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The Letter in PDF format

The Foundation on  and 

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— I support the Robert Schuman Foundation —

The Foundation team wishes you a wonderful summer and hopes to see you back on 7th September.

## Relations between the European Union and the UK: a final agreement in sight?

Author: Christian Lequesne



Negotiations are continuing over the summer between the European Union and the United Kingdom to establish the terms of their future relationship after 31 December 2020. Many sensitive issues remain outstanding. The German Presidency of the Council will have a crucial role to play in leading the discussions with London, but Boris Johnson's government will have to put pragmatism before ideology.

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### 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 by the Marie B publishing house. 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](#)

#### Broadcast of documentary "Trafficking Children"



The documentary "Trafficking Children", directed by Olivier Ballande and with which the Foundation is associated, will be broadcast on Arte on July 22nd at 10:35 pm. It follows judicial and police cooperation in Europe, particularly between French and Romanian magistrates to dismantle a network that was exploiting Romanian minors, forced by their parents to steal in the Paris metro. The documentary is also available on VOD until 19 September.. [Read more](#)

## Managing COVID-19, a journey through Europe



How have the EU Member States managed the health crisis and what are the socio-political consequences? What are the responses to the economic shock caused by the pandemic? What about the dynamics between European States and regional trends? The Foundation has put together in one volume a series of texts published in recent months to contribute to the understanding of this exceptional event... [Read more](#)

## The end of lockdown seen from Europe



The Member States of the European Union are continuing the process of end of 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 reviving the European "spirit"... [Read more](#)

## Recovery :

### Agreement by the European Council on the recovery plan and the 2021-2027 budget



The European Council, which started on 17 July, concluded on 21 July with an agreement on the €750 billion recovery plan, ultimately comprising €390 billion in grants and €360 billion in loans, and on the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 amounting to €1 074 billion over 7 years. This agreement represents a new and important step in European integration in that, for the first time, it gives the European Commission the possibility to contract a joint loan... [Read more](#)

## Meeting of G20 finance ministers



On July 18, G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors discussed the financial and economic consequences of the pandemic. They welcomed the commitments of the IMF and the World Bank under the debt service suspension initiative for emerging and least developed countries, as well as other supranational financial instruments. They committed to take into account the principles of the G20 Action Plan for Global Economic Recovery adopted on 15 April and to strengthening resilience to future pandemics, disasters and environmental risks... [Read more](#)

## Short term measures to counter pandemics



On 15 July, the Commission presented short-term measures to be taken to strengthen the resilience of European health systems in the event of future pandemics and the resurgence of COVID-19. It identifies priority actions such as strengthening screening and contact tracing, ensuring a smooth supply of medicines and protective devices, but also strengthening the capacity of hospitals, which must at the same time continue to receive patients for all types of diseases... [Read more](#)

## Update of the list of countries with whom travel is allowed



The Council has updated the list of countries on which it recommends not to impose travel restrictions. No countries have been added to the list since 1 July, while Serbia and Montenegro have been removed from the list due to an upsurge in the pandemic. The list is based on the epidemiological situation in third countries and the measures they are putting in place to combat the virus. Member States remain individually free to lift the restrictions or not... [Read more](#)

## Meeting of Environment Ministers



On 14 July environment ministers called for the environment and climate to be at the centre of the recovery plan. They pledged to give priority to pending EU dossiers in these areas and called for reforms to be adopted to develop workers' skills in climate and environment... [Read more](#)

### Recommendation not to help businesses that have links with tax havens



On 14 July, the Commission recommended to Member States not to grant financial assistance to companies with links to countries and territories on the European list of non-cooperative countries in tax matters. The statement is accompanied by legal recommendations to implement such a restriction without infringing EU law. The Commission also recommends exemptions for companies that can prove that they have paid an appropriate tax or that they have a real economic presence in a territory or country on the list. It asks Member States to be kept informed of their decisions so that they can report back within three years... [Read more](#)

