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Has Europe's Hour Come?

Author: Antoine Cibirski



In the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Europeans responded quickly, firmly and unitedly: an unprecedented sanctions regime was adopted; funds were released to provide lethal weapons to Ukrainian forces and to assist refugees; Germany, Denmark, Finland and Sweden changed their approach to defence. While the Versailles Summit may have taken these advances on board, it is now a question of making them permanent.

[Read more](#)

Contents

Front page! : Editorial **Elections** : Malta **Foundation** : Publication - Belarus - Health/Europe - Education - Atlas/Europe **Ukraine/Russia** : Parliament - Sanctions/Russia - Electricity - Refugees - Council of Europe - Justice - UN - G7 - Financial Institutions - OECD - IMF **Commission** : Market/Capital - Funds/Brexit **Council** : Carbon/Tarifcation - Eurogroup - Employment/Social - Batteries - Public Procurement **ECB** : Bank/Rates **Germany** : NATO **Belgium** : Nuclear **France** : Plan/Resilience - Senate/Objective 55 **Ireland** : Fine/Facebook - Intel **Italy** : Energy **Moldova** : Support/Frontex **Council of Europe** : Belarus - Poland - Turkey **Eurostat** : Inflation **Studies/Reports** : Arms - Happiness/World **Culture** : Solidarity/Ukraine - Exhibition/Budapest - Exhibition/Amsterdam - Exhibitions/Athens - Exhibition/Warsaw - Exhibition/Paris - Exhibition/Madrid - Exhibition/Helsinki - Festival/Berlin - Jazz/Aberdeen - Cinema/Vilnius - Art/Brussels

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

Front page! :

The jerrycan or freedom



Only force, defeat or the fear of defeat can make Putin back down. Since we refuse to use military means, the most effective course of action would be to stop all purchases of energy from Russia, whose budget and weapons are financed by gas and oil revenues, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani. In this case, the price of our freedom is the price of hardship... [Read more](#)

Elections :

General Elections in Malta



The Maltese parliamentary elections will be held on 26 March. According to the polls, the Labour Party will win the election for the third time in a row. For the first time 16-18 year olds can vote and the electoral law has been amended so that a mechanism can be implemented to increase the share of women in parliament. The pandemic gave the outgoing head of government, Robert Abela, a comfortable lead over the nationalist party since his handling of the situation seems to have been well regarded by his fellow citizens... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

Unreservedly European



In his book, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Foundation, freely addresses his fellow citizens, who must refuse to accept the lies about the European Union, while at the same time making a constant contribution to improving it. This book, published by Marie B, is available in paper format on the Foundation's website and in bookshops. Order your copy... [Read more](#)

Belarus: chronology of a revolution in progress



The Council of Europe suspended its relations with Belarus on 17 March. The Committee of Ministers also suspended its technical co-operation with the country and its right to participate in all Council of Europe meetings and activities. To follow the latest developments in the crisis sparked by the rigged presidential election of August 2020 and the repression of the democratic opposition, the Foundation offers you a chronology of events... [Read more](#)

Map of Health Measures and Travel Conditions in Europe



European countries are relaxing their anti-Covid health measures: in the Netherlands since 15 March indoor and outdoor areas are open and no longer subject to restrictions, and from 23 March it will no longer be compulsory to wear a mask on public transport. In Bulgaria, as of 21 March, the health pass has been suspended and masks are no longer required. Most restrictions were lifted in Slovakia on 14 March, with the exception of FFP2 masks in enclosed areas. To follow developments and find out what measures are in place in the Member States, the Foundation provides a comprehensive map of the measures in place. An essential, regularly updated resource..... [Read more](#)

European Education(s)?



On 25 March, the Joseph Károlyi Foundation is organising an international seminar on the subject of "European Education(s)" as part of the French Presidency of the European Union. The seminar, in which the Foundation is a partner, is being held in Budapest with speakers from various European countries. Please register via the link for the event... [Read more](#)

The Permanent Atlas of the European Union is available



For a better understanding of Europe in 2022, the Permanent Atlas of the European Union, published by Marie B Editions, is a unique work that offers a complete and easy-to-access view of the European Union, the euro zone and each of its 27 Member States, with numerous maps. It is available in English in digital version... [Read more](#)

Ukraine/Russia :

Ukrainian President addresses numerous parliaments



On 20 March, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the Israeli Knesset and asked why Israel had not supplied arms to Ukraine or imposed sanctions on Russia. On 17 March, he addressed the Bundestag in a video conference in which he urged Germany to tear down what he called a "wall" erected in Europe against freedom. The day before, he had addressed the US Congress where he reiterated the demand for a no-fly zone over Ukraine. Following his speech, US President Joe Biden announced an additional \$800 million in aid. On 15 March, Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the Canadian Parliament... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#) | [Other link](#) | [Other link](#) | [Other link](#)

