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The Letter in PDF format

The Foundation on



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Economic recovery and climate: for Europe and the world, two battles to fight at once

Author: Clémence Pèlerin



At the European Council on 10-11 December, EU leaders are due to set the target to cut CO2 emissions by 2030. One year after the presentation of the Green Deal, which calls for the EU to become carbon neutral by 2050, climate transition is at the forefront of the post-Covid recovery strategies of the major economic powers.

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Front page! :

Europe has lost a great Frenchman



Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of the French Republic from 1974 to 1981, has just left us. "This great French liberal honoured Europe, which will miss him," writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Tribute to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing - a Great European



Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was a distinguished president and a great European, to whom the Robert Schuman Foundation was close, and with whom it often had the privilege of working. He honoured us with shared beliefs. Europe owes him a lot... [Read more](#)

Elections :

The liberal right are expected to form the next Romanian government

The Social Democratic Party (PSD) created a surprise in the Romanian parliamentary elections of 6 December, coming out on top with 29.69% of the vote. It beat the



National Liberal Party (PNL), led by outgoing Prime Minister Ludovic Orban, which won 25.18%. The PNL is expected to form a government with the alliance "Save Romania-Party of Freedom, Solidarity and Unity" (USR-PLUS), a liberal party led by Dan Barna, which took third place with 14.75%... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

Table of health measures and travel conditions in Europe



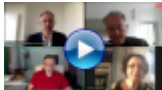
Faced with the second wave of the pandemic, the countries of Europe are trying to strike a balance between health measures and maintaining business activities and family ties for the festive season, while trying to coordinate their action. The Foundation offers you a summary of the health measures in place and travel conditions across Europe. An indispensable, regularly updated resource designed 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, whom the Union no longer recognises as president and subjects to sanctions. To follow this crisis, the Foundation offers you a chronology of events and links to European responses and initiatives... [Read more](#)

The Four Wars of Putin. Why does Russia want to become an Empire again?



On 1 December, the Foundation organised an online debate on Russia and the political ambitions of its President Vladimir Putin, with historian Sergei Medvedev, author of "The Four Wars of 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. You can watch the discussion again in full... [Read more](#)

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, 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... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Guidelines regarding air travel and the management of the pandemic



On 2 December, the Commission presented a strategy for the management of the pandemic during the winter period. It recommends that countries continue screening and tracing of contact cases, that they develop business continuity plans for health facilities, coordinate to introduce future vaccination certificates and communicate on the rules established by each country for travel abroad. On the same day, the EU's Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the Aviation Safety Agency published guidelines recommending that States inform air passengers about the health situation at their destination and for them not to make quarantine procedures automatic... [Read more](#)

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Plan of action for European democracy



The action plan for European democracy presented by the Commission on 3 December sets out several measures to guarantee freedom of the press, the smooth running of elections and the fight against disinformation. The Commission wants to restrict the micro-targeting in political advertising and strengthen the obligations imposed on online platforms. It will put forward recommendations for the safety of journalists, as well as an initiative to protect journalists from abusive litigation... [Read more](#)

Action plan for the media and audiovisual

On 3 December, the Commission presented an action plan to improve media financing, promote investment in the digital and green transition of the media sector and ensure its resilience. The plan calls for the creation of a tool to help media companies benefit



from EU support and national recovery plans, as well as the creation of European media data-sharing spaces. The plan is intended to strengthen citizens' media literacy, facilitate their access to audiovisual content and further promote cultural diversity... [Read more](#)

Strategy for the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights



On 2 December, the Commission presented its strategy for the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of its signature. The Commission will present an annual report on the Charter, which will take a closer look at its implementation in the Member States in specific areas; the first report will focus on fundamental rights in the digital age. The strategy provides for a more proactive response by the Commission when national measures are contrary to EU law, and calls on member countries to set up human rights institutions if they do not already have them... [Read more](#)

Assessment of the von der Leyen Commission's first year



On 1 December, the Commission published the assessment of the last 12 months of Ursula von der Leyen's presidency, detailing the Commission's action for digital and climate transition, its role in industrial and trade policy and the new multiannual budget. The review also covers the European response to the Covid-19 crisis, the €672.5 billion recovery plan, the SURE and React-EU instruments, the civil protection mechanism, the vaccine strategy and the two investment initiatives in the fight against coronavirus... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Agreement on the 2021 budget



Negotiators from the Council and Parliament agreed on 4 December on the EU budget for 2021. Total payments are set at a record €166.1bn. However, its final validation is suspended as Hungary and Poland have blocked the financial framework for 2021-2027. If the multi-annual budget is not approved by 1 January, the EU will be forced to adopt a 2021 budget based on the system of provisional twelfths, which would lead to cuts of €25-30bn, mainly in structural funds... [Read more](#)

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Agreement on the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund



