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The Letter in PDF format

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"The recovery plan must be used to make intelligent investments."

Authors: Philippe Aghion, Céline Antonin



The pandemic crisis has highlighted the inadequacy of the European innovation ecosystem. It is more necessary than ever to direct public spending towards education and research, to strengthen investment capacities and to adapt competition policy, argue economists Philippe Aghion and Céline Antonin.

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Contents

Foundation : Donations - Debate/Economy - Debate/Prague - Report 2021 - Belarus - Health/Europe - EU Recovery - Atlas/Europe **Commission** : Competition - Health **Parliament** : VGE/Tribute **Council** : Agriculture - Energy - Education/Culture - Employment - Eurogroup - Data - Health **Diplomacy** : Infrastructures - USA - Balkans - Americas/Caribbean - Peace **Court of Justice** : Conditionality **ECB** : Notes **European Agencies** : Space - Asylum **Austria** : Government **France** : Middle East - Fisheries **Lithuania** : France **Sweden** : Government **Vatican** : Cyprus/Greece **Council of Europe** : Croatia - Lithuania - Public Health - Turkey **WTO** : Services **NATO** : Ukraine/Russia **OECD** : Recovery **Eurobarometer** : Euro **Eurostat** : Inflation **Studies/Reports** : VAT **Culture** : Cinema - Exhibition/Malaga - Exhibition/Hamburg - Exhibition/Paris - Light/Lyon - Art/Prague - Exhibition/Paris - Exhibition/Wroclaw **Napoleon's Bicentenary** : Biography

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

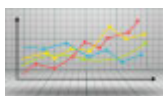
Foundation :

Support the Foundation's activities



In 2021, through its proposals and its active presence in European debates, the Foundation participated in the necessary development of common policies. While France will hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2022, the Foundation will step up its efforts to raise awareness of the European project and will continue its strategy of influence in Brussels, Strasbourg and within the Member States. Now more than ever, it needs your support to continue its activities... [Read more](#)

What economic policies for post-pandemic Europe?



The Foundation is organising a videoconference on 13 December on European economic policy with François Villeroy de Galhau, Governor of the Banque de France. Alain Lamassoure, Chairman of the Foundation's Scientific Committee, will be taking part. The debate will be moderated by Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Proud to be European

The Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2021



You have not yet had the opportunity to read the 2021 edition of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union", a reference work published by Marie B.? You can still do so. It is available in hard copy in bookshops and on our website, and in digital format. Order your copy here... [Read more](#)

Belarus: chronology of a revolution in progress

The EU adopted new sanctions on 2 December against 17 individuals and 11 entities in Belarus who were involved in inciting and organising illegal crossings of the EU border. The day before, the Commission proposed temporary measures to help Latvia, Lithuania and Poland deal with the influx of migrants at their borders with Belarus. To follow the latest developments in the crisis opened by the rigged presidential election of August 2020 and the repression of the democratic opposition, the Foundation offers you a chronology of events and links to European responses and initiatives... [Read more](#)

Map of Health Measures and Travel Conditions in Europe



In Germany, unvaccinated people are no longer allowed to enter bars, restaurants, cultural venues and non-essential shops. In Portugal, a negative test is mandatory for everyone to enter bars and restaurants and some major events. In Belgium, the school holidays have been brought forward to 20 December, indoor events are limited to 200 people and masks are compulsory in enclosed areas from the age of 6. In Italy, unvaccinated people cannot enter bars, restaurants, theatres and cinemas, and a health pass is mandatory for all employees. To follow the evolution of the situation and to keep track of the measures in place in the EU Member States, the Foundation offers you a complete map of the various provisions in force. An indispensable, regularly updated resource... [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. 22 plans have so far been approved by the Commission, and 20 countries have already received the planned pre-financing, including Romania on 2 December. On 3 December, responding to Spain, the Commission for the first time positively assessed a request for disbursement from a country that had met a series of targets. The Commission has so far not approved the Hungarian and Polish plans due to breaches of the rule of law. The Foundation provides an interactive map of the plans country by country, showing amounts, timetables and priorities... [Read more](#)