Fourth package of measures against Russia



The Council decided on 15 March to ban transactions with certain Russian state-owned companies, the provision of credit rating services and new investments in the energy sector. The Council also introduced export restrictions on equipment, technology and services for the energy sector and new trade restrictions on iron, steel and luxury goods. The Council also decided to sanction leading oligarchs, lobbyists, propagandists

and large companies linked to Russia's industrial and defence base by tightening export restrictions on dual-use goods... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#) | [Other link](#) | [Other link](#)

The Ukrainian and Moldovan electricity grids connected to the Europe network



The Ukrainian and Moldovan electricity grids were connected to the European network on 16 March. This synchronisation facilitates exchanges between countries and helps to solve electricity supply problems. Ukraine was linked to the Russian grid until the invasion on 24 February. "Ukraine has become a member of the European energy union," said President Volodymyr Zelensky... [Read more](#)

Clarification on temporary protection and release of resources for cohesion



The European Commission published on 18 March guidelines for the proper implementation of the Directive providing temporary protection to persons fleeing the war in Ukraine. They provide Member States with details of the conditions for such protection and encourage them to extend it to persons who do not meet all the criteria. On 16 March, the Council approved a legislative proposal that will mobilise funds under cohesion policy to help refugees fleeing Russian military aggression... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Exclusion of Russia from the Council of Europe



At an extraordinary meeting on 16 March, the Committee of Ministers decided, under the procedure initiated under Article 8 of the Council of Europe's Statute, that Russia cease to be a member of the Council of Europe as of 16 March, 26 years after its accession. Following this decision, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) decided to suspend the examination of all applications against Russia pending consideration of the legal consequences of the Committee of Ministers' Resolution on the Court's work... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

International Court of Justice calls on Russia to cease operations in Ukraine



On 16 March, the International Court of Justice called on Russia to immediately suspend its military operations in Ukraine and to ensure that no unit "which might be acting under its direction or support" takes further military action. Following an application by Kyiv against Russian allegations of genocide on Ukrainian territory, used to justify the invasion, the Court said it was not in possession of evidence to justify Moscow's claims. The decision was taken almost unanimously. Only Russia and China voted against... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#) | [Other link](#)

UN Alert on shortages in Ukraine



The UN warned on 18 March of the humanitarian needs in the besieged cities, as 3.3 million people have fled the country and more than 2 million are internally displaced. Humanitarian cargo is pre-positioned in Sumy to help, among other things, the 200,000 people without access to water around Donetsk and the 100,000 families without electricity in the Luhansk region. The World Food Programme (WFP) has also pre-positioned food and food rations near besieged towns such as Mariupol where "humanitarian aid has been virtually not allowed in". According to the WHO, health care, directly targeted by the attacks, is suffering from shortages of medical supplies... [Read more](#)

G7 Statements on the war in Ukraine



The Heads of State and Government and Ministers of the Group of Seven (G7) have condemned Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. In a statement on 15 March, the G7 strongly endorsed the seven pillars presented by the IAEA Director General to agree on a framework for the safety and security of nuclear facilities for peaceful purposes in Ukraine. In addition, in a video conference on 17 March, in which the European Union High Representative participated, G7 Ministers demanded that Russia comply with the International Court of Justice's request to immediately halt the assault on Ukraine. They stated that the G7 and its allies are ready to increase pressure against Russia and to increase aid to Ukraine... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Joint statement by heads of financial institutions on the war in Ukraine

On 17 March, the heads of international financial institutions including the EBRD, EIB, CEB, IMF and World Bank issued a joint statement on their responses to the war in Ukraine. Among other things, the EBRD authorised €2 billion to meet the immediate needs of Ukrainians and the EIB solidarity financing of €2 billion, including €668 million in cash. The IMF approved \$1.4 billion in emergency financing. The total amount of aid mobilised by the World Bank for Ukraine now stands at over \$925 million... [Read more](#)



Assessment of the economic impact of the war in Ukraine



On 17 March, the OECD published the first assessment of the impact of the war in Ukraine on the economy. According to the organisation, global economic growth could be more than 1% lower than projected before the conflict, as much as 1.4 for the Eurozone and 0.88 for the US. Inflation could be at least 2.5 percentage points higher globally. According to the same assessment, fiscal measures of about 0.5% of GDP could mitigate the economic impact of the war without increasing inflation... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

