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The Letter in PDF format

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"Open conflict between the West and Russia is not an Option"

Author: Dita Charanzová



Faced with the war in Ukraine, the European Union must rethink its energy model, organise solidarity with refugees and give Ukraine a European perspective, says Czech MEP Dita Charanzova, whose country will chair the Council from 1 July.

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Front page! :

The fall of the House of Russia



Ukraine, and with it Europe and the West, will certainly win the war against Russia, which Putin's nationalist and revisionist rule has unleashed. It will take a generation for Russia to recover, but preparations must already be made to establish a structure for sustainable and peaceful security on the European continent, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

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!.. [Read more](#)

The Union's 24 languages, guarantees of European democracy

The Foundation organised a video conference on the importance of multilingualism in the European Union on 12 May. This event, which was held under the French



European Recovery Plans: figures and priorities



In response to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the EU has set up a €672.5 billion recovery fund, known as the Recovery and Resilience Facility, for Member States in the form of grants and loans. 24 plans have so far been approved by the Council, 21 countries have received the planned pre-financing and 5 countries have received a first instalment after meeting a series of targets, including Portugal on 10 May. The Commission has not yet approved the Hungarian and Polish plans due to the infringement 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](#)

Map of Health Measures and Travel Conditions in Europe



Most of the health measures put in place during the winter have been lifted in the European Union. Since 16 May, wearing a mask is no longer compulsory in airports and aeroplanes in the European Union, but remains at the discretion of airlines depending on the destination, and in public transport in France, but it is still recommended. In Croatia, masks are no longer compulsory except in medical and social establishments and there are no longer any health requirements for entering the country. To learn more about the situation in the Member States, the Foundation offers you a complete map of the measures in place. A vital and regularly updated resource... [Read more](#)

The Permanent Atlas of the European Union is available



To better understand 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 bookshops or on our website... [Read more](#)

Ukraine/Russia :

Corridors for trade with Ukraine



On 12 May, the Commission proposed to create solidarity corridors to help Ukraine export its agricultural products and import the goods it needs, such as humanitarian aid, animal feed and fertilisers... [Read more](#)

Support to displace Ukrainian researchers



On 10 May, the Commission announced the launch of the "Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions for Ukraine" (MSCA4Ukraine) programme, which aims to help displaced Ukrainian researchers continue their activities in Europe through the award of grants. The MSCA4Ukraine, which is part of the Horizon Europe programme and includes €25 million for displaced Ukrainian researchers, also plans to help them resettle back in Ukraine, once the situation allows it... [Read more](#)

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Speeches by Volodymyr Zelensky



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the Slovak and Maltese parliaments. He asked Maltese parliamentarians to block the issuing of golden passports to Russian nationals and to prevent Russian oil from being exported on ships flying the Maltese flag. He thanked the organisers of the conference on the reconstruction of Ukraine to be held in Bratislava in June in the Slovak Parliament. Volodymyr Zelensky also spoke to over 900 French students from Sciences Po Paris, Polytechnique and the Sorbonne, asking them about their perception of Russian aggression and reiterating Ukraine's vocation to join the European Union... [Read more](#)

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Official visits in Ukraine



The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, visited Odessa on 9 May on the occasion of Europe Day, and reasserted the European Union's support to Ukraine. The Secretary General and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Marija Pejcinovic Buric and Dunja Mijatovic, visited Ukraine and also renewed the Council of Europe's solidarity with the President and the people of Ukraine. Visiting Kyiv on 10 May, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock demanded that "war crimes and crimes against humanity" be tried and condemned... [Read more](#)

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G7 Support to Ukraine



Meeting in Berlin on 13 May, the G7 Foreign Ministers declared that they will never recognise the borders resulting from Russia's armed aggression. They reiterated their commitment to support Ukraine economically and financially, and to assist the work of war crimes investigators. They also reiterated their commitments to avoid a global food crisis caused by the war and the Russian blockade on Ukrainian exports. At the meeting, EU High Representative Josep Borrell announced on 13 May that the EU would soon release an additional €500 million to support the Ukrainian army. The money will be used to purchase heavy weapons, in addition to the current supply of armoured vehicles, tanks, heavy artillery and ammunition... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of NATO Foreign Affairs Ministers



