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The Letter in PDF format

The Foundation on



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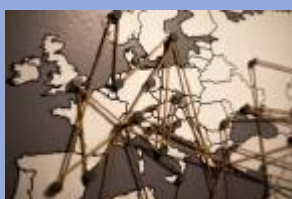


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Understanding the new pact on migration and asylum

Authors: Ramona Bloj, Stefanie Buzmaniuk



The Commission's proposal to reform the Union's migration policy, which was discussed by interior ministers on 13 November, is based on tighter external border controls and return procedures, and new solidarity mechanisms between Member States. But it does not fundamentally challenge the heart of the problem: the Dublin Convention on asylum.

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Elections :

Elections of two houses of Parliament on 6 December in Romania



According to the latest polls, the National Liberal Party (PNL) of Prime Minister Ludovic Orban should come out ahead in the parliamentary elections to be held on 6 December, followed by the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Save Romania Union-Party of Freedom, Solidarity and Unity (USR-PLUS). The PNL and USR-PLUS could form a government coalition complemented by the People's Movement Party (PMP), but these liberal forces will have to overcome their disagreements on the reforms to be carried out... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

The 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 paper version in French, published by Marie B, and in electronic format in French and English with contributions by leading personalities and the best experts. With original maps and annotated statistics, this book offers a comprehensive view of the European Union and analyses the challenges facing Europe. You can order it on our website... [Read more](#)

Parliament in the time of the coronavirus



The Foundation, in partnership with a European university research network initiated by the University of Lille in 2016 on the subject of "Parliament and Time", is launching a new series of reports which aim to report on "the impact of the health crisis on the functioning of national parliaments" in Europe. This week's publications focus on Bulgaria, Latvia and Sweden... [Read more](#)

Table of health measures and travel conditions in Europe



Curfews, shop closures, movement restrictions or confinement, European countries are taking steps to deal with the upsurge of the pandemic and are trying to coordinate their actions. The Foundation offers you a summary of the health measures in place and travel conditions across Europe. An indispensable resource, regularly updated, to understand the situation... [Read more](#)

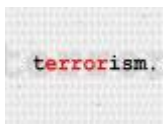
Belarus: chronology of a revolution in progress



The Union has launched the procedure to sanction Alexander Lukashenko, whom it no longer recognises as president after the "rigged" election of 9 August. Meanwhile, the Belarusian people continue to protest against his rule and for the release of political prisoners. To follow this crisis, the Foundation offers you a chronology of events and links to European reactions and initiatives... [Read more](#)

Terrorism :

In support of a European response to the terrorist threat



Following a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President Charles Michel, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, French President Emmanuel Macron called for a "coordinated and rapid response" from the Union against terrorism; including border controls and information exchange, as well as the fight against cyber-terrorism rhetoric... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Interior Ministers



Interior ministers adopted a declaration on the fight against terrorism on 13 November. Five years after the attacks in Paris and at their first meeting since those in Conflans-Saint-Honorine, Nice and Vienna, the ministers considered that the cross-border nature of the threat requires a European response. They call for a new European police partnership, more resources for Europol, more European support for societal initiatives against extremism, more measures against the financing of terrorism, faster expulsions of terrorist suspects and the integration of biometric data into the Schengen Information System (SIS). They also held a policy debate on the main aspects of the proposal for a pact on migration and asylum presented by the Commission in September... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Towards a European Health Union



The Commission proposed on 11 November to strengthen health security in the Union. A new regulation on serious cross-border threats to health has been proposed with a view to coordinating the action of Member States in the face of epidemics, in particular by setting up a health surveillance system specific to the Union and strengthening communication between Member States on their health systems. The Commission also proposes strengthening the mandates of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the European Medicines Agency... [Read more](#)

