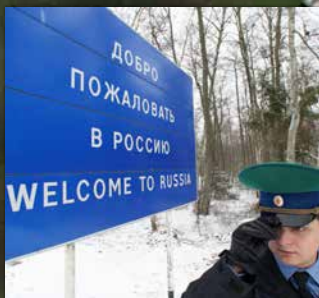


# EUROPE

# Diplomatic

magazine



## LONELINESS BEGINS AT HOME

How a part of Russia  
came to be isolated and  
alone – but also good fun?



## RED, GREEN AND IN BETWEEN

« Red and Green Should Never  
Be Seen », but politician Daniel  
Cohn-Bendit exemplifies  
those clashing colours!

# RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN

*Turkey faces a new reality*

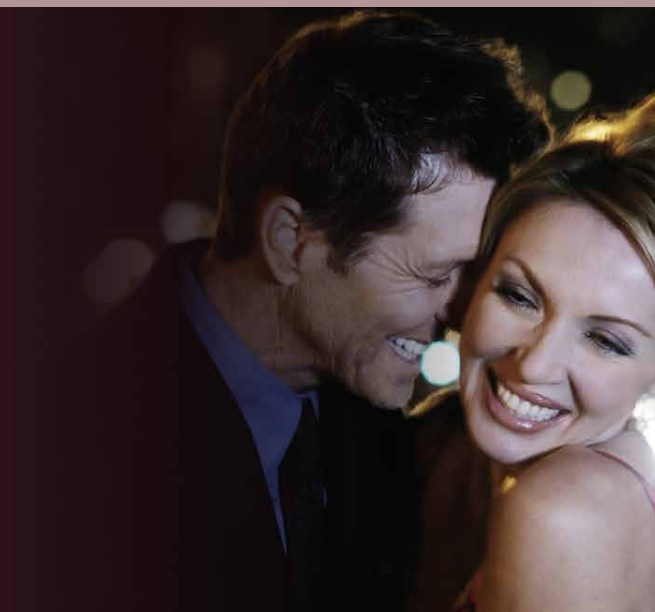


# SAVVIVA

Concierge Services

## EFFICIENT PERSONAL SUPPORT IN BUSY TIMES

- Personal assistance
- Private concierge
- Property management



WE ARE AT YOUR SERVICE, 24/7  
CALL NOW

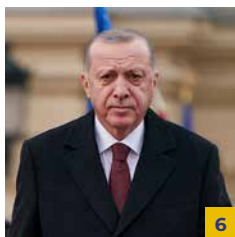
Experience Belgium's leading  
concierge service

SAVVIVA

[www.savviva.be](http://www.savviva.be) | +32 2 669 07 29 | [concierge@savviva.be](mailto:concierge@savviva.be)



# IN THIS ISSUE



## ■ RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN

Turkey faces a new reality .....p.6

## ■ NEWS IN BRIEF:

From around the World .....p.16

## ■ LONELINESS BEGINS AT HOME

How a part of Russia came to be isolated  
and alone – but also good fun? .....p.22



## ■ RED, GREEN AND IN BETWEEN

An old fashion industry maxim says “Red and Green Should  
Never Be Seen, but politician Daniel Cohn-Bendit exemplifies  
those clashing colours! .....p.30



## ■ WHEN THE BOAT COMES IN?

How Brexit is affecting the UK's fishing industry .....p.38

## ■ THE PLAYING FIELDS OF AFRICA

African nations with no UK connections queue up to join  
what was the British Commonwealth .....p.44



## ■ OUT OF THE SHADOWS:

New imaging method reveals concealed objects .....p.52

## ■ MAJOR OPERATION AGAINST MIGRANT SMUGGLING IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL: 39 Arrests

.....p.53

## ■ HUMANKIND

What does the future hold? .....p.56

## ■ TIMELESS CHIC .....p.60

## ■ Books

Our selection .....p.62



EUROPE  
*Diplomatic*  
magazine

international officials or academics, the magazine gives everyone the necessary and useful information about all topics that make up our daily lives. Covering sensitive issues such as nuclear, the rise of Islamism and energy dependence, the magazine opens its pages to recognized specialists who would like to express first order and exclusive information. But Europe Diplomatic Magazine is not only a source of information on recent topics. It is also addressing older facts with deep thought for further analysis. Whether it's news, security, diplomacy, technology, energy, terrorism, European affairs, no subject is treated superficially. Europe Diplomatic Magazine is an independent media, conveying balanced ideas of openness and analysis based on almost 30 years of experience in the journalistic world.

Visit our site and please give us your comments:

<https://europe-diplomatic.eu/>

[europediplomaticmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:europediplomaticmagazine@gmail.com)



Nikola Hendrickx

# EDITORIAL



Benjamin West - Death on a Pale Horse (1796)

## HOW CLOSE ARE WE TO A GLOBAL CONFLICT?

Not since the Cuban Missile Crisis has the world been in such danger of another global war.

Historians may look back in 50 years' time and comment that Putin's war in Ukraine was the spark that lit the powder. However, it is not just risks of Russia's unjust war in Ukraine spilling over into Europe.

There are risks across the globe that threaten to spark major conflicts that would draw in great powers to a new global war.

China is by no means treading carefully in this dangerous time. Instead, there has been an increase in provocative actions directly against Western navies and aircraft in the South China Sea over the past few months by Chinese fighter pilots. Any one of these incidents, if taken too far, could threaten the delicate balance of power in these volatile seas.

And then there's Taiwan. China's leaders appear more and more ready for a confrontation with the West over Taiwan, a prospect that seemed unimaginable a decade ago. China seems no longer willing to maintain the status quo and allow Taiwan to continue seeking its own way as a democratic capitalist society. A peaceful and negotiated resolution seems no longer achievable now that Xi Jinping has shown his hand in Hong Kong, completely ignoring international agreements over the 50-year status of Hong Kong.

What ever happened to "One Country, Two Systems?" Beware, Taiwan, of emperors who make false promises.

The immense consequences of a global war, and the many ways that one could be sparked, mean that Europe's leaders and those in the West have little time to prepare. Most leaders in the EU still think in terms of containing individual conflicts. But there seems little chance that any other conflict could simply be "contained". When viewed through the lens of history, our present time bears remarkable similarities to pre-war Europe in 1914 and 1939.

We still don't know when or where (or if?) the powder keg will be lit, but the EU and NATO must immediately increase inventories of munitions and arms and generally increase defense spending across the board.

