

Letter n°1069 of Tuesday 28th May 2024

"Europe will not survive if it does not evolve".

Jan-Christoph Oetjen - 28 May 2024

At a crucial moment in the French President's state visit to Germany, the first for 24 years, the Foundation has published an interview in its series "Les réveilleurs d'Europe" with Jan-Christoph Oetjen MEP (Renew, DE), one of the vice-presidents of the European Parliament. Although he sits in the same group as the MEPs close to the President, he puts forward some ideas that are far removed from French positions. Proof that Franco-German dialogue is more necessary than ever before.



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■ Elections :



Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda re-elected

The outgoing President of the Republic, Gitanas Nausėda, won the 2nd round of the presidential election in Lithuania on 26 May by a wide margin. He won 74.44% of the vote, ahead of Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte ("Homeland Union-Christian Democrats", TS-LKD), who won 24.06% of the vote. [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 English and French, in hard copy and online. Order it here. [Read more](#)



A site to find all you need to know about the European elections

In under two weeks' time, 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, ideas on Europe

The Schuman Network is an initiative of 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 forum for pooling research on current European issues. Since its launch, more than eighty studies have been published. [Read more](#)



European recovery plans: figures and priorities

In response to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Union set up a €672.5 billion recovery fund. On 21 May, the Commission approved the revised Irish plan and its first payment request for €324 million. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to find out the amounts and timetables. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



337.5 million € fine for Mondelez

On 23 May, the European Commission imposed a €337.5 million fine on Mondelez International for non-compliance with EU competition rules. Mondelez, producer of brands such as Milka, Oreo and Toblerone, was found guilty of anti-competitive agreements aimed at restricting cross-border trade between Member States in chocolate, biscuit and coffee products, as well as an abuse of dominant position. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



The Germany party AfD excluded from the "Identity and Democracy" group in the European Parliament

On 23 May, the Identity and Democracy Group in the European Parliament excluded the German AfD party. According to their press release, they took this decision to avoid "being linked to the incidents involving Maximilian Krah". [Read more](#)



Debate of lead candidates

The debate between the leading candidates for the Presidency of the Commission took place on 23 May in the European Parliament. Walter Baier (Austria, Left), Sandro Gozi (Italy, Renew), Ursula von der Leyen (Germany, EPP), Terry Reintke (Germany, Greens) and Nicolas Schmit (Luxembourg, PES) debated the economy and employment, security and defence, the environment, democracy and migration. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Ministers

Meeting on 21 May, ministers adopted the legislation on artificial intelligence (AI Act), the regulation and directive on electricity market design, and the gas and hydrogen package. The aim of the AI Act is to promote the development and adoption of safe and reliable AI systems throughout the single market, while the electricity market reform aims to make energy prices more stable while reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The gas and hydrogen package aims to facilitate the switch to renewable and low-carbon energies. The Member States also adopted conclusions on the future of cybersecurity and on the European Union's digital policy. [Read more](#)



Meeting of competitiveness ministers

At their meeting on 24 May, the competitiveness ministers adopted the directive on corporate responsibility with regard to sustainability, aimed at forcing large companies to respect human rights and protect the environment. The ministers adopted an amendment to the Schengen Borders Code Regulation, which aims to make the Schengen area more resilient in the face of current and future crises at its external borders. Conclusions on the future of the internal market, based on Enrico Letta's report, were adopted, as well as on the future of the Union's industrial policy. [Read more](#)



Meeting of General Affairs Ministers

The European Affairs Ministers, meeting on 21 May, adopted conclusions on democratic resilience and the protection of electoral processes against foreign interference. They approved a framework to establish rapid reaction teams in the field of hybrid threats, designed to provide tailored and targeted assistance to Member States in the face of such threats. They took note of the Commission's intention to close the procedure provided for in Article 7 TEU with regard to Poland. The creation of the first European Union Diplomatic Academy, in partnership with the College of Europe, was also confirmed. [Read more](#)



Meeting of G7 finance ministers

From 23 to 25 May in Stresa, the finance ministers and central bank governors met with the Ukrainian finance minister, Sergii Marchenko. At an awareness-raising session with Brazil, Mauritania, the Republic of Korea and Saudi Arabia, the ministers discussed the implications of artificial intelligence and cross-border payments. They agreed to work together, particularly at the G20, to solve the problems associated with these issues. [Read more](#)



Use of interest generated by Russian assets

In view of the continuing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, on 21 May the Council adopted measures to ensure that windfall revenues generated by frozen Russian assets are contributed to the Ukrainian war effort. Central Securities Depositories (CSDs) in the EU that hold Russian sovereign assets and reserves worth more than €1 million will pay a financial contribution from their net profits since February 2024. These funds will be used to support Ukraine militarily through the European Peace Facility. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Baltic Borders Challenged

