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The Letter in PDF format

The Foundation on



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## The conundrum of the great gas game and the ensuing strategic realignment in the eastern Mediterranean

Author: Jean Marcou



Tensions between Greece, Cyprus and Turkey are sustained by historical rivalries involving gas amongst other things, in a region plagued by instability. For the European Union, this is a strategic challenge triggered by the Turkish President. The resolution of this crisis means taking into account the reality of Turkish nationalism, but also reflecting on the relationship that Europeans want to establish in the longer term with their Turkish neighbour.

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### Contents

**Front page!** : Diplomacy/EU **Elections** : Lithuania **Foundation** : Belarus - Health/Europe - Publication/Schuman Report **Commission** : Speech/State of the Union - Recovery - Digital - Tests - Fight/Racism - Climate **Parliament** : Own resources - Mediterranean - Belarus/Russia - Medicines - Africa - Poland **Council** : Internal Market - Culture - Education - G20 - Agriculture **Diplomacy** : Turkey/Belarus **Court of Justice** : Internet/Neutrality - Russia - Fisheries **Court of Auditors** : Quota/Emissions **European Agencies** : Airbus - Agriculture **Germany** : Asylum **France** : Defence/Germany - Forecast/Economy **Ireland** : Budget **UK** : Brexit **Council of Europe** : Health - ECHR/Turkey **NATO** : Atlantic **OECD** : Outlook/Economy **Eurostat** : Trade - Regions **Studies/Reports** : Green Recovery - Social **Culture** : Exhibition/Paris - Exhibition/Bilbao - Design/Vienna - Exhibition/Berlin - Exhibition/Glasgow - Exhibition/Warsaw

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

**Front page!** :

Is a European foreign policy possible?



When it comes to taking a stand and acting on the international stage, Europeans remain divided. Ursula von der Leyen's speech on the state of the Union, which deals only modestly with the international aspect, is proof of this. Jean-Dominique Giuliani suggested remaining faithful to Robert Schuman's approach: we must not take away prerogatives from the Member States, but give them something more... [Read more](#)

**Elections** :

General Elections in Lithuania on 11 and 25 October



On 11 and 25 October, the Lithuanians are being called to the polls to renew the 141 elected members of the Seimas, the single house of parliament. 22 political parties are in the running for this election. According to the latest opinion poll carried out by the Spinter Tyrimai Institute, the Union of Patriotic Christian Democrats (TS-LKD), the main opposition party led by Gabrielius Landsbergis, would come out on top with 21.7% of the vote. It would be followed by the Farmers' and Greens Party, with 19.4% of the vote, the

Social Democratic Party with 12.6% and the Labour Party with 8.6%, followed by the Freedom Party (Laisves), a social-liberal party led by Ausrinė Armonaitė 6.8%, and the Liberal Movement (LRLS) of Eugenijus Gentvilas with 5.9%... [Read more](#)

## Foundation :

### Belarus: chronology of a revolution in progress



Since the "rigged" presidential election of 9 August, the Belarusian people have been protesting against the continued rule of Alexander Lukashenko. While opposition candidate Svetlana Tikhanovskaya is in exile in Lithuania and arrests of opponents and police violence continue, the European Union is calling for political dialogue and preparing sanctions against the regime. To follow this crisis, the Foundation offers you a chronology of events and links to European reactions and initiatives... [Read more](#)

### Table of health measures and travel conditions in Europe



At the start of the new school year, the 27 Member States of the European Union are trying to determine the conditions for resuming activities without relaunching the epidemic. The Foundation offers you a summary of the health measures in place and travel conditions across Europe. An indispensable regularly updated resource to understand the events now unfolding... [Read more](#)

### Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2020



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

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## Commission :

### Speech on the State of the Union



Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced a series of objectives in her first State of the Union address on 16 September. As part of the development of the Green Deal, she affirmed the willingness to increase the CO2 reduction targets from 40 to 55% by 2030. 30% of the funds of the NextGenerationEU recovery programme will be raised through green bonds. She proposed the creation of a secure European electronic identity and a European data backup domain. She called for a development of the Europe of health and wants the creation of a public agency for biomedical research. She called on Member States to move to qualified majority voting on human rights issues, and promised a revision of the Dublin Regulation... [Read more](#)