The next war will not be confined to the battlefield but will also be fought in the cyber realm. The EU needs strengthen cyber security and ensure critical infrastructure is protected from cyber attacks. There must be more concerted efforts at sharing information. There must be greater joint contingency planning.

This will ensure that all we and our allies are ready for the next conflict. What will help Europe survive this looming conflict is that which is inherent in our strength as Europeans: Our openness, our sharing of each other's burdens, and our cooperation across all levels of society.

*Trajan Dereville*





© Kremlin.ru

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

## RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN

### *Turkey faces a new reality*

Nestled between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean and at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Turkey is a country with one of the most complex geopolitical dynamics.

With its activities of hydrocarbons exploration on the Greek coast, which keep causing tensions with the European Union, its interventions against the Kurds in Syria in early 2022, its involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict or its increasingly violent confrontations with France, Turkey - by virtue of its own rules - is rapidly imposing itself on the international stage.

At its helm, Recep Tayyip Erdogan is pushing his pawns in all directions to create a new sphere of influence around his neo-Ottoman style of leadership and to eclipse the existing fractures at the heart of the Turkish nation.

President Erdogan's epic journey in politics began in 2001 with the founding of his conservative Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) or AKP. The following year, the AK Party came out on top in parliamentary elections, with a political programme centred on the "lost" Muslim identity.

When Recep Tayyip Erdogan became Prime Minister he began to liberalise the economy under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and despite the 2008 hiatus, Turkey experienced an "economic miracle" characterised by a decade of rapid growth.

#### EARLY SUCCESSES OF THE AKP

Recep Tayyip Erdogan has held power continuously since 2003, when he became prime minister of Turkey, and has also been the country's president since 2014. This relative longevity is largely due to the effective organisational strength of the ruling AKP party and its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Broadly speaking, the government programme is based on an ideology that combines nationalism and Islamism.

The success of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his party, the AKP, is part of

Turkey's particular political ecosystem, where the traditional left-right divide no longer works.



President and AK Party Chairman Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is chairing the meeting of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) at party headquarters in 2017

The party's success is mainly due to the fact that it has managed to update the way it deals with the religious question. Islam, long sidelined by successive governments, has once again become a force for political mobilisation. President Erdogan's programme, however, is not only about the re-Islamisation of Turkey. The AKP has profoundly renewed the institutional framework, liberalised the Turkish economy and allowed the expression of differences in national identity.

The promotion of Islamic identity has paradoxically revealed Turkey's social diversity. At first, as if returning to the Ottoman system, the AKP accepted the affirmation of ethnic and religious identities, granted cultural rights to the Kurds and even relaxed the debate on the recognition of the Armenian genocide.

Although the AKP initially claimed not to challenge secular rule, the debate about the place of Islam in the public sphere soon gained momentum. The veiled wives of some ministers disturbed the military and a turbulent debate began about whether the wearing of the same veil should be allowed at colleges and universities in the name of religious freedom and "freedom of dress".



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Many centre-left intellectuals joined the new party, attracted by the emerging social opening and the declared intention to fight against the occult power of the army.

The efficiency of the AKP leadership was initially measured by economic and territorial development. The diplomatic success of the new Turkey was also spectacular.

The charismatic foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu (between 2009 and



Turkey 2016 Coup

2014), theorist of an Islamist vision of international relations, managed within a few years to turn his country into a hyperactive middle power on the international stage.

Under his aegis, Turkey implemented a kind of "soft power" in which religion was an increasingly explicit element, and opened up spheres of influence in former imperial possessions, especially in the Middle East, with its "neo-Ottoman" foreign policy.

At the time of the Arab Spring in 2011, Turkey was often touted as a "model" of Muslim democracy to navigate the fragile political transitions in Egypt and Tunisia.

Bolstered by steady electoral success, the AKP began to adopt a more overtly conservative identity. The political leadership's promotion of prayer, Ramadan fasting, social segregation of the sexes, the increase in resources of the powerful Bureau of Religious Affairs

(Diyanet), the construction of mosques, the development of the religious education system, these were all the signs of re-Islamisation that is now being scrutinised both by secular opponents in Turkey itself and by the country's Western partners.

### NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE AKP

The foreign policy of the AKP remains a constant source of unease within the European Union. Beginning in 2011, the governing party forged alliances with all the Arab political parties with close links to the Muslim Brotherhood. Consequently, the debate still rages over the compatibility of Islamic

values with Turkey's candidacy for membership in the European Union.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan's authoritarian drift was rapid. A first major episode of protests crystallised in the spring of 2013 around the Gezi Park affair – a green space threatened with destruction by a real estate project in the heart of Istanbul. There was a brutal crackdown on protesters by the security forces.



Fetullah Gulen & Recep Erdoğan in 1998

Then, at the end of the same year, a serious corruption scandal broke out, involving government ministers and even President Erdogan's son. The latter fell out with Fethullah Gülen, an imam who had taken refuge in the United States and who had been at the head of a vast international network of schools and other educational institutions. He had also provided the AKP with a large number of executives.

The hunt for the opposition took on unprecedented proportions following a failed coup attempt on the night of July 15 to 16, 2016. Faced with a motley coalition of poorly coordinated mutineers, the Head of State called his supporters to take to the streets to "defend democracy". The death toll reached an estimated 300 people. Recep



Tayyip Erdogan described the putsch as a "gift from God" and promptly declared a state of emergency, allowing him to rule by decree. Separation of powers and judicial independence are the cornerstones of democratic societies and such development was always likely to raise more concerns from the EU in an already problem-fraught relationship.

Gülenists, pro-Kurds and liberals were targeted by massive purges which lead to tens of thousands of dismissals and mass arbitrary detentions of thousands of individuals within the army, security services, justice and education. The president immediately passed a constitutional reform to change the parliamentary governance system into an executive presidency which gave the president unprecedented powers including an increased influence over parliament and the courts – two main sources of checks and balances.

The degradation of public freedoms and the re-Islamisation of society made the political climate inexorably tense and elections less respectful of European standards.

The president who can count on a loyal electorate of at least a third of the population continues to win them over.

To consolidate this base, he allied with the extreme right of the MHP party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi) before the presidential and legislative elections of June 2018.

Therefore, the pragmatic itinerary of the AKP led it to reconnect with the "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" (Türk-Islam sentezi), a doctrine professed in the early 1970s by certain Turkish nationalists to counter the revolutionary left.

