or re-enter employment because of financial and non-financial constraints on their children's participation in ECEC. Encouraging higher participation of children in vulnerable situations and from disadvantaged backgrounds in inclusive ECEC would have a beneficial impact on their mothers' chances of returning to work. It would also help women to better reconcile their work, family and private life.
- (16) Parents with disabilities and parents with children with disabilities face particular barriers and challenges in terms of access to the labour market. Facilitating the participation of children with disabilities in mainstream ECEC, where appropriate, taking into account the type and degree of disability, expert assessment and the best interests of the child, can help their parents to better reconcile their work, family and private life.

⁽⁴⁾ Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU (OJ L 188, 12.7.2019, p. 79).

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, p. 1.

⁽⁶⁾ Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems (OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 4).

⁽⁷⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the EU strategy on the rights of the child (COM(2021) 142 final, 24 March 2021, p. 1).

⁽⁸⁾ Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee (OJ L 223, 22.6.2021, p. 14).

- (17) Participating in ECEC has multiple benefits for children. Evidence shows that the provision of quality ECEC plays a crucial role in improving children's cognitive, social and educational development from an early age. According to the Council Recommendation on High Quality Early Childhood Education and Care systems, ECEC participation can be an effective tool for achieving educational equity for children in disadvantaged situations, such as children with disabilities or with special educational needs, children within households at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including single-parent households, children with a migrant background, refugee children, Roma children and children from other minority groups, children living in rural and remote areas with inadequate care infrastructure and children in alternative care.
- (18) The Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee and the Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation ⁽⁹⁾ emphasise that equal access to quality and inclusive ECEC is central to breaking the transmission of social exclusion and securing equal opportunities for children in disadvantaged situations. The European Child Guarantee recommends that Member States submit national plans implementing the Recommendation within nine months from its adoption. However, the participation rates of children in disadvantaged situations remain considerably lower, notably among the youngest children, which may result later in worse educational outcomes and high school drop-out rates, in particular for Roma children or children with a migrant background, as well as children deprived of parental care. It is therefore important to close the gap between the ECEC participation of those children and that of the overall population of children. Attention also needs to be paid to reducing the participation gap between the highest and the lowest income quintiles. Participation in ECEC is also relevant for children fleeing the war in Ukraine, as well as for other children seeking or benefitting from protection in the Union. Equal access to mainstream inclusive and non-segregated ECEC services should be ensured for all those potentially vulnerable children.
- (19) Similarly, children with disabilities have the right to participate in mainstream ECEC on an equal basis with others. Half of children with disabilities are cared for only by their parents. It is therefore important to ensure that ECEC is accessible, inclusive and combined with targeted measures that help address specific needs, including through measures for tackling barriers and segregation, equipping staff with the necessary competencies or hiring dedicated staff to address individual needs, and individualised curricula where needed.
- (20) Particular attention needs to be paid to closing the gap in the participation of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion as well as that of children with disabilities or with special educational needs in ECEC systems where the national administrations of social affairs, health and education are separately responsible for different parts of ECEC.
- (21) A high quality of ECEC is essential for ensuring that children benefit from participation in ECEC. While there is no single way to define and measure the concept of quality in ECEC settings, its essence lies in the quality of interaction between adults and children, irrespective of the ECEC system in place. Member States should ensure the provision of high-quality ECEC, taking into account the various dimensions set out in the Recommendation on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems, including access to ECEC services, the qualifications and working conditions of staff, the pedagogical curriculum, monitoring and evaluation, and the governance and financing of ECEC services. Of particular importance are elements such as the staff/child ratio, staff qualifications, and continuous professional training.
- (22) Quality of ECEC provision is also an important factor in establishing trust between parents and the institutions providing education and care, and therefore an important factor in facilitating increased participation in ECEC.
- (23) Accessibility is another important dimension of the provision of ECEC. It includes adequate infrastructure and appropriate reception capacities and opening hours, as well as adaptation to the special needs of parents, and assistance in overcoming complex administrative procedures. Support in navigating administrative procedures should be provided in various forms, including linguistic and digital support, especially for groups in a vulnerable situation or from disadvantaged backgrounds who, for example, are not able to use or do not have access to digital tools. It also includes accessibility for persons with disabilities, including children, parents and professionals, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the accessibility requirements set out in Directive (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁰⁾.

⁽⁹⁾ Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021 on Roma equality, inclusion and participation (OJ C 93, 19.3.2021, p. 1).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Directive (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the accessibility requirements for products and services (OJ L 151, 7.6.2019, p. 70).

- (24) Furthermore, accessibility includes the simplification of procedures and the professionalisation of staff and specialists so as to adequately support children with disabilities or with special educational needs and other vulnerable groups in mainstream non-segregated facilities. Member States should ensure that barriers to the use of ECEC services are removed and prevented, including for persons with disabilities, and that ECEC services are truly inclusive.
- (25) When addressing accessibility, territorial imbalances should be taken into account. Long commuting time linked to distance, lack of or limited transport connections and traffic congestion can be a barrier to participation, in particular for children with disabilities or special educational needs. Remote and rural areas are particularly disadvantaged by the lack of sufficient ECEC services locally. Such territorial imbalances can exacerbate problems of affordability. It is therefore important to consider the different profiles of ECEC services users in mobility plans, and to include territorial coverage in data collection for evaluation and monitoring purposes.
- (26) In many Member States, the high cost of ECEC is still a major barrier to participation. Eurostat data show that the cost factor plays a significant role in the decision not to use formal childcare services in many countries, in particular for households at risk of poverty. According to Union statistics on income and living conditions for 2016, 13 % of parents do not make use of childcare because of its cost and 11 % have moderate or great difficulties in affording it. Those percentages more than double to 28 % and 27 % respectively for households at risk of poverty. Scientific research shows the substantial economic, social, educational and developmental benefits of high-quality ECEC. Ensuring affordable ECEC is beneficial for meeting women's upskilling and reskilling needs and for facilitating their labour-market participation; this also has a positive long-term impact on education from an early age, paving the way for a positive lifelong attitude to learning, going beyond the children involved and extending to society at large. Therefore, Member States should ensure that the costs of ECEC are proportionate to household income and do not constitute a barrier to taking up ECEC. Moreover, Member States should also take into account other costs related to participation in ECEC such as transport, clothing and equipment needed in care situations.
- (27) One way to ensure adequate provision of accessible and affordable high-quality ECEC is by establishing a legal entitlement to ECEC, by which public authorities guarantee a place for all children whose parents demand it, regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status. In most Member States, such legal entitlement already exists but the starting age for the entitlement varies significantly. Ideally, there should not be a gap between the end of adequately paid or compensated maternity, paternity and parental leave and a legal entitlement to ECEC.
- (28) Increasing the availability of high-quality, accessible and affordable ECEC for families and improving working conditions and salaries in the ECEC sector is expected to have economic benefits. At the same time, the fiscal sustainability of investing in ECEC can be optimised by evaluating the impact on public finances and by regularly monitoring and continuously improving cost-effectiveness, building on best practices, including an efficient design of funding mechanisms that is coherent with the overall sustainability of public finances.
- (29) Easy and equal access to adequate online and offline information on ECEC without any discrimination is of key importance for all parents regardless of family composition and status, including civil partnerships, as recognised by national law. This pertains to information on the entitlement to and availability of suitable services, access modalities and eligibility for financial support, where applicable.
- (30) The lack of awareness of parents' and children's rights as regards ECEC and its relevance for future educational achievements is an additional hurdle to taking up services which impacts women's labour market participation. Informing parents correctly and thoroughly should lead to well-considered, informed decisions about care options.