World impact of the war in Ukraine



On 16 March, the IMF warned that the war in Ukraine could have a significant impact on the global economy, causing a significant decline in growth and an acceleration of inflation, including through higher commodity prices, disruption of trade and supply chains, and a historic increase in refugee flows. While oil import-dependent economies risk increased budget and trade deficits, European governments could also face additional budgetary pressures due to spending on energy security and defence... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Proposal for Capital Markets Union



The Commission proposed on 16 March amendments to the Central Securities Depositories (CSD) Regulation to reduce compliance costs and regulatory burdens on CSDs by improving their passport regime. It aims to help them offer more banking services across national borders. The aim is to make securities settlement in the EU safer and more efficient, thereby increasing the attractiveness of capital markets and thus contributing to the financing of the economy... [Read more](#)

Approval of further payments in virtue of the Brexit adjustment reserve



On 14 March, the Commission approved the payment of more than €2 billion to 12 Member States as part of the Brexit adjustment reserve. €819.2 million will be made available by the end of March and the rest by April 2023. Member States have until the end of December 2023 to cover expenditure committed and paid since January 2020 in areas such as job creation or support to the regions... [Read more](#)

Council :

Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers



On 15 March, the Ministers of Economy and Finance discussed the state of implementation of the sanctions against Russia. They reached an agreement on the regulation of the border carbon adjustment mechanism that aims to prevent carbon leakage and encourage states to introduce pricing policies. The mechanism, which is intended to operate in parallel with the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), aims to discourage Member States from importing carbon-intensive products. Its governance will be centralised through the creation of the new registry of registrants... [Read more](#)

Eurogroup Meeting



On 14 March, the 19 Finance Ministers of the euro area agreed on the need to maintain cooperative and flexible fiscal policies in the light of recent events. They agreed on the introduction of a gradual, state-specific fiscal adjustment to reduce the highest public debts, while encouraging investment and reform in the medium term. In addition, the Ministers promised to urgently examine concrete solutions, in line with the Commission's communication on the coordination of budgetary policies for 2023, to deal with the rise in energy prices... [Read more](#)

Meeting of Employment and Social Policy Ministers



Meeting on 14 March, the Ministers for Employment, Social Policy and Health adopted a position on the draft directive aimed at improving equality between men and women on company boards. The ministers also approved conclusions on the annual strategy for sustainable growth. They stated that people displaced by the conflict in Ukraine should be given assistance in reception and support, access to the labour market and housing, and social support... [Read more](#)

Other link

Position concerning the regulation of batteries



The Council adopted its position on 17 March regarding the new battery regulation by introducing stricter waste management requirements in particular for batteries for light means of transport. It extends the scope of the regulation to batteries for electric vehicles and ready-to-use battery models. The position ensures a right of initiative for Member States to propose restrictions on the presence of hazardous substances in batteries... [Read more](#)

Creation of a new international instrument on public procurement



On 14 March, Parliament and Council negotiators adopted a common position on the international instrument on public procurement aimed at creating a level playing field between players. The instrument will encourage the opening of public procurement markets to European economic operators and introduce measures limiting access to EU public tenders for non-European players from countries where the conditions of access are not similar to those of European companies. In addition, negotiators have ensured that economic actors from the least developed states are exempted from the instrument's measures... [Read more](#)

Other link

ECB :

Monetary Policy in an uncertain world



In a speech delivered on 17 March, Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank, commented on the current situation and its impact on investment and inflation. She recalled that, in the coming months, monetary policy in the euro area will be based on three pillars: optionality, gradualism and flexibility. On 17 March, the Bank of England raised its key rate by a quarter of a point to 0.75%, for the third consecutive time. On 16 March, the Federal Reserve followed suit, raising the rate to between 0.25% and 0.50%... [Read more](#)

Other link | Other link

Germany :

Meeting with German Chancellor and NATO Secretary General



In a meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on 17 March, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz reaffirmed that Germany would contribute to NATO and do what was necessary to ensure the security of all allies, especially those in the East. The German government had authorised €100 billion in funding for the Bundeswehr (German army). In addition, Germany will spend 2% of its GDP on defence, in line with the agreements of the 2014 NATO summit... [Read more](#)

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Belgium :

Belgium delays its exit from nuclear power



On 18 March, the Belgian government announced that it would delay its nuclear phase-out by 10 years. The nuclear generators Tihange 3 and Doel 4 will therefore continue to operate until 2035. In December 2021, the ruling coalition had announced a halt to nuclear operations in the country by 2025. The decision comes at a time when Member States are seeking to move away from Russian energy dependency... [Read more](#)

