

Letter n°1041 of Tuesday 24th October 2023

One year of the Meloni government: a tortuous but determined path towards Europe.

Lorenzo Castellani - 24 Oct 2023

The first year of Giorgia Meloni's government has revealed a complex political landscape, with elements of the nationalist right and centrist and moderate tendencies intertwined. The European elections in June will be the next test of whether Fratelli d'Italia's political line has changed.



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■ Foundation :



Publication of the Schuman Report, 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 André Loesekrug-Pietri. 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 your copy now! [Read more](#)



European recovery plans: figures and priorities

To respond to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Union has set up a €672.5 billion recovery fund. The updated plans of several countries were approved in October, to include a REPowerEU chapter. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans, country by country, to find out the amounts involved and the timetables. [Read more](#)

■ European Council :



Meeting on the situation in Israel and Palestine

On 17 October, the 27 Heads of State and Government, together with representatives of the European institutions, discussed the attacks on Israel and the situation in the Gaza Strip. They condemned the Hamas attacks on Israel, reiterated their full solidarity with Israel and called for a military response that respects international law. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Commission :



Work programme for 2024

On 17 October, the Commission published its work programme for 2024, entitled "Delivering results and preparing for tomorrow". It stresses the need to bring to a successful conclusion the reforms undertaken during the term of office, in particular on the ecological and digital transitions, and on the need to reduce the administrative burden to facilitate the application of legislation and the activity of European businesses. It also stresses the need for continued support for Ukraine. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Accelerating the implementation of legislation on digital services

On 18 October, the Commission asked the Member States to speed up the implementation and coordination of action on digital services legislation (DSA). Against a backdrop of misinformation and the sharing of illegal content linked to the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, the Commission would like to see the designation of national authorities responsible for applying the rules. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Better regulation of entry into Europe

On 18 October, the Commission presented two initiatives aimed at regulating entry into Europe. In the event of a crisis, it wants to be able to suspend visa exemption schemes with 60 third countries more quickly and decisively. It is also proposing an action plan of 29 operational measures to reduce irregular entries via the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, the route most frequently used by migrants. [Read more - Other link](#)



Combating organised crime and drug trafficking

On 18 October, the Commission presented a roadmap for the fight against organised crime and drug trafficking. It proposes to target four priority areas: drugs entering Europe through ports, dismantling the main criminal networks, preventing the development of criminal groups, and international cooperation. [Read more - Other link](#)



Reducing pollution from microplastics

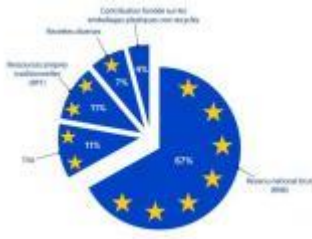
On 16 October, the Commission proposed a regulation on microplastic pollution caused by plastic granules. A Commission investigation estimated that between 52,000 and 184,000 tonnes of granules are released into the environment each year, and that better management measures, together with a more efficient system for accounting for industrial losses, could reduce this pollution by 74%. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



The Sakharov Prize awarded to Mahsa Amini and to Iranian women

On 19 October, Parliament awarded the 2023 Sakharov Prize to Jina Mahsa Amini, the Iranian woman who died after being arrested for breaking the headscarf laws, and to the Iranian women's movement "Woman, Life, Freedom". The award ceremony will take place in Strasbourg on 13 December. [Read more](#)



A 2024 budget to rise to the challenges

On 18 October, MEPs adopted their position on the EU budget for 2024. They want to increase European resources to meet new political needs, and strengthen measures relating to the European Union's strategic autonomy and international action. Parliament and the Council now have three weeks to reach a common position. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Strategic technology investment platform

On 17 October, MEPs approved the creation of a €160 billion platform for investment in strategic technologies. MEPs want to use the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) as a prototype for a European sovereign wealth fund in preparation for the next multiannual financial framework. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



New fisheries control rules

On 17 October, MEPs adopted the proposal for a regulation on fisheries control, which improves the digital system for collecting fisheries data in order to facilitate the management of marine resources. Within four years, it will require certain vessels at risk of not complying with the rules to be equipped with remote video monitoring systems. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Political agreement on the reform of the electricity market

On 17 October, the energy ministers reached an agreement on the reform of the electricity market. The Council amended the Commission's proposal to introduce contracts to encourage investment in renewables, extending them to existing infrastructure such as nuclear power stations. This agreement will serve as a starting point for negotiations with Parliament. The ministers also addressed the issue of energy in Ukraine during the winter, when the country's energy infrastructures are at risk of being targeted by Russian attacks. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Ministers

