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The Letter in PDF format

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Georgia: terrible dilemma for Europe

Author: Régis Genté



At the end of the year, the twenty-seven Member States of the European Union must decide whether or not to grant Georgia the status of candidate country. Giving it this status would reward and strengthen a government whose policy of breaking with the West is clearly set to continue. To refuse it would be to risk arousing popular anger with serious consequences. The country has not yet fulfilled the 12 priorities set by the European Union.

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Foundation :

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 taken place in Europe, accelerated by the shock of the war in Ukraine. This 17th edition, published by Marie B., includes 19 contributions from leading figures, including one by Nicolas Goetzmann on the ECB in the service of European power and strategic autonomy. 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.....
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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 16 June, the Commission made an initial payment of €20.2 million to Luxembourg and the Council adopted the amendment to Estonia's recovery plan, including a chapter on REPowerEU. The

Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to learn about the amounts, schedules..... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Review of the sustainability of fishing in the Union



On 14 June, the Commission published a communication on sustainable fisheries. While stocks are less overexploited than in the early 2000s, it notes that fishing in the Mediterranean, Black and Baltic Seas remains too intensive and requires greater efforts, particularly in terms of combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The North-East Atlantic shows better results in terms of sustainable fishing... [Read more](#)

Measures regarding sustainable finance



On 13 June, the Commission presented measures on sustainable finance, including new criteria for the taxonomy and a regulation on environmental, social and governance (ESG) rating providers. Measures are also planned to facilitate the implementation of European rules on corporate sustainability and the financing of the transition. The criteria for the taxonomy will apply from 1 January 2024 and the regulation on ESG rating providers must now be negotiated with the Parliament and the Council... [Read more](#)

Notification to Google of infringements of European competition rules



On 14 June, the Commission found that Google had infringed the competition rules in the advertising technology sector. After a preliminary investigation, it concluded that Google holds a dominant position in this sector and is abusing this position. Commission Vice-President Margrethe Vestager warned that if the investigation confirmed this preliminary conclusion, Google could be forced to separate its activities... [Read more](#)

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Parliament :

Cypriot President's Speech



In a speech to MEPs in Strasbourg on 13 June, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides said that the European Union should be "strategically autonomous in areas such as security, energy and health". He also reiterated his support for Ukraine and said that the division of Cyprus was a European problem requiring European solutions, and that the European Union should become more involved in the peaceful reunification of Cyprus "using all the political and economic instruments and tools" at its disposal... [Read more](#)

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Kosovar President's Speech



The President of Kosovo, Vjosa Osmani, told MEPs on 14 June that Kosovo was looking towards "a European future". She said that the Serbs living in Kosovo were at home there and that the country was working to ensure that they felt "protected, included, equal and heard". She also called for "strong European leadership" and "a proactive, credible and simple roadmap" for the future of the Western Balkans... [Read more](#)

Adoption of the regulation on batteries



On 14 June, MEPs adopted a regulation on the design, production and waste management of batteries. The text includes a carbon footprint declaration and label for electric vehicle batteries, a digital passport for batteries over 2kWh, and design rules to make it easier to remove and repair all batteries. The regulation must now be adopted by the Council... [Read more](#)

Vote on the regulation of artificial intelligence



On 14 June, MEPs adopted a negotiating mandate on the draft harmonised rules for artificial intelligence (AI). The text establishes obligations and prohibitions for suppliers of artificial intelligence systems and includes these systems in the classification of high-risk applications. An agreement must now be reached with the Council to define the final form of the text... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers



On 16 June, the Ministers for the Economy and Finance debated VAT in the digital age and the reform of economic governance. They adopted their recommendations by country in the context of the European Semester, and the amended plan for Estonia's recovery and resilience. They approved the extension of the deadline for the Commission to finance fire-fighting planes and helicopters. They discussed the economic and financial impact of the war in Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Employment, Social Affairs and Healthcare Ministers



On 12 June, the employment ministers set out their guidelines on the proposed directive on working conditions for platform workers, on two directives on the operation of equality bodies, and on new occupational exposure limits for certain toxic products. On 13 June, the health ministers adopted a recommendation to step up action against antimicrobial resistance... [Read more](#)

The Eurogroup is 25 years old



On 15 June, the eurozone finance ministers took stock of progress on the digital euro project. They also adopted their 2024 work programme and discussed post-programme surveillance of Greece, Cyprus, Ireland, Portugal and Spain. The IMF Managing Director also presented her institution's latest report on the eurozone economy... [Read more](#)

