

Tuesday 5th May 2020

issue 890

The Letter in PDF format

The Foundation on



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On 9 May, it will be the 70th anniversary of Robert Schuman's declaration which launched the process of European construction. We invite you to discover our website dedicated to this event on that day.

The Declaration of 9 May 1950

Author: Robert Schuman



The declaration of 9 May 1950, which is the 70th anniversary this year, is considered to be the founding text of European integration. Pronounced by Robert Schuman, French Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the Salon de l'Horloge on the Quai d'Orsay in Paris, this declaration proposed the creation of a European organisation responsible for pooling French and German coal and steel production and gave rise to the first European Community (ECSC). 9 May was established in 1985 as "Europe Day". The full text of this declaration and Robert Schuman's introductory remarks are attached.

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Front page! :

The Power of Fear



Europe, like half of humanity, is locked down in fear of the pandemic. But it has done so in different ways in different Member States, depending on their social and political traditions. Democratic debates and connecting with citizens are essential for effectiveness and the respect of freedom, notes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

The health crisis as seen from - a panorama of Europe



All European Union Member States have been affected by Covid-19, to varying degrees. How have they coped? How have their health systems adapted? What have their responses been to the economic shock caused by the pandemic? How do they envisage de-confinement? The Foundation would like to share with you the feelings of Europeans who are fighting the virus in their own countries. These testimonials are neither exhaustive nor academic;

they are real-life human experiences. Let's get to know each other better. New destinations: Italy, Germany and Poland... [Read more](#)

Convincing the Europeans to target the acquisition of "strategic autonomy"



The Foundation's Chairman Jean-Dominique Giuliani was interviewed by the Italy-France Club regarding developments in Europe and the challenges to be met... [Read more](#)

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Covid-19: European responses, a full picture



Faced with the health and economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the European Union is trying to deploy the various means at its disposal. In response and in order to be resilient for the future, the EU's capacity to act depends largely on the Member States and their resolve to work together. The Foundation provides you with a regularly updated overview of all the measures taken at national and European level... [Read more](#)

Coronavirus :

National Measures



In Germany, some school classes, hairdressers and shops larger than 2,500 m² reopened on 4 May and the situation will be assessed on 6. Churches were also reopened after the decision of the Constitutional Court. In Austria, shops larger than 400 m² reopened on 2 May. In Belgium, workplaces and some shops reopened on 4 May and all shops will reopen on the 11th. In France, businesses, shops, schools, small museums and libraries will reopen on 11 May under arrangements to be examined by Parliament. In Spain, outdoor activities resumed on 3 May, and restaurants will reopen only with take-away service. The extension of the state of emergency will be examined on 6 May. Polish shops, hotels, museums, libraries and sports facilities reopened on 4 May, followed by crèches and kindergartens on 6 May. In the UK, anyone who is vulnerable or goes out to work can be tested. In Ireland, containment measures have been extended until 18 May... [Read more](#)

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Progressive deconfinement in Italy



Since 4 May, Italians have been able to walk around freely and make family trips in the same region. They are also allowed to attend funerals, with a maximum of 15 people in attendance. Museums and libraries will reopen from 18 May, and bars and restaurants from 1 June. Schools will remain closed until September... [Read more](#)

Support measures to the economy



In France, short-time working measures for home-based employees have been extended until 1 June. On 27 April, the UK government presented a small business loan scheme and released £76 million for victims of violence, and on 2 May, additional support for local businesses. In Ireland, the government is funding 26 research and innovation programmes related to Covid-19 to the tune of €5 million. On 28 April the Spanish government approved a suspension of social security contributions for companies in 12 sectors. The German Ministry of Economics announced that measures for start-ups amounting to €2 billion were ready. The Austrian government presented targets for tax relief and job protection for workers... [Read more](#)

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Support measures to bank lending activities



On 28 April, the Commission proposed to temporarily ease lending conditions for banks to support SMEs and households in the face of the economic crisis caused by the pandemic. They comprise adjustments to the timing of the application of international accounting standards, more favourable treatment of government guarantees, and a postponement of the entry into force of the buffer requirements when calculating the leverage ratio... [Read more](#)

