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A few truths about Ukraine and Russia. By a seasoned diplomat

Author: Jacques Faure



Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February has been based on a long-standing rewriting of history according to which Russia, Ukraine and Belarus are one people. This tragedy, a real turning point for the continent, is a test for the cohesion of the European Union, while Ukrainians are massively turning towards the European model, notes the former French ambassador, Jacques Faure.

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Front page! :

As we face the nightmare



The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army is a senseless criminal act that no one could reasonably foresee. But Vladimir Putin has comforted, encouraged and probably transformed the European Union, which is acting with determination and speed," says Jean-Dominique Giuliani.

The cause of a militarily and diplomatically powerful Europe has made more progress in three days than in thirty years... [Read more](#)

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Foundation :

Unreservedly European



In his book, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, President of the Foundation, addresses his fellow citizens who should refuse to accept the lies about the European Union while contributing relentlessly to its improvement. This book, published by Marie B, is available in paper format on the Foundation's website and in bookshops. Order it... [Read more](#)

Belarus: chronology of a revolution in progress

On 25 February, the European Council strongly condemned Belarus' involvement in the Russian attack on Ukraine, which was partly carried out from its territory. The European Union decided to extend to Belarus the export restrictions on dual-use goods, decided against Russia, and will sanction Belarusians who contribute to the Russian war effort. Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhonovskaya announced in Paris that a government in exile would soon be formed. To follow the latest developments in the crisis opened 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](#)

Energy security and climate change, which European strategy?



On 23 February, the Foundation organised a videoconference on the link between climate change and energy security at European level. This event, which was labelled "French Presidency of the Council of the European Union", is available here... [Read more](#)

Map of Health Measures and Travel Conditions in Europe



The decline in the number of new infections means that European governments have been able to relax or lift restrictions. In France, masks are no longer required in places subject to the vaccination pass since 28 February, but they are still required in public transport. France and Belgium are considering lifting the health pass soon. Germany plans to end restrictions by 20 March. In Italy, the state of health emergency will end on 31 March. To follow developments 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](#)

The Permanent Atlas of the European Union is available



For a better understanding of Europe in 2022, the Permanent Atlas of the European Union, a unique book, offers a complete and easy-to-access view of the European Union, the euro zone and each of its 27 Member States, with numerous maps. It is available in English in digital version... [Read more](#)

The Foundation's publications on Ukraine



Since its creation the Robert Schuman Foundation has been very active in Ukraine, organising numerous events and training sessions, including in Crimea before 2014. The Foundation offers you a compilation of the studies that it has devoted over the last few years to this neighbouring country of the Union... [Read more](#)

Ukraine/Russia :

Extraordinary Meeting of the European Council



The European Council, meeting on 24 February, condemned "in the strongest terms the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression" by Russia against Ukraine and called on Russia to cease its actions immediately. It agreed to a package of sanctions with "heavy and massive" consequences for Russia and called for the preparation of individual and economic sanctions that also cover Belarus. It promised additional political, financial, humanitarian and logistical support to Ukraine and reiterated its "unwavering" support and commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and Moldova... [Read more](#)

Declaration of the representatives of the Parliaments of Europe



On 25 February, representatives of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees of all the national parliaments of the European Union and the European Parliament held an interparliamentary conference on the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy. In a joint declaration, they condemned Russian aggression in Ukraine, reiterated their support for Ukraine's sovereignty and integrity, and called on Europe to do everything possible to provide a coordinated, effective and united response to sanction Russia and to take in war refugees... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Home Affairs Ministers



Following an extraordinary meeting of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers on 27 February, it was decided to fully activate the EU's integrated political crisis response mechanism (IPCR). Ministers committed themselves to providing additional humanitarian aid to Ukraine and any necessary assistance to Moldova. With regard to the reception of refugees, reception capacities have been provided, in particular for the states bordering Ukraine, and a solidarity platform for the management of external borders will be established. The Ministers called on the Member States not to recognise passports issued by the Russian authorities in the occupied territories of Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Declaration of Finance Ministers



