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The Letter in PDF format

The Foundation on  and 

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Judging Putin

Author: Arnaud de Nanteuil



The international arrest warrant issued against Vladimir Putin on 17 March by the International Criminal Court is a gamble, given the many obstacles to an eventual conviction. But this decision marks an important step forward in international justice.

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Front page! :

Incentive or prohibition



While the United States relies on science and industry to make a success of their ecological transformation, Europe favours rules and prohibitions. It must develop incentives if it intends to set a good example, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Elections :

GERB leads in Bulgaria's parliamentary elections



According to the results of the early parliamentary elections in Bulgaria on 2 April, Boyko Borisov's GERB has 26.54% of the vote and Kiril Petkov's We Continue the Change has 24.61%. The far-right Revival party is expected to come third with 14.19%. In total, six parties surpassed the 4% threshold to be represented in Parliament. Far from clarifying the situation, these fifth elections in two years will probably not allow the formation of a solid government coalition and thus Bulgaria to emerge from the political crisis... [Read more](#)

Centre-right wins parliamentary elections in Finland by a narrow margin



On 2 April, the National Coalition Party (Kok) narrowly edged out the Finns Party (PS) and the Social Democratic Party of outgoing Prime Minister Sanna Marin in the Finnish parliamentary elections. According to non-final results, they garnered 20.8%, 20.1% and 19.9% of the vote respectively. The leader of Kok, Petteri Orpo, has to find a coalition to form a government... [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 established a €672.5 billion recovery fund. On 31 March, Spain received a third payment of €6 billion. More than €150 billion has now been paid to Member States. The Foundation offers an interactive map of the plans country by country, to learn more about the figures and timetables... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine :

Visits during the international summit on the war crimes of Bucha



At the international summit on war crimes in Bucha held on 31 March in Kyiv, several European leaders met with Volodymyr Zelensky. The Ukrainian President met with Moldovan President Maia Sandu, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, Slovak Prime Minister Eduard Heger and Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob. The leaders discussed, among other things, the need for further sanctions against Russia and the creation of a special tribunal to investigate the Russian crime of aggression... [Read more](#)

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Speech by Volodymyr Zelensky



On 30 March, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the National Council of the Republic of Austria. He thanked Austria for its humanitarian support to the Ukrainian people, for protecting the Ukrainian energy industry from Russian terrorist missile strikes and for supporting the de-mining of Ukrainian territory... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Third Annual Work Programme of the European Defence Fund



On 30 March, the Commission adopted the third annual work programme of the European Defence Fund (EDF), allocating €1.2 billion to defence research and development projects. The work programme also introduces new measures to promote innovation in the defence field under the European Innovation Programme (EUDIS)... [Read more](#)

Extending the use of digital technology in the field of company law



On 29 March, the Commission proposed a directive to make it easier for companies to use digital tools and processes in the field of EU company law. The proposal aims in particular to facilitate cross-border transactions, increase transparency and business confidence and reduce red tape for cross-border companies... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Agreement on the Renewable Energies Directive



On 30 March, Council and Parliament negotiators reached a provisional agreement on the Renewables Directive to increase the share of renewables in the EU's overall energy consumption to 42.5% by 2030, with an indicative additional 2.5% to reach 45%. This agreement must now be formally adopted by the two co-legislators... [Read more](#)

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Adoption of new rules to counter wage secrecy and wage gaps



On 30 March, MEPs adopted new rules for EU companies to provide information to enable employees to better compare pay and highlight gender pay gaps. The Council must now adopt the proposed directive... [Read more](#)

Vote on the reform of the management of migration and asylum



The Civil Liberties Committee approved on 28 March an update of 3 regulations: the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation, the Crisis Situations Regulation and the Asylum Procedure Regulation. MEPs approved their position on the new regulation on external border control and access to information on criminal convictions of third country nationals. These positions must now be approved in plenary for Parliament to start negotiations with the Council... [Read more](#)

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Resolution on the 2022 Rule of Law Report



On 30 March, MEPs adopted a resolution on the Commission's 2022 report on the rule of law in the EU. They call on the Commission to extend the scope of its report to include the issue of fundamental rights, particularly in border management of migrants... [Read more](#)

Adoption of the reform of the product safety rules



On 30 March, MEPs adopted the regulation on the safety of non-food consumer products to tackle risks linked to new technologies and the growth of online sales, protect vulnerable consumers and speed up product recalls. The text now has to be adopted by the Council... [Read more](#)

Council :

Meeting of Energy Ministers



On 28 March, the Energy Ministers adopted their negotiating position on two proposals that establish common rules for the internal market in terms of renewable gases, natural gases and hydrogen. They also reached agreement on a proposal to extend the voluntary 15% gas demand reduction target by one year, and held a debate on the review of the electricity market... [Read more](#)

