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The Letter in PDF format

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Digital Sovereignty: for a Schuman Data Plan

Author: Arno Pons



The Digital Decade 2030 Action Plan, a monitoring and cooperation mechanism designed to achieve common targets for Europe's digital transformation by 2030, has just entered into force. To safeguard their digital sovereignty and after letting the American giants impose their rules of the game, it is not too late for Europeans to create a trusted digital infrastructure, the foundation of a common data

market.

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Front page! :

The European Union's Second Chance



The European Union is in a new phase that requires a leap of faith, that is to say, boldness. To seize this second chance to stay in the geopolitical, technological, economic and social race, Europe must agree to adapt its policies, which have been successful in the past but which cannot respond to the present situation as they stand, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Petr Pavel and Andrej Babis qualify for the second round of the Czech presidential election



Former general Petr Pavel and former prime minister and businessman Andrej Babis came out ahead in the first round of the Czech presidential election held on 13 and 14 January, with 35.40% and 34.99% respectively. They will face each other in the second round on 27 and

28 January... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

The European Union's Retirement Systems



Pension systems are regularly the subject of debate in the Member States and discussions at European level because of their burden on budgets and the demographic evolution of Europe. While each country has its own system, the Foundation offers a comparative table to better understand the situation in each country and the issues involved... [Read more](#)

Energy Crisis, European Measures



In response to rising energy prices, Member States and the European Union have taken action. On 9 January, the Belgian government reached an agreement to extend the operation of two nuclear reactors by 10 years. On 12 January, the Slovenian government decided to pay compensation to gas and electricity producers in response to the energy price cap. The measure is estimated to cost around €350 million per year. The Foundation provides a regularly updated map of the measures in place... [Read more](#)

Ukraine/Russia :

Visits by political European leaders to Ukraine



On 9 January, European Commission Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans visited Kyiv to discuss Ukraine's energy resilience. On 10 January, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock visited Kharkiv, reiterated Germany's support for Ukraine and offered €20 million to finance Starlink. On the 11th, the mayors of Warsaw, Prague, Budapest and Bratislava met their counterpart from Kyiv, Vitali Klitschko. Finally, on the 12th, an Italian delegation led by the Minister for Enterprise and Production, Adolfo Urso, recalled Italy's support for Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of the Lublin Triangle



On 11 January, the Presidents of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania, Volodymyr Zelensky, Andrzej Duda and Gitanas Nausieda, met in Lviv for the second Lublin Triangle Summit of their three countries and signed a joint declaration to provide military, economic and humanitarian support to Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression, to help Ukrainians win battles and to help rebuild vital energy infrastructure... [Read more](#)

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Speeches by Volodymyr Zelenskyy



On 12 January, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the Speaker of the Latvian Parliament (Saeima) on the subject of Ukraine's defence and European and Euro-Atlantic integration. He spoke on 13 January at the formal sitting of the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas) on the occasion of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom and the award ceremony for the Freedom Prize of the Republic of Lithuania. He said he was inspired by the Lithuanians' battle for freedom against the Soviet Union and recalled that Ukraine's victory in this war will be crucial for the security of Europe... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Entry into force of the regulation regarding foreign subsidies



New rules came into force on 12 January giving the Commission the power to investigate and remedy the distorting effects of foreign financial contributions to companies based in the EU. From 12 July 2023, companies will have to notify the Commission of certain mergers and acquisitions. The Commission will be able to investigate all other market situations where foreign subsidies appear to have a distorting effect... [Read more](#)

MICA Center report on piracy in 2022



On 9 January, the French centre of expertise dedicated to maritime security, the Maritime Information Cooperation & Awareness Center, announced that acts of piracy "fell to their lowest level in the world in 2022". However, the lack of safety at sea still exists with acts of brigandage, smuggling, drug trafficking, etc. 300 acts of piracy took place in 2022. These are the lowest figures since 2008. In the Gulf of Guinea, only 3 ships suffered an act of piracy in 2022, compared to 26 in 2019, and only 2 people were kidnapped, compared to 146 in 2019... [Read more](#)

Extension of the EU civilian mission in Mali



The Council decided on 10 January to extend the mandate of the EU civilian capacity-building mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali) until 31 January 2025, for which more than €73 million will be allocated. The mission aims to provide assistance and advice to the Malian security forces in the implementation of security reform. The new mandate will allow the deployment of the Internal Security Forces (ISF) in the south and centre of Mali... [Read more](#)

Catherine Colonna and Annalena Baerbock visit Ethiopia.



