

Tuesday 24th November 2020

issue 913

The Letter in PDF format

The Foundation on



and



The foundation application available on [Appstore](#) and [Google Play](#).

— I support the Robert Schuman Foundation —

"Europeans have learned that they need to build their strategic autonomy"

Author: Arancha González Laya



The election of Joe Biden as President of the United States gives the European Union an opportunity to revive multilateralism and humanise globalisation, while at the same time developing its autonomy in the areas of defence and technology, explained Arancha Gonzalez Laya, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an interview with the Foundation.

[Read more](#)

Contents

Foundation : Debate/Russia - Health/Europe - Belarus - Publication **European Council** : Covid/Coordination **Commission** : Energy/Sea - European Semester - Trade - Covid/Tests - Employment/SURE - Vaccine **Parliament** : Audition - REACT-EU - Budget **Council** : Defence - Space - Industry - Development **Diplomacy** : EU/World - Cooperation/EEA **European Agencies** : Vaccine/COVID - Cybercrime - Migration **UK** : Brexit/Impact **Studies/Reports** : G20/Vaccine - Competition - Market/Carbon - Pandemic/Management - Trade/Pandemic - Air **Council of Europe** : Committee/Ministers - Hungary/Corruption - Cyprus/Corruption - Greece/Migrants **Eurostat** : Inflation - Agriculture **Eurobarometer** : Citizens/COVID **Culture** : Opera/Vienna - Documentary/Amsterdam - Film/Turin - Exhibition/Madrid - Dance/London - e-Museum/Paris

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

Foundation :

Putin's four wars. Why does Russia want to be an empire again?



The Foundation is organising an online debate on 1 December on Russia and Putin's political ambitions that go beyond Russian territory. The speakers will be historian Sergei Medvedev, author of "Les Quatre Guerres de Putin", Galia Ackerman, Associate Researcher at the University of Caen, and Philippe de Suremain, former French Ambassador and member of the Foundation's Scientific Committee. The discussions will be held in English without translation... [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 resurgence 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 essential, regularly updated resource to help you understand the situation... [Read more](#)

Belarus: chronology of a revolution in progress



Since 9 August, Belarusians have been protesting against the result of the rigged presidential election and demanding the departure of Alexander Lukashenko, who the Union no longer recognises as president. To follow this crisis, the Foundation offers you a chronology of events and links to European responses and initiatives... [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, published by Marie B, is available in electronic format in French and in English. It contains contributions by leading personalities and experts and offers a comprehensive view of the European Union and analyses the challenges facing Europe. You can order it online... [Read more](#)

European Council :

Meeting of heads of state and government



On 19 November, the European heads of State and government discussed the Union's future strategies to deal with the pandemic. They discussed the selection and placing on the market of the most effective rapid antigen tests and the establishment of a coordinated and gradual approach to the lifting of national restrictive measures. A communication campaign and a vaccination campaign will soon be established to help States communicate the importance of vaccines and to assist them in transporting, storing and making the vaccines available to all. They had a discussion on the blocking of the multi-annual budget by Hungary, Poland and Slovenia... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#) | [Other link](#)

Commission :

The Union's strategy regarding renewable energies at sea



On 19 November, the Commission presented a strategy to increase wind power capacity and other production systems such as wind and floating solar power in the EU. It sets a target of 300 GW of generation by 2050, up from the current 12 GW, and estimates that at least €800bn of investment will be needed to achieve it. To facilitate this investment, EU countries are invited to conclude offshore energy development agreements with the European Investment Bank. The Commission is proposing to relax the rules on state aid for environmental protection and energy... [Read more](#)

Opinion on the euro zone's draft budgets



On 18 November, the Commission presented its opinions on the draft budget plans (DBP) of the 19 euro area countries for 2021 and its recommendations for the euro area. Some of the measures presented by France, Italy, Lithuania and Slovakia are of concern. The Commission is calling on them to "redirect these fiscal policies once epidemiological and economic conditions permit it". Macroeconomic imbalances have been noted in 12 countries as part of the alert mechanism report. Recommendations for the eurozone give strategic guidance for recovery and resilience plans and call for completing economic and monetary union (EMU) and strengthening the international role of the euro. According to the recommendation, the unemployment rate is expected to rise from 7.5% to 9.4% in 2021... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

New complaints mechanism to counter trade barriers



The Commission announced on 16 November the establishment of a new complaints mechanism to address trade barriers and violations of sustainable trade commitments. The possibility to lodge a complaint will be open to all EU citizens and complaints will be dealt with through a new centralised single entry point system within DG Trade to allow for an efficient process... [Read more](#)

