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## Global food crisis: Europe must choose between retreat and responsibility

Author: Emmanuelle Ducros



The war in Ukraine is jeopardising the world's supply of grain and fertiliser. For the European Union, the world's leading agricultural power, the situation calls for a rethink of its policies, which could result in production cuts at a time when global needs are increasing.

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### Front page! :

#### The Right of the People



In the discussions to end the war in Ukraine, it should not be forgotten that only the Ukrainians will decide on their future, and that they will have strong and legitimate demands to ensure that the Russian aggressor does not return, recalls Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

### Elections :

#### Viktor Orban win for the fourth consecutive time in Hungary



The Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPSZ), led by outgoing Prime Minister Viktor Orban, won a large victory in the parliamentary elections held in Hungary on 3 April. The party won 53.0% of the vote and 135 seats (+2 compared to the previous elections in 2018), retaining its two-thirds majority. The opposition alliance United for Hungary, led by Peter Marki-Zay, obtained 35.04% of the vote and 56 seats (-10)... [Read more](#)

Elections in Slovenia on 24 April: Janez Jansa might come out ahead without being able to form a majority



On 24 April, the Slovenians are due to renew the 90 members of the Drzavni Zbor (Assembly), the lower house of the bicameral parliament. The Democratic Party (SDS) of outgoing Prime Minister Janez Jansa is running neck and neck with the Movement for Freedom (GS) of Robert Golob. The first party is expected to win 16.8% of the vote and the second 16.7%. The Social Democrats (SD) are estimated to win 9.4% and the Left (L), New Slovenia (NSi) 5%... [Read more](#)

## Foundation :

### Unreservedly European



In his book, Jean-Dominique Giuliani clearly addresses his fellow citizens, who must refuse to accept the lies about the European Union while at the same time contributing to its improvement. This book, published by Marie B, is available in paper format on the Foundation's website and in bookshops. Order your copy!.. [Read more](#)

### What new European economic rules to ensure growth?



On 31 March, the Foundation organised a video conference on economic rules that can promote growth in Europe. You can watch the debate in full... [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. 23 plans have so far been approved by the Commission, including Sweden's on 29 March, 21 countries have received the planned pre-financing, and 2 countries have received a first tranche after meeting a series of targets. The Commission has not yet approved the Hungarian and Polish plans due to the infringement of the rule of law. The Foundation provides you with an interactive map of the plans country by country, to see the amounts, timetables and priorities... [Read more](#)

### Map of Health Measures and Travel Conditions in Europe



Since 1 April, the state of emergency has been lifted in Italy, all health restrictions have been lifted in Bulgaria, and masks are only required in public transport and medical facilities in Estonia. In Spain, Covid-19 is now considered as influenza. To follow the evolution of the situation and to know the measures in place in the Member States, the Foundation offers you a complete map of the measures in place. An indispensable, regularly updated resource... [Read more](#)

### Permanent Atlas of the European Union



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

## Ukraine/Russia :

### Speeches by Volodymyr Zelensky to the parliaments



Ukrainian President Zelensky has addressed the Belgian, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian and Australian parliaments. He urged Dutch MPs to stop buying Russian gas. He asked for Danish help in the reconstruction of Mykolaiv, and called on the Belgians to continue delivering arms to Ukraine. In the Norwegian parliament, he stressed the Ukrainian need for anti-ship missiles, anti-aircraft systems and armoured vehicle systems. He also called for more sanctions against Russia and military aid for Ukraine when speaking to Australian MPs... [Read more](#)

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Visit to Kyiv by the President of the European Parliament



Visiting Kiev on 1 April, the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, reaffirmed the European Union's support for Ukraine before the Ukrainian Parliament. She guaranteed that new sanctions will be taken against Russia and that Ukrainian refugees will be taken care of by the Member States before they can return home. She said Europe would help rebuild bombed-out cities, including through the creation of a solidarity fund. She reiterated her support for Ukraine's bid to become a candidate country for European integration... [Read more](#)

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#### En of Russian gas imports by the Baltic States



Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania decided on 1 April to stop importing Russian gas, explaining that they can rely partly on underground gas reserves in Latvia. Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda called on other EU countries to follow the Baltic countries' example and stop importing Russian gas... [Read more](#)

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#### Release of €17 billion for refugees fleeing Ukraine



The Council approved on 4 April the release of an additional €420 million in aid for the reception of people fleeing the war in Ukraine. It also adopted the CARE regulation allowing Member States to redirect unallocated cohesion policy funds for the period 2014-2020 and from the European Fund for the Most Deprived. In addition, Member States can use up to €9.5 billion under the 2022 tranche of REACT-EU. In total, almost €17 billion is available... [Read more](#)

