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The Letter in PDF format

The Foundation on



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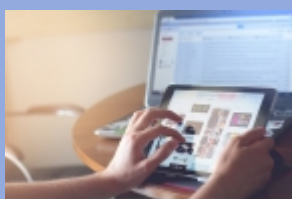


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Convergence in Media and Telecom in the face of COVID-19

Authors: Gérard Pogorel, Augusto Preta



Telecommunications networks, communication services and media play a major role in economic and social resilience. More than ever before, the transformative nature of digital innovation in the media and telecommunications industries is affecting the way we live and work. The crisis we are experiencing has strongly influenced our digital consumption patterns. This raises important economic and regulatory issues.

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Foundation :

Publication of the "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2020"



The 2020 edition of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union", a reference work for European decision-makers, is available in electronic version. With contributions from leading personalities and experts, original maps and annotated statistics, it offers a comprehensive view of the European Union and analyses the challenges facing Europe...
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European leaders call for solidarity



On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, European leaders sent a video message to the Foundation to express their expectations and hopes for the future of Europe. You can find messages from Ursula von der Leyen, Charles Michel, David Sassoli, Christine Lagarde, Michel Barnier, Wolfgang Schäuble and other personalities on our website... [Read more](#)

Covid-19: European responses, a complete picture

Faced with the pandemic of coronavirus, the European Union has deployed the various means at its disposal and must now organise the deconfinement and resumption of



social and economic activities. The Foundation offers you a summary of all the measures taken at national and European level, which is updated regularly... [Read more](#)

Coronavirus :

Franco-German initiative for economic recovery



On 18 May, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel presented a joint proposal for the economic recovery of the Union with a €500 billion Recovery Fund for the sectors and regions most affected by the coronavirus crisis and integrated into the Union's multiannual budget. They also propose a European approach based on strategic health sovereignty to prepare for future crises and stress the need to accelerate the climate and digital transitions. The Commission is due to finalise its recovery plan on 27 May... [Read more](#)

Italian-style economic aid and de-confinement plan



On 14 May, the President of the Italian Council Giuseppe Conte announced a new €55 billion plan to support the economy, including tax rebates and aid to the tourism sector. On 18 May, Italy will move on to a new stage of de-confinement, with, in particular, the reopening of museums, hairdressing salons, bars and restaurants under the condition of strict compliance with health barrier measures. The country plans to reopen its borders on 3 June... [Read more](#)

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Defining a clear exit from the crisis



On 15 May, the ministers responsible for competitiveness discussed the plan for emerging from the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, focusing on four aspects: the single market, investments, global action and good governance. They also noted the need to reduce Europe's industrial dependence on third countries and encouraged green transition and digital transformation. The automotive industry, tourism and aerospace have been identified as sectors particularly affected by the crisis... [Read more](#)

Recommendations regarding tourism and transport



On 13 May, the Commission presented its guidelines for the lifting of travel restrictions and the restoration of free movement, which should be based on three criteria: the epidemiological situation, the ability to maintain distance during travel, and the socio-economic situation. The resumption of transport services will depend on the ability to ensure the safety of employees and customers... [Read more](#)

Eurogroup Meeting



On 15 May the Eurogroup discussed the economic outlook for the euro area and the economic response to the coronavirus. Finance ministers welcomed the swift implementation of emergency measures such as the SURE programme for short-time working and agreed on the need for a temporary, targeted and proportionate recovery plan to support the countries most affected by the pandemic... [Read more](#)

Defence Ministers' Meeting



On 12 May, Defence Ministers discussed the implications of coronavirus in the defence sector with Josep Borell, EU High Representative, Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General, and Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Assistant Secretary General in charge of UN peacekeeping operations. They exchanged views on military assistance to civilians in the face of the pandemic and the maintenance of security and defence operations. They stressed the importance of preparing for future threats, including those of a hybrid nature, such as cyber attacks and disinformation... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Health Ministers



On 12 May, health ministers discussed the safety of access to medicines, in particular through the early detection of shortages and increased production in the Union. They also stressed the importance of their accessibility and of guaranteeing their prices... [Read more](#)

Meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers



On 13 May the Agriculture Ministers discussed the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Union to combat the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on agriculture. They identified sectors in difficulty such as dairy, veal, beef, poultry and wine. The ministers also called for the establishment of a "solid" budget for the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020... [Read more](#)

Education Ministers' Meeting



On 18 May, the Ministers of Education discussed their respective plans to reopen schools, the health and organisational measures put in place to enable them to reopen, the adjustments made to examinations and admission to higher education, the conditions for the resumption of studies for the next academic year, as well as international exchanges. These discussions will be used to draw up Council conclusions on the adaptation of education systems to the pandemic... [Read more](#)

