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The Letter in PDF format

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I support the Robert Schuman Foundation

The Letter team wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We thank you for your loyalty and look forward to seeing you on 10 January 2022.

The Covid-19 pandemic, what lessons for the European Union?

Author: Sylvain Kahn



In combating Covid-19, the European Union has been more effective rather than ineffective: the Europeans have given an in-depth boost to the European project, which has been buffeted successively for the past ten years by several crises. However, the response to the coronavirus has highlighted several structural fragilities that have appeared in Europe's recent history.

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Front page! :

New Stars



In the run-up to Christmas, the Foundation's president takes stock of the world and hopes that Europe will play its full part... [Read more](#)

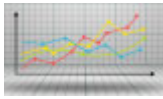
Foundation :

Support the Foundation's activities



In 2021, the Foundation participated through its proposals and its active presence in European debates in the necessary development of common policies. While France will hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2022, the Foundation will step up its work to educate people about the European project and will continue its strategy of influence in Brussels, Strasbourg and within the Member States. More than ever before, the Foundation needs your support to pursue its objectives... [Read more](#)

Which economic policies for post-pandemic Europe?



On 13 December, the Foundation organised a videoconference with the Governor of the Banque de France, François Villeroy de Galhau, on European economic policy. The video of the conference is available online... [Read more](#)

Map of Health Measures and Travel Conditions in Europe



The Netherlands has introduced a lockdown until 14 January. Italy, Greece, Ireland and Portugal require a negative test for all travellers arriving in the country, Austria requires a negative test for all but those who have had a third dose of vaccine, and Italy has imposed a 5-day quarantine on non-vaccinated people. In Denmark, cultural venues are closed and bars and restaurants close at 11pm. In Ireland, bars and restaurants close at 8pm. In Luxembourg, the health pass will be mandatory at work from 15 January and the French government wants to introduce a vaccination pass. To follow the evolution of the situation and to understand the measures in place in the EU Member States, the Foundation offers you a complete map of the measures in place. An indispensable, regularly updated resource... [Read more](#)

Belarus: chronology of a revolution in progress



The European heads of state and government, meeting on 16 December, "strongly" condemned the use of migrants by the Belarusian regime. They called for the rapid implementation of the sanctions approved at the beginning of December and are considering additional measures if necessary. They again called for an end to the repression, the release of political prisoners and the organisation of a "free and fair" election. On 17 December, the Charlemagne Prize was awarded to opposition activists Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, Maria Kalesnikova and Veronika Tsepkalo. To follow the latest developments in the crisis sparked by the rigged presidential election of August 2020 and the repression of the democratic opposition, the Foundation offers you a chronology of events... [Read more](#)

European Recovery Plans: figures and priorities



In response to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the EU has set up a €672.5 billion recovery fund, known as the Recovery and Resilience Facility, for Member States in the form of grants and loans. So far, 22 plans have been approved by the Commission, and all 22 countries have received the planned pre-financing, including Estonia and Malta on 17 December. The Commission has not yet approved the Hungarian and Polish plans due to their infringement of the rule of law. The Foundation provides you with an interactive map of the plans country by country, so you can see the amounts, timetables and priorities... [Read more](#)

The Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2021



You have not yet had the opportunity to read the 2021 edition of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union", a reference work published by Marie B.? You can still do so. It is available in hard copy in bookshops and on our website, and in digital format. Order your copy here... [Read more](#)

The Permanent Atlas of the European Union



Christmas gift idea: the Permanent Atlas of the European Union. This unique book provides a comprehensive and easily accessible overview of the European Union, the eurozone and each of its 27 Member States. It is available in digital format... [Read more](#)

European Council :

European Council and Euro Zone Summit

The 27 Heads of State and Government, meeting on 16 December, recalled the importance of vaccination and called for health measures not to disproportionately



hamper free movement. They recalled the importance of rapid implementation of the migration management action plans, as well as support for Member States at the external borders. They warned Russia of "massive consequences and severe costs" in the event of an invasion of Ukraine. At the Eurozone Summit, they recalled the importance of close coordination of fiscal policies to ensure recovery. They called for the completion of the Banking Union and the deepening of the Capital Markets Union... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Towards a modification of the Schengen Code



On 14 December, the Commission proposed new rules for the management of the Schengen area. In the event of a health crisis, it is considering better coordination between states for restrictions at internal borders, and new rules for rapidly adopting restrictions at external borders. On migration, the Commission is proposing that states should carry out more proportionate border controls so as not to hinder free movement, as well as the introduction of measures to limit the negative impact on border regions and the internal market... [Read more](#)

