

**Letter n°1056 of Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

## The various causes of the agricultural crisis in Europe

Bernard Bourget - 27 Feb 2024

As the International Agricultural Show gets underway, the agricultural crisis is calling into question Europe's trade and environmental policies. The strategic dialogue launched by the Commission should prepare the programming of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) from 2028. European agriculture has lost its competitiveness, and some countries with a surplus on the international market are finding themselves with a deficit on the European market. "The European Union must change its approach to agriculture, relying less on regulatory constraints and taking greater account of the complexity of agricultural activity and the diversity of national, regional and local situations".



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■ **Front page! :**



## Europe, the moment of truth

In the face of attacks and interference, particularly from Russia, Europe's response has been too cautious. Europeans need to be determined "by giving massive support to the Ukrainians and Moldovans, who are for us 'the defence of the front'". In addition to massive investment in our security, Jean-Dominique Giuliani calls for "a declaration, agreement or treaty between European states, including the United Kingdom" through which "the signatories undertake to defend and protect each other". [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 set up 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 22 February, the Commission approved Lithuania's request for payment of €360 million. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to check out the figures and schedules. [Read more](#)

## ■ Ukraine :



### Europe reiterates its support for Ukraine

On the occasion of the two-year anniversary of the Russian invasion on 24 February, European leaders expressed their support for Ukraine. They continue to call for the return of the territories, an end to the fighting, and the application of international law. This support must take the form of financial and military aid, and must in the long term lead to Ukraine's integration into the European Union and NATO. In all, the EU and its Member States have provided more than €138 billion in aid, in the form of financing, budgetary support, humanitarian aid and military support. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## G7 declaration

The G7 heads of state and government met on 24 February to mark the second anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They held talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, and reaffirmed their support for Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression, through financial and military support and sanctions against Russia. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Ursula von der Leyen, Alexander De Croo, Giorgia Meloni and Justin Trudeau visit Kyiv

On 24 February, to mark the second anniversary of the Russian invasion, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hosted in Kyiv the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the Italian Council, Giorgia Meloni, the Belgian Prime Minister, Alexander De Croo, and the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. The meeting provided an opportunity to announce the signing of bilateral security treaties with Italy and Canada. The four leaders also reiterated their support for Ukraine in its war against the Russian aggressor. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



## Security agreement between Denmark and Ukraine

On 23 February, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen travelled to Lviv to join Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in honouring the memory of Ukrainian soldiers who have died fighting Russian invaders. They signed a bilateral security agreement, under which Denmark has committed itself over ten years to providing Ukraine with civil and military support, aid for the reconstruction of the town of Mykolaiv and support for the Ukrainian reforms needed to join the European Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Support from international organisations

On the 2nd anniversary of the Russian invasion, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reaffirmed Ukraine's determination to find a just peace that respects Ukrainian terms. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, expressed his concern about the humanitarian consequences of the conflict, in particular the situation of Ukrainian women. In a statement, the Council of Europe also deplored the deportation of children by Russia, assuring Ukraine of its unwavering support. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg insisted that it was only a matter of time before Ukraine joined the North Atlantic alliance. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



## Joint declaration on the war in Ukraine

On 23 February, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, issued a joint declaration on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The European institutions will continue to support Ukraine," said the leaders, "and support Ukraine's proposal for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. [Read more](#)

## ■ Diplomacy :



## Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers

On 19 February, EU foreign ministers launched the maritime security operation Aspides to protect commercial vessels in the Red Sea. They held talks with their Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba. Finally, the ministers held various discussions on the geopolitical environment in the Sahel, the Middle East and Belarus. [Read more](#)

## ■ Commission :



## White paper on the digital networks of the future

On 21 February, the Commission presented measures to promote innovation, security and resilience in the field of digital infrastructures. A White Paper analyses the challenges for Europe's digital networks of the future, and a recommendation addresses the specific problem of undersea cables. The White Paper highlights the need to develop cloud computing infrastructures and integrated connectivity systems. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Update on the Recovery and Resilience Facility

On 22 February, the Commission published a mid-term review of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which finances national recovery plans from the €800 billion NextGenerationEU fund. Nearly €225 billion has already been paid to the Member States, and the Commission estimates that the investments made possible by NextGenerationEU have the potential to increase the Union's GDP by 1.4% in 2026. The implementation of this plan will have to be accelerated in 2024 to pay all the funds to the Member States by 2026. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Council :



### 13th package of sanctions against Russia

On 23 February, the Council adopted the 13th package of European sanctions against Russia. The European Union is broadening the scope of individuals and entities covered by the sanctions, and tightening its control over companies supplying Russia with equipment to support its military arsenal. [Read more](#)