Recommendations on clinical trials



On 28 April, the Commission published its recommendations to allow the continuation of 200 clinical trials underway in the EU during the pandemic. These recommendations concern the administration of

treatment to affected patients, remote means to monitor raw data, providing clarifications on the classification and notification of authorities of the measures taken to adapt trials to the current situation... [Read more](#)

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Declaration regarding digital contact tracing apps



The Chair of the Council of Europe's Data Protection Committee and the Council of Europe's Data Protection Commissioner issued a joint statement on 28 April on the possible side effects of digital tracing applications related to the prevention of the Covid-19 pandemic. They call for the establishment of legal and technical safeguards to limit the risks of personal data and privacy breaches. The use of these applications should be on a voluntary basis and for a limited period of time only... [Read more](#)

Support to the Western Balkans



On 29 April, the Commission announced the mobilisation of €3.3 billion for the Western Balkans to meet the health and humanitarian needs of the countries in the region in the face of the coronavirus pandemic and to enable economic recovery. An economic and investment agreement for the region is also expected later this year... [Read more](#)

Meeting of interior ministers: reopening of internal borders?



On 28 April, the EU' interior ministers discussed the possibility of gradually reopening borders, improving transit corridors for the transport of priority resources and materials, as well as the guidelines for de-confinement presented by the Commission. They referred to the importance of privacy of tracing applications and took stock of the fight against cybercrime. They discussed the issue of migration and the importance of continuing to work on a Pact for Migration and Asylum... [Read more](#)

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Coordination of the easing of restrictions in the transport sector



The European Transport Ministers discussed the consequences of covid-19 on the sector on 29 April. They stressed the need to strengthen cooperation in order to limit the negative impacts on transport, particularly with the de-confinement which should result in an increase in traffic. They addressed the issue of harmonising air passenger rights or strengthening the role of rail freight corridors... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Energy Ministers



On 28 April Energy Ministers discussed the measures taken to ensure the sector's response to the Covid-19 crisis. Trade agreements to ensure the continuity of essential operations were put in place. Ministers stressed that the European Green Deal could play a major role in the recovery of the economy... [Read more](#)

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For a global movement against the virus



French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Italian Council President Giuseppe Conte, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and European Council President Charles Michel held an online conference on 4 May to launch a global appeal for donations to fund research for a vaccine against Covid-19. Donors from all over the world, but not the US or Russia, pledged €7.4 billion... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

New infringement procedure against Poland



The Commission announced on 29 April the launch of an infringement procedure against Poland regarding the judicial reform introduced in December 2019. The new law extends the scope of disciplinary sanctions against judges, gives the Polish Supreme Court the sole power to deal with issues of judicial independence, and forbids judges to assess the powers of other judges. The Commission considers that this reform is contrary to Union law in that it undermines the right to an impartial judgment, the primacy and directness of European law... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Trade agreement with Mexico



The European Union and Mexico concluded a new comprehensive trade agreement on 28 April, replacing the current 1997 agreement. The agreement eliminates virtually all tariffs on goods and services, and includes guarantees on access to government procurement markets, as well as on compliance with the Paris agreements and the fight against corruption. Mexico is Latin America's largest partner with trade worth €85 billion a year. The agreement now needs to be formally signed by both parties before the ratification phase can begin... [Read more](#)

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Entry into force of the Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement



The Commission announced on 30 April that the Interim Appeals Body for the Settlement of Trade Disputes, whose establishment it supported with 19 World Trade Organization (WTO) member countries, had entered into force. This body, comprising 10 judges, temporarily replaces the WTO Court of Appeal, which has been dormant since 11 December because of the United States' refusal to appoint a judge to it... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

Advocate General conclusions on the measures introduced regarding diesel engines



The Advocate General of the Court of Justice ruled on 30 April that the installation of a "defeat device" on a diesel engine to reduce a vehicle's emissions of nitrogen oxides during type-approval tests is contrary to European law because it is not necessary for the protection of the engine... [Read more](#)

