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From the Russian Pact to the Green Deal?

Author: Gilles Lepesant

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has revived the issue of energy security and lent credence to the idea that renewable energy can benefit both climate and security. However, it would be excessive to equate transition with energy independence. We need to rethink our interdependencies with our various suppliers.
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Elections :

The second round will see a run off between Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen

Incumbent President Emmanuel Macron came first in the first round of the French presidential election on 10 April, with 27.84% of the vote, ahead of far-right candidate Marine Le Pen (23.15%), whom he will face in the second round on 24 April. The radical left-wing candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon came third with 21.95% of the vote. The other far-right candidate Eric Zemmour obtained 7.07%. All other candidates, including Valérie Pécresse of the Republicans, scored less than 5%. The abstention rate was 25.14%...
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Foundation :

Unreservedly European

In his book, Jean-Dominique Giuliani freely addresses his fellow citizens, who must refuse to accept the lies about the European Union while at the same time contributing to its improvement. This book, published by Marie B, is available in paper format on the Foundation's website and in bookshops. Order your copy now!.. 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, called the Recovery and Resilience Facility, for Member States in the form of grants and loans. 24 plans have so far been approved by the Commission, including Bulgaria on 7 April. 21 countries have received the planned pre-financing, and 3 countries have received a first tranche after meeting a series of targets, including Greece on 8 April for €3.6 billion. The Commission has not yet approved the Hungarian and Polish plans because of the infringement of the rule of law. The Foundation offers an interactive map of the plans country by country, so that readers can learn everything they need to know about the amounts, the timetables and the priorities involved... Read more

Map of health measures and travel conditions in Europe

Health measures continue to be relaxed in the EU. Since 10 April, a vaccination pass is no longer required in Malta and all unvaccinated travellers can enter the country on presentation of a negative test less than 72 hours old. In Germany, the Bundestag has rejected plans to make vaccination compulsory for people over 60. To follow developments and find out what measures are in place in the 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, published by Marie B Editions, is a unique work that 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 format... Read more

Ukraine/Russia :

Volodymir Zelensky speaks to the parliaments

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has addressed the Greek, Cypriot, Spanish, Romanian and Irish parliaments. He urged Cyprus to close its ports to Russian yachts and to revoke passports issued to Russians. The President asked the Greek and Irish parliaments to put pressure on the European Union to ban Russian ships from European ports and to stop trading with Russian banks and the oil industry. He called on all Spanish and Romanian companies to stop their activities in Russia... Read more

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A new round of sanctions against Russia

On 8 April, the Council adopted a fifth round of sanctions against Russia, banning the purchase, import or transfer of coal from August. Access to the EU for Russian-flagged ships and Russian and Belarusian road hauliers is suspended. Restrictive measures apply to Russian imports of wood, fertilisers or alcohol, and to Russian exports in the field of industry and technology, including semi-conductors. The Council has banned the transactions of four major Russian banks and extended the number of persons and companies targeted by sanctions. The Freezing and Confiscation Task Force, which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of EU sanctions against Russian and Belarusian oligarchs, reported €29.5 billion in frozen assets, including boats, helicopters, real estate and works of art... Read more

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Over €3 billion for Member States hosting Ukrainian refugees

On 6 and 7 April, the Council and Parliament approved the payment of €3.5 billion to Member States that have undertaken to host Ukrainian refugees. A sum of €40 per week per refugee will provide for the basic needs of the arrivals. The measure also includes an increase in the pre-financing tranche of the REACT-EU programme from 11% to 15% for all Member States, and to 45% for EU countries where the influx of Ukrainian refugees exceeds 1% of the population... Read more

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The European Parliament has called for an embargo on Russian gas and oil

In a resolution adopted on 7 April, MEPs called for a total embargo on imports of Russian oil, coal, nuclear fuel and gas. They want Russia to be excluded from

international organisations, all Russian banks to be banned from the SWIFT system and all ships linked to Russia to be banned from entering EU waters. They also called for a special UN tribunal to be set up to investigate war crimes in Ukraine and for the same sanctions to be imposed on Belarus. In another resolution, MEPs called for safe passage and help for child victims of the war in Ukraine... Read more