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New consumer agenda



On 13 November, the Commission published a new consumer agenda aimed at strengthening consumer protection during the pandemic and beyond. The agenda focuses on 5 areas: the green transition, by providing incentives to repair products and increasing information on the sustainability of products; digital transformation, in particular by combating malicious commercial practices online; respect for consumer rights; the specific needs of certain consumers such as children or the elderly; international cooperation in the field of consumer affairs... [Read more](#)

Contract for the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine



On 11 November, the Commission signed a contract for the purchase of 300 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine with the German and American pharmaceutical groups BioNTech and Pfizer. Pfizer had announced on 9 November that the phase 3 trial of their vaccine, BNT162b2, had provided proof of 90% efficacy. This is the fourth contract signed by the Commission, after those with AstraZeneca, Sanofi-GSK and Janssen Pharmaceutica NV. Negotiations are still ongoing with CureVac and Moderna. On the occasion of the Paris Peace Forum on 12 November, the European Commission announced an increase in the EU's contribution to the WHO COVAX mechanism from €400 million to €500 million to ensure that low-income countries "in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific" have access to the future vaccine against COVID-19. COVAX is a collaboration of 184 countries... [Read more](#)

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New Emission of Bonds to fund the SURE Programme



On 10 November, the Commission announced that it had issued €14 billion of so-called social bonds to finance the European SURE programme to combat unemployment following the economic and health crisis. This issue included €8 billion of bonds redeemable in 2025 and €6 billion redeemable in 2050. This is the second issue after the €17 billion issued on 21 October. These AAA-rated bonds meet precise criteria and must be used solely to finance social measures... [Read more](#)

Antitrust procedures against Amazon



Following a preliminary investigation launched in 2019, the Commission found on 10 November that e-commerce giant Amazon was abusing its dominant position and distorting competition in online retail markets. A statement of objections has been sent to Amazon, which will be able to respond before the investigation is closed. The Commission has also opened a new investigation into the preferential treatment of commercial offers using Amazon's logistics and delivery services, which could constitute a case of unfair competition... [Read more](#)

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165 companies demand action against Google



In a joint letter sent on 12 November to Margrethe Vestager, Vice-President of the Commission in charge of Competition, 165 European and American companies accuse Google of unfair practices and ask the Commission to take action against the platform, to which it already imposed a fine of €2.42 billion in 2017 for favouring its services on its search engine... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Agreement of the 2021-2027 budget



Representatives of the Council and the Parliament reached a political agreement on the next multiannual financial framework on 10 November. In addition to a conditionality mechanism for the respect of the rule of law, the budget provides for an additional €16 billion for health, research and education programmes, including €1 billion for crisis situations, as well as an allocation of 37.5% of the budget for climate and biodiversity objectives. New EU own resources include a tax on non-recycled plastic waste (2021), a carbon market contribution (2023), a digital tax (2023) and a tax on financial transactions (2026). The Council and Parliament have yet to give their final approval to the agreement... [Read more](#)

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Impact of measures regarding COVID-19 on democracy, rule of law



In a resolution on the protection of European democratic values in the Member States during the pandemic, adopted on 13 November, MEPs call for a temporary and proportionate use of emergency measures that undermine democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights. In particular, they call for an end to abusive restrictions on democratic demonstrations and the adoption of laws that impact on fundamental rights without democratic debate. The Commission is also invited to take legal action against Member States whose measures taken during the first wave of the pandemic have undermined the fundamental values of the Union... [Read more](#)

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How to finance the Green Deal



In a resolution on the investment plan for a sustainable Europe and the financing of the Green Deal, adopted on 13 November, MEPs call for public investment to respect the principle of "no significant harm" and to link social objectives to it, in order to make the Green Deal socially just. They call for the phasing out of public and private investment in polluting economic activities where viable alternatives exist... [Read more](#)

Council :

Trade Ministers Meeting



Trade ministers met on 9 November to discuss the Commission's trade policies (TPR), the WTO and relations with the US and China. They reiterated the need for reciprocity in the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) negotiations with China and their commitment to a constructive trade agenda with the US. The TPR will lead to a Commission Communication setting out the trade policy guidelines for the next 5 years, in early 2021... [Read more](#)

