

## New European Challenges: the "Schuman" lesson

Jean-Dominique Giuliani - 23 Apr 2024

Against the backdrop of the health crisis and the war in Ukraine, "the European institutions have had to adapt to the needs expressed by the Member States". The Green Pact, digital regulation and the measures taken to deal with the Russian aggressor were spectacular responses in a new geopolitical environment. The mistakes that have been made should lead us to encourage and support rather than constrain and regulate. Faced with the new economic and foreign and defence policy challenges, "offering European added value over the long term rather than trying to replace national policies straight away is probably the recipe for success. "The Schuman method remains more relevant than ever."



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■ **Front page! :**



## The third era of European integration

The European Union, which is entering its third phase, needs to adapt to rise to four challenges. The democratic dimension means improving the way in which public policies are perceived by citizens. The EU's economic stagnation in the face of China and the United States calls for massive investment. It will also have to prefer incentives to regulations to encourage the inventions of tomorrow. Finally, the problem of security will require enormous efforts that will affect the comfort of the citizens of Europe. To meet these challenges, Europeans will have to "devise new means, new policies which, while denying nothing of past successes, are willing to take account of the reality of the new world". This is the purpose of the contributions made by the highest European authorities to the Schuman Report 2024 on Europe - the State of the Union - published on 24 April. [Read more](#)

## ■ Elections :



### HDZ takes first place in Croatian parliamentary elections

The coalition led by the Democratic Union (HDZ), under incumbent Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, came out ahead in the Croatian parliamentary elections on 17 April. It won 34.32% of the vote and 61 of the 150 seats in the Hrvatski Sabor, the single chamber of parliament. It beat the Rivers of Justice (Rijeke Pravde) coalition, led by Pedja Grbin's Social Democratic Party (SDP), which won 25.41% of the vote and 42 MPs. The Prime Minister now needs to find a majority coalition to form his new government. [Read more](#)



### Presidential election 12 and 26 May in Lithuania

On 12 May, Lithuanians will go to the polls for the 1st round of the presidential election. The outgoing head of state, Gitanas Nausėda, is standing for re-election. Among his main rivals is Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte (Homeland Union-Christian Democrats, TS-LKD). According to the opinion poll carried out by the Vilmorus Institute for the daily Lietuvos Rytas, the President would win the 1st round with 40.20% of the vote, well ahead of lawyer Ignas Vegele, with 10.6%, and Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte, with 8.9%. [Read more](#)

## ■ Foundation :



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

In less than two months, from 6 to 9 June, Europeans are invited to elect 720 Members of the European Parliament for the next five years. The Foundation has set up a website to help you better 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 where research on current European issues can be pooled. Since its launch, around sixty studies have been published on the network's website. [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 15 April, the Commission made the first payment of €6.3 billion to Poland and a payment of €162.5 million to Croatia. It received the fifth payment request for €821.7 million from Croatia. On 17 April, the Commission received Greece's fourth payment request for €2.3 billion. On 19 April, the Commission made a payment of €122.3 million to Estonia. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to check out the amounts and schedules. [Read more](#)

## ■ European Council :



## Extraordinary European Council

The Heads of State and Government, meeting in Brussels on 17 and 18 April for an extraordinary European Council, are determined to monitor and contain any risks arising from disinformation during the European elections in June. They reiterated their support for Ukraine by calling for an intensification of military and humanitarian support, as well as the rapid adoption of the transfer of frozen Russian assets. They condemned Iran's attack on Israel and envisaged new restrictive measures against Iran. Finally, former Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta presented his report on the future of the single market, urging the 27 to ask the Commission to initiate a "competitiveness pact". This pact would aim in particular to remove the last barriers in the single market, but also to create a union of capital markets that would make it possible to finance the investments needed for the green and digital transitions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Commission :



### Free travel passes for young people

On 16 April, the Commission launched the latest DiscoverEU application round, enabling 35,500 young people to travel by train free of charge throughout Europe. To obtain this pass, valid for a maximum of 30 days between 1 July 2024 and 30 September 2025, young people born between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2006 can take part in a quiz comprising five questions on the European Union and an additional question on the European youth portal. [Read more](#)



### Mobility of Young People with the UK

On 18 April, the Commission proposed to the Council that it enter into negotiations with the United Kingdom with a view to facilitating the mobility of young people, as the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union has led to a drop in exchanges. An agreement would make it easier for young people aged between 18 and 30 to study, work and live in the UK and the EU, for up to 4 years. However, on 19 April, the British government announced that it would not be negotiating any mobility programme for young people, as Brexit has put an end to free movement with the European Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Diplomacy :