The Permanent Atlas of the European Union is available



The fifth edition of the unique Permanent Atlas of the European Union provides a comprehensive and easily accessible overview of the European Union, the euro area and each of its 27 Member States. It is available in hard copy on our website and in bookshops, or in English as a digital version... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Sanctions against several banks for anti-trust practices



The Commission decided on 2 December to impose a total fine of €344.4 million on Barclays, RBS, HSBC, USB and Credit Suisse for violating EU law on anti-competitive practices. The Commission alleges that the banks entered into agreements that allowed them to knowingly buy and sell currency in the market... [Read more](#)

Common approach to combat the resurgence of the pandemic



The Commission proposed on 1 December a coordinated EU approach to tackle the resurgence of the Covid-19 pandemic. It calls on Member States to step up vaccination and the roll-out of booster doses. The Commission also announced that investment in treatment will be increased... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Tribute to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing



One year after the death of former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, a tribute ceremony was held on 2 December in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. French President Emmanuel Macron and his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier, as well as the Presidents of the Parliament, the European Council and the Commission, David Sassoli, Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen, paid tribute to his commitment to Europe and the progress he enabled, such as the creation of the European Council and the election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Adoption of the Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027



On 2 December, the Council finally adopted the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the period 2023-2027. The aim is to ensure a sustainable future for European farmers through greener agriculture and to allow farm workers to enjoy adequate employment conditions... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Energy and Telecommunications Ministers



The Energy Ministers, meeting on 2 December, discussed rising energy prices and possible measures to regulate prices and protect consumers. The Telecommunications Ministers, on 3 December, adopted their position on the harmonisation of cybersecurity rules through the new "SRI 2" directive aimed at strengthening cybersecurity and resilience measures in the Union... [Read more](#)

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Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council



The ministers for sport, culture, education and youth met in Brussels on 29 and 30 November. They encouraged better access to films, notably by broadcasting them in European languages, and called on political actors to implement the new European Bauhaus. They discussed how to promote openness, merit and human rights in sports organisations and competitions. They also adopted conclusions on hybrid education, to take into account the lessons learned from the pandemic... [Read more](#)

Minimum wage and equal pay



On 6 December, employment and social affairs ministers called for an adequate EU minimum wage and pay transparency to help close the gender pay gap. They called on Member States to ensure that artificial intelligence (AI) promotes transparency and gender equality when used in recruitment, and to strengthen policies to help people enter and re-enter the labour market quickly... [Read more](#)

Eurogroup Meeting



Meeting on 6 December, the Eurogroup discussed the Commission's proposal for a recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area for 2022. It discussed the economic and budgetary situation of the euro area Member States, as well as the twelfth enhanced surveillance report on Greece, and adopted the work programme for the first half of next year. In addition, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) presented the results of its annual review of the euro area economy... [Read more](#)

Provisional Agreement on Data Governance



The Council and the Parliament reached an agreement on 30 November on the Data Governance Act. The text aims to better regulate the re-use of protected public data such as trade secrets or personal data, and to increase trust in data transfer and sharing. The agreement includes

the use of data sharing services to create a secure environment for both businesses and consumers, who will have more control over how their data is used... [Read more](#)

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New mandate for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control



The Council and Parliament agreed on 29 November to renew the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), to include the emergence of new diseases, and to develop digital platforms for epidemiological surveillance. They expressed their commitment to strengthen coordination with the WHO and data protection provisions... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Launch of world infrastructure strategy



On 1 December, the Commission announced the launch of a new strategy called "Global Gateway", aiming to develop sustainable links in the world in several areas such as digital, climate, health and education. The strategy provides for up to €300 billion of investment until 2027 to support a sustainable global recovery and promote the EU's democratic values. On 3 December, the G7 countries issued a communiqué detailing their common approach to an infrastructure financing strategy, of which Global Gateway will be a part... [Read more](#)

