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The Letter in PDF format

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Gender parity in Europe: a - still imperfect - model in the world

Author: Stefanie Buzmaniuk



In a global context where women's rights are increasingly under attack, the European Union has made some progress towards equality with men in 2022. But while Europe is the continent with the best situation for women, there is still a long way to go to achieve parity.

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Elections :

Succes of the Liberal parties, decline of the populists in the general elections



Outgoing Prime Minister Kaja Kallas' Reform Party (Liberal) won the Estonian parliamentary elections on 5 March with 31.2% of the vote and 37 seats in parliament, ahead of the right-wing populist EKRE party (16.1% and 17 seats), the Centre Party (15.3%, 16 seats) and the Eesti 200 party (Liberal, 13.3%, 14 seats). Kaja Kallas will most likely be re-elected... but with which coalition?... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

European Recovery Plans: figures and priorities



In response to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Union has implemented a €672.5 billion recovery fund. On 28 February, the Commission gave a positive preliminary assessment of the payment requests submitted by Denmark and Lithuania. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to know the figures and the timetable... [Read more](#)

Ukraine/Russia :

Conference on Justice in Lviv



A conference on justice was held in Lviv on 3 and 4 March, attended by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Participants said that Russia should be held responsible for the crimes committed in Ukraine and supported the idea of a special court to try these crimes... [Read more](#)

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Discussions with the OECD



On 28 February, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met with OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann to discuss his country's potential membership in the international organisation. In this context, the parties discussed, among other things, the creation of a business-friendly tax regime for Ukraine's post-war reconstruction... [Read more](#)

The Latvian President in Kyiv



On 3 March, Latvian President Egils Levits visited Ukraine for the third time since the beginning of the war. He signed a joint declaration with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirming Latvia's support for Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The two leaders discussed ways to strengthen the Ukrainian army, the continuation of sanctions against Russia and Latvia's participation in the reconstruction of Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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EPP Group and Roberta Metsola visit Ukraine



On 4 March, the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, met the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky in Ukraine. In addition, seven members of the European People's Party (EPP) group, including its chairman Manfred Weber, also travelled to Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Further action to protect the seas



On 2 March, at the "Our Ocean" conference in Panama, Environment Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius announced 39 EU commitments for the protection of the oceans, which will cost €816.5 million. Around €320 million will be dedicated to ocean research to protect marine biodiversity and combat the impacts of climate change on the ocean... [Read more](#)

Measures to improve road safety



On 1 March, the Commission proposed new rules on road safety and driving licences with the aim of better preparing road users and simplifying the recognition of driving licences in the Member States through a digital licence. The new rules also propose more effective enforcement of safety-related traffic rules in a cross-border context and the introduction of an EU-wide driving ban... [Read more](#)

Council :

Agreement on the creation of green bonds



On 28 February, the Council and the Parliament reached a provisional agreement on the creation of European Green Bonds. Issuers will have to disclose information on the bond's proceeds and verify that at least 85% of the funds raised by the bond are allocated to economic activities in line with the taxonomy on sustainable technologies and enterprises... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Competitiveness Ministers



On 2 March, the Industry Ministers agreed on the Directive on distance contracts for financial services and on the Regulation on the collection and sharing of data on short-term rental accommodation services. They discussed the long-term competitiveness of the single market... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Energy and Transport Ministers



On 27-28 February, the EU's energy and transport ministers met in Stockholm to discuss the European energy market, future energy policy for industrial competitiveness and preparations for the implementation of the Fit for 55 climate package. On the initiative of France, 11 Member States called for increased European cooperation on nuclear energy. They underline that it is one of the many tools to achieve our climate goals, to produce baseload electricity and to ensure security of supply... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Agreement on the Northern Irish Protocol



On 27 February, the Commission and the UK government reached an agreement, known as the Windsor Framework, to maintain access to the single market for Northern Ireland. The same food and medicines that are available in the UK will also be available in Northern Ireland, including a distinction between products that are at risk of entering the EU single market and those that are only intended for Northern Ireland. To implement the agreement, the Commission has submitted legislative proposals to the Council and Parliament in the areas of sanitary and phytosanitary standards, medicines and tariff quotas... [Read more](#)

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Agreement in principle on normalisation of Serbia-Kosovo relations



On 27 February in Brussels, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovar Prime Minister Albin Kurti accepted a draft agreement on normalisation of relations between their two countries, proposed by the EU. The text provides for Belgrade to respect Kosovo's territorial integrity, recognise its identity papers and no longer block its membership of international organisations. In return, Pristina should grant greater autonomy to Kosovo's town halls, whose population is predominantly Serbian. The details of implementation remain to be negotiated... [Read more](#)

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Extension of sanctions against Belarus



On 27 February, the Council extended the sanctions against Belarus by one year, until 28 February 2024. These include a travel ban to the EU for 195 individuals and an asset freeze on the same individuals as well as 34 entities responsible for repression and human rights violations in Belarus, and in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine. The Belarusian regime is cracking down on opponents such as Nobel Prize winner Ales Bialiatski, who was sentenced to several years in prison on 3 March... [Read more](#)

