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The Letter in PDF format

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How not to repeat history: the case of North Korea

Author: Young Gil Song



To provide humanitarian aid to the North Korean people and promote future denuclearisation of the peninsula, the European Union should open a diplomatic channel with the regime, says the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Commission of the South Korean National Assembly.

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Foundation :

The Permanent Atlas of the European Union is available



The new edition of the Permanent Atlas of the European Union has been published by Marie B. It reflects the latest political and economic changes in the European Union and its Member States. With more than 50 maps, texts and thematic sheets, the Atlas summarises the Union's history and political and statistical realities. It is available in hard copy in French in bookshops and on our website. The digital version is available in French and English... [Read more](#)

Robert Schuman's Europe



On 7th May Pascale Joannin is taking part in an online conference organised by the University of Vienna. Her talk will focus on "Robert Schuman's Europe from a French perspective"... [Read more](#)

Map of Health Measures and Travel Conditions in Europe

Travel restrictions are being lifted on 3 May in France and a gradual end of the lockdown will start on 19 May. In Portugal, the state of emergency ended on 30 April,



sports activities and gatherings are now allowed subject to conditions and the border with Spain has been reopened. In Poland, sports and commercial activities resumed under certain conditions and museums will reopen on 4 May. Restaurants and theatres partially reopen in Romania on 3 May. In Slovakia, the state of emergency is being extended until 28 May. To follow the development of the situation, the Foundation offers you a complete map of the sanitary measures in place and the travel conditions throughout Europe. An essential resource, regularly updated, to understand the situation.. [Read more](#)



Belarus: chronology of a revolution in progress



At a meeting in the Italian Chamber of Deputies on 29 April, Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya received the support of parliamentarians calling for new free elections. To follow the crisis since the rigged elections of August 2020, the Foundation offers you a chronology of events and links to European responses and initiatives... [Read more](#)



Commission :

Strategy for voluntary returns



On 27 April, the Commission presented a proposal for an EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration, with a view to establishing a common system under the new Pact on Immigration and Asylum. The aim is to improve the quality of assistance programmes, to consolidate the legal and operational framework for voluntary return from Europe and transit countries and to strengthen cooperation with partner countries by developing their capacities and providing them with staff with the necessary skills... [Read more](#)



Proposals for better regulation



On 29 April, the Commission presented its proposals for improving the EU's legislative process. It wants to remove obstacles and red tape that slow down investment and the construction of infrastructure; simplify public consultations by introducing a "call for participation"; and introduce the "one addition, one withdrawal" principle, whereby new regulation leads to the deletion of existing regulation... [Read more](#)



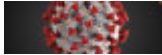
Apple accused of abuse of dominant position



Following a preliminary investigation, the Commission found on 30 April that Apple has distorted competition in the music streaming market by abusing its dominant position with regard to the distribution of music applications via its App Store. The Commission believes that Apple's rules increase costs for competing developers and subscription prices for consumers. The investigation, which was launched in June 2020 following a complaint from Spotify, will continue... [Read more](#)



Proposed easing of restrictions on travel to the EU



On 3 May, the Commission suggested that all people from countries with a "good" epidemiological situation should be allowed to enter the EU for non-essential travel purposes, and that all people vaccinated with an EU- or WHO-approved vaccine should be allowed to enter. It also suggests changing the threshold related to the number of new cases of Covid-19 used to determine the list of countries from which all travel should be allowed. To counter the emergence of variants, the Commission proposes a new "emergency brake" mechanism that would involve better coordination of travel restriction decisions at EU level... [Read more](#)



Parliament :

Adoption of the European Defence Funds



MEPs adopted on second reading the €7.9 billion European Defence Fund to develop joint projects in equipment and technology to strengthen the European defence industry... [Read more](#)



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Adoption of the European Space Programme

On 27 April, MEPs definitively adopted the 2021-2027 space programme. With a budget of €14.88 billion, the largest ever devoted to space, the programme includes all the Union's space activities and aims to ensure the continuity and modernisation of



the Galileo, Copernicus and EGNOS space programmes. It aims to support new initiatives on Space Situational Awareness (SSA), including Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST), Space Weather and Near Earth Objects (NEO), and Satellite Communications (GOVSATCOM)... [Read more](#)