According to the Russian media, the Russian authorities are considering adjusting the geographical coordinates of the points at which it calculates its territorial waters, implying a reworking of the maritime borders with Finland and Lithuania. The latter consider this to be a new act of hybrid warfare, aimed at reinforcing the strategic uncertainty of NATO and the European Union in the Baltic Sea. In Estonia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has strongly condemned Russia, whose border guards unilaterally removed the buoys used to demarcate territory on the Narva on the night of 23 May, demanding that they be returned immediately. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

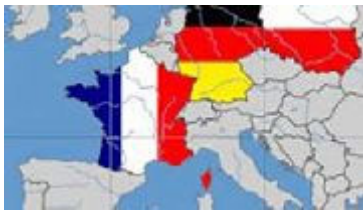
■ EIB :



Support of Polish Defence

On 20 May, the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, and the President of the European Investment Bank, Nadia Calviño, announced the signing of an agreement concerning a satellite programme in cooperation with France, with the EIB participating through a € 300 million loan. The aim is to strengthen European air defence, with the development and subsequent launch of two earth observation satellites. The EIB will also support the National Defence Plan announced by Poland, which involves the construction of 400 km of fortifications on its eastern borders at a cost of €2.34 billion. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Germany :



Meeting of the Weimar triangle

On 22 May, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock received her French and Polish counterparts, Stéphane Séjourné and Radoslaw Sikorski, as part of the Weimar Triangle. They reaffirmed their commitment to working together to be a driving force in Europe in the fight against Russian hybrid attacks, disinformation and the promotion of a European climate policy. They stressed the importance of voting in the forthcoming European elections to preserve democracy, recalling that the Weimar Republic showed how quickly democratic rules can be dissolved by hatred and targeted campaigns. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ France :



State visit by the French President to Germany

French President Emmanuel Macron began a State visit to Germany on 26 May, where he met his German counterpart, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The two heads of state attended the "Celebration of Democracy" in honour of the 75th anniversary of the Basic Law. This State visit, which constitutes the highest form of diplomatic relations, is the first between a French and German President for 24 years, underlining the unique relationship between the two countries. [Read more](#)

■ Poland :



Committee asked to investigate Russian and Belarusian influences

On 21 May, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk issued a decree creating a commission to investigate Russian and Belarusian influence. This was in response to the illegal influx into Poland of Russians carrying out sabotage missions on Polish territory, as well as growing concern about Russian influence on the Polish political and media scene. [Read more](#)



Polish realignment in favour of the European defence industry

Polish Defense Holding (PGZ), one of Poland's leading defence companies, has expressed an interest in participating in the development of the new European battle tank. The company is keen to strengthen its cooperation with European defence groups, marking a strategic shift away from the previous government's preference for American and South Korean weapons and tanks. This European battle tank project is supported by the European Defence Fund (EDF). [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



Security partnership with the European Union

On 21 May the 8th meeting of the Association Council with Moldova was held. On this occasion, the Moldovan Prime Minister, Dorin Recean, and the High Representative, Josep Borrell, signed a partnership agreement on defence and security. The partnership provides for the consolidation of relations in the defence and cyber security sectors, to combat the frequent Russian interference in the country. The head of European diplomacy pointed out that Moldova was the first country to sign such an agreement with the European Union, and said that other agreements would follow to create a "network of friendly countries" keen to strengthen security cooperation with the Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Norway :



The Norwegian border will be closed to Russian tourists

On 23 May, Norway announced that it would close its border to Russian tourists from 29 May. The government stressed that this decision was in line with Norway's position in supporting its allies' response to Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. The new rules allow Norwegian police to refuse entry to Russian citizens travelling for tourist or non-essential reasons. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ UK :



General Elections on 4 July

On 22 May, British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, announced that the UK general election would be held on 4 July. The British Parliament will be dissolved on 31 May, leaving 5 weeks for campaigning. The polls indicate an advantage for Labour, which has been in opposition since 2010. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Visits by the German Foreign Minister and the President of the Polish Senate

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hosted German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in Kyiv on May 21 and Polish Senate President Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska on May 24. At both meetings, they discussed the strengthening of Ukrainian air defence systems. With Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska, the discussion focused on the importance of the upcoming Polish presidency for Ukraine's integration into the European Union, preparations for the Peace Summit in Switzerland and the bilateral security agreement as part of the G7 Vilnius Declaration. The meeting with Annalena Baerbock focused on the organisation of the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC 2024), to be held in Berlin in June. [Read more - Other link - Other link](#)

■ UN :



The General Assembly adopts a resolution on the Srebrenica genocide

On 23 May, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on the Srebrenica genocide of 11 to 16 July 1995, perpetrated by Bosnian Serb forces during the fratricidal war in the former Yugoslavia. From now on, 11 July will be known as the "International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide of 1995". Prepared by Germany and Rwanda, the resolution condemns any denial of the genocide as a historical event, as well as any glorification of its perpetrators found guilty of crimes against humanity and genocide by international tribunals. The resolution received 84 votes in favour, 19 against and 68 abstentions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ IMF :