On 12 and 13 January, the French and German foreign ministers, Catherine Colonna and Annalena Baerbock, visited Ethiopia. The visit demonstrated France's and Germany's support for the November 2022 peace treaty and their wish to participate in the stabilisation and reconstruction of the regions affected by the conflict... [Read more](#)

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European Tour of the Japanese Prime Minister



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, whose country holds the G7 presidency in 2023, met with French President Emmanuel Macron on 9 January, Italian Council President Giorgia Meloni on 10 January and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on 11 January. The leaders reasserted their countries' partnership, particularly in energy, defence, emerging technologies and culture... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Visit of the College of Commissioners to Sweden



The College of European Commissioners visited Kiruna on 12-13 January to meet with the Swedish government and launch the Swedish Presidency of the Council. Discussions focused on the priorities of the Swedish Presidency: security, competitiveness, green and energy transitions, democratic values and the rule of law. On 13 January, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pledged to introduce new legislation to reduce European dependencies, update the state aid framework and to ensure that the EU's economic and social cohesion is maintained... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

Decision on data protection



In a judgment delivered on 12 January, the Court of Justice ruled that every person has the right to know to whom his or her personal data have been disclosed. The controller is obliged to provide the data subject, upon request, with the identity of the recipients... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

Report on tools for travel in the EU in the event of a pandemic



According to a report by the European Court of Auditors published on 11 January, the digital COVID certificate was effective in facilitating travel within the European Union during the pandemic. The report notes that other tools implemented, such as the passenger location form, worked less well and were used in very different ways by Member States... [Read more](#)

EIB :

2022 Survey on Investment



On 11 January, the European Investment Bank published a study on investment activities and sources of finance for companies in Central and Eastern Europe in 2022. The survey is based on interviews with nearly 5,000 companies. It addresses in particular the impacts of COVID-19 and corporate investments related to climate change and the digital transition... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Rise in number of irregular entries into the Union



According to estimates published by Frontex on 13 January, irregular border crossings stood at around 330,000 in 2022, the highest number recorded since 2016, up 64% on the previous year. Almost half of these entries were reported on the Western Balkan route. The European border guard agency states that almost 13 million Ukrainian refugees have been counted entering the Union's borders since 24 February 2022... [Read more](#)

Inauguration of the orbital launch site in Kiruna



Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen inaugurated the satellite launch port in Kiruna on 13 January. The President of the Commission stressed that the Esrange spaceport aims to provide an independent European gateway to space, which is essential for effectively monitoring the effects of climate change... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Resignation of the Defence Minister



On 16 January, German Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht submitted her resignation to the Chancellor. The Social Democrat Boris Pistorius, Interior Minister of Lower Saxony, is expected to succeed her... [Read more](#)

Belgium :

Extension of two nuclear reactors



On 9 January, the Belgian federal government and ENGIE concluded an agreement to extend the life of the Doel 4 and Tihange 3 nuclear reactors by ten years. They have committed themselves to starting the necessary environmental and technical preliminary studies, with the objective of restarting production in November 2026... [Read more](#)

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France :

Visit by Yaël Braun-Pivet in Armenia



On 13 January, the President of the French National Assembly, Yaël Braun-Pivet, visited the Yerevan Memorial in Armenia. She met her Armenian counterpart, Alen Simonyan, to pay tribute to the victims of the Armenian genocide. They then signed a parliamentary cooperation agreement... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

Visit by the President of the European Commission



The President of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, travelled to Rome on 9 January to meet the President of the Italian Council, Giorgia Meloni, in preparation for the Extraordinary European Council on 9 and 10 February, which will focus on the economy and immigration. The discussion focused on progress on the national recovery and resilience plan, the RePowerEU programme and the Ukrainian conflict... [Read more](#)

Poland :

Reforms to release recovery plan funds



The lower house of the Polish parliament adopted by 203 votes to 52 on 13 January a bill that could pave the way for the European Union to release the European recovery plan. The bill reforms the disciplinary chamber of the Supreme Court, one of the main conditions set by the European Union, which is asking Warsaw to ensure the independence of judges from political power. The bill still has to be adopted by the Senate and promulgated by the President... [Read more](#)

Sweden :

Discovery of a deposit of rare earths



The Swedish state-owned mining company LKAB announced on 12 January the discovery of Europe's largest rare earths deposit in the

Kiruna mine (northern Sweden), estimated at over one million tonnes. These components, which are essential to the energy and digital transition, are a crucial resource for European industry in a sector that has been dominated by China until now. However, it will take 10 to 15 years before exploitation can begin... [Read more](#)

NATO :

Joint declaration regarding EU-NATO cooperation



Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President Charles Michel and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg signed a joint declaration on EU-NATO cooperation on 10 January. The two sides have committed to strengthening their partnership to address the Russian threat, cooperate against hybrid and cyber threats, emerging technologies, and combat the consequences of the climate crisis and malicious foreign interference in the area of information. On 11 January, NATO and the European Union agreed to establish a working group on resilience and critical infrastructure protection... [Read more](#)

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OECD :

