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The Letter in PDF format

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The Geopolitics of European Wheat

Author: Sébastien Abis



The European Union is the world's second largest wheat exporter, behind Russia but ahead of the United States. But is it aware of its agricultural strengths and does it want to maintain them in the 21st century?

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Contents

Front page! : Editorial **Foundation** : Publication/Report 2023 - Recovery **Ukraine/Russia** : Tour/Europe - Charlemagne/Prize - Visits/Kyiv - Trade - Arms **Commission** : Forecasts - Gas **Parliament** : Budget - Women/Rights - Artificial Intelligence - Climate - Serbia/Kosovo - Youth/Prize **Diplomacy** : Ukraine/China - Indo-Pacific - Armenia/Azerbaijan - G7 **Court of Justice** : Aviation **Court of Auditors** : Banks **Germany** : Debate/EU **France** : Germany - Attractiveness **Greece** : Polls **Luxembourg** : UK **Portugal** : Visit/Strasbourg **Moldova** : EU/Support **Türkiya** : Elections **Culture** : Eurovision - Exhibition/Amsterdam - Exhibition/Aix - Exhibition/London - Exhibition/Copenhagen - Exhibition/Warsaw - Photo/Rome - Film/Cannes - Exhibition/Bonn - Turin/Book - Exhibition/Madrid - Architecture/Venice

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

Front page! :

What should Europeans be debating?



With one year to go before the European elections, it is important to engage in debates that are commensurate with what is at stake for Europe, such as the economy and innovation, or security and defence, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

Publication of the Schuman Report, the 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 leading actors, 30 original maps and a complete set of commented statistics. The book is available in French in print and digital format, and in English 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 10 May, Lithuania



received a first payment of €565 million. On 12 May, Estonia's €953 million plan was approved. On the same day, a Eurobarometer survey highlighted the positive opinion of European citizens on the Union's support to Member States. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to check out the amounts and schedules... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine/Russia :

Volodymyr Zelensky visits Rome, Berlin, Paris and London



On 13 May, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met in Rome with Pope Francis, Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. On 14 May, he met German President Franck-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Berlin, and then had dinner with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris. On 15 May, he was in London with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. At each stage, there was much talk of military support for Ukraine... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#) | [Other link](#) | [Other link](#) | [Other link](#)

Volodymyr Zelensky and the Ukrainian people receive the Charlemagne Prize



On 14 May, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the Ukrainian people received the Charlemagne Prize in Aachen for their commitment to European unification: "President Zelensky and the people of Ukraine are fighting for the values that this prize embodies: democracy and the rule of law, freedom of expression and the freedom to create one's own destiny... [Read more](#)

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Ursula von der Leyen and Ylva Johansson visit Kyiv



Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited Kyiv on 9 May where she met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. She congratulated him for organising Europe Day, which she described as "the beating heart of European values". She recalled the three priorities: the production and supply of ammunition to Ukraine, financial support to the country, and sanctions against Russia. On the same day, the international coalition for the creation of a tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine (Core Group) met in Kyiv. On 11 May, Commissioner Ylva Johansson and the Director of Europol were in Kyiv to meet the Ukrainian Minister of the Interior, Ihor Klymenko, and the Minister for the Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories, Iryna Vereshchuk... [Read more](#)

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Renewal of Trade Support to Ukraine



On 9 May, MEPs approved the renewal of the suspension of import duties, anti-dumping duties and restrictions on Ukrainian exports to the EU for one year. Once adopted by the Council, this suspension will apply until June 2024 to fruit and vegetables subject to the entry price system, as well as to agricultural products and processed agricultural products subject to tariff quotas... [Read more](#)

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Military Support to Ukraine



On 11 May, UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace announced that the UK has officially given the Ukrainians Storm Shadow long-range air-to-ground missiles. The UK is the first country to provide Ukraine with this type of missile, which is capable of reaching areas controlled by Russian forces more than 250 km away... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Spring Economic Forecasts