This synthesis placed Sunni Islam and Turkishness at the foundations of Turkish political culture. It also cultivated historical references to the Ottoman Empire. This familiar doctrine allows President Erdogan to reassure the majority of the Turkish electorate while excluding large minorities – Kurds, Alevis, and secular activists – from the political debate.

It also levels the playing field for the Islamist side. While the AKP had for years dealt with Sunni diversity itself, the time had come to take full control.

### FOCUS ON SHAPING THE FUTURE

Today, President Erdogan may have experienced a slight weakening in his position, but he is returning to nationalism to curb the erosion of voter confidence within his core electorate. The "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" thus merged into a hybrid ideology: the two major driving forces of the Turkish political machine, namely Islamism and nationalism.

In 2014, Turks elected him president in the first round with 51.8% of the vote, notably from a middle class convinced of his ability to turn the economy around. However, since 2013, the Turkish miracle has given way to a slump. A long economic crisis has shaken the country, plunging it into cycles of a recession that seem to follow one another endlessly.

The national currency - the Turkish lira - has been collapsing for several years, resulting in continuous inflation that reached 15.2% in 2019. The Turkish middle class, which emerged in the 1980s and grew stronger in the 2000s, is bearing the brunt of the rising cost of living and is suffering from the consequences daily. Concurrently, inequalities continue to

subsist, especially between urban and rural areas.

Faced with this downturn, the government and the central bank are struggling to implement effective monetary policies, despite the need for economic restructuring.

President Erdogan's economic policy focuses on attracting tourism and foreign capital, especially through real estate projects, such as his urban redevelopment projects in Istanbul. But these major projects envisaged by the Turkish president have so far seemed costlier than lucrative.



Kurdish protesters attend a demonstration against Turkey's military action

Recep Tayyip Erdogan has also been to some extent, destabilised by the Kurdish question. The Kurds, a people scattered along the frontiers between Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey, have aspired to an independent state for centuries. But this claim is unacceptable to the Turkish ruler, even though they occupy a key territory for Turkey's energy resources. The result has been stubborn repression against them, in an attempt to contain their ambitions.

Although voters re-elected President Erdogan in 2018, his success continues to suffer from the country's economic difficulties and repressive tendencies. In the regional elections of the same year, he lost Istanbul, which concentrates 15 of the country's 80 million inhabitants, and Ankara, its capital of 5 million inhabitants.

Two costly losses for the leader, who was mayor of Istanbul from 1994 to 1998. Faced with this decline in popularity, he seems all the more determined to strengthen his electoral base by playing on identity politics



President Erdoğan performs Friday prayer at Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque



and nationalism. But by so doing, the populist president is using Turkey's international influence and foreign policy to cover up the country's internal problems.

## AN INTRICATE, INTERNATIONAL WEB

Outside Turkey's borders, President Erdogan is becoming something of a "hyperactive" politician. He has made his presence strongly felt in Nagorno-Karabakh, Syria, Libya, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and he continues to intervene wherever he can in order to make political gains.

As a result, Turkey has managed to establish numerous alliances, both in the East and in the West, with which it seems to share less and less common ground.

The Turkish president appears to be very close to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, even though the two leaders support opposing parties in several conflicts, such as in Syria or more recently in Nagorno-Karabakh. But the two men have always made sure that they can get around these differences and that their good relations prevail.

This strong relationship can be explained in particular by their partnerships in various sectors. Since 2010, Turkey and Russia have established several cooperation agreements, including the construction of a nuclear power plant and a joint gas pipeline. In parallel, they also cooperate on a military level, with important arms sales.



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, US President Joe Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Madrid NATO Summit in June

In September 2021, President Erdogan announced that Turkey would maintain its plan to buy a second batch of S-400 missile defence systems from Russia, a decision that could aggravate tensions with the United States even further and lead to new American sanctions. The United States is strongly opposed to the purchase of the S-400 by Turkey, believing in particular that the Russian systems are not compatible with those in use in the NATO alliance, of which Ankara is a member.



American F-35 stealth aircraft

In addition, Washington believes that there is a risk that the Russian operators who will train the Turkish military in the operation of the S-400 could at the same time be able to penetrate the technological secrets of the new American F-35 stealth aircraft which Turkey also wants to acquire. Ankara, for its part, maintains that it has not been able to obtain air defence systems from NATO member states on satisfactory terms.

In an interview aired in September 2021 on CBS News, President Erdogan declared defiantly, *"In the future, no one can interfere with the type of defence system we buy, no matter from which country, no matter how big the transaction. Nobody can interfere with that. We are the only ones to make this kind of decision"*.

In December 2021 the United States imposed sanctions against the Turkish Defense Industries Board (SSB), its president and three employees after Ankara acquired a first batch of the S-400 anti-missile system. Discussions have continued between Russia and Turkey regarding the delivery of a second batch, which, as Washington has repeatedly warned, would most likely trigger new sanctions.

The United States is now reportedly pushing Turkey to trade those Russian air defences for American Patriots and give the S-400s to Ukraine. However, if Turkey were to comply, it would shoot Russia in the back ; there is very little chance of that happening.

Despite appearances, Russians and Turks are not the best of friends. They find themselves on opposite sides of many wars, including that of Syria. However, they have a "good working relationship" as one would say in diplomatic terms. In fact, when the Turkish regime was threatened by a coup in 2016, Vladimir Putin was the first foreign leader to call his Turkish counterpart. Today, Ankara stubbornly refuses to comply with sanctions against Russia, thus lending itself to circumventing them. There has already been talk of wealthy Russians putting their money in Turkish banks and airlines flying the Turkish flag.

## A DANGEROUS BALANCING ACT

Despite Turkey's defence purchases from Russia that have alarmed Ankara's NATO partners, the two countries remain rivals in wars from the Middle East to the Caucasus, highlighting the fault lines running through their awkward alliance.

Other than missiles, Turkey imports Russian gas, hosts millions of Russian tourists and has said membership of the Western Nato alliance is no barrier to building ties with Moscow. But it has also deployed troops in northern Syria to push back Russian-backed Syrian government forces, and the two countries backed rival sides in the wars in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has created a whole new set of dynamics that has profoundly altered the political equilibrium in the Black Sea region. Turkey fears that Russian advances in Ukraine would ultimately disrupt arms cooperation between Kyiv and Ankara, strengthen Moscow's dominance in the Black Sea region and threaten tourism and energy supplies.

