

Letter n°1035 of Tuesday 12th September 2023

Hard choices: if not now, when?

Simon Serfaty - 12 Sep 2023

As the war in Ukraine drags on without a decisive turning point, and both sides have no intention of losing, dialogue will have to be the answer.



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■ Elections :



Will the Christian Social Party return to office in Luxembourg?

According to opinion polls, the Christian Social Party (CSV), led by Luc Frieden, will come out ahead of the Socialist Workers' Party, the Democratic Party of outgoing Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, the Greens, the Pirate Party, the Reformist Democratic Alternative Party and The Left/Dei Lenk in the parliamentary elections to be held in Luxembourg on October 8. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



Publication of the Schuman Report, State of the Union 2023

Europe has changed... This is the message of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2023", which analyzes the profound changes taking place in Europe, accelerated by the shock of the war in Ukraine. This 17th edition, published by Marie B., features 19 contributions by leading thinkers, including Dubravka Suica. The book includes 30 original maps and a full set of commented statistics. The book is available in French, and in English in digital format. You can order it here. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



List of "gatekeepers" for digital markets

On September 6, Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton announced the list of six companies considered gatekeepers under the Digital Markets Act (DMA). Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, ByteDance, Meta and Microsoft will have to comply with a set of competition and consumer protection rules over the next six months, or face financial penalties. [Read more](#)



Digitisation of the social security systems

On September 6, the Commission called on member states to speed up the coordination of social security systems through digitisation, and in particular through single digital platforms, to make it easier to live, travel or work in a member state other than one's country of birth. The Foundation published a study on this subject in July. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



A proposal for a European disability card

On September 6, the Commission presented a proposal to facilitate the free movement of people with disabilities. A European disability card would serve as a form of proof recognized in all 27 member states, and would be accompanied by a European parking card for disabled people. [Read more](#)



Economic forecasts

The European economy is set to grow by 0.8% in 2023, and 1.4% in 2024, according to forecasts published by the Commission on September 11. Last spring, the Commission was expecting growth of 1% in 2023 and 1.7% in 2024. This slowdown is due to weak domestic demand and rising food prices. The Commission forecasts lower inflation, at 6.5% in 2023 and 3.2% in 2024. [Read more](#)



Margrethe Vestager withdraws temporarily

On September 5, the Commission's Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager stepped down temporarily from her post, in view of her candidacy for the presidency of the European Investment Bank. Vice-President Vera Jourova will take charge of the "Europe for the digital age" action area, and the competition portfolio will be assigned to Commissioner Didier Reynders. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Presentation of the Spanish Council Presidency to the committees

In September and October, ministers present their department's priorities to the European Parliament's relevant committees. Committee meetings are broadcast live on the Parliament's website. [Read more](#)



Audition of the Commissioner designate Iliana Ivanova

Iliana Ivanova, Bulgarian candidate for the post of Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, replacing Mariya Gabirel, was auditioned in Parliament on September 5. The full Parliament will vote on her nomination on September 14. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Further sanctions against six Russians

On September 8, the Council adopted sanctions against six people responsible for serious human rights violations in Russia and the occupied territories of Ukraine. Those on the list include prosecutors and judges active in courts established in illegally annexed Crimea, as well as 2 members of the FSB, Russia's internal security service. [Read more](#)



Meeting of Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers

Agriculture and Fisheries ministers met in Cordoba from September 3 to 5 to discuss the use of new technologies to guarantee food security and adapt to climate change. In particular, the ministers opened the debate on new genomic techniques. [Read more](#)



Meeting of Development Ministers

The development ministers meeting in Cadiz on September 4 and 5 discussed the sustainable development objectives with a view to the United Nations summit on September 18 and 19. The Presidency wished to emphasize the social dimension of digital and environmental transitions. Ministers also discussed the reform of multilateral development banks, ahead of the World Bank's annual meeting in October. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



G20 Summit in India

The G20 summit was held on September 9 and 10 in New Delhi, without the Russian and Chinese presidents. The leaders decided on the integration of the African Union as a permanent member, and reaffirmed measures to combat climate change, notably the determination to triple the global use of renewable energies by 2030. On the other hand, they failed to overcome their divisions over the war in Ukraine, resulting in a call to respect the country's sovereignty without using the word "aggression" in relation to the Russian invasion. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Court of Justice :