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### National measures



In France, the wearing of masks has been compulsory in enclosed public places and shops since 20 July. In Germany, the wearing of masks is still mandatory and local containment measures may be taken in the event of an outbreak of Covid. In Spain, the city of Lleida has been locked again and the inhabitants of Barcelona have been asked to stay in their homes. In the United Kingdom, from 24 July, masks will be compulsory in shops and supermarkets and restrictions on schools and childcare centres in the city of Leicester will be lifted and those on retail trade relaxed. In Ireland, phase 4 ending lockdown has been postponed to 10 August, masks are still compulsory in all shops and shopping centres and the restrictions on assembly (50 people in enclosed spaces, 200 outside) are maintained... [Read more](#)

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### Extension of restriction measures in Italy



On 14 July the Italian government announced that the measures taken on 11 June to end lockdown would be extended until 31 July. Indoor discotheques remain closed, fairs and indoor public events are banned. The wearing of masks has not been compulsory in Lombardy since 15 July... [Read more](#)

### Measures to support the economy



In France, the government has announced new investments of €6 billion for the health sector, €20 billion for ecology and €40 billion for industry. In Germany, the government announced a plan to support employment through new apprenticeship contracts and presented a plan for the steel industry combining climate protection and competitiveness. In Spain, the Congress validated the €16 billion support fund for the autonomous communities and the government granted €5.6 million in subsidies to 13 R&D projects, extended the ERTE (temporary work regulation) until 30 September and announced exemptions for the self-employed. In Poland, the deadline for submitting applications to the Central Register of Beneficiaries (CRBR) has been extended. The UK government has introduced employment protection measures which will take effect from 1 January 2021... [Read more](#)

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### Measures to facilitate research into a vaccine



On 14 July the Council adopted measures to facilitate and accelerate the development of a vaccine against COVID-19. Temporary derogations for clinical trials concerning in particular environmental risks may be accepted. These measures will remain in place as long as the WHO considers COVID-19 to be a pandemic... [Read more](#)

### Meeting of health ministers



Health ministers exchanged views on 16 July on how to improve responses to health crises. They consider that the competences of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) should be strengthened, that drug supply chains should be rethought to guarantee the independence of the Union, and that digitisation in health should be encouraged... [Read more](#)

## ECB :

### The ECB pursues its monetary policy

The European Central Bank decided on 16 July to keep the key interest rates at 0% for the main refinancing operations and at 0.25% and -0.5% for the marginal lending and deposit facilities. It is continuing as planned its emergency pandemic purchase programme and its asset purchase programme of €20 billion per month. It intends to



continue to provide ample liquidity through its refinancing operations and is ready to adjust its policies to maintain its inflation targets... [Read more](#)

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**Commission :**

**For fair, simplified taxation**



On 15 July the Commission presented measures for fair, simplified taxation. It consists of 3 initiatives, the first of which is an action plan of 25 measures aimed at simplifying the various stages of the procedures of the European tax systems, in particular as regards VAT registration and the taxation of cross-border workers. This plan also seeks to improve the use of digital technology to combat tax fraud. The second initiative is a proposal to reform the rules on European administrative cooperation to extend them to platforms. The third is a communication on good tax governance aimed at reducing unfair tax competition in Europe and worldwide... [Read more](#)

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**Meeting regarding the implementation of the protocol between Ireland and Northern Ireland**



The Special Committee for the implementation of the Protocol between Ireland and Northern Ireland held its second meeting on 17 July. It recalled that its main objective is to preserve the open border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. It expressed its concern at the lack of progress on key aspects which are taking a long time to establish, despite the fact that the Protocol is due to enter into force on 1 January 2021... [Read more](#)

**Parliament :**

**Survey on European citizens' expectations in the face of the crisis**



On 14 July, Parliament unveiled the results of a survey on the expectations of European citizens carried out in June. 68% of respondents want more powers for the Union, and 56% want it to have a bigger budget to deal with the crisis. 53% are dissatisfied with the solidarity between Member States. 76% have heard about the measures taken by the Union, and 49% are satisfied. The survey reveals that while 57% of citizens have encountered financial difficulties in recent months, their mood is improving. Feelings of uncertainty and fear are down (45% and 17% compared to 50% and 22% in April) while hope and confidence are up to 41% and 24%... [Read more](#)

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**Call to act in support of the rule of law in Poland**



Parliament's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee adopted a report on the rule of law in Poland on 16 July, which will be put to the vote at the September plenary session. The report warns about the functioning of the legislative and electoral system, the independence of the judiciary, the rights of judges and the protection of fundamental rights. It also calls for a resumption of the procedure under Article 7 of the TEU, which has been pending since 2018... [Read more](#)