Ukraine has been like a dam that contains Russian influence and pressure on the region, and if Ukraine falls, it will have direct consequences for Turkey. History teaches us that during the century that followed the fall of the Crimean Khanate, in old European historiography and geography known as Little Tartary, the Russian Empire gradually but resolutely monopolised territories to the west of Ukraine, until it reached the gates of Constantinople, now Istanbul, in 1878.

Under pressure from Moscow, the Ottomans lost the Balkans, while new states were born. Thousands of Turks found themselves refugees. In the east, the Russian Empire seized the Caucasus after a murderous campaign that killed hundreds of Muslims and took Turkish cities such as Kars, Ardahan and Artvin.

It is stories like these that come to mind in Turkey as Russia, slowly but surely, continues its military advance westward, leaving behind a trail of death and destruction. Everyone in Ankara knows that this has put Turkey in the crosshairs of this conflict.

For months, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been trying to bring his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts together for a peace summit in Turkey, to give diplomacy a chance. But Turkish officials are well aware that Russian President Vladimir Putin does not want this meeting : his spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, even mocked this initiative.

But talks between the Ukrainian and Russian foreign ministers did take place in March 2022 on the sidelines of an international diplomatic forum in the southern city of Antalya.

Turkey thus became a de facto mediator in this European conflict. It was encouraging to see the two belligerents discuss and use diplomatic channels to try to resolve this conflict. Nevertheless, the loss of the diplomatic influence of France and EU countries was also to be regretted.

Due to its geographical position, Turkey plays a pivotal role in the region which is not ignored by either the Russians or the Americans. Therefore, Ankara plays a double game, aiming to have the support of both camps in order to develop its own project of becoming a regional power in the Near and Middle East.

Because of its increasingly authoritarian political nature and its position as a regional power, Turkey needs NATO as much as it needs Russia, in order to

avoid being politically dependent on one or the other. But at the same time, Presidents Erdogan and Putin speak the same language; that of two authoritarian leaders at the head of ancient empires straddling Europe and Asia. They both want to restore their country's influence in their "near vicinity".

The case of Turkey shows that it is possible to be a member of Nato and to have strong relations with countries at war like Ukraine and Russia. In fact, France has long occupied this position of mediator. The Gaullist doctrine that has long prevailed at the level of foreign affairs has pushed the country towards a nuanced policy. Neither Atlanticist nor pro-Russian, but seeking to be a bridge between the various powers in order to defend French interests. And today, many, not least the French, may regret that an authoritarian regime has taken the place of France and the so-called liberal democracies in the field of high-level mediation.



Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Be that as it may, and at the risk of irritating Vladimir Putin even further, the Turkish president travelled to Kyiv and met his counterpart, Volodymyr Zelensky.

The Ukrainian leader welcomed an agreement that will allow Ukrainian factories to produce Turkish drones already deployed by government forces against pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Russian authorities, including Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, have repeatedly made it clear that Moscow is very unhappy at Turkey's sale of TB-2s to Ukraine, which uses them to hit Russian positions throughout the Donbas.



The Ottoman capitulation at Niğbolu (Nikopolis, modern Nikopol) in 1877. The Battle of Nikopol, or Nicopolis (Turkish: Niğbolu Muharebesi), was one of the early battles of the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878)



## TURKEY'S DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

According to Turkish officials, Ankara's growing international influence has already created tensions between Turkey and Russia. Turkey undermined Russian air defence systems in Libya, Syria and Azerbaijan, but things stopped there and they continue to live together in the region.

Ankara created some friction within Nato by buying the Russian S-400 missile system in 2020, but it also authorised that same year the American army to inspect another Russian defence system seized by the Turks in Libya.

Moreover, Turkish officials fear that if Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine, it will strengthen its dominance in the Black Sea and put significant pressure on other countries, such as Romania and Bulgaria. Others even believe the supply of Turkish drones to Ukraine could have repercussions for Ankara in Syria, where Turkish troops are hampering a joint Syrian government and Russian offensive on Idlib that could push millions of refugees across the border.

Galip Dalay, Associate Research Fellow at the French Institute of International Relations (Ifri) says, *"Syria remains Turkey's weak point. On this, Russia will probably put pressure on Turkey via Syria. On a broader level, Russia and Turkey cooperate and compete with each other through the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa. However, Moscow is less open to replicating this experience with Turkey in the former Soviet Union"*.



Galip Dalay

According to Dalay, Moscow sees the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa as opportunities for coups and a chance to project its influence. It is much less flexible and accommodating towards Turkish policy towards the former Soviet Union states, which it still considers its exclusive sphere of influence.

Since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Ankara has tried to maintain a certain balance in its relations with Kyiv and Moscow. If he never fails to proclaim "Turkey's support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine", as indicated by the Turkish Anadolu press agency, Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been careful not to join in the Western sanctions against Russian interests and has also abstained in the Council of Europe during the vote suspending Russia.

With full sovereignty over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles Straits, which connect the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, Turkey reaffirmed its position by refusing access to these strategic points to three Russian military ships on February 27 and 28. Of course, this had no major impact on the strategic course of operations, because the war in Ukraine is above all being fought on land, but Turkey wanted to prevent it from deepening and to avoid any maritime spillover from this conflict.

Nearly six months after the start of the Russian invasion, this skilful balancing act has enabled Turkey not to maintain friendly relations with both Kyiv and Moscow, and to be able to welcome Russian and Ukrainian delegations to Istanbul for a number of discussion sessions.

But is this position tenable over time? The big question is whether the country will be able to continue this policy of doing the splits in an increasingly polarised world.

A number of political analysts are of the opinion that Recep Tayyip Erdogan sees the war as an opportunity – « a boon », says Pinar Tremblay, scholar of political science at California State University. The opportunity to win the presidential elections next June. Despite all the legal tricks he has already used to bend democracy to his advantage, the Turkish president's position is now more shaky than ever.



The National Security Council (NSC) convened under the chairmanship of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Indeed, six opposition parties, including the largest, have joined forces, his popularity is at an all-time low and his AK party is between 25 and 35% in the polls, while in 2018 he still won 43% of the votes. Finally, the Turkish economy is in dire straits, with inflation reaching 54% in February, its highest level in 20 years. This economic situation is aggravated by the current war. If only because Turkish tourism is heavily dependent on visitors from Russia.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan can capitalise on the fear of even greater conflict, which is also prevalent in Turkey. In times of crisis, voters tend to opt for the safest choice, for the familiar and for a strong leader as well.