Report on France

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) published its conclusions on 23 May, following a consultation mission to France from 13 to 22 May. It concludes that a strong and immediate response to the pandemic and the energy crisis has cushioned the economic impact. However, the IMF points out that the slower-than-expected recovery has weighed on public finances. It calls on the government to take further fiscal consolidation measures over the medium term, starting in 2024, in order to put the debt on a downward trajectory". [Read more](#)



Report on Moldova

On 24 May, the IMF and the Moldovan authorities reached an agreement on the fifth review of the programmes under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) and the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), as well as the first review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). While some structural reforms have been delayed, the overall performance of the programmes remains satisfactory. The conclusion of these reviews and the approval of the Board of Directors will make it possible to release approximately \$175.2 million. [Read more](#)



Report on Georgia

On 24 May, the IMF completed its Article IV consultation with Georgia. The IMF welcomed Georgia's economic resilience in the face of shocks and recommended structural reforms to strengthen resilience, stimulate inclusive growth and support progress towards EU membership. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Eurobarometer :



EU citizens' expectations in view of the European elections

Eurobarometer, published on 23 May, shows that Europeans want a stronger, more independent European Union. Indeed, 77% are in favour of a common defence and security policy, while 71% and 69% respectively believe that the Union should produce military equipment and adopt a common foreign policy. The most important issues for the elections are security and defence (34%), climate and the environment (30%), health (26%), and the economy and migration (both 25%). [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Photographs of Normandy at Le Havre

Until 22 September, the Musée d'art moderne André Malraux - MuMa, in Le Havre, is exhibiting "Photographing in Normandy (1840-1890)". As part of the 5th edition of 'Normandie Impressionniste', this exhibition is devoted to masterpieces of painting and photography, showing a pioneering dialogue between the arts" and highlighting the decisive role played by Normandy in the beginnings of photography. [Read more](#)



"Art and social transformation" in Madrid

The Prado Museum in Madrid is presenting an exhibition entitled "Art and Social Transformations in Spain (1885-1910)" until 22 September. The 300 works in this exhibition provide an insight into the social transformations that took place in Spain, in areas such as women's work, the industrial revolution, education and medicine and illness, through the medium of painting. Some of the works come from private collections and are being shown to the public for the first time. [Read more](#)



Hilary Heron in Dublin

Until 28 October, Dublin's Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) is presenting a retrospective of the pioneering work of modernist sculptor Hilary Heron since 1964. The exhibition highlights her contributions to modern sculpture by exploring the themes of gender and religion through a variety of materials. [Read more](#)



Marianna Simnett in Berlin

The "Marianna Simnett" exhibition will run until 3 November at the Hamburger Bahnhof - Nationalgalerie de Gegenwart in Berlin. To coincide with the European football championship, the artist is exhibiting a film installation entitled "WINNER". The film depicts a football pitch where a group of dancers weave their way between hooligans and football players, underlining the ambivalent emotions of the game: triumph, brutality and defeat. [Read more](#)



Edvard Munch - Horizons in Oslo

The "Edvard Munch - Horizons" exhibition has been on show at the Munch Museum in Oslo since 25 May. Visitors can see the work of the Norwegian painter and other Nordic and European artists between 1880 and 1950. This period of upheaval gave rise to a breath-taking diversity of forms and colours in the art scene. [Read more](#)



"The Body in Motion" in Paris

To coincide with the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Petit Palais is celebrating sport and art until 17 November. Entitled "The Body in Motion", the exhibition features 50 works, including paintings, sculptures, objets d'art, drawings and prints from the Petit Palais collection, dating from Antiquity to the early 20th century. The representation of the sporting body since Antiquity is the central theme of the exhibition. [Read more](#)



Lucca Summer Festival

The 2024 edition of the Lucca Summer Festival takes place from 2 June to 26 July. Founded in 1998, the festival offers an eclectic mix of musical genres, from rock and pop to folk and electronica. Eric Clapton will open the festival on 2 June. [Read more](#)



Mayer Kirshenblatt in Warsaw

Until 16 December, the 'Polin' Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw is exhibiting works by Mayer Kirshenblatt (1916-2009). Through his colourful, imaginative and humorous paintings, this Polish-born Canadian artist recreates his memories of the people, events, daily life and customs of the Jewish population in rural Poland between the wars. [Read more](#)

■ Sports :



Stade Toulousain wins the Europe Rugby Cup

After a high-level final and 20 minutes of extra time, Stade Toulousain beat Leinster of Ireland in the Investec Champions Cup final at Tottenham Hotspur on 25 May. It was Stade Toulousain's sixth victory in the competition. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 27 May 2024

"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council (Brussels)

 27-28 May 2024

"Foreign Affairs" Council (Brussels)

 30 May 2024

 30 May 2024

"Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) (Brussels)



The Letter n°1069

PDF

in English -- Edition of Tuesday 28th May 2024

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N° ISSN: **2729-6482**

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