Appeal for public transport



In an open letter to the Presidents of the European Commission, Parliament and Council, more than 80 CEOs and local elected representatives called on 13 May for local public transport to be included among the sectors covered by the EU recovery plan. They stressed that the sector, which could lose €40 billion in revenue by the end of the year, is "a key accelerator for the economy, job creation, social inclusion, health and sustainable development"... [Read more](#)

Support measures to the economy



On 14 May, the French government announced a €18 billion support plan for the tourism sector and measures for the wine industry. In the United Kingdom, employees most affected by the health crisis will continue to receive 80% of their salaries until the end of October. Irish companies are following their roadmap for recovery from 18 May. In Austria, the government has introduced a €500 million tavern package to support the national restaurant industry, including tax breaks and incentives to consume local products. In Spain, the ERTE scheme for businesses and the self-employed to finance short-time working measures has been extended until 30 June... [Read more](#)

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Agreement regarding SURE for short-time working



The Council definitively adopted the SURE programme on 19 May. This €100 billion programme will provide loans to Member States to help them finance their programmes for short-time working, self-employed workers and the health sector. It will be financed by loans from the Commission, guaranteed to the tune of €25 billion by the Member States. The loans will be granted on a proposal from the Commission and will have to be voted on by the Council. SURE will become active once all the Member States have issued their guarantees, and until 31 December 2022... [Read more](#)

National Measures



The French government announced on 14 May an €18 billion support plan for the tourism sector and measures for the wine industry. In the United Kingdom, employees most affected by the health crisis will continue to receive 80% of their salaries until the end of October. Irish companies are following their roadmap for recovery from 18 May onwards. In Austria, the government has put in place a €500 million tavern package to support the national gastronomy, including tax breaks and incentives to consume local products. In Spain, the ERTE scheme, aimed at businesses and the self-employed, has been extended until 30 June. It comprises, among other things, tax exemptions... [Read more](#)

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Parliament :

For an ambitious budget

On 13 May, MEPs adopted by 616 votes to 29 with 46 abstentions a legislative resolution calling on the European Commission to present a proposal for a contingency plan for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) by 15 June 2020. This will be done



on 27 May. On the 15th, they voted by 505 votes to 119, with 69 abstentions, on a resolution on the revision of the EU budget for the post-2020 period, calling for the new "Recovery and Transformation Fund" to be worth €2,000 billion... [Read more](#)

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[New regulation regarding the increase of re-use of water](#)



On 14 May MEPs gave their final approval to a regulation on water reuse, which aims to ensure wider use of urban waste water and water treated in recycling plants for agricultural irrigation. The legislation lays down minimum quality requirements for the reuse of such water. This will, among other things, limit the over-exploitation of groundwater in many European countries facing water shortages, particularly in times of heat waves... [Read more](#)

[New regulation regarding the labelling of tyres](#)



On 13 May MEPs finally adopted a regulation on tyre labelling designed to raise consumer awareness of fuel economy, safety and noise caused by land vehicles, by indicating fuel efficiency, grip, noise and, where possible, mileage and tyre abrasion level. This measure is expected to save tyre producers €9 billion and avoid the release of 10 million tonnes of CO2 per year... [Read more](#)

[Rejection of a plan to exchange fingerprints with the United Kingdom](#)



On 13 May MEPs rejected a draft decision on the exchange of fingerprints with the UK until 31 December 2020. On the one hand, MEPs believe that the UK does not offer enough data protection guarantees: there is no indication that they will comply with EU standards after the transition period. On the other they note a lack of reciprocity, as the UK will not share the fingerprints of suspects, unlike EU participants... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

[End of third round of EU/UK negotiations](#)



Michel Barnier, the Union's chief negotiator with the United Kingdom, expressed his disappointment on 15 May at the end of the third round of negotiations. He noted that the United Kingdom is refusing reciprocal mutual guarantees in the area of trade and believes that the British government lacks ambition in many areas, including the governance of the agreement. He also deplors the UK's refusal to discuss environmental aspects and the too limited progress on fisheries... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

[Ruling on the detention of asylum seekers in Hungary](#)



The Court of Justice ruled on 14 May that the placement of asylum seekers in the centre of Röszke, in Hungary on the border with Serbia, is a form of detention. If, following judicial review of the lawfulness of such detention, it is established that the persons concerned were detained without valid reason, the court must release them with immediate effect... [Read more](#)

ECB :

[Towards more women at the ECB](#)



The European Central Bank announced on 14 May new measures to increase the proportion of women in its staff for the period 2020-2026. The share of women in all management positions increased from 17% to 30% between 2013 and 2019, still below the 35% target. The new targets extend beyond management positions and aim to increase the number of women in the ECB to between 40% and 51% by 2026... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

[Consequences of confinement for migrants who are victims of smugglers](#)

According to the annual report of the European Centre for the Fight against the Smuggling of Migrants, published by Europol on 15 May, smugglers and criminals are finding new ways to abuse the vulnerability of undocumented migrants wishing to enter Europe with the tightened border controls and closures due to the coronavirus.