## G7 foreign ministers' meeting

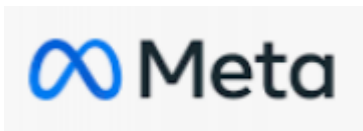
The G7 foreign ministers, meeting in Capri from 17 to 19 April, called on Iran to refrain from sending ballistic missiles to Russia, at the risk of the 7 members taking measures against Teheran. Support for Ukraine was reiterated. No specific plan was drawn up for the use of frozen Russian assets; however, the ministers expressed their intention to present options for their use to the G7 leaders at a summit in June in Italy. [Read more](#)

## ■ European Agencies :



### Promoting Innovation

The European Patent Office (EPO) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) shared their plans for 2024 on 19 April, highlighting their role in promoting innovation in Europe. Joint educational initiatives, such as the integration of the EPO's Modular Intellectual Property Training Framework into EIT curricula, were highlights of the collaboration. Future projects aim to deepen cooperation in areas such as advanced technological innovation, reinforcing their commitment to a dynamic innovation landscape in Europe. [Read more](#)



### Meta business practice

On 17 April, the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) - the independent EU body responsible for ensuring the application of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - published an opinion stating its opposition to Meta's 'pay or ok' business practice. This practice gives customers the option of using services for free if they consent to Meta processing their private data, or opting for a paid subscription model, in which case Meta will refrain from processing their data. The committee believes that this binary approach does not comply with EU data privacy rules. [Read more](#)

## ■ Germany :



## Olaf Scholz in China

From 14 to 16 April, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited China to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang. Discussing the situation in Ukraine, they agreed on the need to preserve Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and the importance of a conference in Geneva this year to discuss peace. They reiterated their desire to continue their economic exchanges and discussed equal access to the Chinese and German markets, intellectual protection and the need to establish a reliable legal framework for their economic exchanges. [Read more](#)

## ■ Greece :



### 9th "Our Ocean" conference in Athens

The 9th session of the "Our Ocean" conference was held in Athens from 15 to 17 April. This initiative aims to improve the health of the oceans. Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced the main Greek commitments, including the creation of two new marine nature parks, an 80% increase in marine protected areas and a ban on trawling. The European Union has announced 40 commitments to be funded to the tune of €3.5 billion. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Italy :



### Rapprochement with Tunisia

Three cooperation agreements were signed between Tunisia and Italy on 17 April in the fields of energy, trade and education. This is the fourth time in less than a year that Giorgia Meloni has visited Tunis to meet Tunisian President Kais Saïed, underlining the importance attached to Tunisia in Italy's new African policy, embodied in the "Mattei Plan for Africa". Giorgia Meloni praised the efforts of the Tunisian authorities in the fight against human trafficking since the memorandum of July 2023 between Tunisia and the European Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Georgia :



## "Transparency of Foreign Influence" Act

On 17 April, the Georgian Parliament passed the first reading of the draft law on foreign influence. Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili denounced the bill as a "copy of Putin's law against NGOs and the media". She warned of increased Russian pressure in the country and referred to a "hybrid war", particularly through "propaganda" and "the influx of Russian migrants into Georgian territory". If passed, the law on the "transparency of foreign influence" would oblige organisations that receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad to register as "organisations pursuing the interests of a foreign power", on pain of a fine. Numerous demonstrations were held to oppose this text. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Ukraine :



### Increase in NATO aid

The NATO-Ukraine Council was held on 19 April, bringing together the defence ministers by videoconference. At the end of the meeting, NATO members decided to step up their military support to Ukraine, notably by sending a Patriot anti-aircraft system from Germany, €4 billion from the Netherlands and €293 million from Denmark. The need to strengthen Ukraine's air defence was one of the priorities of the discussions at this meeting. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



### Agreement with the EIB

On 19 April, the European Investment Bank (EIB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ukraine that includes an EIB commitment of €560 million for the country's reconstruction. This involves €500 million in EIB loans and €60 million in European Union grants in 2024. In addition to increased support for key public sectors, the EIB will step up its assistance to the private sector. [Read more](#)



### Visits to Kyiv

On 15 and 18 April, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hosted meetings with the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Espen Barth Eide, and the German Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection, Robert Habeck. He thanked them for the support provided by Norway and Germany. During the meetings, support for strengthening Ukraine's anti-aircraft system was announced. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Plan for Ukraine

