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The Letter in PDF format

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What should we make of the Just Transition Mechanism put forward by the European Commission?

Author: Olivier Marty



The Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) designed to support the Union's move towards carbon neutrality by 2050 has been criticised for its lack of clarity with regard to its financing and operation. However, it appears that its main merit is that it establishes a positive dynamic initiated by the European public authorities with a view to achieving a transition based on solidarity for all territories.

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Elections :

Tightly run election in the second round of the presidential election in Poland



According to official results collected in 99.7% of polling stations, outgoing Polish President Andrzej Duda beat Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski in the second round of the presidential election held on 12 July. Andrzej Duda would thus receive 51.2% of the votes... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

The "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2020" in paper format



The 2020 edition of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union", a reference work for European decision-makers, has now been published in French in hard copy, published by Marie B. It is also available in electronic format in French and English. With contributions from leading personalities and experts, together with original maps and annotated statistics, it offers a comprehensive view of the European Union and analyses the challenges facing Europe... [Read more](#)

End of lockdown viewed from Europe



The Member States of the European Union are continuing the process of ending lockdown with the resumption of social and economic activities. Free movement has been almost fully restored, external borders have been partially reopened since 1 July, and Europeans are starting to travel within the Union again. 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 recapturing a European "spirit"... [Read more](#)

Recovery :

National Measures



In France, the state of health emergency ended on 10 July. In Belgium, the wearing of masks has been made mandatory in shops, cinemas, places of worship, museums and libraries since 11 July. In Germany, the wearing of masks is still compulsory in public transport and retail shops and is strongly recommended for holiday activities. In Austria, the government is preparing measures to be taken in the event of a new health crisis. In Spain, the wearing of masks in public areas in Catalonia has been mandatory again since 9 July. In the United Kingdom, outdoor swimming pools, theatres, opera, dance and music performances resumed their activities on 11 July. Gymnasiums, leisure centres and indoor swimming pools will reopen on 25 July. In Ireland, the next phase of ending lockdown is scheduled for 20 July... [Read more](#)

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Measures to support the economy



In France, MEPs adopted at first reading a €43.5 billion plan for tourism, cars and aeronautics. In Germany, small and medium-sized enterprises can apply for additional transitional financial aid. In Spain, the government has extended financial burden relief for mortgages, rents and non-mortgage loans and adopted measures for air transport. It has also presented a €1.056 billion investment plan for research and development and a plan for tourism. In the United Kingdom, the government presented a £30 billion (€33 billion) plan to support employment, divided into 3 pillars: £3.6 billion to help employers retain employees, £8.8 billion of investment in infrastructure, decarbonisation and maintenance projects, and VAT cuts for the tourism and hospital sectors... [Read more](#)

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Reform plan for recovery



On 6 July, the Italian government unveiled the broad outlines of the reform plan it may present under the European Recovery Fund to tackle the economic consequences of the crisis. The plan allocates €32 billion to health infrastructure, €7 billion to education and research and €3 billion for the renovation and digitisation of school infrastructure. In addition, on 9 July the Minister for Health published a ban on entry into Italy for anyone who has travelled to or transited through 13 non-EU countries... [Read more](#)

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New measures in support of the wine sector



On 7 July the Commission adopted new support measures for the wine sector to respond to the crisis caused by the coronavirus and its consequences on the sector, which has been particularly affected by the closure of restaurants and bars. These measures, which come on top of those adopted in May, include a temporary derogation from the competition rules, an increase in the Union's contribution to support programmes for the sector and the possibility of paying advances for distillation and storage in the event of a crisis... [Read more](#)

OECD report on unemployment



The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a much more serious employment crisis than the one that followed after the 2008 recession. Women, youth and low-income workers are being hit hardest, according to a new OECD report and unemployment statistics released on 7 July... [Read more](#)

Charles Michel presents his draft budget



On 10 July, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, presented his proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the Recovery Plan on the basis of the Commission's proposal and his discussions with the members of the European Council. It sets out a budget of €1 074 billion for the period 2021-2027, 30% of which is earmarked for climate transition projects, and maintains the rebate for the 5 Member States currently benefiting from it. It proposes to strengthen the supervision of the Member States on the recovery plan. His proposal will be discussed by the Heads of State and Government at the European Council on 17 and 18 July...

