

Tuesday 4th July 2023

issue 1030

The Letter in PDF format

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"Music is the very essence of European Cultural Identity"

Author: Jorge Chaminé



It is vital to build a European narrative, and to show that the European idea is not just the brainchild of technocrats, says musician and baritone Jorge Chaminé, founder and president of the European Music Centre.

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Front page! :

France-Germany: recapturing a sense of history



At a time when the accumulation of differences between the two countries has never been so apparent, France and Germany need to regain trust and engage in in-depth dialogue, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Should Europe fear the break-up of Russia?



Although there are still many uncertainties, we can no longer rule out the break-up of the Russian Federation as a result of the failed aggression in Ukraine. Yet Europe need not fear these possible upheavals, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani. It simply needs to prepare for them with all the means at its disposal... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Spaniards go to the ballot box on 23 July to renew both chambers of parliament

The People's Party (PP) led by Alberto Nunez Feijoo is the favourite in the early parliamentary elections on 23 July. It is credited with 32.1% of voting intentions ahead of the Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) of outgoing Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez



(29%). Vox, a right-wing populist party, would obtain 13.9% and Sumar (S) (Unite), a coalition of radical left-wing parties, 13.6%. The rest of the votes would go to the regional parties, of which there are many in Spain. These parties could deprive the PP or the PSOE of a majority. In the last two parliamentary elections (2015 and 2019), the Spanish people had to go back to vote a few months after the first elections, which failed to produce a majority. Will the scenario be the same in 2023?.. [Read more](#)

Foundation :

Publication of the Schuman Report, the State of the Union 2023



Europe has changed... These are the findings of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2023", which 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 articles by leading figures, including one by Odile Renaud-Basso on the European economic model in the face of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. 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](#)

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 26 and 27 June, the Commission gave a positive assessment of the requests from Malta, France and Slovakia to amend their plans to include a REPowerEU chapter. The Commission gave a positive preliminary assessment to Romania's second payment request for €3.22 billion. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to check out the amounts and schedules... [Read more](#)

European Council :

Conclusions on Ukraine, the economy and migration



The 27 Heads of State and Government, meeting in Brussels on 29 and 30 June, repeated their support for Ukraine and asked the Commission to study the possibility of using seized Russian assets to finance reconstruction. They discussed economic and industrial policy and called on the institutions to rapidly adopt measures for competitiveness and resilience. In conclusions on migration published separately due to opposition from Hungarian and Polish leaders, the European Council reiterated its determination to break the business model of smugglers and to reach an agreement on the management of asylum seekers... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

New projects for the European Defence Fund



On 26 June, the Commission announced that 41 new joint research and development projects will receive €832 million from the European Defence Fund. These include the E-NACSOS project for naval air and missile defence, the REACTII project for the management of electronic warfare resources in the air sector and the ODIN'S EYE II project for European space capabilities... [Read more](#)

Digital Euro Project



On 28 June, the Commission presented its plans for a digital euro, which would be used by citizens and businesses to make payments while ensuring that cash remains accessible... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Environment Committee rejects nature restoration project



On 27 June, the European Parliament's Environment Committee rejected the draft regulation on nature restoration, which will be submitted to the next plenary session. On the same day, the committee adopted its position on the revision of the Water Framework Directive, the Groundwater Directive and the Environmental Quality Standards Directive. It also

adopted a report on the revision of the air quality directives. In particular, MEPs want to harmonise air quality indices... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Meeting of Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers



On 26 June, the agriculture and fisheries ministers discussed the state of progress of the Common Fisheries Policy. They adopted conclusions on making the fisheries sector more competitive, exchanged views on the use of plant protection products and defined their position on the regulation establishing a management plan for bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. They adopted the sustainable fisheries partnership agreement with Madagascar for the period 2023-2027. On 27 June, they discussed the state of agri-food trade... [Read more](#)

Meeting of European Affairs Ministers



The Ministers for European Affairs discussed the work to revise the rules governing the election of Members of the European Parliament. They adopted the Council's work programme for the period from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2024. Finally, they approved the country-by-country recommendations for the European Semester, as well as the free trade agreement between the European Union and New Zealand, which can now be formally signed... [Read more](#)