Report on the Greek Economy



On 10 January, the OECD published a report on the Greek economy. According to the report, the reforms implemented over the last few years have helped to set in motion the economic recovery since the end of the Covid 19 pandemic. GDP is at pre-pandemic levels and unemployment is at its lowest level in 12 years. The OECD proposes recommendations to sustain this recovery and achieve carbon neutrality, such as improving the allocation of public spending, effectively implementing the "Greece 2.0" stimulus package, renovating housing and raising the price of CO2 emissions... [Read more](#)

IMF :

Effectiveness of job retention during the pandemic in Europe



In a report published on 13 January, the IMF assesses the effectiveness of measures introduced by many European countries to protect jobs and support households during the pandemic. The report finds that almost 80% of market income shocks have been cushioned by these measures and that they have also contributed to a reduction in the unemployment rate... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Survey on the concerns of Europeans



According to a Eurobarometer survey published on 12 January, three quarters of respondents approve of the EU's overall support for Ukraine as well as specific measures, including sanctions against Russia. Meanwhile, the rising cost of living is the most pressing concern for 93% of respondents, followed by the threat of poverty and social exclusion (82%) and global warming and the spread of war in Ukraine (81%)... [Read more](#)

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World Bank :

A second year of sharp decline in growth



The World Bank published a report on the global economic outlook on 10 January. Global growth is expected to slow to 1.7% in 2023, with investment growth in emerging markets below the average rate of the past two decades. In the event of a negative shock, the global economy could fall into recession, with small states being the hardest hit. Measures must be taken to boost growth and investment... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

Museum Night in Basel



On the occasion of the Basel Museum Night on 20 January, 39 museums and cultural institutions in the region will open their doors from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. so that the public can discover their collections by night... [Read more](#)

The work of Henri Matisse in Copenhagen



Until 26 February, the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen is presenting an exhibition devoted to the work of the French painter Henri Matisse, built around the iconic painting "The Red Studio" (1911)... [Read more](#)

Restoration of "The Virgin of Humility" at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum



Until 12 December, Fra Angelico's restored "Madonna of Humility" is on display in a special installation at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid. A video also shows the restoration process of the painting, which is usually exhibited at the National Art Museum of Catalonia (MNAC)... [Read more](#)

Diana Thater and Hicham Berrada at the Bourse de Commerce



The Bourse de Commerce Pinault is hosting an exhibition on Diana Thater until 8 May, and on Hicham Berrada until 4 September. The first one presents images of the city of Pripyat, near Chernobyl. It is a film that allows us to observe the animal life that has developed in this abandoned city. The second, "Omen", "immerses viewers in a mutant visual universe" where we observe the development of plants on a large scale... [Read more](#)

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Otto Piene's art in Wrocław



From 22 January to 25 June, the National Museum in Wrocław is hosting an exhibition devoted to the German-American artist Otto Piene, one of the founders of the ZERO "group". The sky sculptures "Seven Stars" (2014) and the light installation "Lichtraum Prag" (2002-2017) are on display... [Read more](#)

5th Fipadoc Festival



The 5th edition of the international documentary festival "Fipadoc" will take place from 20 to 28 January in Biarritz. Documentaries will be highlighted through "screenings, masterclasses, debates and conferences". 30 000 spectators are expected to discover the 177 works competing for one of the 15 prizes... [Read more](#)

100th anniversary of the Milan Triennale



The year 2023 is one of celebration for the Milan Triennale, which is celebrating the centenary of the first edition of the Biennale of Decorative Arts in 1923 in the park of the Villa Reale in Monza. Until 29 January, the public will be able to explore ten projects by ten Italian architectural firms. The exhibition "Ettore Sottsass. La Parole", open from 20 January to 2 April, presents a selection of drawings, objects, writings and unpublished works by the Italian artist on the multiple use of the word. From 27 January to 23 April, an exhibition is devoted to the work of the architect, designer, sculptor and academic Angelo Mangiarotti... [Read more](#)

Short film festival in London



The 20th London Short Film Festival will run from 20-29 January and will feature between 250 and 500 UK and international short films, accompanied by live events, Q&A sessions and multidisciplinary programming... [Read more](#)

Nan Goldin winner of the Käthe Kollwitz Prize 2022



The American photographer Nan Goldin will receive the Käthe Kollwitz Prize 2022 on 3 March in Berlin. To mark the occasion, the Academy of Arts is organising an exhibition from 20 January to 19 March, presenting photographs by the artist in Boston, New York, Berlin and Asia, as well as recent works... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



16-19 January 2023
Strasbourg
Plenary Session of the European Parliament



17 January 2023
Brussels
Economic and Financial Affairs Council



22 January 2023
Paris
Franco-German Ministers Council



23 January 2023
Brussels
Foreign Affairs Council

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