

Europe's Decline, a German story?

[Emmanuel Sales - 21 May 2024](#)

While China is increasing its subsidies for electric cars and batteries, threatening the global balance, Germany continues to increase its direct investment in China. The author argues that Germany's mercantilist strategy is at the root of Europe's economic decline over the last fifteen years. "It's as if Germany was reluctant to project itself fully into Europe. But with the end of the Cold War and the advent of the euro, Berlin now has a historic responsibility for the fate of the continent's peoples. It must abandon its mercantilist ideal and accept its European destiny.



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■ Elections :



Parliamentary elections in Bulgaria on 9 June

On 9 June, Bulgarians will renew the 240 seats in the National Assembly - the single chamber of Parliament - at the same time as they vote in the European elections. The polls put the Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), led by former prime minister Boyko Borrisov, in the lead with 27.5% of the vote, ahead of the nationalist Renaissance (Vazrazhdane - V) - 15.7% - and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS) - 14.2%. The political stability of the country is at stake in these elections, against a backdrop of fragmentation and polarisation of the political landscape. [Read more](#)



Belgian federal elections on 9 June

9 June is an important election day for Belgians, as they vote to renew the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament, the Walloon, Brussels, Flemish and German-speaking Community parliaments, as well as for the European elections. Pre-election polls predict a surge in radical right-wing and left-wing parties in the country, which could complicate the formation of a government after the polls. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



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

The Foundation is publishing the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2024". This year it includes the exceptional contribution of the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, as well as that of the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola. Eminent representatives from the worlds of politics, business, research and diplomacy paint a portrait of a Union that is mapping out the contours of environmental and digital sovereignty and projecting itself into a new geopolitical era, full of new challenges, particularly for its industry and defence. The book is available in French and English. Order your copy now. [Read more](#)



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

In less than three weeks, 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](#)



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 16 May, Luxembourg submitted a request to add a REPowerEU chapter to its recovery plan, by transferring its share of the Brexit adjustment reserve, i.e. €128 million. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to see details of the amounts and timetables. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Economic Perspectives

On May 15, the Commission published its spring economic forecasts, according to which there should be a gradual expansion against a backdrop of high geopolitical risks. The EU's GDP should reach 1.6% in 2025, compared with 0.4% in 2023, while inflation should be 2.2% in 2025, compared with 6.4% in 2023. The deficit is expected to fall to -2.9% in 2025, compared with -3.5% in 2023 for the EU as a whole. [Read more](#)



Report on the Security Union

On 15 May, the Commission adopted the seventh progress report on the implementation of the Security Union strategy for the period 2020-2025. The report notes the increase in hybrid attacks, prompting the EU to strengthen the resilience of its critical infrastructures and improve cybersecurity with new directives and regulations in force since January 2023. At the same time, measures have been taken to combat terrorism and organised crime, including new strategies, enhanced international cooperation and a specific roadmap against drug trafficking and organised crime. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Proceedings against Meta (DSA), Booking and X (DMA)

On 16 May, the Commission announced the opening of formal proceedings against Meta under digital services legislation concerning the protection of minors on Facebook and Instagram. On 13 May, it applied the Digital Markets Regulation (DMA) by designating Booking as a gatekeeper for its online intermediation service Booking.com, considering this essential platform service to be a major access point between businesses and consumers. In addition, an investigation has been opened against social network X to examine whether it can also be considered as a gatekeeper. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of economy and finance ministers

The ministers, meeting on 14 May, reached an agreement on the directive aimed at accelerating and securing the relief of excess withholding tax (FASTER). They defined the VAT rate to be applied in the legislative proposal on VAT in the digital age, aimed at combating VAT fraud, supporting businesses and promoting digitisation. They adopted the assessment of the Ukraine Plan, enabling the disbursement of €38 billion in financial aid. Finally, they approved conclusions on financial culture aimed at contributing to the realisation of the capital markets union. [Read more](#)



Targeted review of the Common Agricultural Policy

On 13 May, the Council formally adopted a targeted review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), aimed at addressing farmers' concerns. This review concerns certain elements of the regulation on national strategic plans under the CAP and the regulation on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy (the so-called "horizontal regulation"). These updated rules will simplify and reduce the administrative burden on farmers. [Read more](#)



Meeting of ministers for education, youth, culture and sport

From 13 to 14 May, the ministers for education, youth, culture and sport met in Brussels. In particular, they adopted a recommendation entitled "Europe on the move", which concerns mobility opportunities for learning purposes, with the aim of encouraging more people to take advantage of opportunities to study abroad. [Read more](#)



Adoption of the pact on migration and asylum

On 14 May, the Council adopted the Pact on Migration and Asylum, aimed at establishing a set of rules that will help to manage the arrival of migrants in an orderly manner, create effective and uniform procedures and strengthen solidarity between Member States. The Pact contains a total of ten legislative acts, including the Regulation on screening, enabling national authorities to return irregular migrants and asylum seekers to an external border, and the Regulation on asylum and migration management, which determines which Member State is responsible for examining applications for international protection and introduces for the first time a fair sharing of responsibilities between Member States. [Read more](#)