In a joint statement with the Commission and the European Central Bank, the 27 Finance Ministers assured on 25 February that the sanctions against Russia will remain in place "as long as necessary and will be complemented by new decisions". Meeting in Paris, they discussed the consequences of the war on the energy sector and pledged to accelerate projects "aimed at strengthening our economic independence and ensuring sustainable and resilient growth"... [Read more](#)

European condemnations of the Russian invasion



All European leaders condemned the Russian aggression against Ukraine. French President Emmanuel Macron said the attack was "the most serious attack on the stability of our Europe for decades", which must be responded to "without weakness and with composure". German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called the "unjustified" war "Putin's war". Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki called on the free world to reject this "barbarism". Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez "energetically" condemned this "totally unjustified aggression". British Prime Minister Boris Johnson condemned an attack "without credible excuse" and called for all measures to be taken to stop this "hideous and barbaric adventure"... [Read more](#)

G7 Declaration



On 24 February, G7 leaders condemned Russia's "unprovoked and completely unjustified attack" on Ukraine and called on the international community to do the same "without equivocation". They announced "tough and concerted economic and financial sanctions" and expressed their readiness to offer humanitarian assistance to Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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Closure of Russia's OECD accession process



The OECD Council decided on 25 February to formally close the Russian accession process, which was postponed in 2014 after the annexation of Crimea. It decided to close the organisation's office in Russia, suspend any new voluntary contribution agreements and terminate all projects funded by voluntary contributions from Russia that had not yet started. It also decided to strengthen the OECD's support for the democratically elected Ukrainian government... [Read more](#)

Suspension of flights



Following the closure of Ukrainian airspace on 24 February, flights from Russia and Russian airlines are no longer allowed to enter the airspace of some 20 European countries. These decisions were taken in retaliation for the Russian invasion of Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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Sport and war in Ukraine



Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, several international sports federations have taken more than symbolic measures: competitions have been moved, starting with the Champions League final; the Formula 1 Grand Prix in Sochi has been cancelled; sportsmen and women have been declared persona non grata; sponsorships have been withdrawn or called into question: the Russian invasion of Ukraine has already had serious consequences on professional sport and on the image and presence of Russia in competitions... [Read more](#)

The UN is organising humanitarian aid and the General Assembly convened



The UN General Assembly met on 28 February to discuss the situation in Ukraine. Its President, Abdulla Shahid, called for an immediate ceasefire and a full return to diplomacy and dialogue. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for an immediate halt to the fighting and highlighted the humanitarian risk. He appointed Amin Awad as UN Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine. On 28 September, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, decided to open an investigation into possible war crimes or acts of genocide committed in Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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NATO Declaration



On 25 February, NATO heads of state and government condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine "in the strongest possible terms" as a "very serious strategic mistake". They discussed plans to protect the Alliance's eastern members and affirmed that they would make "all necessary deployments to ensure strong and credible deterrence and defence across the Alliance now and in the future". They met again on 28 September to coordinate defence build-up and support for Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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Energy Council



On 28 February, the 27 Energy Ministers discussed ways to limit the price increase caused by the war and asked the Commission to propose emergency measures. They also discussed the possibility of synchronising Ukraine's electricity network with the European Union's network... [Read more](#)

Ukraine's candidature for EU membership



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky sent his country's application for EU membership on 28 February. In a joint letter, eight member states asked that Ukraine be given an immediate prospect of membership... [Read more](#)

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EU Sanctions against Russia



On 25 February, EU leaders adopted new sanctions against Russia following the military aggression in Ukraine. Individual sanctions against Vladimir Putin, his Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and members of the Russian Security Council, as well as individuals who facilitated the Russian military attack from Belarus, were introduced to freeze their assets in the EU. On the 26th, the EU, the US, Canada and the UK announced the forthcoming exclusion of certain Russian banks from the SWIFT financial messaging system and measures to prevent the Russian Central Bank from financing the war. On the 27th, the EU announced that it would finance the purchase of arms and their delivery to Ukraine to the tune of €450 million and close European airspace to Russian aircraft. On the 28th, the Council extended the sanctions to 26 Russian individuals and one entity in the oil, banking and financial sectors. The Russian media RT and Sputnik will also be banned from broadcasting in the EU... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Proposal for a regulation governing data



