

**Letter n°1053 of Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

## Ukraine's European Aspirations

Myroslav Marynovych - 06 Feb 2024

For having chosen Western values, after being torn between East and West, Ukraine is under attack from Russia. It wants to join the European Union, which has evolved considerably since the founding fathers, and which will no doubt have to reshape itself further in the future.



[Front page!](#) | [Foundation](#) | [European Council](#) | [Commission](#) | [Council](#) | [Diplomacy](#) |

[Court of Justice](#) | [Court Auditors](#) | [Trilogues](#) | [European Agencies](#) | [Bulgaria](#) | [France](#) |

[Italy](#) | [UK](#) | [Montenegro](#) | [Georgia](#) | [Ukraine](#) | [Eurostat](#) |

[Prize](#) | [Culture](#) |

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

### ■ Front page! :



#### Successful transitions: incentives and innovation before prohibition

"To make a success of the transition, we must encourage rather than prohibit, we must innovate before regulating". For Jean-Dominique Giuliani, the Europeans have abused their legislative powers under the Green Deal, whereas the ecological transition requires the commitment of everyone: citizens, businesses and local authorities. "We need to convince before coercing, and sometimes we need to support before demanding results." [Read more](#)

## ■ Foundation :



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

From 6 to 9 June, Europeans are invited to elect 720 MEPs for the next five years. The Foundation has created a website to help you better 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 in each Member State. [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 2 February, the Commission paid €1.4 billion to Spain. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to check the amounts and schedules. [Read more](#)

## ■ European Council :



### Extraordinary European Council

On 1 February, the 27 Heads of State and Government reached an agreement to increase the European budget by €64.6 billion, including €50 billion for Ukraine, at the mid-term review of the 2021-2027 budget. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Commission :



### Exemption from certain CAP rules for 2024

On 31 January, the Commission proposed a dispensation from the rules of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which require farmers to set aside 4% of their farmland for non-productive areas or set-aside. For 2024, farmers will be able to opt out of this rule, provided they devote 7% of their land to growing nitrogen-fixing plants without using pesticides. [Read more](#)



## Inspections into unfair competition practices in the tyre sector

On 31 January, the Commission announced that it was carrying out unannounced inspections of tyre companies in various EU countries. It is concerned that some of these companies may be engaging in practices contrary to competition law, in particular by coordinating their prices. If violations are found, the companies risk being fined. [Read more](#)



## Social Summit

The tripartite social summit was held on 31 January. The participants signed a declaration for a rich European social dialogue and committed themselves to resolving the problem of labour shortages, and to strengthening European social dialogue through several measures such as the creation of a social dialogue envoy within the Commission. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Council :



## Defence of the Defence Ministers

Meeting on 30 and 31 January, the defence ministers discussed the deepening of European defence cooperation, military support for Ukraine and the level of defence preparedness in the Member States. [Read more](#)



## Extension of sanctions against Russia

At their meeting on 29 January, the European Affairs ministers discussed the state of the rule of law in the EU and debated the Commission's legislative proposals on the defence of democracy. They renewed for 6 months the sanctions against Russia following its aggression against Ukraine, until 31 July 2024. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Council Agreement on the AI Act

The permanent representatives of the Member States reached agreement on 2 February on the final version of the legislation on artificial intelligence (AI Act). The aim is to provide a framework for the development and use of artificial intelligence, to prevent it from being used to undermine public security or the fundamental rights of European citizens. The text will now have to be definitively adopted by Parliament before coming into force. [Read more](#)

## ■ Diplomacy :



### Trade and Technology Council with the United States

Vice-Presidents Margrethe Vestager, Commissioner for Competition, Valdis Dombrovskis, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, and Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for the Internal Market, met Antony Blinken, US Secretary of State, Gina Raimondo, US Secretary of Commerce and Katherine Tai, US Trade Representative, on 30 January as part of the Trade and Technology Council. Discussions focused on cooperation in the fields of artificial intelligence, ecological transition and access to strategic raw materials. [Read more](#)



### Ministerial Meeting with the ASEAN countries

At a ministerial meeting between the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 2 February, representatives from both sides called for closer cooperation in areas such as trade, ecological transitions and digital technology. The leaders also spoke out in favour of multilateralism based on the rule of law. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Court of Justice :



### Storage of data on convicted offenders

In a ruling handed down on 30 January, the Court of Justice ruled that police authorities cannot keep the biometric and genetic data of individuals convicted of a criminal offence indefinitely. The retention of such data cannot be systematic and indiscriminate, and the length of time the authorities retain individuals' data must depend on factors such as the nature and seriousness of the offence. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Court Auditors :