### Criteria governing the implementation of the recovery plan and growth strategy



On 17 September, the Commission published its strategic guidelines for the implementation of the €672.5 billion European Recovery Plan NextGenerationEU. The plans presented by the Member States will have to respect four dimensions defined by the Commission in the framework of the European Semester: environmental sustainability, productivity, equity and macroeconomic stability. They must aim to strengthen growth potential, promote job creation and economic and social resilience, and achieve ecological and digital transitions... [Read more](#)

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### Supercomputers for High Performance and Quantum Computing



To strengthen the EU's digital policy, on 18 September the Commission presented a proposal for a regulation to introduce a new generation of high-performance computers to drive research and innovation. These supercomputers are to be used to improve the digital agenda, including artificial intelligence, mega-data analysis and cybersecurity. More than 800 scientific, industrial and public sector applications could have access to this new technology... [Read more](#)

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### Recommendations for a common COVID-19 test strategy



On 18 September, the Commission published its recommendations for the establishment of a common Covid-19 testing strategy for the Member States. These recommendations pursue 5 objectives including the effective control of the rates and severity of Covid-19 cases, the reduction of the impact of the virus on social and health structures, the detection of specific outbreaks of contagion and the fight against the reintroduction of the virus once it has been eliminated... [Read more](#)

### Plan of action against racism



On 18 September, the Commission presented its anti-racism plan 2020-2025. The plan provides for the appointment of a European anti-racism coordinator, the holding of an anti-racism summit in 2021 and legislative and accompanying measures by Member States to strengthen national equality bodies. The Commission wants to act against ethnic profiling, algorithmic discrimination, and to improve diversity within the European institutions themselves... [Read more](#)

### Adoption of a proposal to reach climate neutrality



On 17 September, the Commission adopted a communication and an update of the proposed climate law to include the objective of a 55% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030, a promise which is part of the European Green Deal, announced the previous day by President Ursula von der Leyen. The text sets 30 June 2021 as the deadline for the adoption of the law, as well as the holding of a "public debate" in the autumn of 2020 with a view to increasing the Union's contribution to the Paris Agreement before the end of the year. The share of renewable energy, which was set at 27%, has been raised from 38% by 2030... [Read more](#)

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## Parliament :

### Proposal on own resources



MEPs adopted a proposal on the Union's own resources on 16 September. They want to increase the share of Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) resources earmarked for own resources to 30%, raise the ceiling on own resources to 1.5% of the annual GNP of the Member States and limit to 10% the share of customs duties that Member States retain after collecting them for the Union. They call for a €2 per kg tax on non-recycled plastic packaging from January 2021. They also call for the abolition of rebates to certain Member States on their contributions and the establishment of additional own resources by 2028... [Read more](#)

### Resolution on the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean



MEPs adopted a resolution on 17 September expressing their solidarity with Greece and Cyprus and condemning the drilling activities carried out by Turkey in their exclusive economic zones. They also call on the Council to stand ready to introduce new sanctions and restrictive measures if Turkey does not engage in a peaceful political dialogue with the Union... [Read more](#)

### Request for sanctions against Belarus and Russia



On 17 September, MEPs voted in favour of sanctions against Belarusian President Lukashenko, whose legitimacy they do not recognise after the "so-called presidential election" of 9 August. They condemn the violent repression of demonstrators and the proven cases of rape and torture in detention centres. They are also calling for an immediate international investigation into the attempted poisoning of Russian opponent Alexei Navalny... [Read more](#)

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### Proposal to bring medical product shortages to an end



In a resolution adopted on 17 September, MEPs call on the Commission to take the necessary measures to guarantee the security of supply of medical products, reduce the EU's dependence on third countries and support the local manufacture of pharmaceutical products of major interest. They therefore call for a revision of the legislation on blood, tissues and cells and the creation of a European pharmaceutical establishment... [Read more](#)

## Resolution on cooperation with Africa



MEPs adopted a resolution on 17 September on EU-Africa security cooperation in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa. In particular, they asked the Council to approve the establishment of a European fund to finance military and defence cooperation with third countries and international organisations. In addition to the security aspects, they want to ensure that operations do not hinder sustainable development and the distribution of humanitarian aid... [Read more](#)