- (31) The ECEC sector suffers from staff shortages in many countries. That can be addressed through multiple strategies, such as improving working conditions, career prospects and remuneration, by providing regular upskilling and reskilling possibilities, by developing creative recruitment strategies, and by calling on different under-represented groups to join the ECEC workforce, such as men and persons from various cultural backgrounds, for example migrants and refugees. A simple and rapid qualifications recognition mechanism could help address shortages. For example, Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 ⁽¹⁾ addresses the access of those fleeing the war in Ukraine to regulated professions.
- (32) The promotion of fair working conditions for staff in ECEC should contribute to attracting new workers and at the same time help ensure that those who are working in that sector are willing and able to remain in their jobs until retirement. It may equally contribute to tackling gender segregation in the ECEC sector. In this context, the International Labour Organization policy guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel ⁽²⁾ give guidance on the possible implementation of recommendations concerning professional and career development, appropriate remuneration, including equal pay, and sustainable employment and working conditions, as well as the promotion of social dialogue in this sector.
- (33) Care for children does not stop when they go to primary school. The care needs of children of primary school age can also limit mothers' labour-market participation and working time if there are no adequate, quality and affordable solutions for care after school and during holidays in the context of national school systems. If no care possibilities are available for older children, the availability of ECEC for younger siblings will not allow the labour-market participation of the parents, which might in turn have an impact on the uptake of ECEC for younger siblings. Member States should therefore provide adequate, quality and affordable out-of-school care. It is recommended that the measures taken by Member States include, where relevant, an offer for the supervision of and support for homework for all children, including children from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- (34) Work-life balance remains a great challenge for many parents, in particular for women. The difficulty of balancing work and care responsibilities is a major obstacle that contributes to the underrepresentation of women in the labour market. In this context, gender stereotypes often influence the roles of women and men with regard to care. The imbalance between caregiving by women in comparison to men in turn reinforces gender stereotypes regarding both men's and women's occupations and roles.
- (35) This persisting gender care gap should be tackled, in particular by encouraging uptake by fathers of paternity leave, parental leave and flexible working-time arrangements, where relevant, combined with more equal sharing of care responsibilities within couples as regards paid and unpaid work ⁽³⁾. The implementation of Directive (EU) 2019/1158 should enhance the rights of workers with care responsibilities to paternity and parental leave and to request flexible working-time arrangements. Further action should focus on raising awareness of those new rights and monitoring whether workers can fully make use of those rights without experiencing unfavourable treatment at work.
- (36) In addition to other measures to reconcile work, family and private life, flexible solutions for using ECEC should be promoted, as necessary. For example, workers with care responsibilities would benefit from access to complementary childcare services such as early opening, the provision of meals and late closing.
- (37) In order to better understand care needs and constraints, Member States should ensure the availability of adequate data with a sufficient degree of granularity, reliability and comparability. Given that Directive (EU) 2019/1158 does not contain specific provisions on data collection, those data should include the take-up of paternity and parental leaves, taking into account the methodological manual for the work-life balance indicator framework developed by the Employment Committee (EMCO) and the Social Protection Committee (SPC) to support the proper monitoring and evaluation of that Directive.

⁽¹⁾ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the recognition of the qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine (OJ L 107 I, 6.4.2022, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ International Labour Organisation, 'Meeting of Experts on Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel', available at: https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/codes-of-practice-and-guidelines/WCMS_236528/lang-en/index.htm

⁽³⁾ See Council Conclusions on Tackling the Gender Pay Gap: Valuation and Distribution of Paid Work and Unpaid Care Work, 13584/20.

- (38) Progress in implementing this Recommendation should be regularly monitored in the context of the European Semester, the annual report on gender equality in the Union and the Gender Equality Strategy Monitoring Portal. To that end, Member States should in particular support the Commission in the possible development and calculation of an indicator for measuring the gender care gap, which means the difference in time devoted to care by women and men, the gender pay gap, and the use of time in paid and unpaid work, in order to better understand the interdependencies between those elements with a view to supporting the development of evidence-based gender equality and social policies. Member States should also continue their efforts to design and implement reforms in the ECEC sector, making best use of the Commission's support, including via the Technical Support Instrument (TSI), through the exchange of good practices and the use of appropriate processes and methodologies, and through data collection, stakeholder involvement and more effective and efficient inter-institutional coordination and human resources planning, allocation and professional development in the ECEC sector.
- (39) The wording 'early childhood education and care' should be understood, as defined in the Council Recommendation on High Quality ECEC, as referring to any regulated arrangement that provides education and care for children from birth to the compulsory primary school age — regardless of the setting, funding, opening hours or programme content — and includes centre and family day-care, privately and publicly funded provision, as well as the provision of pre-school and pre-primary services.
- (40) In order to assess the impact of this Recommendation, the Commission in collaboration with the Member States should monitor its progress and report regularly on it to the Council,

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION:

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

1. This Recommendation aims to encourage Member States, taking into account their national circumstances, to increase participation in accessible, affordable, and high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) in order to facilitate and encourage women's labour-market participation and to enhance the social and cognitive development of children and their educational success, in particular for children in vulnerable situations or from disadvantaged backgrounds.
2. This Recommendation concerns ECEC for all children.

TARGETS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

3. (a) It is recommended that Member States provide high-quality ECEC services in line with national competences, levels of parental leave take-up and patterns of ECEC provision, ensuring that by 2030 at least 45 % of children below the age of three participate in ECEC according to EU SILC data.

Notwithstanding the first subparagraph, it is recommended that Member States that have not yet reached the target set in 2002 of a 33 % participation rate in ECEC for this age group increase participation, by 2030, by at least a specific percentage in relation to their current participation rate as set out in points (i) and (ii) of this point. The current participation rate shall be calculated as the average participation rate in ECEC of children below the age of three achieved in the years 2017-2021 according to EU-SILC data. It is recommended that Member States increase ECEC participation in relation to their respective current participation rates as follows:

- (i) by at least 90 % for Member States whose participation rate is lower than 20 %; or
- (ii) by at least 45 %, or until at least reaching a participation rate of 45 %, for Member States whose participation rate is between 20 % and 33 %.

- (b) It is recommended that Member States provide high-quality ECEC services for children from the age of three in order to reach, by 2030, the target agreed by the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) ⁽¹⁴⁾, whereby at least 96 % of children between the age of three and the starting age for compulsory primary education should participate in ECEC.

INDICATOR FOR INTENSITY OF PARTICIPATION

4. It is recommended that Member States support a level of availability of ECEC services that is compatible with the child's well-being and development and allows for the meaningful labour-market participation of parents, especially mothers, while also allowing for gender-equal parental choice in the use of ECEC services.
5. It is recommended that Member States take steps to make ECEC services available in a way which allows children to participate at least 25 hours per week.
6. It is recommended that Member States promote the availability of ECEC services or of complementary services before and after regular working hours of ECEC services, as appropriate, so as to allow for travel time and to make childcare fully compatible with the child's wellbeing and the parents' working hours and their need to reconcile work, family and private life.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS, CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS OR WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

7. It is recommended that Member States:
 - (a) have targeted measures in place to enable and increase participation in ECEC of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including children at risk of poverty or social exclusion or with a migrant background, and children with insufficient knowledge of the language of schooling, as well as children with disabilities, with specific needs or with special educational needs;
 - (b) take the necessary steps to close the participation gap in ECEC between children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and the overall population of children;
 - (c) strive to increase the participation in mainstream ECEC of children with disabilities, children with specific needs or with special educational needs, when appropriate; and
 - (d) support training programmes for ECEC staff designed to support them in offering high quality ECEC for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, as well as children with disabilities, with specific needs or with special educational needs.

QUALITY

8. It is recommended that Member States ensure that:
 - (a) ECEC services for all children are of high quality, in order to contribute to the healthy physical, social, emotional, cognitive and educational development and wellbeing of the child, and in order to increase parents' trust in the services; and that
 - (b) the national or regional Quality Frameworks which Member States are encouraged to develop in line with the Council Recommendation on High Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems include the provision of services for children of both age groups covered by this Recommendation; Quality Frameworks should in particular provide for:
 - adequate staff-child ratios and group sizes, taking into account the age of children and any disability or special educational needs they may have, in particular in split ECEC systems, so as to avoid gaps in terms of care;

⁽¹⁴⁾ OJ C 66, 26.2. 2021, p. 1.