NATO foreign ministers, meeting in Berlin on 14 and 15 May, discussed the upcoming membership applications of Finland and Sweden and the Alliance's support for Ukraine. They also discussed the strengthening of NATO's deterrence and defence posture and raised the topics for the summit to be held in Madrid at the end of June... [Read more](#)

Launch of UN inquiry



On 12 May, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on the "Deterioration of the human rights situation in Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression" by 33 votes to 2, with 12 abstentions, paving the way for an independent international investigation into the events in the regions of Kharkiv, Kiev, Chernihiv and Sumy. On the same day, UN Deputy Head of Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya told the Security Council that the UN and the Red Cross had evacuated more than 600 people from the Azovstal steel plant and other areas in the Mariupol city region. UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths visited Turkey on 9 May to increase Turkish humanitarian assistance to Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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EBRD Forecasts



In a report published on 10 May, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development announced a greater than expected economic slowdown in Central and Eastern Europe due to the war in Ukraine. The Ukrainian economy is contracting by 30% and the Russian economy by 10%. Growth forecasts for the EBRD's area of operations have been revised downwards from 1.7% to 1.1%. The report highlights the importance of oil and gas supply challenges for the region's economic stability... [Read more](#)

Commission :

New strategy to protect children from the dangers of the internet



The Commission proposed on 11 May a new European strategy "for a more child-friendly internet" to protect children from misinformation, cyber-bullying as well as harmful, illegal content. In addition, it proposed new legislation to protect children from online sexual abuse, including the creation of a new European Centre on Child Sexual Abuse. The proposed legislation also mentions the strengthening of national laws in this area, the vigilance of national authorities as well as that of digital companies... [Read more](#)

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Spring economic forecasts



The European Commission revised its economic forecasts downwards on 16 May. Growth in the euro zone is expected to be 2.7% this year, compared with the 4% expected before the invasion of Ukraine. Inflation is expected to reach 6.1% before falling back next year... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Special committee on foreign interference



Parliament's new special committee on foreign interference (INGE2) in all EU democratic processes began its work on 12 May, electing its chair, Raphaël Glucksmann (FR, S&D), vice-chairs and coordinators. The committee will continue the work of the previous committee of the same name, whose report was adopted in March, to further analyse the threats and ensure that the 2024 European elections are protected... [Read more](#)

First meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly - EU-UK



European and British parliamentarians met in Brussels on 12 and 13 May to discuss cooperation between the European Union and the United Kingdom. In particular, they discussed the application and interpretation of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, their cooperation on the war in Ukraine and the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Agreement on cybersecurity between Council and Parliament



The Council and Parliament reached a provisional agreement on 13 May on the new NIS 2 (Network and Information Systems Security) Directive, proposing measures to ensure a common level of cyber security in the EU. The directive sets out minimum regulatory rules and incident reporting obligations in the energy, transport and digital sectors. It establishes a European Cyber Crisis Management and Preparedness Network (EU-CyCLONe) and extends the scope of the current NIS Directive to public administrations... [Read more](#)

Negotiation Mandate regarding the storage of gas



The Council reached a mandate on 11 May to negotiate with the Parliament on a proposal on gas storage. The mandate states that Member States without gas storage facilities will have access to a reserve in other Member States and will have to "share the financial burden of filling obligations". To avoid external influence on infrastructure and security of supply, states agreed on mandatory certification of all storage system operators. A derogation is foreseen for Malta, Cyprus and Ireland, as long as they are not directly interconnected to the gas system of other Member States... [Read more](#)

Position regarding the Union's digital strategy



On 11 May, the Council adopted its position on the 2030 Agenda, "The way ahead for the digital decade". The text, which aims to "strengthen the Union's digital leadership", sets out an industrial plan and digital targets for the Member States to follow by 2030. The text proposes the creation of a cooperation mechanism between the Commission and the Member States to achieve the targets... [Read more](#)

Position regarding the harmonisation of standards in the Union



The Council adopted its position on 13 May on the amendment of the European regulation on standardisation, aimed at ensuring the development of harmonised standards in the Union. The reform introduces new requirements to involve the national standards bodies of the European Union and the European Economic Area in the decisions of the European Standards Organisations (ESOs) responsible for developing standards at the request of the Commission... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting



On 16 May, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs exchanged views with their counterparts from the six Western Balkan countries on the consequences of the war in Ukraine and, in particular, on their alignment with the European Union's foreign policy and sanctions. Joined by the Canadian and Ukrainian Foreign Ministers, they discussed solutions to help Ukraine, notably through trade liberalisation and to combat Russian interference and disinformation... [Read more](#)

6.4 billion € for Syria and its neighbours



The international community pledged €6.4 billion by 2022 at the sixth European Union conference for the future of Syria and the region on 10 May. The funds are intended to help the Syrian population as well as neighbouring countries that have faced a large influx of refugees fleeing the war. Of the total donations, the European Union and its Member States have pledged €4.8 billion... [Read more](#)

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European Agencies :

New mandate for the Director of Europol



On 10 May, the Council appointed Catherine De Bolle for a second term as Executive Director of Europol for a period of 4 years. She was appointed Executive Director in March 2018... [Read more](#)

Eurojust: arrest of drug traffickers in Italy, Spain and the Netherlands



The Italian, Spanish and Dutch authorities, coordinated and supported by Eurojust, conducted an operation on 11 May against a drug trafficking network using the art market to launder its activities. The investigation, launched in 2019, involved various drugs from Lithuania, North Africa and Latin America. In total, 24 people were arrested, €150,000 in cash and 150kg of drugs were seized... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Elections in the Land of North Rhine Westphalia



In the 15 May regional elections in North Rhine-Westphalia to determine the new state assembly, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) won 76 of the 195 seats with 35.7% of the vote, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) 56 with 26.7% of the vote, the Greens 39 with 18.2% of the vote, the Liberal Democratic Party (FDP) 12 with 5.9% of the vote and the Alternative for Germany (AfD) 12 with 5.4%... [Read more](#)

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Finland :

Request to join NATO



On 15 May, Finland officially applied for NATO membership. President Sauli Niinistö called it a historic day. Now the Finnish Parliament must consider and approve the membership application... [Read more](#)

France :

Journey of Emmanuel Macron to Berlin



President Emmanuel Macron travelled to Berlin on 9 May for his first international trip since his re-election, for talks with Chancellor Olaf Scholz. The two leaders discussed the idea of a "European political community" proposed the same day in Strasbourg. A Franco-German Council of Ministers was also announced for early July, to "strengthen bilateral cooperation"... [Read more](#)

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Hungary :

Katalin Novak, new president, takes office



Katalin Novák (Fidesz) took office as President of Hungary on 10 May for a 5-year term, following the presidential election of 10 March. She succeeds Janos Ader. "All Hungarians can count on me", she said during her inaugural speech on 14 May. She is the first woman President in Hungary... [Read more](#)

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New government



The composition of the new Hungarian government resulting from the 3 April elections was announced on 13 May. Viktor Orbán's fifth government comprises 14 ministers. Former EU Commissioner Tibor Navracsics has become Minister for Regional Development and the use of EU Funds. The only woman in the government, Judit Varga, remains Minister of Justice... [Read more](#)

Sweden :

Green light to joining NATO



On 16 May, the Swedish government decided, after consultation with parliament, to apply for NATO membership. It believes that joining the Atlantic Alliance is the best way to protect Sweden's security after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has "profoundly changed the security environment"... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Crisis in Northern Ireland



After the 5 May elections in Northern Ireland, won by Sinn Fein in favour of Irish reunification, the DUP unionists refused on 13 May to elect a Speaker of the local Assembly and blocked the formation of the government. Prime Minister Boris Johnson travelled to Belfast on 16 May to try to ease the crisis. European Commission Vice-President Maros Sefcovic has warned that a unilateral challenge to the Northern Ireland Protocol by the UK government would be unacceptable... [Read more](#)

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Switzerland :

Vote on remaining in the Schengen Agreement



In a vote held on 15 May, 71.48% of the Swiss people approved their country's continued participation in the European border and coast guard agency Frontex. This vote allows Switzerland to continue to participate in the Schengen and Dublin agreements on free movement. Turnout totalled 39.98%... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

New Protocol for the Convention on Cybercrime



In response to the increase in cybercrime and the risks associated with the use of information and communication technologies by organised crime, 22 States signed the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime on 12 May. The Protocol aims to strengthen the disclosure of electronic evidence and cooperation between States and the private sector, through dedicated tools such as exchanges with service providers or the conduct of joint investigations. It will enter into force once 5 States have ratified it... [Read more](#)