Other link

France :

Announcement of a resilience plan



On 16 March, French Prime Minister Jean Castex presented the resilience plan in response to the economic effects of the war in Ukraine. The €0.15 per litre fuel discount has been extended to natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas. The government plans to reduce

heating in public buildings and help individuals change their boilers. Energy-intensive companies could receive up to €25 million in subsidies to compensate for their losses. 400 million € is planned to support agricultural activity over the next four months; for fishermen, financial aid of €0.35 per litre of diesel is planned until 31 July... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Senate proposal on the "Adjustment to fit for 55" package



On 16 March, the French Senate published its motion for a European resolution on the "Adjustment to the fit for 55" package, presented on 14 July 2021 by the European Commission. The Senate supports the objectives of the package, while emphasizing the issue of the social, economic and territorial acceptability of the climate transition... [Read more](#)

Ireland :

17 million € fine against Facebook in Ireland



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Facebook's parent company Meta was sanctioned on 15 March by Ireland for failing to comply with EU data protection regulations. The decision follows an investigation by the Irish Data Protection Commission in 2018. It concluded that the social network did not put in place the necessary measures to comply with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) adopted in 2016 by the European Union... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Intel's extensive investment plan in Europe



On 15 March, the American semiconductor company Intel unveiled a €33 billion investment plan in Europe, which could reach €80 billion over ten years. It is making the European Union the new nerve centre of its production, with the installation of a "mega manufacturing site" in Magdeburg in Germany, as well as the doubling of the Leixlip site in Ireland and the creation of an R&D centre in Saclay in France. Other investments are also planned in Spain, Italy and Poland... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Italy :

Meeting between Italian, Spanish, Greek and Portuguese Prime Ministers



The President of the Italian Council, Mario Draghi, and his Spanish, Pedro Sanchez, Greek, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and Portuguese counterparts, Antonio Costa, met in Rome on 18 March to define their common positions for the European Council of 24 and 25 March. On this occasion, they repeated the need for the European Union to take urgent measures to limit the rise in energy prices... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Moldova :

Decision on Frontex operational support to Moldova



On 17 March, the Council adopted a decision on the signing of an agreement between the European Union and Moldova to provide Chişinău with Frontex operational support "as soon as possible" in response to the arrival of more than 300 000 refugees fleeing Ukraine. The agreement is based on the deployment of Frontex teams to support the Moldovan authorities in tasks such as registration and border checks... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

The Council of Europe suspends its relations with Belarus



On 17 March, the Council of Europe announced the suspension of relations with Belarus because of its active participation in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a non-signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights, Belarus is not a full member of the Council of Europe. Nevertheless, the Committee of Ministers has deprived Minsk of any form of co-operation under the conventions signed by the country as well as the four partial agreements of which it was a member... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

European Court of Human Rights condemns Poland



On 15 March, the European Court of Human Rights condemned Poland following the dismissal, without appeal, of a member of Poland's National Judicial Council. Denouncing Poland's 2017 judicial reform which ended the terms of office of judges on the National Judicial

Council elected under the old system, the European judges concluded that this interruption of office violated the right of access to the court. Poland was ordered to pay €30,000 to the dismissed judge... [Read more](#)

Philanthropist Osman Kavala held in custody



On 21 March the Turkish court decided that Osman Kavala, a Turkish businessman and philanthropist, detained since 2017 without trial, will remain in prison. Charged with "attempting to overthrow" the government he will appear in court again on 22 April. Despite threats of sanctions from the Council of Europe, Osman Kavala faces life imprisonment... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Eurostat :

Rise in inflation



EU annual inflation was 6.2% in February, up from 5.6% in January, and the euro area annual rate was 5.9%, up from 5.1%, according to data released by Eurostat on 17 March. The lowest annual rates were recorded in Malta and France (4.2%), while the highest were in Lithuania (14%), Estonia (11.6%) and the Czech Republic (10%)... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

New data regarding the international transfer of arms



International arms transfers decreased slightly between 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 (-4.6%). However, exports from the US and France have increased significantly, as have imports by states in Europe (+19%), East Asia (+20%) and Oceania (+59%), according to news published on 14 March by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)... [Read more](#)

World Happiness Report



Since 2013, the United Nations (UN) has celebrated the International Day of Happiness on 20 March. On this occasion, the UN calls for "broader, more equitable and balanced economic growth that promotes sustainable development, poverty eradication, and the happiness and well-being of all people". This year, the International Day of Happiness celebrates its tenth anniversary. The World Happiness Report 2022 ranks Finland, Denmark and Iceland as the happiest countries... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Culture :