Also, Turkey probably has no moral objections to the war that Russia is currently waging, because it has faced a rather similar situation for years. The biggest difference between the conflict with the Kurds is that the front line runs through Turkish territory. Turkey is of course also implicated for its role in the war in Syria.

So why is Turkey so keen to mediate? Wagging tongues would have it that this role gives the country an alibi for not having to take sides. However, it seems to be doing the Ukrainians a great service by supplying them with the dreaded Bayraktar drones, but the contracts for these were signed before the war started. This is fundamentally different compared to the arms deliveries that many other countries have decided to make since the beginning of the war.



© Baykarta.com

The Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drone

## SETTING THE STAGE IN TEHRAN

In Tehran on July 19, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of a tripartite summit with Iranian head of state Ebrahim Raisi. Among the key issues of the meeting, the war in Syria as well as Russian-Iranian cooperation in the gas and oil sectors with both countries under Western sanctions.



Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Iran's president, Ebrahim Raisi and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Tehran

Turkey's role as mediator in the Ukrainian grain export crisis was also emphasised when the Russian president spoke of progress in the negotiations for the export of grain from Ukraine via the Black Sea and thanked his Turkish counterpart for his "mediation" in this issue.

But he also called for the lifting of Western restrictions on Russian cereals so as to achieve progress in the export of Ukrainian agricultural production blocked in the country's ports because of the Kremlin offensive. *"We will facilitate the export of Ukrainian grain, but on the basis that all restrictions on air deliveries for the export of Russian grain are lifted,"* Vladimir Putin said after

talks in Tehran. *"If they sincerely want to improve the situation in world food markets, I hope the same will be true for Russian grain exports,"* he added.

It became apparent later that the Turkish leader made Vladimir Putin wait in front of the cameras for forty-five seconds. A gesture that speaks volumes and with which the Russian president is quite familiar. In politics, other than words, gestures also have meaning.

And when you are the president of one of the great world powers, forty-five seconds of forced waiting is a long time. Vladimir Putin knows this well and he struggled to hide his discomfort in front of the cameras. The Russian president remained standing in front of his armchair and the Russian flag, his hands crossed in front of him. With his irritation mounting as the seconds passed, he began shifting his weight from one foot to the other, and then making faces.

This is a practice to which Vladimir Putin himself has often resorted in the past. During a meeting in Moscow in 2020, the Russian president, no longer in a position of strength vis a vis Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, had made him wait several minutes.



Secretary-General António Guterres (left) and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the signing ceremony of Black Sea Grain Initiative in Istanbul, Türkiye

Among other heads of state who experienced this ordeal, there is Queen Elisabeth II who was made to wait for 13 minutes, Donald Trump for 45 minutes and Pope Francis for one hour. But that fact that he is now the victim goes to show that he is no longer in a dominant position.

But the Russian president left Tehran with the visible support of the Iranian leaders, showing that he is not totally isolated on the international scene. But Iran is also a country under Western sanctions. And by making him wait, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan probably made him understand that the support of a country integrated into the concert of Nations comes at a cost.

## TACKLING THE WORLD FOOD EMERGENCY

Following telephone conversations between President Erdoğan and his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts, military delegations from the two countries at war arrived in Istanbul on July 13 for a summit that was also attended by Turkish defence officials and UN envoys. The aim of the meeting was to find an agreement on a corridor that will allow the exit of Ukrainian wheat blocked due to the war, from the Black Sea ports.

At the centre of the talks were the 35 or so million tonnes of Ukrainian wheat stuck in Black Sea ports due to the war, which is in danger of rotting and creating a global food crisis.

Turkey has proposed the establishment of a logistics control center in Istanbul, with the participation of the United Nations, in order to trace the route of ships leaving the Black Sea by a route free of the mines which now infest the waters, especially near ports.



President Erdogan's diplomatic pressure produced its first effect, culminating in the organisation of this meeting between delegations which was a kind of follow-up to the trip made in June to Moscow by a military delegation from Ankara.

At the end of the meeting, the delegations reached an agreement on a cleared route, which was then taken by a Turkish ship stranded in Mariupol with a cargo of steel, whose return to Turkey constituted a kind of test for the passage of wheat cargoes.



Wheat fields in midsummer in Ukraine, Oblast Lviv

However, there was no final agreement between the parties. This was mainly due to Moscow's reluctance ; it had laid down a series of conditions before giving the green light to plans to "liberate" wheat. Kyiv also had doubts related to mine clearance and fear of Russian attacks.

Ankara promptly came up with another proposal : the transportation of the wheat by road and rail out of Ukraine before shipping. A definitive solution is still in the works.

Since the start of the conflict, the Turkish and Russian leaders have spoken several times by telephone, but have never met face to face. The hope is that such a meeting would be the right opportunity to unlock 70% of the export grain produced by Ukraine, one of the world's leading wheat producers and to prevent a global famine of major proportions, especially in Africa.

For the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, *"This may be the most important thing that the international community is facing. The most worrisome thing is the lack of food in many countries around the world."*

The 27-country bloc and its Western partners have accused Moscow of weaponising food and of deliberately targeting Ukraine's agricultural infrastructure.

Borrell, who spoke to reporters ahead of a meeting of EU foreign affairs ministers in Brussels, said the bloc is *"doing whatever we can in order to support these grains through other ways, through the solidarity lanes, through the Black Sea to Romania and Bulgaria. But that's not enough. Russia must unblock and allow the Ukrainian grain to be exported. Otherwise, we would have to continue claiming that they are using food as a weapon without any kind of consideration for human beings' lives. It has to be said loudly,"* he added.

But on July 22, President Erdogan could finally relish every moment of his success in forging a landmark deal to reopen Ukrainian Black Sea ports for grain exports, raising hopes that an international food crisis aggravated by the Russian invasion can be eased.

The accord crowned two months of talks brokered by Turkey and the United Nations aimed at what UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called a "package" that would both restore Ukrainian grain exports while easing Russian grain and fertiliser shipments, despite tough Western sanctions on Moscow.

## TURKEY'S DREAMS OF GRANDEUR

What matters for Recep Tayyip Erdogan, other than victory in the elections, is not finding himself on the

losing side at the end of the conflict.

*"It is the outcome of the war that will determine which side Turkey leans on,"* writes Jeffrey Mankoff, a researcher at the US National Defense University, in Foreign Policy magazine.