Guidelines on the world space economy



The Council adopted its position on 11 November on the future European space policy. It calls on the European space industry to work for fair global competition and an open economy based on multilateralism and reciprocity ... The Council invites the Commission, the Member States and the European Space Agency to coordinate their efforts to achieve the policy's objectives... [Read more](#)

Proposals regarding intellectual property



The Council presented its proposals on intellectual property on 10 November, expressing its readiness to consider a system of geographical indication protection for non-agricultural products and calling for better involvement of online platforms and other hosting providers in the fight against counterfeiting and piracy. With regard to the protection of industrial designs, the Council calls for account to be taken of new technologies, complementarity between national systems and the phenomenon of transit through the territory of the Union of goods infringing a design... [Read more](#)

New rules to govern dual usage goods and technologies



Representatives of the Parliament, the Council and the Commission reached an agreement on 10 November on an update of the rules on dual-use goods and technologies, i.e. for civil and military use. The new rules include better harmonisation of national rules, better cooperation between licensing and customs authorities, and stronger export controls on cyber-surveillance technology, which will promote intra-EU trade. The agreement still needs to be approved by the Parliament and the Council... [Read more](#)

Agriculture Ministers Meeting



On 16 November, agriculture ministers discussed food wastage caused by the pandemic and the pressures on the agricultural market, sustainable food and swine fever in Africa. Ministers asked the Commission to provide more information on the implementation of the strategy from farm to table and the stakeholders involved in the strategy. The management of mink infections by Covid-19 in Denmark and the health risks involved was also discussed... [Read more](#)

Hungary and Poland block the budget and recovery plan



Hungary and Poland said they wanted to block the adoption by the Council on 16 November of a decision approving the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 and the recovery plan, as well as a decision on the Union's own resources. Both countries are contesting the establishment of a conditionality mechanism on the rule of law... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Western Balkans: agreement for a common regional market



On 10 November, at the 7th Summit of the Berlin Process, the six countries of the Western Balkans agreed on a 4-year plan to establish a common market aligned with the four freedoms of the European single market and European investment standards. They also have a green agenda aiming at carbon neutrality by 2050 and supported by a €9 billion European investment plan. The summit, co-chaired by Bulgaria and Northern Macedonia, brought together leaders and representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and the EU... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

Opinion on the execution of arrest warrants issued by Poland



In an opinion delivered on 12 November, the Advocate General of the Court of Justice ruled that the worsening of systemic or generalised failures affecting the independence of the judiciary in Poland does not justify the automatic non-execution of all European arrest warrants originating from that Member State. Referred to by the Dutch justice system, which has to respond to two extradition requests from Poland, it considered that an automatic refusal would be detrimental to the proper functioning of the European arrest warrants and would prejudice the professional practice of Polish judges who would wish to be able to benefit from this mechanism... [Read more](#)

ECB :

Monetary policy in the pandemic emergency



At the ECB Annual Forum, President Christine Lagarde recalled the particularity of the current crisis, now affecting the services sector three times more than the industrial sector, is having greater impact on employment than the financial crises, and is aggravating inequalities between low and high-skilled jobs. She also argued that the ECB's €1,350 billion PEPP instrument has prevented a deflationary shock and that States' fiscal policy has mitigated the financial shock. While wages have fallen by 7% this year, disposable household income has fallen by only 3%... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Three new contracts for European Earth observation satellites



The European Space Agency signed contracts with Airbus and Thales on 13 November for its Copernicus programme of Earth observation satellites. The satellites will be used in particular for soil monitoring and temperature measurements... [Read more](#)

The EIB will no longer finance any projects that are damaging to the climate as of 2021