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Adoption of the research programme Horizon Europe



On 27 April MEPs adopted the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme for 2021-2027, which aims to secure long-term funding to tackle global challenges, including climate change, digitisation and pandemics. Already provisionally set up by the Commission as of January, the programme has a budget of €95.5 billion. An additional €1 billion secured by the Parliament is earmarked for basic research, through the European Research Council... [Read more](#)

Adoption of the strengthening of the legal framework regarding civil protection



On 27 April, MEPs adopted the strengthening of the legal framework for civil protection. It aims to ensure better preparedness for large-scale disasters. The Commission will be able to directly acquire, under certain conditions, the necessary resources via the RescEU reserve to be able to deploy assistance more swiftly in the event of a crisis. 1.2 billion is earmarked for the mechanism for the budget period 2021-2027, to which will be added €2 billion from the Union's recovery instrument... [Read more](#)

New rules for the transparency register



On 27 April, MEPs adopted new rules in the structure of the transparency register where interest representatives will have to register to carry out their activities with the Parliament, the Commission or the Council. The three institutions will have to put in place additional transparency measures to encourage the registration of interest representatives... [Read more](#)

Position on the European "digital green certificate"



On 29 April, MEPs adopted a proposal for a European certificate, calling for the latter to remain in place for only 12 months and to facilitate freedom of movement without discrimination. They call for people in possession of the certificate not to be subject to additional travel restrictions and for unvaccinated people to have access to "universal, accessible, rapid and free" testing. Negotiations on a final text will start with the Council... [Read more](#)

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Resolution on the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia and the rule of law in Malta



In a resolution adopted on 29 April, MEPs express concern about "the possible involvement of ministers and government appointees" in the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in Malta in 2017 and call for all those involved to be brought to justice. They stress the importance of media freedom, judicial and police independence and freedom of assembly. They have called upon Malta to ensure that these European values are respected and upon the Commission to take steps to guarantee them in Malta and in the Union... [Read more](#)

New rules against online terrorist content



On 28 April, MEPs finally adopted a regulation to combat the dissemination of terrorist content online that incites, solicits or contributes to terrorist offences. Host providers will have to remove such content within one hour of receiving a removal order from the competent authority... [Read more](#)

Council :

Meeting of Development Ministers



Development ministers held a policy debate on the future European financial architecture for development on 29 April, with the participation of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Entry into force of the trade and cooperation agreement with the UK



The trade and cooperation agreement with the UK entered into force on 1 May after being approved by the European Parliament on 27 April by 660 votes to 5. The agreement, concluded in December 2020, was ratified by the UK Parliament and entered into force provisionally. In an accompanying resolution, MEPs condemned the UK's unilateral measures relating to the island of Ireland in breach of the withdrawal agreement and called on the UK government to implement the agreement "in good faith". On 29 April, the Council approved the €5 billion Brexit adjustment reserve fund to help the regions, areas and sectors most affected by Brexit... [Read more](#)

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Extension of sanctions against Myanmar



On 29 April, the Council decided to extend for one year the restrictive measures against those directly involved in the February 2021 military coup in Burma, those involved in the violence against protesters, as well as those responsible for human rights violations against the Rohingya population. The restrictive measures include an embargo on arms and surveillance equipment that could be used for internal repression, and a halt to military cooperation with the armed forces... [Read more](#)

Russia bans several European leaders



Russia decided on 30 April to ban the entry into its territory of 8 European personalities, including the President of the European Parliament David Sassoli and the Vice-President of the Commission Vera Jourova, in response to European sanctions against those responsible for human rights violations in Russia. In a joint statement, the three leaders of the European institutions condemned "in the strongest possible terms" this decision, which shows that Russia has chosen confrontation with the EU instead of agreeing to redress the negative trajectory of our bilateral relations. They added that the EU reserves the right to take "appropriate measures" in response. The Russian ambassador to the EU was summoned on 3 May to inform him of this condemnation of a "lack of any legal justification"... [Read more](#)

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EIB :

First emission of bonds via blockchain



The European Investment Bank has issued €100 million in bonds using blockchain technology for the first time. The transaction was carried out in cooperation with private banks and the Banque de France as part of a central bank digital currency project. The aim is to give the EIB faster and easier access to alternative sources of finance... [Read more](#)