- support for the professionalisation of all ECEC staff, including by increasing the required level of initial education and ensuring continuous professional development, including knowledge of children's rights, through adequate and lifelong training opportunities; and
- a safe, nurturing and caring environment, a quality curriculum and learning opportunities appropriate to the specific needs of each category of children and each age group, and a social, cultural and physical space that offers a range of possibilities allowing children to develop their potential.

TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION

9. It is recommended that Member States address challenges for children and their families in accessing a suitable education and care facility by providing sufficient territorial coverage of ECEC provision. To that end, it is recommended that Member States, in particular:
 - (a) organise the provision of ECEC adequately across urban and rural areas, affluent and disadvantaged neighbourhoods regions and outermost regions, taking into consideration national structures as well as the specific features of areas, including the density of the child population and the distribution of children by age, in a way that is fully in line with desegregation and non-discrimination principles and in close cooperation with local and regional authorities; and
 - (b) take into account, as appropriate, the need for reasonable commuting times, including for parents using active mobility and public transport, when organizing ECEC or developing policy on where ECEC services are located.

AFFORDABILITY

10. For children other than those covered by the Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee, who should enjoy free education and affordable and effective access to high quality ECEC services as defined in that Recommendation, it is recommended that Member States ensure that the net cost of ECEC is reasonably proportionate to other household expenses and disposable income, paying particular attention to low-income households, including low-income single-parent households. In particular, Member States are encouraged to:
 - (a) limit out-of-pocket expenses for parents; and
 - (b) where applicable, introduce sliding-scale fees proportionate to family income or a maximum fee for ECEC.

ACCESSIBILITY

11. It is recommended that Member States continuously remove obstacles to equal access to ECEC for all children in a non-discriminatory manner. In that context, particular attention should be given to:
 - (a) offering solutions for parents with atypical working hours to better reconcile work, family and private life, while ensuring the child's wellbeing;
 - (b) addressing the specific needs of single parents, most of whom are women;
 - (c) improving access to ECEC regardless of the labour market status of the parents in a manner coherent with providing incentives to work;
 - (d) ensuring the accessibility of buildings, infrastructure, community support services and transport as well as learning material and digital tools for parents and children with disabilities or with special educational needs;
 - (e) offering effective educational and care support and appropriate information and communication for children and parents with disabilities or with special educational needs as well as those in vulnerable situations, and addressing linguistic and cultural barriers, including barriers faced by children with a migrant background, so as to enable children's participation in ECEC offered in mainstream facilities that are inclusive and non-segregated;

- (f) proactively providing support and clear information about the benefits of attending ECEC and about existing opportunities, eligibility rules, and administrative procedures for access to ECEC services to all parents on a non-discriminatory basis, regardless of family composition and status; and
 - (g) providing administrative support for enrolment, with particular attention to parents in vulnerable situations or from disadvantaged backgrounds.
12. It is recommended that Member States consider introducing a legal entitlement to ECEC. When determining the starting age for that entitlement, it is recommended that Member States take into account the availability and length of adequately paid or compensated maternity, paternity and parental leave, and aim to avoid gaps between the end of such leave and the start of ECEC.

COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES AND OUT OF SCHOOL CARE

13. In addition to providing ECEC services, it is recommended that Member States ensure a comprehensive approach to care for children, taking into account the care needs of children of different ages, including those of primary school age, by facilitating affordable, accessible and high quality out-of-school care for children in primary school (after-school and holiday cover), including those with disabilities or with special educational needs, taking into account the national organisation of school and holidays. It is recommended that Member States include in those services, where relevant, support for homework for all children, including in particular children from disadvantaged backgrounds or in vulnerable situations.

AWARENESS OF RIGHTS

14. It is recommended that Member States promote parents' awareness of their rights, including, where applicable, of the entitlement to a place in ECEC, bearing in mind that different traditions and backgrounds may influence the knowledge and perception of, and trust in, the ECEC system.
15. Member States are encouraged to proactively inform parents about the possibilities, benefits and costs of using ECEC and, where applicable, about the financial support available. Consideration should be given to:
- (a) the parents' needs for information on ECEC taking into account the diversity of their skills, capabilities, socio-economic background, and any disability; and
 - (b) making information easily accessible online as well as offline, taking into account different language needs and the availability of digital tools.
16. It is recommended that Member States put in place effective, impartial and accessible complaints procedures for reporting issues or incidents to the competent authorities.

STAFF WORKING CONDITIONS AND SKILLS

17. It is recommended that Member States support quality employment and fair working conditions for ECEC staff, in particular by promoting social dialogue and collective bargaining and by supporting the development of attractive wages, adequate working arrangements, high standards in occupational health and safety, and equality and non-discrimination in the sector, while respecting the autonomy of the social partners.
18. It is recommended that Member States address skill needs and worker shortages in ECEC, in particular by:
- (a) improving initial and continuous education and training to equip current and future ECEC workers with the necessary skills and competencies;
 - (b) building career pathways in the ECEC sector, including via upskilling, reskilling and information and guidance services;
 - (c) offering attractive professional status and career prospects to ECEC workers;

- (d) implementing measures to tackle gender stereotypes and gender segregation and to make the profession more attractive; and
- (e) developing professional networks for persons employed in the ECEC sector, where appropriate.

TACKLING THE GENDER CARE GAP

19. It is recommended that Member States encourage equal sharing of care for children between parents by:
- (a) combating gender stereotypes and encouraging a balanced participation of both parents in care responsibilities on an equal footing, including through communication campaigns; and
 - (b) promoting and supporting the availability and gender-equal uptake of family-friendly work arrangements, as well as the uptake of parental leave by both parents, especially men, over the life course.

GOVERNANCE AND DATA COLLECTION

20. It is recommended that Member States ensure sound and effective policy governance in ECEC, in particular by:
- (a) ensuring strong cooperation between different policy-making institutions and ECEC services, and supporting cooperation with other policy-making institutions and services in charge of early childhood development and education; and
 - (b) mobilising and making cost-effective use of appropriate and sustainable funding for ECEC, including by making use of Union funds and instruments, and by pursuing policies conducive to the sustainable funding of ECEC services that are coherent with the overall sustainability of public finances.
21. It is recommended that, where relevant, Member States develop or improve data collection on:
- (a) the participation of children in ECEC, on a regular basis and with adequate sample size where surveys are used, disaggregated by age and, where possible, by sex, including with reference to children in vulnerable situations or from disadvantaged backgrounds;
 - (b) the differences in time use in paid and unpaid work between women and men with care responsibilities, preferably by using time use surveys on the basis of the standard set by the Harmonised European Time Use Surveys;
 - (c) the take-up of parental leave disaggregated by sex, from administrative data in a Union-harmonised way making use of the work-life balance indicator framework developed by the joint subgroup of the EMCO and the SPC;
 - (d) the working conditions of staff in ECEC, covering in particular the aspects referred to in Recommendations 17 and 18; and
 - (e) ECEC shortages, accessibility, affordability and quality of ECEC on a regular basis, and on the territorial distribution of ECEC, notably to assess territorial disparities, including in remote and rural areas.
22. It is recommended that Member States scale up efforts to ensure that data are comparable at Union level and have a sufficient degree of granularity.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

23. It is recommended that Member States inform the Commission of the set of measures taken or planned to implement this Recommendation within 18 months of its adoption, building where relevant on existing national strategies or plans. Where appropriate, reference can be made to reports submitted under existing reporting mechanisms, such as the Open Method of Coordination, the European Semester and other relevant Union programming and reporting mechanisms.