■ Court of Justice :



Social benefits for frontier workers

The Court of Justice of the European Union, based in Luxembourg, issued a ruling on 16 May concerning the rights of frontier workers. In it, the Court ruled that frontier workers enjoy the same social benefits as resident workers, by virtue of their contribution to the financing of the social policies of the host Member State, through their tax and social security contributions paid in that State. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



AfD party taken to court

On 13 May, the Münster Higher Administrative Court upheld a ruling authorising the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) to keep the AfD party under surveillance as a group suspected of being extreme right-wing. In addition, on 14 May, Björn Höcke, chairman of the AfD parliamentary group in the Thuringia Landtag, was fined €13,000 for using a slogan from the vocabulary of the SA, the paramilitary militia of Adolf Hitler's National Socialist Party, during a speech in May 2021, which is banned in Germany. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ France :



"Choose France" attractiveness summit

The 7th edition of the "Choose France" Summit was held in Versailles on 13 May. This initiative, launched in 2018 by Emmanuel Macron, aims to promote the reforms undertaken by France in terms of the country's economic attractiveness. As a result, 10,451 foreign investment projects in France came to fruition over the period 2017 - 2023, with 307,940 jobs maintained or created for French people over this period. And for the fifth year running, France remains the most attractive country for foreign investment. [Read more](#)

■ Greece :



Meeting of the Greek Prime Minister with the Turkish President

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Ankara on 13 May, marking a milestone in the diplomatic sequence begun a year ago to ease tensions between the two countries. The leaders stressed the importance of maintaining constant dialogue and strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries. They also addressed areas of disagreement, notably the Cypriot question and the classification of Hamas as a terrorist organisation. [Read more](#)

■ Italy :



Czech and Italian prime ministers meet

Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni met in Rome on 13 May. The two leaders expressed their wish to go beyond the EU pact on migration and asylum, and to prevent illegal immigration by cooperating with third countries to outsource the management of migrants. They also highlighted their shared vision for the future of the Union, including the development of a European defence industry, the strengthening of competitiveness and the need for a more geopolitical Europe. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ The Netherlands :



Coalition agreement to form a government

On 16 May, four political parties - the Party for Freedom (PVV), the Liberal Party (VVD), the Farmers' Party (BBB) and the New Social Contract (NSC) - presented a coalition agreement to form a government. Together, these four parties have a majority of 88 seats out of 150. The choice of Prime Minister remains open for the moment. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ UK :



Northern Ireland: ruling against the law on the deportation of migrants

On 13 May, the High Court in Belfast handed down a ruling declaring several provisions of the UK law on the deportation of asylum seekers to Rwanda inapplicable in Northern Ireland, which will complicate its implementation. The judge responsible cited incompatibility with the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and the European Convention on Human Rights. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Slovakia :



Attempted assassination of the Prime Minister

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico was shot on 15 May after a meeting in the town of Handlova. The assailant is a 71-year-old writer, and the assassination attempt is believed to have been politically motivated. The Prime Minister's life is no longer in danger, but his condition remains "serious". [Read more](#)

■ Sweden :



Nordic Summit in the presence of Olaf Scholz

On 13 and 14 May, the Nordic Summit was held in Stockholm, bringing together the Prime Ministers of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, joined by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. It was an opportunity to reiterate their support for Ukraine and the importance of hybrid threats that require cooperation on security and new technologies. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Armenia :



Border agreement with Azerbaijan

On 16 May, Armenia and Azerbaijan announced that they had reached agreement on an important part of the demarcation of their borders. Armenia has agreed to cede four border villages claimed by Azerbaijan. This is an important step towards normalising relations between the two countries, whose borders have been the subject of several wars since their independence in 1991, the most recent Azerbaijani offensive dating from September 2023. [Read more](#)

■ Georgia :



President vetoes "foreign influence" bill

On 14 May, the Georgian parliament definitively adopted the controversial draft law on "foreign influence" on third reading by 84 votes to 30. As a result, organisations that receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad will have to register as "organisations serving the interests of a foreign power". On 18 May, Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili announced that she had vetoed the law, which she described as "Russian in essence". [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



Referendum on EU membership on 20 October

On 16 May, Moldovan MPs approved the holding of a referendum to ask Moldovans whether they are in favour of their country joining the European Union. The referendum will be held on 20 October and is a victory for Moldovan President Maia Sandu and the members of her party, who are firmly opposed to the Russian-led war in Ukraine. The presidential election, in which the outgoing President is standing for re-election, is being held on the same day. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Further Danish aid for Ukraine

On 16 May, Denmark announced a new €750 million military aid package for Ukraine. The package is aimed at strengthening Ukraine's artillery and anti-aircraft systems. It includes the dispatch of a Patriot anti-aircraft system, against a background of increasingly intense Russian air strikes on Kharkiv, as Russia has launched a new offensive. On 14 May, Ukraine and Luxembourg began negotiations on a security agreement. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council of Europe :