Cyprus :

Reunification talks resume



Cypriot President Nikos Anastasiades, the British, Greek and Turkish foreign ministers met from 27 to 29 April in Geneva under the aegis of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to restart negotiations to resolve the division of Cyprus, which have been suspended since 2017. The latter noted the absence of common ground. The Turkish side defended a two-state solution while the Cypriot President, supported by Greece, pleaded for the creation of a bi-national federation. A further informal meeting is planned in the coming months... [Read more](#)

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France :

Agreement regarding the European fighter plane engine



On 29 April, the French company Safran and the German MTU created a joint structure, EUMET, with the Spanish company ITP as part of a cooperation agreement for the engine of the future European fighter aircraft (NGF). This project is part of the Future Air Combat System (SCAF) programme, launched in 2017 by Germany and France. The agreement gives Safran overall responsibility for the engine's design and integration, MTU will be the leader for services, and ITP will develop the low-pressure turbine and nozzle... [Read more](#)

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Portugal :

World's longest suspension footbridge



On 30 April, the world's longest pedestrian suspension bridge was inaugurated in Arouca in northern Portugal. The 516-metre long and 175-metre high bridge beats the record held by the 494-metre Charles Kuonen bridge in the Swiss Alps... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Resignation of the First Minister of Northern Ireland



The First Minister of Northern Ireland, Arlene Foster, announced on 28 April that she will step down from her position at the end of June. She will also resign on 28 May as leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which she has led for five years. This decision comes the day after a majority of DUP members signed a confidence vote against her, criticising her management of the Brexit negotiations... [Read more](#)

Slovenia :

Meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron



French President Emmanuel Macron and Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa met at the Elysée Palace on 29 April. They discussed the successive presidencies of the Council of the European Union by their countries, in the second half of 2021 for Slovenia and in the first half of 2022 for France, as well as the Conference on the future of Europe. They discussed European solidarity during the health crisis, as well as the situation in the Western Balkans and Europe's neighbourhood... [Read more](#)

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Moldova :

Dissolution of Parliament



On 28 April, Moldovan President Maia Sandu dissolved parliament and announced early parliamentary elections for 11 July. She hopes to obtain a majority to form a government. The parliament, the majority of which supports former President Igor Dodon, has rejected the prime ministers she put forward... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Declaration regarding freedom of the press



In a statement issued on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejcinovic Buric, called upon European governments to show more political will to protect journalists and independent journalism and to halt the deterioration of press freedom on the continent. According to the latest annual report of the Council of Europe's Platform for the Protection of Journalism and the Safety of Journalists, 201 incidents posing a serious threat to press freedom were recorded in 2020 in the 47 member states, an increase of 40% compared to 2019... [Read more](#)

Proposal on social rights in Europe



On 30 April, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejcinovic Buric, published her proposals for improving social rights in Europe and strengthening the European Social Charter. The proposals focus on three areas: political support for improving the Council of Europe's contribution to the implementation of social rights; improvements to the procedures established under the European Social Charter; and forward-looking substantive and procedural developments... [Read more](#)

Declaration regarding the protection of children in the digital world



The Council called on 29 April for European states to strengthen data protection measures and respect the privacy of children. The Committee of Ministers calls on European States not to publish data concerning the health and education of children. It wants to protect children from overexposure that can lead to discrimination, harassment and sexual abuse... [Read more](#)

Rapport sur le trafic d'êtres humains en Bulgarie

In a report published on 29 April, the Council of Europe's Group for Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), calls on the Bulgarian authorities to improve victims' access to justice and compensation. The report acknowledges that progress has been made, but stresses that the authorities should improve victims' access to information about their rights and the services available to them, and calls for them to be systematically assigned specialised lawyers... [Read more](#)



Eurostat :

Inflation rate at 1.6%



According to a study published by Eurostat, the Union's statistical office, on 30 April, the annual inflation rate in the euro zone is estimated at 1.6% in April 2021, compared with 1.3% in March... [Read more](#)