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"Stand up for Ukraine" Conference

At the Global Donor Conference "Stand up for Ukraine" organised by Canada and the European Union on 9 April, €9.1 billion was raised for people fleeing the war in Ukraine. In total, €5 billion are loans and grants from European public financial institutions, and €4.1 billion are financial contributions from the private and public sectors for IDPs and refugees. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has announced an additional €1 billion loan to cover the needs of people displaced by the invasion... Read more

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Ursula von der Leyen, Boris Johnson and PACE in Ukraine

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, High Representative Josep Borrell and 30 MEPs visited Kyiv on 8 April in support of Ukraine. The EU handed President Volodymyr Zelensky a document to serve as a basis for discussions on his country's accession. They also went to Bucha and Irpin. On 9 April, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Volodymyr Zelensky and announced military assistance of 120 armoured vehicles and new missile systems. A delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe visited Kyiv on 6 April. Its President, Tiny Kox, condemned the atrocities committed by the Russian army in Ukraine and promised to provide assistance in investigating war crimes... Read more

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Declaration by the Mayors of European Cities

On 4 and 5 April, the Mayors' Forum organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was held in Geneva. On this occasion, mayors affirmed their support for Ukrainian cities by condemning the military attack and the abuses perpetrated by Russia and by calling on international organisations to help Ukrainian municipalities rebuild and prosper. They also announced their readiness to welcome Ukrainian refugees to help the war-torn country... Read more

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Declaration of G7 Foreign Affairs Ministers

On 7 April, the G7 Foreign Ministers and the EU High Representative condemned "in the strongest terms" the Russian "massacres" and "atrocities" in Bucha and the rest of Ukraine. They warned Russia about the use of chemical weapons and pledged to support countries bordering Ukraine that provide humanitarian assistance... Read more

The UN suspends Russia from the Human Rights Council

On 7 April, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution suspending Russia from the organisation's Human Rights Council. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the war in Ukraine has already caused the death of at least 1,563 civilians and forced more than 4.1 million Ukrainians to flee their country. The remaining civilian population is in urgent need of humanitarian aid and this need is likely to increase as more than half a million refugees have decided to cross the border back into their homes. The World Food Programme requires $570 million to carry out its three-month emergency plan on Ukrainian soil... Read more

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NATO steps up support to Ukraine

Meeting in Brussels on 6 and 7 April, NATO foreign ministers restated their support for Ukraine. Condemning Russian abuses in Bucha, they agreed to increase and sustain their assistance to Ukraine and other partners at risk of Russian aggression. They approved the Charter of the North Atlantic Defence Innovation Accelerator.

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Expulsion of Russian diplomats

On 4 April, Italy, Denmark, Slovenia, Estonia, Sweden and Spain expelled dozens of Russian diplomats following France and Germany, marking a further deterioration in relations with Moscow after the discovery of massacres attributed to Russian forces near Kiev. Lithuania expelled the Russian ambassador because of "war crimes and crimes against humanity" committed in Ukraine by the Russian army. More than 200 Russian diplomats were expelled. On 5 April, 19 members of the Russian Permanent Mission to the European Union were declared personae non grata for activities contrary to their diplomatic status... Read more

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The IMF creates an account for Ukraine and the World Bank lowers its forecast

On 8 April, at the request of some member states, the IMF approved the creation of an account for Ukraine, open to all states, agencies and intergovernmental organisations. Canada has already proposed that C$1 billion be distributed through this account. On 11 April, the World Bank reported that Ukraine's economy could contract by 45.1% in 2022 due to the Russian-led war, with GDP expected to collapse by 11.2%... Read more

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Commission :