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G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting



The G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting was held in New Delhi on 1-2 March. Discussions focused on the lack of progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the global economic slowdown and debt overhang, growing inequality, food and energy insecurity, and the conflict in Ukraine. On these issues, the 20 members failed to reach a consensus and sign a joint communiqué, reflecting the irreconcilable rift that runs through the group... [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

Litigation review 2022



The Court of Justice's annual report, published on 3 March, shows a high number of cases brought before it. The average number of cases brought in the last five years is 21% higher than the average from 2013 to 2017. The Court also notes that it is increasingly called upon to deal with "sensitive issues" such as the rule of law, environmental protection, consumer protection, privacy and personal data, the fight against discrimination, and compliance with competition rules by digital giants... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

The Union's Financial Landscape



On 1 March, the European Court of Auditors presented a report on the EU's financial landscape. It concludes that this is a patchwork that does not allow for full accountability, and makes several recommendations to improve the situation... [Read more](#)

EIB :

Investing to get out of global crises



On 27 and 28 February, the EIB Group (European Investment Bank) met in Luxembourg to adapt responses to the current crises. The meeting provided an opportunity to present the EIB's annual report on investment and investment financing, which provides a detailed overview of the main trends and developments in the market with a focus on the Union's digital and green transition in times of energy crisis... [Read more](#)

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European Agencies :

Annual Report by the European Prosecutor's Office



According to its annual report published on 1 March, the Public Prosecutor's Office opened 865 new investigations and conducted a total of 1,117 in 2022 with an estimated total fraud loss of €14.1 billion... [Read more](#)

Spain :

Visit to Ireland, Finland and Denmark



The President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sanchez, travelled to Dublin and Copenhagen on 2 March and Helsinki on 3 March to meet his counterparts and prepare for the Spanish Presidency of the Council in the second half of 2023. Strategic autonomy will be one of the priorities... [Read more](#)

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Finland :

Parliament allows the country's accession to NATO



On 1 March, the Finnish Parliament approved by 184 votes to 7 a law allowing the country to join NATO. Ratification of the accession protocol by Turkey and Hungary is still required for the country to join the Alliance... [Read more](#)

France :

Franco-Italian Declaration on Industry



The French and Italian ministers for the economy, Bruno Le Maire and Adolfo Urso, called in a joint declaration on 3 March for a European industrial policy to support the green and digital transitions, competitiveness and strategic autonomy. They supported an adjustment of state aid to support industrial sectors, as well as a European sovereignty fund to support strategic industrial sectors... [Read more](#)

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Summit devoted to Forests in Libreville



On 1 and 2 March, more than twenty countries representing the world's major forest basins, members of the scientific community, local populations and business leaders met in Libreville to find solutions to protect tropical forests. This One Forest Summit resulted in a "Libreville Plan" which proposes the development of more sustainable timber industries and the creation of a €100 million fund to reward countries that are exemplary in conserving forests and safeguarding their vital carbon and biodiversity stocks... [Read more](#)

Malta :

Five countries call for more solidarity



On the occasion of the fifth MED5 ministerial meeting in Malta on 3 and 4 March, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain called for more solidarity between Member States to prevent irregular migration. They reiterated the conclusions of the European Council of 9 February by asking for European funds to be made available to Member States to strengthen border protection... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Report on Corruption in Austria



On 1 March, the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) published its fifth evaluation report on Austria, analysing corruption prevention. Noting a low level of public trust in the political class and recent scandals that have tarnished the reputation of the executive, GRECO recommends the adoption of a comprehensive integrity policy for public officials in connection with the management of conflicts of interest... [Read more](#)

UN :

Agreement to protect the high seas



On 5 March, at the 5th session of intergovernmental negotiations at the United Nations headquarters in New York, agreement was reached by delegates to the Intergovernmental Conference on a treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The treaty is the result of talks that began in 2004... [Read more](#)

OECD :

Report on Poland's Economy



In a report published on 27 February, the OECD notes that the Polish economy recovered quickly from the Covid-19 pandemic but has been held back by the war in Ukraine. Inflation, which is at its highest level for two decades, needs to be reduced. Furthermore, the study says that making a green transition and promoting digital transition should help improve the country's growth... [Read more](#)

IMF :

Report on Belgium's Economy



On 2 March, the IMF released its forecast for the Belgian economy. The organisation expects Belgian growth to be closer to 1.2% in the medium term while the budget deficit will stabilise at around 5.5%. However, the report estimates that the Belgian public debt will continue to grow and will reach 120% of GDP in 2028 if no adjustment is made. It recommends that Belgium undertake structural reforms and rationalise current expenditure while increasing productive public investment... [Read more](#)

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Eurostat :

Annual inflation rate down in the euro area



According to a Eurostat estimate published on 2 March, annual inflation in the euro area rose to 8.5% in February 2023, compared to 8.6% in January. Energy prices had a lower annual inflation rate (13.7% compared to 18.9% in January), while food, alcohol and tobacco prices rose by 15% compared to 14.1% in January... [Read more](#)