HEREBY WELCOMES THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION TO:

24. (a) improve regular data provision, in collaboration with Member States, by making available on the Eurostat website, as well as on the Gender Equality Strategy Monitoring Portal, the following:
- (i) a further breakdown by age, and, where appropriate, by household income quintile, of children's participation in ECEC, as well as of the time-intensity of participation and the participation rate for children at risk of poverty or social exclusion;
 - (ii) confidence intervals for the EU-SILC main indicator 'Children in formal childcare or education' and other relevant indicators alongside the participation rates to ensure comparability across years and countries; and
 - (iii) more comprehensive explanatory information on the data collected, in particular as regards ECEC programmes covered by the definition of the indicators;
- (b) mobilise Union funding to support national reforms and investments in ECEC;
- (c) explore the possibility to develop further indicators in cooperation with the EMCO and the SPC and in close cooperation with the Education Committee and the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks, and seek to facilitate the exchange of good practices and mutual learning among Member States, as well as technical capacity-building activities, and continue to support Member States in their efforts to design and implement reforms in the area of ECEC, in particular via the Strategic Cooperation Framework in education and training and the TSI;
- (d) encourage Union agencies such as the European Institute for Gender Equality and Eurofound to collect data regularly, develop indicators and carry out analyses on the gender care gap, the gender pay gap, and the use of time in paid and unpaid work, on individual and social activities by women and men with care responsibilities and on work arrangements throughout their working life;
- (e) monitor the implementation of this Recommendation in the context of the annual report on gender equality in the Union, and existing arrangements of the European Semester, with the support of EMCO and the SPC, and – for children above three years of age – the Education and Training Monitor.
25. Report to the Council within five years on progress made in relation to this Recommendation.

Done at Brussels, 8 December 2022.

For the Council
The President
M. JUREČKA

EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

of 13 December 2022

to the Council of the European Union on the external auditors of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank

(ECB/2022/44)

(2022/C 484/02)

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank, and in particular Article 27.1 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The accounts of the European Central Bank (ECB) and national central banks of the Member States whose currency is the euro are audited by independent external auditors recommended by the ECB's Governing Council and approved by the Council of the European Union.
- (2) Article 37(1) of the Austrian Federal Act on the Oesterreichische Nationalbank provides that the General Meeting of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank elects one external auditor and one alternate external auditor for a multi-year period of, at most, five years. The alternate external auditor will be mandated only in the event that the external auditor is unable to perform the audit.
- (3) The mandate of Ernst & Young Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft m.b.H., the current external auditor of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank, and the mandate of Deloitte Audit Wirtschaftsprüfungs GmbH, the current alternate external auditor, will both end following the audit for the financial year 2022. It is therefore necessary to appoint external auditors from the financial year 2023.
- (4) The Oesterreichische Nationalbank has selected BDO Austria GmbH Wirtschaftsprüfungs- und Steuerberatungsgesellschaft as its external auditor for the financial years 2023 to 2027. The Oesterreichische Nationalbank will select its alternate external auditor at a later point in time,

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that BDO Austria GmbH Wirtschaftsprüfungs- und Steuerberatungsgesellschaft should be appointed as the external auditor of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank for the financial years 2023 to 2027.

Done at Frankfurt am Main, 13 December 2022.

The President of the ECB
Christine LAGARDE

II

*(Information)*INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES
AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case M.10913 – SADCO / HACP / JV)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2022/C 484/03)

On 9 December 2022, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the internal market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾. The full text of the decision is available only in English and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- in the merger section of the ‘Competition policy’ website of the Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/>). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,
- in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en>) under document number 32022M10913. EUR-Lex is the online point of access to European Union law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

COUNCIL

Conclusions on Special Report No 19/2022 by the European Court of Auditors: COVID-19 vaccine procurement – Sufficient doses secured after initial challenges, but performance of the process not sufficiently assessed

(2022/C 484/04)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

- (1) WELCOMES the Special Report No 19/2022 by the European Court of Auditors (hereafter referred to as 'the Court') and the replies of the Commission to the Report;
- (2) NOTES that the Court's audit assessed whether the Commission and Member States procured COVID-19 vaccines up to the end of 2021 effectively; in that endeavour, the Court reviewed whether:
 - the EU's preparations for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines were effective;
 - the EU's negotiators were able to secure the EU's procurement objectives in the contracts it signed with vaccine manufacturers;
 - the Commission addressed any issues impacting the supply of vaccines.
- (3) RECALLS that the objectives of the EU Strategy for COVID-19 vaccines, published by the Commission, are to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of vaccines, to secure timely access to vaccines for Member States and their population while leading the global solidarity effort and to ensure equitable access for all in the EU to an affordable vaccine as early as possible.
- (4) ACKNOWLEDGES that the EU Strategy for COVID-19 vaccines represents a significant achievement and highlights the added value of EU cooperation by ensuring that 80 % of the EU adult population was fully vaccinated by the end of 2021.
- (5) RECALLS that the Member States and the Commission approved the Agreement which authorised the Commission to conclude agreements with vaccine manufacturers with the objective to procure Covid-19 vaccines on behalf of the Member States ⁽¹⁾.
- (6) NOTES that according to the Special Report the EU strategy for COVID-19 vaccines was centred around two bodies, particularly the Steering Board, responsible for overseeing negotiations and validating contracts before signature and the Joint negotiation team being in charge of negotiating the contracts.
- (7) NOTES that according to the Special Report, the President of the Commission conducted preliminary negotiations for a contract with Pfizer/BioNTech during March 2021, which was the only contract for which the Joint negotiation team was not involved in this stage of negotiations, contrary to the Commission decision on procuring COVID-19 vaccines. On 9 April 2021, the Commission presented to the steering board the conditions negotiated between the President of the Commission and Pfizer/BioNTech, and the steering board agreed to launch a call for tender. It is the biggest COVID-19 vaccine contract, which will dominate the EU's vaccine portfolio until the end of 2023.

⁽¹⁾ Annex to Commission Decision C(2020) 4192 final of 18 June 2020

(8) INVITES the Commission to continue the cooperation with Member States in order to fulfil the goals of the EU Vaccines Strategy, while addressing the shortcomings, in particular in terms of transparency, governance and needs of Member States.

(9) TAKES NOTE of the findings of the Report, in particular that:

- The Commission produced its vaccine strategy in the early stages of the pandemic at a time when there were no COVID-19 vaccines available on the market;
- The EU managed to procure COVID-19 vaccines by ensuring a diversified portfolio in order to spread the risk of failed vaccine development by signing contracts with several different manufacturers;
- The EU's preparations for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines were mostly effective, however the EU started the procurement process later than the UK and the US;
- The terms of the contracts evolved over time and the EU's negotiators were better able to secure the EU's procurement objectives in the later contracts it signed with vaccine manufacturers;
- The Commission and 10 of the 14 Member States who responded to the ECA survey wish to see a more standard liability regime when the standard marketing authorisation has been granted;
- The Commission has proposed the use of the procurement system for future health crises without first evaluating its performance or examining third country procurement system beforehand;
- The Commission did not fully analyse the production and supply chain challenges of vaccine production until after signing most of the contracts. The Commission only set up a task force to support manufacturing and supply chains in February 2021 and while it did help resolve bottlenecks, its impact on the ramp-up of vaccine production was unclear.

(10) SHARES the observations of the Court to the findings and recommendations included in the Report, in particular that:

- The Commission achieved a diversified vaccine portfolio, but the EU is mainly dependent on one supplier for 2022-2023;
- The Commission supported contract implementation, in close cooperation with Member States, but these efforts had a limited leverage to overcome supply challenges;
- The EU's new regulations and activities in the field were not determined on the basis of an ex-ante impact assessment by the Commission.

(11) WELCOMES the Commission's reply to the findings of the Court and the initiatives already taken to implement those recommendations, including the proposal for a Council Regulation on a framework of measures related to medical countermeasures in the event of a public health emergency at Union level ⁽²⁾.

(12) TAKES NOTE of the recommendations of the Court and thus INVITES the Commission to:

- Create pandemic procurement guidelines within one year from the adoption of the Emergency Framework Regulation ⁽³⁾ and the revised Financial Regulation ⁽⁴⁾, on the basis of lessons learnt taking into account, when possible, existing evidence to identify good practices for future negotiating teams;
- Carry out a risk assessment of the EU's procurement approach in order to propose appropriate measures;
- Carry out an independent evaluation of the adequacy of the procedures to assess effectiveness, prices, payment model, quantities of the COVID-19 vaccines procured by the EU from a public health perspective, elements of the contracts clauses as well as selection criteria of the Negotiating Team in order to feed into the guidelines developed;
- Run exercises, in close cooperation with the Member States, in order to test all parts of its updated pandemic procurement framework to identify any weakness and areas for improvement.

