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Mediterranean Sea: a paradigm of contemporary conflicts

Author: Amiral Jean Casabianca



An area of trade and conflict since antiquity, the Mediterranean Sea remains a major crossroads for the interaction of the main strategic competitors. The multiplication of actors, and the inevitable duplicity that goes with it, generate the ambiguity of stated or real intentions. But Europe is best placed to understand this uncertain space and take a more active part.

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Foundation :

The "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2020" in digital form



The 2020 edition of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union", a reference work for European decision-makers, is available electronically in English and French. With contributions by leading personalities and experts, original maps and annotated statistics, it offers a comprehensive view of the European Union and analyses the challenges facing Europe... [Read more](#)

The end of lockdown in Europe



The Member States of the European Union are continuing the process of ending lockdown with the resumption of social and economic activities and the reopening of the Union's internal borders. The Foundation offers you a summary of the measures taken and the timetable planned by each State. An indispensable resource for understanding the way out of the crisis and regaining a European "spirit"... [Read more](#)

Giving ambition to the multiannual financial framework 2021/2027



The Foundation is organising an online debate on the next multiannual financial framework on 23 June at 3 pm with Gert-Jan Kooman, Director General of DG BUDGET at the European Commission, José Manuel Fernandes, Member of the European Parliament and Alain Lamassoure, former Minister, former Member of the European Parliament and Chairman of the Foundation's Scientific Committee. The debate will be moderated by Pascale Joannin, Director General... [Read more](#)

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Recovery :

Meeting of heads of State and government



The Heads of State and Government discussed the European Recovery Plan and the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 on 19 June. At the end of the meeting, the President of the Council, Charles Michel, noted that there were differences of opinion and that a phase of negotiations was beginning with a view to a further meeting in Brussels in mid-July. EU leaders also took stock of negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom and approved a one-year renewal of sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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Commission's strategy regarding vaccines



On 17 June, the Commission presented its strategy on vaccines against Covid-19, which was drawn up at the request of the EU Health Ministers. It aims to guarantee the quality of vaccines and their rapid and equitable availability, and is based on two pillars: support for European laboratories to ensure that these vaccines are produced on the continent, and regulatory flexibility to speed up their development... [Read more](#)

Agreement on compatibility of coronavirus patient tracking applications



The Commission announced on 16 June an agreement between Member States on the compatibility of patient tracing applications of Covid-19. This decision was taken to coincide with the reopening of borders and tourism, and will make every national application functional across the Union. The Commission emphasises that user data will be stored only on their phones, and will provide a gateway service to allow users' phones to communicate with each other... [Read more](#)

National Measures



In France, school is mandatory again as of June 22nd, cinemas can reopen and contactless team sports resume. In Germany, the tracking application "Corona-warn" has been available since 16 June. In Spain, the borders reopened with the end of the state of alert on 21 June, and Catalonia has fully moved to phase 3 of the end of lockdown: restrictions on the reception of people are being eased in bars, shops and on beaches. In Poland, the "ProteGO Safe" application has been available since 16 June. In the United Kingdom, where the professional football championship has resumed, Prime Minister Boris Johnson will announce new measures on 4 July for the leisure, entertainment and hospitality sectors... [Read more](#)

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Measures in support of the economy



The French government has announced an action plan for the relocation of health research projects and health product production sites. In Belgium, the government has repealed some specific measures for the federal civil service. In Germany, the government announced €24.8 billion to guarantee employment, €1 billion to support culture, and the extension until 30 September of the conditions for access to social protection measures. In Austria, an allowance of €450 will be provided to the unemployed, families will receive €360 per child and tax reductions on wages and income, and VAT has been cut by 5% in the catering sector. The Spanish government has released €16 billion to help the autonomous communities and announced a €4.262 billion plan to support tourism... [Read more](#)

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Consultations regarding the recovery plan

From 13 to 21 June, the Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, held talks with political, economic and cultural leaders to prepare the country's recovery plan, which will be financed by the EU's common



loan, based on three main themes: modernising the country, launching the energy transition and designing a more inclusive Italy. Proposals are expected to be presented in September... [Read more](#)

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Lifting of the state of emergency



The Hungarian Parliament unanimously voted on 16 June to end the state of emergency introduced at the end of March to counter the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, a new law on temporary health measures, including provisions under the state of emergency, was adopted... [Read more](#)

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Adoption of temporary easing of banking rules



On 18 June MEPs adopted a plan to temporarily ease regulatory constraints on banks to help them support economic recovery. The plan relaxes some of the EU's banking prudential rules, in particular the rules on capital requirements, rules on lending to SMEs, pensioners and employees on permanent contracts. The aim is to enable banks to channel the money raised by the ECB into the economy... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Education and Training Council



On 17 June the Council adopted conclusions concerning responses to the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic to education and training systems. The Council calls on the Member States to develop innovation and digital transformation in education as well as the skills of trainers in this field. It also underlines the importance of sharing good practice between States and the need to ensure inclusion and equal opportunities... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Consultation regarding the revision of the trade policy



On 16 June the Commission launched a comprehensive review of the EU's trade policy, including a public consultation. The aim is to identify new guidelines for the medium term, which will take account of new constraints such as the crisis linked to the coronavirus pandemic. The results of the consultation will be published at the end of the year...