Unemployment down



According to a Eurostat estimate published on 2 March, the unemployment rate was 6.1% in the EU and 6.7% in the euro area in January 2023, compared with 6.3% in the EU and 6.9% in the euro area in January 2022. The statistical office notes, however, that youth unemployment has increased in the EU and the euro area compared to the same period... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Cultural Solidarity with Ukraine



Cultural solidarity with Ukraine continues in Europe, with many cultural events organised in support of the country. In France, concerts are being organised in Epinal on 14 March and in Concarneau on 19 March. In the UK, a concert entitled "Song for Ukraine" will be held on 16 March at the Royal Opera House in London. In Germany, a concert will take place in Bad Honnef on 25 March. In Spain, a concert will also take place on 11 March in Madrid to support Ukrainian refugees... [Read more](#)

International Day of Women's Rights



On 8 March, on the occasion of International Women's Rights Day, several exhibitions are taking place in Europe. In Paris, an exhibition on the railings of the Madeleine church is dedicated to Louise Weiss. On the same day, the Museum of the Lubusz Region in Zielona Gora opened an exhibition entitled "Beauty is a Woman". In Bonn, the Women's Museum presents the exhibition "Women's Movements: 1865, 1971, 2017". In London, the WOW Festival is being held from 10 to 12 March. In Spain and Ireland, several exhibitions are dedicated to women artists... [Read more](#)

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Matisse at the Orangerie



The Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris is devoting an exhibition to Matisse and his artistic production in the 1930s until 29 May. The exhibition proposes to identify the issues of this period of the painter's career through the publications of Cahiers d'Art, an avant-garde review created during the same period... [Read more](#)

Renoir at the Roverella Palace in Rovigo



Until 25 June, Palazzo Roverella in Rovigo is hosting an exhibition devoted to Renoir and his exploration of the neo-Renaissance style. While the painter is known as one of the most important figures of Impressionism, this exhibition aims to shed light on a little-known moment of his artistic career... [Read more](#)

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Knossos in Oxford



Until 30 July, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford is devoting an exhibition to the ancient city of Knossos. Discovered more than a century ago, Knossos was the heart of the Minoan civilisation that developed on Crete from 2700 BC to 1200 BC. This is the first British exhibition devoted entirely to the city, bringing together more than 100 objects that had not previously left Greece... [Read more](#)

Anglada X Camarasa in Barcelona



Until 7 May, the Museu Nacional d'Art Catalana (National Museum of Catalan Art) is holding an exhibition dedicated to Anglada Camarasa, a great Catalan painter. The exhibition, entitled "The Premeditated Archive", is original in that it presents mainly personal archives... [Read more](#)

Anka Ptaszkowska in Warsaw



The Vistula Museum in Warsaw is hosting an exhibition dedicated to Anka Ptaszkowska until 23 April. The exhibition is built around the script of an autobiographical film in 32 chapters, made by the artist in 2016, and aims to shed light on the official and private dimensions of her story... [Read more](#)

Aleksandra Waliszewska and Symbolism



The MK Ciurlionis National Art Museum in Kaunas is hosting the exhibition "Dark Arts: Aleksandra Waliszewska and Symbolism of the East and North" until 22 May. It brings together more than 200 paintings by 36 Polish, Czech and Baltic artists from the 19th century to the present day. These works are linked by the themes they address and by the desire of their authors to escape realism and naturalism through the depiction of fantastic scenes... [Read more](#)

Flowers in Art in Munich



Until 27 August, the Kunststhal in Munich is hosting an exhibition devoted to the cultural history of flowers from antiquity to the present day. Whether in mythology, religion, art or politics, flowers have always had great symbolic power. Nearly one hundred and seventy works and specially designed installations show how they have evolved from coveted status symbols to a mass-marketed product worldwide... [Read more](#)

Poets' Spring



From 11 to 27 March the 25^e edition of the Printemps des poètes will be held, entitled "Borders". Several events in Europe and around the world are calling for a rethink of the border not just as a geopolitical theme, in connection with the Ukrainian conflict, but also as one that is poetic, aesthetic and literary... [Read more](#)

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New publication of the Michelin Guide



One of the largest gatherings of chefs in history was held in Strasbourg on 6 March to celebrate the 2023 Michelin Guide's ranking. Only one restaurant was awarded a third star, four restaurants received two stars and 39 new restaurants were awarded stars. Thanks to these chefs, Europe is the most gastronomic destination in the world... [Read more](#)

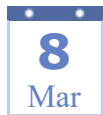
Agenda :



7 March 2023
Brussels
Education Council



7-8 March 2023
Stockholm
Informal Meeting of Defence Ministers



8-9 March 2023
Stockholm
Informal Meeting of Development Ministers



9-10 March 2023
Brussels Justice and Home Affairs Council
Stockholm Informal Meeting of Trade Ministers

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