Recommendation regarding rapid antigen tests



The Commission issued a recommendation on 18 November to encourage Member States to use rapid antigen tests. It advises on the selection of appropriate rapid tests and the persons authorised to carry them out and encourages mutual recognition of test results... [Read more](#)

SURE: second payment and 18th State participant



On 17 November, the Commission paid out €14 billion to nine Member States (Italy, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Croatia) under the SURE instrument to combat unemployment and the social consequences of the Covid-19 crisis. The day before, the Commission proposed to the Council to grant Ireland €2.5 billion, making it the 18th country to benefit from the instrument, which would increase the amount to €90.3 billion. The largest beneficiaries of the instrument are Italy (€27.4 billion) and Spain (€21.3 billion)... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Vaccine: signature of a contract with CureVac



On 17 November, the Commission signed a contract with the European pharmaceutical group CureVac for the purchase of 405 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine. This is the fifth contract with laboratories, bringing the EU's order of vaccines to 1.2 billion doses. Negotiations are still underway with Moderna, which announced the day before that the phase 3 trial of its vaccine had provided proof of a 94.5% efficacy rate... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Hearing with Christine Lagarde



At her last quarterly hearing in Parliament on 19 November, European Central Bank (ECB) president Christine Lagarde urged Member States to introduce an economic recovery plan based on public investment. MEPs discussed the role of the ECB in the Green Deal, e.g. through the purchase of green bonds, the current scope of the ECB's mandate, the role of the Stability and Growth Pact in its current form or sovereign debt relief... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Agreement on the REACT-EU initiative in response to the crisis



Negotiators from the Council and the Parliament reached an agreement on 18 November setting the amount of the React-EU initiative at €47.5 billion. €37.5 billion will be available in 2021 and €10 billion in 2022 for this instrument mobilising cohesion funds to help Member States' economies in the face of the Covid-19 crisis. Unlike other cohesion programmes, Member States can apply for a 100% EU grant rate. The pre-financing rate is set at 11%. Italy and Spain will be the two biggest beneficiaries, with €11.3 and €10.9 billion of funds respectively. The Council and Parliament must now approve the proposal... [Read more](#)

Continued blockade regarding the budget and the recovery plan



After Hungary and Poland blocked the Council's approval of the multiannual financial framework and the Union's own resources on 16 November, Parliament's Conference of Presidents refused on 18 November to reopen negotiations on the conditionality of the rule of law, which was opposed by the two countries... [Read more](#)

Council :

Meeting of Defence Ministers



On 20 November, the defence ministers discussed the implementation of the Union's future "strategic compass" to define its security and defence objectives. An initial threat analysis has been carried out by the Member States' intelligence services and should help the Union to adapt its defence strategy. The strategic review of the permanent structured cooperation was discussed and the ministers set themselves concrete objectives so that the 26 projects can be completed by 2025... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Space Ministers



On 20 November, research and science ministers discussed how the Union could strengthen the competitiveness of its space industry and play a greater role in the development of international regulatory regimes, such as space traffic management and cyber security. Ministers stressed the importance of the European Copernicus and Galileo programmes and the need to develop the Union's strategic autonomy in space... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Competitiveness Ministers



On 19 November, the ministers in charge of industry and the internal market discussed the recovery plan and ways of making European industry greener, more dynamic and competitive. They discussed the Annual Report of the SME Envoy Network, the Commission's new consumer programme and the industrial policy work programme of the upcoming Portuguese presidency of the Council... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Development Ministers Meeting



On 23 November, development ministers discussed investment, sustainable development goals (SDGs) and post-Cotonou negotiations with African countries as part of the overall COVID-19 response, the recovery effort and the issue of debt relief. They also discussed how best to promote gender equality and empower women... [Read more](#)



Diplomacy :

Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting



On 19 November, the foreign ministers discussed the situation in Afghanistan, Belarus, Nagorno-Karabakh, the Eastern Mediterranean and Ethiopia. They also discussed the outcome of the US elections and multilateralism. The head of German diplomacy Heiko Maas presented the Council Presidency's proposal for a "Transatlantic New Deal" with the future US Administration, aimed at combating Covid-19 and climate change, the distribution of vaccines and the modernisation of the global multilateral system (WTO, WHO, UN). They approved the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, which contains the Union's main priorities on how to advance and defend human rights and democracy through its external actions... [Read more](#)