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Informal Meeting of Agriculture Ministers



Agriculture ministers discussed the contribution of agriculture and forestry to sustainable development from 11 to 13 June. In particular, they discussed the growth of the bioeconomy as a means of involving both sectors in the green transition... [Read more](#)

ECB :

Rates Increase



On 15 June, the European Central Bank (ECB) announced that it would raise its key interest rates by a quarter point from 21 June. ECB President Christine Lagarde noted that inflation was likely to remain "too high for too long" and stated that the ECB would keep rates at sufficiently restrictive levels if necessary... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Economic Partnership Agreement with Kenya



On 19 June, the European Commission and Kenya announced the conclusion of negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement. This agreement, designed to strengthen bilateral trade relations, is to include provisions on climate protection, the environment and labour law... [Read more](#)

Support to Syria



On 14 and 15 June, the European Union held its seventh conference on the future of Syria and the countries of the region. The meeting brought together representatives from 57 countries, including the 27 Member States, and more than 30 international organisations, including the United Nations. The conference mobilised international aid, with international commitments of almost €5.6 billion for 2023 and subsequent years... [Read more](#)

Visit by Ursula von der Leyen to Latin America



The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, visited several Latin American countries from 12 to 15 June to discuss the European Union's political, economic and trade partnerships with South America... [Read more](#)

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An agreement in critical minerals with the USA



On 14 June, the Commission presented its negotiating position for an agreement on critical minerals with the United States. Such an agreement should enable the European Union and the United States to trade more freely, strengthen their supply chains and make the sector more sustainable. Once the Council has taken a decision, negotiations can begin... [Read more](#)

Cybersecurity :

5G networks cybersecurity



On 15 June, the Member States, with the support of the European Commission and ENISA, the cybersecurity agency, published their second report on the implementation of 5G cybersecurity. The Commission expressed its concern about the risks to EU security posed by certain suppliers of mobile network communications equipment, justified the Member States' decisions to exclude the Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE from 5G networks, and announced that it would do the same... [Read more](#)

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Recommendation against the use of spyware



On 15 June, MEPs adopted the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry into the use of Pegasus and other spyware surveillance software. They call for such software to be used only in Member States where investigations into alleged abuses have taken place, where national legislation complies with the recommendations of the Venice Commission and the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union, and where exports are controlled in accordance with EU standards... [Read more](#)

Digital interference involving Russia



On 13 June, the French government announced that it had detected a campaign of information manipulation targeting France and involving Russian or Russian-affiliated state entities. The campaign was based around fake web pages and social network accounts impersonating national media and government websites. The threat was detected in advance by the authorities, who put in place preventive and protective measures... [Read more](#)

Digital :

Adoption of the package on the exchange of electronic evidence



On 13 June, MEPs adopted the Regulation on electronic evidence and the Directive on legal representatives, which should facilitate the exchange of electronic evidence in cross-border criminal investigations. The authorities will be able to ask service providers, such as telecommunications companies, in other Member States to provide them with evidence. Provision is made for the possibility of rejecting the request if there are concerns about guaranteeing fundamental rights... [Read more](#)

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Agreement on the digitisation of visas



On 13 June, Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the Regulation on the digitisation of visas. This new legislation allows applicants to apply for a visa online and digitises the visa itself. The agreement still has to be formally adopted by the two co-legislators... [Read more](#)

Survey of citizens and digital technologies



According to a Eurobarometer survey published on 14 June, four out of five Europeans believe that digital technologies are playing an increasingly important role in their daily lives, and that the European Union should do more to ensure a successful digital transformation. Only half of those surveyed believe that digital rights and principles are well protected, and two-thirds believe that digital technologies will play an important role in the fight against climate change... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

Special report on the financing of post-COVID recovery



On 12 June, the French Court of Auditors published a report on the financing of the post-Covid recovery. It notes that the €800 billion NextGenerationEU recovery plan will be financed entirely by debt in the form of European bonds, and calls on the Commission to improve the assessment and reporting of its debt management so that NextGenerationEU complies with international "best practice"... [Read more](#)



European Agencies :

Increase in illegal migration towards the Union via the Central Mediterranean



In a press release published on 16 June, Frontex notes that half of irregular migration to the European Union takes place via the central Mediterranean, with more than 50,300 illegal crossings reported between January and May 2023 by national authorities. Two days after the shipwreck off Pylos, the European border and coastguard agency notes that in the first five months of the year, the number of detections of illegal crossings via the central Mediterranean increased by 160% compared to the same period in 2022, the highest increase since 2017... [Read more](#)



