

Letter n°1047 of Tuesday 5th December 2023

The advantages and uncertainties of gas in Europe's energy transition

Clémence Pèlerin - 05 Dec 2023

The drive to diversify energy supplies since the start of the war in Ukraine raises new questions about the Member States' strengths and weaknesses in their commercial relations with partners likely to take over from Russia as the continent's gas supplier.



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■ Foundation :



Conference on Strategic Sovereignty

In partnership with the SWP (Germany) and the PISM (Poland) the Robert Schuman Foundation is organising a conference on the European Union's strategic sovereignty on 5th December in Brussels. The Managing Director of the Foundation Pascale Joannin will be taking part in a round table discussion on defence. [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 28 November, the Commission gave a positive assessment of the payment requests from Germany, Greece and Italy. On 30 November, it made a payment of €700 million to Croatia. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to see the figures and timetables. [Read more](#)



A site for everything you need to know about the European elections

From 6 to 9 June 2024, Europeans will be invited to elect their MEPs for the next five years. The Foundation has set up a website to help you understand the elections and the issues at stake, and to follow the campaign with the lists of candidates and the programmes of all the parties. [Read more](#)

■ European Agencies :



Japanese-European experimental nuclear fusion project

JT-60SA, the world's largest tokamak (nuclear fusion reactor), was inaugurated on 1 December in Naka, Japan. It is a joint venture between Japan and the European Union. Construction began in 2013 and was completed in 2020. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Launch of the semiconductor joint undertaking

On 1 December, the Commission inaugurated the Joint Undertaking for Semiconductors set up under the Chips Act. Until 2030, €11 billion will support and finance research and innovation in electronic components and systems to strengthen Europe's position. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Improvements to travellers' rights

On 29 November, the European Commission presented proposals to improve the rights of travellers in the European Union in the event of delays or cancellations to their journeys, drawing lessons from the difficulties encountered during the Covid crisis. It wants to improve passengers' rights by introducing a standard complaints form that is "easy to understand" and valid throughout the EU. [Read more](#)



Preventing and Countering Migrant Trafficking

On 28 November, the Commission presented proposals to combat migrant smugglers. It is proposing a global alliance with neighbouring countries and within the framework of international organisations, and a strengthened legal framework in this area. [Read more](#)



Temporary withdrawal of Jutta Urpilainen

The Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, stepped down temporarily from her post on 2 December, due to her candidacy in the Finnish presidential election, the first round of which takes place on 28 January. Vice-President Margaritis Schinas has temporarily taken over her portfolio. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Trade Ministers

At their meeting on 27 November, the Trade Ministers drafted the European Union's position for the forthcoming World Trade Organisation (WTO) conference. They discussed the progress of trade agreements, notably with Chile, and trade relations with the United States. [Read more](#)



Meeting of Health Ministers

On 30 November, the health ministers discussed open strategic autonomy in the field of health. They adopted conclusions on mental health, and discussed the progress of negotiations for an international treaty on pandemics. [Read more](#)



European Disability Card

The Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs, meeting on 27 and 28 November, defined their position on the directive on European disability cards. They approved conclusions on democracy at work and digitisation in the field of social security coordination. [Read more](#)



Meeting of ministers responsible for cohesion policy

Meeting on 30 November, ministers discussed the role of cohesion policy in developing Europe's strategic autonomy. They adopted conclusions suggesting targeting the least developed regions and rural areas, and making cohesion policy a tool to help these regions meet new challenges. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Trilogues :



Agreement on internal gas and hydrogen markets

On 28 November, the Council and Parliament reached agreement on the directive establishing common rules for the internal markets in natural gas and hydrogen. The aim is to decarbonise the gas and hydrogen markets within the European Union in order to achieve a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. [Read more - Other link](#)



Agreement on the protection of journalists and human rights defenders

On 29 November, Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the directive aimed at protecting journalists and human rights defenders from gagging procedures. The aim is to limit the phenomenon of legal proceedings aimed at silencing individuals who denounce certain practices. The co-legislators will now have to definitively adopt the legislation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Agreement on the reduction of industrial emissions

On 22 November, Parliament and the Council reached agreement on a directive on industrial emissions and a regulation establishing an industrial emissions portal. The aim is to limit harmful industrial emissions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Agreement on cyber resilience

On 30 November, Parliament and the Council reached agreement on the regulation on cyber resilience. The aim is to introduce cybersecurity requirements for connected products before they are placed on the market. Manufacturers will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules, and consumers will have to be informed of the cybersecurity standards of their products when they buy them. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Raw materials partnership with Greenland

On 30 November, the Commission signed a strategic partnership on raw materials with Greenland. Of the 34 raw materials identified as strategic for the European Union, 25 are present in Greenland. The parties will now have to work out the practical implementation of the partnership. [Read more](#)



Report on relations with Turkey

On 29 November, the Commission presented a report on the state of relations between the European Union and Turkey. It recommends developing constructive cooperation with Turkey to ensure regional stability in the Middle East, but also to defend the interests of the European Union and its Member States. [Read more](#)

■ Luxembourg :



Prime Minister visits Paris and Brussels

On 28 November, the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Luc Frieden, travelled to Paris where he met Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne. With President Emmanuel Macron, he discussed the European Union's strategic programme. He travelled to Belgium on 30 November to meet his Belgian counterpart, Alexander De Croo, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Sweden :



Relaunching nuclear power

The Swedish Parliament approved the nuclear revival bill on 29 November, by 152 votes to 149. The bill is due to come into force on 1 January 2024, the date from which Sweden will be able to build nuclear sites other than the three existing power stations. The government has already announced its intention to build 10 additional reactors by 2045. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



