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The Letter in PDF format

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A change of era (Zeitenwende) in Germany and its implications for European integration

Author: Alexine Corblin



Russia's invasion of Ukraine has challenged many of the foundations of German politics and the economy. In response, the government is reviewing its energy and defence policies and seeking a balance between transatlantic ties and European solidarity.

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Contents

Front page! : Editorial **Elections** : Bulgaria - Latvia **Foundation** : Energy - Recovery **Ukraine/Russia** : Frontex - Visas/Russia - Finland - Visits/Kyiv - Sanctions/Russia - UN - Annexation/Rejection - Banks - Aid/Humanitarian **Energy** : Greece/Bulgaria - Denmark/Poland - Decision/Council - Nord Stream **Commission** : Innovation - Minimum wages **Council** : Agriculture/Fisheries - Competitiveness - Fisheries **ECB** : Audition/Parliament **Court of Auditors** : Illegal fishing **Austria** : Polls **Czech Republic** : Elections/Senate **Bosnia-Herzgovina** : Elections **UK** : Economy **Council of Europe** : Minorities - Environment **IMF** : Security/Food **OECD** : Perspectives/Economy **Eurostat** : Inflation - Unemployment **Culture** : Solidarity/Ukraine - Livre/Lviv - Exhibition/London - Exhibition/Genoa - Exhibition/Madrid - Exhibition/Lodz - Exhibition/Lodève - Exhibition/Vienna - Exhibition/Paris - Film/Hamburg - Festival/Dublin - Festival/Bastia

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

Front page! :

Russia's headlong rush



By declaring mobilisation, annexing Ukrainian territories and threatening to use nuclear weapons, Putin is only strengthening European unity and Western solidarity. He must now be dissuaded from going further in his headlong rush, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani...

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Elections :

Boyko Borissov's GERB comes first in Bulgaria's parliamentary elections but is not guaranteed to govern



The GERB party of former Prime Minister Boyko Borissov came out ahead in the 2 October parliamentary elections, with 25.36% of the vote. It leads the coalition "We continue the Change" of former Prime Minister Kiril Petkov (20.20%), the Turkish-speaking Movement for Rights and Freedoms (13.71%), the nationalist Renaissance party (10.17%), and the Socialist Party (9.31%). It will be very difficult for GERB to form a government majority, as almost all parties have declared their refusal to join forces with it... [Read more](#)

New Unity of outgoing Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins wins the parliamentary elections in Latvia.



New Unity, the party of outgoing Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins, came out ahead in the 1 October parliamentary elections in Latvia, with 18.97% of the vote and 26 of the 100 seats in parliament. The parties of the outgoing government coalition (New Unity, National Alliance, and the Conservatives (K) together do not hold an absolute majority of seats and will have to find allies... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

Energy Crisis: European Measures



In response to rising energy prices, Member States and the European Union have taken action and developed plans to reduce consumption. On 29 September, the German government announced a €200 billion plan to cap gas and electricity prices. The Foundation offers you a map to help you understand the situation. It will be regularly completed and updated... [Read more](#)

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European recovery plans: figures and priorities



The Commission approved on 27 September a positive preliminary assessment for a second payment of €21 billion to Italy under the EU's NextGenerationEU programme set up to tackle the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The €672.5bn recovery fund, known as the 'Recovery and Resilience Facility', is designed to provide grants and loans to Member States. The plans of 26 countries have been approved, and 10 countries have received disbursements. The Foundation provides an interactive map of the plans country by country, including amounts, timelines and priorities... [Read more](#)

Ukraine/Russia :

Rise in the number of Russians entering the European Union



Nearly 60,000 Russians entered the European Union in the week of 19-25 September, a 30% increase on the previous week, Frontex, the EU's border guard agency, announced on 27 September. This increase in cross-border crossings, mostly via Finland and Estonia, coincides with the announcement of partial mobilisation in Russia. Frontex estimates that the number of Russians seeking to enter the EU will increase further... [Read more](#)

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Guidelines for the delivery of visas to Russians



The Commission published on 30 September new guidelines for the delivery of visas to Russians and controls at the EU's external borders. It calls on Member States to increase the level of security checks when delivering visas to Russians and a more rigorous examination of their travel documents at the borders... [Read more](#)

Finland restricts the entry of Russian tourists



The Finnish government decided on 29 September to severely restrict the entry of Russian tourists into the country from 30 September. It will accept applications on humanitarian grounds, which arise from its international obligations, or which are in its national interest... [Read more](#)