Report on the situation and trends in terrorism



On 14 June, Europol published its annual report on the situation and trends in terrorism, in which the agency notes that the risk of terrorist attacks remains high. The agency also warns that the war in Ukraine could have an impact on terrorism, particularly since disinformation campaigns organised by pro-Russian groups could polarise opinion and fuel terrorist as well as extremist violence... [Read more](#)



Germany :

National security strategy



On 14 June, the German government unveiled the first national security strategy in the country's history. It sets out how it intends to deal with a range of external and internal threats, and plans to invest more than 2% of GDP in the defence budget by 2024, compared with 1.5% at present... [Read more](#)



Spain :

Priorities of the Spanish Presidency of the Council



On 15 June, the President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sanchez, presented the priorities of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which begins on 1 July. These priorities can be broken down into 4 main areas: reindustrialising and guaranteeing Europe's strategic autonomy; maintaining efforts in the field of ecological and environmental transition; achieving greater social and economic justice; and strengthening European unity in the face of growing geopolitical tensions... [Read more](#)



France :

Meeting of the Weimar Triangle



On 12 June, French President Emmanuel Macron met his Polish counterpart, Andrzej Duda, and the German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, as part of the Weimar triangle. The aim of the meeting was to coordinate the military aid and security guarantees that the Europeans want to give Ukraine, ahead of the European Council on 29 and 30 June and the Nato summit in Vilnius on 11 and 12 July. The three leaders reaffirmed their political, financial, military and humanitarian support for Ukraine, and expressed the hope that the current counter-offensive would be victorious... [Read more](#)



Finland :

New government coalition



On 15 June, the future Prime Minister, Petteri Orpo, signed a government coalition agreement. His National Coalition Party (KOK) has joined forces with the far-right True Finns (PS), who came second in the 2 April general election, the Swedish People's Party (RKP) and the Christian Democrats (KD). Between them, they hold 108 of the 200 seats in Parliament. Following lengthy negotiations, the programme of the future government

was published on 16 June. The main areas of focus are clean energy, foreign and security policy and the European Union... [Read more](#)

Greece :

Polls just one week before the elections



With one week to go before the new Greek general elections on 25 June, an average of the polls indicates that New Democracy (ND), the party of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, will obtain 39% of the vote, ahead of Syriza (radical left) with 18-20%. The crucial issue in this election is for the leading party to pass the 40% threshold that guarantees a stable majority... [Read more](#)

Romania :

New government



On 12 June, the Romanian Prime Minister, Nicolae Ciuca, announced his resignation under an agreement reached by the members of the ruling coalition, which provided for a change of government after 18 months. On 13 June, President Klaus Iohannis appointed Marcel Ciolacu to form a new government. On 15 June, the Romanian Parliament voted 290 to 95 in favour of the government, which includes 5 women out of 20 ministers... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine :

Conclusion of two agreements in the education sector



On 15 June, Magaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for promoting the European way of life, signed two cooperation agreements with Ukraine. The first concerns cooperation in the field of education and should, in particular, facilitate the mutual recognition of university qualifications. The second aims to strengthen cooperation in the field of health. In particular, it covers the areas of mental health and access to care, as well as meeting the health needs of refugees... [Read more](#)

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Agreement for 100 million € in additional loans



On 13 June, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) reached an agreement to release a guarantee enabling the EIB to grant €100 million in new loans to Ukraine for the country's reconstruction. This guarantee will draw on the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+)... [Read more](#)

Meeting of NATO Defence Ministers



NATO defence ministers met on 15 and 16 June to prepare for the Vilnius summit in July. The ministers pledged new contributions of €500 million to Ukraine. The Alliance is preparing a multi-year plan with substantial financial resources, as well as the creation of a NATO-Ukraine Council. The ministers discussed the new regional defence plans to be adopted in Vilnius, and approved a new rotation model for air and missile defence... [Read more](#)

OECD Support Programme for Ukraine



The OECD and the Ukrainian government have launched a four-year country programme that will complement Ukraine's reform, recovery and reconstruction programme. This programme will help Ukraine make progress in its bid to join the OECD and the European Union. The aim is to strengthen the country's institutions and governance, continue the fight against corruption and attract private sector investment... [Read more](#)

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Volodymyr Zelensky hosts the IAEA and addresses the Swiss Parliament