On 23 February the Commission proposed new rules to clarify who can use and access data generated in the EU. The aim is to ensure fairness in the digital environment, stimulate the development of a competitive data market, open up opportunities for data-driven innovation and make data more accessible to all. The Commission proposes to prevent excessive contractual imbalances in data sharing contracts, as well as to allow customers to switch providers efficiently through safeguards against unlawful data transfers... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Last meeting of Citizens' Panels

The final European Citizens' Panel of the Conference on the Future of Europe, on issues related to the economy, a just society, education and digital transformation, met in Dublin from 25 to 27 February. Its recommendations will be discussed at the



next plenary meeting of the Conference on 11-12 March. All Europeans can contribute to the debates on the Conference platform... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Agriculture and Fisheries Council



On 21 February, the Agriculture Ministers discussed the coherence between the Green Deal, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and trade policy. They insisted on the need to better articulate the sanitary and environmental production standards imposed in the Union and those applied to imported agri-food products. The Ministers also discussed the risk that imported products might contribute to deforestation and forest depletion. They also discussed the rising costs of energy, fertilisers and animal feed... [Read more](#)

Competitiveness Council



On 24 February, Ministers debated the future of the industrial ecosystem for mobility in the context of the green transition, as well as the regulation on foreign subsidies that distort the internal market. They discussed the Union's strategic dependencies, the semiconductor package presented by the Commission, and the state of play of the examination of the proposal for a universal charger. In addition, they adopted a position on the proposal for a directive on sustainability reporting by companies (CSRD)... [Read more](#)

Eurogroup Meeting



On 25 February, the Finance Ministers of the eurozone countries discussed the euro area dimension of the procedure for macroeconomic imbalances and the digital euro project. They acknowledged the positive effect on Greek public finances of Greece's early repayment of loans from the EU and the International Monetary Fund. Tuomas Saarenheimo was re-elected as Chairman of the Eurogroup working group... [Read more](#)

General Affairs Council



On 22 February, the Ministers for European Affairs held a hearing with Poland on the rule of law, under the Article 7 procedure, to discuss the latest developments since the last hearing in June 2021. The Ministers also discussed the next steps regarding the Conference on the Future of Europe, the Union's resilience to future crises, and the state of play in discussions with the United Kingdom... [Read more](#)

Informal meeting of Transport Ministers



At a meeting on 21 and 22 February at Le Bourget, the transport ministers confirmed their common intention to accelerate and facilitate the deployment of electric recharging stations and to promote the development of low-carbon and renewable hydrogen. They discussed measures to be taken to improve the working conditions of truck drivers, to protect professionals in the maritime sector, and to ensure the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the aviation sector... [Read more](#)

Covid: update on travel conditions



On 22 February, the Council updated a recommendation on measures affecting free movement during the pandemic. This recommendation provides that Covid-19 measures should be applied according to the status of the person and not the situation at regional level, with the exception of areas where the virus is circulating at high levels. On the same day, the Commission extended the validity of Covid digital certificates of recovery to include a positive antigen test... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Following the adoption of the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific last September, an Indo-Pacific Ministerial Cooperation Forum was held in Paris on 22



February. Participants underlined their shared ambition to work together for peace, prosperity and sustainable and inclusive development. They also restated their commitment to a rules-based international order, democratic values and principles. They also discussed EU-Indopacific cooperation on security and defence, connectivity, digital issues and climate change...