#### Condemnation of Russian atrocities



The European Union's High Representative, Josep Borrell, condemned on 4 April the atrocities perpetrated by Russian forces in Ukraine, in particular in the town of Boutcha. He held the Russian authorities responsible and recalled that Europe supports the investigations by the International Criminal Court prosecutor on war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as the work of the commission of enquiry of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights... [Read more](#)

#### Proposal for exchange of hryvnia banknotes by persons fleeing Ukraine



The Commission proposed on 1 April to offer people fleeing Ukraine the same conditions to exchange their Ukrainian currency, hryvnia, into the local currency of the host country... [Read more](#)

#### Europol deploys operational teams for refugees



On 1 April, Europol announced the deployment of operational teams to European countries bordering Ukraine to support them in receiving Ukrainian refugees. These teams, consisting of Europol specialists and guest officers, assist national authorities by organising secondary security checks and identifying terrorists and criminals who may be attempting to enter the EU through the flow of refugees... [Read more](#)

#### Risk of food shortages



The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said on 29 March that as a result of the war in Ukraine food shortages are expected in the coming weeks and months. The hostilities have caused "major disruptions to supply chains and markets throughout Ukraine and people are facing challenges in accessing food"... [Read more](#)

#### Humanitarian aid efforts



The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) warned on 1 April that the humanitarian situation in Ukraine is worsening. It has so far helped 1 million people affected by the war and aims to support more than 3 million internally displaced people in the coming months. It has pre-positioned nearly 40,000 tonnes of food for distribution. For its part, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced that the attempt to evacuate humanitarian aid from the city of Mariupol had failed and that humanitarian convoys could not pass... [Read more](#)

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## Commission :

### Proposals for mainstreaming the circular economy



The Commission presented proposals on 30 March encouraging circular business models, extending the existing framework on eco-design and empowering consumers. It also proposed its new strategy on sustainable and recyclable textile products. Finally, the Commission tabled a proposal to stimulate the construction products market and ensure that its regulatory framework is in line with the aspirations of the

Green Deal... [Read more](#)

### Strengthening geographical indications for agricultural products



On 1 April, the Commission presented measures to revise the system of geographical indications for wines, spirits and agricultural products. It proposes to shorten and simplify the registration procedure, to strengthen the protection of geographical indications online, to encourage the social, environmental or economic sustainability of production, and to strengthen the role of producer groups in the management and development of their geographical indication... [Read more](#)

## Parliament :

### Delegation to Moldova



A delegation of seven MEPs from the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Security and Defence Subcommittee visited Moldova from 31 March to 2 April to reaffirm their support for the authorities in the context of the war in Ukraine. They discussed Moldova's application for EU membership and encouraged the government to undertake the necessary reforms. On 4 April, the Council approved €150 million in assistance to strengthen Moldova's resilience and cover its financing needs... [Read more](#)

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## Council :

### Mid-term review of the French Presidency of the Council



On 30 March, the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs presented a communication to the French Council of Ministers on the mid-term review of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Major progress was made in three areas in particular: the reciprocity instrument in access to public contracts was the subject of a complete agreement on 14 March after 10 years of negotiations, the border carbon adjustment mechanism was the subject of a political agreement on 15 March, and the legislation on digital markets (Digital Markets Act) was the subject of a complete agreement on 24 March... [Read more](#)

### Extension of the roaming system at no extra cost



The Council gave its final approval on 4 April to the extension of the free roaming system until 2032. The regulation, which will enter into force on 1 July, protects EU citizens who will be able to continue making calls, sending texts and surfing the web while travelling in other EU Member States without incurring extra costs... [Read more](#)

### Meeting of Health Ministers



On 29 March, Health Ministers reiterated their support for the Member States providing medical care for Ukrainian refugees. They stressed the need to define a common vaccine strategy, emphasising coordination with the Covax initiative and the adaptation of vaccine procurement contracts. The Ministers discussed the strengthening of EU cooperation and action in the field of rare diseases, based in particular on the future European Health Data Space... [Read more](#)

### Eurogroup meeting



Eurozone Finance Ministers discussed the economic consequences of the war in Ukraine on 4 April, underlining the forthcoming slowdown in growth without raising alarm about the risk of an inflationary spiral. They recalled the importance of adopting an "agile trade policy" and the need to encourage private and public investment. They discussed the digital euro and the need to take into account the protection of privacy. For the first time, they discussed the evolution of the housing market and its consequences... [Read more](#)

## Diplomacy :

### EU-China Summit



At the EU-China summit on 1 April, the presidents of the European Council and the Commission, Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen, called on Chinese President Xi Jinping to work to end the war in Ukraine and not to help Russia circumvent sanctions. They stressed the need for a transparent and competitive environment for the digital economy and discussed the relationship with Hong Kong and the human rights situation in China. Both sides reiterated the importance of their cooperation in the fight against pandemics and climate change... [Read more](#)

