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The Letter in PDF format

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European sovereignty, strategic autonomy, Europe as a power: what reality for the European Union and for what future?

Author: Bruno Dupré



The Europe of pooling economies was built without being geopolitical. It must now acquire political leadership, at the junction of the military and the economy, in order to play a global role on a worldwide scale.

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Front page! :

Europe and Russian Blackmail



Contrary to its propaganda, it is not the military threats that worry Russia, but the presence on its western borders of a large, peaceful, rich and democratic entity that highlights its failures. Faced with the gesticulations of Putin's regime, Europeans must show unity and look after their common defence, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

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Foundation :

Second "Defence Factory"



As part of the second annual Fabrique Défense organised by the French Ministry of Defence, which will be held from 28 to 30 January at the Grande Halle de La Villette in Paris, the Foundation is organising a debate on 29 January on European resilience in a new geopolitical context. It is necessary to enrol. On 26 January, the Foundation and the IHEDN are organising a videoconference on the challenges of the strategic compass that the European Union is due to adopt in March... [Read more](#)

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[Map of Health Measures and Travel Conditions in Europe](#)



Since 24 January, the vaccination pass has been required in France for access to bars, restaurants, cultural venues and interregional transport. In Spain, Catalonia lifted the curfew on 21 January, and the health pass is no longer required in restaurants in Cantabria. In Ireland, the curfew for bars and restaurants was lifted on 22 January, as well as limitations on the number of people at indoor and outdoor events. In Belgium, from 28 January, bars and restaurants can stay open until midnight, and a barometer setting restrictions in cultural venues according to the situation comes into force. In Austria, the parliament passed the compulsory vaccination law on 20 January, which will come into force on 4 February. 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](#)

European Recovery Plans: figures and priorities



In response to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the EU has established a €672.5 billion recovery fund, known as 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 Council, and 20 countries have received the planned pre-financing, including Finland, which received €271m on 21 January. The Commission has so far not approved the Hungarian and Polish plans due to infringements of the rule of law. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, showing the sums involved, the timetables and the priorities... [Read more](#)

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The Permanent Atlas of the European Union is available



To better understand Europe in 2022, the Permanent Atlas of the European Union, a unique work, offers a complete 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 versions... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Strategy for Higher Education



On 18 January, the Commission presented a European strategy for universities to give them the means to act in the context of the dual ecological and digital transition. It also proposes to strengthen cooperation between universities, notably through the development of joint programmes and the pooling of resources... [Read more](#)

Request for payment of penalties against Poland



On 20 January, the Commission gave Poland 45 days to pay €69 million in daily penalties imposed by the European Court of Justice for failing to comply with a ruling suspending the disciplinary chamber of the Polish Supreme Court. In case of non-payment, the Commission will deduct the sum from the EU funds intended for Poland. The Commission has already asked Poland to pay €15 million for failing to comply with a Court ruling ordering the closure of a coal mine... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Speech by Emmanuel Macron to the European Parliament



French President Emmanuel Macron discussed the programme of the French Council presidency with MEPs on 19 January in Strasbourg. He said he wanted the right to abortion and environmental protection to be included in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. He also called for the construction of "a new European security order" with NATO as part of the development of the European Union's strategic autonomy and the reflection on the strategic compass... [Read more](#)

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Digital Services Act



On 20 January, MEPs adopted the Digital Services Act (DSA), which sets out the responsibilities and obligations of intermediary service providers, in particular social media. The proposed measures include the removal of illegal products, services and content. The text provides for more options for no-tracking ads, a ban on the use of minors' data for targeted

ads, and more transparency about algorithms to combat harmful content and misinformation... [Read more](#)

Strengthening the European Medicines Agency



On 20 January, MEPs definitively adopted a text that strengthens the role of the European Medicines Agency. The aim is to make the fight against shortages of medicines and medical equipment more effective, in particular through the creation of two "steering groups" to manage the European platform for monitoring shortages in order to facilitate the collection of information... [Read more](#)

Election of Roberta Metsola, 14 Vice-Presidents and 5 Quaestors



Roberta Metsola (EPP, MT) was elected President of the Parliament on 18 January with 458 votes in the first ballot, against 101 for Alice Kuhnke (Greens/EFA, SE) and 57 for Sira Rego (GUE/NGL, ES). She succeeds David Sassoli (S&D, IT) for the second half of the legislature. She is the third woman to hold this position, after the French women Simone Veil (1979-1982) and Nicole Fontaine (1999-2002). On 19 January, MEPs also elected 14 vice-presidents and five quaestors, including Foundation Board member Fabienne Keller, for the second half of the legislature. The Foundation provides comprehensive information on the Parliament and its functioning on a special website... [Read more](#)

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Plenary Meeting of the Conference on the future of Europe