Strategic reserves in the event of chemical and nuclear incidents

The Commission announced on 6 April the development of its strategic reserves to respond to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents through the Civil Protection Mechanism. These include a Rescue Stockpile, established in conjunction with the European Health Emergency Response and Preparedness Authority (HERA), with a budget of €540.5 million. The stockpile includes equipment and medicines to treat exposed patients and a decontamination reserve of specialised response teams... Read more

New proposals to meet the EU's climate goals

The Commission presented proposals on 5 April to guide industries in the green transition and to stimulate innovation. It also proposed two new regulations to better control fluorinated greenhouse gases and ozone-depleting substances to make the EU climate neutral. It also presented how it will achieve climate neutrality in its own operations and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2030... Read more

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Parliament :

Priorities for the 2023 budget

On 5 April, MEPs adopted a resolution making recovery, youth, climate and respect for the rule of law priorities in the drafting of the EU's 2023 budget. They want to offer more opportunities to young Europeans, especially in terms of employment, and stress the need for investment to support environmental protection and climate action programmes. Finally, MEPs insist that the rule of law conditionality mechanism should be applied "immediately and fully"... Read more

Adoption of law on data governance

On 6 April, MEPs adopted the Data Governance Act. Aimed at increasing the availability of data for businesses to stimulate innovation, the law provides for the establishment of common European data spaces in strategic sectors. The text now has to be formally adopted by the Council before it can enter into force... Read more

Reform of European energy infrastructures

On 5 April, MEPs approved the reform of the Trans-European Energy Networks (TEN-E) regulation aimed at moving states away from fuel energy. They backed funding for projects related to the development of hydrogen and carbon capture. Projects based on natural gas will no longer be eligible for EU funding, but a temporary derogation is to be granted to Cyprus and Malta to ensure their connection to the EU grid. The text must now be definitively adopted by the Council... Read more

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Plenary session of the Conference on the Future of Europe

The sixth plenary session of the Conference on the Future of Europe was held in Strasbourg on 8 and 9 April. Delegates discussed the proposals arising from the exchanges in the nine thematic working groups that had met the day before... Read more

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Council :

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Agriculture Ministers discussed on 7 April the effects on producers and consumers of the increased cost of energy, fertiliser and fuel due to the war in Ukraine. They supported the Commission's communication on food security calling on Member States to help producers and reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. They endorsed the Commission's communication on how to encourage agricultural practices that reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, including through a carbon certification framework... Read more

Economy and Finance Council

Ministers of Economy and Finance discussed on 5 April the implementation of sanctions against Russia and the consequences of the war in Ukraine on the economy. They adopted conclusions on the strategic autonomy of the European economic and financial sector, stressing the importance of strengthening the international role of the euro, completing banking union and protecting against the effects of the extraterritoriality of third country sanctions. They discussed the strengthening of the European financial architecture for development. Finally, the ministers adopted a directive to update the rules on value added tax rates and a strengthened mandate for the Fundamental Rights Agency... Read more

Meeting of Transport Ministers

The Transport Ministers pledged on 8 April to respond in a coordinated manner in terms of logistics and mobility of refugees to deal with the consequences of the war in Ukraine on the European transport system. They decided to strengthen their cooperation in protecting transport personnel, ensuring their safety, and strengthening the resilience of the European transport system... Read more

Education, Youth and Culture Council

On 4 and 5 March, the Ministers for Education, Youth and Culture approved conclusions on the mobility of teachers, trainers, young volunteers and artists in the European Union. They adopted conclusions on cooperation in the fields of cultural industry, higher education and research, based in particular on the experimentation of a European label for joint diplomas from 2022. Finally, the Slovak city of Trenčín was selected as the European Capital of Culture 2026... Read more

Court of Justice :

Judgment on the retention of location data

The European Court of Justice confirmed on 5 April that EU law precludes measures providing for the general and undifferentiated retention of traffic and location data as a preventive measure to combat serious crime. It recalled that the ePrivacy Directive allows the storage of such data only if the principle of proportionality of the measures to the objective pursued is applied. However, the Court does not object to the expeditious storage of traffic and location data held by electronic communications service providers... Read more