ECB :

New monetary decisions and forecasts for 2020



The European Central Bank decided on 30 April to relax the long-term refinancing conditions (TLTRO III) for banks and to launch a new series of longer-term refinancing operations, called PELTRO. The emergency pandemic purchase programmes and the monthly asset repurchase programme will continue, and could be extended if necessary. The ECB calls on EU leaders to make "ambitious and coordinated efforts that are crucial". Interest rates remain unchanged... [Read more](#)

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Germany :

11th Petersberg Dialogue



The 11th meeting of the Petersberg Climate Dialogue was held on 27 and 28 April by videoconference, under the co-chairmanship of Germany and the United Kingdom. In view of the global health crisis, the discussions focused mainly on a "green" post-Covid-19 economic recovery, taking into account climate protection objectives. For the first time, exchanges were organized with non-State actors such as representatives of private sector companies or NGOs.

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Constitutional Court judgment on the ECB's asset purchase programme



The German Constitutional Court ruled on 5 May that the European Central Bank's public debt repurchase programme exceeds the Union's monetary policy powers. It gives the ECB three months to demonstrate that its action is proportionate to the economic and budgetary consequences. Otherwise, the Bundesbank, the German central bank, would no longer be able to participate in the programme... [Read more](#)

France :

Greenlight for the Franco-German battle tank



Germany and France gave the greenlight on 28 April to the development of a new Main Ground Combat System to replace the Leopard 2 and Leclerc tanks in the 2030s. The French and German defence ministers signed an Implementing Arrangement 1, which constitutes the contractual basis for the study of the system architecture of a battle tank entrusted to the three industrialists concerned, the French Nexter and the Germans Rheinmetall and KMW... [Read more](#)

Ireland :

First negotiations regarding the Irish Protocol



On 30 April the European Union and the United Kingdom began discussions on the Irish Protocol, which concerns the management of the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland (Ulster) in order to guarantee the peace and continuity of the single market. The United Kingdom's withdrawal agreement is due to take effect on 1 January 2021, at the end of the transitional period. The Commission therefore welcomed the discussions but stressed the need for them to be accompanied rapidly by tangible measures... [Read more](#)

Poland :

Call by former leaders to postpone the presidential election



The three former Polish Presidents and six former Prime Ministers called on 30 April for a boycott of the presidential election if the first round is held as scheduled on 10 May. They considered that the election, which would be held by post because of the pandemic, and in the absence of an election campaign, would be "neither general nor fair". Former Prime Minister Donald Tusk, president of the European People's Party (EPP), said on 28 May that he would refuse to take part in the vote, saying it would be unconstitutional. However, the vote could be postponed, as the law providing for postal voting is due to be submitted to the Senate on 6 May, where the ruling Law and Justice Party does not have a majority... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Report on violations of press freedom



The 2020 annual report by the Council of Europe's partner organisations for the protection of journalists, published on 29 April by 14 international press advocacy groups, reveals a worrying picture: in 2019, attacks on journalists increased, with 142 serious threats to media freedom identified. New threats linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, such as increased surveillance of the media and the granting of unlimited powers under the state of emergency, are weighing on the media and darkening the picture. Russia, Turkey and Azerbaijan are among the Council of Europe members responsible for the most significant violations, while two homicides were recorded, in Ukraine and Northern Ireland... [Read more](#)

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The British prison system is experiencing a serious crisis



In a report published on 30 April, the Council of Europe's anti-torture Committee highlights the serious situation in the UK prison system. It notes that inter-prisoner violence and assaults have reached "unprecedented" levels, and that one third of prisoners have tested positive for drug use. It highlights the problem of overcrowding in prisons in England and Wales, as well as mental disorders and self-harm among prisoners. The Committee strongly advises against the construction of new prisons, with a view to favouring a change in sentencing policy to achieve a stabilization and reduction of the prison population... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Decrease in GDP in the first quarter



