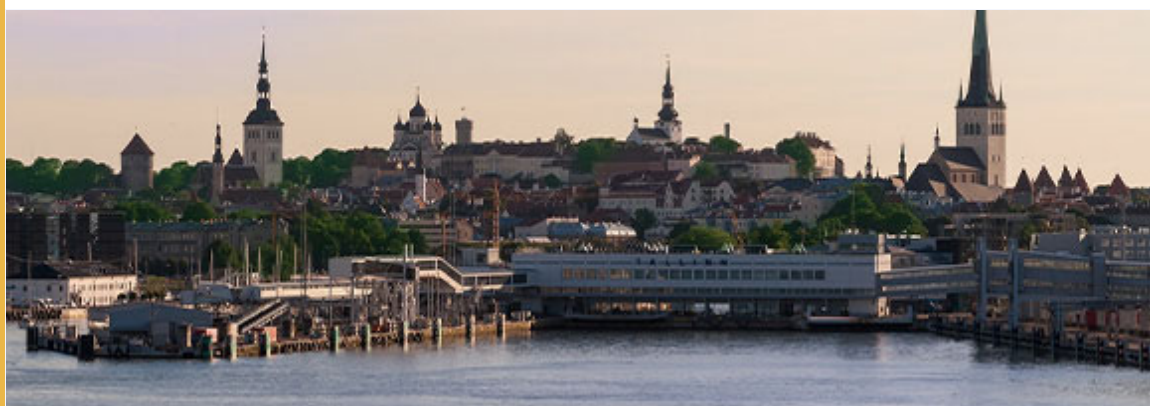


Letter n°1045 of Tuesday 21st November 2023

Europe's locally elected representatives, key players in the ecological transition

Ferréol Delmas - 21 Nov 2023

The principle of subsidiarity is a fundamental principle of European law and could, in environmental matters, become the spearhead of a better appreciation of the environment by European citizens and a tool for our leaders. Mayors, in particular, have a major role to play.



[Foundation](#) | [Commission](#) | [Council](#) | [Trilogues](#) | [Diplomacy](#) | [Germany](#) | [Spain](#) | [Finland](#) | [France](#) | [Ireland](#) | [Luxembourg](#) | [The Netherlands](#) | [Sweden](#) | [Armenia](#) | [UK](#) | [Ukraine](#) | [Studies/Reports](#) | [Culture](#) |

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■ Foundation :



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 November, the Commission approved the updated recovery plans for Germany, Belgium, Latvia and Cyprus. On 17 November, it gave a positive assessment of France's payment claim for €10.3 billion. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to find out about the sums involved and the schedules. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Revised Economic Forecast

On November 15, the European Commission published its economic forecasts, predicting a modest economic recovery over the next two years. It forecasts GDP growth of 0.6% for the European Union and the eurozone in 2023, which is 0.2 points lower than forecast in August, and 1.3% in 2024. Inflation should continue to fall, from 6.5% in 2023 to 3.5% in 2024 and 2.4% in 2025. Finally, the unemployment rate should remain stable at around 6% in 2023 and 2024. [Read more - Other link](#)



Glyphosate approval renewed for 10 years

On 16 November, the Commission proposed to renew the approval of glyphosate for a further 10 years, as the Member States were unable to reach a qualified majority for or against this renewal. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Defence Ministers Meeting

On 14 November, the defence ministers discussed the consolidation of European military support for Ukraine and the European rapid reaction force project. They took note of progress in permanent structured cooperation and approved the first space strategy for European security and defence. [Read more](#)



European Ministers' Meeting

On 15 November, the European Affairs ministers prepared for the European Council on 14 and 15 December, and discussed the rule of law and European values in Hungary and Poland. They discussed ways of reforming the way the European Union functions, in particular electoral reform, and relations with the United Kingdom. [Read more](#)



Declaration regarding housing

At their meeting on 13 and 14 November, the housing ministers adopted the Gijon Declaration, in which they pledged to work towards housing for all in a sustainable, healthy and inclusive environment. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Trilogues :



Agreement on critical raw materials

On 13 November, the Council and Parliament reached agreement on proposed legislation to secure European supplies of 34 critical and 17 strategic raw materials, [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Agreement on digital public services and short-term rental

On 13 November, the Council and Parliament reached agreement on the regulation to harmonise access to digital public services. They also reached agreement on 16 November on the regulation governing data management in the field of short-term accommodation rental. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Agreement on the transfer of waste, environmental crime and methane

On 17 November, the Member States and the Parliament reached an agreement on the revision of the waste shipment regulation. They also reached agreement on 16 November on a legal framework for environmental crime. On 15 November, they reached agreement on a regulation to reduce methane emissions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting

On 13 November, the foreign ministers discussed the global geopolitical situation, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. [Read more](#)



