



Create your Europe in...

Pilot project to foster cooperation among local actors of EU networks in eight target areas

First things first...

Some find new ideas exciting, others wonder what it means to their current operations.

What is the goal of this new process? Who is this aimed at? How will it work? Will it mean more work?

We hope we answer hereunder all the questions you may have on forming your Europe in.... If not, please drop us a line: <FMB Helpdesk>¹

What is the goal?

Europe in... will accompany local members of EU networks in selected target areas in a process aimed at fostering their cooperation duties and potential on the ground. It is a process implemented by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM) as domain leader in the field of external communication.

This process, running *from November 2020 to March 2021* (see [What's the timing?](#)), will ultimately make 'Europe on the ground', the services provided by the networks more accessible to the wider, general public.

Eight target areas in Austria, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden are working together, sharing knowhow, and building a blueprint for a more structured cooperation on their level. ([Where does it take place?](#)).

Who is this process aimed at?

Europe in... encourages members of European networks to take part, starting with the target areas ([Where does it take place?](#)). Participants are those members who are present in these target areas, including but not restricted to

- Europe Direct: Information Centres, Documentation Centres and Team Europe,
- Creative Europe Desks,
- Erasmus+ National Agencies,
- Europe for Citizens,
- EURODESK,
- EURES,
- INFORM-INIO,
- Enterprise Europe Network and SOLVIT,
- EURAXESS and EuroGuidance,
- national contact points for Horizon2020, members of mission boards,
- members of the Committee of the Regions,
- and members of the European Economic and Social Committee.

Where does it take place?

Primarily, in the virtual space, through online meetings and a collaboration platform ([What do we have to do then?](#)).

We invite participants from the following target areas:

- Austria (Burgenland, Niederösterreich, Wien)
- France (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes)
- Hungary (Dunántúl)
- Italy (Piemonte)
- Poland (Dolnośląskie, Opolskie, Śląskie)
- Portugal (Centro, Norte)
- Spain (Castilla y León)
- Sweden (Skåne)

¹ The Helpdesk is in the process of being set up.



What is in it for our communities?

A natural question that all participants ask when a new initiative comes along... How will my region and community benefit from it?

The best way to explain it is to think of *Europe in...* as both a **pool** for the best ideas generated through the exchanges and a **springboard** for innovative ways to achieve the individual goals of each network member and region. For example, how to develop ideas for clever communications campaigns together. Joining *Europe in...* means access to **collective knowhow** and a **forum**.

Ultimately, through better understanding your partners in your region, you will be able to service your local communities with better and faster access to information and more engagement, making them understand the positive impact of the EU in their home in return as well.

What does it cost to participate?

Nothing! There are no payments needed to participate in this pilot initiative, no costs will arise for you, thus, reimbursements are excluded as well.

Europe in... just needs your enthusiasm and an investment to make it a success (see [What do we have to do then?](#)). This effort will pay dividends for your organisation, your audience, and the community at large. *Europe in...* paves the way for better, simpler, more enlightened ways of helping your network achieve its goals. Most networks have an obligation to cooperate with stakeholders in their area, we are looking for win-wins in this process!

What do we have to do then?

Founding members of their *Europe in...* formulate a durable working approach and joint arrangements for sharing knowhow, expertise and complementary services aimed at their communities. At a minimum, participants to **take part in and contribute to** planned **meetings**, to **create, discuss** and further develop **proposals** on the interactive online **platform** between meetings; to advocate on behalf of the project, **to promote your membership through your communication activities**, and to **take ownership of Europe in...** through **long-term cooperation** serving your community and local citizens in general.

How much time will it take?

A relatively small investment in time and effort is required for this process. You will win back these efforts in the long term (see [What is in it for our community?](#)). You take part in the [common virtual kick-off meeting](#) in November 2020. A [common virtual wrap-up meeting](#) of the same length and format takes place in March 2021. Between these two 'common meetings', each target area should **meet up to four times**; the duration, date and time is decided by the group participants. We guide you through these meetings with professional facilitators to extract the best possible outcomes for you. Some contributions to the 'common tasks' via the collaborative platform are also envisaged. Participants should also factor in some preparation time before meetings (incl. technical checks) as well as some background reading.

What is the common virtual kick-off meeting about?

A roughly 90-120 minutes common virtual kick-off is scheduled in November 2020 as a plenary session. Participants from all target areas will meet, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communication will introduce the project and objectives, explain the main actions, and clarify the desired outcomes. (See [What's the timing?](#))

What are the regional meetings about?

