

Letter n°1063 of Tuesday 16th April 2024

Health for the Europeans, who cares?

Tiphaine Maloingne - 16 Apr 2024

Health is a cross-cutting issue for European action, as part of a "Europe that protects". To build a Europe of health, there are ways of establishing shared competences. At the end of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the EU affirmed its resolve to create a "right to health". So how can we "strengthen the horizon of a European health affectio societatis"? We need to consider the emergence of a health democracy on a European scale, look at the EU's influence in research and innovation, and set up a think-tank on European health to tackle major new challenges such as bio-law and artificial intelligence. Making health intelligible to the public is also essential.



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■ Elections :



General Elections in Croatia on 17 April

Although his candidacy has been rejected by the Constitutional Court, the President of the Republic, Zoran Milanovic, has announced that he will head the government if his party, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), wins the parliamentary elections on 17 April. According to the polls, the Democratic Union (HDZ) (31%), led by outgoing Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, is in the lead. In office since 2016, he warns against Zoran Milanovic, who could throw Croatia "into the arms of Russia". [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



The issues at stake in the European Elections

In under two months' time, from 6 to 9 June, Europeans are being invited to elect 720 Members of the European Parliament for the next five years. The Foundation has set up a website to help you understand the role and powers of the Parliament, the voting rules and the issues at stake, and to follow the campaign with the lists of candidates and party programmes in each Member State. [Read more](#)



The Schuman Network

The Schuman Network is an initiative launched in November 2023 by the Robert Schuman Foundation, which works to promote the sharing of ideas on a European scale. With 20 members from 12 European countries, the Schuman Network is a space for pooling research on current European issues. Since its launch, around sixty studies have been published on the network's website. [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. On 10 April, the Commission gave a positive preliminary assessment of Latvia's second request for payment of €336 million. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to check on the amounts and timetables. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Code of conduct for the 2024 elections

On 9 April, all European political parties signed a code of conduct for the European Parliament elections in June 2024. This code of conduct, negotiated with the parties by European Commissioner Věra Jourová, is part of the Commission's "defence of democracy" package, aimed at protecting the European election campaign in June from foreign interference and disinformation. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Pact on Migration and Asylum

On 10 April, MEPs adopted the ten legislative texts of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. The Pact stipulates that Member States experiencing strong migratory pressure must be helped by other countries in the form of relocation of migrants and asylum seekers, a financial contribution or operational and technical support. A mechanism to deal with crisis situations and cases of force majeure in the event of an exceptional influx into a Member State. Screening of third-country nationals is possible at the EU's external borders, as are faster asylum procedures thanks to a new common procedure for granting international protection. All data - including fingerprints and facial images from the age of six - will be stored in the Eurodac database, and the authorities will be able to film people who pose a threat to security. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Pharmaceutical products and medicines

On 10 April, MEPs adopted the "pharmaceutical package", i.e. a directive and a regulation designed to encourage innovation and strengthen the security of supply and accessibility of medicinal products for human use. They wish to introduce a minimum regulatory period of seven and a half years for data protection for companies bringing an innovative medicine to market. This period is in addition to the two-year market protection period - during which generic, hybrid or biosimilar products cannot be sold - following the granting of a marketing authorisation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



"Breakfast" Directives

On 10 April, MEPs approved an agreement with the Council on revisions to the breakfast foods directives. These directives aim to help consumers make better-informed decisions about products such as honey, fruit juices and jams. In particular, the new rules impose compulsory labelling to systematically identify the country of origin of honey imported from third countries, thereby guaranteeing its traceability. In addition, labels indicating the sugar content of fruit juices and the minimum proportion of fruit in jams will now be clearer. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Reform of the European Electricity Market

On 11 April, MEPs approved the agreement reached with the Council to reform the European electricity market. The measures should protect consumers from price volatility by making the European electricity market more affordable and encouraging the use of "contracts for difference" to stimulate investment in energy. They will also protect vulnerable customers from power cuts, including in the event of disputes between suppliers and customers. [Read more - Other link](#)



Reform of the gas market

On 11 April, MEPs adopted reforms to the gas market that will facilitate access to renewable and low-carbon gases, including hydrogen. A common gas purchasing system will be established to avoid competition between Member States. Mechanisms to ensure fair pricing and stable energy supplies will be strengthened, thereby limiting gas imports from Russia and Belarus. The legislation encourages the use of biomethane and hydrogen to reduce dependence on fossil gas. [Read more - Other link](#)



