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The Letter in PDF format

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Giorgia Meloni's first six months

Author: Anna Bonalume



Giorgia Meloni's first six months as President of the Italian Council have been praised by the international press, but domestic consensus is beginning to crumble. The next few months will show whether the leader of Fratelli d'Italia will be able to solve the problems and challenges which the country faces.

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Elections :

New Democracy expected to win Greek parliamentary elections but without a majority



According to the latest opinion poll, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' New Democracy party will lead the 21 May parliamentary elections with 35.6% of the vote, ahead of the Coalition of the Radical Left-Progressive Alliance (SYRIZA) of former Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. The elections will be held under full proportional representation for the first time in 33 years, making it difficult to form a governing majority... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

The publication of the Schuman Report, State of the Union 2023



Europe has changed ... this is what the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2023" shows, as it analyses the profound changes that have occurred in Europe, accelerated by the shock of the war in Ukraine. This 17th (14th in English) edition published by Marie B. includes 19 contributions from prominent figures, 30 original maps and a complete set of commented statistics. The book is available in digital format. Order your copy now!.. [Read more](#)

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[European Recovery Plans: figures and priorities](#)



In response to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Union has set up a €672.5 billion recovery fund. On 20 April, Austria and Slovenia each received a first instalment, of €700 million and €50 million respectively. On 21 April, France submitted an amendment to its plan to include a RePowerEU chapter. The Foundation offers an interactive map of the plans country by country, with information on amounts and timetables... [Read more](#)

Retirement systems in the European Union



Pension systems are regularly the subject of debate in the Member States and discussions at European level because of their weight 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](#)

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Ukraine/Russia :

EBRD President visits Ukraine



The President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Odile Renaud-Basso, visited Kyiv on 21 April to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and reiterate the institution's support for Ukraine. The EBRD is the largest institutional investor in Ukraine with an investment commitment of €3 billion in 2022-2023. In an article for the Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2023, which the Foundation has just published, Odile Renaud-Basso recalls that the first priority of these investments is to ensure access to essential public services for Ukrainian refugees in neighbouring countries... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine joins EU civil protection mechanism



On 20 April, Janez Lenarcic, European Commissioner for Crisis Management, was in Ukraine to sign an agreement on behalf of the European Union granting Ukraine membership of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the EU's solidarity framework for helping states that are unable to cope with a disaster. As part of this, the EU has announced an additional €55 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine to prepare for the coming winter... [Read more](#)

Meeting on the protecting children



On 21 April, Olena Zelenska met with European Commission Vice-President Dubravka Suica, Swedish Minister for Social Services Camilla Waltersson Grönvall and European Parliament Vice-President Ewa Kopacz, Coordinator for Children's Rights. They discussed the establishment of an office that will coordinate the reform of the education system for orphans and children without parental care, which should be funded by the EBRD. On the same day, the Ukrainian Commissioner for Children's Rights, Daria Herasymchuk, met with the delegation from the European Commission, the European Parliament and Sweden to discuss the forced deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia... [Read more](#)

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NATO Secretary General visits Kyiv



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visited Kyiv on 20 April and met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. He recalled that the Alliance was with Ukraine, that the Allies had provided more than €150 billion in support to the country and that its place was in the Alliance... [Read more](#)

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Suspension of cereal imports from Ukraine



On 15 April, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria announced that they were suspending imports of agricultural products, including cereals, from Ukraine, which they accused of destabilising their markets. On 18 April, Ukraine and Poland reached an agreement to allow the transit of Ukrainian agricultural products. On 19 April, the Commission proposed a number of measures, including agricultural financial support to affected farmers, exceptional product safeguards and measures to facilitate the transit of Ukrainian grain exports through solidarity corridors. These measures are conditional on the lifting by the Member States concerned of their unilateral measures... [Read more](#)

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Summit of cities and regions in Kyiv