The third plenary meeting of the Conference on the Future of Europe took place in the Parliament in Strasbourg on 21-22 January. Delegates discussed the recommendations of the citizens' panels and the corresponding national panels on two themes: "European democracy, values and rights, rule of law and security" and "climate change, environment and health". All Europeans can contribute to the debates on the conference platform... [Read more](#)

Council :

Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers



At the Economic and Financial Affairs Council on 18 January, the ministers debated the proposal for a directive on the establishment of a global minimum tax level for multinationals, emphasising the priority of this dossier. They discussed the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). In addition, the Council launched the annual European Semester process for monitoring Member States' economic, budgetary and employment policies and gave guidance for further work on the Union's mandate for the G20 in February... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Environment and Energy Ministers



The environment ministers met on 20 and 21 January in Amiens to discuss the challenges of the ecological transition, health and biodiversity. They discussed the European harmonisation of rules governing the use of plant protection products and the fight against imported deforestation. The ministers discussed the role of wood in energy policies and how to support businesses and households in the climate transition. On 22 January, the energy ministers discussed energy prices, efficiency and hydrogen. They agreed on the importance of deepening solidarity in terms of security of supply. They repeated their wish to create a hydrogen value chain, associated with an industrial sector... [Read more](#)

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Development of Erasmus for apprentices



As part of the ministerial conference organised by France on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the "Erasmus+" programme, on 20 January, the ministers expressed their wish to offer all young people the possibility of a European experience. In particular, they committed together with the Commission to strengthen partnerships between Member States with a view to consolidating European networks and facilitating the use of mobility for apprentices. The Foundation has published a study on this subject... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Health Ministers



On 21 January, health ministers discussed best practices for managing the crisis and how best to align national strategies. They agreed to improve the sharing of information on national vaccination campaigns, to fully mobilise the instruments introduced by the European Union and reaffirmed the principle of vaccine solidarity in the world... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers



The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, meeting on 24 January, discussed Russia's military build-up on Ukraine's borders and met with US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken. They reiterated their support for Ukraine and assured that military aggression on the part of Russia would entail heavy consequences and massive costs. The Council also discussed the situations in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Syria and Libya. Finally, it said it was following developments in Burkina Faso very closely and called for respect for the Constitution and the release of President Kaboré, who was overthrown in a coup... [Read more](#)

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European Agencies :

Provisional application of the Agreement on a Unified Patent Court



The Protocol on the provisional application of the Agreement on a Unified Patent Court entered into force on 19 January. This international treaty complements and strengthens the centralised system for granting European patents, already provided by the European Patent Office (EPO). The Unified Patent Court (UPC) will have jurisdiction over actions for infringement and invalidity of patents granted by the EPO, allowing for better protection of European inventions and a less costly litigation procedure for patent holders... [Read more](#)

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Shutting down an online network used by criminals



On 17 January, in a joint action by 10 countries and Europol, law enforcement authorities took action against the criminal use of VPNLab.net, a secure internet access and communication service. More than 100 companies were identified as being at risk of cyber attacks due to the misuse of this service. The operation took down 15 servers hosting VPNLab.net, making it unavailable... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Friedrich Merz, Chair of the CDU



Friedrich Merz was elected leader of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) with 94.6% of the delegates' votes at the party congress held on 22 January online. He wants to organise a "constructive opposition" to the current government. On the same day, all the members of the party's leadership team were also appointed, including 17 women... [Read more](#)

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France :

Clémenceau 22



The French Ministry of Defence announced on 20 January that the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle and its carrier battle group would be deployed in the Mediterranean as part of a mission called Clémenceau 22. American, Spanish, Greek and Belgian ships, as well as German, Italian and Canadian officers will take part in this mission... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Launch of the Presidential election procedure



The Italian presidential election starts on 24 January. A thousand senators, deputies and regional representatives must elect Sergio Mattarella's successor. To be elected, two thirds of the votes are needed in the first three rounds, followed by an absolute majority in subsequent rounds. Due to health restrictions, each round will take one day. While there are theoretically no official candidates, Council President Mario Draghi is the favourite, while Forza Italia party leader Silvio Berlusconi announced on 22 January that he would not be running... [Read more](#)

Lithuania :

A border under tension



Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte and European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson exchanged views on the situation on the Belarus-Lithuania border in Vilnius on 21 January. They discussed new EU actions to strengthen the protection of the external border and to develop resistance to hybrid attacks... [Read more](#)

Romania :

Franco-Romanian Cooperation in Defence



Faced with rising tensions on the EU's eastern borders, French President Emmanuel Macron announced on 19 January the possible participation of French military troops in NATO's forward military presence in Romania, notably to protect the Black Sea. His Romanian counterpart, Klaus Iohannis, welcomed this cooperation... [Read more](#)

Armenia :

President Armen Sarkissian announces his resignation



Armenian President Armen Sarkissian resigned on 23 January. In conflict with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian, he explained that he no longer had "the necessary tools to influence important foreign and domestic policy processes in difficult times for the people and the country".. [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Tensions with Russia