The European Investment Bank (EIB) announced on 11 November that it would increase its level of support for climate action and projects promoting sustainability to a minimum of 50% of its investments by 2025, for a total of at least €1 trillion over the next ten years. From 2021 onwards, no more "climate-damaging" projects will be financed by the EIB, so as to be in "full compliance" with the Paris Climate Agreement... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Order of 38 Eurofighter planes from Airbus



On 11th November, Germany signed a contract with Airbus for the purchase of 38 Eurofighter fighter aircraft for 5.5 billion euros. Delivery is scheduled between 2025 and 2030. Launched in 2003, the Eurofighter is the largest European defence programme in which the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy are involved alongside Germany... [Read more](#)

UK :

Resignation of Dominic Cummings, special advisor to Boris Johnson



Dominic Cummings, special advisor to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, was dismissed on 13 November. A proponent of a tough Brexit and a challenge to the government administration, he had to leave his post after disagreements within Boris Johnson's team. Will this change the country's attitude in its negotiations with the EU?.. [Read more](#)

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Vatican :

The Pope's Letter on Europe



In a letter published on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Communities (COMECE), Pope Francis calls on Europe to rediscover its "ideals which have deep roots". He believes that "Europe's originality lies above all in its conception of man and reality; in its capacity for initiative and active solidarity" and declares that he "dreams of a Europe that is a friend of the person and of people", in solidarity and generosity... [Read more](#)

Moldova :

Maia Sandu elected President



Maia Sandu, of the Action and Solidarity Party, was elected President of Moldova on 15 November after her victory in the second round of voting, by 57% of the votes, over outgoing President Igor Dodon, Socialist Party. Maia Sandu focused her campaign on a rapprochement with the European Union and the fight against corruption in opposition to the pro-Russian positions of her opponent... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Launch of the Observatory on History Teaching



On 12 November, the Council of Europe launched the first Observatory on History Teaching in Europe, whose mission will be to observe how history is taught in all participating countries, to facilitate the exchange of good practice and mutual learning. The Observatory, one of whose initiators is Alain Lamassoure, Chairman of the Foundation's Scientific Committee, wants to play a role in "resisting the manipulation and distortion of history" and in "promoting peace and dialogue". Of the 17 participating countries, which include Russia, Turkey and Serbia, 9 are members of the European Union (France, Spain, Greece, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Malta, Cyprus, Ireland and Portugal)... [Read more](#)

Increase in the prison population after the end of lockdown



On 10 November, the Council of Europe published a study on the medium-term impact of COVID-19 on the prison population in Europe, which decreased between January and June and then increased until 15 September. Thus, while the average incarceration rate dropped from 121.4 to 115.8 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants between January and September, it has increased significantly since the end of the first lockdown, rising by 12% in Luxembourg, 11% in Slovenia and 8.3% in Finland. Only Bulgaria experienced a decrease (-13%). France released 17% of its inmates in March, Portugal 17% and Slovenia 16% to prevent the virus from spreading, which infected at least 3,300 inmates in the 35 countries studied... [Read more](#)

ECHR :

Condemnation of Russia for the arrest of Alexei Navalny



The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) condemned Russia on 10 November for degrading treatment and violations of the right to liberty and security, the right to a fair trial and freedom of assembly, in connection with the violent arrest of opponents Alexei Navalny and Vadim Gunko on 6 May 2012 in Moscow. The Court found that the brutality of the arrest and the administrative conviction of the two applicants had had a deterrent effect on protest rallies and engagement in political opposition in Russia... [Read more](#)

Condemnation of Turkey for the breach of liberty and the freedom of expression



The European Court of Human Rights condemned Turkey on 10 November for violating liberty and freedom of expression of journalists and managers of the daily Cumhuriyet. They had been placed in pre-trial detention and sentenced in 2017 for terrorist propaganda following the publication of press articles that appeared after an attempted coup in 2016. The Court ruled that the mere publication of these articles did not constitute sufficient evidence to justify remand in custody and a criminal conviction... [Read more](#)