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New Energy rules and Climate Transition



On 15 December, the Commission proposed to adapt the rules on the energy performance of the buildings as part of the Green Pact objectives for 2030. It proposes to develop the use of hydrogen while reducing methane emissions. On 14 December, it published guidelines to help Member States develop and implement measures to promote climate transition... [Read more](#)

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Approval of the acquisition of Suez by Veolia



On 14 December, the Commission approved the proposed acquisition of Suez by Veolia, both leaders in the water treatment and waste management sectors. The investigation concluded that the merger between the two French companies did not raise competition concerns. In addition, Veolia committed to divest certain activities such as hazardous waste management... [Read more](#)

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50 billion € loan for NextGenerationEU



The Commission announced on 14 December that it will issue €50 billion of long-term bonds and short-term debt securities by June 2022 to finance the NextGenerationEU recovery plan... [Read more](#)

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Medicines Supply in Northern Ireland



On 17 December, European Commission Vice-President Maros Sefcovic received UK Brexit Minister David Frost for a further discussion on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The two sides are proposing an arrangement for the supply of medicines to Northern Ireland that will allow all residents to have access to the same medicines as in the UK, while ensuring that the integrity of the European single market is protected... [Read more](#)

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Authorisation of Novavax vaccine



On 20 December, the European Medicines Agency recommended the use of a new Covid-19 vaccine, Nuvaxovid, produced by Novavax. This is the fifth Covid-19 vaccine approved in the EU. Novavax is expected to supply 100 million doses to the EU from the first quarter of 2022... [Read more](#)

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Parliament :

Award of Sakharov Prize to Alexei Navalny



Daria Navalnaya was awarded the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize on 15 December on behalf of her father, Alexei Navalny, a Russian opposition figure who is currently being held in prison. Before his arrest, Navalny had organised protests against President Vladimir Putin and his government and had advocated anti-corruption reforms... [Read more](#)

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Vote in support of the law on digital markets



On 15 December, MEPs voted to support the proposed Digital Market Act, which aims to eliminate unfair practices by large online platforms. They extended the scope to web browsers, virtual assistants and connected TVs. They added the possibility for users to uninstall pre-installed software applications at any time. Negotiations between the Parliament and the Council for the final adoption of the text will take place under the French Presidency of the Council in the first half of 2022... [Read more](#)

Agreement on legislative priorities in 2022



Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Parliament President David Sassoli and Slovenian Prime Minister Janes Jansa, representing the Council, signed a joint declaration on 16 December listing legislative priorities for 2022. The list includes the implementation of the Green Pact for Europe, adaptation to the digital age and the strengthening of European values... [Read more](#)

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Vote on the International Public Procurement Instrument



On 14 December, MEPs adopted the International Public Procurement Instrument (IPI), which is designed to make it easier for EU companies to open up non-EU public procurement markets. The EU will limit access to its tenders for companies from third countries that do not open their markets to European companies. Tender procedures with a minimum value of €10 million for works and concessions, and €5 million for goods and services will be subject to an IPI measure... [Read more](#)

Building energy performance



In a resolution voted on 15 December, MEPs call on the Commission to ensure that Member States' building renovation strategies are compatible with the EU's climate neutrality objectives. They have also called on the Commission to ensure that the rules for social housing are properly implemented. They have underlined the role that digitisation of buildings and construction technologies can play in increasing energy efficiency... [Read more](#)

Recommendations of the second citizens' panel



European citizens, meeting from 10 to 12 December online and in Florence, Italy, adopted 39 recommendations in the areas of values, the rule of law and security. They insisted in particular on the principle of non-discrimination, the protection of democracy, the construction of a European identity and the strengthening of citizen participation. The recommendations will be discussed at the conference's plenary session in Strasbourg at the end of January. All Europeans can contribute to the debates on the conference's platform... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Programme of the next Presidency Trio



France, the Czech Republic and Sweden, which will take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union between 1 January 2022 and 30 June 2023, have published their programme. The priority themes are the protection of citizens and freedoms, the promotion of a new European growth and investment model, the construction of a greener, fairer and healthier Europe, and a global Europe... [Read more](#)

Results of the Slovenian Presidency



Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa presented an assessment of his country's Council Presidency on 16 December. He highlighted the progress made in crisis response, the creation of a Health Union, and the strengthening of cyber resilience. He mentioned the agreement between the Member States on the green and digital transition. In terms of security, he stressed the Union's ability to provide an organised response to the hybrid attack by the Belarusian regime. He noted the lack of major progress on the migration and asylum pact. In addition, 22 national plans for recovery and resilience were approved... [Read more](#)