Visits by Catherine Colonna and Yaël Braun-Pivet in Kyiv



On 27 September, the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Catherine Colonna, visited Kyiv to reiterate France's support for the Ukrainian people. She met with Dmytro Kuleba, her Ukrainian counterpart and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. On 29 September, the President of the French National Assembly, Yaël Braun-Pivet, went to Ukraine with a delegation of deputies and signed a "memorandum of understanding" with the President of the Parliament Ruslan Stefanchouk to strengthen links and exchanges between parliamentarians, particularly in the context of Ukraine's application to join the European Union... [Read more](#)

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[More sanctions against Russia](#)

SANCTIONS

In response to the " referendums " in the occupied Ukrainian territories, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced on 28 September the possibility of further sanctions against Russia. The proposed measures include a cap on the price of Russian oil, targeted restrictions on a new list of individuals and entities close to the Kremlin, trade restrictions through the extension of import and export bans, and an increased crackdown on those who help circumvent the sanctions... [Read more](#)

Russian veto of UN condemnation



On 30 September Russia vetoed a UN Security Council draft resolution denouncing illegal referendums in four Ukrainian regions. The decision to veto by Russia will now be debated by the 193-member UN General Assembly within 10 days... [Read more](#)

Rejection of the annexation of Ukrainian territories



On 30 September European leaders rejected Russia's annexation of four Ukrainian regions, as proclaimed by Russian President Vladimir Putin. They stressed that the results of the pseudo-referendums held there are "null and void" and have "no legal effect". They assure that Russian threats will not prevent them from continuing their support for Ukraine. The French President, the German Chancellor, the US President, the Spanish Prime Minister, several Central and Eastern European leaders including the Polish President and the G7 Foreign Ministers have assured that they will not recognise the Russian decision... [Read more](#)

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Facilitation of remittances between the EU and Ukraine



In a joint statement issued on 27 September, 16 financial institutions from the EU and Ukraine agreed to make it more affordable, accessible and transparent for Ukrainians in the EU to send money to Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Operation "A boat for Ukraine"



On 28 September, the French government launched the humanitarian operation "A boat for Ukraine", in partnership with local authorities, associations and companies. The ship, loaded with civil security equipment, medical and food aid and emergency rehabilitation, left Marseille for Constanza in Romania... [Read more](#)

Energy :

Interconnexion between Greece and Bulgaria



The exploitation of the gas pipeline linking Greece to Bulgaria was launched on 1 October to reduce dependence on Russian gas. Bulgaria used to import 80% of its gas from Russia. According to Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, this is a "new era for Bulgaria and for South-East Europe"... [Read more](#)

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Baltic Pipe Inauguration



The new Baltic Pipe pipeline, which links Norway to Denmark and Poland to reduce dependence on Russian gas, was inaugurated on 27 September in Goleniow, Poland, and began delivering gas on 1 October. The project was funded by the European Union to the tune of €215 million... [Read more](#)

Agreement between European Ministers to reduce energy prices



The energy ministers agreed on 30 September on emergency measures to bring down energy prices. The agreement includes a target to reduce gross electricity consumption at peak times until 31 March 2023. The measures will include a revenue cap for energy and renewable energy producers, redistribution of surplus revenues to electricity consumers, and the introduction of a solidarity levy on fossil fuel companies. The measures will apply from 1 December 2022 to 31 December 2023... [Read more](#)

Responses to the sabotage of the gas pipelines



High Representative Josep Borrell expressed the European Union's concern on 28 September over the underwater explosions that caused three gas leaks from the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines. In a statement issued on 29 September, the NATO member states, Finland and Sweden condemn the "deliberate, reckless and irresponsible acts of sabotage". They stressed that any deliberate attack on their critical infrastructure would trigger a "united and determined" response. In a video conference on 30 September, the heads of government of Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Norway, and the NATO Secretary General condemned the sabotage and agreed to strengthen the protection of critical infrastructure... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

New liability rules for artificial intelligence



On 28 September, the Commission presented a proposal for a revision of the Directive on the liability of manufacturers of objects and a proposal for a Directive on the liability of artificial intelligence (AI) systems. The former aims to adapt the liability rules for AI to the ecological and digital transition. The second aims to strengthen the protection and ensure effective redress for consumers who have suffered damage caused by AI-enabled products and services. In particular, the new rules will relieve victims of the burden of proof and facilitate access to evidence held by companies and suppliers using high-risk AI systems... [Read more](#)

Commission recommendation regarding minimum wage systems



On 28 September, the Commission presented recommendations to modernise and enhance the effectiveness of national minimum income schemes. It proposes guidelines on the coverage and operation of minimum income. It also calls on Member States to take specific measures to improve access to an inclusive labour market, support services and the promotion of individualised support... [Read more](#)

Council :