**Council :**

**Meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers**



Meeting physically in Brussels on 20 July, the Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers asked the Commission for transparency, flexibility and speed in the development of the "farm to table" strategy. They discussed the green dimension of the Common Agricultural Policy, and whether or not eco-schemes should be made compulsory. They also took stock of the situation of agricultural markets in the context of the Covid-19 crisis... [Read more](#)

**Diplomacy :**

**Meeting between Serb and Kosovar leaders**



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovar Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti met in Brussels under the aegis of the European Union on 16 July, following two video conferences on 10 and 12 July. They discussed internally displaced persons and missing persons from the 1998-1999 conflict that led to Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008, which

was not acknowledged by Serbia. The European Envoy for Dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, Miroslav Lajcak, announced a further meeting in Brussels in September... [Read more](#)

### Franco-German-Italian Declaration on Libya



In a joint statement on 18 July, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte called on the Libyan parties and their foreign supporters to stop fighting and threatened sanctions against countries that do not comply with the UN arms embargo. The three leaders underline their support for UN initiatives to find a peace agreement and for negotiations in the framework of the 5+5 group. Finally, they call for the lifting of the oil embargo on the country and for a transparent and fair distribution of oil revenues... [Read more](#)

### European Union-India Summit



At the 15th (virtual) EU-India Summit on 15 July, the President of the European Council Charles Michel and the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen held talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They decided to strengthen their strategic partnership, in particular on trade and the fight against climate change. They underlined the prospects for collaboration in the fight against the pandemic and in the search for a vaccine. They adopted a roadmap for EU-India cooperation over the next 5 years... [Read more](#)

### Physical meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers



On 13 July, foreign ministers called on Turkey to respect the arms embargo on Libya and to stop illegal drilling off the coast of Cyprus, and condemned the decision to convert the Basilica of Saint Sophia in Istanbul into a mosque. Ministers also expressed concern about the health situation in South America. They also adopted conclusions on the European Union's priorities at the UN and for cooperation with the Council of Europe... [Read more](#)

### Court of Justice :

#### Cancellation of the reimbursement by Apple of 13 billion € to Ireland



On 15 July, the Court of First Instance of the European Union annulled the Commission's 2016 decision requiring the Irish State to recover €13 billion corresponding to tax advantages granted to Apple, which the Commission considered to be illegal state aid. The judges found that the Commission had failed to prove that Apple's subsidiaries benefited from such an advantage. Following the Court's ruling, European Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said she was considering further steps and wanted to continue to fight tax evasion... [Read more](#)

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#### Invalidation of the agreement with the USA regarding the transfer of personal data



On 16 July the Court of Justice invalidated the agreement between the European Union and the United States on the transfer of personal data, known as the "privacy shield". The Court ruled that the agreement, which replaces the 2000 "Safe harbour" agreement, which was invalidated by the Court in 2015, is illegal under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It does not contain sufficient guarantees on data processing by the US State, nor does it provide any means of redress for European citizens. The Commission will therefore have to negotiate a new agreement with the US... [Read more](#)

### Belgium :

#### The N-VA and the PS asked to prepare the formation of a new government



On 20 July, the President of the Socialist Party, Paul Magnette, and the President of the N-VA party, Bart De Wever, were commissioned by King Philip to form a government. The two political leaders are due to submit a first report to the King on 31 July. A few hours earlier, in a speech on the occasion of the national holiday, the King said that "the whole country is now calling for a resolute and stable government". The current government led by Sophie Wilmes (MR), who was given powers to manage the coronavirus crisis, only has the support of a majority in Parliament until September... [Read more](#)

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## Bulgaria :

### Resignation of three ministers



On 15 July, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov asked his interior minister, Mladen Marinov, economy minister, Emil Karanikolov, and finance minister, Vladislav Goranov, to resign as the government faces a protest movement against corruption... [Read more](#)

## Poland :

### Creation of a citizens' movement



Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, who narrowly lost the 12 July presidential election, announced on 17 July the forthcoming creation of a broad citizens' movement for a "tolerant and European" Poland... [Read more](#)