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Economic forecasts: recession more severe than forecast



On 7 July the Commission presented its new summer economic forecasts. It estimates that the impact of the pandemic on economic activity in 2020 will be greater than expected and forecasts that the euro area and EU economies will contract by 8.7% and 8.3% respectively in 2020 and grow by 6.1% and 5.8% in 2021, compared to the May forecasts of -7.7% and -7.4% in 2020. These forecasts are also based on a continued recovery of the economy, without a second epidemic wave, but do not take into account the effect of the future recovery plan...

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Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers



On 10 July, ministers exchanged views on measures to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, including the European Stability Mechanism support plan, the Temporary Support Instrument for Unemployment Risk Reduction in Emergencies (SURE), and the EIB's Pan-European Guarantee Fund. Ministers exchanged views on the progress of convergence measures for those states that have not yet adopted the euro. The chairman of the High Level Forum on Capital Market Union (CMU) presented its final report on recommendations and priorities for further market integration...

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Commission :

Preparations for the end of the transition period with the UK



On 9 July the Commission published a communication on the end of the transitional period with the United Kingdom. It identifies all the changes that will take place on 1 January 2021, whether there is an agreement or not, in order to allow businesses, public administrations and citizens to prepare for the new situation. The Communication deals with topics such as trade, energy, tourism, social security, company law, security, data protection and intellectual property protection...

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Guidelines for online platforms



On 10 July, the Commission published its guidelines to help online platforms comply with the rules set out in the regulation on the relationship between companies and platforms. The regulation was adopted in July 2019 and takes effect on 12 July this year. It makes more transparent the classification of the appearance of products sold on the platforms, the rules for sales and the procedures for challenging a platform's decisions. In parallel, the Commission has opened a consultation on the three reports of the Online Platforms Observatory in order to prepare the future digital services package...

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Agreement with the Union on the use of European contributions



On 9 July the Commission signed a Framework Partnership Agreement with the World Bank, governing the use of EU contributions. Both partners have committed to promote economic growth, digital development, job creation, support for fragile states, ecological transition, reduction of gender inequalities, and support for SMEs in developing countries in the face of the coronavirus crisis. Between 2015 and 2019, the EU has contributed €2.07 billion to World Bank programmes...

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24 new European universities

On 9 July, the Commission published the list of the 24 additional European universities that will join the first 17 higher education



alliances already selected for 2019. These 24 European universities involve 165 institutions from 26 Member States and countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme. The alliances allow for closer cooperation, for students, staff and resources. Each alliance will receive up to €5 million under the Erasmus + programme and up to €2 million under the Horizon 2020 programme for a period of three years... [Read more](#)

European alliance for clean hydrogen



On 8 July, the Commission presented its strategy for integrating the European energy system and increasing the production of clean hydrogen by 2030, and deploying this fuel on a large scale between 2030 and 2050. It launched the European Alliance for Clean Hydrogen, with the aim of building up a pool of investment projects to meet hydrogen production targets... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Adoption of road transport reform



On 8 July MEPs finally adopted the three legislative acts that form part of the road transport reform. The reform guarantees protection for drivers regarding the location and duration of weekly rest periods and the frequency of return journeys home. The reform will require the fitting of tachographs to monitor the movements of heavy goods vehicles and introduces rules on the registration of transport companies in the Member States in order to combat "letter-box companies". Finally, the rules on posting will apply to cabotage and certain types of road transport to ensure fair remuneration... [Read more](#)

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Presentation by Angela Merkel of the priorities of the German Presidency of the Council



On 8 July, German Chancellor Angela Merkel presented the priorities of the German Council Presidency to MEPs in the presence of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. She stressed that the main objective of the Presidency was the economic recovery of the Union and that its priorities were fundamental rights, solidarity and cohesion, climate change, digital transition and Europe's role in the world. The representatives of the parliamentary groups replied that they expect ambitious stimulus, promoting the rule of law and supporting the ecological transition... [Read more](#)

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Resolution on the protection of employment and poverty