Decision on the indemnisation of air passengers

In a ruling on 7 April, the Court of Justice of the European Union decided that passengers of a delayed flight can claim compensation from an air carrier established outside the European Union when it performs the entire flight on behalf of a carrier established in one of the Member States... Read more

Diplomacy :

Meeting regarding the settlement of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia

The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, hosted Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azeri President Ilham Aliyev on 6 April to discuss the implementation of their commitments to ease tensions between their two countries. He stressed the need for a resolution of humanitarian issues, including the release of detainees. It was agreed that the foreign ministers would work on the preparation of a peace treaty, and that by the end of April a joint commission would be working on the demarcation of the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The leaders discussed the restoration of communication and transport infrastructure between the two states... Read more

European Agencies :

Ariane 6 contract for Kuiper and Sentinel1-C launches

On 5 April, the European group Arianespace signed a contract with the American company Amazon to launch 18 Ariane 6s to help put into orbit its Kuiper constellation, which will provide high-speed Internet access, particularly in areas with poor coverage. This order, the largest in Ariane's history, comes ahead of the inaugural flight of Ariane 6 scheduled for the end of 2022. On 8 April, Arianespace was also awarded a contract to launch Sentinel-1C in the first half of 2023 on Vega-C. The satellite will provide global monitoring of the environment and security using radar systems as part of the Copernicus programme... Read more

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Increase in the number of patent applications

The European Patent Office (EPO) received a record number of patent applications in 2021, with 188 600 applications, an increase of 4% compared to 2020. The main areas of patent applications are digital communication (+9.4% compared to 2020), medical technology (+0.8%) and computer science (+9.7%). The top five countries of origin of applications are the US (25% of total applications), Germany (14%), Japan (11%), China (9%) and France (6%)... Read more

France :

Report on the judicialization of public life

The Senate's information mission on the Judiciarisation of public life delivered its report on 29 March. It advocates "dialogue rather than duel" and puts forward 28 proposals to open "new spaces for dialogue with the courts", improve the quality of laws, and encourage self-regulation of legal bodies. The Managing Director of the Foundation, Pascale Joannin, was one of the experts interviewed by the mission... Read more

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Italy :

Revision of growth forecasts

The Italian government has revised its growth forecast for 2022 to 3.1% GDP growth, instead of the initial 4.7%, due to the economic consequences of the war in Ukraine such as higher energy costs and supply difficulties for businesses. The government has announced €5 billion in additional aid to families and businesses to cope with inflation, which is expected to be 5.8% in 2022... Read more

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Moldova :

Support Conference

36 countries and 9 international organisations participated in a conference in support of Moldova held in Berlin on 5 April. To support the country in the face of the flow of Ukrainian refugees, participants agreed to provide €660 million in financial assistance, including €108 million in direct grants and €530 million in credits. The EU is contributing an additional €53 million for Moldova... Read more

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Council of Europe :

Guidelines regarding digital political campaigns

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers published guidelines on 6 April aimed at ensuring transparency in online election communications and spending, equality for political parties and candidates, and avoiding manipulation of the electorate, including

by giving them the choice of whether or not to be targeted by online political advertisements. The guidelines also recommend that states, online platforms and civil society work together to develop independent monitoring mechanisms and appropriate sanctions... *Read more*

Prison population down in 2021

The prison population fell between January 2020 and 2021 as a result of movement restrictions introduced during the pandemic, according to the Council of Europe's annual criminal statistics published on 5 April. Over the same period, the prison population rate in Europe fell from 104.3 to 101.9 prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants. Russia and Turkey are the two countries with the highest incarceration rates, with 328 and 325 prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants respectively... *Read more*

IMF :

Greece has repaid all of its debt

The Greek government announced on 4 April that it had fully repaid, more than two years early, the loans it had taken from the International Monetary Fund since 2010. In a report published on 31 March, the IMF stressed that Greece has recovered well from the COVID crisis, forecasting a stable growth rate and a fall in public debt despite the consequences of the war in Ukraine... *Read more*