### Africa: partnerships for sustainable investments



The Commission announced on 31 March the priorities of the partnership with Niger. The €300 million partnership focuses on growth, education and food security. Côte d'Ivoire has launched projects worth €58 million to support education and "sustainable and digital growth" in the cocoa sector. The Commission announced a contribution of €44.7 million to strengthen water infrastructure in Ghana... [Read more](#)

## Court of Justice :

### Decree on the independence and impartiality of judges in Poland



In response to a question from the Polish Supreme Court, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled on 29 March that the fact that a judge was appointed at a time when the Member State was a communist regime does not call into question the independence or impartiality of that judge. It also considered that the appointment of judges by the current National Council of the Judiciary, which is considered non-independent, is not sufficient to call into question their impartiality and independence... [Read more](#)

## Germany :

### Economic Outlook



The German Council of Wise Men (GCEE) estimated on 30 March that the war in Ukraine has considerably worsened the economic outlook. It forecasts German GDP growth at 1.8% in 2022 and 3.6% in 2023. Due to rising fuel prices, it expects inflation to be 6.1% in 2022 and 3.4% in 2023... [Read more](#)

## France :

### Latest polls just one week from the Presidential election



Polls published a week before the first round of the French presidential election, which will be held on 10 April, put incumbent President Emmanuel Macron in the lead (26-28%) ahead of the far-right National Rally candidate Marine Le Pen (21-21.5%), the radical-left France Insoumise candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon (15-15.5%), far-right candidate Eric Zemmour (11%) and right-wing Republican candidate Valérie Pécresse (9.5%). 63% of registered voters said they were quite certain to vote. The level of abstention could exceed 28%, the record for the first round of voting in 2002... [Read more](#)

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## The Netherlands :

### First version of the recovery plan



On 28 March, the Netherlands published a first version of its recovery plan as part of the European NextGenerationEU plan. This plan, worth €7.7 billion, i.e. €3 billion more than the sum allocated by the Union, still needs to be debated by the Parliament. It includes 5 pillars: ecological transition, digital transformation, social and territorial cohesion, health and economic, social and institutional resilience, and inclusive and sustainable growth... [Read more](#)

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## Serbia :

### Presidential and legislative elections



On 3 April, the presidential and parliamentary elections in Serbia took place. Incumbent President Aleksandar Vucic was re-elected with 59% in the first round. His Progressive Party won 121 out of 250 seats in the National Assembly, losing its absolute majority... [Read more](#)

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**Vatican :**

**Pope's trip to Malta**



During his trip to Malta on 2-3 April, Pope Francis once again condemned the "sacrilegious war" in the "martyred" Ukraine after the discovery of civilian corpses caused shock and outrage... [Read more](#)

**Council of Europe :**

**GRECO reports on Spain, France, Luxembourg and Serbia**



The Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) has published reports on Spain, France, Luxembourg and Serbia, noting the progress made and pointing out shortcomings in the implementation of its recommendations... [Read more](#)

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**Conflict areas: new recommendation on the use of information**



On 31 March, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation on the use of information obtained in conflict zones as evidence in criminal proceedings. Such information, provided that it has been obtained in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights and the rule of law, may be used in the context of the conviction of terrorist activities... [Read more](#)

**OECD :**

**Declaration regarding a healthy resilient environment for all**



On 30-31 March, ministers and representatives from 38 OECD countries adopted a declaration on strengthening climate action in which they pledged to do more to fight plastic pollution, align post-Covid-19 recovery plans with environmental goals and accelerate action to limit global warming to 1.5°C... [Read more](#)

**IMF :**

**Report on Cyprus**



On 30 March, the IMF published its mission report on economic development in Cyprus in 2022. It notes that the country is exposed to the consequences of the war in Ukraine and forecasts a drop in the GDP growth rate from 5.5% in 2021 to 2% in 2022. It recommends an adjustment of Cyprus' fiscal and budgetary policies... [Read more](#)

**Eurostat :**

**Decline in unemployment**



The unemployment rate in the European Union rose to 6.2% in February, compared with 6.3% in January, and 8.2% in February 2021, according to data published by Eurostat on 31 March. In the euro area, it was 6.8% in February, compared with 6.9% in January and 7.1% in February 2021... [Read more](#)

**Inflation increase in March**



Annual inflation in the euro area rose to 7.5% in March from 5.9% in February, according to Eurostat's estimate published on 1 April. Energy is again expected to show the highest increase (44.7%, compared to 32% in February)... [Read more](#)

