

Letter n°1036 of Tuesday 19th September 2023

What kind of majority coalition is possible in Poland following the parliamentary elections on 15 October?

Corinne Deloy - 19 Sep 2023

An important poll for the Union as a whole, the Polish elections on 15 October will mainly pit the governing Law and Justice party against the Civic Platform of former European Council President Donald Tusk. On the face of it, neither the United Right coalition nor the Citizens' Coalition will be able to secure an absolute majority in the Sejm.



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■ Front page! :



A message and a turning point

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's State of the Union address was more than just an assessment: it was an overview of current European decisions and a projection into the future of common policies, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



Tribute to Jean-Paul Gauzès

The Robert Schuman Foundation is in mourning. Jean-Paul Gauzès, its treasurer, has suddenly passed away. A former Member of the European Parliament and elected representative for Normandy, his time in the European Parliament was marked by his role as EPP coordinator for economic and monetary affairs. In this capacity, he brought his consensual personality to bear on the work of the assembly during the crises. His qualities as a jurist stood out for their pragmatism. An ardent supporter of Franco-German friendship, he was a firm believer in Europe. His commitment, expertise, kindness and attentiveness will be sorely missed by all those involved in building Europe. [Read more](#)



Publication of the Schuman Report, 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", 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 contributions from leading figures, including Mathilde Lemoine. 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. Order it here. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Speech on the State of the Union

On 13 September, Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen delivered her State of the European Union address to the European Parliament. She emphasised the successes of the Commission's term of office and its determination to complete the major reforms it has embarked upon. The subjects mentioned for their importance in the coming months were supporting the European economy and its industries in the ecological transition, and defending this economy in a globalised world. Other major challenges include future enlargement, in line with the support given to Ukraine, and the impact of new technologies on the lives of Europe's citizens. [Read more](#)



Closure of the cooperation and verification mechanism for Bulgaria and Romania

On 15 September, the Commission announced the closure of the cooperation and verification mechanism, in place since 2007 to assist Bulgaria and Romania in their transition to the rule of law at the time of their accession in 2007. The Commission concluded that the two States had made sufficient progress in the areas of judicial independence and the fight against corruption, and that they could now enter the annual rule of law cycle like the other Member States. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Fifteen extra MEPs in 2024

On 13 September, the Members of the European Parliament voted in favour of the European Council's proposal to increase their number to take account of demographic changes in the Member States since 2019. The number of MEPs will rise from 705 to 720 after the 2024 elections. France, Spain and the Netherlands will have 2 additional seats, and 9 States (Austria, Belgium, Poland, Denmark, Finland, Slovakia, Ireland, Slovenia and Latvia) will have 1 additional seat. [Read more](#)



Towards reform of the European electricity market

On 14 September, MEPs adopted a position on the reform of the European electricity market. They came out on the side of stronger protection for consumers against price instability, and a ban on blackouts for vulnerable consumers. [Read more](#)



Regulation on joint defence procurement adopted

On 12 September, MEPs adopted the instrument to strengthen the European defence industry through joint procurement (EDIRPA). A budget of €300 million will be used to part-finance public procurement contracts launched by a consortium of at least three Member States and involving European SMEs or ETIs. [Read more](#)



Regulation on the greening of aviation fuels

The fuels consumed by the aviation sector will have to be sustainable from 2025 and 70% sustainable by 2050, according to a new regulation on aviation fuels approved by MEPs on 13 September. The increase in their share of the fuel mix will be regulated, with targets set every five years. [Read more](#)



Regulation on critical raw materials

The European Union will have to increase its extraction, processing and recycling capacities for certain materials, and may not depend on a third country for more than 65% of its supplies of each of these raw materials. This is the negotiating mandate with the Council adopted by MEPs on 14 September on legislation on critical raw materials, which aims to ensure that the EU has access to certain materials considered essential for the ecological and digital transitions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Accelerating the use of renewable energies and combating water and air pollution

On 12 September, MEPs voted in favour of an amendment to the Renewable Energy Directive aimed at speeding up the greening of Europe's energy consumption. Renewable energies will have to account for at least 42.5% of energy consumption by 2030. They also voted to strengthen the protection of surface and groundwater. On 13 September, they adopted a position on the proposed revision of the rules to improve air quality. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Revision of the Rules of Procedure for greater integrity and transparency