The Commission presented its spring economic forecasts on 15 May. It forecasts growth of 1% in 2023 and 1.7% in 2024 for the European Union, and 1.1% in 2023 and 1.6% in 2024 for the euro area. It estimates inflation at 6.1% in 2023 and 3.2% in 2024... [Read more](#)

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Launch of the first joint gas purchase

On 10 May, the Commission launched the first international tender for the joint purchase of gas by the Union, for a total volume of 11.6 billion cubic metres of gas to be delivered between June 2023 and May 2024. 77 companies responded on the same day. Suppliers have until 15 May to submit bids... [Read more](#)



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Parliament :

Discharge, recovery and own resources



On 10 May, MEPs approved the implementation of the 2021 budget for all institutions except the European Council, to which they called for a solution that respects Parliament's role in the discharge procedure. They adopted a resolution expressing concern about the lack of verification of how funds from the Recovery and Resilience Facility are being used, the impact of recovery borrowing costs on the 2024 EU budget and a resolution calling for new "own resources"... [Read more](#)

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Vote to join the Istanbul Convention



On 10 May, MEPs approved the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention on violence against women. The Council must now finalise the ratification of this text. MEPs call on those Member States that have not yet done so (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia) to ratify the Convention... [Read more](#)

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Negotiating mandate on artificial intelligence



The Internal Market and Civil Liberties Committees adopted on 11 May a draft negotiating mandate for a regulation on new EU rules on artificial intelligence systems. The regulation should introduce transparency and risk management rules and the draft negotiating mandate includes a ban on biometric surveillance, emotional recognition and predictive policing AI systems. It must now be approved at the June plenary to start negotiations with the Council... [Read more](#)

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Votes on product sustainability and methane emissions reduction



On 11 May, MEPs adopted their negotiating mandate for the directive on empowering consumers to make the transition to a greener future. On 9 May, they adopted their position on the text to reduce methane emissions in the energy sector. They asked the Commission to set a binding target for 2030 and an agreement on these texts must now be reached with the Council... [Read more](#)

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Resolutions on relations between Serbia and Kosovo



On 10 May, MEPs adopted two resolutions calling on Serbia and Kosovo to reach an agreement on mutual recognition and normalisation of relations, reiterating their support for Kosovo's application for EU membership and asking Serbia to align itself with EU sanctions against Russia... [Read more](#)

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Charlemagne Youth Prize



AILEM, a Belgian application that offers language courses for refugees, won the European Charlemagne Youth Prize 2023 on 12 May in Aachen. Two projects came in second place: the "Mobile Climate Museum" from Lithuania and the "European Correspondent" from the Netherlands. The prize is awarded jointly by the European Parliament and the International Charlemagne Prize Foundation... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Informal Meeting of Foreign Ministers



The foreign ministers met on 12-13 May in Stockholm to discuss strengthening the EU's response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. They also held a strategic discussion on the EU's relations with China... [Read more](#)

European Union-Indo-Pacific Forum



On 13 May, the EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Summit was held in Stockholm. They discussed the growing tensions in the area, creating pressure on trade, as well as the need for increased technology and foreign and security policy. Sweden and the EU also asserted the need to deepen partnerships and political dialogues in the region. The meeting was attended by participants from EU member states, members of the European Investment Bank, representatives of regional organisations and 26 countries from the Indo-Pacific region, excluding China... [Read more](#)

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Charles Michel meets the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan



The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, welcomed Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to Brussels on 14 May. They discussed the normalisation of relations, peace treaty talks and border demarcation, but also the unblocking of transport and economic links in the South Caucasus region and the rights and security of Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors



From 11 to 13 May, the G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors met in Japan. They reiterated their support for Ukraine and are committed to continuing to address urgent short-term financing needs, as well as to support neighbouring countries severely affected by the crisis. In addition, they committed to stability- and growth-oriented macroeconomic policies that support medium-term fiscal sustainability and price stability... [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

The General Court of the European Union annuls the approval of the recapitalisation of Lufthansa