Agreement on the Anti-Coercion Instrument



The Council and the Parliament reached agreement on 28 March on the regulation on the protection of the Union and its Member States against economic coercion by third countries (Anti-Coercion Instrument - ACI). The AIT aims to deter third countries from exercising economic coercion on the EU and its Member States by, for example, imposing trade restrictions on these third countries... [Read more](#)

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Agreement on the deployment of infrastructures for alternative fuels



The Council and the Parliament reached an agreement on 28 March on the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Project (AFIR), to deploy a sufficient infrastructure network to refuel and recharge alternative fuel or electric vehicles and vessels. The agreement must now be approved by both institutions... [Read more](#)

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Adoption of 4 measures from the Fit for 55 adjustment package



On 28 March, the Council adopted several texts of the Fit for 55 adjustment package to reduce CO2 emissions by 2030. It adopted the regulation setting stricter CO2 emission standards for new cars and vans, which provides for the end of combustion engines in new vehicles in 2035. It adopted the regulation on effort sharing by Member States, as well as the regulation on land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) and a decision amending the stability reserve of the emission allowance market... [Read more](#)

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Formal adoption of the 15% gas demand reduction target

On 30 March, the Council formally adopted the regulation extending the voluntary 15% gas demand reduction target for Member States by one year, until 31 March 2024. The possibility for the Council to trigger a "Union alert" on security of supply is maintained. It makes the reduction of gas demand mandatory... [Read more](#)



Diplomacy :

The Year that War returned to Europe



On 27 March, EU High Representative Josep Borrell published a collection of blog posts, opinion pieces and speeches entitled "The year the war came back to Europe. EU Foreign Policy in 2022". In it he discusses the issues that have dominated EU foreign policy over the past year... [Read more](#)

The second Summit for Democracy



From 29 to 31 March, the second US-led Summit for Democracy was held to promote the democratic model around the world. US President Joe Biden announced the creation of a \$690 million fund to support "democratic renewal". French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reiterated the imperative to defend democratic values, as did Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and Polish President Andrzej Duda... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

Videoconferencing courses are covered by the GDPR



In a judgment delivered on 30 March, the Court of Justice recognises that live video conferencing of public school lessons falls under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Increase in patent applications in Europe



In 2022, the European Patent Office (EPO) received 2.5% more patent applications than the previous year, according to the EPO's Patent Index 2022 barometer, published on 29 March... [Read more](#)

Germany :

German-Dutch Council of Ministers



On 27 March, the German and Dutch governments met in Rotterdam. They discussed the fight against climate change, the improvement of rail links between the two countries, the need to increase the EU's capacity to act on the international stage and the continuation of military support to Ukraine... [Read more](#)

France :

Press release regarding European nuclear cooperation



On 28 March, during the Energy Council in Brussels and at the initiative of France, the ministers and representatives of 13 Member States restated their wish to strengthen European cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, in particular for research and innovation, and a qualified nuclear workforce. They stressed that nuclear power is a key technology for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050... [Read more](#)

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Poland :

Visit to Romania by Prime Minister



On 28 March, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki travelled to Bucharest to meet his Romanian counterpart Nicolas Ciuca for intergovernmental consultations between the two countries. The consultations focused on bilateral cooperation, security, mechanisms for stabilising grain prices, Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the economic consequences of the war, as well as the preparation of the NATO summit to be held in July... [Read more](#)

UK :

Visit by King Charles III to Germany

From 29 to 31 March, King Charles III made his first foreign visit to Germany. Charles was welcomed in Berlin by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. On 30 March, he met Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Berlin Mayor Franziska Giffey. Charles III was the first British monarch to address the Bundestag, in which he condemned Russian aggression in Ukraine and praised Germany's "extremely brave" military support for the Ukrainians. He then travelled to Hamburg... [Read more](#)

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New Scottish Government[Read more](#)

Following his election as leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), Humza Yousaf was formally elected Head of Government by the Scottish Parliament on 28 March. He was then sworn in before the Supreme Court and announced the appointment of his ministerial team on 29 March. The new government consists of 10 ministers 6 of whom are women, supported by 18 deputy ministers, 9 of whom are women...