The Council and the Parliament agreed on 4 December on the guidelines for the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) for the multi-annual budget 2021-2027. The €6.1 billion fund includes provisions for strengthening international ocean governance, increased support for small-scale fishermen and aquaculture (which provides 80% of the freshwater fish consumed in Europe)... [Read more](#)

Agreement on the rules governing the Cohesion Funds



The Council and Parliament agreed on 2 December on the rules for the Union's eight cohesion funds for the period 2021-2027, consolidating the objectives of environmental and digital transition. There will be an evaluation in 2025 and a monitoring mechanism for climate objectives. The EU co-financing rate will not exceed 85%... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers



At their meeting on 1 December, the Ministers of Economy and Finance discussed the Banking Union, tax cooperation, the European semester and the Union of Capital Markets. New rules for the exchange of information between Member States' tax authorities will be put in place from 2023 and will notably help to combat fraud on digital platforms. The ministers would like to set up a deposit insurance scheme to strengthen the banking union... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Justice Ministers

On 2 December, Justice Ministers discussed the annual report on the rule of law, published by the Commission in September, and the fight against terrorism. The



German Presidency of the Council discussed the possibility of setting up a preventive mechanism for monitoring the rule of law. The ministers would like to strengthen the fight against terrorism by stepping up the prevention of online hate speech, digital cooperation and by adopting conclusions on the European Arrest Warrant... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Health Ministers



Health Ministers met on 2 December to discuss the health pandemic and the proposals for a Europe of Health presented by the Commission on 11 November. They discussed the pharmaceutical strategy put forward by the Commission. After an assessment of the German presidency, Portugal presented its work programme for the next presidency... [Read more](#)

Men/Women Equality and wage inequality



The employment ministers met by videoconference on 3 December to discuss the protection of platform employees (Uber, Deliveroo, Monster), particularly in terms of trade union rights and access to health insurance. They discussed the gender equality plan presented in March by the Commission, as well as the conclusions on the action to tackle gender pay inequalities adopted two days earlier by the Council... [Read more](#)

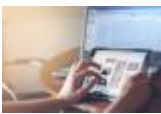
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Meeting of Sports Ministers



On 1 December, the Sports Ministers discussed the impact of the pandemic on the organisation of sports competitions and on the sports industry. They exchanged views on the EU work plan on sport for the years 2021 to 2024, as well as on the Council conclusions on promoting cross-sectoral cooperation for the benefit of sport and physical activity in society... [Read more](#)

Conclusions on the cybersecurity of connected devices



On 2 December, the Council adopted conclusions designed to strengthen the resilience, security and safety of connected devices by establishing comprehensive and sustainable legislation on the availability, integrity, confidentiality rules and conditions for placing such devices on the market. The Council invited the Commission to request the creation of a prototype for cybersecurity certification for connected devices and related services through the European Union Cybersecurity Agency... [Read more](#)

Declaration on the fight to counter antisemitism



In a declaration adopted on 2 December, the Council expresses its "concern" about antisemitism and calls for the fight against antisemitism to be mainstreamed in all Union policies and the internal policies of the Member States. It wishes to address the increase in hate crimes and threats against Jews through prevention and awareness-raising policies, in particular on the history of the Holocaust and the contribution of Jews to European identity and culture... [Read more](#)

Foreign Affairs Council



Meeting on 7 December, the Foreign Affairs Ministers adopted the introduction of a sanctions mechanism against the perpetrators of human rights violations. Inspired by the US Magnitsky Act, it imposes travel bans and asset freezes against those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and other human rights abuses anywhere in the world. Ministers also discussed the situation in Venezuela, Georgia, Hong Kong, Belarus, Ethiopia and Turkey. They adopted conclusions on the transatlantic relationship, Lebanon, the CSDP Civil Compact for 2021 and EU mediation for peace... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Culture and Audiovisual Ministers



The Ministers of Culture and Audiovisual Affairs discussed the Creative Europe programme, gender equality in culture and media pluralism. They made proposals to ensure sustainable funding for the media and to fight against the proliferation of misinformation. The German city of Chemnitz has been named European capital of culture for the year 2025

and the programmes of Galway (Ireland) and Rijeka (Croatia), cultural capitals for 2020, have been extended until spring 2021... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

New Transatlantic Agenda



On 2 December, following the election of Joe Biden, the Commission presented a new agenda for cooperation between the European Union and the United States. It proposes cooperation on global economic recovery, financing and development of coronavirus vaccines and the establishment of a transatlantic green agenda leading to global commitments such as carbon neutrality. It proposes the creation of an EU-US Trade and Technology Council. An EU-US summit could be held in spring 2021 to launch this new agenda... [Read more](#)

EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting



The Foreign Ministers of the European Union and the 10 countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) met by videoconference on 1 December. Faced with the need for coordination in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis, the ministers decided to raise the ASEAN dialogue to the level of a strategic partnership. After the free trade agreements with Singapore and Vietnam, European ministers encouraged the continuation of negotiations with Indonesia and called on other countries to follow this path... [Read more](#)

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Pre-agreement on the partnership with the States of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific



Negotiators from the European Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) reached an agreement on 3 December on the framework for their political and economic relations for the next 20 years. This new framework will succeed the Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000, which is due to be extended in December until 30 November 2021. The European Parliament warned on 2 December that it would block the treaty if it did not include a provision giving a stronger role in terms of scrutiny to parliamentary assemblies... [Read more](#)

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Stéfano Sannino, new Secretary General of the European Diplomatic Service



Helga Schmid, Secretary General of the European External Action Service, was appointed Secretary General of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on 4 December. She will be replaced at the head of the European Diplomatic Service on 1 January by Stefano Sannino... [Read more](#)

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European Agencies :

Support to AI businesses



On 3 December, the European Investment Bank (EIB) announced the implementation of a €150 million financing instrument for companies in the field of artificial intelligence. This instrument will be used by the EIB to invest alongside managers supported by the European Investment Fund and other private investors to support projects in areas such as high-performance computing, quantum technologies and cybersecurity... [Read more](#)

European action to counter online money laundering



As part of the drive to counter money laundering involving money mules, individuals recruited voluntarily or involuntarily, an international operation in Europe, Australia and the United States led to the identification of 4,031 mules and 227 recruiters, and the arrest of 422 individuals, Europol announced on 2 December. 1,529 criminal investigations were opened and €33.5 million in losses to banks and financial institutions were prevented... [Read more](#)

Cooperation rules between the European Parliament and OLAF



On 4 December the Council adopted the text detailing the form of cooperation between the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Public Prosecutor's Office, which should be operational by the beginning of 2021. The new relationship will be based on the principles of cooperation, exchange of information, complementarity and non-duplication. The European Public

Prosecutor's Office, in which Hungary, Poland, Ireland, Denmark and Sweden do not participate, is the only European body able to investigate and prosecute fraud affecting the Union's budget and crimes against the Union's financial interests. The text must be approved by the Parliament... [Read more](#)

Belgium :

Meeting with the French President



On 1 December French President Emmanuel Macron hosted Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo at the Elysée Palace. During this meeting, several points were discussed: cooperation regarding health measures and terrorism, the course of the pandemic, the management of tests and the vaccination strategy, for which both countries support coordination at European level... [Read more](#)

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France :

Death of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing



Former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing died on 2 December at the age of 94. Head of State from 1974 to 1981, he was the founder of the European Council and the G7 summits, as well as the election of the European Parliament by universal suffrage and European monetary cooperation, the forerunner of the euro. In 2002-2003, he led the Convention on the Future of Europe, which proposed a draft Constitution for Europe. 9 December will be a day of national mourning in France, and a tribute will be paid to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing by heads of State and government in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 2 February... [Read more](#)

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Poland :

Economic outlook for Poland



On 4 December, the OECD published a report on Poland's management of Covid-19, which limited the contraction of GDP to -3.5% in 2020 before an anticipated rebound of 2.9% in 2021. The OECD warns, however, that the crisis is likely to aggravate existing problems of access to housing and care, and to seriously weaken SMEs and rural regions. The report recommends that the country invest heavily in the digital and green transition to strengthen economic recovery and create stable and skilled jobs... [Read more](#)

Portugal :

Prime Minister visits Brussels



The Portuguese Prime Minister, Antonio Costa, was in Brussels on 1 December to prepare for the six-month Presidency of the Council that Portugal will hold from 1 January. The programme of the Portuguese presidency will focus on the distribution of the vaccine, the promotion of a "Global Europe", favourable to multilateralism and the development of the social pillar in the framework of the post-Covid recovery will be one of its priorities. Portugal will host a social summit in May 2021, as well as an EU-India summit... [Read more](#)

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Kosovo :

Meeting of Association and Stabilisation Council with the Union



The EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association Council met on 30 November. It hopes to liberalise the issue of visas for Kosovars and to speed up the work to reform the European programme relating to the rule of law, justice, economic development and education. They agreed to negotiate the conclusion of a trade agreement abolishing customs duties and reciprocity measures and to strengthen Kosovo's participation in the action plan for the development of a common regional market and in the green agenda for the Western Balkans... [Read more](#)

Montenegro :

New government



On 4 December, the Montenegrin parliament approved the new government led by Zdravko Krivokapic with 41 votes in favour and 28 against. This government comes after 3 months of negotiations within the coalition "For the Future of Montenegro" which won the elections of 30 August 2020, marking the first political alternation in this country

which had been led by the Democratic Socialist Party since 1991. The new Prime Minister wants to pursue a policy of rapprochement with Serbia and Russia while respecting Montenegro's commitments within NATO and to continue reforms with a view to integrating the European Union... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Report on the fight to prevent human trafficking in Croatia