On 15 April, the Commission adopted the proposal for a Council implementing decision giving a positive assessment of the plan for Ukraine. The plan details the reform and investment strategy that Ukraine will undertake over the next four years. The facility, worth around €50 billion, will help Ukraine support its recovery and reconstruction. Member States have one month to adopt this decision in order to pay up to €1.89 billion in pre-financing. [Read more](#)

## ■ Vatican :



## A new lease of life for Europe

On 8 April, eight European bishops signed a pastoral letter entitled "A new lease of life for Europe", highlighting the continent's common history and shared values. They recalled Robert Schuman's visionary ideal of a united Europe, and highlighted current challenges such as the rise of nationalism, the war in Ukraine and the migratory crisis. With a view to the European elections in June 2024, they reiterated the importance of voting and choosing solidarity to overcome the "crisis of European conscience". [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Council of Europe :



## Spring Session of the Parliamentary Assembly

The spring session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) took place from 15 to 19 April in Strasbourg. The Assembly considered that Kosovo met the minimum standards required and therefore recommended that Kosovo join the Council of Europe, provided that reforms to the rule of law continue. The elected representatives paid tribute to the courage and sacrifice of Alexei Navalny and considered that the Russian state bore full responsibility for his murder. PACE reiterated the need to counter Vladimir Putin's totalitarian regime and his war on democracy. [Read more](#)

## ■ Eurobarometer :





## Survey on the European Elections

The Eurobarometer survey published on 17 April reveals an upward trend in the main electoral indicators. With two months to go before the European elections, the survey shows that 60% of those questioned say they are interested in voting in June, an increase of 3 points compared to autumn 2023, and 71% say they are likely to vote. These results are boosted by the current geopolitical context, with 81% agreeing that this makes the vote even more important. The French are the European exception, with 52% of French respondents pessimistic about the future of the European Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Studies/Reports :



### Report on the Schengen Area

On 16 April, the Commission presented its report on the situation in the Schengen area. It shows that the Schengen rules are largely respected, but there are still some weaknesses. It indicates that increased police cooperation is needed to gradually eliminate long-term controls at internal borders. The report does, however, welcome measures to complete the Schengen area with Bulgaria and Romania. [Read more](#)



### IMF Report on the World Economy

In its report published on 16 April, the IMF forecasts French and German growth of 0.7% and 0.2% respectively in 2024, then 1.4% and 1.3% in 2025. This is 0.3% down on the January forecast. For the eurozone, the IMF forecasts growth of 0.5% in 2024 and 1.5% in 2025. The report notes that the world economy is resilient, despite very strict monetary policy on the part of central banks to restore price stability, but that this has enabled a rapid recovery from soaring inflation. [Read more](#)



## Lobbying transparency

On 17 April, the European Court of Auditors published a report on the EU Transparency Register in which it highlights the shortcomings of the "conditionality" principle, under which lobbyists must register in order to gain access to these institutions. It recommends the publication of information on unscheduled meetings with lobbyists, following the discovery that unregistered organisations, such as the one implicated in Qatargate, have organised events in Parliament. The report also stresses the need to improve data quality control and the accessibility of the register's website. [Read more](#)

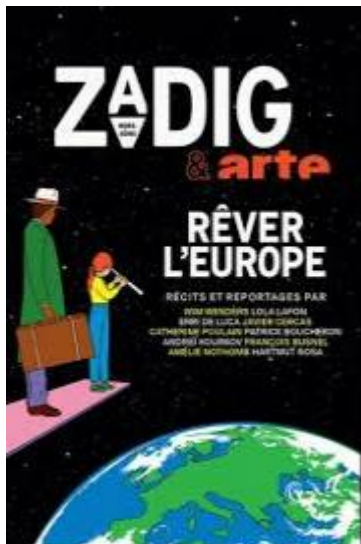


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## Increase in global military spending

Total global military spending will reach \$2,443 billion in 2023, an increase of 6.8% in real terms compared to 2022. This is the largest year-on-year increase since 2009. The 10 biggest spenders in 2023 - led by the United States, China and Russia - have all increased their military spending, according to new data on global military spending published on 22 April by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). [Read more](#)

## ■ Publications :



## Dreaming Europe

On the eve of the European elections, Arte and Zadig are offering a special issue to debate and reflect on the political issues at stake in the European cultural area. Entitled "Dreaming Europe", the magazine explores the history and genealogy of the great founding legends of the European project, using illustrations, computer graphics and portfolios. [Read more](#)