On April 30, Eurostat published its preliminary estimates of GDP for the first quarter of 2020, which is expected to decline by 3.5% in the European Union and 3.8% in the euro zone. This is the largest decline recorded by Eurostat since 1995... [Read more](#)

Rise in unemployment in March



Eurostat unveiled its unemployment figures for the month of March 2020. The rate of unemployment in the EU lay at 6.6% and that of the euro zone 7.4%. Youth unemployment is at 15.2% in the EU and 15.8% in the euro zone - that of women, 7% in the Union and 7.8% in the euro zone... [Read more](#)

Decrease in inflation in April

Eurostat estimates euro-zone annual inflation was 0.4% in April compared with 0.7% the previous month, Eurostat estimates on 30 April. The euro area fell by 0.3



percentage points, reflecting the containment measures introduced in the Member States. Slovenia, with -1.3%, recorded the biggest decrease, while the highest inflation was observed in Slovakia with 2.2%... [Read more](#)

Asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors in 2019



Eurostat announced on 27 April that EU Member States granted asylum to 295,800 refugees in 2019, down 6% from 2018. Syrians (27%), Afghans (14%) and Venezuelans (13%) were the main beneficiaries. The country that granted the most refugee statuses was Germany (39%), followed by France (14%). On 28 April, Eurostat reported that 14 000 of the asylum seekers who entered the EU were unaccompanied minors, i.e. 7% of them. This figure is down on previous years... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

38th annual report on the use of trade defence instruments



On 30 April the Commission published its 38th annual report on the use of trade defence instruments. It notes that 16 cases were opened in 2019, 6 more than in 2018, with the number of cases in which protective measures were taken doubling from 6 in 2018 to 12 in 2019. The report points out that these measures have reduced unfair imports by 80%, diversified sources of supply and protected 23,000 jobs in the Union... [Read more](#)

4th annual report regarding the Facility for Refugees in Turkey



The 4th report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey was published by the Commission on 30 April. This report takes stock of the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement of March 2016 and covers the period from April 2019 to February 2020. It notes that 41% of the facility's budget has been earmarked for development aid projects and 59% for humanitarian aid. 83 333 refugees arrived in the EU from Turkey in 2019, an increase of 47% compared to 2018. 7 020 migrants were resettled in the EU in 2019 and 1 995 returned to Turkey... [Read more](#)

Culture :

"Opéraoké" with the Opéra Comique



The Opéra Comique de Paris is proposing the Opéraoké Challenge, a competition to interpret the most famous arias of the lyrical art, on the model, for example, of Bizet's *L'Amour est un oiseau rebelle* (Love is a Rebellious Bird), sung by Maria Callas. It is the online revival of a popular activity launched during the work on the theatre in 2016... [Read more](#)

Histories of Poland



On its YouTube channel, the Museum of Polish History in Warsaw offers documentaries on different periods of the country's history... [Read more](#)

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Wednesdays at the V&A



The Victoria & Albert Museum in London organises every Wednesday #LetsMakeWednesdays, a call for creativity on the part of both young people and adults in design, object making or storytelling, drawing inspiration from its collections... [Read more](#)

Modern Art in Berlin



The Berlinische Galerie, the museum of modern art in the German capital, offers a #museumfromhome programme that includes a virtual visit to its permanent collection as well as an exhibition devoted to the German photographer Umbo... [Read more](#)

Zaragoza Museum



The Museum of Zaragoza is offering online visits to its collections, which range from prehistory to the 20th century, and cover a variety of subjects such as ethnography, ceramic art or the Colonna Celsa, the ancient Roman city on which the museum is built... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



5th May 2020

Meeting of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers

Meeting of Telecommunications Ministers



6th May 2020

EU-Western Balkans Summit



8th May 2020

Eurogroup Meeting



9th May

Europe Day - 70th Anniversary of the Robert Schuman Declaration



10th May 2020

Poland

Presidential election (first round)



11th May 2020

Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting

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