## UK :

### Huawei excluded from the British 5G network



Following technical advice from the National Cybersecurity Centre (NCSC), the UK government announced on 14 July that it would stop purchasing new 5G equipment from the Chinese producer Huawei by 31 December and completely remove Huawei equipment from its network by the end of 2027... [Read more](#)

## North Macedonia :

### Victory of the Social-Democrats in the legislative elections

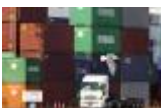


The alliance led by the Social Democratic Party (SDSM) of former Prime Minister Zoran Zaev came out ahead in the parliamentary elections in Northern Macedonia on 15 July with 35.89% of the vote and 46 seats. The right-wing VMRO-DPMNE party led by Hristijan Mickoski came in second with 34.57% of the vote and 44 seats. The Democratic Union for Integration took 11.48% and 15 seats, and the Albanian minority party 8.95% and 12 seats. The turnout was 51.34%. Originally scheduled for 12 April, early elections had been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic... [Read more](#)

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## Eurostat :

### Trade surplus .... down



On 16 July Eurostat announced that the euro area recorded a surplus of €9.4 billion in international trade in goods in May, compared with a surplus of €20.7 billion in May 2019. Exports fell by 29.5% year-on-year and imports by 26.7%. The dynamic is the same at EU level, with exports outside the EU down 29.7% compared to May 2019, and imports down 26.2%... [Read more](#)

### Slight decline in inflation in June



The annual inflation was 0.8% in the European Union and 0.3% in the euro area in June, Eurostat announced on 17 July... [Read more](#)

## Studies/Reports :

### Decline in illegal immigration in the first semester



36 400 illegal crossings of the Union's borders were recorded in the first half of the year, a 20% drop compared with the first six months of 2019, according to figures published by Frontex on 13 July. The agency explains this fall by the coronavirus pandemic. The most active route was the Western Balkans, with 9 300 detections, an increase of 73% compared to 2019. The Western Mediterranean route was not as busy, with 11,900 detections, half as many as in 2019. The Central Mediterranean route saw a drop in traffic with 900 detections. Finally, the Eastern Mediterranean route saw an 8% increase in the number of detections to 750... [Read more](#)

### OECD report on international taxation

On 18 July, the OECD presented a report on the ongoing negotiations to address the fiscal challenges posed by digitisation and the latest developments in international

### Study into the impact on mobility in the spread of COVID-19



On 15 July, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) published a study on the link between mobility and spread of the coronavirus. By analysing anonymous telephone location data from 14 operators in 19 Member States, the JRC found that mobility alone could explain the spread of the virus in Italy, France and Spain. The data thus demonstrated the effectiveness of confinement measures. However, with the imposition of physical distancing measures, mobility has become a less important factor in the spread of the virus... [Read more](#)

### Culture :

#### Christo at the Pompidou Centre



The Centre Pompidou in Paris is showing the exhibition "Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Paris", devoted to the work of the artist couple known for their gigantic, ephemeral works. The exhibition focuses on their Parisian period, recalling the various projects they designed for the capital, such as the "Pont-Neuf emballé"... [Read more](#)

#### Pre-Raphaelites in Liverpool



The Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool has been showing its collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings since its reopening on 15 July. It is one of the most important collections devoted to this 19th century movement inspired by the Renaissance... [Read more](#)

#### To whom does the cosmos belong?



The National Museum in Cracow is organizing until July 27th "To whom does the cosmos belong?" Based on the digitised archive of photographer Zygmunt Rytka, the exhibition shows the evolution of the topics he explored between 1978 and 1983, mainly the regime's propaganda during the Cold War... [Read more](#)

#### Nicolas de Staël in Malaga



The Centre Pompidou in Malaga will bring together from 23 July to 8 November 25 works by Nicolas de Staël, paintings and works on paper, often large-format, which retrace the artist's career... [Read more](#)

#### Nature and Symbol at the Albertina



From 6 August, the Albertina Museum in Vienna will present "Nature and Symbol", an exhibition focusing on the confrontation of works by the artists Franz Gertsch, Christiane Baumgartner, Ofer Lellouche, and Kiki Smith and their relationship to the themes of nature and human existence... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



20 July

Agriculture and Fisheries Council



21-22 July 2020

Jul

Meeting of Research Ministers

21  
Jul

21-23 July 2020

London

Negotiations between the European Union and the UK

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