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The Letter in PDF format

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## New political equations in Europe one year before the European elections

Author: Pascale Joannin



Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, the European elections in spring 2024 (6-9 June) represent a political opportunity to assert and strengthen Europe's place and weight on the international stage. Traditional political balances are likely to be upset. With a year to go to the polls, Pascale Joannin analyses some of the initial trends in the changes taking place.

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### Foundation :

#### Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2023



Europe has changed... This is what is shown by the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2023", as it analyses the profound changes that have taken place in Europe, accelerated by the shock of the war in Ukraine. This 17th edition, published by Marie B., includes 19 contributions from prominent figures, including one by José Manuel Fernandes MEP (EPP, PT) on budgetary issues. It also includes 30 original maps and a full set of commented statistics. The book is available in paper and digital versions in French, and in digital format in English. Order your copy now!.. [Read more](#)

### Commission :

#### Draft budget for 2024



On 7 June, the Commission presented its draft budget for 2024, amounting to €189.3 billion in commitment appropriations. The main items are the common agricultural policy with €53.8 billion, regional development and cohesion with €47.9 billion, partnerships and interests in the world with €15.8 billion and research and innovation with €13.6 billion. The 2024 budget will be supplemented by €113 billion in subsidies under the NextGenerationEU instrument... [Read more](#)

### New measures regarding irregular migration



On 7 June, the Commission presented an action plan for the migratory routes of the Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic. This plan comprises 18 measures organised into 2 pillars: strengthening dialogue with partner countries and reinforcing operational measures concerning search and rescue, return procedures and the fluidity and speed of voluntary solidarity. The Commission has also proposed new measures against the abuse by criminal networks of commercial transport for irregular migration to the European Union... [Read more](#)

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### Proposal to set up an ethics body



On 8 June, the Commission proposed the creation of an interinstitutional ethics body. The aim of this body will be to set common standards for the ethical conduct of members of the European institutions and to create a formal mechanism for coordination and exchange of views on ethical requirements between the institutions... [Read more](#)

### Infringement procedure against Poland



On 8 June, the Commission launched infringement proceedings against Poland following the entry into force of a law setting up a State Committee to examine Russian influence on Poland's internal security between 2007 and 2022. The Commission considers that this law violates several EU legal principles, such as the principles of legality and non-retroactivity... [Read more](#)

## Council :

### Meeting of Home Affairs and Justice Ministers



On 8 June, Home Affairs ministers reached an agreement on the regulation on asylum and migration management and the regulation on asylum procedures. The former replaces the Dublin Regulation for determining which Member State is responsible for an asylum application. The second establishes a common procedure across the EU for dealing with applications for international protection. The Justice ministers, meeting on 9 June, adopted five general guidelines relating to the fight against organised crime, the protection of public debate, the fight to combat violence against women and the criminalisation of breaches of EU sanctions... [Read more](#)

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### Sanctions against 9 people responsible for the conviction of Vladimir Kara-Murza



On 5 June, the Council imposed sanctions on 9 individuals responsible for the conviction of Russian opposition figure Vladimir Kara-Murza. Those on the EU sanctions list are subject to an asset freeze, a ban on receiving funds from EU citizens or companies, and a ban on entering or transiting EU territory... [Read more](#)

### Agreement on intelligent transport systems and traffic data



The Council and Parliament have reached agreement on the rules for Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). A large amount of road and traffic data should be made available online. The agreement also provides for greater cooperation between Member States in the deployment of such services... [Read more](#)

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### Agreements on access to financial information and financial services contracts



On 6 June, the Council and Parliament reached agreement on draft European legislation to facilitate access to financial information by national authorities. They also reached a provisional agreement on the directive on distance contracts for financial services, which should facilitate consumer access to and information on digital financial services... [Read more](#)

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### Agreement on anti-coercive instrument

On 6 June, the Council and Parliament reached agreement on the anti-coercive instrument. The current version of the regulation on this instrument provides a legal framework enabling the EU to seek compensation from third countries for the damage



caused by their economic coercion. Parliament and the Council must now formally approve this regulation... [Read more](#)

## Diplomacy :

### WTO agreement on fisheries



On 8 June, the European Union formally accepted the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement on fisheries subsidies. 34 WTO members have so far accepted the agreement, which will come into force once two-thirds of the 164 members have ratified it. It includes a ban on public subsidies for unregulated fishing and provisions against the reflagging of fishing vessels to other jurisdictions... [Read more](#)

### Strengthening the Euro-Tunisian partnership



On 11 June, during a visit to Tunis alongside Giorgia Meloni and Mark Rutte, Ursula von der Leyen announced that the Commission was ready to mobilise €900 million in macro-financial aid for Tunisia, as well as a further €150 million from the European Investment Bank. She announced that the European Union would provide Tunisia with €100 million for border management and that a "Tunisia" window would be created in the Erasmus + programme supporting student exchanges, with a budget of €10 million... [Read more](#)

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### New agenda for the Latin American/Caribbean partnership