Reform of the European Parliament

On 10 April, MEPs approved the report intended to implement the recommendations of the parliamentary working group on parliamentary reform entitled "Parliament 2024". This reform should simplify legislative work by reducing conflicts of competence between committees and allowing the establishment of temporary legislative committees to deal with cross-cutting proposals. In addition, special hearings and ad hoc plenary sessions will be introduced to strengthen the Commission's control. [Read more](#)



The King of the Belgians speaks to MPs

King Philippe, King of the Belgians, gave a speech to the European Parliament on 10 April in which he emphasised the "geo-ecological" role of the European Union and called for unity in the face of climate change. He called for the defence of democracy in the face of a growing global trend towards autocracy, and a loss of confidence in political institutions. Finally, he spoke of the importance of the European set of social rights and the social dimension of the Union. [Read more - Other link](#)



Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers

On 12 April, the 27 Economics and Finance Ministers adopted the conclusions of the mid-term review of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), welcoming the progress made in its implementation. However, they felt that it was still too early to assess its impact. The ministers discussed Ukraine's budgetary and economic situation, and the European Public Prosecutor, Laura Codruța Kövesi, gave a presentation on suspected fraud in the allocation of €11 billion in RRF funding, which had led to the dismantling of cross-border criminal networks. [Read more](#)



Eurogroup Meeting

On 11 April, the eurozone ministers held an exchange of views on the external competitiveness of the eurozone, on exchange rates and inflation before the next spring meeting of the World Bank and the IMF, and on the progress of the digital euro project. [Read more](#)



Informal Meeting of Telecommunications Ministers

The telecommunications ministers, meeting in Louvain-la-Neuve from 11 to 12 April, want to strengthen digital infrastructures against cyber attacks and technical incidents. They tasked the Commission with creating optional tools to verify the authenticity of profiles with which consumers interact online. They advocated the creation of a single European telecommunications market to harmonise rules and pave the way for investment and innovation. [Read more](#)

■ ECB:



Interest rates to remain unchanged but expected to fall in the short term

On April 11, the European Central Bank (ECB) decided to leave its three key interest rates unchanged as inflation in the eurozone has declined from 10.6% in 2022 to 2.4% in March 2024. The ECB considers that current rates are contributing to the fall in inflation and is considering measures to lower rates, since inflation is very close to the ECB's 2% target. [Read more](#)

■ EIB:

EIB action plan for the defence industry

On 12 April, the finance ministers of the EU Member States activated the action plan proposed by Nadia Calviño, President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), aimed at strengthening support for the European security and defence industry. The action plan includes adapting the EIB's lending policy towards the security and defence industry. [Read more](#)

■ Bulgaria :



Caretaker government until 9 June

Following the failure of the rotation of government agreed between the country's two main parties last month, Bulgarian President Rumen Radev entrusted Dimitar Glavchev with the task of forming a provisional technical government. The new government was sworn in on 9 April. New parliamentary elections will be held on 9 June, at the same time as the European elections. [Read more](#)

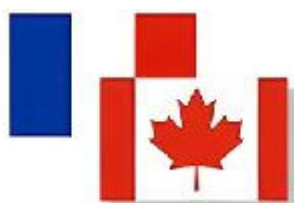
■ Croatia :



Survey one week before the general election

According to the latest surveys published on 14 April, a week ahead of the Croatian parliamentary elections, the Democratic Union (HDZ) of outgoing Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic is leading in the 10 constituencies with 60 seats, followed by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) with 44 seats, the Patriotic Movement (DP) with 41 and 14 seats, "We Can!" and "The Bridge" with 9 seats each, then the Istrian Democratic Diet (IDS) with 2 seats, "Focus and Republic" and Matije Posavca's independent list with 1 seat each. Voting will take place on 17 April. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ France :



The Prime Minister in Canada

French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal visited Ottawa from 10 to 12 April, where he met his Canadian counterpart Justin Trudeau. The two heads of government reiterated their support for the free trade agreement between Canada and the European Union, which was rejected by the French Senate at the end of March. They also discussed strengthening Franco-Canadian cooperation in the fields of culture and linguistics, the environment, research and development, and economic cooperation. [Read more](#)