## Call to resume article 7 procedure against Poland



In a resolution approved on 17 September, MEPs called on the Council to "act" for the rule of law and the defence of minorities in Poland, and to resume the Article 7 procedure, which provides for the suspension of some of the country's rights in the event of a violation of citizens' rights. The text denounces the "overwhelming evidence" of deterioration of the rule of law, judicial reforms, violations of abortion rights, access to contraception and freedom of the press... [Read more](#)

## Council :

### Meeting of Industry Ministers



On 18 September, the ministers for the internal market and industry reasserted their commitment to deepening the single market, removing unjustified obstacles and improving the transposition and implementation of internal market legislation. They stated that the current deterioration in the epidemiological situation should not lead to disturbances in the functioning of the single market... [Read more](#)

### Meeting of Culture Ministers



Ministers of Culture met in Berlin on 14 September to discuss ways of countering the effects of the pandemic on the cultural sector. The main areas of discussion concerned aid for the development of the cultural sector, the mobilisation of the art and common cultural heritage of the Member States, as well as national experiences and strategies for the resumption of cultural activity... [Read more](#)

### Meeting of Education Ministers



At an informal meeting in Osnabrück on 16 and 17 September, the education ministers reasserted their intention to strengthen vocational training in Europe and to integrate sustainability and cross-border mobility into it. These objectives are to take the form of an "Osnabrück Declaration", which they may adopt in November... [Read more](#)

### Meeting of G20 Finance and Health Ministers



On 17 September a meeting of G20 Finance and Health Ministers took place to discuss the pandemic and its socio-economic effects. The ministers reasserted the commitments made on 26 March 2020 and reiterated the importance of international cooperation to combat the epidemic and the resulting economic crisis. Ministers expressed their commitment to having "equitable and affordable access to the vaccine for all"... [Read more](#)

### Meeting of Agriculture Ministers



The Agriculture and Fisheries ministers meeting on 21 September continued negotiations on the future of the CAP after 2020. Discussions focused on the trade aspect of agriculture, particularly with a view to future free trade agreements. Green architecture and the integration of the conclusions of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) into the implementation of the next system of direct payments were also discussed. They are due to adopt their general approach to the CAP reform by October... [Read more](#)

## Diplomacy :

### Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers

Foreign Ministers met in Brussels on 21 September to discuss the situation in Belarus and Libya and the "post-Cotonou" negotiations with the African Union. They imposed



restrictive measures against two individuals and three entities involved in the violation of the UN arms embargo in Libya. The High Representative of the Union Josep Borrell, who chaired the meeting, said he regretted Turkey's use of Cypriot waters and that negotiations on measures against Belarus would be continued by the European Council on 24 and 25 September... [Read more](#)

## Court of Justice :

### Decision regarding neutrality of the net



On 15 September, the Court of Justice confirmed the EU regulation guaranteeing access to an open internet, in a dispute between the Hungarian Communications and Media Authority and the Hungarian company Telenor, which applied preferential conditions to certain applications while others suffered a traffic slowdown. It confirms that national regulatory authorities must sanction an access provider when it favours certain applications or services. This is the first time that the Court has had to interpret the 2015 regulation... [Read more](#)

### Rejection of Rosneft appeal against European sanctions



On 17 September, the European Court of Justice rejected an appeal by the Russian oil and gas company Rosneft, which challenged EU sanctions against Russian companies because of the war in Ukraine. The judges confirmed the legitimacy of the bans on sensitive exports to the oil sector and the restrictions on access to the EU capital market decided in 2014. The Court confirms that the bans are in line with international law and contribute to the objective of sanctioning the role of the Russian State, the majority shareholder of the company... [Read more](#)

### Validation of aid measures for French fishermen



On 17 September, the Court of Justice overturned a Commission decision requesting recovery by France of sums corresponding to a social security tax relief granted to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors after the sinking of the oil tanker Erika and a storm in 1999. The Commission considered this relief to be undue state aid. The Court held that it had erred in law in considering that the reduction in wage costs provided a direct advantage to fishing businesses... [Read more](#)