Partnership agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries

On 15 November, the European Union and its Member States signed a new partnership agreement with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP). The "Samoa Agreement" replaces the "Cotonou Agreement". It covers cooperation in areas such as sustainable development and growth, human rights and global security. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Meeting with the United States on justice and security issues

On 14 November, Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders met the US Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security, along with ministers representing the Spanish Presidency of the Council and the incoming Belgian Presidency. The meeting served to reiterate the importance of transatlantic cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs, against a backdrop of geopolitical instability, particularly in Ukraine and the Middle East. [Read more](#)



Meeting with the Foreign Ministers of the Western Balkans

On 13 November, at an interministerial meeting between the European Union and the Western Balkans, High Representative Josep Borrell reiterated the importance of the European Union's cooperation with the countries of the region in maintaining political stability on the European continent. They discussed the Commission's latest proposals on enlargement policy. [Read more](#)



Ursula von der Leyen and Josep Borrell in the Middle East

The President of the European Commission and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy made separate visits to the Middle East between 16 and 20 November. Ursula von der Leyen met the President of Egypt and the King of Jordan. Josep Borell visited Israel, the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar. Both reiterated the European Union's position on the conflict, with a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, and welcomed efforts to deliver humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Germany :



The Constitutional Court forces the government to review its budget

On 15 November, the German Constitutional Court declared illegal the federal government's decision to reallocate €60 billion of unused pandemic funds to green initiatives and support for industry. This decision puts Chancellor Olaf Scholz's three-party coalition in a difficult position, as it has already been shaken by a series of crises against a backdrop of worsening economic conditions, and now has a large hole to fill in the public finances. The Bundestag's current debate on the 2024 budget has been suspended until 21 November. [Read more](#)

■ Spain :



Pedro Sanchez reappointed as head of government

Pedro Sanchez (PSOE), President of the outgoing government, was sworn in for a new term of office on 17 November, after obtaining the investiture of the Congress of Deputies the day before. Four months after the 23 July elections, he won 179 votes to 171, thanks in particular to the support of the Catalan party Junts per Catalunya, with which he reached an agreement on an amnesty following the 2017 independence referendum. Several demonstrations, including one in Madrid on 18 November attended by more than 100,000 people, took place to protest against this agreement. On 20 November, he announced the composition of his government, which comprises 22 ministers, including 12 women. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Finland :



Half the border crossings with Russia closed

Finland closed four of its eight border crossings with Russia on the night of 18-19 November. The authorities are accusing Russia of smuggling migrants in retaliation for Finland joining NATO. The border crossings are due to remain closed until 18 February 2024. [Read more](#)

■ France :



State visit of the French President to Switzerland

French President Emmanuel Macron made a State visit to Switzerland on 15 and 16 November. He was welcomed by the Federal Council and the President of the Swiss Confederation, Alain Berset, with whom he discussed bilateral relations and closer cooperation between Switzerland and the European Union. The two leaders discussed scientific diplomacy and exchanged views on Europe with students from the University of Lausanne. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ireland :



Electricity interconnection with France

French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne met her counterpart Leo Varadkar in Ireland on 14 November. Construction of the Celtic Interconnector, a high-voltage undersea electricity cable that will link the two countries' power grids, began on 13 November. Its aim is to enhance energy security and help reduce bills between the two countries. It should be completed in 2026 and connected to the grid in 2027. [Read more](#)

■ Luxembourg :



New government led by Luc Frieden

The government formed following the legislative elections on 8 October took office on 17 November. A coalition agreement was signed the previous day between the Christian Social Party (CSV) and the Democratic Party (DP). Luc Frieden (CVV) is now Prime Minister and heads a government of 14 ministers, including 5 women, who were sworn in by the Grand Duke. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ The Netherlands :



Polls ahead of the general elections

With just a few days to go before the general elections in the Netherlands on 22 November, the latest polls place the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) of outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte with 28 of the 150 seats in the lower house, followed by the New Social Contract Party (NSC) with 26 seats, then the Labour Party (PvdA) and the Green Left (GroenLinks) with 23 seats, and finally the Party for Freedom (PVV) with 19 seats. [Read more](#)

■ Sweden :



New nuclear reactor construction programme

On 16 November, the Swedish government announced the launch of a roadmap for new nuclear energy. The construction of a new nuclear power station with two reactors by 2035 is at the top of the list of objectives, as is the appointment of a government coordinator for nuclear energy. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Armenia :



Accession to the ICC and ICJ order

Armenia is to become the 124th country to join the International Criminal Court (ICC). The country officially applied for membership on 14 November and will become an official member on 1 February 2024. In addition, on 17 November, the International Court of Justice ordered Azerbaijan to allow the "safe" return of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ UK :



Supreme Court opposes expulsion of migrants to Rwanda

On 15 November, the British Supreme Court rejected Rishi Sunak's government's controversial proposal to deport asylum seekers who arrived illegally in the UK to Rwanda, as the country is not considered safe. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