On 19 and 20 April, the International Summit of Cities and Regions took place in Kyiv. The event brought together representatives of Ukraine, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the governments of each Member State and partner states to discuss the reconstruction of Ukraine. In a joint declaration, they confirmed their wish to participate in the reconstruction of Ukraine and defined the guiding principles of this initiative. 11 agreements were signed between Ukrainian regions, cities and communities and foreign partners... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Reform of the bank crisis management framework



On 18 April, the Commission presented its reform of the EU framework for bank crisis management and deposit insurance, which should allow authorities to organise the exit of a failing bank from the market through new tools... [Read more](#)

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Draft regulation on cybersecurity



On 18 April, the Commission presented a proposal for a regulation on cybersolidarity which aims, among other things, to create an emergency mechanism in the field of cybersecurity but also a European cyber shield, an infrastructure composed of national and cross-border security operations centres (SOCs) in the European Union by 2024... [Read more](#)

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Parliament :

Debate with the Luxembourg Prime Minister



Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel addressed MEPs on 19 April and called on the European Union to remain open and fight against protectionism and populism, but also to remain united in the face of "unacceptable aggression from Russia"... [Read more](#)

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Adoption of the Regulation on Deforestation



On 19 April, MEPs adopted a regulation on deforestation that obliges companies to sell their products in the EU only if they declare that they do not come from deforested land and have not caused forest degradation. They will also have to check that these products respect the legislation of the country of production, including human rights. The regulation now has to be approved by the Council... [Read more](#)

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Adoption of five texts for the climate goal 2030



On 18 April, MEPs adopted five texts as part of the objective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030. These include the reform of the emissions trading scheme, including for aviation, the creation of a new mechanism to combat carbon leakage (MACF, carbon adjustment mechanism at borders) and a Social Climate Fund... [Read more](#)

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Traceability rules for crypto-assets



On 20 April, MEPs adopted the Regulation on crypto-asset markets (MiCA) enabling the tracing of crypto-asset transactions, combating market manipulation, preventing money laundering and the financing of criminal activities. The regulation must now be formally adopted by the Council... [Read more](#)

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Negotiation mandates on asylum and migration



On 20 April, MEPs adopted a negotiating mandate for the new regulation on the screening of foreign nationals, the regulation on asylum and migration management, the regulation on crisis situations and the revision of the directive on long-term residents. Agreement must now be reached with the Council on these texts... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Agreement on semi-conductors



The Council and the Parliament reached a provisional agreement on 18 April on the European Semiconductor Regulation (Chips Act). The aim is to double the EU's global market share in semiconductors from 10% to more than 20% by 2030 by creating better conditions for the development of an industrial base in this field. The agreement now has to be formally adopted by the two institutions... [Read more](#)

Informal Meeting of Environment Ministers



The environment ministers met informally on 18-19 April in Stockholm. They discussed the challenges of achieving the green transition, the role of business and its actions for biodiversity and competitiveness... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers



The G7 foreign ministers met from 16 to 18 April in Karuizawa, Japan. They restated their support for Ukraine and decided to step up sanctions against Russia. The Ministers expressed support for the establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression against Ukraine. The ministers also discussed peacekeeping and peacebuilding, disarmament and non-proliferation, economic and energy security, cyber security and the fight against disinformation... [Read more](#)

Evacuation of Europeans from Sudan



Following the extremely rapid deterioration of the security situation in Sudan on 23 April, several European states announced that they were coordinating evacuation operations for their diplomatic personnel and nationals. France is also contributing to the evacuation of nationals of European and allied countries, as well as European diplomatic personnel... [Read more](#)

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Appointment of 40 heads of delegation



On 20 April, Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, announced the appointment of 40 Heads of Delegation and one Chargé d'Affaires of the European Union... [Read more](#)

Fierce controversy caused by the Chinese ambassador to France



On 21 April, Chinese Ambassador Lu Shaye's remarks on the French channel LCI, which included questioning the "sovereign status" of the former USSR territories, led to strong protests. While Lu Shaye will have to explain himself to the French Foreign Ministry, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have also decided to summon the Chinese ambassadors... [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