*"If Russia loses, Ankara is likely to align itself with the West again. But if Russia wins, it may turn even further away from Nato and the EU,"* according to analyst Selim Koru, himself from Turkey, and research fellow at the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), an Ankara-based think tank. If Nato fails to curb Moscow's territorial claims based on national, ethnic and historical bases, then Ankara's beliefs about the diminishing relevance of Nato will be confirmed and this could fuel Turkey's hopes for a new era in geopolitics.

These days, Ankara does not necessarily view the Russian resurgence as a threat.

Indeed, President Erdogan's worldview, as well as that of the Turkish right as a whole, is much closer to that of Vladimir Putin than to that of Western liberal elites.

This may seem unimportant to policy makers, but it is the emotional backdrop of the entire political apparatus, which shapes popular perceptions and strategic culture. President Putin famously declared in 2005 that *"the demise of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20<sup>th</sup> century"*. His major foreign policy exploits, from the 2008 Georgia war to the current Ukraine crisis seem to be aimed at reversing that 'catastrophe'.



Key leaders and attendees for the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps-Turkey/Eurocorps handover takeover ceremony in Istanbul in 2021



© Imperial War Museums

French troops en route to Gallipoli in 1915



© TRT World and Agencies

Ottoman troops engaged in fierce trench warfare while defending the Gallipoli coastline from the Allies in World War I

Many Turks can probably relate to this aspiration. For conservatives like Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's status as a junior partner in a US-led transatlantic alliance and a medium-sized power is probably not a particularly enviable one.

The Turkish right dreams of a revitalised Turkish sphere of influence, projecting its power across three continents. The AKP, having headed the national government for twenty years has enabled it to breathe life into the country with this vision.

Turkey's founding fathers defeated Western forces at the Battle of Gallipoli in 1915 to build a republic that held up Western modernity as a model. The current government, whose roots go back to the radical right-wing dissidents of this tradition, seeks to do the opposite. It sees the West as an anti-model: a rival to be emulated at first, but ultimately, beaten at its own game.

The relationship of the Western world, with its strong Judeo-Christian influences, to the Muslim religion is a sensitive one and President Erdogan sees this as a golden political

opportunity to play with his influence internationally.

Initially, he endeavoured to send a number of seconded imams, particularly to European nations as a direct way of spreading Turkey's religious influence beyond its borders, and particularly within countries with large Muslim minorities. He also uses religion to consolidate his influence in the East, where Islam and politics are closely intertwined in many countries.

His credo seems to be to embody a religious alternative to the "neocolonial and heretical" West. A credo that resonates well and truly in the Near and Middle East as was demonstrated by the boycott of French products in the region, actively supported by Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Indeed, France drew the wrath of much of the Muslim world for President Macron's scathing remarks against Islam, which he described as a "religion in crisis". He had made these remarks during a speech on the separation of religion and state as well as the defence of the freedom

to blaspheme, in reference to the controversial caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed, published by the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo.

President Erdogan seized on the opportunity, going so far as to question the mental health of the French president. The Turkish leader, through the virulence of his remarks, transposed his populist discourse on a transnational scale, in a desire to unite the Muslim world around Turkey and its programme regarding the identity crisis.

Between now and the next elections in 2023, President Erdogan has time to continue to nurture his project of a 'Greater Turkey'. What's more, he has obtained a constitutional derogation that allows him to offer himself - provided he has democratic approval - another two new, five-year terms as president, when in fact, he should not have been able to stand for re-election.

Although his global popularity rating is down, he nurtures his grass roots support by resorting to his international influence. He is therefore well on the way to proposing a structured approach to the fracture of our century: that of the identity crises that create the tensions between civilisations, in a world where peoples are nevertheless, ever more connected and interdependent.



© NRT

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his wife

If the Turkish president succeeds in pulling this off and manages to tame these dissensions, he will have in his hands a powerful political tool, but whose control he could also quickly lose.

*Hossein Sadre*





**Going for a coffee? ... Lock your desktop first!**

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## PASSENGER RIGHTS: TRAVELLING IN THE EU WITHOUT ANY WORRIES

**Was your train delayed or your flight cancelled? Find out about your passenger rights when travelling in the EU.**

Travellers check a board which shows departing flights, many of which are cancelled at Roissy Charles de Gaulle international airport, outside Paris © Europarl.europa.eu

As you set off on your summer holiday, it is good to know that EU passenger rights protect you, should anything go wrong while travelling.

EU rules ensure a minimum level of protection for passengers, irrespective of the mode of transport: flight, train, bus, coach or ship.

One thing could disrupt even the perfect holiday - getting there. Journeys can be tricky - with unexpected delays, cancellations and lost luggage. This is why MEPs helped to introduce EU rules obliging transport companies to provide travellers with meals, accommodation, reimbursement and compensation if something happens.

And transport companies in the EU can no longer charge more for tickets based on nationality and location of the purchase.

EU law also guarantees special attention to passengers with reduced mobility who have the right to free assistance services.



© Wikimedia

### Air passenger rights

Air passenger rights apply under certain circumstances, for example if the flight is within the EU or if it departs from the EU to a non-EU country.

If you are denied boarding, airlines should provide assistance free of charge that can include refreshments, food and accommodation. The airline must also offer you a choice between reimbursement and re-routing. In addition, passengers denied boarding are entitled to up to €600 in compensation. The amount of the compensation depends on the distance of the scheduled flight.

If your flight is cancelled, you have a right to assistance as well as reimbursement, re-routing or return. In the case of delays,

this depends on the duration of the delay and the distance of the flight.

Passengers whose flights were cancelled at short notice or

Flights ≤ 1 500 km	Flights 1,500-3,500 km Flights EU ≥ 1,500 km	Flights ≥ 3,500 km
€250	€400	€600

arrived more than three hours late may also be entitled to the above-mentioned amounts of compensation, but with some restrictions. It does not apply to companies offering an alternative solution or in extraordinary circumstances, such as air traffic management decisions, political instability, adverse weather conditions or security risks.

### Rail passenger rights

EU rules on rail passenger rights apply when you travel by rail within the EU. If your train is cancelled or delayed, the operator must give you information on the situation in real time and provide information on your rights and obligations. Depending on the circumstances, you may be entitled to assistance in the form of meals and refreshments, accommodation and compensation.

### Bus passenger rights

Passenger rights mainly apply to regular long-distance bus and coach services that start or finish in an EU country. In case of cancellation or delays, you may be entitled to meals and accommodation.

### Ship passenger rights

Rules usually apply to ferries and cruise ships (sea and river) if your journey starts or ends at an EU port. If a crossing was cancelled or departure delayed, you may be entitled to assistance in the form of meals and accommodation. If your arrival is delayed by more than one hour, you are entitled to compensation.