On 13 September, MEPs adopted a revision of the Rules of Procedure in response to the abuses brought to light by the Qatargate scandal. From now on, MEPs will have to make public their meetings with representatives of interests or third countries. They will be banned from becoming an interest representative within six months of the end of their term of office, and stricter rules have been laid down for their ancillary activities and any gifts offered to them. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers

On 15 and 16 September, the EU's economy and finance ministers met in Santiago de Compostela. They agreed on a mechanism for monitoring investments under the Global Gateway programme, and discussed the reform of multilateral financial institutions and the reform of European tax and budgetary rules. The previous day, the Eurogroup ministers exchanged views on macroeconomic developments in the eurozone and took note of progress on the ratification of the European Stability Mechanism Treaty. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Extension of sanctions against Russians and Iranians

On 13 September, the Council announced the extension until 15 March 2024 of individual sanctions against nearly 1,800 Russian individuals and entities considered to be responsible for Russian aggression in Ukraine, with the exception of four individuals removed from the list. On 15 September, the Council extended its sanctions against Iran for human rights violations. The sanctions now target four additional individuals, including a commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary Guards, and six entities. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ ECB :



New hike in interest rates

On 14 September, the European Central Bank (ECB) announced that it would raise its key interest rates by a quarter point from 20 September. ECB President Christine Lagarde has stated that interest rates will remain at restrictive levels for as long as is necessary to achieve the objective of reducing inflation to 2%. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



Meeting of the French and German Finance Ministers

French Economy and Finance Minister Bruno le Maire met his two German counterparts, Robert Habeck, Minister for the Economy and Climate Protection, and Christian Lindner, Minister for Finance, during a Council of Ministers meeting in Berlin. The three ministers discussed the need to establish a single capital market, to oppose all forms of unfair competition, particularly from China in the electric vehicle market, and to launch an offensive European industrial strategy. [Read more](#)

■ Belgium :



Summit of Heads of State of German-speaking Countries

Belgium hosted the informal summit of German-speaking countries on 11 and 12 September. Bringing together the heads of state of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Belgium, the meeting was held in Eupen, the capital of Belgium's German-speaking community. [Read more](#)

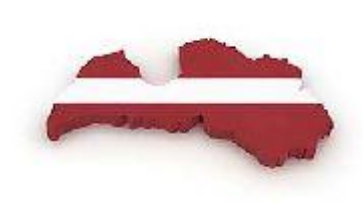
■ Ireland :



TikTok condemned

On 15 September, the social network TikTok was fined €345 million in Europe by the Irish Data Protection Commission. The Chinese company is accused of breaching European rules, in particular by publishing newly created profiles, including those of minors. [Read more](#)

■ Latvia :



New government led by Evika Silina

On 15 September, the Latvian Parliament (Seima) swore in the new government led by Evika Silina of the centrist New Unity party (JV). The coalition government includes the Union of Green Farmers and the Progressive Party. Former Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins (JV), who resigned in August, is Foreign Minister. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Belarus :



Speech by Svetlana Tikhanovskaya

On 13 September, the leader of the Belarusian democratic opposition in exile, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, gave a speech to the European Parliament. She called for relations with the opposition to be formalised and for support with a view to future accession to the Union. MEPs adopted a declaratory report on relations with Belarus, supporting the democratic opposition and political prisoners, and calling for more sanctions against the Lukashenko regime. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



End of import restrictions on Ukrainian cereals

On September 15, the European Commission lifted import restrictions on Ukrainian grain for the five countries bordering the country - Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania - on condition that Ukraine controls the influx of grain. However, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary are refusing to lift this measure in order to protect their agricultural producers. [Read more](#)



Visit by the German Foreign Minister

On 11 September, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who was visiting Kyiv. He focused on a new military assistance package and a significant contribution to strengthening Ukraine's air defence. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Eurobarometer survey on European response to the war in Ukraine

On 11 September, the Commission published the results of a Eurobarometer survey on the European response to the war in Ukraine and its consequences. The majority of Europeans approve of the measures taken to prevent a surge in energy prices, and also remain in favour of all forms of support for Ukraine. [Read more](#)



Compensation for victims of the war in Ukraine

On 12 September, the second meeting of the Conference of Participants in the Damages Register for Ukraine was held in Riga. The previous day, the Conference of Ministers of Justice gave political direction, through a series of principles aimed at providing compensation to all victims of the war, for the targeted and effective operation of the Register. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Monaco :



