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The Letter in PDF format

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## European energy solidarity: strengthening the EU's resilience to crises

Author: Aline Bartenstein



Solidarity has never been taken for granted as a premise for action between Member States. The current energy crisis and the climate transition, however, will create a growing need for social solidarity to which the European Union will have to respond.

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### Elections :

#### 2nd round between Nikos Christodoulides and Andreas Mavroyiannis on 12 February



Independent candidate Nikos Christodoulides came out ahead in the first round of the presidential elections in Cyprus on 5 February with 32.04% of the vote. He will face on 12 February Andreas Mavroyiannis, a candidate supported by the Progressive Party of Workers (Akel), who obtained 29.59% of the votes... [Read more](#)

### Ukraine/Russia :

#### EU-Ukraine Summit



The 24th EU-Ukraine Summit was held in Kyiv on 3 February with European Council President Charles Michel, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The three leaders discussed the EU's support for Ukraine, the country's candidacy, and took stock of the implementation of the Association Agreement. The day before, 15 EU commissioners took part in a meeting with the Ukrainian government... [Read more](#)

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Capping of prices of Russian oil products



The European Union and G7 members agreed on 4 February on an additional price cap for Russian seaborne oil products which came into effect on 5 February. The agreement sets the price per barrel at \$100 for diesel, paraffin and gas oil and \$45 for fuel oil and naphtha... [Read more](#)

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### Austrian President and Danish Prime Minister in Kyiv



On 30 January, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen visited Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to discuss bilateral cooperation between the two countries and Danish military assistance to Ukraine. On 1 February, Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen also visited Kyiv to meet his Ukrainian counterpart and prepare for the EU-Ukraine summit on 3 February... [Read more](#)

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### Visit to France of the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament



The Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, Ruslan Stefanchuk, paid an official visit to France on 31 January and 1 February. During two speeches to the National Assembly and the Senate, he asked for fighter planes and Leclerc tanks to be sent, for a special court to be set up to judge the perpetrators of war crimes and for France to recognise Russia as a terrorist state... [Read more](#)

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### Additional military support



On 2 February, the Council approved additional military assistance measures for Ukraine, including a 7th equipment package of €500 million and €45 million in training aid for the Ukrainian armed forces. The French Minister for the Armed Forces, Sébastien Lecornu, and his Australian counterpart, Richard Marles, announced on 30 January that several thousand 155mm shells would be manufactured for supply to Ukraine. On 31 January, on the occasion of the visit of his Ukrainian counterpart Oleksiy Reznikov, he declared that France would deliver 12 new Caesar guns. On 3 February, France and Italy finalised discussions to deliver the SAMP/T - MAMBA air defence system to Ukraine by spring 2023... [Read more](#)

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### European Council :

#### Charles Michel meets Giorgia Meloni in Rome



The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, was hosted on 30 January by the President of the Italian Council, Giorgia Meloni. They discussed the war in Ukraine, as well as European economic and industrial policy and migration, which will be on the agenda of the European Council on 9 and 10 February... [Read more](#)

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### Commission :

#### Reports on Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia



On 2 February, the Commission published its analysis reports assessing the ability of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to meet the standards and obligations of EU membership. The reports provide a detailed analysis of the state of progress of these countries with regard to the EU acquis... [Read more](#)

#### Plan for zero emission industry



On 1 February, the Commission presented an industrial plan to strengthen "zero emission" competitiveness. The plan is based on four pillars: a simplified regulatory environment; strengthening financing, notably by easing state aid and creating a sovereign wealth fund; skills; and a trade policy to secure supplies. A regulation for a net zero emissions industry by 2050 and legislation on critical raw materials will be proposed, while the reform of the electricity market will be proposed in March... [Read more](#)

### Parliament :

#### Tightening of political advertising rules

On 2 February, MEPs adopted stricter requirements for political advertising. The proposed changes aim to improve transparency for citizens, authorities and journalists by creating an online directory for all political advertising and related data... [Read more](#)



### Legislation on platform workers' conditions



MEPs adopted on 2 February a position for negotiations on new rules to improve conditions for workers on digital platforms. They proposed to determine the status of these workers and to set a framework for the use of algorithms and artificial intelligence to monitor and evaluate workers... [Read more](#)

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### Waiver of immunity of three MPs



On 2 February, MEPs approved the lifting of the parliamentary immunity of Marc Tarabella (S&D, BE) and Andrea Cozzolino (S&D, IT), suspected of being involved in the corruption case with Qatar. The procedure was initiated on 16 January following requests from the Belgian judiciary. MEPs also lifted the immunity of Nicolas Bay (NI, FR), who is under investigation in France for inciting racial hatred... [Read more](#)