Solidarity with Ukrainians in the world of culture



In Europe, the world of culture is showing its solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Many opera houses, such as the Berlin Philharmonic or the São Carlos National Theatre in Lisbon, are organising concerts to support the victims of the war in Ukraine. Concerts for peace will take place at the Opéra Garnier in Paris on 27 March and at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan on 4 April. The film world is also mobilising against the war, and cultural festivals such as the Cannes Film Festival and the Venice Biennale have closed their doors to "anyone linked to the Russian government"... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#) | [Other link](#) | [Other link](#)

New acquisitions at the Ludwig Museum Budapest



The Ludwig Museum in Budapest is presenting its new acquisitions of works from the neo-avant-garde movements of the Pécs workshop and the Bosch group and Bosch of Vojvodina until 24 April. Numerous themes such as historical memory, self-portraiture and the place of the artist in society are explored during the exhibition... [Read more](#)

William Van de Velde and son in Amsterdam



Until 8 May, the Maritime Museum in Amsterdam is presenting the exhibition "William Van de Velde & Zoon", which traces the work of the famous 17th-century painter and his son. Both artists were active in important battles at sea and are renowned for having perfected their art close to the action... [Read more](#)

Paintings by Nikos Engonopoulos in Athens



The Foundation for Visual Arts B. M. Theocharakis is honouring the surrealist painter Nikos Engonopoulos with an exhibition of 148 works by the artist. The works, on loan from art galleries, foundations and private collections, are on display until 19 June... [Read more](#)

Jarosław Modzelewski at the Opera



The gallery of the National Opera in Warsaw is presenting an exhibition on Jarosław Modzelewski until 17 April. The founder of the Gruppa art movement is honoured in this exhibition, which reviews the various themes that influenced his works... [Read more](#)

Delacroix and Nature



Until 27 June, the Eugène Delacroix Museum in Paris is hosting the exhibition Delacroix and Nature. Tracing the unique link between the painter and this central element of his work, the exhibition offers visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in nature, through rare landscapes and animals painted by Eugène Delacroix... [Read more](#)

From Posada to Isotype, from Kollwitz to Catlett



From 23 March to 29 August, the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid is presenting the exhibition "From Posada to Isotype, from Kollwitz to Catlett", which explores printed modes of communication considered obsolete in the age of technology, such as woodcuts, linocuts and lithography. The exhibition focuses on the major figures of printmaking at the end of the 19th century, German expressionism, the Gráfica Popular print workshop in Mexico and the "Isotype" project... [Read more](#)

Dance in Finland



From 25 March to 11 September, the Helsinki Museum of Fine Arts (HAM) is presenting an exhibition on dance and the visual arts. It features works from the collections of Finnish museums from 1880 to the present day... [Read more](#)

MaerzMusik in Berlin



The city of Berlin is hosting the contemporary music festival MaerzMusik until 27 March. Seeking to explore the concept of time and its relationship to art and life, it offers concerts, performances, installations, film presentations and discussions throughout the German capital... [Read more](#)

Jazz Festival in Aberdeen



Until 27 March, a jazz festival is taking place in Aberdeen, Scotland. This major event will feature over 100 international artists. Concerts will be held all over the city and there will be the opportunity to participate in musical workshops... [Read more](#)

Film Festival in Vilnius



From 24 March to 3 April, Vilnius is hosting the Kino Pavasaris festival, where around 100 international films, documentaries and shorts will be shown. In addition to the screenings, there will be debates and workshops. On the 23rd, the eve of the festival, there will be a Ukrainian Film Day. All proceeds will be donated to the Ukraine support fund... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Affordable Art Fair in Brussels

From 23 to 27 March, the Affordable Art Fair will be held in Brussels, offering artworks priced at €7,500 or less. Coming from 75 local, national and international galleries,

Agenda :

21
Mar

21 March 2022
Brussels
"Foreign Affairs" Council "Defence" Council "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council

22
Mar

22 March 2022
Brussels
General Affairs Council

23
Mar

23 March 2022
Brussels
Tripartite Social Summit

23
Mar

23 and 24 March 2022
Brussels
Session of Parliament

24
Mar

24 March 2022
Brussels
NATO Extraordinary Summit G7 Meeting

24
Mar

24/25 March 2022
Brussels
European Council

25
Mar

25 March 2022
Brussels
Euro Zone Summit

26
Mar

26 March 2022
Malta
General Elections

28
Mar

28 March 2022
Brussels
Extraordinary Meeting of the "Justice and Internal Affairs" Council

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