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The Letter in PDF format

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The entire Foundation team is happy to welcome you back and wishes you a very happy 2022!

The Challenges of the French Presidency of the Council

Author: Eric Maurice



On 1 January, France took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for six months. The exercise, which mainly consists in leading the meetings of European ministers, is also an opportunity for the country temporarily in charge of it to convey its priorities and even a political vision for Europe. The French Presidency comes at a particular time for the Union, for France and for its President, Emmanuel Macron.

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Elections :

Who will succeed Sergio Mattarella as President of the Italian Republic?



On 24 January, the procedure for the election of the President of the Italian Republic will begin. The mandate of the outgoing head of state, Sergio Mattarella, expires on 3 February. With two weeks to go before the election, the race is wide open. No single person has emerged as the frontrunner for the top job. Former Council President Silvio Berlusconi has made public his desire to become president, and current Council

President Mario Draghi is the favourite candidate of many politicians, although his supporters would like him to stay in office until the next legislative elections scheduled for early 2023... [Read more](#)

Socialists remain favourites in Portugal's legislative elections but their lead in the polls is shrinking



Early parliamentary elections will be held in Portugal on 30 January, due to a crisis within the ruling coalition over the 2022 budget. With three weeks to go, Prime Minister Antonio Costa's Socialists remain in the lead in the polls, although their lead is narrowing as the weeks go by. They would get 38% of the vote, ahead of the centre-right Social Democratic Party, which would get 31%. Neither of the two main parties seems to be in a position

to form a coalition that will ensure a stable majority... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

The judicialization of public life



On 11 January, from 4.15 pm, Pascale Joannin will be interviewed within the framework of the Senate's information mission on "The judicialization of public life: an opportunity for the rule of law? A challenge to representative democracy? What are the consequences on the way standards are produced and their hierarchy?.. [Read more](#)

Strategic Maritimes Challenges



On 12 January, the Académie de Marine is organising a debate on strategic maritime issues with Jean-Dominique Giuliani and Admiral (2S) Bernard Rogel... [Read more](#)

Franco-German cooperation in the field of the European defence industry



In the framework of the Defence Factory and in partnership with ECFR Berlin, the Foundation is organising an online event on 13 January on Franco-German cooperation in the field of the defence industry, at the centre of European ambitions for the construction of strategic autonomy... [Read more](#)

Permanent Atlas of the European Union



To better understand Europe in 2022, the Permanent Atlas of the European Union, a unique work, offers a comprehensive and easy-to-access view of the European Union, the euro zone and each of its 27 Member States. It is available in English in digital version... [Read more](#)

Map of health measures and travel conditions in Europe



Since 28 December, people who have not been vaccinated cannot enter Finland. The Italian government has decided to make the vaccine compulsory for people over 50 from 15 February. From 10 January, a vaccination pass, already required in cinemas, theatres, bars and restaurants, is required in transport, hotels, congresses and on restaurant terraces. In Germany, a negative test is required in addition to the health pass from 15 January to enter bars and restaurants, and the wearing of a FFP2 mask is "strongly recommended" in transport. In the Netherlands, non-essential shops, restaurants and bars, cinemas, theatres and museums are closed until 14 January but schools reopen on 10 January. In Spain, masks must be worn outdoors. In Austria and Romania, the FFP2 mask is mandatory in the street and public places. In France, teleworking is mandatory at least 3 days a week. To follow developments in the situation and find out what measures are 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](#)

European Recovery Plans: figures and priorities



In response to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Union has set up a €672.5 billion recovery fund, called the Recovery and Resilience Facility, for Member States in the form of grants and loans. 22 plans have so far been approved by the Commission, and all 22 countries have received the pre-financing. On 27 December, Spain was the first country to receive a payment on the basis of met targets, amounting to €10 billion. The Commission has not yet approved the Hungarian and Polish plans due to breaches of the rule of law. The Foundation provides an interactive map of the plans country by country, to see the amounts, timetables and priorities... [Read more](#)

How can France influence the Green Deal?