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Montenegro :

Jakov Milatovic, elected President, signalling the end of the Djukanovic era

Jakov Milatovic (PES!, "Europe Now!"), a 36-year-old economist, won the presidential election in Montenegro in the second round on 2 April, with 60.1% of the votes cast. Incumbent President Milo Djukanovic (DPS, "Democratic Party of Socialists"), in office since 1991 as head of state or government, obtained 39.9%. The presidential term is five years, renewable once... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

GRETA's criticism of the UK's anti-illegal immigration bill

On 29 March, the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) expressed its deep concern about the UK's proposed Illegal Migration Bill. It believes that the Bill would be a step backwards in the fight against human trafficking and modern slavery. It calls for a review of the Bill to ensure its compliance with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings... [Read more](#)

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Call to end "pushbacks"

On 30 March, the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) called on European governments to put an end to pushbacks and to prevent the ill-treatment of foreign nationals at borders, particularly in detention centres... [Read more](#)

NATO :

Hungary and Turkey ratify Finland's membership

On 27 March, the Hungarian Parliament approved Finland's accession to NATO by 182 votes to 6. On 30 March, the Turkish Parliament approved Finland's accession to NATO by a unanimous vote of 276 MPs present. Finland's entry into NATO has now been approved by all 30 members of the Alliance. The accession ceremony is scheduled to take place on 4 April at NATO headquarters in Brussels... [Read more](#)

IMF :

Economic Outlook for Cyprus

The IMF published its economic outlook for Cyprus on 30 March. It notes that the Cypriot economy is proving resilient in the face of the consequences of the war in Ukraine. It forecasts a slowdown in growth this year, but the outlook for the mid-term remains solid. Among its recommendations, the IMF indicates the importance of rebuilding fiscal buffers, maintaining the targeting of social assistance and preserving financial stability... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Annual inflation rate down



According to a Eurostat estimate published on 31 March, annual inflation in the euro area stood at 6.9% in March, down from 8.5% in February. The development of energy prices is the main source of this drop in inflation: -0.9%, compared to 13.7% in February... [Read more](#)

Unemployment down



According to Eurostat data published on 31 March, the unemployment rate in February 2023 was 6% in the European Union compared to 6.1% in January 2023; and 6.6% in the euro area compared to 6.1% in January 2023... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Holy Week in Spain



Holy Week in Spain will last until 9 April. Many traditional festivities are being held throughout Spain for the occasion, showcasing Hispanic culture and arts. This historic week is also known to have many rich local variations, both in the major Spanish cities and in the countryside.. [Read more](#)

Easter Festival in Salzburg



The Salzburg Easter Festival will be held until 10 April. Numerous cultural and artistic events are organised, including one on Richard Wagner... [Read more](#)

Baden-Baden Easter Festival



The Easter Festival in Baden-Baden runs until 10 April. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra is giving a series of concerts. This year's festival is devoted to Viennese composers from the turn of the 20th century... [Read more](#)

10th anniversary of the Easter Festival of Aix-en-Provence



The Aix-en-Provence Easter Festival is running until 16 April. For its tenth anniversary, it is offering concerts, conferences and master classes. Several meetings with some of the great names of the current scene are proposed... [Read more](#)

Hugo van der Goes in Berlin



Until 16 July, the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin is hosting an exhibition devoted to Hugo van der Goes, the most important Dutch artist of the second half of the 15th century. 540 years after his death, the exhibition will for the first time bring together almost all of Hugo van der Goes' works... [Read more](#)

Thorvald Helleesen in Oslo



Until 20 August, the National Museum in Oslo is organising an exhibition devoted to Thorvald Helleesen, one of the pioneers of Cubism. This extensive retrospective of the artist's work includes some 70 exhibits, including paintings, gouaches, drawings, as well as sewing and interior decoration... [Read more](#)

The Krakow Group, the founding myth of Polish contemporary art



Until 24 September, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow is devoting an exhibition to the Krakow Group. The public will be able to

discover the work of this group of artists, who were at the origin and forefront of Polish contemporary art... [Read more](#)

Tartan Exhibition in Dundee



The Victoria and Albert Museum in Dundee is hosting an exhibition celebrating the tartan until 24 January 2024. It explores the complex history of the textile and examines how it has influenced many artists, designers, architects and film makers to become one of the symbols of Scotland that is seen everywhere around the world... [Read more](#)

Japanese prints in Bologna



Until 23 July, the Palazzo Pallavicini in Bologna is hosting an exhibition dedicated to ancient Japanese monster prints. More than two hundred works from the 18th and 19th centuries are on display, including woodcuts by Hokusai, rare books and samurai armour... [Read more](#)

Basquiat and Warhol at the Fondation Louis Vuitton



Until August 28, the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris is devoting an exhibition to Jean-Michel Basquiat's collaboration with Andy Warhol. The exhibition brings together more than three hundred works and documents, including eighty paintings signed by both artists... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



4-5 April
Brussels
Meeting of NATO Foreign Affairs Ministers



5-8 April
Beijing
Emmanuel Macron and Ursula von der Leyen visit China

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