GDP down in the first quarter



GDP fell by 0.4% in the EU and by 0.6% in the euro area in the first quarter of 2021, Eurostat reported on 30 April. The year-on-year growth rates were negative for all countries except France (+1.5%) and Lithuania (+1%). The countries with the largest declines were Portugal (-3.3%), Latvia (-2.6%) and Germany (-1.7%)... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Europeans and international cooperation



The Eurobarometer survey on development cooperation, published on 29 April, reveals that nine out of ten Europeans believe that cooperation with partner countries remains one of the most important policies of the EU. The survey shows an increase in the number of people (88% of respondents) who believe that the consequences of climate change in developing countries are a priority for the EU and that young people have a crucial role to play... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

Demographic Atlas



On 29 April, the Commission presented a "Demographic Atlas" of the EU, produced by the Joint Research Centre using data collected at European, national, regional and local levels. The Atlas is interactive online and provides an opportunity to visualise and monitor demographic change. This tool will help to understand demographic trends and to anticipate dynamics... [Read more](#)

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Report on misinformation about vaccines



In a report published on 29 April, the European External Action Service describes the misinformation operations carried out in particular by Russia and China regarding vaccines. The manipulation of information is aimed at undermining confidence in the health policies of EU countries and in the European Medicines Agency. In the Balkans and the EU's eastern neighbourhood, they attempt to improve the image of Russia and China at the expense of Europe and to promote vaccines produced by these two countries... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Classical concerts in streaming



Until 31 May, France Musique and the Association Française des Orchestres are streaming recordings of concerts performed by various French symphony orchestras... [Read more](#)

Festival of Brighton



Until 23 May, Brighton Festival is presenting over 90 music, theatre and film events, online and in vivo in the city's parks, museums and concert halls... [Read more](#)

Concert online in tribute to Zygmunt Stojowski



On 8 May, the Sinfonia Iuventus orchestra will broadcast a concert dedicated to the Polish composer and pianist Zygmunt Stojowski from the Polish radio studio, conducted by Antoni Wit, with pianist Krzysztof

Książek... [Read more](#)

Illuminated manuscripts in Madrid



The National Library of Spain is showcasing its collection of illuminated manuscripts from the time of Charlemagne to that of Francis I in an exhibition open until 5 September. 70 manuscripts reflect the developments in the art of miniature painting in the Middle Ages, and reconstruct the daily life and beliefs of European society... [Read more](#)

Roman mosaics



Until 15 September, the Centrale Montemartini Museum in Rome is presenting "The Colours of the Romans", an exhibition of ancient Roman mosaics from the Capitoline collections, as well as frescoes and sculptures. The exhibition covers the period from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD... [Read more](#)

Women artists of the Wiener Werkstätte



The Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna is hosting an exhibition dedicated to the women artists who contributed to the creation of the Wiener Werkstätte, an artists' association founded in 1903 with the aim of independently producing decorative objects and textiles in the service of modernity, crafts and the major arts. Ninety women artists who took part are represented in this exhibition, through different designs: fabrics, ceramics, or murals... [Read more](#)

Zubin Mehta and Daniel Barenboim Concert



On the occasion of Zubin Mehta's 85th birthday, the Staatskapelle Berlin and Daniel Barenboim offer an exceptional concert with works by Beethoven and Schubert. To be discovered on Arte concert until 29 May... [Read more](#)

Napoleon's Bicentenary :

Napoleon on Saint Helena



Brian Unwin's account of his trip to St Helena gives readers an insight into the conditions of exile. The Saint Helena Napoleonic Heritage website offers a history of the exile... [Read more](#)

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20 podcasts for the bicentenary



To mark the 200th anniversary of the death of Napoleon I, Radio Classique is offering a collection of twenty podcasts by Franck Ferrand devoted to the emperor's history... [Read more](#)

Napoleon and the legend of Rome



The Museum of the Markets of Trajan in Rome is hosting an exhibition on the relationship between Napoleon, the ancient world and Rome until 30 May. The exhibition, which reopened on 26 April, shows how Napoleon drew inspiration from imperial Rome to define his political strategy... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



3-5 May 2021
London
Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of the G7



6 May 2021
Brussels
Defence Council



7 May 2021
Porto
European Social Summit



8 May 2021
Porto
Meeting of Heads of State and government
Videoconference
EU-India Meeting



9 May 2021
Europe Day



10 May 2021
Brussels
Foreign Affairs Council

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