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USA-EU joint declaration on transatlantic security



In a joint statement issued on 3 December, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and EU High Representative Josep Borell reiterated their partnership and commitment to transatlantic security. They stated that the European Union and the United States shared common strategic challenges and recalled the importance of coordinated and complementary action. Discussions will take place in early 2022 to allow for closer cooperation between the two powers on security and defence... [Read more](#)

EU-Balkan Forum on Justice and Home Affairs



Representatives from the EU and the Western Balkans met from 1 to 3 December in Slovenia for an annual ministerial forum on justice and home affairs. They expressed their willingness to strengthen their cooperation through the transfer of information, in particular on migration flows, the fight against terrorism and organised crime... [Read more](#)

Meeting with leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean



EU leaders met with their Latin American and Caribbean counterparts on 2 December. They expressed their wish to increase their cooperation in the fight against pandemics, climate change and biodiversity loss. They recalled the importance of preventing future diseases, the convergence of rules facilitating digital innovation and the preservation of human rights and fundamental freedoms... [Read more](#)

Financial Aid for four countries to maintain peace



In the framework of the European Peace Facility, the Council validated support measures for several countries to enhance their domestic resilience by improving their operational capabilities. The countries concerned are Ukraine (€31 million), Georgia (€12.75 million), Moldova (€7 million) and Mali (€24 million). The Council specified that the use of this aid must comply with the rules of international law... [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

Advocate General's Opinion on the budgetary conditionality regime



The Advocate General of the Court of Justice ruled on 2 December that the conditionality regime for the protection of the EU budget in the event of a breach of the rule of law is in line with EU law. It underlines that the conditionality regulation is not analogous to the regime of article 7 TEU but aims to check that the use of EU funds is in line with the Union's values. He insisted that the regulation only targets the violation by a Member State of the rule of law directly affecting the financial interests of the Union.

He concludes that the actions brought by Hungary and Poland should be dismissed by the Court... [Read more](#)

ECB :

Revision of euro note design



[more](#)

The European Central Bank announced on 6 December that the design of banknotes will change by 2024. Working groups will be set up to gather public opinion on possible themes and personalities for the future banknotes, and a design competition will be launched... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Launch of 2 new Galileo satellites



The European Space Agency (ESA) announced on 5 December that two new satellites have joined the Galileo fleet, which now consists of 28 satellites following the successful launch of a Soyuz rocket from the Guiana space centre in Kourou. They will provide positioning, navigation and time synchronisation services to more than 2.3 billion users worldwide. The ground control segment of the Galileo system has recently been upgraded to monitor more satellites at the same time... [Read more](#)

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Rise in Afghan requests for asylum



According to an analysis published by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) on 2 December, approximately 71,200 asylum applications were lodged in the EU and Schengen countries in September, an increase of one quarter compared to August and the highest figure since November 2016. In particular, 72% of applications were made by Afghans. Following the arrival of the Taliban in Kabul, Afghanistan is now the number one country of origin of asylum seekers, replacing Syria which had been the leading country of origin for seven years until last July... [Read more](#)

Austria :

Karl Nehammer new Chancellor



Karl Nehammer was sworn in as Chancellor by Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen on 6 December. Previously Minister of the Interior, he will now be taking over the leadership of the coalition between the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and the Greens after being elected ÖVP President on 3 December. On 2 December, the former Chancellor and leader of the ÖVP, Sebastian Kurz, announced his retirement from politics, leading to the resignation of Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg who will become Foreign Minister again. The government comprises 15 ministers including 7 women... [Read more](#)

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France :