Reduction of the penalty payment imposed on Poland



The Court of Justice decided on 21 April to reduce from €1 million per day to €500,000 the amount of the periodic penalty payment imposed on Poland since October 2021 for failure to comply with an order requiring the suspension of the disciplinary regime for Polish judges. The Court considers that the measures taken by Poland "are such as to ensure, to a significant extent", compliance with the order... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Copernicus Report on the Climate in 2022



The European Climate Change Service of Copernicus, the European Earth Observation Programme, published its annual State of the Climate report on 20 April. It reveals that temperatures in Europe are rising twice as fast as the global average and that the last 8 years have been the warmest on record... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Chancellor visits Portugal



On 19 April, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz travelled to Lisbon to meet his Portuguese counterpart Antonio Costa. The two leaders reiterated their support for the project to create a "green corridor for renewable energy" to transport hydrogen from the Iberian Peninsula to the rest of the European Union. They also want to continue the joint endeavours made by Portugal and Germany in providing military aid to Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Denmark :

Prime Minister's visit to Italy



Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen visited her Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni in Rome on 21 April. The two leaders discussed, among other things, the need to find solutions to Europe's migration challenges, Europe's support for Ukraine and the importance of strengthening partnerships in Africa... [Read more](#)

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Greece :

Dissolution of Parliament and the launch of the electoral campaign



On 23 April, a presidential decree announced the dissolution of the Vouli, the Greek parliament. This dissolution, which launches the election campaign, comes one month before the parliamentary elections on 21 May. The mandate of the Greek Parliament expires on 7 July...

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Launch of Funds for a Just Transition in Greece



The Just Transition Development Programme was launched on 21 April in Tripolis, Greece. This programme will allow Megalopolis and the municipalities of Gortynia, Oichalia and Tripoli to access €391 million in funding to support SMEs, economic diversification and the exit from fossil fuels... [Read more](#)

UK :

Resignation of the Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab



British Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Minister Dominique Raab announced his resignation on 21 April, the day after the publication of a report confirming accusations of bullying against him. Former culture minister Oliver Dowden was appointed Deputy Prime Minister. Alex Chalk, a Secretary of State for Defence, took over the Justice portfolio... [Read more](#)

Kosovo :

Vote on short-term visa exemption for Kosovars



On 18 April, MEPs adopted a visa waiver for Kosovar citizens coming to the European Union for short stays. The measure will come into force when the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) is in place, by 2024... [Read more](#)

Moldova :

Resolution in favour of Moldova's accession



On 19 April, MEPs said in a resolution that Moldova's accession would be a geostrategic investment for the EU and recognised the Moldovan government's progress in reforming and aligning with the body of EU law. They called for the opening of accession negotiations by the end of the year, provided that Moldova completes 9 steps identified by the Commission... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Report on Georgia



On 19 April, the Council of Europe published a report on the human rights and humanitarian situation in Georgia, in particular in the areas affected by the conflict with Russia since 2008. Due to the Russian presence on Georgian territory, the institution notes that there has been almost no progress in the protection of these rights, with citizens in the war zones facing numerous restrictions on their freedom of movement, access to healthcare and education... [Read more](#)

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Secretary General's visit to Austria



On 20 April, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejcinovic Buric, met with the Austrian President, Alexander Van der Bellen. They discussed the summit of heads of state and government to be held in Reykjavik on 16 and 17 May. She also met with Minister of Justice Alma Zadic to discuss the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and she also attended meetings at the OSCE... [Read more](#)

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WTO :

Ruling in favour of the European Union against India



The World Trade Organisation (WTO) ruled in favour of the European Union on 18 April following a challenge to Indian tariffs on information and communication technology products such as mobile phones. The application of rates of up to 20% on the export of such goods was seen as contrary to India's WTO commitments... [Read more](#)

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Eurostat :