In a judgment handed down on 10 May, the General Court of the European Union annulled a Commission decision approving the recapitalisation of Lufthansa by the German State during the Covid-19 pandemic, for a sum of €6 billion... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

Report on the supervision of bank credit risk



In a report published on 12 May, the EU Court of Auditors says that the European Central Bank (ECB) needs to strengthen its supervision of the credit risk of EU banks. It points out that the ECB has not imposed proportionately higher capital requirements on more exposed banks and has not tightened prudential measures enough for banks that allow weaknesses in their credit risk management to persist... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Address by Olaf Scholz to the European Parliament



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 9 May, affirming the need for an "enlarged and reformed" and "forward-looking" Union. He also recalled that the European Union should work on the reconstruction of Ukraine, the strengthening of its partnerships with the countries of the South, the fulfilment of its international commitments, enlargement towards the Western Balkans and the management of migration... [Read more](#)

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France :

Communication regarding Franco-German cooperation



On 10 May, French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna and her German counterpart Annalena Baerbock, who attended the French Council of Ministers, presented a communication on bilateral cooperation between the two countries. France and Germany say they share a common resolve to support Ukraine for as long as necessary and to make Europe a competitive industrial power... [Read more](#)

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Despite the shocks, France continues to lead in Europe



On 11 May, the financial auditing firm EY (Ernst & Young Global Limited) published its first 2023 barometer of France's attractiveness. It reveals that for the fourth consecutive year, France tops the European ranking of destinations for foreign investment. On the same day, the French President, Emmanuel Macron, presented his strategy to accelerate the reindustrialisation of France. On this occasion, he said he wanted "a European regulatory break" in environmental matters... [Read more](#)

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Greece :

Polling trends for the elections with one week to go



According to a poll published by Kapa Research on 12 May, the New Democracy party of outgoing Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis leads in voting intentions for the 21 May parliamentary elections with 31.6%, ahead of SYRIZA (25.8%), PASOK (8.5%), the Communist Party (6.6%), Greek Nationalist Solution (3.8%) and Yanis Varoufakis' MeRA25 (3.5%)... [Read more](#)

Luxembourg :

Jean Asselborn visits the UK



On 11 May, the Luxembourg Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jean Asselborn, paid a working visit to the United Kingdom. He was hosted by his British counterpart James Cleverly. They signed a joint declaration on bilateral cooperation between their two countries... [Read more](#)

Portugal :

President visits the European Parliament and the Council of Europe



In a speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 10 May, Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa presented economic recovery, enlargement, migration and energy as the main challenges facing the Union once Russia's war with Ukraine is over. He also met with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejcinovic Buric, to discuss the summit of heads of state and government taking place in Reykjavik on 16-17 May... [Read more](#)

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Moldova :

Interconnection agreement and macro-financial assistance



On 9 May, EU Transport Commissioner Adina Valean and Moldova's Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Lilia Dabija, signed an agreement associating Moldova to the European Interconnection Mechanism (EIM). On the same day, on 9 May, MEPs adopted an additional €145 million in support for Moldova, bringing the total amount of EU macro-financial assistance to €295 million. The Council now has to approve this assistance... [Read more](#)

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Türkiye :

Presidential and legislative elections



On 14 May, presidential and parliamentary elections took place in Turkey. According to provisional results, incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (AKP) obtained 49.42% of the votes cast, against 44.95% for the opposition coalition candidate (CHP) Kemal Kiliçdaroglu, and 5.2% for Sinan Ogan (ATA). A second round is therefore expected to be held on 28 May. In the parliamentary elections, the AKP won 266 seats out of 600, the Republican People's Party (CHP) 169, the Green Left Party (YSP) 62, the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) 50, the Good Party (IYI) 44, the New Social Party 5 and the Workers' Party 4... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

Eurovision Song Contest winners



On 14 May, Sweden's Loreen won the 67th Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool. Ukraine, which won in 2022, could not host the competition because of the war on its territory. This is the second time that Loreen

has won the competition, enabling Sweden to equal the record for the most wins per country, seven, with Ireland... [Read more](#)