### Report on the Diplomatic Service

In a report published on 30 January, the Court of Auditors gives a positive assessment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), while pointing out weaknesses in communication with delegations in third countries. The Court recommends improving interaction with the delegations in third countries and implementing effective and secure exchanges with the Council and the Commission. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Trilogues :



### Agreement on the "Breakfast" Directives

On 30 January, Parliament and the Council reached agreement on directives concerning honey, jams, fruit juices and milk powder. The aim of these rules is to improve consumer information, particularly on the origin and composition of products. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



### Revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive

On 29 January, Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the revision of the directive on urban wastewater treatment. The directive will now apply to agglomerations of more than 1,000 inhabitants, which will be required to set up a wastewater collection system, and to apply a second treatment to wastewater before it is released into the environment. [Read more](#)



### European consumers' right to redress

On 2 February, Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the directive on strengthening consumers' right to redress. Manufacturers of everyday household products will be obliged to offer consumers the option of repairing a faulty product. Consumers will be able to borrow a product during the repair period and have free online access to an assessment of repair prices. The legal guarantee for repaired goods will be extended by one year. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)





## Agreement that aims to strengthen the internal market in the event of crisis

On 1 February, Parliament and the Council reached an agreement aimed at strengthening the internal market in the event of a crisis posing a risk to the stability of supply chains for essential goods and services. In particular, the agreement establishes an "Emergency and Resilience Committee for the Internal Market" to advise the Commission on prevention, alert and emergency measures. The agreement still has to be formally approved by the two institutions. [Read more](#)

## ■ European Agencies :



### Dismantling of a Network in Cyprus

On 29 January, Europol carried out an operation to dismantle a criminal network of illegal immigration based on fictitious marriages. Conducted in Cyprus, the operation led to the arrest of 15 people. [Read more](#)

## ■ Bulgaria :



### Bulgaria launches a European Arrest Warrant

On 30 January, Bulgaria issued a European arrest warrant for six Russian spies suspected of terrorism on its territory. The Russian nationals are accused of entering Bulgaria under false identities and carrying out explosions at four ammunition warehouses between 2011 and 2020. [Read more](#)

## ■ France :



### State Visit in Sweden

From 30 to 31 January, French President Emmanuel Macron made a State visit to Sweden. He met King Carl XVI Gustaf and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, with whom he discussed the renewal of the Franco-Swedish strategic partnership in innovation, defence and the ecological and digital transition. [Read more](#)



## Declaration of General Policy

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal presented his general policy statement to the National Assembly on 30 January and to the Senate on 31 January. The Prime Minister made announcements on forthcoming reforms to the economy, housing, public services, the environment and agriculture. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Italy :



### Summit with Africa

On 29 and 30 January, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni brought together African heads of state and representatives of the European Union and the United Nations for the Italy-Africa summit in Rome. The meeting provided an opportunity to reiterate the strong links between Italy and its African partners, and to consider ways of boosting them at a time when Italy currently holds the presidency of the G7. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ UK :



### New First Minister in Northern Ireland

On 3 February, Michelle O'Neill, leader of Sinn Féin, the republican party, was appointed "First Minister" by the local assembly in Northern Ireland. For the first time in its history, Northern Ireland is headed by a nationalist who is in favour of the reunification of the two Irelands. This appointment comes a few days after the agreement reached between London and the Northern Irish unionists, putting an end to the two years of political deadlock caused by the introduction of new post-Brexit trade rules. Northern Ireland now has a regional government after almost two years of vacancy. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Montenegro :



### Accession Conference with Montenegro

The fifteenth ministerial-level accession conference with Montenegro was held in Brussels on 29 January. European representatives were able to engage in a dialogue with the Prime Minister of Montenegro, Milojko Spajić, on his country's progress towards accession to the European Union. For Montenegro, the priorities remain the rule of law and the fight against corruption. [Read more](#)

## ■ Georgia :



### Change of Prime Minister in Georgia

Irakli Kobakhidzé took over as head of the Georgian government on 29 January, replacing Irakli Garibashvili. Garibashvili takes over the reins of the ruling "Georgian Dream" party, with parliamentary elections scheduled for 2024. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Ukraine :



### Trade measures with Ukraine and Moldova

On 31 January, the Commission announced the renewal for one year of the suspension of trade barriers with Ukraine and Moldova. The Commission has included protection mechanisms in the agreement, in anticipation of a situation where imports cause destabilisation of the European market. The measures include the possibility of reintroducing customs barriers on certain sensitive products if the quantities imported become too large. [Read more](#)