**Eurobarometer :**

**Survey on SMEs, the use of resources and "green markets"**



European SMEs are taking action to move their businesses towards more sustainable practices, according to a Eurobarometer survey published on 28 March. 89% of SMEs surveyed have taken steps to become more resource efficient by reducing waste (64% of cases), saving energy (61%) and saving materials (57%). The study will be used by the Commission to help SMEs become more sustainable as part of the Industrial Strategy... [Read more](#)

## Studies/Reports :

### NATO Annual Report



On 31 March, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg published his Annual Report for 2021. Looking back on the central events of the past year, such as the Brussels Summit in June, cooperation with Ukraine, and the adoption of the NATO 2030 Agenda, he reaffirmed the need for Europe and North America to help each other in these troubled times... [Read more](#)

### European Securities and Markets Authority reports



On 30 March, the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) published its report on enforcement and regulation of corporate reporting. 711 reviews of financial statements were carried out resulting in sanctions against 250 issuers for non-compliance with international accounting standards. On 28 March, the Commission published its final report on the EU carbon market in which it makes a number of policy recommendations to improve transparency and market oversight... [Read more](#)

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### Report on the implementation of ECHR decisions



On 30 March, the IMF published its mission report on economic development in Cyprus in 2022. It notes that the country is exposed to the consequences of the war in Ukraine and forecasts a drop in the GDP growth rate from 5.5% in 2021 to 2% in 2022. It recommends an adjustment of Cyprus' fiscal and budgetary policies... [Read more](#)

### New infographic tool on trade and tariff data



On 31 March, the WTO launched a dashboard that consolidates its statistics and provides faster access to the organisation's trade and tariff data. The new tool features customisable charts and maps for better visualisation of data... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

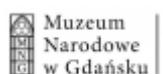
### Solidarity with Ukrainians in the world of culture



Cultural events in support of Ukraine continue in Europe. In France, the Château de Versailles and the Département des Yvelines are offering a charity concert on 8 April, and in Toulouse the Gesu music associations are organising a "music for peace" festival. In Germany, two concerts are being held at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg on 11 and 12 April, featuring the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, Ensemble Resonanz and the NDR Vokalensemble. In Spain, three orchestras and 120 singers perform on 8 April at the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona in a call for peace. In Poland, the cultural centre in Racibórz, Silesia, is offering a free concert on 9 April, during which a food drive for Ukrainians is being organised... [Read more](#)

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### Meetings on Ukrainian art in Gdansk



The National Museum in Gdansk is offering a series of lectures on Ukrainian art and its history until 9 June, initiated by the community of art historians in Gdansk. Its meetings, entitled "Let's get to know each other", relate the turbulent history of the Ukrainian nation to the artistic currents that accompanied it... [Read more](#)

### Picasso's Blue Period in Barcelona



From 6 April to 4 September, the Picasso Museum will be presenting a technical study of Pablo Picasso's Blue Period. The exhibition, which is partly based on the use of digital tools, looks at the creative processes, compositional materials and different layers of colour used by the artist,

as well as the contextualisation and relationship of these works to others... [Read more](#)

#### Festival of Sami culture in Norway



The Sami people of Norway are holding their Easter festival in Kautokeino, the largest Sami municipality in the country. Concerts, art exhibitions, film screenings and theatre performances will be part of the festival, which runs from 9 to 18 April... [Read more](#)

#### Film Festival Dresden



The 34th Dresden Short Film Festival is taking place from 5 to 10 April. German and international films are competing for the jury prizes, and several films are also being shown outside the selection... [Read more](#)

#### Musical Festival of Tampere



The Tampere Biennale takes place from 6 to 10 April. This festival introduces the public to contemporary Finnish music and has been held every two years since 1986. This year the festival explores the theme of mental landscapes... [Read more](#)

#### Easter Festival in Provence



From 8 to 24 April, Aix-en-Provence will host its annual Easter Festival. This "festival en partage" offers classical music concerts, some of which will be broadcast virtually, meetings between the public and artists, workshops and conferences... [Read more](#)

#### Salzburg Easter Festival



The Salzburg Easter Festival takes place from 9 to 18 April. The compositions of Richard Wagner will be in the spotlight, and a tribute will be paid to Johannes Brahms on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of his death, with a performance of his Fourth Symphony... [Read more](#)

#### Art Paris



From April 7 to 10, the Grand Palais Éphémère will host the Paris Art Fair. Based on the themes of natural history and the environment, the fair will bring together a selection of works from 130 galleries in some twenty countries... [Read more](#)

#### Agenda :



4-7 April 2022  
Strasbourg  
Plenary Session of the European Parliament



5 April 2022  
Luxembourg  
Economic and Financial Affairs Council



7 April 2022  
Luxembourg  
Agriculture and Fisheries Council



10 April 2022  
France  
First round Presidential election



11 April 2022  
Luxembourg  
Foreign Affairs Council

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**N° ISSN : 2729-6482**

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