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Launch of 16 new European defence projects



On 15 June, the Commission committed €205 million to finance 16 projects in the framework of the pilot funds that prefigure the European Defence Fund. This funding will be distributed to companies from across the Union, including 83 SMEs. The projects aim to develop new defence technologies such as drones, space technologies, unmanned land vehicles, high-precision missiles, airborne electronic attack technologies, cyber security platforms and active stealth technologies... [Read more](#)

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White paper on foreign subsidies



On 17 June the Commission adopted a White Paper on foreign subsidies in the Single Market and opened a consultation on the issue until 23 September 2020. Subsidies from third countries can affect competition in the EU and cause distortions. In order to fill the existing regulatory gap, the Commission proposes to introduce a general control instrument to ensure that foreign subsidies do not give an undue advantage, as well as a monitoring mechanism on procurement... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

MEPs demand a recovery plan for Schengen



On 19 June, MEPs adopted a resolution calling on Member States to restore the integrity of the Schengen area as soon as possible by 520 votes in favour, 86 against and 59 abstentions. While MEPs are pleased to see that some countries are reopening their borders, they note that

this is not the case for all, and that in any case it is being done in an uncoordinated manner. They believe that the reopening is essential for the recovery of the European economy. MEPs want to launch a medium-term reflection on the creation of real governance of the Schengen area... [Read more](#)



Increase in aid to the agricultural sector



On 19 June MEPs approved increased aid to farmers through the Rural Development Fund, up to €7,000 instead of €5,000 per farmer, and €50,000 per SME in the agri-food sector. The deadline for the payment of the aid was extended from 31 December 2020 to 30 June 2021. In addition, aid will be available up to 2% of the envelope for rural development programmes instead of the original 1%. The project must now be definitively approved by the Council... [Read more](#)



Security law condemned in Hong Kong



In a resolution adopted on 19 June, Parliament condemned China's new National Security Law, which undermines Hong Kong's autonomy. MEPs recommended that the law be referred to the International Court of Justice if implemented, since it would run counter to the Sino-British agreement on the return of Hong Kong and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. MEPs also highlighted the deterioration of rights and freedoms in the territory. They called for the release of pro-democracy activists and the appointment of a UN special envoy to deal with the situation... [Read more](#)



Council :

Meeting of Defence Ministers



On 16 June, the Ministers for Defence and Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union, exchanged views on how to strengthen the Union's operational commitment, particularly with regard to force generation and the gradual resumption of missions and operations. They discussed the improvement of European defence initiatives and the means to be mobilised to implement the Union's objectives. On the 17th, the Council adopted its conclusions on security and defence to enable the development of Europe's strategic autonomy... [Read more](#)



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Diplomacy :

Eastern Partnership Meeting



European leaders and their Eastern Partnership counterparts exchanged views on 18 June regarding the response to the coronavirus crisis and the future of the partnership. They expressed their commitment to the Eastern Partnership and the areas of cooperation it includes, including on trade and free movement of people, and prepared for their next summit in March 2021... [Read more](#)



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Anglo-Franco-German Declaration on Iran



France, Germany and the United Kingdom said on 19 June that they were opposed to the United States' use of "snapback", the automatic restoration of sanctions against Iran. They say they oppose the automatic lifting of the arms embargo on Iran in October. The 3 countries are calling for dialogue and for Iran to respect its obligations under the nuclear agreement, despite the US withdrawal from the agreement... [Read more](#)



Renewal of sanctions for a further year following the annexation of Crimea



On 18 June, the Council renewed the sanctions introduced in 2014 in response to Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimea for a further year. The measures include restrictions on imports, exports and investments... [Read more](#)



EU-China Summit



European Council President Charles Michel, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and High Representative Josep Borrell held talks on 22 June with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Keqiang. EU leaders called on China to respect its commitments on

market access for European companies, transparency on subsidies and technology transfer. They reiterated their commitment to reach a bilateral agreement on investment, the urgent need for WTO negotiations on industrial subsidies and overcapacity in steel and certain technologies. They also warned China against cyber-attacks and misinformation and expressed the Union's "grave concern" about the challenge being made to Hong Kong's autonomy... [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

Hungarian law on NGO funding is contrary to EU law



In a ruling issued on 18 June, the Court of Justice, which had been consulted by the Commission, ruled that Hungary's 2017 law on the international financing of NGOs was contrary to European law. The law provides for a reporting obligation for associations receiving more than €1 400 from foreign donors and the publication on a public website of the name of the association and the donor. The Court considers that those provisions constitute an obstacle to the free movement of capital and are contrary to the Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

Delay and additional cost of 8 major transportation infrastructure projects



On 16 June the European Court of Auditors published a report reviewing 8 major transport infrastructure projects. It notes that delays have accumulated, 11 years on average, and that construction costs have risen by an average of 47%. The Court therefore calls for these projects, which are vital to the operation of the trans-European transport network, to be speeded up... [Read more](#)