Meeting of European Affairs Ministers



On 14 December, the European Affairs Ministers approved conclusions on the state of discussions with the candidate countries. In parallel to the Council, intergovernmental conferences with Montenegro and Serbia were held on 13 and 14 December.. [Read more](#)

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Agreement on cross-border energy projects



The Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on 14 December on the Trans-European Energy Network (TEN-E) regulation. The two institutions agreed on sustainable criteria for energy projects, on a transition period until 2029 for hydrogen, and on better access to the European energy network for isolated areas such as Cyprus and Malta... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Environment Ministers



On 20 December, the Environment Ministers discussed the draft adjustment to target 55, including the revision of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and its extension to transport and buildings, and the social climate fund... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

6th Summit of the Eastern Partnership



At the 6th Eastern Partnership Summit on 15 December, the EU reiterated its commitment to the security and stability of partner countries, including its support for Ukraine. Leaders committed themselves to improving resilience, including through strengthening the rule of law and security, and stressed their support for partner countries in the fight against the pandemic. Belarus did not participate in the summit, and the EU expressed its support for the Belarusian people... [Read more](#)

Agreement with Korea on personal data



On 17 December, the Commission adopted an adequacy decision for the protection of personal data transferred from the EU to the Republic of Korea. This decision concerns the private data of Europeans and the exchange of data between public authorities. This cooperation aims to strengthen the free trade agreement and the strategic partnership between the EU and South Korea... [Read more](#)

ECB :

End of pandemic emergency measures announced



The European Central Bank (ECB) confirmed on 16 December that the Emergency Pandemic Programme (EPPP) will end in March 2022, and that the volume of asset purchases will be reduced from January. However, the ECB assured that the PEPP could be resumed in the event of further market fragmentation due to the pandemic. Regarding the asset purchase programme (APP), the ECB decided that the monthly pace of net purchases would be €40 billion in the second quarter of 2022 and €30 billion in the third quarter.. [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Over 500 arrests for trafficking in fake medicines



Thanks to Europol and the coordination between 20 Member States and 7 third countries, an operation resulted in the seizure of €63 billion of counterfeit medicines and illegal doping products. The operation led by the French, Finnish, Greek and Italian police forces resulted in 544 arrests. Most of the products seized were fake Covid-19 treatments... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Friedrich Merz appointed president of the CDU

CDU Friedrich Merz was appointed as the next president of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) on 17 December by 62.1% of party members, ahead of Norbert Röttgen (25.8%) and Helge Braun (12.1%). He is expected to be

formally elected at the party congress in January. He will succeed Armin Laschet and has promised to break with the policies of former German Chancellor Angela Merkel... [Read more](#)

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France :

Emmanuel Macron in Budapest



On 13 December, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban received French President Emmanuel Macron in Budapest in the context of the upcoming French Presidency of the Council of the European Union (FPEU). Viktor Orban, who currently chairs the Visegrad group (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia), discussed priority European issues including European defence, investment plans for the green and digital transition and asylum and migration management... [Read more](#)

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The Netherlands :

Coalition Agreement for a new government with Mark Rutte



Nine months after the parliamentary elections, outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte (VVD, Liberal) reached a coalition government agreement on 13 December with three other parties: the D66, the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) and the Christian Union. The agreement was presented on 15 December and the new government is expected to be formed and take office in January... [Read more](#)

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Poland :

Media Ownership Act



Polish MPs passed a controversial law on 17 December, seen as an attempt by the government to silence the independent news channel TVN24. According to the law, media outlets may not be more than 49% owned by companies located outside the European Economic Area. This would force TVN, currently owned by the American group Discovery, to find a new majority shareholder, otherwise it would no longer be able to broadcast. Thousands of Poles marched on 19 December to defend "media freedom"... [Read more](#)

Czech Republic :

New government led by Petr Fiala



On 17 December, Czech President Milos Zeman appointed the new coalition government led by Petr Fiala of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), which brings together the ODS, the Christian Democratic Union-People's Party (KDU-CSL), TOP 09, the Pirate Party and the Mayors and Independents Movement (STAN). The government comprises 17 ministers, including 3 women... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Resignation of David Frost



UK Brexit minister David Frost resigned on 18 December over disagreements about the "direction" taken by Boris Johnson's government with regard to Brexit, the fight against Covid, and taxation. Negotiations with the EU will now be led by Foreign Secretary Liz Truss... [Read more](#)

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Eurostat :