### The ICJ has jurisdiction over the invasion of Ukraine

On 2 February, the International Court of Justice considered itself competent to rule on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and reiterated its rejection of the Russian argument that the invasion of Ukraine was aimed at putting an end to the genocide of the Russian-speaking populations of Eastern Ukraine. On 31 January, the Court also rejected Ukraine's claim that Russia had not financed terrorism by arming separatist groups in the Donbas. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



### Russian assets frozen to help rebuild Ukraine

In a resolution by its Political Affairs Committee on 30 January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called for frozen Russian state assets to be mobilised for the reconstruction of Ukraine. These assets amount to 300 billion dollars, whereas in June 2023 the damage caused by Russia in Ukraine was estimated at 416 billion dollars. [Read more](#)



## ■ Eurostat :



### **Stable GDP, inflation declining, and unemployment down**

According to Eurostat estimates published on 30 January and 1 February, GDP remained stable for the European Union and the eurozone in the fourth quarter of 2023. January inflation is estimated at 2.8% in the eurozone, compared with 2.9% in December 2023. In December 2023, unemployment stood at 6.4% in the Eurozone and 5.9% in the European Union, down slightly on November 2023. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Prize :



### **Prize for the best article on the transformation of the energy sector**

The Hanns Seidel Foundation, the Academy for Politics and Current Affairs and the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities are organising their first international prize for the best article on the subject of the transformation of the energy sector. Young researchers are invited to submit an article on the political and technical approaches to energy transformation by 29 February. [Read more](#)

## ■ Culture :



### **Cracow Opera Festival**

Until 18 February, the Opera Rara Kraków festival will be presenting compositions from all eras and genres, transcending the conventions and classical formats of opera. In the 2024 edition of the festival, audiences will be treated to Mozart's Idomeneo and Karol Nepelski's Solaris, based on the science fiction novel of the same name. [Read more](#)



## Valie Export in Berlin

Until 22 May, the C/O Berlin museum is hosting a retrospective exhibition on the Austrian feminist artist Valie Export. The exhibition presents the work of the artist, who questions social norms and gender models through her feminist performances and experimental photographs. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Giacometti in Copenhagen

From 10 February to 20 May, the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen is staging "What Meets the Eye", an exhibition of sculptures and drawings by the famous Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti, one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. [Read more](#)



## Surrealism at the Fundación Canal in Madrid

From 7 February to 21 April, the Fundación Canal in Madrid will be hosting the exhibition "Surrealism: The Age of the Machine". The exhibition features 125 works, including paintings, photographs, prints, drawings, magazines, catalogues, books, sculptures and ready-made objects, by four artists - Duchamp, Man Ray, Picabia and Stieglitz - who broke with the traditional codes of art. [Read more](#)



## The Courtauld Gallery in London hosts Frank Auerbach's portraits

From 9 February to 27 May, the Courtauld Gallery in London is hosting an exhibition of "Charcoal Heads", a series of large-scale charcoal portraits produced by Frank Auerbach at the end of the Second World War. In their darkness, these portraits illustrate the post-Second World War period and the difficulty that contemporaries had in rebuilding their lives. For the first time, these charcoal works will be exhibited together with some of the artist's paintings of the same portraits. [Read more](#)



## Exhibition: Egypt of the Pharaohs at the Atelier des Lumières (Paris)

Until 5 January 2025, the Atelier des Lumières in Paris is presenting an exhibition entitled "Egypt of the Pharaohs". This will be an opportunity to discover the masterpieces of Egyptian civilisation from Cheops to Ramses II. [Read more](#)

## ■ Agenda :

 5-6 February 2024

**Meeting of ministers responsible for cohesion policy** (Mons)

---

 5-8 February

**Plenary Session of the European Parliament** (Strasbourg)

---

 8-9 February 2024

**Meeting of ministers responsible for competitiveness** (Genk)

---

 11-12 February 2024

**Meeting of Development Ministers** (Brussels)

---

 11 February 2024

**Presidential Election (2nd round)** (Finland)



### The Letter n°1053

PDF

[in English](#) -- Edition of Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024

 [I download](#)

The Letter is also available in:



 [I love the Robert Schuman Foundation's Letter](#)

The Letter's Editorial Team :  
**Stefanie Buzmaniuk, Helen Levy ;  
Loup Panteix, Juliette Bachschmidt,  
Charles Devoud**

N° ISSN: **2729-6482**

A question, a suggestion ?  
Contact us!

Editors-in-chief :  
**Peggy Corlin**  
Publishing Director :  
**Pascale Joannin**

[Click here if this email is not displayed correctly.](#)



You no longer wish to receive our letters. {LINK}