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Meeting of the EU-UK mixed committee



Commission Vice-President Maros Sefcovic and UK Foreign Secretary Elizabeth Truss met on 21 February for a meeting of the Joint Committee on the UK Withdrawal Agreement. They reiterated the importance of guaranteeing the rights of EU citizens residing in the UK and of British nationals residing in the EU. They underlined their determination to ensure that outstanding issues in the context of the Northern Ireland Protocol are addressed and that lasting solutions are found for the benefit of citizens, businesses and stability in Northern Ireland... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

Judgment on the jurisdiction of national courts



The European Court of Justice ruled on 22 February that practices preventing ordinary courts from enforcing EU law are contrary to EU law. In particular, the Court considers that Romanian ordinary courts are competent to assess the compatibility between EU law and national legislation, without having to refer to the Constitutional Court. It also recalled that a national regulation allowing the disciplinary accountability of a national judge for disregarding the decisions of the Constitutional Court would be contrary to Union law... [Read more](#)

Clarification of the criteria for refusing the execution of a European arrest warrant



The European Court of Justice ruled on 22 February that the fact that judges are appointed by a non-independent body in a Member State is not sufficient to refuse extradition to that country. An Amsterdam court had asked the Court about the execution of two European arrest warrants issued by Polish courts for two Polish nationals. The Court clarified that the Dutch court must take into account the circumstances of the person concerned and show how systemic deficiencies actually affect the rights of that person... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

Report on investment in the Union



In a report published on 25 February, the Court of Auditors found that although the EU's actions have established a single market for investment funds, the benefits for investors remain limited. It considers that the effectiveness of fund supervision and investor protection is insufficient. The Court recommends that the Commission carry out a comprehensive quality review of investment fund legislation by 2024, better protect retail investors, in particular through stronger incentive rules, and harmonise the reporting regimes for undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities and simplify data collection... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Suspension of Nord Stream 2 and arms deliveries



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced on 22 February the suspension of the authorisation of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline linking Russia and Germany. On 26 February, his government decided to deliver 1,000 rocket launchers and 500 surface-to-air missiles to Ukraine. In a speech to the Bundestag on 27 February, he announced the creation of a €100 billion fund to equip the German army and an increase in the defence budget to 2% of GDP each year... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Suspension of Russia

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe suspended Russia from its right of representation in the Committee and the Parliamentary Assembly on 25 February because of its war in Ukraine. However, Russia remains a member of the Council of



Europe and a party to its conventions, including the European Convention on Human Rights, and applications against it will continue to be examined by the European Court of Human Rights. The day before, Council of Europe Secretary General Marija Pejcinovic Buric described the Russian aggression as a flagrant violation of the European Convention on Human Rights and called on the Russian authorities to return to diplomacy... [Read more](#)

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OECD :

Global Plastics Outlook



In a new report on plastic waste management, the OECD finds that plastic production and the waste it generates continue to negatively affect the environment, as only 9% of plastics were recycled and 22% were mismanaged or discarded. The OECD notes that the largest producers of plastic waste are OECD member countries, and encourages these countries to increase international co-operation and national efforts... [Read more](#)

Economic study of Norway



In a report published on 22 February, the OECD notes that Norway has succeeded in limiting the impact of Covid-19 on its population and economy through a high vaccination rate. The organisation recommends that the country "improve the efficiency of public spending, raise employment and productivity levels and ensure the affordability of housing". It notes that Norway is one of the most ambitious countries in the world in terms of green transition and encourages it to continue along this path... [Read more](#)

IMF :

Report on the Polish economy



The IMF said in a report published on 24 February that Poland has demonstrated good resilience in the face of the pandemic, thanks to extensive and targeted fiscal measures that will help it reduce its public debt and deficit by 2021. The IMF is encouraging Poland to continue these measures as well as to implement social reforms to address labour shortages, increase transparency in government spending, and promote a green and digital transition with EU funds... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Increase in annual inflation in January



Annual inflation in the European Union was 5.6% in January, up from 5.3% in December, and in the euro area 5.1% in January, up from 5% in December, according to data released by Eurostat on 23 February... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on Europe's strategic dependencies



On 23 February, the Commission published the second edition of its in-depth review of Europe's strategic dependencies. Despite the progress made since the first report, dependencies remain for a number of chemicals. Dependencies on rare earths, magnesium and photovoltaic panels are due to the high concentration of global production in China and low diversification of supply. The report points out the EU's weaknesses vis-à-vis global competitors in certain technologies such as cyber security and computer software... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