Appeal against Frontex dismissed

On September 6, the European Court of Justice dismissed the appeal lodged by several Syrians against Frontex, the European border guard agency. In 2016, Frontex had sent the Syrians back to Turkey before their asylum applications had been examined. The Court ruled that the decision on whether or not to accept an asylum application rests with the Member States, and not with the agency, which only provides technical and operational support. [Read more](#)

■ ECB :



Report on the economic impact of climate change

In a report on the economic impact of climate change, published on September 6, the European Central Bank suggests that accelerating investment in the ecological transition would be the best way to limit the medium- and long-term costs of climate change and preserve European economic stability. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ European Agencies :



Framework contracts signed for joint purchasing of ammunition

On September 5, the European Defense Agency signed eight framework contracts with European industry for the joint procurement of 155 mm ammunition. [Read more](#)



Increase in asylum requests in the first half of 2023

On September 5, the European Asylum Agency published its figures for the first half of 2023. The number of asylum applications for this period is 519,000, an increase of 28% on 2022. Syrians are the most numerous asylum seekers. The countries receiving the most asylum applications are Germany with 30%, followed by Spain 17% and France 16%. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Romania :



Three Seas Initiative Summit

On September 6 and 7, the Three Seas Initiative summit was held in Bucharest, during which leaders strengthened cross-border interconnections with Russia, particularly in terms of energy and transport. In addition, Greece joined the Initiative, becoming the 13th country to cooperate, and Ukraine and Moldova were granted associate member status. On this occasion, French President Emmanuel Macron reiterated his support for Ukraine and the importance of such European regional cooperation. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Lithuania :



IMF report on the economy

According to an IMF report on Lithuania published on September 5, the country is facing high inflation and rising interest rates combined with weak external demand. The IMF notes, however, that the economy should recover this year and next, thanks to both domestic and foreign demand. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Albania :



Border control cooperation agreement with Frontex

On September 8, the Council approved a cooperation agreement with Albania enabling the European border guard agency Frontex to operate on Albanian territory and at its borders, in cooperation with local authorities. Frontex agents will take part in border surveillance and control activities. The agreement must be approved by Parliament before coming into force. [Read more](#)

■ UK :



Reintegration into the Horizon Europe and Copernicus programs

The European Commission and the UK reached a political agreement on September 7, allowing the country to rejoin the European Horizon science program, which it has not been part of since the Brexit. This return to the European research scene goes hand in hand with the country's association with the Earth observation program, Copernicus. Funding of around €2.6 billion a year is expected from the UK for its participation in these programs. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



New Defence Minister

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky presented the new Defense Minister, Rustem Umerov, to the Rada on September 7. He urged the former head of the State Property Fund to take swift, concrete steps towards far-reaching reform of the institution. [Read more](#)



Visits by the Danish Prime Minister and French Members of Parliament

On September 6, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, who was visiting Kyiv. On September 8, the Deputy Head of the President's Office, Ihor Zhovkva, met a French parliamentary delegation led by Benjamin Haddad, Chairman of the France-Ukraine Friendship Group at the French National Assembly. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



The first Leopard I tanks arrive in Ukraine

As promised last February, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands delivered the first 10 Leopard 1 tanks to Ukraine on September 9. Further tanks are said to be on their way. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council of Europe :



GRECO report on Romania

According to a report published on September 7 by the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), Romania's institutional and legal framework for combating government corruption is inadequate. In particular, the assessment concerns the government's use of emergency ordinances. The country has been given 26 recommendations, to be implemented by the end of 2024. [Read more](#)

■ OECD :



Economic survey of the European Union and the euro zone

The OECD Economic Survey of the European Union and the euro area, published on September 6, calls for a deepening of the single market to stimulate innovation and growth. The latter should reach 1.5% in 2024, up from 0.9% in 2023. Strict monetary policy and a better-targeted fiscal policy should be able to contain inflationary trends, without however reaching the 2% threshold set by the ECB. Carbon-neutral targets for the year 2050 cannot be achieved without a redeployment of the workforce and a gradual rise in the price of carbon. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