Position regarding legislation on critical raw materials



On 30 June, the Member States set out their negotiating position on the draft legislation on critical raw materials. In particular, they are proposing to increase transformation and recycling targets and to update the list of materials concerned more regularly. Negotiations on the final version of the draft will begin with the Parliament once it has defined its position... [Read more](#)

Position on the classification and labelling of substances



On 30 June, the Council adopted its position on the draft revision of the regulation on the classification, labelling and packaging of substances. It wants to clarify the labelling rules and avoid increasing the burden on businesses... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

High Level Economic Dialogue with Japan



On 27 June, the European Union and Japan held their third high-level economic dialogue on the issue of economic security and the strengthening of their strategic cooperation, particularly with regard to the resilience of supply chains... [Read more](#)

Digital Partnership Council with South Korea



The European Union and the Republic of Korea held their first Digital Partnership Council in Seoul on 30 June. The two sides pledged to cooperate on technologies highlighted in the European economic security strategy, i.e. semiconductors, high-performance computing and quantum technologies, 5G and the next generations of mobile networks, the platform economy, AI and cyber security... [Read more](#)

Cooperation Council with Tajikistan



The 10th meeting of the Cooperation Council between the European Union and Tajikistan saw the start of negotiations on a new enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement on 26 June. The two parties discussed trade, energy supply, governance, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and the strengthening of civil society... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

Report on the Union's Climate Goals by 2030



On 27 June, the European Court of Auditors published a report on the targets set to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It notes that there is little evidence that companies' actions will be sufficient to achieve the target of a 55% reduction by 2030. It notes that the European Union would probably not have achieved its 2020 energy efficiency target had it not been for the decrease in energy consumption caused by the 2009 financial crisis and then the COVID-19 pandemic... [Read more](#)



ECB :

Forum on central banking activities



The European Central Bank held its annual forum in Sintra, Portugal, from 26 to 28 June. In her opening speech, President Christine Lagarde said it was too early to predict an end to interest rate hikes, given the uncertainties surrounding inflation... [Read more](#)



European Agencies :

Launch of the European telescope Euclid



The European space telescope Euclid was launched on 1 July. Its mission is to discover the nature of two components of our Universe, dark matter and dark energy... [Read more](#)



Dismantling of the encrypted communications network, EncroChat



On 27 June, Europol and Eurojust announced that the infiltration and dismantling of the EncroChat encrypted communications network had led to the arrest of 6,658 people, including 197 particularly wanted criminals, as well as the seizure of €900 million in criminal funds, more than 260 tonnes of drugs and hundreds of weapons, vehicles and properties... [Read more](#)



New Commander for Eurocorps



On 29 June, General Jaroslaw Gromadzinski took command of the Eurocorps in Strasbourg, the first Pole to hold this position... [Read more](#)



Trilogues :

Agreement on joint defence purchases



On 27 June, the Council and Parliament reached a provisional agreement on the instrument for strengthening the European defence industry through joint procurement (EDIRPA). The aim of this regulation is to pool requests from Member States wishing to make joint purchases of defence products. Joint purchases will be partly reimbursed by the EU budget. The agreement has yet to be formally adopted... [Read more](#)



Agreement on data legislation



On 27 June, the Council and Parliament reached an agreement that aims to make personal data more accessible, to make the market more competitive and to share more of the value produced by the sector. They clarified the scope of the new legislation and included measures to prevent the abuse of contractual imbalances in data-sharing contracts... [Read more](#)



Agreement on the Sustainability of Agriculture



On 29 June, the Council and Parliament reached an agreement on the regulation concerning a data network on agricultural sustainability. The aim of this regulation is to collect additional data to monitor the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Green Pact. It complements the collection of agricultural data already in place under the regulation on the Farm Sustainability Data Network... [Read more](#)