■ Ireland :



Simon Harris' Government

Simon Harris (Fine Gael) became Ireland's youngest Prime Minister on 9 April, succeeding Leo Varadkar. His government took office the same day. Leading a coalition with the Green Party and Fianna Fáil, he carried out a cabinet reshuffle by appointing Patrick O'Donovan, Minister for Higher Education, and Peter Burke, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, to replace Simon Coveney. The rest of the government remains unchanged. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Lithuania :



Three Seas Summit

On 11 April, the summit of the Three Seas Initiative - Baltic, Adriatic and Black - a forum of Central and Eastern European countries, was held in Vilnius. It brought together 13 EU Member States, two associated states, Ukraine and Moldova, and four strategic partners, including the European Commission and the United States. The aim of this initiative is to strengthen cooperation in the fields of transport, energy, cyber security and military mobility. In the presence of the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the focus was on aid to Ukraine and the need for efforts to integrate Ukraine and Moldova into the European Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Serbia :



Serb President visits Paris

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic met Emmanuel Macron at the Élysée Palace in Paris on 8 April. The two heads of state signed an agreement concerning the purchase by Serbia of 12 Rafale aircraft. They also discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation in the defence, energy, innovation and artificial intelligence sectors. On this occasion, the French President reiterated his commitment to and support for Serbia's integration into the European Union. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Security Agreement with Latvia

The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and his Latvian counterpart, Edgars Rinkēvičs, signed a security agreement on 11 April that commits Latvia over 10 years to work towards Ukraine's integration into the European Union and NATO, to provide military and non-military aid to Ukraine, and to support the country in the war against Russia. In particular, Latvia undertakes to devote 0.25% of its GDP per year to military aid to Ukraine. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Defence Agreement with the UK

The UK and Ukraine signed a defence framework agreement on 8 April. The agreement aims to facilitate joint military and industrial cooperation projects. On this occasion, the British Ministry of Defence signed an agreement with the British company BAE Systems for the maintenance, repair and overhaul of L119 light guns in Ukraine. [Read more - Other link](#)



Reconstruction of Ukraine

The members of the multi-institutional donor coordination platform for Ukraine - which includes the G7 countries, the European Union and the United States - met in Kyiv on 10 April. They reiterated their unwavering support for the country's resilience and reconstruction, and discussed ways of supporting reconstruction, particularly in the energy sector. The Ukrainian government presented its plan for Ukraine, detailing the reforms and investments needed to modernise the country with a view to its accession to the Union. This plan will qualify the country for €50 billion from the Ukraine Facility. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ IMF :



Kristalina Georgieva reappointed

On 12 April, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) renewed the term of office of the Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva of Bulgaria, for a further five years. She was the only candidate in the running. [Read more](#)

■ Eurobarometer :



Survey on Social Europe

A Eurobarometer survey published on 12 April shows that 88% of EU citizens want a strong Social Europe. At national level, 48% of respondents believe that tackling the high cost of living should be a major priority in their country, followed by the issue of low pay (35%). At European level, respondents consider living standards (45%), fair working conditions (44%) and access to quality healthcare (44%) to be key elements of the EU's social and economic development. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



The war in Ukraine is forcing the decline of world trade

On 10 April, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) published its "World Trade Prospects and Statistics" report. The report notes a 1.2% contraction in trade and a 5% drop in the value of exports and imports. These declines are mainly attributed to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which plunged Europe into a period of inflation, resulting in a general drop in demand for imports on the European continent. [Read more](#)



Reduction of State Aid in 2023

On 9 April, the Commission published its 2023 State aid scoreboard. This table shows a reduction in aid in 2022 compared with 2021. Despite this, Member States have maintained their support for businesses affected by the Covid-19 crisis and Russia's war in Ukraine. A total of €228 billion has been deployed, including €76.65 billion for businesses affected by the pandemic and €39.33 billion to mitigate the impact of measures linked to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. [Read more](#)



Public Development Assistance

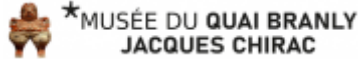
According to an OECD report published on 11 April, aid disbursed by the member countries of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) - the countries of the European Union as well as the United States, Canada, Iceland, South Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Switzerland - reached \$223.7 billion in 2023, 1.8% more than in 2022. The United States is the biggest donor (\$66 billion), followed by Germany (\$36.68 billion), then the European institutions (\$26.93 billion). Ukraine received \$40.5 billion, \$12 billion more than in 2022, becoming the largest recipient of DAC official development assistance over one year. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Report on Forest Fires