## ■ Culture :



## European Heritage Label

At a ceremony held in Antwerp on 17 April, the European Commission awarded the European Heritage Label 2023 to seven European sites. The label is awarded to monuments, natural or urban sites, as well as cultural objects, goods and intangible heritage that symbolise European values and history. [Read more](#)



## Georgian Art in Krakow

The "Golden Fleece: Georgian Art" exhibition is on until 15 September at the National Museum in Krakow. Visitors can discover Georgian art from Antiquity to modern times, as well as the contribution of Polish artists in exile in Georgia. In collaboration with Georgia's main museums, this exhibition also provides an opportunity to discover certain aspects of the great heritage of Georgian culture. [Read more](#)



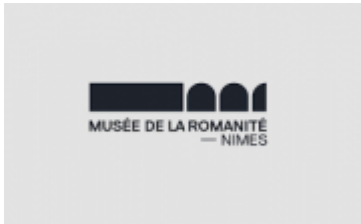
## "If not now, when?" in The Hague

The exhibition "If not now, when? - Collection Max Vorst" will run until 8 September at the Museum Beelden aan Zee in The Hague. Visitors can discover a selection of over seventy sculptures and installations from the collection of art collector Max Vorst. This selection traces the development of contemporary sculpture. [Read more](#)

# kode

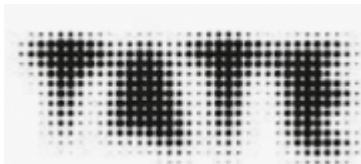
## Indigenous Histories in Bergen

The "Indigenous Histories" exhibition is running until August 25 at the Kode museum in Bergen. This exhibition explores indigenous artistic cultures from South and North America, the Nordic region and Oceania since colonial times. 285 works by 170 artists and authors of indigenous origin are on display, in eight sections, each focusing on different regions and one on the global activism of indigenous peoples. [Read more](#)



## Achilles in Nîmes

The Musée de la Romanité in Nîmes is devoting an exhibition to the legendary hero of Greek mythology, Achilles, from 27 April to 5 January 2025. This immersive exhibition retraces the story of this character and the complex origins of the Trojan War. The exhibition is based on a wide selection of works, mainly from the museum's reserves, and is complemented by an immersive journey through a digital fresco that invites visitors to follow in the hero's footsteps, from his birth to his death. [Read more](#)



## The "Blue Rider" in London

The exhibition "Expressionists" is on at London's Tate Modern from 25 April to 20 October. It explores the artistic camaraderie of the "Blue Rider" group, a circle of early twentieth-century Expressionist innovators who aspired to revolutionise modern art. Among the most famous members of this circle were Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter. With over 130 masterpieces on display, the exhibition highlights the experimental and daring nature of these artists. [Read more](#)



## Olympism at the Louvre Museum

As part of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games being held in Paris, the Musée du Louvre is dedicating an exhibition to Olympism, from 24 April to 16 September. The exhibition looks back at the creation of the first Olympic Games and the iconographic sources from the late 19th century, giving visitors an insight into the political context of the time and an understanding of how the organisers sought to reinvent the competitions of ancient Greece. [Read more](#)



## 40th Brussels Art Fair

The 40th "Art Brussels" art fair is being held in Brussels from 25 to 28 April. It is one of the biggest art events of its kind in Europe. Each year the event brings together some 30,000 professionals, collectors and art lovers. Founded in 1968, it offers a unique opportunity to discover the diversity of the contemporary artistic and cultural scene, including younger generations of lesser-known artists. [Read more](#)

## ■ Sports :



## Lighting of the Olympic Flame

The first torch of the Olympic Flame Relay was lit at a ceremony in the sanctuary of Olympia on 16 April. A symbol of peace and friendship between peoples since ancient times, the Flame left Olympia, where the ancient Games were traditionally held, for Athens, before embarking on board the Belem, a French three-masted sailing ship. It is due to arrive in Marseilles on 8 May, from where it will begin its journey across France to Paris, the venue for the 2024 Games. [Read more](#)

## ■ Agenda :

 22 April 2024

**"Foreign Affairs" Council** (Luxembourg)

 22-25 April 2024

 24 April 2024


Publication of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2024".

 25 April 2024

Speech on Europe by Emmanuel Macron (Paris - La Sorbonne)

 29 April 2024

"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council (Luxembourg)



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