On 3 December, the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) published a report on the fight against human trafficking in Croatia since 2016. The report warns of inadequacies in police care of victims, with some complaints not being taken seriously and insufficient psychological support given to victims... [Read more](#)

Report on psychiatric and social establishments in Bulgaria



In a report published on 2 December, the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) expresses its concerns about the situation in psychiatric and social care institutions in Bulgaria. It calls upon the Bulgarian authorities to take urgent and concrete measures to remedy the situation and recommends that they develop a specific strategy to manage the Covid-19 pandemic in these establishments... [Read more](#)

NATO :

Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers



The Foreign Ministers of the 30 NATO member countries met on 1 and 2 December to discuss strategy in Afghanistan, the military build-up in Russia, the NATO 2030 initiative and the report on the organisation's future. The NATO 2030 initiative is an initiative launched by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg last June, which provides for enhanced consultation with economic and scientific partners and greater internal cohesion in the run-up to 2030. A report on China, detailing China's military and technological strategy and the risks to the Allies' critical infrastructure, was also adopted... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

Association Implementation Report EU-Ukraine



On 1 December the Commission published its Association Implementation Report with Ukraine. It notes that Ukraine is continuing reforms in the economic, banking, digital and judicial fields despite the pandemic. In particular, progress has been made in the fight against corruption, the digital sector and the restoration of financial stability. Further efforts are still needed for the independence of the Central Bank and the protection of the rule of law, as well as in the areas of environment and energy... [Read more](#)

Euro zone should step up its fiscal and monetary efforts



In a report on the euro zone published on 30 November, the IMF welcomed the rapid and strong response by the European authorities, particularly the ECB, but warned of the effects of the second wave of Covid-19. The IMF supports the €750 billion recovery plan, but warns that its success will depend on the quality of investment and reforms in the Member States. To accompany the economic recovery, the IMF proposes to freeze the rules of the Stability Pact for as long as necessary and for the ECB to continue and extend its accommodative monetary policy... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and the Musée d'Orsay



The Musée d'Orsay has made a point of honouring the memory of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. It was he who, when he was President of the Republic, decided to transform the former Gare d'Orsay (railway station) in Paris into a museum dedicated to the art of the second half of the 19th century. "A man of profound culture, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing guided the creation of the museum and followed its development". It is hoped that the museum will bear his name in the future... [Read more](#)

Online shows by the San Carlo Theatre of Naples



Until January 2021, the San Carlo Theatre of Naples is presenting a series of concerts and shows available online on its Facebook page. Among the upcoming concerts, there will be the 'Mozart and Belcanto Gala' from December 10th to 13th and the traditional Christmas concert from December 25th to January 2nd... [Read more](#)

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Digital concerts at the Berlin Philharmonic



During the lockdown, the Berlin Philharmonic is offering classical music and jazz concerts online. 28 concerts are scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays until June 2021. Of particular note is the concert on December 31st with Kirill Petrenko... [Read more](#)

Festive Season of the National Theatre of Scotland



From 13 December to 1 January, the National Theatre of Scotland will be launching its "Festive season", 20 days of online events including poetry by Jackie Kay, cinema with the film Rapunzel by Stewart Kyasimire and theatre with director Johnny McKnight and his company... [Read more](#)

DocumentaMadrid



The Madrid International Documentary Film Festival is holding its 17th edition until 20 December, with part of the programme online on the VOD FILMIN platform. This year, there are three main competitive sections: International, National and Fugas... [Read more](#)

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Polish Sculptures online



Until 21 March 2021, the Contemporary Art Centre at the Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw is running an online exhibition of sculptures by the artist Ludwika Ogorzelec. The exhibition focuses on some of her works from the 1980s, including mobile and wooden sculptures... [Read more](#)

The Rouen Museums at home



The Rouen Normandy Metropolitan Museums meeting, which includes 8 museums, has created the "Museums in your home" platform, which offers online the 6 exhibitions and 3 contemporary projects planned for the 2020 Impressionist season. The exhibitions provide an overview of the Impressionist period with, among others, a retrospective devoted to the collector François Depeaux, another to the ceramics of Camille Moreau-Nélaton and an exhibition at the Musée de la Corderie on the fashion of the Second Empire... [Read more](#)

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Agenda :



8 Decemer 2020

Videoconference
General Affairs Council Transport Council



9 December

Videoconference
EU-African Union Meeting



10 December 2020

Frankfurt
Meeting of the Council of Governors of the European Central Bank



10-11 December 2020

Dec

Brussels
European Council

14
Dec

14 December 2020
Videoconference
Justice and Home Affairs Council Energy Ministers Meeting

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