On 19 and 20 October, the Home Affairs and Justice ministers discussed the implications of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the security of the European Union, the asylum and migration pact, European regulations on insolvency, and legal responses to Russian crimes in Ukraine. [Read more](#)



Economy and Finance Ministers' Meeting

On 17 October, the Ministers for the Economy and Finance discussed the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact and the implementation of recovery plans. They definitively adopted the DAC8 directive aimed at strengthening cooperation between national tax authorities in the area of crypto-assets and advance rulings for high incomes. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Meeting of environment ministers

On 16 October, the environment ministers approved a negotiating position for the forthcoming COP 28 climate conference at the end of November. They reached a preliminary agreement on the proposed regulation on CO2 emissions from heavy goods vehicles and on the revision of the wastewater treatment directive. [Read more](#)



Eurogroup Meeting

On 16 October, the eurozone finance ministers discussed the Commission's monetary policy recommendations and the digital euro project. They had an exchange with US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on global risks and another with business representatives on European capital markets. [Read more](#)



Informal meeting of trade ministers

On 19 and 20 October, the trade ministers meeting in Valencia discussed the European Union's trade agreements and the role of these agreements for Europe's economic security. The Commission is currently negotiating several trade agreements on behalf of the EU. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



EU-US Summit

On 20 October, the Presidents of the European Commission and Council, Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel, and US President Joe Biden reiterated their commitment to global stability, multilateralism based on common rules, and defence cooperation. On the economic front, they highlighted the successes of the Trade and Technology Council, an interministerial forum to be set up in 2021, and reiterated their mutual commitment to an open and balanced economic order. The talks failed to reach agreement on current trade disputes, notably European steel imports. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ ECB :



Preparatory phase of the digital euro project

On 18 October, the European Central Bank announced the launch of the preparatory phase of the digital euro project. Following a two-year study phase, this preparatory phase should also last two years. It is only at the end of this phase that a decision will be taken on whether or not to launch the digital euro. [Read more - Other link](#)



Claudia Buch appointed head of the Supervisory Board

On 19 October, the Council approved the appointment of Claudia Buch, former Vice-President of the Bundesbank, as Chairwoman of the ECB's Supervisory Board, with effect from 1 January 2024. The Supervisory Board supervises European banks with the aim of ensuring the stability of the European monetary system, and makes recommendations to the Governing Council. [Read more](#)

■ Estonia :



Kaja Kallas meets Emmanuel Macron

French President Emmanuel Macron met Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas on 18 October to discuss geopolitical developments in the world and their bilateral cooperation, particularly in terms of defence. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Visit to Albania

French President Emmanuel Macron visited Albania on 16 and 17 October, the first bilateral visit by a French president since 1912. Discussions with Albanian President Bajram Begaj and Prime Minister Edi Rama focused on Albania's future membership of the European Union, as well as cooperation between the two countries. The French Development Agency and the Albanian government signed a new investment programme, providing for the allocation of €600 million to Albania in the energy and environment sectors between now and 2027. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Armenia :



Speech by Armenian Prime Minister to the European Parliament

On 17 October, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pachinian addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg. He reiterated his intention to defend democratic principles despite the difficulties facing his country, and his commitment to peace with Azerbaijan, for which the European Union's assistance is invaluable. He then met the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejcinovic Buric, who emphasised the importance of confidence-building measures to encourage dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Armenia abolishes capital punishment

On 19 October, Armenia abolished the death penalty by ratifying Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights, which provides for the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances. Armenia thus becomes the 45th member state of the Council of Europe to ratify this protocol. [Read more](#)

■ Georgia :



Failed attempt to impeach the President

On 18 October, deputies from the ruling Georgian Dream party failed to obtain the two-thirds majority needed to impeach Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili. Two days earlier, the Constitutional Court had ruled that the President had violated the Constitution by travelling abroad without government permission to promote the idea of Georgia joining the European Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Switzerland :



Federal election results

Federal elections were held in Switzerland on 22 October to renew the two chambers of parliament, the National Council and the Council of States. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) consolidated its status as the country's largest party, winning 28.6% of the vote. The Socialist Party obtained 18%, the Centre 14.6% and the Liberal Radical Party (PLR) 14.4%. The Greens and the Vert'liberals were down, with 9.4% and 7.2% respectively. The turnout was 46.6%. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Agreement with Romania on export transit