Meeting of Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers



On 26 September, the EU Agriculture Ministers and their Ukrainian counterpart Mykola Solskyi discussed the current state of agricultural production in Ukraine. To ensure the export and import of agricultural products to Ukraine, they discussed the implementation of solidarity channels between the European Union and Ukraine. The Ministers also discussed the management of fish stocks shared with the United Kingdom... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Competitiveness Ministers



On 29 September, the Ministers in charge of competitiveness discussed the emergency instrument for the single market proposed by the Commission on 19 September and called for clarification on the criteria for activating the mechanism. They also discussed the proposal for a regulation on eco-design for sustainable products, and exchanged views on the impact of the war in Ukraine on the internal market... [Read more](#)

Agreement on access to Member States' territorial waters



The Council and the Parliament reached a provisional agreement on 29 September on the rules for access of fishing vessels to European waters. The agreement aims to extend the regime governing the conditions of access to territorial waters by 10 years. According to the ministers, its conclusion is urgent, since the interruption would create instability for fishermen, particularly with regard to the agreements established between Slovenia and Croatia and Greece and Italy... [Read more](#)

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ECB :

Audition of Christine Lagarde in Parliament



The President of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde, was heard on 25 September by the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee. In response to MEPs' concerns about the impact of rising food and energy prices on households, she assured them that the ECB will raise interest rates to restore price stability and that temporary

and targeted measures by Member States will be adopted to avoid fragmentation within the euro area... [Read more](#)

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Court of Auditors :

The Member States called to counter illegal fishing



The European Court of Auditors warned on 26 September about the lack of effectiveness of European and national measures against illegal fishing. In a report, it notes that control and sanction systems, in particular those relating to the verification of imported fishery products, appear to be "unequal" among Member States. These shortcomings lead to overfishing and underreporting of catches. In this context, the Court invited the Commission to oversee the tightening of national controls... [Read more](#)

Austria :

Latest polls just a week before the Presidential election



The last poll before the 9 October presidential election in Austria, carried out by the Kurier/OGm institute, puts the incumbent president Alexander Van der Bellen well ahead with 58% of the vote, followed by the nationalist candidate of the Freedom Party (FPÖ), Walter Rosenkranz, who would secure 16%. Lawyer and columnist Tassilo Wallentin (9%) and Dominik Wlazny, chairman of the Beer Party (8%), follow in third and fourth place... [Read more](#)

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Czech Republic :

Results of the Senatorial elections



The second round of the Czech Senate elections took place on 1 October. Despite its success in the first round, the opposition movement ANO won only 3 seats, while the government coalition SPOLU won 20. The group of ODS and TOP 09 senators remains the largest in the Senate and will therefore be able to appoint the President of the Upper House... [Read more](#)

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Bosnia-Herzegovina :

Results of the elections on 2 October



On 2 October, Bosnia and Herzegovina voted to renew the country's tripartite presidency, as well as the governments of the two entities that make up the country, the Republika Srpska (Serb and Orthodox) and the Muslim-Croat Federation (Bosniak and Croat). In the Serb Republic, Milorad Dodik was re-elected for a third term. Zeljka Cvijanovic is expected to take the Serbian seat in the country's tripartite presidency, while the Bosnian seat goes to pro-European social democrat Denis Becirovic, who defeated Bakir Izetbegovic. Zeljko Komsic wins his fourth term as president for the Croatian side. The High Representative, Christian Schmidt, announced institutional reforms that "aim to improve functionality and ensure the prompt implementation of the election result"... [Read more](#)

UK :

Intervention by the Bank of England to Stabilise the Markets



The Bank of England announced on 28 September a temporary £65 billion bond-buying programme to stem the fall in the pound and the rise in interest rates caused by the previous week's announcement of a tax cut and household support plan by Liz Truss' government. On 3 October, the Chancellor of the Exchequer decided to abandon the tax cut for high earners... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

New threats to national minorities



The Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have had a major impact on the socio-economic situation of national minorities, according to a report by the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities published on 27 September. The report also points out that climate change and certain environmental policies have contributed to increased inequalities... [Read more](#)

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Call to recognise the right to a healthy environment



On 27 September, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation inviting its 46 member states to recognise the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right. It calls on states to respect and incorporate the polluter pays principle or access to justice in environmental matters into their national law, and to strengthen corporate environmental responsibility... [Read more](#)

IMF :

Help for countries in the face of food insecurity



The International Monetary Fund announced on 30 September the opening of an emergency financing window that will provide additional assistance to countries facing food insecurity risks. The facility, which is open for one year, comes in the context of rising food insecurity since 2018, aggravated by the war in Ukraine and its impact on imports and exports... [Read more](#)

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OECD :