In a resolution adopted on 10 July, MEPs call for the strengthening of youth and children's guarantees and the "housing first" approach. They stress the importance of defending gender equality and maintaining flexibility in the EU's budgetary rules to help Member States deal with the crisis. MEPs call for the SURE instrument for financing short-time working not to benefit companies based in tax havens, paying dividends and bonuses, or not respecting collective agreements... [Read more](#)

Council :

Paschal Donohue elected president of the Eurogroup



On 9 July, Irish Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe (EPP) was elected President of the Eurogroup in a second round of voting against Spain's Nadia Calvino. Luxembourg's Pierre Gramegna withdrew after the first round. Paschal Donohoe will succeed Mario Centeno on 13 July for a two and a half year term. Ministers held an exchange of views on the economic situation in the euro area, on the basis of a presentation of the European Commission's interim economic forecasts for the summer of 2020... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Interior Ministers



On 7 July, interior ministers discussed police cooperation on immigration and rescue at sea and the fight against smugglers. They agreed on the importance of developing existing police cooperation tools and increasing the budget of Europol and Frontex so that they can use new technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analysis. On rescue at sea and migration, the ministers would like to see the establishment of a

sustainable framework rather than ad hoc negotiations for each migratory crisis, as well as the strengthening of cooperation with third countries, particularly those in the Maghreb... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Justice Ministers



On 6 July, the Ministers of Justice discussed the restrictions on citizens' rights decided in the context of the management of the Covid-19 pandemic. They reiterated the importance of the fight against misinformation and incitement to hatred exacerbated by the crisis. They also raised the issue of the protection of victims of terrorism and decided to work on the Commission's strategy on victims' rights... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Resumption of dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovar Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti participated on 10 and 12 July in two videoconferences under the aegis of France and Germany, then the European Union, to resume the dialogue for mutual recognition and normalisation of relations between their two countries. A meeting is to be held in Brussels on 16 July... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

The platforms cannot communicate the data of a user who has illegally uploaded content



In a ruling delivered on 9 July, the Court of Justice ruled that a rightholder may not request the telephone numbers, e-mail address and IP address of a user who has illegally distributed a work of which he owns the intellectual property. A German company asked YouTube for this information concerning users who had illegally broadcast on the platform two films to which it owned the rights. According to the Court, the 2004 directive on intellectual property allows rightholders to obtain only the physical address of infringing internet users... [Read more](#)

Volkswagen can be prosecuted in all Member States.



The European Court of Justice ruled on 9 July that purchasers of a vehicle whose engine has been tampered with in order to conceal the real rate of emissions can sue Volkswagen in the State where the vehicle was purchased, and not only in the State where the manufacturer has its headquarters. It held that the purchaser's damage is incurred in the Member State in which he acquires the vehicle. An Austrian consumers' association had thus brought an action for damages before the Klagenfurt Regional Court, in Austria, against Volkswagen, which had challenged the jurisdiction of that court... [Read more](#)

ECB :

Bulgaria and Croatia join ERM II



On 10 July, the Finance Ministers of the euro area and the European Central Bank approved the accession of Bulgaria and Croatia to the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM II), the first step in the process of joining the euro... [Read more](#)

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European Agencies :

Appointment of François-Michel Michaud as head of the European Banking Authority



On 8 July MEPs approved the appointment of Frenchman François-Louis Michaud as Executive Director of the European Banking Authority, despite the negative opinion of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee, which criticised the absence of women in the selection process. François-Louis Michaud, currently Deputy Director General at the European Central Bank, has been appointed for a five-year term... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Secretary General's Annual Report



On 9 July, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejcinović Buric, published her annual report on the Council of Europe's action between May 2019 and May 2020. The report highlights the fundamental role of human rights during the pandemic and the importance of multilateralism. The Secretary General recalls the need to intensify efforts in the fields of gender equality, the fight against hate crimes and artificial intelligence, which are priorities for the Council of Europe... [Read more](#)

Call to counter prison overcrowding



On 9 July, the Council of Europe's Anti-Torture Committee (CPT) called upon the 47 States to put an end to prison overcrowding through emergency measures to combat the coronavirus pandemic. The call follows a policy statement issued in March, and affirms the need for additional measures to be taken as an alternative to detention. The CPT recalls that temporary restrictions imposed, such as limits on visits and activities by prisoners, should be lifted as soon as they are no longer necessary... [Read more](#)