On 18 October, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met Romanian Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu, who was visiting Kyiv to discuss the protection of Ukraine's southern region and Danube port infrastructure from Russian air attacks. The Romanian Prime Minister signed a memorandum of understanding with his Ukrainian counterpart Denys Shmyhal to secure the transit of Ukrainian products and promote border crossings between the two countries. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Negotiations with France on security guarantees

On 19 October, the Ukrainian government began negotiations with France on a bilateral agreement on security guarantees, which would strengthen French support in the military, security and economic fields. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



European Parliament vote in favour of €50 billion

On 17 October, MEPs adopted the €50 billion facility for Ukraine for 2024, for the reconstruction of the country. They want the funds to be used transparently, ensuring that companies under the influence of oligarchs cannot benefit. and future funds to be drawn from Russian assets recovered through sanctions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ UN :



Humanitarian aid to Gaza

Two convoys carrying food, water and medicines began entering Gaza from Egypt on 21 and 22 October. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called for uninterrupted and unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza from Israel. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Annual report on foreign direct investments

On 19 October, the Commission published its 3rd annual report on the analytical review of foreign direct investment (FDI). 420 were analysed in 2022, while the number of Member States with investment screening mechanisms rose from 11 to 21. The report notes that Member States blocked 560 applications for the export of dual-use goods. [Read more](#)



Report on the strategy for the Security Union

On 18 October, the Commission published its sixth progress report on the Security Union strategy, a comprehensive approach to European security policies. Since 2020, the Commission has proposed 36 items of legislation relating to this security strategy, and the report stresses the need to adopt the proposals still under negotiation before the end of the mandate in 2024, and to implement those that have already been adopted at Member State level. [Read more](#)

■ Eurostat :



Inflation down in September

In September, annual inflation was down on August, at 4.9% in the European Union and 4.3% in the eurozone, according to the estimate published by Eurostat on 18 October. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Robert Doisneau in Nice

The Musée de la Photographie in Nice is devoting a retrospective to Robert Doisneau, running until 28 January 2024. The exhibition features almost 110 shots by the famous French photographer, including "Le baiser de l'Hôtel de Ville". [Read more](#)



Ukrainian modernism in Brussels

Until 28 January 2024, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels is hosting the "In the Eye of the Storm" exhibition, which highlights Ukrainian modernist art between 1900 and 1930 through some sixty works on loan from Ukrainian museums. [Read more](#)



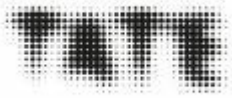
Conrad Festival in Krakow

The Conrad Literary Festival runs until 29 October in Krakow. It showcases world literature through films, lectures and concerts, and aims to stimulate discussion about the place of literature in our lives. [Read more](#)



Treasures of Notre-Dame-de-Paris

The Musée du Louvre is presenting an exhibition entitled "The treasures of Notre-Dame-de-Paris. From the origins to Viollet-le-Duc", until 29 January 2024. Featuring more than 120 works, manuscripts and relics, the exhibition traces the history of the cathedral's treasures as restoration work draws to a close. [Read more](#)



Philip Guston in London

Until 25 February 2024, the Tate Modern museum in London is exhibiting works by the American expressionist painter Philip Guston. The exhibition traces the development of his committed paintings, which deal mainly with racism in the United States and social struggles. [Read more](#)



Franz Kafka in Munich

The Villa Stuck in Munich is presenting an exhibition on the writer Franz Kafka until 11 February 2024. The exhibition retraces the life of the author and his fictional characters. [Read more](#)



Diego Velazquez, Pablo Picasso and Carmen Calvo in Madrid

Until 15 February 2024, Casa de Velázquez in Madrid presents "Diego Velázquez invites Pablo Picasso... and Carmen Calvo", an exhibition of archival documents and contemporary art, built around the fictional encounter between three great names in Spanish art. [Read more](#)

 23-24 October 2023

Agriculture and Fisheries Council (Luxembourg)

 24 October 2023

Meeting of Telecommunications Ministers (Leon)

 24 October 2023

General Affairs Council (Luxembourg)

 25 October 2023

Tripartite Social Summit (Brussels)

 26-27 October 2023

European Council (Brussels)

 26 October 2023

Meeting of the Council of Governors of the European Central Bank (Athens)

 30-31 October 2023

Tourism Ministers Meeting (Palma)



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