Detailed information on passenger rights for all types of transport is available on the « Your Europe » Website :

[https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/passenger-rights/index\\_en.htm](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/passenger-rights/index_en.htm)

## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS: EXPERT GROUP GRETA RELEASES ITS ANNUAL REPORT

The Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) has published its annual report for 2021. During 2021 GRETA was able to achieve a number of milestones in spite of the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and continued to develop its cooperation with other Council of Europe bodies, other international



organisations and civil society to prevent and combat human trafficking. It carried out ten country evaluation visits and adopted third round evaluation reports on six countries (France, Latvia, Malta, Montenegro, Romania and the United Kingdom). Israel became the second Council of Europe non-member state to accede to the anti-trafficking convention.



© Coe.int

GRETA's president Helga Gayer

In the report, GRETA's president Helga Gayer stresses that child trafficking has continued to increase despite legislative and policy measures taken by states parties to the anti-trafficking convention. "The Covid-19 pandemic has made children even more vulnerable to trafficking, including exploitation online. All actors involved in action against human trafficking need to step up efforts to combat child trafficking and develop innovative approaches to protect children", she said. The report contains the key findings and recommendations of a study on online and technology-facilitated trafficking in human beings based on information provided by 40 states parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 12 NGOs and two IT companies.

The study assesses the extent to which technology impacts human trafficking, the operational and legal challenges in detecting, investigating and prosecuting online and ICT-facilitated human trafficking offences, and contains a set of recommendations. The study also explores strategies, tools and good practices adopted by states parties to overcome such challenges. These include Internet monitoring, web-scraping tools and social network analysis. The involvement and co-operation of a wide range of agencies and knowledge sharing are crucial, as is cross-border co-operation in securing electronic evidence.

Technology-based tools to identify victims of trafficking, such as facial recognition and web-crawlers, can be valuable in performing data reduction and handling large volumes of information; however, the study points out that they raise ethical concerns and should only be employed by well-trained operators with knowledge on human trafficking. Online self-reporting mechanisms and helplines enable victims to seek assistance and disseminate information to communities at risk. The study recommends enhancing online confidential reporting mechanisms and working with private companies to set up mechanisms to flag up suspicious activities and advertisements. Countries should also develop data-sharing procedures and co-operation protocols with companies holding relevant data.

"The Covid-19 pandemic and ICT developments have produced structural changes in human traffickers' *modi operandi*, which requires countries to adapt and equip their law enforcement agencies and criminal justice systems with capabilities to tackle the changing environment. To counter the use of ICTs by human traffickers, it is essential that governments invest in the training of law enforcement personnel, provide adequate resources and enhance their cooperation with private companies and with other national authorities", said GRETA's President Helga Gayer.

The annual report can be downloaded from :  
<https://rm.coe.int/greta-11th-general-report-of-activities-2022-en/1680a72bb8>

## EUROPE'S FIRST-EVER BEYOND VISUAL LINE OF SIGHT DRONE FLIGHT TAKES OFF IN BELGIUM

Partners in SESAR's SAFIR-Med project got the green light from the Belgian civil aviation authority to operate a beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) flight over a populated area between two hospitals in Antwerp. The flight is fully compliant with EASA's specific operations risk assessment (SORA) and unmanned aircraft system (UAS) regulations.

BVLOS capabilities mean that flights can be flown beyond the visual range, enabling drones to cover far greater distances and opening up the possibility of a wide variety of applications. In the case of the SAFIR-Med project, the focus is on urgent medical deliveries. These are coordinated through a command and control centre system (C2C), which has interfaces with a U-space services provider (USSP).



© Sesaf/ucv

The flight was given authorisation to take off by the civil aviation authorities who validated the project's processes and technologies in three areas:

1. Combined mitigations to reduce the risk for people on the ground and in the air;
2. Risk mitigation based on the SABCA designed X-8 multicopter with an integrated parachute, fully compliant with the flight test requirements specified in the ASTM F3322-18 Standard Specification;
3. Robust ground organisation, emergency response plan (ERP).

With this first authorisation, project partners are now planning a series of demos in the cities of Maastricht, Aachen, Hasselt, Heerlen and Liège.

## THE PROJECT

The vision of SAFIR-Med project is to demonstrate ways to achieve safe, sustainable, socially accepted and socially beneficial urban air mobility which will contribute to the EU healthcare system, by ensuring that future generations will continue to democratically have access to the best cure and care.

Technologies of all partners will be leveraged to make use of the maximum number of U-Space services towards the highest possible operational safety level, including advanced Detect and Avoid U-space services.

The demonstrations will enable involved cities to get acquainted with their role in U-space management and keep up with relevant regulatory changes in order to use UAM technology for the benefit of their citizens.

- The project has received funding from the European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101017701.

### INNOVATION FUND: EU INVESTS €1.8 BILLION IN CLEAN TECH PROJECTS

The EU is investing over €1.8 billion in 17 large-scale innovative clean-tech projects with a third round of awards under the Innovation Fund. Grants will be disbursed from the Innovation Fund to help bring breakthrough technologies to the market in energy-intensive industries, hydrogen, renewable energy, carbon capture and storage infrastructure, and manufacturing of key components for energy storage and renewables. The selected projects are located in Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Sweden.



Executive Vice-President Frans TIMMERMANS - European Green Deal

Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "Today's grants support innovative businesses across Europe to develop the cutting-edge technologies we need to drive the green transition. The Innovation Fund is an important tool to scale up innovations in renewable hydrogen and other solutions for European industry. Compared to the first disbursement round, the funds available have increased by 60%, enabling us to double the number of projects supported. This is a big boost for the decarbonisation of energy-intensive industry in the European Union."

The 17 projects were selected under the second call for large-scale projects, meaning they have capital costs above €7.5 million.

The projects were evaluated by independent experts based on their ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions compared to traditional technologies and to innovate beyond the state-of-the-art, while being sufficiently mature for deployment. Other selection criteria included the projects' potential for scalability and cost effectiveness.

The selected projects cover a wide range of sectors contributing to the EU's decarbonisation efforts such as production, distribution and use of green hydrogen, waste-to-hydrogen, offshore wind, manufacturing of photovoltaic (PV) modules, battery storage and recycling, carbon capture and storage, sustainable aviation fuels, and advanced biofuels. Together, they have a potential to save 136 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>eq over their first 10 years of operation.