Four regional meetings are envisaged, between the two common meetings, the first taking place from end-November, and followed by instalments in December 2020, January, and February 2021 (exact timings will be determined by participants themselves). Participants benefit from closer ties to their regional counterparts, iteratively defining and refining their goals and priorities towards establishing a strategic overall workplan by the end of the planned sessions.



What happens during the common virtual wrap-up meeting?

The common wrap-up is a chance for everyone to reconvene in a plenary session with all participants to present the outcomes and successes from all target areas. A presentation of the different cooperation agreements will be followed by discussions on promoting the results of the process and on further plans of the target areas. A ‘virtual drink’ at the end is also not out of the question!

What is the working language of these meetings?

The working language for the process, platform and common sessions is English. Local language needs are also met with simultaneous translation in the plenary sessions.

Local language will be used in the regional meetings to ease your discussions.

Certain features of the platform and all relevant documents will be available in your local language as well.

How will I get to know the other participants?

The success of a process like *Europe in...*, and indeed any network, rests largely on good communication and relationship-building. To that end, we foster strong relations both within each target area but also amongst them. The open access platform mediating most of the communication and exchanges was designed to stimulate participatory democracy in organisations, cities, and communities. The platform itself is simple to use and promotes rich debates and exchanges through programmed activities, events, polls, fora and more. It also handles the messy business of document sharing. For *Europe in...* participants it is THE virtual ‘convenience store’ for setting up and organising themselves.

How will this process be carried out?

Each target area can work on their individual priorities and actions, according to their discussions, in the timeframes they commit to together. Actions such as continued dialogue on common local priorities or the co-creation of actions or case study exercises connected with campaigns like the European Green Deal, Recovery Plan and Digital Agenda – all topics high on the agenda of the European Commission in 2021 and beyond – can all be on your menu of discussions during the [regional meetings](#). You will finalise your arrangements in a cooperation agreement.

Services of the European Commission and other European institutions managing networks participating in this process are continuously informed about the progress through coordination meetings and support this bottom-up approach of cooperation.

So, are physical meetings with participants in my region out of the question?

Not at all. The ‘core business’ of *Europe in...* is to foster durable relationships between and among networks. Pure and simple! The exploratory phase is mediated virtually for practical, financial and health reasons. But this does not rule out face-to-face activities at the regional level, providing your local COVID-19 measures allow for such meetings. Participants are fully encouraged to deepen bilateral or multilateral relationships at the local level. European Commission staff are, however, only allowed to participate in essential missions and would thus not be able to be physically present in such bilateral/multilateral meetings (updated last: 28 September 2020).

What’s the timing?

The following is a quick recap of the main activities:

1. Common kick-off meeting (Nov 2020) – Plenary welcoming all participants and outlining the project
2. First regional meeting (end Nov/early Dec 2020) –Introductions within the target areas, definition of own goals/priorities, work steps
3. Second regional meeting (Dec 2020/Jan 2021) – Group-determined agenda and priorities
4. Third regional meeting (Jan 2021) – Group-determined agenda and priorities
5. Fourth regional meeting (Feb 2021) – Group-determined agenda and priorities
6. Common wrap-up meeting (end Mar 2021) – Present results and agreements, discuss follow-up, promotion and future plans



What kind of resources and support is offered?

Participants committing to *Europe in...* receive the following support and tools to help them carry out their work:

- Toolkit explaining the process, technical platforms used, and other participant information
- Videos explaining how to access features of the platform and webinar, answering technical questions
- Infographics outlining important information
- Translation services during the events and for important documents in your preferred language
- Personal invitations and reminders to all relevant events and milestones
- Additional region-specific resources
- Code of conduct and golden rules for participation in online events
- Access to a digital library providing up-to-date information on relevant policy developments
- Helpdesk answering questions in English

What kind of equipment is necessary to participate?

You will need a steady Internet connection and your usual audio-visual equipment to participate successfully in the virtual live meetings of *Europe in...* We recommend that you situate yourself in a quiet space with a neutral background and make sure that your device's speakers, microphone and camera are operational.

The same technical set-up is required to contribute to the online platform - a stable internet connection but no additional equipment.

We will provide specific guidelines on all software platforms used through "*Europe in...*" and there will be IT personnel to help you with any technical questions through the <FMB Helpdesk>².

You will also not be required to subscribe to any additional application services: you can join the events and the online platform directly through a click online.

² The Helpdesk is in the process of being set up.