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Eurobarometer :

Citizens' support for a common security and defence policy

77% of European citizens support a common European security and defence policy, according to Standard Eurobarometer No. 96 published on 4 April. Support is highest in Cyprus and Lithuania, and lowest in Sweden and Austria. Europeans also consider the environment (26%), rising prices (24%) and immigration (22%) to be the most important problems facing the Union... *Read more*

Culture :

Solidarity for Ukraine in the world of culture

Cultural events in support of Ukraine continue across Europe. In France, there will be a benefit concert on 17 April in Nice where the National Dance Company of Ukraine will perform at the Théâtre de Verdure. In Belgium, on 17 April, violinists Tatiana Koichurenko and Alexandra Raikhlina will play in Brussels. In Germany, the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra will visit the Berliner Phiharmoniker on 29 April. In Spain, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum is offering a concert of Baroque music with Infermi d'Amore, a group of international musicians founded by Ukrainian violinist Vadym Makarenko. The National Gallery in London announced on 4 April that Edgar Degas' pastel "Russian Dancers" has been renamed "Ukrainian Dancers". The cultural channel ARTE offers music programmes in support of Ukraine in six languages... *Read more*

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Six Ukrainian artists on show in Bucharest

From 13 April to 9 May, six Ukrainian artists are presented in an exhibition entitled "HERE. NOW. Artists are present" in Bucharest. This exhibition is taking place at Rezidența BRD Scena9, it is free for all... *Read more*

Miro. His most intimate legacy

Until 26 September, the Joan Miro Foundation in Barcelona is presenting an exhibition on the painter's intimate legacy, revealed through sketches and paintings that trace his artistic development. The exhibition also presents 59 unpublished paintings recently donated to the foundation by Miro's family... *Read more*

Beyond Caravaggio in Naples

The Capodimonte Museum in Naples is presenting an exhibition that redefines the approach to Neapolitan art of the 17th and 18th centuries until 7 January 2023. The major influence of Caravaggio in Neapolitan art is challenged in favour of other artists such as José de Ribera... *Read more*

Hockney landscapes in Berlin

Until 10 July, the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin is showing large-scale landscapes by David Hockney alongside paintings from Berlin's museums that inspired the British artist... Read more

Salgado and the environment in Paris

The Aqua Mater art installation is open to visitors until 22 September on the square in front of La Défense in Paris. A 1,000m2 bamboo pavilion designed by Colombian architect Simon Vélez houses photographs by Sebastião Salgado that raise awareness of environmental issues and, above all, of the threatened resource of water... Read more

Jazz in Tallinn

Until 1 May, Tallinn is hosting Jazzkaar, the largest jazz festival in the Baltic States. Since 1990, the world's best jazz musicians have been performing throughout the Estonian capital... Read more

Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival in Warsaw

The Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival will take place until 15 April in the Warsaw Philharmonic. While Beethoven's repertoire is the main focus of the concerts, works by artists such as Einojuhani Rautavaara, Claude Debussy and Robert Schumann are also on the programme... Read more

Easter Festival in Deauville

From 16 April to 7 May, Deauville is hosting its 26th Easter Festival. Mozart, Schubert and Bruckner are on the programme of concerts that will take place in the Elie de Brignac-Arqana hall, normally used for horse auctions... Read more

Easter Bach Concert in Dresden

The organist of the Frauenkirche in Dresden, Samuel Kummer, will celebrate Easter on 17 April with a performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's compositions in the famous reconstructed church... Read more

Raphael at the National Gallery

Until 31 July, the National Gallery in London is honouring Raphael with a new exhibition of some of his greatest works. Thanks to loans from other museums such as the Louvre and the Prado Museum, it is the first to present Raphael's entire career through all of his very diverse creations... Read more

Agenda :

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Luxembourg
Foreign Affairs Council

12 April 2022

12 Apr — Luxembourg
General Affairs Council

14 Apr — 14 April 2022
Frankfurt/Maibn
Meeting of the ECB Council of Governors

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