Journey to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia



French President Emmanuel Macron visited the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia on 3 and 4 December. He focused on cooperation on climate and global issues, especially during the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2022. During the visit, France and the Emirates signed a contract for the sale of 80 Rafale aircraft, and Saudi Arabia signed a contract for the purchase of 26 Airbus helicopters... [Read more](#)

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Guernsey provides new fishing permits



Following negotiations between France and the European Commission, Guernsey granted permanent fishing licences to 40 French vessels on 1 December and declared a further 3 vessels to be eligible. The vessels concerned can now continue fishing beyond 31 January 2022, when the current temporary licences expire. Brussels has asked London to resolve the issue of licences by 10 December... [Read more](#)

Lithuania :

Interview with the Lithuanian and French Presidents

French President Emmanuel Macron received his Lithuanian counterpart Gitanas Nausėda on 30 November. The two heads of state discussed responses to the use of



migrants by the Belarusian regime as a tool for political pressure on the EU. They discussed the strengthening of Lithuania's engagement in the Sahel within the Takuba Task Force... [Read more](#)

Sweden :

New Government



[more](#)

On 30 November, Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson presented her government to King Carl XVI Gustaf, officially taking office. The government is made up entirely of members of the Social Democratic Party and has 22 ministers, 11 of whom are women... [Read more](#)

Vatican :

Pope's visit to Cyprus and Greece



Pope Francis made an apostolic journey to Cyprus and Greece from 2 to 6 December. In particular, he reiterated the idea of forgiveness between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and called on Europe to change its migration policy and thus put an end to a "shipwreck of civilisation"... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Report by the Anti-Torture Committee on Croatia



[more](#)

In a report published on 3 December, the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) calls on the Croatian authorities to take measures to prevent migrants from being ill-treated by police officers and to ensure that cases of ill-treatment are effectively investigated... [Read more](#)

Moneyval Report on Lithuania



[more](#)

In a report published on 30 November, the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (Moneyval) recognised Lithuania's efforts to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. Nevertheless, there are still deficiencies for which its legislation has been judged "partially compliant" by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Lithuania will have to report to MONEYVAL in 2023 on further progress... [Read more](#)

Call to sign the convention on public health offences



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On 2 December, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Council of Europe Convention on counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes threatening public health (MEDICRIME), the Committee of Ministers called on states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention. While the Covid-19 pandemic has intensified drug trafficking, the MEDICRIME Convention allows for international co-operation between national authorities as well as effective prosecution of offenders to combat counterfeit vaccines or falsified medical products. The Convention has so far been signed by 18 states... [Read more](#)

Warning to Turkey



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The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has called on Turkey to release philanthropist and patron Osman Kavala and announced its intention to refer the case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) at its February meeting. In December 2019, the ECHR ruled that O. Kavala's detention was not based on sufficient incriminating evidence and demanded his immediate release... [Read more](#)

WTO :

Agreement on the trade of services

67 members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), including the European Union, reached an agreement on 2 December on cutting red tape in the trade in services. The agreement aims to harmonise qualification requirements and procedures, technical



standards, licensing requirements and procedures for service providers... [Read more](#)

NATO :

Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers



NATO Foreign Ministers met in Riga on 30 November to discuss the current tensions and the Russian military presence on the Ukraine-Russia border. At the end of the meeting, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg called on the Kremlin to withdraw its military presence on the border with Ukraine and also threatened Moscow with heavy political and economic retaliation in case of aggression by Ukraine... [Read more](#)

OECD :

Economic Outlook



In a report published on 1 December, the OECD forecasts global growth of 5.6% in 2021, 4.5% in 2022 and 3.2% in 2023. It notes that countries with low vaccination rates are experiencing slower economic recovery. It warns that the risk of a worsening health situation due to the Omicron variant and inflation are factors that could jeopardise these economic prospects... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Survey on Citizens and the Euro



According to a Eurobarometer published by the Commission on 3 December, 78% of respondents consider the euro to be a good thing for the Union and 69% that it is a good thing for their country. 77% are in favour of the recovery and resilience facility, which finances Member States' recovery plans... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Rise in inflation