The United States and European states are continuing their efforts to prevent Russia from attacking Ukraine, while some 100,000 Russian troops are stationed on the northern, eastern and southern sides of Ukraine. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as the UK, have delivered defensive weapons to Ukraine, and NATO is strengthening its presence in Eastern Europe. On 24 January, the President of the Commission proposed €1.2 billion in EU aid in the form of emergency loans and grants to "meet the financial needs arising from the conflict". The Foundation invites you to re-read its study: "Russia, Ukraine and International Law"... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Tiny Kox elected President of the Parliamentary Assembly



The Dutchman Tiny Cox (GUE) was elected President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 24 January for a one-year term, renewable once. He succeeds the Belgian Hendrik Daems who served two terms... [Read more](#)

UN :

Antonio Guterres puts forward his 5 priorities for 2022



On 21 January, UN Secretary-General António Guterres presented his priorities for 2022, calling on all countries to mobilise to tackle five challenges: the Covid-19 pandemic, global financial reform, the climate emergency, anarchy in cyberspace and conflict... [Read more](#)

WTO :

WTO case against Russian timber export restrictions



The European Union requested on 21 January the opening of WTO consultations with Russia, thus initiating the dispute settlement procedure. It is challenging Russia's restrictions on timber exports to the EU. Russia has increased export duties up to 80%, violating the maximum rate of 15%, and has reduced the number of border crossing points for goods from 30 to 1... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Annual inflation increases in December



Annual inflation was 5.3% in the European Union and 5% in the euro area in December 2021, compared with 5.2% and 4.9% in November, according to data published by Eurostat on 20 January... [Read more](#)



Culture :

Jarosław Modzelewski in Warsaw



The Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw (the Ujazdowski Castle) is organising an exhibition devoted to the works of Jarosław Modzelewski until 24 April. Through the theme of the river, which is central to the work of the contemporary painter, the exhibition traces the artistic career of Jarosław Modzelewski and offers a different view of the Polish landscape... [Read more](#)



Seeing Auschwitz



The Centro Sefarad Israel in Madrid is hosting the exhibition "Seeing Auschwitz" until 15 July, a visual record of the camp, its prisoners and those who died there, but also of the life of the communities before the Shoah. The exhibition is supported by the UN, UNESCO and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial... [Read more](#)



Relax at the Museum of Applied Arts of Vienna



The exhibition "Relax" can be seen at the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna until 6 March. The artists Christoph Meier, Ute Müller, Robert Schwarz and Lukas Stopczynski present a new version of the Loos American Bar, a Viennese bar known for its unusual architecture... [Read more](#)

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6 Yves Saint Laurent Exhibitions in Paris



To mark the 60th anniversary of Yves Saint Laurent's first fashion show, the Centre Pompidou, the Louvre Museum, the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, the Musée d'Orsay, the Musée National Picasso-Paris and the Yves Saint Laurent Museum in Paris are working together to organise a unique exhibition dedicated to the designer from 29 January. Until 25 May, each museum is highlighting the designer's links with French art and public collections to offer an exhibition in six different locations... [Read more](#)

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Hito Steyerl at the Stedelijk



The exhibition "Hito Steyerl. I Will Survive" opens at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam on 29 January and will run until 12 June. Hito Steyerl is one of the most influential people in contemporary art. Combining visual art and film, she works to highlight the pressing issues of our time through a variety of genres ranging from the creation of innovative multimedia installations to the production of documentaries... [Read more](#)

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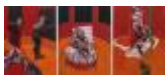
Bernar Venet in Tempelhof



The exhibition "Bernar Venet, 1961 - 2021" offers a retrospective of the artist's works to be visited from 29 January to 5 May in hangars 2 and 3 of Berlin's former Tempelhof Airport. The painter, sculptor and performance artist reshapes his environment through art to give his own perspective on the world... [Read more](#)



Francis Bacon at the Royal Academy



From 29 January to 17 April, the Royal Academy in London is devoting an exhibition to Francis Bacon, which focuses on the artist's fascination with animals and the similarities he perceived between them and humans... [Read more](#)

[humans... Read more](#)



Villeurbanne, French capital of culture 2022

Villeurbanne has been named "French Capital of Culture" for the year 2022 by the French Ministry of Culture. During this year, the city will present a cultural programme



reflecting the popular and urban identity of the town, including a Youth Festival... [Read more](#)

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Agenda :



24-28 January

Strasbourg

Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe



25 January 2022

Brussels

General Affairs Council

Brussels

EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Council



26-27 January 2022

Strasbourg

Informal meeting of ministers responsible for education and youth



30 January 2022

Portugal

General Elections



31 January-1 February 2022

Lens

Informal meeting of ministers responsible for industry and the internal market

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