### Meeting of European Affairs Ministers

At a meeting of European affairs ministers on 20 February, Polish Justice Minister Adam Bodnar presented the judicial reforms carried out to wind up the Article 7 procedure launched in 2017. On this occasion, the Commission gave its opinion on the rule of law in the country. The ministers adopted the directive aimed at strengthening consumer rights to promote the circular economy and participate in the ecological transition and the regulation and directive on markets in financial instruments known as MiFIR and MiFID. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



## WTO Ministerial Meeting

On 25 February, the Council approved conclusions marking the start of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial meeting, which is being held until 29 February. The European ministers coordinated their objectives for this conference, and support an international trade order based on WTO rules. The Council spoke out in favour of reforming the WTO, with a view to unblocking the organisation's dispute settlement body, which has been unable to fulfil its functions since 2019. [Read more](#)



## Meeting of Tourism Ministers

On 19 and 20 February, the ministers responsible for tourism were invited by the Belgian Presidency to discuss the digital and sustainable transition of tourism. The ministers were able to express their expectations regarding the measures relating to tourism that could feature on the agenda of the next Commission. [Read more](#)



## Meeting of Economics and Finance Ministers

The Ministers for Economic Affairs and Finance met in Ghent on 23 and 24 February. They discussed the future of Europe's financial and capital markets, and ways of meeting the challenge of the Union's competitiveness. The Eurogroup ministers re-elected Tuomas Saarenheimo as Chairman of the Eurogroup working group. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Trilogues :



## Agreement on carbon dioxide capture and air pollution

On 20 February, the European Parliament and the Council reached agreement on a regulation establishing a European certification framework for the removal and capture of carbon dioxide. On the same day, they reached agreement on a directive on air pollution. The legislation sets targets for reducing the quantity of certain pollutants in the air by 2030. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ ECB :



## Financial Statements 2023

On 22 February, the European Central Bank (ECB) published its financial statements for 2023. They show a loss of €1.3 billion after reversal of a €6.6 billion provision for financial risks. This loss will be carried forward on the ECB's balance sheet to be offset by future profits. [Read more](#)

## ■ European Agencies :



### The European Anti-Money Laundering Authority in Frankfurt

The European Parliament and the Council have chosen Frankfurt, out of 9 candidate cities, to be the seat of the European Anti-Money Laundering Authority. A central authority in the fight against dirty money, the agency will be responsible for combating the financing of terrorism, and will have powers of supervision, sanctions and harmonisation of rules in this area. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



### Agreement between Frontex and the United Kingdom on illegal immigration

On 23 February, the UK and the European border and coastguard agency Frontex signed an agreement to combat illegal immigration. The UK Border Force and Frontex will work together to develop new technologies, exchange intelligence, train officials and establish liaison staff. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Bulgaria :



### Nuclear energy cooperation with France

On 21 February, Bulgaria's Energy Minister, Rumen Radev, and France's Minister of the Economy and Finance, Bruno le Maire, signed a declaration of intent aimed at strengthening cooperation in the field of civil nuclear energy. The stated objectives are to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and to strengthen their countries' energy security and sovereignty. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ France :



## Strengthening links with Armenia

French President Emmanuel Macron met Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pachinian on 21 February. He expressed France's support for Armenia's independence and territorial integrity, and pledged its support for the development of relations between the European Union and Armenia, with a view to enabling Armenia to benefit from the European Peace Facility. On 23 February, the French Minister for the Armed Forces, Sébastien Lecornu, travelled to Yerevan where he met his Armenian counterpart. On this occasion, he confirmed the rapprochement between France and Armenia in terms of defence. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Latvia :



## Ban on imports of certain Russian and Belarusian agricultural products

On 22 February, Latvian MPs voted to ban imports of agricultural products and animal feed from Russia and Belarus. These products will also be banned from being imported from third countries. [Read more](#)

## ■ Poland :



## Speech by Radosław Sikorski at the UN

On 23 February, Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, gave a point-by-point rebuttal at the United Nations Security Council to the statements made by Vassili Nebenzia, Russia's Permanent Representative to the UN. He retorted that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was the third Russian attempt to exterminate the Ukrainian people after a first one by the imperialists in the 19th century, then by the Bolsheviks, that Western mistrust of Russia was the result of Russia's repeated nuclear threats, and that the Ukrainian government was democratically elected. [Read more](#)

## ■ Sweden :





## Budapest ratifies Sweden's entry into NATO

Three days after the visit of the Swedish Prime Minister, Ulf Kristersson, and the signing of a defence industrial cooperation agreement between Stockholm and Budapest, the Hungarian Parliament approved Sweden's accession to NATO on 26 February. The country will now be able to join the Atlantic Alliance. Ulf Kristersson declared that this was a historic day for NATO, and that Sweden was ready to assume its responsibilities in Euro-Atlantic security. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Albania :