On 7 June, the High Representative and the Commission presented a new agenda for relations between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular, they propose to strengthen the dialogue between the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), as well as trade and investment... [Read more](#)

## Court of Justice :

### The Court confirms the infringement of the rule of law in Poland



In a judgment handed down on 5 June, the Court of Justice (CJEU) upheld the Commission's action following Poland's adoption on 20 December 2019 of a law amending the national rules on the organisation of ordinary courts, administrative courts and the Supreme Court. This judgment confirms that the CJEU has jurisdiction to review a Member State's compliance with values and principles such as the rule of law, effective judicial protection and the independence of the judiciary... [Read more](#)

## European Agencies :

### European Anti-Fraud Office Annual Report



The 2022 report from the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), published on 6 June, reveals that the body has recommended the recovery of €426.8 million. OLAF reports that it has closed more than 250 investigations and made 275 recommendations to European and national authorities... [Read more](#)

### Annual report on the health status of European bathing waters



On 9 June, the European Environment Agency (EEA) published its annual report on the health status of European bathing waters, covering 21,658 bathing sites in the 27 Member States, 119 in Albania and 196 in Switzerland. The Agency notes that the quality of European bathing water was high in 2022, with 85.7% of bathing sites classified as excellent and 95.9% meeting minimum water quality standards. The EEA also notes that the quality of coastal bathing water is generally better than that of rivers and lakes... [Read more](#)

## Germany :

### Olaf Scholz meets Giorgia Meloni in Rome

On 8 June, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz met his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni in Rome to discuss a number of European issues. The two leaders announced their



intention to sign an "action plan" before the end of the year to strengthen bilateral cooperation on foreign and defence policy, the environment, economic development, education and research policy, and immigration. They reasserted their support for Ukraine... [Read more](#)



**Bulgaria :**

**New government**



On 6 June, the Bulgarian Parliament approved the appointment of the new Prime Minister, Nikolay Denkov, and the composition of his government. The new government includes 4 women out of 19 ministers, and brings together the Continue the Change/Democratic Bulgaria coalition (centre) and GERB (centre-right). Nikolay Denkov will lead the government for 9 months, before handing over to former European Commissioner Mariya Gabriel (GERB), who led the negotiations to form the government. Priorities include integration into the Schengen area and the eurozone, as well as the fight against corruption and judicial reform... [Read more](#)



**France :**

**Commission authorises Vivendi's acquisition of Lagardère**



On 9 June, the European Commission cleared the acquisition of Lagardère by Vivendi, two major French multimedia groups, under the European Merger Regulation. Vivendi had to take a number of corrective measures, including selling off all its publishing activities (Editis) and Gala magazine... [Read more](#)



**Italy :**

**President Mattarella's visit to France**



On 7 June, Italian President Sergio Mattarella visited his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron. In addition to a political meeting, the two presidents inaugurated the "Naples in Paris" exhibition at the Louvre Museum, demonstrating the depth of bilateral cultural cooperation... [Read more](#)



**Death of Silvio Berlusconi**



Silvio Berlusconi died on 12 June at the age of 86. President of the Council of Ministers from 1994 to 1995, from 2001 to 2006 and from 2008 to 2011, the founder of the Forza Italia party had been a senator since 2022... [Read more](#)



**Slovakia :**

**Meeting of the leaders of the so-called "Bucharest Nine" group**



On 6 June, the heads of state of the "Bucharest Nine" and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg met in Bratislava to prepare for the Vilnius summit in July. This group includes Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The priorities for the NATO summit in Vilnius were discussed, including a multiannual aid programme for Ukraine, the strengthening of the deterrence and defence posture, and Sweden's application to join NATO... [Read more](#)



**Montenegro :**

**Legislative election results**



According to the non-final results of the early parliamentary elections held in Montenegro on 11 June, President Jakov Milatovic's "Europe Now" movement came first with almost 25.5% of the vote. Former president Milo Djukanovic's Democratic Socialist Party came second with around 23.8% of the vote... [Read more](#)



**Ukraine :**

**Agreement on the financing of the Connecting Europe Facility**

On 6 June in Lviv, Ukraine, the Commission signed an agreement associating Ukraine with the Connecting Europe Facility. Ukrainian projects of common interest in the fields





of transport, energy and digital technology will be eligible for EU funding, thereby promoting Ukraine's integration into the single market... [Read more](#)

### The Netherlands to return Scythian treasures to Ukraine



On 9 June, the Dutch Supreme Court ruled that the Allard-Pierson Archaeological Museum of the University of Amsterdam should return the "Scythian treasures" to Ukraine. This collection is claimed by the Ukrainian state and museums in the Russian-occupied territory of Crimea... [Read more](#)

### Council of Europe :

#### Ukraine joins the Observatory for History Teaching in Europe



After submitting its application on 12 May, Ukraine joined the Observatory for History Teaching in Europe (OHTÉ) as an observer state on 1 June... [Read more](#)

### Eurobarometer :

#### Survey one year before the European elections



A Eurobarometer survey published on 6 June, one year ahead of the European elections (6 to 9 June 2024), shows that people are more interested in voting than they were in 2018, a year before the 2019 elections. 56% of the public say they are interested, compared with 50% five years ago. 67% of those questioned say they would vote if the elections were held next week. In 2018, only 58% of respondents answered this question in the affirmative... [Read more](#)

### Studies/Reports :

#### 2023 Justice Scoreboard



On 8 June, the Commission published the 2023 scoreboard for justice in the European Union. It notes that there are still problems with the perception of the independence of the judiciary and that there is a need to improve the digitisation of justice systems in most Member States.