On 13 June, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi. He called for a rapid response from the international community following the explosion of the dam at the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station, which represents a major threat to the safety of the Zaporizhia nuclear power station. On 15 June, he addressed the Swiss Federal Assembly and

called on the country's authorities to allow Swiss-made weapons belonging to allies to be exported to Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

GRETA Annual Report



On 14 June, the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) published its 2022 annual report, taking stock of its activities during the year. It devotes a chapter to managing the risks of human trafficking linked to the war in Ukraine and presents several measures to minimise them. GRETA shows that improvements have been made in responding to human trafficking and encourages States to continue their action by strengthening their national strategies, resources and partnerships... [Read more](#)

Report on Corruption in Hungary



The Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) has asked Hungary to take measures to combat corruption within the government and among members of the national police force. GRECO notes that senior officials in the executive branch are not subject to any code of ethics or rules on lobbying. It notes a lack of transparency regarding the composition of ministerial cabinets as well as the role and remuneration of their members... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on Drugs in Europe



On 16 June, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction published its annual Trends and Developments report. The report highlights the fact that the number, availability and production of substances circulating on the European market continue to increase. New psychoactive substances also continue to emerge... [Read more](#)

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SIPRI Annual Report



On 12 June, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) published its annual report on the state of armaments, disarmament and international security. One of the key observations of the 2023 edition is that as countries' plans for the long-term modernisation and expansion of their armed forces progress, the number of operational nuclear weapons has begun to increase... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

Basquiat at the Beyeler Foundation



Until 27 August, the Fondation Beyeler in Riehen (Switzerland) is holding an exhibition devoted to Basquiat's work. This exhibition is exceptional in that it brings together for the first time the artist's 8 "Modena paintings", from private collections. The Modena cycle marks the beginning of Basquiat's career, and is a major milestone in his work... [Read more](#)

Intermezzo, reopening of the contemporary art museum 44Møen



The 44Møen international exhibition space reopened its doors on 17 June after a year's renovation. To mark the occasion, a major exhibition in collaboration with the Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA) is being presented. The exhibition, entitled Intermezzo, is a space for reflection and dialogue on a changing Europe, and is accompanied by a programme of music, performances and lectures until 10 September... [Read more](#)

Chorégies d'Orange



The Chorégies d'Orange festival runs until 24 July, attracting over 50,000 spectators from all over the world each year to enjoy performances by the great names in opera. Around fifteen concerts and shows are scheduled at the Théâtre Antique d'Orange... [Read more](#)

Music Festival



The 41st Fête de la Musique takes place on 21 June. This popular event is free and open to all musicians, amateurs of all levels and professionals alike. It celebrates living music and showcases the breadth and diversity of musical practices and all musical genres... [Read more](#)

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Reopening of the National Portrait Gallery



After a three-year closure for renovation, the National Portrait Gallery in London reopens its doors to visitors on 22 June. To mark the occasion, the museum is planning new exhibitions, including pioneering women photographers such as Yevonde Middleton (until 15 October) and previously unseen portraits of The Beatles by Paul McCartney (until 1 October)... [Read more](#)

The ages of Picasso in Málaga



An exhibition in honour of the Cubist painter is being held at Picasso's birthplace in Malaga until 1 October. Organised to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the artist's death, the exhibition aims to show the chronological development of his style and his life. Hence the title "The ages of Pablo"... [Read more](#)

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Exhibition on the Viennese Secession in Berlin



Until 22 October, the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin is hosting an exhibition devoted to the Viennese Secession, an artistic movement that flourished in Austria, and more specifically in Vienna, between 1898 and 1910. Through a selection of over 200 paintings and sculptures by international artists, coupled with a presentation of some 50 works by the Viennese painter Gustav Klimt, the exhibition looks back at this decade of break with traditional art codes... [Read more](#)

Venus in Music in Rome



The second Venus in Music festival, organised by the Colosseum archaeological park in Rome, takes place from 21 to 24 June. To mark the occasion, the temple of Venus and Rome is hosting a panel of international artists for 4 nights of festivities... [Read more](#)

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Festival in Krakow



The 7th FestivALT festival of Jewish art, featuring contemporary art and performances, is being held in Krakow until 2 July. The festival is supported by the European Union's MultiMemo programme for the preservation of memory... [Read more](#)

St John's Day



In many European countries, Saint John's Day is celebrated on 23 or 24 June. This festival, traditionally accompanied by huge bonfires, is held to mark the summer solstice... [Read more](#)

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