Euro area annual inflation was 4.9% in November, up from 4.1% in October, according to Eurostat's flash estimate published on 30 November. Energy prices rose by 27.4%, compared with 23.7% in the previous month... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on VAT revenues in 2019



In a report published on 2 December on value added tax (VAT) revenues, the Commission estimates that Member States lost €134 billion in 2019 due to fraud, evasion and tax optimisation practices, as well as bankruptcies and insolvencies. Nevertheless, the Commission sees a rather positive trend as Member States have seen a decrease in the VAT gap of about €7 billion compared to the previous year, partly due to the aid measures put in place... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

ArteKino Festival



The European film festival ArteKino, organised by the channel Arte, is taking place online until 31 December. Twelve European films available in French, German, English, Spanish, Polish and Italian will be judged by public votes... [Read more](#)

Sophie Calle at the Pompidou Centre of Malaga



Until 17 April 2022, the Centre Pompidou in Málaga is presenting a monograph on the work of French visual artist Sophie Calle. The exhibition highlights almost forty years of creation through photographs, embroidered texts, visual and sound works that illustrate the themes that are dear to the artist, such as intimacy, love relationships and absence... [Read more](#)

Tomi Ungerer in Hamburg



The Centre for Contemporary Art Deichtorhallen in Hamburg is dedicating a retrospective exhibition to Tomi Ungerer until 24 April 2022 to mark the 90th anniversary of the French painter and cartoonist's death in 2019. More than 400 works are presented in an exhibition entitled "It's a question of freedom"... [Read more](#)

Cafés, the cradle of Europe



Exhibited on the gates of the Quai d'Orsay throughout the month of December, photographs reveal the importance of cafés as places of life and creation, but also of debates, gatherings of friends and meetings. A symbol of European culture, it is in cafés that the greatest European literary, cultural and artistic movements were born. Through the presentation of some of the most mythical cafés in Europe, the exhibition also traces the history of the formation of the great political, resistance and reflection movements of the last centuries... [Read more](#)

Festival of Light in Lyon



Lyon's Festival of Lights is taking place from 8 to 11 December, with a programme of 30 artistic lighting projects spread throughout the Lyon metropolis over four days... [Read more](#)

Contemporary Art Fair in Prague



The Prague Contemporary Art Fair is celebrating its 20th anniversary from 7 to 12 December and is presenting 190 original works of art from around the world... [Read more](#)

Steve McCurry at the Maillol Museum



The Musée Maillol in Paris is presenting a retrospective of Steve McCurry's photographs from 9 December to 29 May 2022. For the first time in Paris, 150 large-format photographs trace 40 years of his career around the world... [Read more](#)

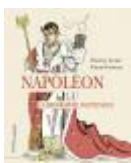
Ada Zielinska in Wroclaw



The work of artist and photographer Ada Zielinska is on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Wroclaw from 9 December to 7 March 2022. The artist uses the social and economic gap between Poland and Italy in the 1980s to give a distorted version of the ideal of life on the Italian coast... [Read more](#)

Napoleon's Bicentenary :

Napoleon. The unexpected biography



Thierry Lentz, a writer and historian specialising in the Napoleonic period, and Fanny Farieux, a cartoonist, have published a historical and humorous biography of Napoleon Bonaparte in a comic strip entitled "Napoleon. La biographie inattendue" published by Passés/Composés... [Read more](#)

Agenda :

7 December 2021

7
Dec

Brussels
Economic and Financial Affairs Council EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association
Council

8
Dec

8 December 2021
Germany
Election of Chancellor to the Bundestag

9
Dec

10 December 2021
Brussels
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

9
Dec

9-10 December 2021
Brussels
Justice and Home Affairs Council

13
Dec

13 December 2021
Brussels
Agriculture and Fisheries Council Foreign Affairs Council

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