G20 :

Agreement on the restructuring of poor countries' debt



G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors agreed on 13 November on a common framework for restructuring the debt of some poor countries as they believe that the debt moratorium in place until 30 June 2021 will not be sufficient. The framework adopted provides for the debtor country to make a request for restructuring, which will be analysed and implemented by the IMF and the World Bank on a case-by-case basis. To date, 73 countries with a total debt of \$744 billion would be eligible for potential debt restructuring... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

GDP up in the third quarter



In the third quarter, the Union's GDP grew by 11.6% and that of the euro zone by 12.6% compared to the second quarter, Eurostat announced on 13 November. This represents a decrease of 4.3% and 4.4% compared to the third quarter of 2019, while GDP fell by 11.4% and 11.8% in the second quarter. Compared to 2019, Spain (-8.7%) and Romania (-6%) are the most affected countries; the least affected are Lithuania (-1.7%) and Poland (-2%). The employment rate rose by 0.9% in the EU and eurozone, after falling by 2.7% and 2.9% in the previous quarter... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on the Union's trade agreements



The fourth annual report on the implementation of the EU's trade agreements, covering 2019, was published on 12 November. Trade with the EU's partners increased by 3.4% in 2019 and accounted for 1/3 of the EU's external trade, which grew by 2.5%. Exports of agri-food and industrial goods increased sharply, thanks in particular to trade agreements with Canada and Japan, whose agri-food imports from the Union increased by 16%. The report calls on the EU to continue its efforts to implement the sustainable development chapters introduced in the latest EU agreements... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Surrealism and design in Madrid



Until 21 March 2021, at the Caixaforum in Madrid, the exhibition "Objects of Desire" will be exploring the influence of Surrealism on design. It includes paintings, sculptures and objects from the last 100 years by artists such as Salvador Dalí and Giorgio de Chirico... [Read more](#)

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Exhibitions accessible in Germany



Despite the closure of museums and theatres on 2 November in Germany, cultural life is being reorganised online. The Berlinartlink, an online art magazine, offers a regularly updated list of German online events, exhibitions and shows. It includes the 11th edition of the Berlin Biennial of Contemporary Art and the Inter-Film Festival dedicated to short films... [Read more](#)

Online museums in Vienna



In Vienna, several museums such as the Natural History Museum, the Jewish Museum or the Leopold Museum offer virtual tours and exhibitions. The Museum of Art History is also offering online readings, podcasts and other services on its website... [Read more](#)

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Virtual archaeology in Turin



The Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Turin is hosting the virtual exhibition "Invisible Archaeology", which retraces numerous archaeological discoveries, such as papyrus and mummies. In videos, researchers explain the techniques of archaeological excavations that have helped them discover the history of the objects in the museum's collection... [Read more](#)

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Miro in virtual reality

The Centre Pompidou in Paris has set up its first virtual reality exhibition, on the border between art and digital, dedicated to the artist Joan Miró. The exhibition



includes a reading of the famous triptych Bleu I, Bleu II and Bleu III, which the public can discover by moving around as they wish, without being constrained by a digital exhibition visit generally limited to 360° views... [Read more](#)

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Theatre online "Voilà! Europe"



The 8th edition of the European Theatre Festival "Voilà! Europe 2020" which takes place every year in London, is being held online until 21 November. Thirteen plays are on offer, as well as meetings with artists and directors... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



17 November 2020

Videoconference
Meeting of European Affairs Ministers



18 November 2020

Videoconference
EU-Tadjikistan Cooperation Council



19 November 2020

Videoconference
Meeting of Heads of State and Government
Videoconference
Meeting of Ministers responsible for the internal market and industry
Videoconference
Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers



20 November 2020

Videoconference
Meeting of Defence Ministers
Videoconference
Meeting of Ministers responsible for Space Policy



23 November 2020

Videoconference
Meeting of Development Ministers

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