## Court of Auditors :

### Report on the emissions trade system



EU member states are struggling to target free carbon emission allowances effectively, says the Court of Auditors in a report published on 15 September. 40% of emission allowances are allocated mainly to the industrial and aviation sectors free of charge. This percentage slows down the progress of decarbonisation as required by the Paris Climate Agreement. The Court of Auditors urges the commission to optimise the targeting of allowances by giving priority to sectors that cannot pass on the cost of these emissions to consumers... [Read more](#)

## European Agencies :

### Airbus present first zero emission airplane



On 21 September, Airbus unveiled three concepts prefiguring the world's first zero-emission commercial aircraft, scheduled to enter service in 2035. Each of these concepts presents a different approach to zero-emission flight, exploring various technological avenues and aerodynamic configurations. Airbus intends to position itself as a leader in the decarbonisation of the aviation industry... [Read more](#)

### Christiane Lambert elected Chair of European Farmers



On 18 September, Christiane Lambert of France, Chairwoman of the main French farmers' union (FNSEA), was elected President of Copa Cogeca, the European farmers' organisation. She succeeds Joachim Rukwied from Germany for a 2-year term... [Read more](#)

## Germany :

### The government announces the reception of 1553 extra migrants



On 15 September, the German government announced that "1,553 persons belonging to 408 families, which Greece had already recognised as needing protection, will be received". This decision follows the fire that ravaged the Moria migrant camp in Greece during the night of 8-9 September, leaving 12,000 migrants homeless... [Read more](#)

## France :

### Franco-German Transport Squadron and Eurodrone



On 17 September, the French and German Defence Ministers, Florence Parly and Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, laid the first stone of the Franco-German tactical transport squadron at the Evreux air base. The unit, which should be operational in 2021 and at full capacity in 2024, will be equipped with 10 aircraft. The two ministers then visited the Airbus Defense and Space site in Manching, Bavaria, to take stock of two other Franco-German projects, the air combat system of the future (SCAF) and the Eurodrone... [Read more](#)

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### Stronger economic recovery than forecast according to the Bank of France



On 14 September, the Banque de France revised its forecasts for the decline in activity in 2020 to -8.7% instead of the expected -10.3% drop announced in June; the level of activity at the end of 2019 is expected to return at the beginning of 2022. The GDP should rise by 7.4% in 2021 and 3% in 2022... [Read more](#)

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## Ireland :

### 2021 budget will be based on the hypothesis of a hard Brexit



On 16 September, the Irish government published the main guidelines of its 2021 budget, which is mainly based on the management of the global pandemic and Brexit for the duration of the pandemic, giving priority to the hypothesis of a disorderly Brexit... [Read more](#)

## UK :

### Law on the internal market passed in first reading in Parliament



On 14 September, the House of Commons passed first reading by 340 votes to 263 of the "Internal Market" Bill, which deals inter alia with the customs issue with Northern Ireland. The Union called on the British government to withdraw the text, which violates the withdrawal agreement signed last year. The text is due to be examined by the House of Lords on 21 and 22 September... [Read more](#)

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## Council of Europe :

### Increase in cooperation to learn from the crisis



On 15 September, the Council of Europe published a background paper on Member States' efforts to address the challenges facing the health sector in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Member States are encouraged to participate in the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Human Rights and Technologies in Biomedicine (2020-2025)... [Read more](#)

### Condemnation of Turkey



The European Court of Human Rights condemned Turkey on 14 September for the arbitrary and irregular detention of writer Ragip Zarakolu. The Court ruled that the applicant's inability to have access to his file so that he could challenge the accusations made against him of belonging to a terrorist organisation constitutes a total restriction of his rights. Ragip Zarakolu was released in 2012 after 5 months imprisonment and is still awaiting trial... [Read more](#)

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## NATO :

### New Atlantic Command

On 17 September, NATO's Atlantic Command, the Alliance's new strategic command, was declared operational. Located at the Norfolk Naval Base in the United States, it



aims to ensure the security of transatlantic maritime routes for the delivery of reinforcements and resupply between North America and Europe... [Read more](#)