There is a shift in smuggling activities from air to land and sea routes (small boats, cargo vehicles). Sexual exploitation could also increase... [Read more](#)

Illegal immigration down by 85% in April



According to figures published by the Frontex agency on 12 May, illegal border crossings by Europe's main migration routes fell by 85% in April. This decrease is due to the coronavirus, but also to delays in the communication of data by Member States. The figures for the period January-April 2020, when 26 450 arrivals were recorded, are also comparable with those for 2019... [Read more](#)

Germany :

New president of the Constitutional Court



On 15 May, former vice-president of the Karlsruhe supreme court and former CDU deputy Stephan Harbarth was elected president of the German Constitutional Court at the age of 48, replacing Andreas Vosskuhle, whose 12-year term ended on 6 May... [Read more](#)

Croatia :

Dissolution of Parliament



Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic announced on 18 May the dissolution of Parliament, paving the way for parliamentary elections by 12 July. These elections were scheduled to take place this autumn. The government hopes to capitalise on a successful management of the coronavirus crisis... [Read more](#)

Poland :

Rafal Trzaskowski, new opposition candidate in presidential election



Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski was nominated on 15 May as the new candidate of the opposition Civic Platform party in the presidential election. He replaces Malgorzata Kidawa-Blonska, who has withdrawn her candidacy. The election, originally scheduled for 10 and 24 May, could not be held due to the coronavirus pandemic. No new date has yet been set... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Greece takes the chair of the Committee of Ministers



On 15 May, Greece took over the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the next six months from Georgia. The country will focus on public health protection and responses to the health crisis. It will then be succeeded by Germany... [Read more](#)

WTO :

Resignation of Director-General Roberto Azevedo



The Director-General of the Trade Organization, Roberto Azevedo, announced on 14 May that he will step down on 31 August, shortening his second term by one year. He explained that his departure will allow a successor to be chosen without interfering with preparations for the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference scheduled for 2021... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on the European Investment Advisory Hub



On 14 May, the Commission published the 2019 report on the European Investment Advisory Hub. Launched in 2015, it has since processed more than 2,500 projects, 150 of which have been able to obtain €34 billion in funding from the European Investment Bank. The platform has been used mainly for projects in countries benefiting from the European cohesion policy, and helps local players to carry out projects relating to clean energy, road safety, social housing and health... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Sharp drop in GDP in the first quarter



Eurostat announced on 15 May that the Union's GDP fell by 3.3% and that of the euro zone by 3.8% in the first quarter of 2020, the largest drop since 1995. This decline in GDP has resulted in a 0.2% reduction in employment compared to the last quarter of 2019... [Read more](#)

Trade surplus in March



According to Eurostat figures published on 15 May, the EU's surplus in international trade in goods was €22.2 billion in March and the euro-zone surplus was €28.2 billion... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Re-opening of the Museum of Modern Art in Berlin



The Berlinische Galerie, which houses a collection of works of art from 1870 to the present day, has reopened its doors in Berlin. It is now possible to visit the exhibition devoted to the photographer Umbo from 1926-1956... [Read more](#)

Fine Arts in Agen



The Fine Arts Museum of Agen reopened its doors on 13 May. It is now possible to visit its permanent collection of more than 3,000 objects, including masterpieces by artists such as Tintoretto, Boudin, Goya and Corot... [Read more](#)

Explore the Frederic Chopin's birthplace



The house where Fryderyk Chopin was born, in Zelazowa Wola near Warsaw, reopened on 12 May and concerts are being held in the park every Sunday... [Read more](#)

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Ancient Rome in Tarragona



The National Museum of Archaeology of Tarragona and the adjacent ancient Roman site, classified by Unesco, are visible online, modelled in three dimensions... [Read more](#)

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Art in Manchester



The Lowry Cultural Centre in Manchester provides online resources and activities on many artistic disciplines such as dance, digital art, theatre and circus... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



18 May 2020

e-Meeting of Education Ministers



19 May 2020

e-Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers e-Meeting of Culture and Youth Ministers



20 May 2020

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