Reduction of the public deficit and debt in 2022



According to Eurostat, the government deficit in 2022 was 3.6% of GDP in the euro area and 3.4% in the EU, compared with 5.3% and 4.8% respectively in 2021. The ratio of government debt to GDP was 91.6% in the euro area and 84% in the EU, compared with 95.5% and 88% at the end of 2021... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Exhibition on the origin and legacy of the Good Friday Agreements



Until 31 May, the Linen Hall in Belfast is hosting an exhibition dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, signed on 10 April 1998 to end 30 years of deadly conflict in Northern Ireland. Thousands of artefacts, cartoons, badges, posters and other objects document the preparation and the consequences of the peace agreement in Northern Ireland... [Read more](#)

Sarah Bernhardt at the Petit Palais in Paris



Until 27 August, the Petit Palais in Paris is hosting an exhibition devoted to the greatest French actress of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Sarah Bernhardt. The exhibition retraces the life and career of the actress and seeks to highlight her activity as a painter, writer and sculptor. More than 400 pieces are on display, including some of her stage costumes, photographs, posters and sculptures... [Read more](#)

Theme of the icon and status of the image in Venice



Until 26 November, the Punta della Dogana art museum in Venice presents an exhibition focusing on the themes of the icon and the status of the image. The exhibition proposes a reflection on the place of the image in rituals, on its capacity to transcend and its polysemic character. The exhibition brings together a selection of emblematic works from the Pinault Collection and places certain artists such as David Hammons and Agnes Martin and Danh Vo and Rudolf Stingel in dialogue... [Read more](#)

Francisco de Herrera's Baroque



An exhibition dedicated to the work of the Baroque artist Francisco de Herrera is being held at the Prado National Museum in Madrid until 30 July. The museum has gathered a number of his paintings for the occasion, some of which have even been recently restored by the museum staff. The exhibition also aims

to highlight the artist's Italian period, during which he further developed his painting technique... [Read more](#)



Latin Music Festival in London



Until 7 May, the Latin music festival "La Linea" is taking place in several London cafés and clubs. The event is an opportunity to showcase young artists and the diversity of the Latin music scene... [Read more](#)



Women artists in the spotlight in Stockholm



Until 14 January 2024, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm is holding an exhibition devoted to several women artists who emerged in the 1980s. The exhibition brings together various works by these artists, including photographs, plastic creations and paintings... [Read more](#)



"Mémoire Vive" in Nîmes



Until 31 December, the Musée de la Romanité in Nîmes is presenting an exhibition built around the figure of Olivier Laric, exploring the link between Antiquity and the contemporary world. The exhibition aims to show that the museum's archaeological collections continue to inspire creators and that they can occupy a new place in a world marked by the digital revolution and the use of the Internet... [Read more](#)



Baroque in Florence at the Bozar



Until 21 July, the exhibition 'Baroque in Florence' at Bozar Brussels brings together a collection of 17th-century Florentine artists. Some of the works on display are being shown for the first time in Belgium... [Read more](#)



Exhibition on art in Germany in 1923



On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Friends of the Kunsthalle Hamburg, the art gallery is organising an exhibition dedicated to the year 1923. Until 24 September, some sixty works provide an overview of artistic creation, social trends and historical events in Germany and Hamburg in 1923, which is often regarded as a crucial year for the Weimar Republic... [Read more](#)



Art Gallery Festival in Berlin



The 19th Berlin Gallery Weekend will take place from 28 to 30 April. 55 Berlin galleries are taking part in this event, which is spread over more than 50 locations and brings together almost 80 international artists...

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Exhibition on the Warsaw Ghetto



Until 7 May, the Galeria Kordegarda in Warsaw is presenting an exhibition on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. One of the most important items in the exhibition is the Stroop report. The exhibition also presents drawings, photographs and posters that bear witness to the event... [Read more](#)



Agenda :



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Luxembourg
Agriculture and Fisheries Council



28 April 2023

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Stockholm
Eurogroup Meeting

28
Apr

28-29 October 2023
Stockholm
Informal Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers

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