**OECD :**

**Sharp decline in the GDP of the G20 countries**



On 14 September, the OECD released growth figures for the second quarter of 2020 in the G20 countries. These figures provide a measure of the impact of the global pandemic on the economy. According to the OECD, "GDP fell by a record minus 6.9 per cent, significantly higher than the minus 1.6 per cent recorded in the first quarter of 2009 at the height of the financial crisis". India and the United Kingdom are the two countries most affected by the crisis with GDP contraction of 25.2% and 20.4% respectively, while China is the country that is doing best with a growth rebound of 11.5%... [Read more](#)



**Eurostat :**

**Trade surplus in July**



The EU recorded a trade surplus of €25.8bn and the eurozone €27.9bn in July, according to figures published by Eurostat on 16 September. Eurozone exports fell by 10.4% compared to July 2019, and imports by 14.3%... [Read more](#)



**Annual Regional Yearbook**



On 18 September Eurostat published the 2020 edition of its Regional Yearbook, which gives a statistical overview of the regions. Data are available for the 27 Member States as well as the United Kingdom and in some cases for EFTA and candidate countries. The 240 regions of the Union (with demographic parity) are classified in the yearbook in terms of age structure, birth rate, use of e-commerce and recurrence of certain diseases... [Read more](#)



**Studies/Reports :**

**Report on "green" recovery**



The OECD published a report on 14 September on the place of ecology in stimulus packages. The report notes that a "majority of states have included provisions to support the transition to a greener economy in their recovery strategies" with a total of \$312 billion of public money devoted to green stimulus. However, the report also points out inconsistencies in some plans that support "non-green" industries, including fossil fuel subsidies, and calls for more to be done for the green transition... [Read more](#)



**Report on the development of employment and the social situation in Europe**



In its annual report on Employment and Social Developments (ESDE), on social equity and solidarity, the Commission analyses the adverse effects of the Covid-19 epidemic and social trends in employment in Europe. The report explains the influence of minimum wages on social mobility, the impact of short-time working arrangements, social investment and gender disparities... [Read more](#)



**Culture :**

**Sarah Moon in Paris**



Until 10 January 2021, the sixth edition of the NOW exhibition at the Scottish National Gallery Of Modern Art is dedicated to the work of the Scottish artist Katie Paterson, who is considered one of the most important artists of her generation, particularly for her reflection on the notions of time and the cosmos... [Read more](#)



**Lee Krasner Exhibition in Bilbao**

Until 10 January 2021, the exhibition "Living Colour" dedicated to the artist Lee Krasner is on display at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. A pioneer of Abstract Expressionism, Lee Krasner sought to reinvent himself throughout his long career, to which this exhibition pays tribute... [Read more](#)



### Vienna Design Week



From 25 September to 4 October, the 14th Vienna Design Week will take place in Vienna. The programme includes more than 150 retrospectives in museums, exhibitions in galleries, artist talks, designer discoveries and workshops. Part of the events will be held online... [Read more](#)

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### "Decadence and Dark Dreams" in Berlin



Until 17 January 2021, the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin is running the exhibition "Decadence and Dark Dreams" devoted to the artistic movement of Symbolism. Works by artists such as Gustave Moreau, Arnold Böcklin and a selection of works of Belgian Symbolism are on show... [Read more](#)

### Exhibition NOW at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art



Until 10 January 2021, the sixth edition of the NOW exhibition at the Scottish National Gallery Of Modern Art is dedicated to the work of the Scottish artist Katie Paterson, who is considered one of the most important artists of her generation, particularly for her reflection on the notions of time and the cosmos... [Read more](#)

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### "The Soul of a Nation" in Warsaw



Until 20 December 2020 the exhibition "Poland 1840-1918: Painting the Soul of a Nation" is being held at the National Museum in Warsaw, retracing the history of Poland. Nearly 120 paintings of the greatest names in Polish painting are on display... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



21 September 2020  
Brussels  
Agriculture and Fisheries Council  
Brussels  
Foreign Affairs Council



22 September 2020  
Brussels  
General Affairs Council



24-25 October 2020  
Brussels  
Extraordinary European Council



27 September 2020  
France  
Senatorial Elections



28 September 2020  
Videoconference of Transport Ministers

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