On 10 April, the Commission published a report by the Joint Research Centre on forest fires in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa in 2023. The report shows an increase in the areas burnt during the summer months, mainly in the Mediterranean region. An area twice the size of Luxembourg has burnt in the EU, i.e. 504,002 hectares. These figures are set to accelerate in 2024, with 1,227 fires mapped as of mid-March, compared with an average of 645 last year. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Mexica in Paris

In association with Mexico City's National Institute of Anthropology and History, the Quai Branly-Acques Chirac Museum is dedicating an exhibition to the Mexica culture, running until 8 September. Although the Mexican civilisation, long wrongly referred to as Aztec, is well known and documented, its culture remains unknown. The exhibition lifts the veil on certain little-known aspects of this civilisation, particularly in the fields of ritual, art and architecture. [Read more](#)

FLOWERS

Terry Frost in London

Sir Terry Frost's exhibition is on at the Flowers Gallery in London until 11 May. It celebrates his artistic legacy from 1966 to 2003, influenced by his experiences in a Second World War prisoner of war camp. His deep connection with the British landscapes of Cornwall and Yorkshire, and his inventive use of colour, make him a leading figure in British modernism. [Read more](#)



Beate and Serge Klarsfeld, "les combats de la mémoire" in Marseille

From 18 April to 1 September, in partnership with the Musée d'Histoire de Marseille, the Shoah Memorial will be retracing the steps taken by Beate and Serge Klarsfeld to help the victims of the Shoah and to combat the impunity of those formerly responsible for the Final Solution. Unique documents and objects will be on display, revealing the history and motivations behind this couple's commitment. [Read more](#)

Caspar David Friedrich in Berlin

The exhibition "Casper Friedrich - Unendliche Landschaften" will be on show at the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin from 19 April to 4 August. Around 60 paintings and 50 drawings by the greatest painter of German Romanticism are on show. Part of the celebrations to mark the artist's 250th birthday, the exhibition is being held under the patronage of the German President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier. [Read more](#)



Suzanne Valadon in Barcelona

From 19 April to 1 September, the Museu d'Art de Catalunya, in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou-Metz and the Musée d'Art de Nantes, is presenting the exhibition "Suzanne Valadon. A modern epic". More than 100 paintings are on show, along with drawings, prints and sculptures by this emblematic figure of Bohemian society in Montmartre in the early 20th century. [Read more](#)



The Egypt of the Pharaohs in Les Baux-de-Provence

The Carrière des Lumières in Les Baux-de-Provence is devoting an exhibition to ancient Egypt, from 19 April to 5 January 2025. The exhibition invites visitors on a journey along the Nile, during which they can contemplate the construction of the pyramids and witness the mythical battles that marked the reign of Egypt's most illustrious rulers. It's a chance to discover this mythical civilisation that spans three millennia. [Read more](#)



60th anniversary of the Venice Biennale

The 60th Venice Biennale is being held from 20 April to 24 November under the direction of Adriano Pedrosa. Its theme is "Stranieri Ovunque", which means "Foreigners Everywhere", and it features foreign and immigrant artists. To coincide with the opening of the event on 17 April, an exhibition devoted to Willem de Kooning will be on show at the Gallerie Accademia, highlighting the influence of his travels to Italy on the works of this Dutch-American artist. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

MUZEUM sztuki nowoczesnej w warszawie

Maria Prymachenko in Warsaw

Until 30 June, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw is hosting the exhibition "A tiger entered the garden" by Ukrainian artist Maria Prymachenko. The exhibition features gouaches produced between 1982 and 1994, whose humour, optimism and surrealist imagination convey a message of peace and harmony between nature and mankind . [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 15-19 April 2024

Spring Session of the IMF and the World Bank (Washington DC)

 15-16 April 2024

Energy Ministers' Informal Meeting (Brussels)

 16 April 2024

"Foreign Affairs" Council (Video conference)

 17-18 April 2024

Extraordinary European Council (Brussels)

 17 April 2024

General Elections (Croatia)



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