Agreement on the reform of banking rules and capital market union



On 27 June, the Council and Parliament reached an agreement on the reform of banking rules under the Basel III accords. The negotiators reached agreement on how the "capital floor" will be implemented. On 29 June, they reached a provisional agreement on the revision of the Markets in Financial Instruments Regulation (MiFIR) and the Second Directive on Markets in Financial Instruments (MiFID II)... [Read more](#)

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Agreement on European Digital Identity



On 29 June, the Council and Parliament reached a provisional agreement on Europe's digital identity. A personal digital wallet accessible via mobile phone will be created for European citizens. The provisional agreement specifies the concept of the electronic wallet and its interaction with national electronic identification methods. It must now be formally adopted by the two co-legislators... [Read more](#)

Agreement on the protection of workers against asbestos



On 27 June, Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the revision of the directive on asbestos at work. Exposure limit values will be reduced, and employers will be required to identify materials that may contain asbestos... [Read more](#)

Bulgaria :

Bulgarian Iliana Ivanova appointed Commissioner



On 28 June, Bulgarian Iliana Ivanova, a member of the European Court of Auditors, was chosen to become Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth. If her nomination is approved by the Council and Parliament, she will succeed Mariya Gabriel... [Read more](#)

UK :

Court rules against expulsions of migrants to Rwanda



On 29 June, the British courts ruled that the plan to deport migrants who had arrived in the UK illegally to Rwanda was unlawful. The Court of Appeal ruled that Rwanda could not be considered a safe third country, and identified "a real risk that those sent to Rwanda would be returned to their country of origin"... [Read more](#)

Bosnia-Herzegovina :

Two controversial Serbian laws annulled



The international High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Christian Schmidt, used his powers on 1 July to annul controversial laws adopted by the Bosnian Serb entity, which refuses to recognise the decisions of the country's Constitutional Court... [Read more](#)

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Iceland :

Meeting of Nordic Countries and Canada in Iceland



On 25 and 26 June, the prime ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Åland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Canada met in Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland. The aim was to discuss how to respond to the various security threats posed by the war in Ukraine. The participants pledged to strengthen security and defence cooperation in their respective regions. They also stressed the need to cooperate in the face of global challenges, notably climate change... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Visit by Pedro Sanchez



The President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sanchez, met the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in Kyiv on 1 July, on the first day of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Pedro Sanchez reiterated his support for Ukraine in the face of the Russian invasion, and for Ukraine's bid to join the European Union... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of the Lublin Group



On 28 June, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met his Polish and Lithuanian counterparts, Andrzej Duda and Gitana Nausėdė, in Kyiv, as part of the "Lublin Triangle". Discussions focused on preparations for the NATO summit on 11 and 12 July in Vilnius, Ukraine's integration into the European Union, and preparations for the World Peace Summit...

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Meeting on the damage caused by Russia in Ukraine



On 27 June, the Conference of Participants in the Register of Damage Caused by Russia's Aggression against Ukraine held its inaugural meeting, with representatives from 43 countries. As the first step towards an international compensation mechanism for victims of the conflict, this Register will be used to record evidence and claims for compensation for damage, loss or injury caused to the Ukrainian State and to all persons concerned by internationally wrongful acts committed by Russia in Ukraine or against Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on infrastructure security



The task force on infrastructure resilience and protection published its final report on 29 June. It notes the vulnerability of energy and digital infrastructures, in particular underground and undersea fibre optic cables, and transport infrastructures to cyber attacks, as well as threats to space. It makes a number of recommendations on strengthening and structuring dialogue on resilience and military mobility, on synergies between allies and on promoting best practice, particularly in threat assessment and monitoring... [Read more](#)

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World Bank report on the exploitation of natural resources



On 27 June, the World Bank published a report on sustainable development, which concludes that if countries used their natural resources more efficiently, the world could meet the challenges of climate change, economic productivity, food and water security and public health... [Read more](#)