OECD :

Fall in unemployment



The unemployment rate in OECD countries fell in March to 5.1% from 5.2% in February, according to figures released on 11 May. In the euro area, the rate was 6.8%, the eleventh consecutive month of falling or stable unemployment... [Read more](#)

Culture :

European Cultural Solidarity for Ukraine



Cultural events in support of Ukraine continue in Europe. In France, on 18 May, a big evening for peace is being held in Lyon at the Maison de la Danse. In Germany, the Trinity Church in Berlin is holding a charity concert on 22 May. In Poland, the association of families and friends of disadvantaged people "Więź" is screening a film while they will be asking for donations on 19 May. In Spain, on 28 May in Madrid, a volunteer marathon is going to paint the city in blue and yellow, the colours of Ukraine. In the UK, on 22 May the Ukrainian rock band Bez Obezhen will play in London at the Venue Night Club. On 21 May, as part of the Cannes Film Festival's film market, a day is dedicated to Ukraine to support its industry... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine wins the Eurovision competition



The Ukrainian group Kalush Orchestra won the 2022 Eurovision final in Turin on 14 May with the song "Stefania", which mixes folk, pop and hip-hop. The UK and Spain came second and third respectively... [Read more](#)

Night of Ideas in Luxembourg



On 20 May, starting at 7pm, the Pierre Werner Institute is organising the Night of Ideas at Neumünster Abbey in Luxembourg. A plenary session on the future of Europe will open the evening, which will be followed by a number of thematic round tables on European issues such as climate, energy and democracy... [Read more](#)

Tamara de Lempicka, a nomadic artist



The National Museum in Lublin is showing a retrospective of the work of Polish artist Tamara de Lempicka until 14 August. The exhibition presents her paintings from Polish collections and French museums, as well as her everyday objects. A master of art deco in the 1920s and 1930s, her style is characterised by expressive chiaroscuro, strong drawing, sharp colours and hard forms... [Read more](#)

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Raoul Dufy in Aix-en-Provence



The Hôtel de Caumont in Aix-en-Provence is hosting an exhibition of Raoul Dufy's work until 18 September. The artist, who explored a wide variety of techniques, such as watercolour, ceramics, drawing and engraving, used a palette of bright colours that evolved over the course of his career, between impressionist, fauvist and "Cézanne" influences... [Read more](#)

"Maternity" in Barcelona



The Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (National Art Museum of Catalonia) is hosting the exhibition "Maternity" until 25 September, which highlights the work of women artists in the post-Second World War period. These artists, including Mari Chordà, Roser Bru, Parvine Curie and Núria Pompeia, explore in their art the multiple facets of pregnancy, its physical, psychological, social, mysterious and political dimensions... [Read more](#)

Exhibitions by Maltese artists in Gozo



In Gozo, until 7 June, the Heart of Gozo Museum offers an exhibition of Maltese modern artists comprising 52 works by 32 different artists... [Read more](#)

Tributes to Yannis Xenakis in Athens



From 24 to 29 May, an international conference dedicated to the composer Yannis Xenakis is being organised by the Kapodistria University of Athens, in collaboration with the University of Paris and Les amis de Xenakis. Concerts, lectures and cultural excursions are offered in Athens and Nafplio... [Read more](#)

Triennial of photography in Hamburg



From 20 May to 18 September, the Triennial of Photography takes place in Hamburg. The festival has been held every three years since 1999 and features exhibitions, lectures and conversations with artists on the theme of money... [Read more](#)

Perth Arts Festival



From 18 to 29 May, the city of Perth in Scotland is holding its arts festival. Throughout the city there are jazz, folk, classical music, opera and theatre productions... [Read more](#)

Cannes Festival



FESTIVAL DE CANNES

The 75th Cannes Film Festival is taking place from 17 to 28 May. The festival will pay tribute to the Lithuanian director Mantas Kvedaravicius, who was murdered by the Russian army at the beginning of April in Mariupol. The jury will be chaired by French actor Vincent Lindon... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



17 May 2022
Brussels
Defence Council



18 May 2022
Brussels
EU-Armenia Partnership Council



18-19 May 2022
Brussels
Mini-Session European Parliament



20 May 2022
Brussels
Development Council



23 May 2022
Brussels
Eurogroup Meeting
Brussels
General Affairs Council

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