(13) UNDERLINES the importance of drawing the lessons from COVID-19 vaccines procurement. Taking into account the context of the Global Pandemic during which contracts were negotiated and without prejudice to the context, Member States emphasise the need for more flexibility for Member States in future contracts, especially when it comes to purchased quantities, delivery schedules and payment upon arrival depending on vaccines delivered, as well as for more precise definition of acceptable expiry periods. Realizing the role of the EU in actively contributing to a global response through vaccine donation, CALLS for easing of donation conditions, so to allow fast delivered directly to third countries or donation of in-country doses.

⁽²⁾ COM/2021/577 final

⁽³⁾ 2021/0294 (NLE)

⁽⁴⁾ 2022/0162 (COD)

(14) REGRETS the lack of reply from the Commission to the Court's information requests on the preliminary negotiations for the contract signed with Pfizer/BioNTech on 19 May 2021 and INVITES the Commission to provide the information necessary to allow Union institutions and bodies to carry out their tasks pursuant to the Treaties.

Conclusions on vaccination as one of the most effective tools for preventing disease and improving public health

(2022/C 484/05)

Introduction

Vaccination is considered to be one of the most effective public health tools in the prevention of infectious diseases and the mitigation of their most damaging effects. Vaccination is not only important for children, but also in a life-course perspective. The development of vaccines represents a shift in medical history and has had a significant impact on public health. Many diseases have been prevented by vaccination, thereby reducing the burden on health systems and preventing an estimated 3,5 - 5 million deaths annually ⁽¹⁾. In the case of smallpox, this disease has even been eradicated thanks to vaccination.

However, today, vaccination is a victim of its own success. Some people no longer see the impacts of infectious diseases that are no longer present due to vaccination schemes and a considerable number may even therefore question the importance of vaccination. Vaccination coverage rates in many regions across the EU are falling well below the recommended levels. Infectious diseases can easily return under such circumstances. An example of this is the measles epidemic that has broken out in recent years in a number of European countries.

People's willingness to receive safe, effective, recommended and available vaccines has been challenged over the last few decades. Vaccine hesitancy is ranked by the World Health Organization (WHO) among the 10 biggest threats to global health. It is also a problem that varies depending on the context, country and type of vaccine concerned, and for this reason it is particularly challenging. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and a sustainable effort in improving dialogue with citizens, understanding their concerns and developing tailored vaccination strategies, alongside targeted communication campaigns, is required.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the size and scope of this issue. COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy was substantially influenced by diverse factors, among which concerns about the perceived safety and effectiveness of the vaccine have been predominant. Although in some EU Member States COVID-19 vaccination campaigns did not result in very high vaccination rates, in some parts of the European Union the results were impressive.

On the positive side, the pandemic has also brought forward the development of a number of important solutions and tools which we can already make use of today. Significant developments have been made, for example, in digitalisation, with the collection and exchange of data at EU level as well as establishment of the EU Digital COVID Certificate, an important milestone setting a global standard as part of the public health measures to contain the spread of the pandemic. The EU Strategy for COVID-19 vaccines ⁽²⁾ followed by the launch of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) also represents a major step forward in ensuring the development, procurement, purchase and distribution of medical countermeasures at EU level, such as of vaccines and therapeutics. Another equally important achievement is putting in place the European Health Union, which aims at reinforcing the crisis preparedness and response of key agencies.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.who.int/health-topics/vaccines-and-immunization#tab=tab_

⁽²⁾ COM/2020/245 final

We need to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure adequate preparedness for future public health crises. In this regard, flows of displaced persons to the EU may pose a public health challenge, first and foremost for displaced group itself, and also for the Member States, that should include all such persons in their vaccination strategies, according to national legislation. Additionally, we should focus on the impact of climate change on public health, which may be far-reaching, with potential shifts in the transmission ranges of infectious diseases, in particular vector-borne diseases such as hantavirus, tick-borne encephalitis, Lyme disease and malaria.

With this in mind, Member States should step up their joint efforts, building on the Council Recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases from 2018 ⁽³⁾ and lessons learned during last years of COVID-19 pandemic.

While vaccination services, programmes and policies are a responsibility of Member States, given the cross-border nature of infectious diseases and the common challenges faced by national immunisation programmes, particularly in the light of COVID-19 pandemic, migration, or the monkeypox outbreak, Member States could benefit from an even more coordinated EU approach to preventing and limiting the spread of epidemics and vaccine-preventable diseases.

Combating vaccine hesitancy: the risk of mis- and disinformation and the need to increase public confidence in vaccination

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. RECALLS that, pursuant to Article 168 of the Treaty of Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Union action, which is to complement national policies, is to be directed towards improving public health, preventing physical and mental illness and disease, and preventing sources of danger to physical and mental health.
2. RECOGNISES that while vaccination programmes are the responsibility of the Member States, a better coordinated EU approach can generally have an added value, given the cross-border nature of vaccine-preventable diseases.
3. NOTES that vaccine hesitancy has different root causes. Different situations such as routine vaccination with well-known vaccines or vaccination during health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where newly developed vaccines are deployed, require different solutions.
4. ACKNOWLEDGES that the COVID-19 pandemic clearly demonstrated the threats and challenges that mis- and disinformation pose to our societies. 'Infodemics' – too much information, including false or misleading information, in digital and physical environments during a disease outbreak ⁽⁴⁾ – was one of the crucial factors, which increased the risks to human health, health systems and effective crisis management.
5. RECALLS the joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative adopted on 5 December 2018 launching the Action Plan against Disinformation ⁽⁵⁾, the Commission Communication on 'Tackling online disinformation' ⁽⁶⁾ adopted on 26 April 2018, the Commission Communication on 'Guidance on Strengthening the Code of Practice on Disinformation' ⁽⁷⁾ adopted on 26 May 2021, the Commission Communication on 'Strengthened Cooperation against Vaccine Preventable Diseases' ⁽⁸⁾ adopted on 26 April 2018 and joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative adopted on 10 June 2020 on Tackling COVID-19 disinformation - Getting the facts right ⁽⁹⁾.

⁽³⁾ COM/2018/244 final

⁽⁴⁾ https://www.who.int/health-topics/infodemic#tab=tab_1

⁽⁵⁾ JOIN/2018/36 final

⁽⁶⁾ COM/2018/236 final

⁽⁷⁾ COM/2021/262 final

⁽⁸⁾ COM/2018/245 final

⁽⁹⁾ JOIN/2020/ 8 final

6. RECALLS the Council Conclusions on strengthening resilience and countering hybrid threats, including disinformation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic ⁽¹⁰⁾, the Council Recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases ⁽¹¹⁾, which pays particular attention to the issue of vaccine hesitancy and disinformation shifting the public focus away from the benefits of vaccination and towards a distrust in science and fear of possible side effects, and TAKES NOTE OF the Roadmap ⁽¹²⁾ of the European Commission for the implementation of actions called for by the Recommendation together with the activities of the Joint Action on Vaccination ⁽¹³⁾, delivering recommendations and concrete tools for stronger responses to vaccination challenges, including promoting vaccine acceptance.
7. RECALLS the report for the Commission on the 'State of Vaccine Confidence in the EU+UK' published on 11 December 2020 ⁽¹⁴⁾.
8. RECALLS the report on 'Countering online vaccine misinformation in the EU', published by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control on 29 June 2021 ⁽¹⁵⁾, examining the evidence base for how to counter online vaccine misinformation in the EU and HIGHLIGHTS the European Vaccination Information Portal ⁽¹⁶⁾, hosted by the ECDC, which provides accurate and up-to-date evidence on vaccination together with an overview of the EU mechanisms to ensure vaccine safety and effectiveness.
9. RECALLS the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 establishing a European Centre for disease prevention and control ⁽¹⁷⁾ and also WELCOMES ECDC's overall role and contribution, including in facilitating the fight against mis- and disinformation regarding vaccination and increasing vaccine confidence such as e-learning courses on how to address online vaccination misinformation ⁽¹⁸⁾.
10. WELCOMES the EU4Health Programme, which ambitiously fosters Union-wide and cross-sectoral crisis prevention, with a particular emphasis on improving vaccination coverage rates in the Member States, specifically by providing funding available for awareness-raising campaigns and communications activities targeting both the general public and specific groups, with the aim of preventing and addressing vaccine hesitancy, misinformation and disinformation.
11. WELCOMES the HORIZON 2020 actions tackling vaccine misinformation and the development of tools to improve vaccine uptake and the HORIZON Europe actions aimed at providing evidence to better counter mis- and disinformation.
12. WELCOMES the Immunization Agenda 2030 ⁽¹⁹⁾, published by WHO on 1 April 2020, which seeks to address vaccine hesitancy by developing robust, innovative strategies to mitigate vaccine misinformation and reduce its propagation and negative impact.
13. EMPHASISES the need for constant analysis and public communication of individual risks and benefits of vaccinations in various risk groups and among those with insufficient sources of information, for example due to social, cultural or linguistic challenges.