Economic Perspectives



The OECD released on 26 September its interim report on the economic outlook for its members in the face of the effects of the war in Ukraine. The slowdown in global growth is stronger than expected, with growth holding steady in the second half of 2022 and decelerating in 2023 to an annual rate of 2.2%, down from 2.8%. Inflation is now affecting all sectors, spreading beyond food and energy, mainly due to soaring energy, transport and labour prices. The OECD calls for a reduction in energy consumption and diversification of supply sources to avoid shortages... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

The inflation rate of the euro zone rises to 10%



According to an estimate published on 30 September by Eurostat, the annual inflation rate in the euro zone rose to 10% in September, compared with 9.1% in August. Energy is the main component of inflation, followed by food, alcohol & tobacco, industrial goods excluding energy and services... [Read more](#)

Drop in Unemployment



According to an estimate published on 30 September by Eurostat, the unemployment rate in the European Union stood at 6% and in the euro zone at 6.6% in August, while the unemployment rate in the EU stood at 6.4%... [Read more](#)

Culture :

European cultural solidarity with Ukraine



The world of culture is mobilising for Ukraine. At the Philharmonie de Paris, a concert was organised in support of Ukrainian artists on 5 October. On 12 October, the Ukrainian rock band Bez Obmozen performed at the Electric Brixton in London. In Hamburg, numerous events such as exhibitions and readings are being organised until the end of the year. In Poland, a charity concert is also being organised on 14 October to help Ukrainian refugee children in Poland... [Read more](#)

Book Fair in Lviv



The 29th edition of the Lviv Book Fair is being held in a hybrid format from 6 to 9 October in partnership with the Hay Festival in Wales. Renowned Ukrainian writers will join international authors in a series of events on art in conflict, memory, gender, loss, corruption, imperialism and hope. These meetings will also be available online and will be translated into English, Spanish and Ukrainian... [Read more](#)

Cézanne Exhibition at the Tate Modern



Until 12 March 2023, London's Tate Modern presents an exhibition on the work of the French painter Paul Cézanne, exploring his

Impressionist period, as well as the pursuit of his own artistic language... [Read more](#)

Rubens in Genoa



Until 22 January 2023, the Ducal Palace of Genoa is presenting an exhibition dedicated to the Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens, bringing together 20 paintings that highlight the artist's relationship with the city... [Read more](#)

Ilse Bing at the Mapfre Foundation



In Madrid, the Mapfre Foundation is devoting an exhibition to the German photographer Ilse Bing, until 8 January 2023. Her photographs reflect the cultural and artistic concerns of the 20th century... [Read more](#)

The Cosmist movement in the Sztuki Museum



The exhibition "Citizens of the Cosmos" will run until 12 March 2023 at the Sztuki Museum in Lodz and presents a series of films and works exploring the religious and philosophical trend of cosmism, which emerged in Russia at the end of the 19th century, and in particular the studies of the artist Anton Vidokle... [Read more](#)

Destination Impressionism in Lodève



Until 19 March 2023, the Lodève Museum, in partnership with the Reims Museum of Fine Arts, is hosting an exhibition on the development of landscapes from the end of the 18th to the 20th century. Impressionist painters such as Corot, Courbet, Monet or Sisley are in the spotlight... [Read more](#)

George Nuku in Vienna



The Weltmuseum in Vienna is presenting the first exhibition in Austria dedicated to the Maori artist George Nuku, entitled "Oceans. Collections. Reflections". Until 31 January 2023, the museum is hosting works on themes focusing on relationships and change. An installation on the Covid-19 pandemic has also been created... [Read more](#)

Kokoschka at the Museum of Modern Art



The Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris is devoting an exhibition to the Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka until 12 February 2023. This committed artist is a painter, writer, playwright and poet, and his works reflect the political upheavals of his time... [Read more](#)

Cinema Festival in Hamburg



The Hamburg Film Festival runs until 8 October and presents more than 100 films from all over the world, which are shown in various cinemas in the city... [Read more](#)

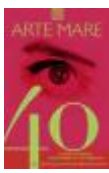
Dublin Festival of History



Until 16 October, the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin is hosting the City History Festival. Several guided tours are organised... [Read more](#)

Mediterranean Film Festival

The Mediterranean film festival, Arte Mare, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, will be held in Bastia until 9 October... [Read more](#)



Agenda :



3 October 2022
Brussels
EU-Israel Association Council



3-6 October 2022
Strasbourg
Plenary Session of the European Parliament



4 October 2022
Luxembourg
Economic and Financial Affairs Council



6 October 2022
Prague
Meeting of the European Political Community



7 October 2022
Prague
Informal Meeting of the Heads of State and Government



9 October
Austria
Presidential election (first round)

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