On 5 January, Pascale Joannin took part in a round table on "How can France influence the Green Deal?", organised by the Senate Committee on Regional Planning and Sustainable Development on the occasion of

the debate of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The recording of the debate is available on the Senate website... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Start of consultations regarding taxonomy in the gas and nuclear sectors



The Commission started consultations with the Member States' expert group on sustainable finance on 31 December on the taxonomy covering certain activities in the gas and nuclear sectors for the transition to climate neutrality. The experts have until 12 January to make their contributions. The act will then be sent to the co-legislators for final adoption... [Read more](#)

Proposals for three new own resources



On 22 December, the Commission presented three new sources of revenue for the EU budget. The first aims to integrate 25% of the revenue from the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) into the EU budget. The second proposes to allocate 75% of the revenue generated by the border carbon adjustment mechanism to the budget. As part of the OECD-G20 agreement to combat tax evasion, the Commission is also proposing to include in own resources 15% of the share of multinationals' profits, which would then be reallocated to Member States. Between 2026 and 2030, these new own resources should generate on average up to €17 billion per year... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Recommendations of the citizens' panel on climate and healthcare



Around 200 European citizens, meeting from 7 to 9 January online and in Poland (Natolin), adopted their recommendations on climate change, environment and health, which will be debated at the plenary session of the Conference at the end of January in Strasbourg. All Europeans can contribute to the debates on the conference platform... [Read more](#)

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Death of President David Sassoli



The President of the Parliament David Sassoli (IT, S&D) died on January 11 at the age of 65 in Aviano, where he was hospitalized. A former journalist, he had been an MEP since 2009 and had been elected to lead the Parliament in 2019. He was not a candidate for a new mandate in the election for the presidency of the assembly scheduled during the January session... [Read more](#)

Council :

Start of the French Presidency



On 1 January, France took over the six-month presidency of the Council of the European Union. Its programme has been defined around three ambitions: a more sovereign Europe, a new European growth model, and a more humane Europe. The French Presidency was launched on 6 and 7 January with the visit of the College of European Commissioners to Paris. On 19 January, President Emmanuel Macron will present the programme to the European Parliament in Strasbourg and debate with MEPs... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Visit by Josep Borrell in Ukraine



The Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, visited Ukraine on 5 January to confirm the European Union's support for the country's sovereignty and independence. Faced with the threat of Russian aggression, he reiterated the need to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict, through dialogue between the United States, NATO and Russia, in order to obtain an easing of tensions from the latter. The High Representative's visit was the first by a European diplomatic chief to eastern Ukraine since the conflict began... [Read more](#)

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ECB :

The Euro is 20 years' old

1 January marked the 20th anniversary of the introduction of the euro. The central building of the European Central Bank was illuminated every evening until 9 January



for the occasion. The euro is the currency used by 19 Member States and over 340 million people... [Read more](#)



European Agencies :

Launch of the James Web telescope



The largest space telescope ever built, James Webb, was launched into space by an Ariane 5 rocket on 25 December. The launch took place from the Guiana Space Centre in Kourou, French Guiana, and was the result of nearly 30 years of international collaboration. The perilous deployment of the James Webb Telescope into space ended on 8 January with its primary mirror being 100% successful. The telescope's iconic primary mirror is about 6.5 metres in diameter, and was therefore too large to fit into a rocket as it was launched... [Read more](#)



Germany :

G7 Presidency



On 1 January, Germany took over the presidency of the G7, the group of the seven largest industrialized democratic countries. The summit of heads of state and government is scheduled for 26-28 June at Elmau Castle in Bavaria... [Read more](#)



France :

Joint declaration regarding the prevention of the use of nuclear arms



In a joint statement issued on 3 January, France, the United States, the United Kingdom, China and Russia reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of the atom. In the run-up to the 10th Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference on 24-28 January, they pledged to strengthen their national measures to prevent the unauthorised or unintended use of nuclear weapons... [Read more](#)



Italy :

Reform of the budgetary rules



In a joint op-ed published in the Financial Times on 23 December, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi and French President Emmanuel Macron call for a "credible and transparent" reform of European budgetary rules and plead for it to be accompanied by "large-scale investments in research, infrastructure, digital and defence" and increased coordination between Europeans... [Read more](#)



The Netherlands :

New Government



The new Dutch government, which emerged from the March 2021 general elections, took office on 10 January. Headed by Mark Rutte of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), who is entering his fourth term as Prime Minister, the government has 29 ministers and deputy ministers, including 14 women. It is a coalition of the VVD, the

Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), the Christian Union (CU) and the Democrats 66 (D66)... [Read more](#)



Switzerland :

Ignazio Cassis, President of the Confederation in 2022



Ignazio Cassis, of the Liberal-Radical Party, is the rotating president of the Swiss Confederation in 2022. In charge of foreign affairs since 2017, he is the first president from the Italian-speaking region of Ticino. In his New Year's speech, he called for Swiss unity in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.. [Read more](#)



NATO :

Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers

NATO foreign ministers discussed the Russian military build-up on the Ukrainian border and its implications for European security on 7 January. They reiterated their support



for Ukraine and their willingness to engage in dialogue with Russia, but warned them of the "serious consequences" they would face in the event of an attack... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Increase in inflation in the euro area



Euro area annual inflation rose to 5% in December, up from 4.9% in November, according to estimates published by Eurostat on 7 January. The energy sector recorded the highest annual rate in December (26%)... [Read more](#)

Decrease in November in Unemployment



The unemployment rate in the EU stood at 6.5% in November (compared with 6.7% in October) and in the euro area at 7.2% in November (compared with 7.3% in October), according to data released by Eurostat on 10 January... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Esch-sur-Alzette, Kaunas and Novi Sad, European Capitals of Culture 2022



The cities of Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg) and Kaunas (Lithuania) have been European capitals of culture since 1 January, as has Novi Sad (Serbia)... [Read more](#)

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Molière, the factory of national glory



From 15 January to 17 April, the Espace Richaud in Versailles is devoting an exhibition to the life of Molière, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of his birth, by following his literary, theatrical, cultural and political fortune step by step. Through more than 170 works, including manuscripts, sketches, photographs, sculptures and audiovisual projections, the exhibition looks at the making of and changes in the myth surrounding the playwright... [Read more](#)

Cranach the Elder in Warsaw



Until 27 February, the National Museum in Warsaw is devoting an exhibition to Lucas Cranach the Elder, one of the main artists of the German Renaissance, which shows the changes that took place in iconography in the 15th and early 16th centuries, particularly with regard to the ways of representing nature and the sacred... [Read more](#)

Photos by Nicolas Muller in Porto



The Portuguese Centre of Photography in Porto is devoting an exhibition to the photographer Nicolas Muller until 20 February. Born in 1913 in Hungary, he travelled to Italy, France, Portugal and Morocco before settling permanently in Spain. The exhibition is made up of 126 photographs that bear witness to the history of the 20th century... [Read more](#)

Retrospective of Domenico Gnoli



Until 27 February, the Prada Foundation in Milan is organising a retrospective of over 100 works by Domenico Gnoli from 1949 to 1969. The Italian artist's works are arranged in thematic series of everyday objects... [Read more](#)

From Goya to Modernism in Madrid



The Maria Cristina Masaveu Peterson Foundation in Madrid is hosting a selection of 117 paintings from its extensive collections of 19th century Spanish paintings, which include works by Goya, Madrazo, and Fortuny, until 31 July... [Read more](#)

Art in the time of Luitpold of Bavaria

BAWARIENES NATIONALMUSEUM
Das Schatzhaus der Kunstgeschichte

On the occasion of the bicentenary of the birth of Prince Regent Luitpold of Bavaria (1821-1912), the Bavarian State Museum in Munich is devoting an exhibition to the gifts sent to him during his reign. The exhibition highlights the artistic techniques of the time and traces the cultural development of the period up to the emergence of Art Nouveau... [Read more](#)

Imagining the universe in Louvain



The M Museum in Leuven is presenting the exhibition "Imagining the universe" until 16 January. The exceptional pieces demonstrate man's fascination with the universe and the answers to questions about our origins from the Middle Ages to the modern era. Themes include religion, mythology, astrology and detailed observation of the firmament... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



12 January 2022
Brussels
NATO-Russia Council Meeting



12-13 January 2022
Brest
Informal meeting of Defence Ministers



13-14 January 2022
Brest
Informal Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers



17 January 2022
Brussels
Agriculture and Fisheries Council Eurogroup Meeting

The Letter is also available in:



I love the Robert Schuman Foundation's Letter

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