Election of a new President of the ECHR

On 13 May, the European Court of Human Rights elected Marko Bošnjak, a Slovenian judge, as President of the Court. Vice-President of the Court since 1 November 2022, Marko Bošnjak succeeds Síofra O'Leary. His term of office will begin on 2 July. [Read more](#)



75th anniversary and treaty on artificial intelligence

On 17 May, the foreign ministers of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe met again one year after the Reykjavik Summit, on the occasion of the 75^e anniversary of the Organisation. They reviewed the measures taken by the Council of Europe in response to Russian aggression against Ukraine and reiterated their support for that country, with the exception of Hungary, Armenia, Serbia, Azerbaijan and Turkey. The first international treaty on artificial intelligence was adopted, aimed at legally binding governments, entities and individuals to ensure compliance with legal standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the use of artificial intelligence systems. [Read more](#)

■ Eurobarometer :



Eurobarometer: participation of young people in civic life

In the run-up to the European elections on 6-9 June, the Commission published a Eurobarometer survey on youth and democracy on 13 May. The survey reveals that 64% of young people intend to vote. However, while 38% of young people said that voting was the most effective way of making their voice heard, around 19% said they were not interested in politics and 13% did not wish to vote. [Read more](#)

■ EBRD :



Annual Meeting of the EBRD

From 14 to 16 May, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development held its annual meeting and business forum in Yerevan, Armenia. Under the slogan "Making an impact together", the meeting enabled industry experts, business leaders and EBRD members to discuss the constantly changing economic environment. They focused in particular on strengthening financing for renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure and new technologies. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Vermeer in Dublin

The "Vermeer Visits" exhibition in Dublin is on at the National Gallery of Ireland until 18 August. It brings together two masterpieces by the famous Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer. His painting "The Mistress and the Handmaid", from the Frick collection in New York, is making a special trip to Dublin to be shown alongside "The Woman Writing a Letter and Her Handmaid" from the National Gallery of Ireland. [Read more](#)



Joan Miró in Grenoble

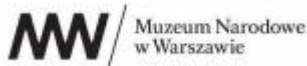
The Musée de Grenoble is hosting an exhibition of works by the Catalan painter Joan Miró, in partnership with the Centre Pompidou, until 21 July. More than 130 works from the collection of the Musée National d'Art Moderne are on show, including the series of three "Blues". This exhibition focuses on iconoclasm, creative energy and artistic modernity through the work of the painter. [Read more](#)

Roni Horn and Eduardo Chillida in Menorca

The "Roni Horn" exhibition will run until 27 October at the Hauser & Wirth Museum in Menorca, Spain. The exhibition features sculptures and installations reflecting Horn's poetic study of nature, his source of inspiration. The "Eduardo Chillida" exhibition will also be on at the same museum until 27 October. It features sculptures and works on paper, showing the Spanish artist's connection with the island of Menorca. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

**The art of Mannerism in Prague**

The National Gallery in Prague, in collaboration with the Musée du Louvre, is presenting an exhibition on the art of the print, from Michelangelo to Jacques Callot, until 11 August. Mannerism emerged from the Italian Renaissance and was characterised by refined elegance, rich imagination and an affinity for symbols and hidden meanings. More than 200 works, engravings, drawings, paintings, jewellery and other decorative arts are on display to the public. [Read more](#)

**Jadwiga Sawicka in Warsaw**

The Warsaw Museum is exhibiting "Things, People, Ghosts" until 31 December. The exhibition features works by Polish painter and artist Jadwiga Sawicka. Through her paintings and site-specific actions, she explores the emotions hidden in words, giving them materiality. [Read more](#)

**"Interactions 2024" in Bonn**

The "Interactions 2024" exhibition will run until 27 October at the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn, Germany. Works of art such as Gabriel Lester's "Bouncer" and Carsten Höller's "Toboggan of Bonn" are on display both inside and outside the museum. Visitors are invited to take an active part in the exhibition. [Read more](#)



Contemporary Art Fair of Lisbon

The "ARCO" contemporary art fair is taking place at Lisbon's Corderie Nationale from 23 to 26 May. The fair features works by 70 galleries selected by the Organising Committee. Two curated sections are also planned: "As formas do Oceano", focusing on Africa and its diaspora, and "OPENING", exploring new artistic languages and spaces. [Read more](#)

kunstmuseum basel

"When we see us" in Basel

From 25 May to 27 October, the Basel Art Museum will be showing "When we see us", an exhibition retracing one hundred years of pan-African figurative painting. The exhibition brings together works by 120 artists, enabling visitors to discover figurative painting from Africa and the African diaspora since the 1920s. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 21 May 2024

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

 21 May 2024

General Affairs Council (Brussels)

 23 May 2024

Competitiveness Council (space, research and innovation issues) (Brussels)

 24 May 2024

Competitiveness Council (Brussels)

 26 May 2024

Presidential election (2nd round) (Lithuania)



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