Suspension of negotiations with the European Union

On 14 September, the European Union and the Principality of Monaco ended negotiations on an association agreement by mutual agreement, due to common differences on the substance of the agreement. The Commission has announced that it will continue negotiations on an association agreement with the Principality of Andorra and the Republic of San Marino. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Migration :



Ursula von der Leyen in Lampedusa proposes an emergency plan

On 17 September, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen visited the Italian island of Lampedusa with the President of the Italian Council, Giorgia Meloni. After visiting the reception centre for migrants, she presented a 10-point emergency plan to tackle the migration crisis. The plan includes distributing asylum seekers between Member States and stepping up assistance to Italy from the European coastguard, border guard and asylum agencies. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Half of all illegal entries are via the Central Mediterranean route

According to a communication from the European border guard agency Frontex, published on 14 September 2023, 50% of irregular entries to European territory in 2023 were made via the central Mediterranean route. Irregular entries recorded by Frontex rose in 2023 compared with the previous year, reaching the highest level for the January-August period since 2016. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Europol report on economic and financial crime

Nearly 70% of criminal networks operating in the European Union use money laundering to finance their activities and conceal their assets, and 60% of these networks use corrupt methods to achieve their illicit objectives, notes the European Centre for Combating Financial and Economic Crime in a report published on 11 September. In 2020 and 2021, the agency seized an average of €4.1 billion in criminal assets. [Read more](#)



WTO Trade Report 2023

In its World Trade Report 2023, published on 12 September, the WTO warns against fragmentation of world trade and stresses the benefits of "re-globalisation" in the face of major challenges such as climate change, the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions and food insecurity. [Read more](#)

■ Eurostat :



International Trade Surplus in July

On 15 September, Eurostat published its international trade figures for July. The eurozone recorded a trade surplus of €6.5 billion and the European Union €4.9 billion. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Lyons Dance Biennial

Lyons' 20th biennial dance festival runs until 30 September. This contemporary dance festival is a major cultural event, showcasing the talents of nearly 500 artists. [Read more](#)



Dance Festival in Turin

Until 25 October, the Torinodanza international festival will be bringing together contemporary dance performances in Turin. Numerous international troupes take over the city's theatres. In addition, the festival offers a range of events. [Read more](#)



Arts Festival in Rye

The Rye Arts Festival is being held in Sussex until 30 September. The festival reflects the town's artistic and literary scene, which has been enriched by the many writers who have lived here. The event is brought to life by authors, actors and musicians who meet the public through readings and concerts. [Read more](#)

Bozar

Antoni Tàpies: the practice of art in Brussels

Until 7 January 2024, Bozar in Brussels is presenting a retrospective of the work of Spanish artist Antoni Tàpies, entitled "The Practice of Art". With 122 works spanning the period from 1944 to the 1990s, this is the first time in Belgium that a complete overview of the artist's work will be on show. [Read more](#)



Images of the Golden Age in Krakow

Until 14 December, Krakow's Royal Castle will be home to 400 works of art from Poland's Golden Age, tracing the flowering of Renaissance art and culture under the Jagiellonian dynasty. The exhibition features objects from thirteen countries, including the collections of the Louvre, the Met and the British Library. [Read more](#)



Monet in Madrid

An exhibition on the painter and father of Impressionism, Claude Monet, is taking place from 21 September to 24 February 2024 at the CentroCentro in Madrid. More than 50 masterpieces from the Marmottan Monet museum in Paris have been loaned to explain his artistic career. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Modigliani: a painter and his dealer in Paris

The Musée de l'Orangerie is hosting the exhibition "Amedeo Modigliani. A painter and his dealer" from 20 September to 15 January 2024. The Italian artist's career, marked by his meeting with the art dealer Paul Guillaume, will be highlighted through a corpus of around one hundred paintings. [Read more](#)



Mary Ellen Mark retrospective in Berlin

The C/O House in Berlin is paying tribute to photojournalist Mary Ellen Mark with a retrospective running until 18 January 2024. The artist was famous for her use of black and white and her desire to document the daily lives of marginalised people in the United States, as well as in India and Mexico. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 18-19 September 2023

Informal meeting of Education Ministers (Saragossa)

 19 September 2023

General Affairs Council (Brussels)

 19-26 September 2023

UN General Assembly (New York)

 21-22 September 2023

Informal meeting of Transport Ministers (Barcelona)

 25 September 2023

Competitiveness Council (Brussels)

 25-26 September 2023

Informal meeting of Culture Ministers (Cáceres)

 24 September

Senatorial Elections (partial renewal) (France)



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