2022 Report on Trade Defence

On September 6, the Commission published its annual report on trade defence activities. 177 measures were in place at the end of 2022, including 151 on anti-dumping. The countries whose imports are most targeted by these measures are China and Russia, in sectors such as steel and aluminium, due to dumping and public funding. [Read more](#)



Results of the Commission since September 2022

Ahead of the State of the Union address on September 13, the Commission presented a review of its activities since the 2022 speech on September 8. It focuses on action in support of Ukraine, commitments in terms of energy and environmental policy, action in support of European industry, and the defence of the Union's system of democratic governance. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



European Heritage Days

The European Heritage Days are held on September 16 and 17, during which European citizens can discover their shared heritage by visiting numerous monuments and historical-cultural sites. The event attracts up to 20 million visitors across Europe every year, and raises awareness of the need to safeguard and promote Europe's rich cultural and architectural heritage. [Read more](#)



Four Cultures Festival in Lodz

Lódź's annual Four Cultures Festival runs until September 17. The Jewish, Polish, German and Russian history and traditions that have shaped the city are showcased through music, theatre and dance. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Nancy Holt in Barcelona

Until January 7 2024, Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art is hosting "Dedans/Dehors", the first major European survey of the artistic legacy of American visual artist Nancy Holt. The exhibition features a wide selection of projects created between 1966 and 1992. [Read more](#)



Michelangelo in Vienna

From September 15 to January 14, 2024, the Albertina Museum in Vienna will be paying tribute to the artist and humanist Michelangelo with an exhibition on the representation of the human body and nudity, not only by Michelangelo, but also by the artists he influenced, such as Dürer, Raphael, Klimt and Schiele. [Read more](#)



Nicolas de Staël in Paris

The Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris is showing a retrospective of the French painter Nicolas de Staël from September 15 to January 21, 2024. Over 200 paintings and drawings illuminate the artist's work. [Read more](#)



Munch, the Magic of the North in Berlin

From September 15 to January 22, 2024, the Berlinische Galerie tells the story of Edvard Munch and Berlin in an exhibition entitled "Magic of the North". In cooperation with the Munch Museum in Oslo, it portrays an artist intimately linked to the Berlin art scene. Around 80 paintings and photographs trace the history of the pioneer of Expressionism. [Read more](#)

FONDATION BEYELER

Niko Pirosmani at the Beyeler Foundation

Georgian artist Niko Pirosmani is the subject of an exhibition at the Fondation Beyeler in Switzerland, from September 17 to January 28 2024. The exhibition is one of the largest ever devoted to Pirosmani, a leading figure in naive art. [Read more](#)



Chanel in London

From September 16 to February 25, 2024, Chanel is invited to the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, where the first British exhibition of the works of French couturier Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel is held. The exhibition traces Chanel's pioneering work in design, from the house's inception to its contemporary influence. [Read more](#)



Winner of the Venice Mostra

The 80th edition of the Venice Film Festival came to a close on September 9 with the unveiling of its prize list. Poor Things by Greece's Yórgos Lánthimos took the Golden Lion, the Grand Jury Prize went to Aku wa sonzai shinai (lit. Evil does not exist) by Japan's Ryusuke Hamaguchi, and finally, I, Captain (Io capitano) by Italy's Matteo Garrone was awarded the Silver Lion. Poland's Agnieszka Holland received the Jury's Special Prize for her film Zielona granica (Green Border). [Read more](#)

■ Sports :



First regattas for the America's Cup

From September 14 to 17, the Spanish town of Vilanova i la Geltrú hosts the preliminary regattas for the America's Cup, the world's most important sailing competition and the oldest sporting event with a 174-year history (1851). The 37th edition of the event will be held in October 2024. Six teams, including New Zealand, the Cup holder and, as such, defender, will compete on AC40 boats in match-racing races. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 11-14 September 2023

Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)

 13 September 2023

Speech on the State of the Union (Strasbourg)

 14 September 2023

Meeting of the Governing Council of the European Central Bank (Frankfurt)

 15 September

Eurogroup Meeting (Santiago de Compostela)

 15-16 September 2023

Informal meeting of Economics and Finance Ministers (Santiago de Compostela)

 18 September 2023

Agriculture and Fisheries Council (Brussels)

 18-19 September 2023

Informal meeting of Education Ministers (Saragossa)



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