## Council :

### Meeting of Agriculture Ministers



On 30 January, the Ministers of Agriculture discussed the impact of the war on agricultural markets, in particular the very high prices of energy and inputs despite the stabilisation of the market. They reiterated their commitment to support Ukraine, notably through solidarity channels. Furthermore, they discussed a policy for the development of a sustainable bioeconomy... [Read more](#)

### Recommendation on adequate minimum income



On 30 January, the Council adopted a recommendation that calls on Member States to introduce an adequate minimum income by 2030, taking into account, inter alia, the specific needs of households, sources of income and price level developments... [Read more](#)

## Diplomacy :

### Agreement on digital with Singapore



The EU and Singapore signed a digital partnership on 1 February, focusing on cooperation in cutting-edge technologies and critical areas such as semiconductors, trusted data flows and data innovation. The partnership includes the signing of the Digital Trade Principles, which is part of the implementation of the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy... [Read more](#)

## Court of Justice :

### Judgment on the obligations for the execution of a European arrest warrant



On 31 January, the Court of Justice ruled that a judicial authority cannot refuse to execute a European arrest warrant on the grounds that the court called upon to try the wanted person in the issuing Member State does not have jurisdiction to do so, following a reference for a preliminary ruling from the Spanish Supreme Court. However, such an authority may refuse execution if it is likely to violate European fundamental rights... [Read more](#)

## Court of Auditors :

### Report on the integration of the domestic electricity market



In a report published on 31 January, the European Court of Auditors finds that the integration of electricity markets has progressed unevenly across the EU. It points out that several factors have jeopardised the completion of the European electricity market, including the choice of regulatory tools and weaknesses in the EU's governance framework, notably the existence of 27 different national frameworks, delays and incomplete market monitoring... [Read more](#)

ECB :

#### Further increase in interest rates



The European Central Bank announced on 2 February a 50 basis point increase in its key rates. ECB President Christine Lagarde told a press conference that rates would have to rise for a third time by 50 basis points at the next meeting to ensure a rapid return to the 2% inflation target. However, she said the risks to the economic growth outlook had become more balanced... [Read more](#)

Bulgaria :

#### Construction of a gas pipeline with Serbia



The construction of a 170 km gas pipeline between Bulgaria and Serbia was launched on 1 February. Recognised as a European project of common interest, it should be operational in the second half of the year... [Read more](#)

Spain :

#### Pedro Sanchez visits Morocco



The first bilateral summit in 8 years between Spain and Morocco was held in Rabat on 2 February, against a backdrop of reconciliation after major diplomatic tensions. One of the issues at stake was the Western Sahara. The topics discussed included economic, political, trade, migration and security cooperation between the two states... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

#### Giorgia Meloni visits Sweden and Germany



The President of the Italian Council of Ministers, Giorgia Meloni, visited the Swedish Prime Minister, Ulf Kristersson, on 3 February to prepare for the Extraordinary European Council on 9-10 February. She also met German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to discuss cooperation between Germany and Italy... [Read more](#)

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The Netherlands :

#### Visit by Emmanuel Macron



On 30 January, French President Emmanuel Macron travelled to The Hague to meet Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte. The two leaders exchanged views on the preparation of the Extraordinary European Council on 9 and 10 February, military support for Ukraine, and the economic, energy and industrial sovereignty of the European Union...

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Council of Europe :

#### EU cooperation with the Council of Europe



On 30 January, the Council of the European Union presented conclusions on the priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe in 2023-2024, focusing on political dialogue and legal cooperation. The EU committed itself to increasing joint declarations and high-level events on topics of common interest and reiterated its commitment to join the European Convention on Human Rights... [Read more](#)

#### Action plan for Belarusian democrats



On 1 February, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejcinovic Buric, presented an action plan to support civil society and democrats in Belarus to the Committee of Ministers, which includes actions for human rights training and the abolition of the death penalty... [Read more](#)

#### Recommendation on access to medicines and medical equipment

On 2 February, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation to ensure equitable access to medicines and medical equipment in a situation of scarcity. It sets out general human rights and procedural principles to



ensure such access, including non-discrimination, prioritisation based on medical criteria, participation of health professionals and civil society and transparency of decisions... [Read more](#)

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**IMF :**

**World Economic Outlook**



On 30 January, the IMF updated its growth projections for 2023 and 2024 in its World Economic Outlook report. It highlights the resilience and adaptation of the European economy in the face of the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis and soaring inflation. It forecasts 0.7% growth in the eurozone, stronger than the 0.5% forecast in October 2022. Germany, France and Italy are expected to grow by 0.1%, 0.7% and 0.6%. However, the IMF warns that risks remain high... [Read more](#)