Progress is still needed in the areas of information on the fight against corruption and access to justice for the elderly, victims of discrimination and victims of gender-based and sexual violence... [Read more](#)

#### Report on Climate Change and Defence



On 8 June, the Commission and the European Defence Agency published a report analysing the links between climate change, energy and defence. The report points out that the defence sector is dependent on fossil fuels and that defence assets, capabilities and operations are threatened by climate hazards, as are civilian infrastructures and activities... [Read more](#)

### Eurostat :

#### GDP down in the euro zone



According to a Eurostat estimate published on 8 June, GDP fell by 0.1% in the eurozone in the first quarter of 2023. As it had already fallen in the 4th quarter of 2022, the conditions for a technical recession have been met. On the other hand, it increased by 0.1% in the European Union... [Read more](#)

### Economy :

#### OECD World Economic Outlook



On 7 June, the OECD estimated that the global economic outlook is improving, despite a weak recovery in growth. Global GDP growth is expected to be 2.7% in 2023 and 2.9% in 2024, weaker than in 2022.

The recovery remains fragile and risks appear to indicate a downward trend, despite the uncertainty surrounding developments in the war in Ukraine... [Read more](#)

## World Bank Economic Outlook



On 6 June, the World Bank published its World Economic Outlook. It raised its global growth forecast for 2023, noting that the world economy has proved more resilient than expected. Whereas in January it forecast growth of 1.7% for 2023, it estimates that real world GDP should increase by 2.1% this year. However, it warns that some developing countries are over-indebted... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

### The Rouen Armada



Until 18 June Rouen is hosting the Armada, the largest gathering of tall ships in the world. Several million visitors come to admire the prestigious boats and cheer on the crews. There are plenty of events on the programme, including free concerts, visits to the ships and fireworks over the Seine every evening... [Read more](#)

### Rosalba Carriera in Dresden



To mark the 350th anniversary of Rosalba Carriera's birth, the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden is devoting an exhibition until 24 September to the Venetian pastellist, who was one of the most famous portrait painters of her time. With 73 paintings, Dresden has the largest collection of this artist in the world. The exhibition features typical Venetian products from this period, such as glass, lace and fine fabrics... [Read more](#)

### Exhibition on Vilnius in Krakow



Until 3 September, the National Museum in Warsaw is presenting an exhibition on the Lithuanian capital, entitled "Wilno, Vilnius, Vilne 1918-1948, one city - many stories". Works by Vilnius artists preserved in Polish and Lithuanian cultural heritage institutions provide an insight into the artistic scene in the capital, considered to be an important centre of neoclassicism... [Read more](#)

### Animation Film Festival



The Annecy Animation Film Festival will be running until 17 June. For this 2023 edition, the spotlight is on Mexican animation, notably through the figure of Guillermo del Toro, who will be giving a lecture on cinema to festival-goers... [Read more](#)

### Liverpool Contemporary Art Biennial



The 12th Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art will be running until 17 September. The theme is "uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things": more than 30 international artists use the Zulu concept "uMoya", meaning spirit, air, climate or wind, to explore the ways in which people and objects manifest their power as they move through the world... [Read more](#)

### Ingres, the artist and his princes at Chantilly



Until 1 October, the Château de Chantilly is hosting an exhibition devoted to Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Some of the painter's greatest masterpieces, as well as a number of previously unpublished works, are on show to the public... [Read more](#)

### Picasso, El Greco and Cubism



To mark the fiftieth anniversary of Picasso's death, the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid is holding an exhibition entitled "Picasso, El Greco and Analytical Cubism" until 17 September. This exhibition looks at Picasso's work in the light of the influences that El Greco and Velazquez had on him... [Read more](#)

### Photography Exhibition in London



The development of photography changed the course of painting forever. Until 28 January 2024, the Tate Modern Museum in London is presenting an exhibition showing how painting and photography have influenced each other right up to the present day, leading to the emergence of new artistic movements... [Read more](#)



### 100th Verona Opera Festival



The 100th edition of the Verona Opera Festival will run until 9 September. There will be 50 evenings of performances, during which audiences will be able to enjoy some of the most successful operas in the festival's history, including Carmen by Georges Bizet and Aida by Giuseppe Verdi... [Read more](#)



### Agenda :



12-15 June 2023  
Strasbourg  
European Parliament Plenary Session



15 June 2023  
Luxembourg  
Eurogroup Meeting



16 June 2023  
Luxembourg  
Economic and Financial Affairs Council



19 June 2023  
Luxembourg  
Energy Council

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