The EIB inaugurates a hub for Eastern Europe in Kyiv

On 27 November, the heads of the European Investment Bank, Werner Hoyer and Teresa Czerwińska, visited Ukraine to inaugurate a regional hub for Eastern Europe in Kyiv. This initiative demonstrates the EIB's support for the reconstruction and economic development of Ukraine. [Read more - Other link](#)



Conference on Green Recovery in Ukraine

A high-level conference on green recovery in Ukraine organised by the European Commission was held in Vilnius from 28 November to 1 December. Comprising a political and economic component, the conference aimed to propose specific and applicable solutions for the sustainable reconstruction of the country. [Read more](#)



Additional European funding for armed forces training

On 28 November, the European Union announced a further €194 million in aid for the training of Ukrainian soldiers, bringing the total to €255 million. Some 34,000 Ukrainian soldiers have now benefited from this training. [Read more](#)

■ OECD :



Economic Outlook

According to the OECD, global growth should reach 2.9% in 2023 and weaken to 2.7% in 2024. Inflation is expected to fall gradually to 5.2% and 3.8% in 2024 and 2025 respectively, from 7% in 2023. World trade growth is weak, at 1.5% in the first half of 2023. [Read more](#)

■ UN :



Inauguration of the COP28 in Dubai

COP28 opened on 30 November in Dubai, with the adoption of a fund to compensate vulnerable countries for loss and damage caused by climate change. Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Spain, France and Kenya jointly launched a new taskforce on international taxation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ NATO :



Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers

NATO foreign ministers met on 28 November to discuss the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, deterrence and the alliance's partnerships. Together with their Ukrainian counterpart, they held the first NATO-Ukraine Council, during which they reiterated their support for Ukraine and welcomed the progress made towards the country's accession to the Alliance. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Eurostat :



Decline in inflation in October

According to a Eurostat estimate published on 30 November, annual inflation continued to fall in October, reaching 2.4% in the eurozone, compared with 2.9% in September. The fall in energy prices played a major part in this decline. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Report on European Defence

On 30 November, the European Defence Agency published its annual report on defence data for 2022. The Member States allocated €240 billion to defence in 2022, a record and a 6% increase on 2021. Of this €240 billion, €58 billion was earmarked for investment, mainly for the purchase of equipment. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Annual report on the Erasmus+ programme

In its 2022 report on the Erasmus+ programme, published on 30 November, the Commission points out that more than 1.2 million citizens have benefited from funding for mobility for education and training purposes. The ongoing programme will receive almost twice as much funding as the 2014-2020 period for the period 2021-2027, with €26.2 billion in funding. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

First report by the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe

The Council of Europe's Observatory on History Teaching in Europe, chaired by Alain Lamassoure, who is also Chairman of the Foundation's Scientific Committee, presented its first report on 30 November. It states that curriculum overload and teaching pressures are the main obstacles to history teaching on the continent. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Modern Paris

Until 14 April 2024, the Petit Palais is presenting an exhibition entitled "Modern Paris 1905-1925". The exhibition highlights the work of a large number of artists who left their mark on the world of cinema, painting, fashion, photography and architecture in Paris from the Belle-Époque to the Roaring Twenties. [Read more](#)



The Impressionists at the Royal Academy

Until 10 March 2024, the Royal Academy in London is showcasing works on paper by the greatest Impressionists and Post-Impressionists of the 19th century. Drawings, pastels, watercolours, gouaches: the 77 works in the exhibition show how the Impressionists were able to rewrite the rules of art. [Read more](#)

Karlo Kacharava in Ghent

Until 14 April 2024, the Ghent Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK) is organising the first monographic exhibition of Georgian artist Karlo Kacharava outside Georgia. The exhibition "Karlo Kacharava: Sentimental Traveller" presents some of his most significant works and offers a new perspective on his work. [Read more](#)





Chopin's letters in Warsaw

The Fryderyk Chopin Museum in Warsaw is showcasing the letters of the famous Franco-Polish composer and pianist until 4 February 2024. Going beyond the traditional representation of musical genius, this epistolary exhibition explores the opening up of culture to the whole of society through the musician's letters. [Read more](#)

Tribute to Elliott Erwitt

A retrospective of the Franco-American photographer Elliott Erwitt, who died on 29 November 2023, is on show at La Sucrière in Lyon until 17 March 2024. Showcasing more than 215 photographs, the exhibition highlights the artist's work in black and white, as well as his colour pictures, which are less well known to the general public. [Read more](#)



The Art of Interference

The Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich is presenting the "Glitch" exhibition until 17 March 2024. The exhibition looks at the "glitch" art movement that emerged in the 1950s, which turned digital errors into new forms of expression, interference and design. [Read more](#)



Jorge Semprun in Weimar

An exhibition devoted to the Spanish writer Jorge Semprun is on show in Weimar until 29 February 2024. A survivor of the Shoah, he is being honoured for his writings on his wartime experiences and his opposition to Franco's regime. The exhibition also sheds light on the writer's great European vision. [Read more](#)

 4-5 December 2023

Justice and Home Affairs Council (Brussels)

 4-5 December 2023

Transport, Energy and Telecommunications Council (telecommunications) (Brussels)

 7-8 December 2023

EU-China Summit (Beijing)

 7 December 2023

Eurogroup (Brussels)

 7-8 December 2023

Competitiveness Council (Brussels)

 8 December 2023

Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Brussels)

 10-11 December 2023

Agriculture and Fisheries Council (Brussels)

 11 December 2023

Foreign Affairs Council (Brussels)



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