Music festival in Inverness



The Inverness Music Festival celebrates its 100th anniversary until 6 March. Music, song, dance, poetry and drama competitions are being held in addition to performances across the city. The festival will also be broadcast online... [Read more](#)

Dublin International Film Festival

Until 6 March, Dublin is hosting its annual film festival. More than 100 films from 19 countries are being screened and meetings organised around Irish creations. At the end of the festival, the Voltas awards for career achievement, the Audience Award for best theatrical film and the Dublin Film Critics' Award for best Irish film will be presented... [Read more](#)



Belgrade Film Festival



The Belgrade International Film Festival, one of the most important in the Balkans, is celebrating its 50th anniversary until 6 March. More than 400 films are being shown in 12 cinemas around the city... [Read more](#)

Picasso Portraits in Madrid



Until 15 May, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid is organising an exhibition on the portraits created by Pablo Picasso. The exhibition is being held in cooperation with the Fondation Beyeler... [Read more](#)

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Women in modern art in Denmark



The Arken Museum in Ishøj, near Copenhagen, is presenting an exhibition on the representation of women in art until 14 August. Starting with the shocking phrase: "Do women have to be naked to enter the museum?", more than 120 works shed light on 150 years of history during which female artists have remained in the shadows... [Read more](#)

Swedish Art and Design of the 1920's



The National Museum of Sweden in Stockholm is presenting "Swedish Grace", an exhibition on the 1920s, until 28 August. Through art, design, fashion, photography and film, the museum invites its visitors to discover or rediscover the Roaring Twenties, a period presented as contrasting and culturally innovative... [Read more](#)

"Amour" exhibition Maurice Denis



The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam is exhibiting prints from the "Amour" series by French artist Maurice Denis. This series, created in 1899, is dedicated to his wife and aims to represent love in all its forms. These thirteen drawings can be seen until 15 May... [Read more](#)

Titian and the image of the woman in 16th century Venice



The Palazzo Reale in Milan is hosting an exhibition on Titian and the Venetian vision of women in the 16th century until 5 June. The artist's paintings represent women as a sublime theme of art, life and love, in the context of 16th century ideals... [Read more](#)

Long Live Venice at the Belvedere



The exhibition "Long live Venice! The Invention of Venice in the 19th Century" is being held at the Belvedere in Vienna until 4 September. Austrian and Italian historical paintings of the period depicting the glorious history of Venice are on display. The links between the city and Austria are also explored, as Venice was under Habsburg rule in the first half of the 19th century. Finally, the exhibition highlights the representation of the city as a place of nostalgia... [Read more](#)

Guido Reni: nature and devotion



Until 22 May, the Borghese Gallery is showing the exhibition "Guido Reni and Rome: nature and devotion". The exhibition is organised around his painting "Country Dance" which has just returned to the collection of Cardinal Scipione Borghese. The festive landscape will be accompanied by works by other 17th century Italian artists... [Read more](#)

Renoir, the revival of Rococo



From 2 March to 19 June, the Städel Museum in Frankfurt is presenting the exhibition "Renoir -Rococo Revival", which explores the influence of the Rococo style in the work of the Impressionist painter and his contemporaries such as Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Edgar Degas and Édouard Manet... [Read more](#)

Women Pioneers at the Musée de Luxembourg



From 2 March to 10 July, the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris presents the exhibition "Pionnières - Artistes des années folles" which shows the crucial role played by women in the development of the great artistic movements of the early 20th century. These women were among the first to gain access to the great art schools, to own or manage a studio or a publishing house, and to be recognised as artists. They appropriated and reinvented the representation of the female body in the arts... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



28 February-1 March 2022

Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Cohesion



1 March 2022

Brussels

Extraordinary plenary session of the European Parliament



2 March

Agriculture and Fisheries Council



3-4 March 2022

Brussels

Justice and Home Affairs Council

Arles

Informal Meeting of the General Affairs Council



6-7 March 2022

Montpellier

Informal Meeting of Development Ministers

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