"Van Gogh in Auvers" in Amsterdam



Until 3 September, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam is organising an exhibition entitled 'Van Gogh in Auvers', which covers the end of the painter's life when he settled in Auvers-sur-Oise, near Paris. During this period he was extremely productive... [Read more](#)

Max Ernst in Aix-en-Provence



Until 8 October, the Hôtel de Caumont in Aix-en-Provence is hosting an exhibition on Max Ernst (1891-1976). Through nearly 120 works, this exhibition retraces the steps of this artist associated with the Dada group and Surrealism and highlights his magical and liberated worlds... [Read more](#)

Exhibition of Saint Francis of Assisi in London



Until 30 July, the National Gallery in London is hosting an exhibition dedicated to Saint Francis of Assisi. The exhibition examines why this saint is a relevant figure for our time, particularly for his inclination to establish a dialogue of peace with the other major monotheistic religions... [Read more](#)

Niko Pirosmani Exhibition in Copenhagen



Until 20 August, the work of Niko Pirosmani (1862-1918) is being shown for the first time in Northern Europe at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Copenhagen. The Georgian artist is a mythical figure in the history of modernist art. The exhibition presents some fifty rarely exhibited works by Pirosmani, on loan from the National Museum of Georgia... [Read more](#)

Feminist worldbuilding and the moving image



Until 16 July, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw presents "No Master Territories: Feminist Worldmaking and the Moving Image". The exhibition is dedicated to films and videos about women, made by women. It includes works of great stylistic diversity... [Read more](#)

World Press Photo 2023 Exhibition in Rome



Until 4 June, the Palazzo dei Pubblici in Rome is hosting the World Press Photo 2023 exhibition. The exhibition features a preview of the finalists' photos for the prestigious International Photojournalism Award, which each year rewards a number of professional photographers for their best images. This year, Ukrainian photographer Evgeniy Maloletka won a prize for one of his photos taken on 9 March 2022 during the siege of Mariupol in Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Cannes International Film Festival



The 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival will be held from 16 to 27 May. This year's event will be presided over by the Swedish director Ruben Ostlund, twice winner of the festival's Palme d'Or. 21 films are in competition, 12 are not running, including Martin Scorsese's The New Adventures of Indiana Jones... [Read more](#)

Joséphine Baker in Bonn



Until 24 September, the Kunsthalle Bonn is devoting an exhibition to Josephine Baker, a world star who became one of the first black cultural icons of the 20th century. The exhibition looks at her many commitments, from the Resistance to her support for the civil rights movement. It shows how Josephine Baker turned the supposed stigma of her skin colour into her strength, using her fame as a weapon in her fight for freedom and against racism... [Read more](#)

Turin Book Fair



The 35th Turin Book Fair will be held from 18 to 22 May. This year, it will pay tribute to Sardinia and Albania by offering a programme linked to the Mediterranean culture they share. Many authors will be present during these 5 days... [Read more](#)

Picasso at the Casa Encendida



Until 7 January 2024, the Casa Encendida in Madrid is organising an exhibition to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Picasso's death. Entitled "Picasso: Untitled", the exhibition is original in that it consists of some fifty untitled works by Picasso. These works have been renamed for the occasion by 50 artists participating in the exhibition and offering singular views on Picasso's last artistic period... [Read more](#)

Venice Architecture Biennale



The 2023 edition of the Venice Architecture Biennale will take place from 20 May to 26 November. The Golden Lion will be awarded to Demas Nwoko for his lifetime achievement on 20 May. The 18th International Architecture Exhibition, entitled "The Laboratory of the Future", has as its themes decolonisation and decarbonisation... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



16 May 2023

Brussels

Economic and Financial Affairs Council Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council



16-17 May 2023

Reykjavik

Council of Europe Summits of Heads of State and Government



19-21 May 2023

Hiroshima

G7 Summit



21 May 2023

Greece

General Elections



22-23 May 2023

Brussels

Foreign Affairs Council Competitiveness Council

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