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Global Peace Index 2023



On 28 June, the Institute for Economics and Peace published the 17th edition of its Global Peace Index, which measures the scale of conflicts around the world. It shows that 2022 was the year with the highest number of conflict-related deaths since the beginning of the century. The Ethiopian conflict claimed the most victims in 2022. In Ukraine, 65% of men aged between 20 and 24 fled the country or died in the conflict. In addition, almost 79 countries experienced an increase in the level of conflict, and the global economic impact of this rise in violence is estimated to have increased by 17% in 2022, or an additional \$1,000 billion... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Decrease in inflation



According to a Eurostat estimate published on 30 June, annual inflation in the eurozone was 5.5% in June, compared with 6.1% in May. This is the lowest inflation rate since January 2022... [Read more](#)

Unemployment rate declines



In May, the unemployment rate in the European Union was 5.9%, down 0.1% on April. In the eurozone, it was 6.5%, according to a Eurostat estimate published on 30 June... [Read more](#)

Publications :

Robert Schuman, a biography of personal accounts



Manfred Kontz has published "Robert Schumann, Eine Biografie in Zeitzeugenberichten" (Robert Schuman, Une biographie en témoignages) in German, published by Brill | Schöningh. In this book, the author pays tribute to the "Father of Europe", committed to Franco-German reconciliation and to a European future free of war, hatred and poverty... [Read more](#)

Culture :

LUX Audience Award 2023



The European Audience Film Prize (or LUX Prize) was awarded on 27 June to the film "Close" by Belgian director Lukas Dhont, at a ceremony held in the hemicycle of the European Parliament in Brussels... [Read more](#)

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Destins de Verdun



Until 28 April 2024, the Verdun Memorial in Fleury-devant-Douaumont is hosting the "Destins de Verdun" exhibition. The latter uses sound and text to tell the stories of twenty people who were directly or indirectly involved in the Battle of Verdun. To emphasise the importance of family memory, descendants of French and German soldiers also tell the story of their ancestors... [Read more](#)

Vivian Suter in Bergamo



Until 24 September, the Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Bergamo, Italy's capital of culture, is devoting an exhibition to Vivian Suter. Featuring almost 200 paintings, the exhibition seeks to convey the link between Vivian Suter's work and the environment, and to illustrate the development of her work... [Read more](#)

Exhibition on Camille Claudel in Warsaw



Until 10 September, the National Museum in Warsaw is presenting the exhibition "Sans Corsets - Camille Claudel and the Polish sculptresses of the 19th century". This exhibition aims to revive the memory of forgotten women artists and give them their rightful place in the history of art. It is also the first time that the works of Camille Claudel (1864-1943) have been shown in Poland... [Read more](#)

Women artists in Dublin



To mark its bicentenary, the Royal Hibernian Academy, in collaboration with the National Gallery of Ireland, is organising a major exhibition until 22 October dedicated to the women artists exhibited by the two museums over the last 100 years... [Read more](#)

African Photography in London



Until 14 January 2024, London's Tate Modern is hosting an exhibition devoted to contemporary African photography. The exhibition explores how these artists reinterpret the cultural, historical and geographical diversity of the continent, using photography to bring the past and present together in powerful and transformative ways... [Read more](#)

Theatre Festival Almagro



The 46th edition of the Almagro International Classical Theatre Festival is being held in Spain until 23 July. This cultural event, which attracts more than 60,000 spectators, is taking place at various venues around the city. The programme is rounded off by workshops and meetings throughout the festival... [Read more](#)

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Music festival in Rheingau

The Rheingau Music Festival, one of Germany's most renowned classical music festivals, is being held in Wiesbaden until 2 September. Over a hundred concerts of classical and pop music, theatre, literature and dance are scheduled... [Read more](#)

75th anniversary of the Festival of Aix-en-Provence



The 75th Festival d'Aix en Provence is running until 24 July. The highlight will be George Benjamin's new one-act opera *Picture a Day Like This*. The Festival is presenting a new work by Philip Venables and Ted Huffman: *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions*. This edition also pays tribute to the composer Betsy Jolas with several performances of her works... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



10 July 2023
Brussels
General Affairs Council



10-11 July 2023
Valladolid
Informal Meeting of Environment Ministers



10-13 July
Strasbourg
Plenary Session of the European Parliament

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N° ISSN : 2729-6482

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