Increase in inflation in November



Annual inflation was 5.2% in the European Union and 4.9% in the euro area in November, up from October, according to data released by Eurostat on 17 December... [Read more](#)

International Trade Balance



The euro area recorded a surplus in its trade in goods with the rest of the world of €3.6 billion for the month of October, up 7.3% on October 2020, according to data published by Eurostat on 16 December. The European Union recorded a deficit of €4.2 billion... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Erasmus+ 2020 Annual Report



The Erasmus+ 2020 annual report published on 16 December shows that the programme has fostered nearly 640,000 learning experiences abroad despite the pandemic, thanks to a total budget of €3.78 billion, including €200 million that has been made available specifically for the digital transition. European University Alliances now include 280 higher education institutions across Europe... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Pre-selection for the European LUX Audience Award



Three films have been selected for the European LUX Audience Award, which aims to support European cinema and inspire debate on topical issues. They are Flee, Great Freedom and The Voice of Aida. European citizens have until 25 May to vote for their favourite film. The LUX Prize will be awarded on 8 June 2022 in the European Parliament in Strasbourg... [Read more](#)

The Nutcracker in Prague



The Hybernia Theatre in Prague is presenting several performances of the Christmas story The Nutcracker adapted into a ballet, with recorded music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky... [Read more](#)

Benozzo Gozzoli in Florence



Until March 10, 2022, the Medici-Riccardi Palace in Florence is hosting an exhibition on the Florentine Renaissance painter Benozzo Gozzoli. The exhibition is based on the history of the palace, which houses the Chapel of the Magi, one of Benozzo Gozzoli's masterpieces, which he painted on commission from the Medici in the 15th century. The exhibition highlights Benozzo Gozzoli's links with the Medici family and with the city of Florence... [Read more](#)

Masks and Policy in Barcelona



The Centre for Contemporary Culture in Barcelona (CCCB) is organising an exhibition on the political use of masks until 1 May 2022. Inspired by Servando Rocha's book "Some Dark and Dangerous Things: The Book of Masks and Masked People", the exhibition offers a history of the use of masks over the last century, both as an instrument of power and as a tool for political activism... [Read more](#)

From Warhol to Cecily Brown



Until 20 February 2022, the Albertina in Vienna is devoting an exhibition to some 40 artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, Mel Ramos, Katharina Grosse, Monika Kus-Picco, Andy Warhol and Cecily Brown, who represent the great diversity of artistic positions in the post-war period, ranging from pop art to abstraction and from colour aesthetics to political themes... [Read more](#)

Stanislaw Wyspianski in Krakow



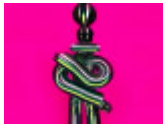
The National Museum in Krakow is staging a retrospective of the work of Stanislaw Wyspianski, a prolific Polish painter, poet, playwright and stage director. The exhibition includes 1,100 of his works or objects that belonged to the man who was a figure of the Young Poland movement at the end of the 19th century... [Read more](#)

Anselm Kiefer in Paris



Until January 11, 2022, the Grand Palais in Paris will be hosting works by the artist Anselm Kiefer, created between 2015 and 2021. Through a minimalist scenography, sculptures, installations and large-scale canvases, Anselm Kiefer's works interact with the poetry of the German poet Paul Celan, offering a vision of European memory... [Read more](#)

Dreamsphere between Art and Digital in Dublin



Irish artist Aoife Dunne is bringing a futuristic atmosphere to the Dublin Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) with her open access exhibition "Dreamsphere" until 1 February 2022. Aoife Dunne's futuristic art installations combine sound and light between the two worlds of art and digital technology... [Read more](#)

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Finnish Visual Art by Jarmo Mäkilä



The Sinebrychoff Museum in Helsinki is showing paintings by Finnish artist Jarmo Mäkilä in an exhibition entitled "Matrix Hardcore" until 24 April 2022. The painter, who has been described as a pioneer of Finnish visual art, specialises in the theme of strength and ancestral stories... [Read more](#)

5,000 years of Iranian history in Berlin



Until 20 March 2022, an exhibition is being held at the James Simon Gallery on Berlin's Museum Island devoted to Iranian civilisation. The exhibition explores 5,000 years of art and culture in Iran, at the crossroads of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa... [Read more](#)

View of the Forest in Zagreb



The Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb is organising an exhibition dedicated to forests until 9 January 2022. Through a series of sculptures, photographs, videos and conceptual installations, artists address deforestation and the degradation of this natural habitat... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



1 January 2022

Beginning of the French Presidency of the Council

Beginning of the German Presidency of G7



6-7 January 2022

Paris

Visit of the College of European Commissioners

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