⁽¹⁰⁾ ST 14064/20

⁽¹¹⁾ COM/2018/244 final

⁽¹²⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-07/2019-2022_roadmap_en.pdf

⁽¹³⁾ <https://eu-jav.com/>

⁽¹⁴⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/2020_confidence_rep_en.pdf

⁽¹⁵⁾ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/ecdc-launches-report-countering-online-vaccine-misinformation-eueea>

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://vaccination-info.eu/en>

⁽¹⁷⁾ 2020/0320(COD)

⁽¹⁸⁾ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/e-learning-how-address-online-vaccination-misinformation>

⁽¹⁹⁾ <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/immunization-agenda-2030-a-global-strategy-to-leave-no-one-behind>

14. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO:

- Use interdisciplinary expertise (including public health experts, digital health experts, communication specialists, social media experts and behavioural experts) to amplify efforts to counter vaccine mis- and disinformation and apply a stronger, evidence-based and more strategic approach to vaccine communications, with harmonised messaging between the parties involved.

15. INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

- Without duplication with existing initiatives and minimising the administrative burden on Member States, establish an expert forum on Vaccine Hesitancy to provide a platform to bring together experts from all relevant fields in order to discuss, exchange best practice, follow up on the Joint Action on Vaccination's activities beyond the project itself and, in particular, facilitate and accelerate the communication with EU agencies to provide guidance on how to increase vaccination coverage rates across the European Union;
- Strengthen, where appropriate, the coordination between EU policies on vaccination and on fighting disinformation in order to support a more effective holistic approach, including by issuing a Commission Communication on combating vaccine hesitancy;
- Together with ECDC provide Member States, upon request with non-binding tailor-made recommendations and guidelines on how to tackle vaccine hesitancy taking into account national specificities;
- Provide advice, upon Member State's request, to those responsible for national immunisation programmes within Member States, on the use of all relevant EU programmes and instruments for targeted vaccination campaigns and how to evaluate these campaigns.

16. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:

- Develop training opportunities (communications and social media training) to allow health professionals and health communication experts to become more versed in effective techniques and tools for countering vaccine mis- and disinformation, including online, for developing communication strategies or ensuring effective communication between health professionals and citizens about the benefits of vaccination (shared decision-making), involving the Coalition for Vaccination and health professionals' and students associations at national level;
- Promote awareness-raising activities on the benefits of vaccination, including through partnerships with the education sector, social partners and action targeting the media, while putting particular focus on the responsibilities and role of social media platforms;
- Support national policies that will ensure provision of equitable, accessible and appealing vaccination services to all eligible people, ensuring that vaccination does not become a missed opportunity.

Strengthening EU cooperation to prepare for upcoming challenges: building on best practice and lessons learnt

17. NOTES that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected vaccination policies at European and national level in a significant and unprecedented way. Although in some Member States, COVID-19 vaccine acceptance has been high, in many it has not been sufficient. It has also accelerated the development of new tools and solutions that the EU can build on to encourage cooperation on vaccination strategies and immunisation programmes.
18. UNDERLINES the benefits of strengthened EU cooperation in terms of countering vaccine mistrust and encouraging vaccine uptake; realizing that significantly different approaches though based on the same scientific data, may in some cases negatively influence public confidence in vaccination.
19. RECALLS Regulation (EU) 2021/953 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2021 on a framework for the issuance, verification and acceptance of interoperable COVID-19 vaccination, test and recovery certificates (EU Digital COVID Certificate), which has been a great success for the EU.

20. RECALLS the EU Vaccines Strategy to accelerate the development, manufacturing and deployment of vaccines against COVID-19, presented by the Commission on 17 June 2020, which enabled Member States to jointly procure and secure timely access to COVID-19 vaccines.
21. WELCOMES the creation of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), which should work to improve preparedness and response to serious cross-border threats in the area of medical countermeasures and, in doing so, should closely cooperate with Member States. Attention should be paid to tackling challenges related to the supply of medical countermeasures.
22. NOTES that international mobility and migration have been accelerated therefore cooperation in the field of vaccination should always have a global dimension.
23. RECALLS the Commission Communication on 'Welcoming those fleeing war in Ukraine: Readyng Europe to meet the needs', adopted on 23 March 2022, which emphasises the need to increase vaccination coverage among displaced Ukrainians, with a particular focus on childhood vaccination programmes.
24. RECALLS the ECDC guidelines on 'Operational public health considerations for the prevention and control of infectious diseases in the context of Russia's aggression towards Ukraine', published on March 2022.
25. POINTS OUT that also other global issues and crises are expected to affect infectious disease occurrence within the EU, particularly climate change, which is likely to increase transmission of tick-borne encephalitis and other vector-borne diseases, such as West Nile fever or dengue.
26. RECOGNISES the work carried out by the European Medicines Regulatory Network related to vaccines, ensuring the quality, efficacy and safety of medicines in the European Union. The work of the regulatory network implies scientific networking, benchmarking and strong collaboration between national competent authorities which contributes to an in-depth scientific knowledge on vaccines and increases reliability among the European population.
27. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO:
 - Promote adult vaccination campaigns to provide protection against transmissible infectious diseases that may be associated with serious outcomes, such as measles, diphtheria, tetanus or poliomyelitis;
 - Maintain childhood vaccination campaigns and provide protection against transmissible infectious diseases to children who are not yet protected by vaccination, i.e. to carry out vaccination catch-up campaigns;
 - Support the digitisation of the healthcare system and explore the possibility of developing medical facilities' capacity to store electronic information on citizens' vaccination status;
 - Build and maintain an adequate health sector workforce capable of providing a rapid and effective response to health threats, as well as improve vaccination coverage among health care professionals as a good health practice for the general public;
 - Promote health education and health literacy in a life-course perspective.
28. INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:
 - While ensuring the protection of health data, explore the added value and possibilities of overcoming the legal and technical barriers to the interoperability of (sub-) national immunization information systems, where they exist, through the opportunities offered by the existing or future cross border health data exchange mechanisms, and explore the added value of a digital version of vaccination certificates, taking into consideration the experiences with European digital infrastructures and other existing tools, such as the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis.

- Put particular focus on research and innovation and examine possibilities for supporting the development of new vaccines against (re)emerging infectious threats, with particular attention to vector-borne diseases.
- To invite ECDC to update its public health guidance on screening and vaccination for infectious diseases in newly arrived migrants within the EU/EEA, taking into account existing national public health guidelines .

29. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:

- Develop, based on the good practice and experience gained from the 'Bazaar tool' developed for the needs of the Steering Board for Covid-19 vaccines procurement, a virtual database to facilitate, on voluntary basis, exchange of information on possible surpluses and shortages of essential vaccines, thus enabling possible resell or donation among Member States.
 - Make use of possibilities for the joint procurement of vaccines where appropriate, while taking into account the serious cross border health threats recognized at Union level and the actual needs of the Member States.
 - Support the European Medicines Regulatory Network through a well-resourced and flexible mechanism to consolidate its work and ensure the sustainability of the network contribution in the long term.
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

19 December 2022

(2022/C 484/06)

1 euro =

Currency	Exchange rate	Currency	Exchange rate		
USD	US dollar	1,0598	CAD	Canadian dollar	1,4472
JPY	Japanese yen	144,65	HKD	Hong Kong dollar	8,2428
DKK	Danish krone	7,4382	NZD	New Zealand dollar	1,6632
GBP	Pound sterling	0,87118	SGD	Singapore dollar	1,4378
SEK	Swedish krona	11,0063	KRW	South Korean won	1 377,17
CHF	Swiss franc	0,9884	ZAR	South African rand	18,3074
ISK	Iceland króna	151,90	CNY	Chinese yuan renminbi	7,3901
NOK	Norwegian krone	10,5025	HRK	Croatian kuna	7,5395
BGN	Bulgarian lev	1,9558	IDR	Indonesian rupiah	16 506,72
CZK	Czech koruna	24,233	MYR	Malaysian ringgit	4,6912
HUF	Hungarian forint	403,18	PHP	Philippine peso	58,649
PLN	Polish zloty	4,6853	RUB	Russian rouble	
RON	Romanian leu	4,9107	THB	Thai baht	36,923
TRY	Turkish lira	19,7676	BRL	Brazilian real	5,6327
AUD	Australian dollar	1,5794	MXN	Mexican peso	20,9743
			INR	Indian rupee	87,5321

⁽¹⁾ Source: reference exchange rate published by the ECB.

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/07)

*National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Belgium*

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Belgium

Subject of commemoration: The healthcare sector in recognition of the exceptional commitment during the Covid-19 pandemic

Description of the design: The design depicts in the inner part of the coin the health personnel. At the left you can find the inscription 'Danke – Merci – Dank u' together with various pictograms referring to healthcare sector. From top to bottom, a cross, a stethoscope, a heart, a syringe, a wheelchair and a chemical mixture are shown. At the far right are the initials of the designer Luc Luycx located. As the Royal Dutch Mint will strike the coins, the mintmark of Utrecht, a mercury staff is located on the bottom together with the Belgian mint master mark, the coat of arms of the municipality Herzele, the country code BE and the year mark 2022.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 2 000 000

Date of issue: Spring 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/08)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Greece

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Greece

Subject of commemoration: 200 years from the first Greek Constitution

Description of the design: The design features the temple of Asclepius at Epidaurus with the statue of the god at centre. The theme replicates the reverse of a commemorative medal on the First National Assembly held by the revolted Greeks at Epidaurus, which was awarded to the Assembly members during the reign of king Otho. Inscribed along the inner edge is the wording 'HELLENIC REPUBLIC' and 'THE FIRST GREEK CONSTITUTION', as well as the years '1822' and '2022', a palmette (the mintmark of the Greek mint) and the monogram of the artist (George Stamatopoulos).

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 750 000

Date of issue: July 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/09)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Spain

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Spain

Subject of commemoration: The 5th centenary of the first circumnavigation of the Earth

Description of the design: The expedition began in Seville in 1519 and ended in 1522 after finishing the first circumnavigation of the Earth. The design depicts two images, one is the globe in the background and the other one is a portrait of Juan Sebastián Elcano. At the bottom of the portrait and in capital letters the legends 'JUAN SEBASTIÁN ELCANO' and 'PRIMUS CIRCUMDEDISTI ME' (*First to circumnavigate me*), and on the portrait shoulder is the initial and the end date of the circumnavigation (1519-1522). On the right hand side and in capital letters are the issuing country 'ESPAÑA' and the year of minting '2022'. On the left hand side is the mint mark.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 1 000 000

Date of issue: First quarter 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/10)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Spain

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Spain

Subject of commemoration: UNESCO: Garajonay National Park

Description of the design: The Garajonay National Park is situated in the middle of the island of La Gomera in the Canary Islands archipelago, was registered on the World Heritage Sites list for being an outstanding well-preserved example of laurisilva (Laurel forest), an exceptional ecosystem of the living remnant of the old rainforests and warm temperate forests that occupied much of Europe and North Africa during the Tertiary.

The coin depicts a view of the 'Roque de Agando' and a detail of the 'Laurisilva forest'. On the upper right hand and in capital letters are the word 'ESPAÑA' and the year of minting '2022'. At the top on the right hand side is the mint mark.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 1 000 000

Date of issue: First quarter 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/11)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Estonia

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Estonia

Subject of commemoration: The 150th anniversary of the founding of the Society of Estonian Literati

Description of the design: The design depicts the pages of a book and the tip of a quill pen. At the top, in semi-circle are the inscription 'EESTI KIRJAMEESTE SELTS' and the year of issuance '2022'. The inscription on the pages of the book reads 'KUI ME EI SAA SUUREKS RAHVAARVULT, PEAME SAAMA SUUREKS VAIMULT', meaning 'If we cannot be a great nation in number, we must be great in spirit'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 1 000 000

Date of issue: First quarter 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/12)

*National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Portugal*

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Portugal

Subject of commemoration: The 100th anniversary of the crossing the South Atlantic Ocean by air, achieved in 1922 by Gago Coutinho and Sacadura Cabral

Description of the design: This crossing was achieved by using only internal means of navigation: a modified sextant and a course corrector. The design shows the representation of one of the three Fairey III biplanes that were used to accomplish the flight between Lisboa and Rio de Janeiro. The edge inscription reads 'TRAVESSIA DO ATLÂNTICO SUL' (English – CROSSING OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC). Below the plane, the inscription 'PORTUGAL 1922-2022'. The Mintmark will be 'CASA DA MOEDA', the Portuguese name of the Mint.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 1 000 000

Date of issue: March 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/13)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Slovakia

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Slovakia

Subject of commemoration: The 300th anniversary of the construction of continental Europe's first atmospheric steam engine for draining mines

Description of the design: The design depicts an atmospheric steam engine for draining water from mines, the one constructed in the mining town of Nová Baňa in 1722 as the first of its kind in continental Europe. It was designed and built by English engineer Isaac Potter, whose facsimile signature is inscribed sideways, on two lines, in the lower left part of the design. On the right side of the engine, again written sideways, are the name of the issuing country 'SLOVENSKO' and, to its right, the years '1722' and '2022' separated by a medial dot. Next to the left edge of the coin's inner section, positioned one above the other, are the mint mark of the Kremnica Mint (Mincovňa Kremnica), consisting of the letters 'MK' placed between two dies, and the stylised initials of the national side designer, Peter Valach.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 1 000 000

Date of issue: October 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/14)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Andorra

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Andorra

Subject of commemoration: The legend of Charlemagne

Description of the design: Legend has it that Emperor Charlemagne was the founder of Andorra in the year 805 and that he granted its inhabitants their own legal status. The design of the coin represents this legend deeply rooted in the history and culture of Andorra and shows, in its background, a landscape with mountains and a river, representing the rich scenery of our country, with the name of the issuing country 'ANDORRA'. The foreground of the design depicts a partial reproduction of the well-known portrait of Emperor Charlemagne by the artist Albrecht Dürer and the year of issue '2022'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 70 000

Date of issue: Last quarter of 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/15)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Andorra

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Andorra

Subject of commemoration: 10 years of the entry into force of the Monetary Agreement between Andorra and the European Union

Description of the design: The different shapes and sizes of the puzzle pieces depicted in the lower part of the design symbolize the Principality of Andorra and the countries belonging to the European Union. In the upper part of the design, the stars encircling the symbol of the common European currency represent that they are all part of the euro universe. Next to them, the name of the issuing country 'ANDORRA' and the years of the commemoration '2012' and '2022' are featured.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 70 000

Date of issue: Last quarter of 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/16)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by the Vatican City State

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Vatican City State

Subject of commemoration: The 125th anniversary of the birth of Pope Paul VI

Description of the design: The design features a portrait of the Pope. At the top left, in semi-circle, is the inscription 'CITTÀ DEL VATICANO' and at the top right is the inscription 'PAPA PAOLO VI'. At the left of the portrait are the years '1897' and '2022' and underneath them is the mintmark 'R'. At the bottom left is the name of the artist 'D. LONGO'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 84 000