Ireland :

Agreement on a new coalition



On 15 June, the Irish centre-right parties Fianna Fail and Fine Gael and the Greens agreed on a government programme enabling them to form a coalition following the 8 February elections. The leader of Fianna Fail, Michael Martin, is expected to become the next Prime Minister until December 2022, when the post will revert to the leader of Fine Gael, outgoing Prime Minister Leo Varadkar. The coalition agreement has yet to be approved by a majority of the members of the three parties... [Read more](#)

Serbia :

Victory for the party in office



President Aleksandar Vucic's Serbian Progress Party (SNS) won the parliamentary elections on 21 June with 63% of the vote, followed by its coalition partner the Socialist Party (SPS) which won 11% of the vote. Turnout totalled 47.7%. Estimates put the SNS at between 187 and 189 seats out of the 250 seats in parliament. Opposition parties boycotted the elections... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Investigations into incarceration in Europe



According to the 2019 edition of the annual SPACE II survey, carried out for the Council of Europe by the University of Lausanne and published on 18 June, alternatives to detention without deprivation of liberty are gaining ground in Europe. These measures include electronic surveillance, community service or house arrest. In parallel with the investigation, a special report on detainees in Europe in times of pandemic was also published. More than 118,000 prisoners have been released in Europe since the beginning of the pandemic, in an effort to limit its spread... [Read more](#)

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NATO :

Meeting of Defence Ministers



NATO Defence Ministers discussed Russian nuclear rearmament on 16 June and took stock of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In response to Russia's increasing nuclear weapons build-up, they approved political and military measures to strengthen the Alliance's troop training, air

and missile defence and conventional capabilities. They decided not to deploy new nuclear missiles on the continent... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on demography in Europe



In a report on demography in Europe published on 17 June, the Commission points out that the population of the Union will fall to only 4% of the world population in 2070. This decline is expected to vary from region to region, with Central Europe particularly affected by this trend. The report will serve as a basis for future Commission proposals on ageing and support for the regions most affected by this demographic decline... [Read more](#)

Annual report on trade barriers



On 18 June the Commission published its report on barriers to trade for the year 2019. It estimates that EU action to remove illegal barriers has resulted in €8 billion in gains for European businesses. However, it notes that illegal barriers are on the increase in the information and communication technology, automotive and electronics sectors. It has identified 438 barriers to trade around the world, 43 of which will be introduced in 2019. China and Russia are the countries with the most barriers, with 38 and 31 trade restrictive measures respectively... [Read more](#)

Annual review of the fisheries policy



The Commission published its annual review of the Common Fisheries Policy on 17 June. The report notes a recovery in fish stocks in the North-East Atlantic in 2018, a sign of the development of more sustainable fisheries. The net profit of the fisheries sector is €1.4 billion, with an average net profit margin of 18% and an increase in the average wage of fishermen. Despite these good results, the Commission is concerned about the consequences of the coronavirus crisis for the sector and notes that the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea continue to be overfished... [Read more](#)

Report on the European elections



On 19 June the Commission published its report on the conduct of the May 2019 European elections. The report highlights the increase in the participation rate (50.6%), particularly among young people, and the numerical dimension of the campaign. The report notes the prevalence of national debates, despite the emergence of a Europe-wide debate on issues such as climate change and human rights. Transparency between the European and national political levels and the fight against misinformation and interference remain major challenges... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Reopening of the Orsay Museum



The Musée d'Orsay in Paris will reopen on June 23 with two exhibitions that will continue until September. It will be devoted to the 19th century French painter James Tissot, "the modern ambiguous", and to Léopold Chauveau, a doctor and artist whose style was naïve and incisive... [Read more](#)

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The Lentos revisited



The Museum of Modern Art Lentos in Linz is showing more than 1,500 works of art, including paintings by Klimt, Schiele and Pechstein. Until 9 August, the Austrian artist Jakob Lena Knebl is revisiting the collection in an installation that can also be seen in an immersive setting on the museum site. Until 4 October, another exhibition will be devoted to the artist Josef Bauer... [Read more](#)

Takis in Barcelona



The Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA) is presenting a retrospective of the Greek artist Takis, a leading figure in the experimental arts of the 1960s, until 13 September. The museum is

also offering a series of films from its collections on its website every Thursday until 30 July... [Read more](#)

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Andreas Eriksson in London



The Stephen Friedman Gallery in London will be hosting an exhibition of works by Swedish artist Andreas Eriksson until July 31. His paintings mainly focus on the theme of nature, between abstract and figurative art... [Read more](#)

Art and Politics in Wroclaw



The Museum of Contemporary Art in Wroclaw is presenting "Poetry and Performance" until 13 July, an exhibition that focuses on film poetry, writing and language as an instrument for political ideology in Eastern Europe. Another exhibition, running until 2021, explores the links between art, reality and commitment under the title "Private Mythologies"... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



22 June 2020

EU-China Meeting



23 June 2020

Meeting of Environment Ministers

Meeting of Education Ministers

Tripartite Social Summit



28 June 2020

Poland
Presidential Election (first round)



29 June 2020

Meeting of Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers

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