Meeting of Council of the European Economic Area



The Council of the European Economic Area (EEA), which includes the EU and three countries of the European Free Trade Association (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein), held talks by videoconference on 18 November. It reiterated its commitment to cooperation in the context of the Covid-19 crisis, to free movement within the EEA and to the integrity of the internal market. Representatives affirmed their commitment to eliminate remaining trade barriers, notably in the field of services, and to support the modernisation of the WTO... [Read more](#)



European Agencies :

European Medicines Agency (EMA) might approve the deployment of a vaccine by the end of the year



The European Medicines Agency (EMA), which is currently reviewing applications for licences from three applicants, said on 20 November that it might approve the first Covid-19 vaccines by the end of the year or early 2021... [Read more](#)



Europol Report on the risks and opportunities of artificial intelligence



In a report published on 19 November in cooperation with the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and Japanese researchers, Europol explains how artificial intelligence (AI) is both the vector and the target of attacks. The report calls for the development of secure frameworks for AI design, and for seizing the opportunities of AI by using it to combat organised crime... [Read more](#)



Decrease in migrant arrivals in the Union



The Frontex Agency announced on 18 November that illegal crossings of the Union's external borders fell by 21% in the first 10 months of 2020 compared to the first 10 months of 2019. Over the same period, the number of migrants coming through the Balkans, estimated at 19,700, has doubled, while arrivals from the West and East of the Mediterranean have fallen by 37% and 75% respectively... [Read more](#)



UK :

A no deal Brexit would weaken post-COVID recovery



A study published by the independent audit firm KPMG on 18 November forecasts a weaker economic recovery in the UK if there is no agreement on Brexit, of around 4.4% in 2021, compared with 7.2% if the EU and the UK reach a minimum agreement that excludes services. The absence of an agreement particularly threatens the manufacturing sector, whose production would be 6 to 12% less at the end of 2021 than at the end of 2019. KPMG stresses that Brexit, even with an agreement, will penalise the British recovery because GDP growth would be 7.2% in 2021 against 10.1% if the United Kingdom had remained within the single market... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

G20 Meeting



At a virtual summit on 21-22 November, G20 leaders reaffirmed their commitment to develop and distribute a vaccine against Covid-19 that is accessible to all and to increase their cooperation to better prepare for future pandemics. They also reaffirmed their commitment to fair and open international trade and their willingness to reach agreement on an international tax on multinationals by mid-2021. They confirmed the establishment of a debt restructuring mechanism for certain poor countries and announced a possible 6-month extension of the freeze on interest payments until June 2021... [Read more](#)

Report on the implementation of competition rules



In a report on the implementation of competition rules by the Commission published on 19 November, the Court of Auditors highlights progress in merger control and antitrust procedures, but calls for accelerated procedures and increased staff resources to deal with new anti-competitive trends... [Read more](#)

Report on the functioning of the European carbon market



Greenhouse gas emissions regulated by the European carbon market fell by 9.1% last year compared to the previous year, the European Commission said on 18 November in a report to the European Parliament and the Council... [Read more](#)

Report on the management of the health crisis



On 19 November, the OECD published a report produced jointly with the European Commission comparing the management of the Covid-19 crisis by 35 countries, EU Member States, members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the 5 EU candidate countries. The report considers that Norway and Finland are the two countries that have best mastered the pandemic thanks to the rapid implementation of a screening and tracing strategy and a high level of public confidence in the institutions... [Read more](#)

Report on the state of trade in the G20 economies



On 18 November, the WTO released a report on the effects of the pandemic and the international trade-related measures adopted by G20 countries. It notes a 21% contraction in trade in goods and a 30% contraction in trade in services in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the previous year. It stresses that of the 133 measures to regulate international trade adopted by G20 countries, 63% were trade facilitation measures... [Read more](#)

Europeans are breathing purer air



Air quality has improved significantly in Europe over the past 10 years but large numbers of Europeans continue to die prematurely due to pollution, the European Environment Agency (EEA) noted in a report on 23 November... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Germany takes over the chair of the Committee of Ministers



Germany took over the six-month chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 18 November. Its priorities are strengthening the implementation of the rights and obligations enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, setting standards in the field of artificial intelligence, combating hate speech on the internet, as well as the Roma and young people... [Read more](#)