**Eurostat :**

**Inflation down in the euro area**



According to an estimate published on 1 February by Eurostat, the annual inflation rate in the euro area will be 8.5% in January 2023, compared with 9.2% in December 2022. Spain and Luxembourg recorded the lowest rate at 5.8%, while Latvia had the highest rate at 21.6%... [Read more](#)

**Unemployment down**



According to figures published by Eurostat on 1 February, the unemployment rate stood at 6.1% in the European Union and 6.6% in the euro area in December 2022, down from 7% in December 2021. Young people are more affected with a rate of 15% in the EU and 14.8% in the euro area... [Read more](#)

**GDP growth in Q4 2022**



According to figures published by Eurostat on 31 January, GDP increased in the fourth quarter of 2022 by 0.1% in the euro area and remained stable in the Union compared to the previous quarter. A first estimate shows that GDP increased by 3.5% in the euro area and by 3.6% in the EU in 2022... [Read more](#)

**Eurobarometer :**

**NextGenerationEU recovery plan**



According to a Eurobarometer survey published on 31 January, 51% of respondents are aware of the NextGenerationEU plan, which aims to support economic recovery after the pandemic, and more than 70% are in favour of it. 64% agree with the conditionality attached to the disbursement of funds. Furthermore, respondents consider that priority should be given to health (57%), energy, environment and climate (48%) and employment (37%)... [Read more](#)

**Culture :**

**Cultural solidarity with Ukraine**



Nearly a year after the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, artists are stepping up initiatives to support the Ukrainian people. Until 25 February, the National Assembly in France is exhibiting a series of photographs of works made by the artist C215 in Ukraine in March and April 2022. Until 1 April, the Promocyjna gallery in Warsaw is hosting the first exhibition of Ukrainian painter Vasyl Lyakh, consisting of monumental works showing the conflict from the perspective of civilians living in the occupied territories. Finally, 17 photographs by Ukrainian journalist Anastasia Taylor-Lind are on display until 8 May at the Imperial War Museum in London. These pictures depict the harsh reality of everyday life for civilians in the midst of the conflict... [Read more](#)

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**Venice Carnival**



The 2023 edition of the Venice Carnival, based on the theme of the sign, will be held until 21 February. The main parades will begin on 11

February with the gondola parade. In parallel, several shows and parties are being organised by the city, including a nocturnal show on the Arsenal basin... [Read more](#)

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#### Leonora Carrington in Madrid



The MAPFRE Foundation in Madrid is holding an exhibition devoted to Leonora Carrington, one of the most important female figures of the Surrealist movement, until 7 May. The foundation aims to pay tribute to this artist by highlighting the various forms of expression she experimented with, such as painting, sculpture and writing... [Read more](#)

#### Niki de Saint Phalle in Frankfurt



Until 21 May, the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt is hosting an exhibition highlighting the many facets of Niki de Saint Phalle's career. The hundred or so pieces on display focus on her critique of conventional models and her approach to political and social issues... [Read more](#)

#### Exhibitions by Cédrine Scheidig and Faith Ringgold in Paris



The European House of Photography (MEP) in Paris is devoting an exhibition until 26 March to the Franco-Caribbean photographer Cédrine Scheidig, winner of the Dior Prize for Photography and Visual Arts for Young Talents 2021. Until 4 March, the Picasso Museum in Paris is presenting an exhibition dedicated to Faith Ringgold, an American feminist artist committed to the struggle for civil rights... [Read more](#)

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#### Elliott Erwitt in Padua



The Villa Bassi Rathgeb Museum in Padua is devoting an exhibition to the American photographer Elliott Erwitt until 11 June. More than 150 photographs are on display, some of them rarely exhibited, giving the visitor a glimpse into 20th century American society... [Read more](#)

#### David Hockney in Aix-en-Provence



The Granet Museum in Aix-en-Provence is hosting a retrospective exhibition dedicated to David Hockney in partnership with the Tate Gallery in London until May 28. The exhibition, covering more than 700 m<sup>2</sup>, highlights the painter's artistic career, from his beginnings in the 1950s... [Read more](#)

#### Vermeer in Amsterdam



From 10 February to 4 April, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam is hosting the largest exhibition ever devoted to Vermeer. The painter, known for his intimate portraits of everyday life, left only 35 works to our knowledge - the majority of which have now been brought together in this exhibition... [Read more](#)

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#### Agenda :



6-8 February 2023

Stockholm

Informal meeting of ministers responsible for competitiveness



7 February 2023

Brussels

EU Association Council-Moldova

9-10 February 2023

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Brussels  
Extraordinary European Council

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Feb

12 February 2023  
Cyprus  
Presidential Election (second round)

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Feb

13 February 2023  
Brussels  
Eurogroup Meeting

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