Date of issue: March 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/17)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by the Vatican City State

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Vatican City State

Subject of commemoration: The 25th anniversary of the death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Description of the design: The design features a portrait of Mother Teresa with a child. At the top, in semi-circle, is the inscription 'MADRE TERESA DI CALCUTTA' and at the bottom is the name of the issuing country 'CITTÀ DEL VATICANO'. At the right of the portrait is the mintmark 'R' and underneath it are the years '1997' and '2022'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 84 000

Date of issue: September 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/18)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Estonia

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Estonia

Subject of commemoration: Ukraine and Freedom

Description of the design: The design depicts the silhouette of a woman holding a bird in her hand, with an ear of wheat. At the top left is the text 'SLAVA UKRAINI'. At the bottom left are the name of the issuing country 'EESTI' and the year of issuance '2022'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 2 000 000

Date of issue: Fourth quarter 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/19)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Finland

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Finland

Subject of commemoration: Climate research in Finland

Description of the design: The theme of the coin is a stylized beard lichen, with its root like structure embossed in the centre of the inner part of the coin. The outer sides of the inner part of the coin bear the lettering 'CLIMATE RESEARCH' in Finnish on the left-hand side and 'CLIMATE RESEARCH' in Swedish on the right-hand side. The bottom of the inner part of the coin bears the lettering '2022 FI'. The top of the inner part of the coin bears the mintmark of the Mint of Finland.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 400 000

Date of issue: Autumn 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/20)

*National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Finland*

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Finland**Subject of commemoration:** 100 years of Finland's National Ballet**Description of the design:** The design depicts the powerful and free movements of a dancer covered in a light flowing textile that accentuates the beauty and fluidity of the dancer's pose. It also bears the year of issuance '2022' and at the top the indication of the issuing country 'FI' and the mintmark.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 400 000**Date of issue:** Spring 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/21)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Luxembourg

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Luxembourg

Subject of commemoration: The 10th anniversary of the marriage of the Hereditary Grand Duke Guillaume and the Hereditary Grand Duchesse Stéphanie

Description of the design: The design depicts the effigies of the Hereditary Grand Duke Guillaume and the Hereditary Grand Duchesse Stéphanie. Close to the effigies, the respective names are depicted in semi-circular form. Two wedding rings appear at the left of the year-date 2022. At the bottom of the design, the word 'LËTZEBUERG' designating the issuing country is depicted, as well as the wedding date '20. Oktober 2012'. The monogram (letter 'H' with a crown) is a representation of the Grand Duke Henri.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 500 000

Date of issue: April 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/22)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Malta

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Malta

Subject of commemoration: UNESCO: Hal Saflieni Hypogeum

Description of the design: The design shows a detail of the prehistoric site. At the top left is the name of the issuing country 'MALTA' and underneath the year of issuance '2022'. At the bottom is the inscription 'HAL - SAFLIENI HYPOGEUM' and underneath the inscription '4 000 - 2 500 BC'. At the bottom right are the initials of the creator of the design Noel Galea Bason 'NGB'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 192 000

Date of issue: May 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/23)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Malta

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Malta

Subject of commemoration: The 22nd anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Description of the design: The design shows three female faces. From the top left to the bottom left are the inscriptions 'WOMEN', 'PEACE', 'SECURITY', the year of issuance '2022' and the name of the issuing country 'MALTA'. At the centre, underneath the faces, are the inscriptions 'UNSCR' and '1325'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 65 500

Date of issue: October 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/24)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Lithuania

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Lithuania

Subject of commemoration: 100 years of basketball in Lithuania

Description of the design: The design shows the contour of the map of Lithuania arranged as a basketball court in the centre, which signifies that basketball has been played in Lithuania already for 100 years. The coin also features the inscriptions 'LIETUVA' (Lithuania), '1922-2022' and the logo of the Lithuanian mint, its manufacturer, arranged in a semi-circle around the centre.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 750 000

Date of issue: Second quarter 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/25)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Lithuania

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Lithuania

Subject of commemoration: Lithuanian Ethnographic Regions - Suvalkija

Description of the design: The design depicts a Taurus on the escutcheon, while the escutcheon is decorated on both sides with silver oak branches with acorns. The branches are joined at the bottom with a silver ribbon bearing the inscription 'VIENYBĖ TEŽYDI' (UNITY MAY BLOSSOM). Oak branches symbolize the rich history of the region that goes back to the pagan times of the Lithuanian state. In the past, Taurus was the most widespread animal in this region. The composition is surrounded by the inscription 'LIETUVA' (LITHUANIA) and the year of issuance '2022' on the top, and the inscription 'SUVALKIJA' and the mintmark of the Lithuanian Mint at the bottom.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 500 000

Date of issue: Fourth quarter 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2022/C 484/26)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Latvia

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Latvia

Subject of commemoration: The centenary of Latvijas Banka – financial literacy

Description of the design: Financial literacy is the important ability to understand and effectively use various financial skills, including personal financial management, budgeting, and investing. Financial literacy is the foundation of our relationship with money, and it is a lifelong journey of learning. The design shows a tree, symbolizing the importance of financial literacy and the knowledge about it. At the bottom is the year of issuance '2022' and underneath the name of the issuing country 'LATVIJA'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 415 000

Date of issue: April-May 2022

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

NOTICES FROM MEMBER STATES

Information communicated by Member States regarding closure of fisheries

(2022/C 484/27)

In accordance with Article 35(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Union control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy ⁽¹⁾, a decision has been taken to close the fishery as set down in the following table:

Date and time of closure	1.10.2022
Duration	1.10.2022 – 31.12.2022
Member State	Italy
Fishing effort group code	EFF2/MED2_TR3
Stock group	Giant red shrimp in GSAs 8, 9, 10 and 11
Type(s) of fishing vessels	Vessels with overall length \geq 18 and $<$ 24 m
Reference number	13/TQ110

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1

V

(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

NOTICE PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 29(2) OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

Publication of a vacancy for the function of Deputy Director-General in the Directorate-General for Informatics (grade AD 15), Brussels

COM/2022/10422

(2022/C 484/28)

The European Commission has published a vacancy notice (reference COM/2022/10422) for the function of Deputy Director-General in the Directorate-General for Informatics (grade AD 15).

To consult the text of the vacancy notice in 24 languages and to submit your application, please visit this dedicated webpage on the European Commission's website: <https://europa.eu/!Rqbd8Y>

PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETITION POLICY

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Prior notification of a concentration **(Case M.10560 – SIKA / MBCC GROUP)**

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2022/C 484/29)

1. On 12 December 2022, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾.

This notification concerns the following undertakings:

- Sika International AG ('Sika', Swizerland), a 100 % subsidiary of SIKA AG ('Sika AG', Swizerland),
- LSF11 Skyscraper Holdco S.à.r.l. ('MBCC', Luxembourg), the ultimate parent company of the MBCC Group.

Sika will acquire within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation control of the whole of MBCC.

The concentration is accomplished by way of purchase of shares.

The same concentration was already notified to the Commission on 7 June 2022 ⁽²⁾, but the notification was subsequently withdrawn on 4 July 2022 ⁽³⁾.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are the following:

- for Sika: group active in the development, production and supply of chemical admixtures, mortars, sealants and adhesives, damping and reinforcing materials, structural strengthening systems, industrial flooring as well as roofing and waterproofing systems which are used in the building sector and by manufacturing industries, at global level,
- for MBCC: group composed of two business units active at global level namely (i) 'chemical admixtures', which provides solutions for customers in the concrete manufacturing, cement and underground construction industries, and (ii) 'construction systems', which offers solutions to protect and repair buildings and structures.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').

⁽²⁾ OJ C 234, 17.6.2022, p. 5.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 265, 11.7.2022, p. 8.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. The following reference should always be specified:

M.10560 – SIKA / MBCC GROUP

Observations can be sent to the Commission by email, by fax, or by post. Please use the contact details below:

Email: COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu

Fax +32 22964301

Postal address:

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Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
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