Recommendation to ban racial profiling



On 6 July, the Council of Europe Commission against Racism (ECRI) warned against racial profiling by law enforcement officials. It considers this practice to be a stigmatising and humiliating racial discrimination for the targeted communities, which can lead to institutionalised racism. It recommends that the recruitment of law enforcement officials be modified to ensure that they are representative of the population of each country and that independent monitoring bodies be set up... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

The Union's population stood at 448 million inhabitants on 1st January



According to figures published by Eurostat on 10 July, the population of the Union stood at 448 million on 1 January 2020. Leaving aside the departure of the United Kingdom, this represents an increase of 900 000 inhabitants compared to 2019, thanks to a positive migratory balance. Indeed, the natural variation of the Union's population has been negative for 8 years, with more deaths than births. Germany remains the most populous state, and Malta the least populous, despite having recorded the highest growth. The state with the largest decrease in population is Bulgaria (-7%)... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Survey on European citizenship and democracy



On 9 July the Commission published the results of a new Eurobarometer on citizenship of the Union. A large majority of Europeans are aware of the notion of the "Union citizen" (91%) and are also well informed about their rights to vote, to lodge a complaint with the institutions, or to reside in other Member States. As far as free movement is concerned, 84% of those questioned believe that it is generally advantageous for their country's economy... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report 2019 on the competition policy



On 9 July the Commission published its annual report on competition policy. In 2019, it adopted 15 decisions to sanction antitrust practices and finalised 4 cases under the voluntary cooperation procedure. As a result, 382 mergers were reported to the Commission, which processed 362 mergers and intervened in 19 cases. The Commission dealt with 308 state aid cases. It is continuing its work of assessing competition policy, in particular to adapt it to digital markets and to combat subsidies from third countries to their companies operating in the Union... [Read more](#)

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Report on the liberalisation of visas



On 10 July the Commission published its report on the fulfilment by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine of the conditions for visa liberalisation towards the Union. Coordination on migration is

considered positive, but further efforts are needed to fight organised crime and corruption... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

Picasso's Studies in London



The Royal Academy of Arts in London will reopen to the public on 16 July, with the exhibition "Picasso and Paper", which until 2 August will display 300 drawings and studies by the artist, including preparatory work for the *Les Femmes d'Alger* and *Guernica*... [Read more](#)

Contemporary art in Hamburg



The Deichtorhallen Centre for Contemporary Art and Photography in Hamburg has a number of temporary exhibitions, including "Young Painter in Germany", which showcases a selection of 150 works, and "Quadro", which focuses on the creation of symbols through painting using figurative, surrealist or experimental images... [Read more](#)

Satirical art in Warsaw



The Contemporary Art Centre at Ujazdow Castle in Warsaw is organising the exhibition "Crack Up - Crack Down" until 11 October, which presents various satirical works by artists from European countries as well as from China, Iran and the United States. These works present the use of satire in different historical and political contexts... [Read more](#)

Call for tender in support of the music sector



On 10 July, the Commission launched a call for tender for €2.5 million for the creation of an innovative support plan for the music sector to address the difficulties caused by the pandemic. The Commission intends to select the winners of the call for tender in November, so that the sector can receive grants as early as 2021... [Read more](#)

Art in action in Barcelona



Within the framework of the European project Our many Europes, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA) will be presenting, until February 2021, "Action: a provisional history of the 1990s", which revisits artistic developments in Spain, particularly performances involving the human body... [Read more](#)

Re-opening of the Guimet Museum



The Guimet Museum in Paris reopened its doors on July 8. An exhibition of porcelain sculptures by the Chinese artist Ru Xiao Fan is running until 21 September. And from July 15 to October 12, "Fuji, Land of Snow" will be held, dedicated to various representations of Japan's sacred mountain... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



15 July 2020

Meeting of European Affairs Ministers

EU-India Meeting



16 July 2020

Jul

Meeting of Health Ministers
Frankfurt
Meeting of Council of governors of the Central European Bank

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17 July 2020
Meeting of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers

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17-18 July 2020
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Extraordinary European Council

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20 July 2020
Brussels
Agriculture and Fisheries Council

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