Hungary not active enough regarding MPs' corruption



The Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) regrets, in a report published on 17 November, the lack of measures in Hungary to prevent conflicts of interest of parliamentarians and the absence of adequate and proportionate sanctions. It criticises the shortcomings of the Parliament's committee on mandate control, the lack of proportionality of sanctions, and the lack of independence of the two judicial appointment bodies... [Read more](#)

Cyprus must do more to prevent corruption



In a report published on 17 November, the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) calls on Cyprus to take steps to increase transparency in the tax returns of elected representatives and to establish a code of conduct for parliamentarians to prevent conflicts of interest. While the report notes progress, particularly in terms of transparency of judicial appointments, it is also concerned about the scandal of "golden" Cypriot passports sold to non-Europeans... [Read more](#)

Report on Migrant Reception Centres in Greece



In a report published on 19 November, the Council of Europe's Anti-Torture Committee (CPT) calls on Greece to address "structural shortcomings" in its migrant reception system, in particular as regards overcrowding, hygiene and accommodation conditions. It warns that conditions in the Evros region and on the island of Samos can be seen to constitute inhuman and degrading treatment. The CPT calls upon the Greek authorities to put an end to the detention of unaccompanied children. However, it recognises the challenges that the country faces and stresses the importance of a coordinated European approach... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Stabilisation of inflation



Annual inflation in October was estimated at -0.3% in both the EU and the euro area, according to figures released by Eurostat on 18 November. It was therefore stable compared with September... [Read more](#)

Increase in agricultural output in 2019



EU agricultural output rose by 2.4% in 2019 compared with 2018, according to the economic accounts for agriculture published on 16 November by Eurostat. France and Germany contributed most to agricultural output in 2019, accounting for 18% and 14% respectively of the EU total... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Citizens survey on the Union's management of the pandemic



On 20 November, the Parliament published the results of its third Eurobarometer survey of the year on citizens' views on the coronavirus crisis and their attitudes towards the European Union. 41% of respondents have a positive image of the EU, up from 31% in the first survey in April. 66% believe the EU should have more powers to deal with the pandemic and 77% want only member countries that respect the rule of law and the EU's democratic values to be eligible for EU funding... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Culture :

[National Opera of Vienna online](#)



During its closure, at least until 6 December due to the pandemic, the Vienna State Opera is broadcasting an opera from its online archives on its website every evening at 7 pm. The video remains online free of charge for 24 hours... [Read more](#)

Documentary film in Amsterdam



The 33rd edition of the Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival (IDFA) is taking place in more than 40 cinemas and online until 6 December. This year, IDFA is presenting 257 films and media projects from 72 countries and hosting 136 international premieres... [Read more](#)

e-Film Festival in Turin



This year, the 38th edition of the Turin Film Festival will be held exclusively online until November 28th. More than 133 films are presented on the MYmovies streaming platform. On the Festival website you can also find presentations and content to learn more about the selected films and their authors... [Read more](#)

Mondrian and De Stijl in Madrid



The Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid is presenting an exhibition dedicated to Neoplasticism, an artistic movement founded in 1917 by the Dutch artist Piet Mondrian, until 1 March 2021. On display are the works of Mondrian and those of other artists who contributed to this movement, based on the relationships between rectangular shapes, colour planes and straight lines... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Dance online



From 23rd November to 4th December, London's Sadler's Wells Theatre is teaming up with the "Candoco" dance company and offering their online show "Lets Talk About Dis", directed by Hetain Patel, as well as dance classes with the group's dancers. The theatre offers other online content, including a short film about the National Youth Dance Company and how its dancers had to innovate to work in 2020... [Read more](#)

FLVchezvous



The Louis Vuitton Foundation, available online, is offering a number of cultural events until December 1st and offers you the opportunity to rediscover an exhibition, a concert and a masterclass... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



23-26 November 2020
Brussels
Plenary Session of the European Parliament



27 November 2020
Videoconference
Meeting of Research Ministers



30 November 2020
Videoconference
Eurogroup Meeting
Videoconference
Meeting of Youth Ministers
Videoconference
Meeting of Education Ministers

The Letter is also available in:



 I love the Robert Schuman Foundation's Letter

The Letter's Editorial Team :

Stefanie Buzmaniuk, Helen Levy ;
Jérémy Cottrez, Thomas Hinzelin, Florian Da, Julian Parodi
Editor-in-chief: Eric Maurice
Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin
N° ISSN : 2729-6482

Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

The Robert Schuman Foundation, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France, Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani.

You no longer wish to receive our letters. [{LINK}](#)