An independent Scotland back in the European Union

In a report entitled "An independent Scotland in the European Union", prefaced by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Angus Robertson, Scotland's ruling independence party (SNP) argues that Scottish independence is the only realistic path for the country to regain the benefits of the European Union, including access to the single market, the common agricultural policy and the Erasmus+ exchange programme. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Damage Register Council for Ukraine

On 16 November, the Register of Damage for Ukraine, a body set up to record claims for compensation following Russian aggression in Ukraine, elected its Board. It will be responsible for organising the work and taking final decisions on the claims submitted. The aim is for the Register to be able to start receiving claims in the first quarter of 2024, so as to set in motion an international compensation mechanism for the victims of the aggression. [Read more](#)



Black Sea Economic Cooperation

The 62nd Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) was held in Kyiv from 15 to 17 November. Representatives of the states in the region discussed issues such as territorial integrity, sovereignty, food safety and freedom of navigation. [Read more](#)



Visit to Kyiv by David Cameron and Pierre Heilbronn

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky received British Foreign Secretary David Cameron on 16 November, who also visited Moldova on 17 November. On 19 November, the French special envoy for aid and reconstruction in Ukraine, Pierre Heilbronn, met the head of the Ukrainian presidential administration, Andriy Yermak, to discuss French assistance in the fields of infrastructure, energy, technology and transport. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Report on the EU's trade policy

In a report on the European Union's trade policy, published on 15 November, the Commission states that the value of trade under free trade agreements exceeded €2,000 billion for the first time in 2022. This annual report shows that trade with countries that have a free trade agreement with the European Union increased by 30% in 2022, and that the agreements are having a positive impact on the economy. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Report on the drugs market in Europe

In a report published on 16 November, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and Europol warn of an increase in the strength and diversity of cannabis products consumed in Europe. Cannabis remains the drug with the largest market, with a record amount seized in 2021, and cooperation between criminal networks poses major security challenges for European police services. [Read more](#)



Report on Denmark's migration policy

In a report published on 16 November, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatovic, expresses her concern at the orientation of Denmark's migration policy, which favours temporary protection and the outsourcing of asylum procedures to third countries. She calls for a reorientation of asylum policy towards protection and integration, in particular through measures to respect the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and people with disabilities. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Opening of Michelangelo's secret room in Florence

Discovered in 1975, Florentine artist Michelangelo's secret room will be temporarily open to the public until 30 March 2024. This premiere will give visitors access to a hidden room inside Florence's Medici Chapel. The walls of the underground room contain charcoal sketches attributed by some experts to the Renaissance artist. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Holbein and the Northern Renaissance in Frankfurt

The Städel Museum in Frankfurt is presenting an exhibition entitled "Holbein and the Northern Renaissance" until 18 February 2024. The exhibition sheds light on the influence of Northern Renaissance painters such as Hans Holbein the Elder and Albrecht Dürer, and provides keys to understanding the meteoric rise of this artistic movement in Northern Europe in the 16th century. [Read more](#)



Picasso, the Turning Point

The exhibition "Picasso 1906 - The Turning Point" is on at the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid until 4 March 2024. The exhibition traces the first contribution made by the painter Pablo Picasso to the definition of "modern art". [Read more](#)



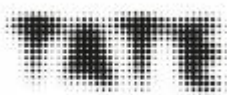
Bucolics in Warsaw

Until 17 March 2024, the National Museum in Warsaw is devoting an exhibition to the myth of Arcadia, which originated in the "Bucolics" by the Latin poet Virgil. The exhibition presents the many European artistic interpretations of Arcadia, an ideal world of freedom, happiness, unchanging order and eternal youth. [Read more](#)



Yayoi Kusama in Bergamo

Until 24 March 2024, the Palazzo della Ragione in Bergamo is spotlighting the contemporary Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama with an exhibition entitled "Infinito Presente". [Read more](#)



Women in revolt in London

Until 7 April 2024, Tate Britain is presenting "Women in revolt!", an exhibition featuring the work of over 100 British women. Rooted in the context of the women's liberation movement of the 1970s and 80s in the UK, the exhibition highlights the creativity of women in their feminist struggle. [Read more](#)



Glaz Festival in Rennes

The Glaz Festival is taking place in Rennes until 7 January 2024, on the theme of "emergencies". This photography festival will feature a range of exhibitions and conferences, bringing together world-famous and emerging artists. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 20-23 November 2023

Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)

 20 November 2023

European Economic Area Council (Brussels)

 21 November 2022

Foreign Affairs Council (Development) (Brussels)

 22 November 2023

General elections (The Netherlands)

 23-24 November 2023

EU-Canada Summit (St-John's)

 23-24 November 2023

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (Brussels)

 23-24 November 2023

Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Equality (Pamplona)

 27 November 2023

Foreign Affairs Council (Brussels)



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