## Migration agreement with Italy

On 22 February, the Albanian parliament gave the green light to a migration agreement with Italy. The agreement provides for the construction of two reception centres on Albanian territory, with a total capacity of around 3,000 people, for migrants rescued in Italian waters. These centres will be financed by Rome, which will also be responsible for policing them. [Read more](#)

## ■ Georgia :



## Meeting with the Secretary General of NATO

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg hosted Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze in Brussels on 21 February to discuss how NATO and Georgia could strengthen their cooperation ties. They agreed to step up their cooperation in the event of a crisis and on cyber security and military engineering issues. [Read more](#)



## EU-Georgia Association Council

The eighth meeting of the Association Council between the European Union and Georgia was held on 20 February in the presence of Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze. The EU representatives welcomed the reforms carried out in Georgia with a view to accession to the European Union, and invited the Georgian government to continue its efforts, particularly in consolidating the rule of law and aligning its foreign and security policy with that of the EU. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Studies/Reports :



## Report on the rule of law and European funds

On 22 February, the Court of Auditors published a special report on the rule of law in the European Union, focusing in particular on the impact of the cross-compliance regulation. The Court concludes that the regulation on conditionality helps to improve the rule of law, but recommends that the Commission develop additional administrative capacity to apply the regulation in full, and further improve the protection of the rule of law through other legislative measures. [Read more - Other link](#)

## ■ Culture :

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### Spectaculare Festival in Prague

Until 28 March, Prague is hosting the 11th Spectaculare Festival, organised by Josef Sedloň. This eclectic festival offers all styles of music, performed in unusual venues around the city. Although the concerts are central to the festival, it also features workshops, film screenings and exhibitions, giving spectators a complete experience. [Read more](#)



### "The Alchemy of Painting", by Michalis Economou, in Athens

The "Alchemy of Painting" exhibition by Michalis Economou is on until 12 May at the B&M Theocharakis Foundation in Athens. It features 116 works by the Greek Impressionist painter. Inspired by the splendour of nature, Michalis Economou places simplicity at the heart of his work, bringing to life isolated houses and floating boats in the serenity of Greek landscapes. [Read more](#)



### Exhibition on Missak Manouchian and his comrades in Paris

The exhibition "Vivre à en mourir. Missak Manouchian and his Resistance comrades at the Panthéon" is being held in the crypt of the Panthéon in Paris until 8 September. It includes original documents, photographs and handwritten notebooks of the Armenian militant and his Resistance comrades. [Read more](#)

belvedere

### Ukrainian Modernism in Vienna

The exhibition "In the Eye of the Storm: Modernism in Ukraine" is on show at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna until 2 June. It explores the development of modern art in the first half of the 20th century and the history of Ukraine's cultural identity. At the opening of the exhibition, Olena Zelenska welcomed the first visitors, stressing that it is also through art that Ukraine continues its fight for survival. [Read more - Other link](#)

THYSSEN-  
BORNEMISZA  
MUSEO NACIONAL

### Isabel Quintanilla at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid

Until 2 June, the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid is devoting a retrospective to the Spanish artist Isabel Quintanilla, a major figure in contemporary Realism. The exhibition features around a hundred works, including her most famous drawings and paintings, rarely seen in Spain. [Read more](#)



### "Audre Lorde - The Berlin Years" in Berlin

The photo exhibition "Audre Lorde - The Berlin Years" is running until 30 June at the FHXB Museum in Berlin. It features various photographic portraits of Audrey Lorde, the Afro-American poet and activist who was a leading figure in the fight against racism, sexism and homophobia in Berlin in the 1980s and 1990s. [Read more](#)



### Wim Delvoye's "L'ordre des choses" in Geneva

The "L'ordre des choses" exhibition runs until 16 June at Geneva's Musée d'Art et d'Histoire. Belgian visual artist Wim Delvoye offers a striking aesthetic experience that calls into question the boundary between art and everyday objects. [Read more](#)



## Bartosz Koval in Warsaw

Until 30 March, the Staromiejski Dom Kultury in Warsaw is exhibiting the works of Bartosz Koval. His paintings are images that have been replayed, recopied and reworked by an alternative algorithm. Koval attempts to capture indefinite states, existential anxiety, the fissure of reality. [Read more](#)



## Photojournalism in London

The exhibition "Bert Hardy: Photojournalism in War and Peace" is on show at the Photographer's Gallery in London until 2 June. It explores the key moments in the career of this photographer, known for his monochrome photographs capturing everyday scenes in post-war Britain. [Read more](#)

## ■ Agenda :

 25-29 February 2024

**Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)** (Abu-Dhabi)

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 26-29 February 2024

**WTO Ministerial Conference** (Abu-Dhabi)

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 26-29 February 2024

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

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 29 February - 1 March 2024

**Meeting of Education Ministers** (Strasbourg)

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 4 March 2024

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

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 4-5 March 2024

**Justice and Home Affairs Council** (Brussels)



## The Letter n°1056

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