In addition, up to 20 projects that are promising but not yet sufficiently mature for a grant will be pre-selected for project development assistance by the European Investment Bank. These will be announced in the fourth quarter of 2022.

### Projects in brief Energy-intensive industries:

**Cement** (4 projects): A project in Germany will deploy a second-generation oxyfuel carbon capture process at a cement plant and provide it as raw material for further processing into synthetic methanol. Another one located in Poland will create an end-to-end carbon capture and storage chain starting from CO<sub>2</sub> capture and liquefaction at a cement plant to storage in offshore sites. A third project will capture the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions coming from exhaust gases produced during lime production and store them permanently in offshore geological formations in France. Finally, another project will be the first full-chain carbon capture and storage project in Bulgaria, linking CO<sub>2</sub> capture facilities at a cement plant with offshore permanent storage in a depleted gas field in the Black Sea, through an onshore and offshore pipeline system.

**Chemicals** (3 projects): In Finland, a project will chemically recycle plastics to be used as a feedstock for refineries. Another project in Sweden will create a first-of-a-kind methanol plant converting CO<sub>2</sub>, residue streams, renewable hydrogen and biogas to methanol. Another project in Finland will produce a new fibre from pulp to substitute polyester in textile applications. **Hydrogen** (3 projects): In the Netherlands, one project will produce, distribute and use green hydrogen through an electrolyser supplied by offshore wind electricity. Another one will produce 15,500 tonnes of renewable hydrogen per year. The third one will process non-recyclable solid waste streams and transform them primarily into hydrogen.

**Refineries** (2 projects): In Norway, one project will build and operate the world's first commercial-scale drop-in biofuel production facility, which will convert forestry waste into advanced second-generation biofuels and biochar. A project in Sweden will build a large-scale facility for the production of synthetic sustainable aviation fuel, using CO<sub>2</sub> captured at a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant.

**Manufacturing of components for energy storage or renewables production** (3 projects): In Poland, a project will create a manufacturing plant of innovative electrochemical battery systems to provide short-term electricity storage. Another project in the North of France will build a manufacturing plant for photovoltaics based on innovative heterojunction



technology. A third project in France will construct a Li-Ion recycling plant at the Dunkirk battery cluster for producing and refining black mass, providing access to a secondary source of battery raw material.

**Renewable energy:** In the German part of the North Sea, a project will construct and operate an offshore windfarm, which will implement innovative solutions for turbines and hydrogen.

**Carbon capture and storage infrastructure:** A project in Iceland will build a highly scalable onshore carbon mineral storage terminal with an estimated overall storage capacity of 880 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

## EU EXTERNAL BORDERS IN JUNE: WESTERN BALKAN ROUTE MOST ACTIVE



In the first half of 2022, there were about 114 720\* irregular entries to the European Union, according to preliminary calculations. This is about 84% more than in the same period last year.

The most significant increase was recorded on the Western Balkan route, where the number of detections increased nearly 3-fold compared with the first six months of 2021. This increase can be attributed to crossing attempts by migrants already present in the Western Balkans.

People fleeing Ukraine and entering the EU through border crossing points are not part of the figures of illegal entries detected. According to the latest Frontex data, 7.2 million people have fled Ukraine into the EU since the start of the war, including 6.3 million Ukrainians.

In June, Frontex registered 23 290 irregular crossings into the EU, 59% more than in the same month of last year.

At the moment, Frontex has more than 2 200 standing corps officers and staff at various sections of the EU external border, as well as in Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Moldova.

### January-June: Top migratory routes

On the **Central Mediterranean** route, Frontex registered 25 164 irregular border crossings, 23% more than in the first six months of 2021. In June alone, there were 5651 illegal crossings on this route, in line with last year. The main nationalities on this route were Bangladeshis, Egyptians and Tunisians.

On the **Eastern land border** route, Frontex registered 2452 irregular crossings, 141% more than last year. The main nationalities on this route were nationals of Ukraine, Iraq and Belarus.

The **Western Balkan route** accounted for half of all the detections with 55 321 illegal crossings, nearly three times the total from the same period of last year. The main nationalities on this route included migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Turkey.

The number of detections on the **Eastern Mediterranean** route remains high with 17 957 arrivals (+125%) due to the steady number of arrivals to Cyprus (12 407).

In June, there were 2220 illegal crossings on this route. Most migrants came from Nigeria, Syria and Congo (Kinshasa).

The number of irregular migrants seeking to cross the **Channel** towards the UK remains high with over 22 400 detections, including attempts and crossings, which represents an 87% increase on the same period in 2021. Migrants continue to make repeated attempts to cross the Channel due to the increase border surveillance along the coastline.

\*The figure includes other less active migratory routes not mentioned in this press release. The final figures may be higher due to delayed reporting.

Note: The preliminary data presented in this statement refer to the number of detections of irregular border-crossing at the external borders of the European Union. The same person may attempt to cross the border several times in different locations at the external border.

Source : Frontex

## MULTINATIONAL HELICOPTER TRAINING CENTRE TAKES SHAPE AS TECHNICAL ARRANGEMENT IS SIGNED



Another major step was taken towards the establishment of the **Multinational Helicopter Training Centre (MHTC)** at Sintra Airbase in Portugal when the **Technical Arrangement (TA)**, which defines the organisation, missions and responsibilities of the Centre was signed by 14 founding countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, and Sweden. The signing marks the start of the technical and logistical buildup of the centre which is expected to become a reference for multinational military helicopter training.

For an initial period of 15 years, the MHTC will take over the management of EDA's current three helicopter training

programmes: the Helicopter Exercise Programme (HEP), the Helicopter Tactics Course (HTC) programme and the Helicopter Tactics Instructor Course (HTIC) programme, which have been managed by the Agency for almost a decade. Those programmes are not only among the most long-lasting, recognised, and successful ever managed by the Agency, but also highly appreciated and reputed among the rotary wing community.

The MHTC will be built in the same location as the current EDA helicopter training centre, but with a fully renewed infrastructure and permanently manned with a team of 10 international staff, supervised by the MHTC Steering Board. The MHTC is planned to deliver at least 37 weeks of helicopter tactics training per year, including a multinational “Blade” helicopter exercise, a helicopter tactics symposium, and several basic and advance courses with the aim to enhance the tactical knowledge of military helicopter crews, and improve their interoperability levels, facilitating their preparation for international deployments.

Since the launch of the MHTC project in August 2019, EDA has played an active role in coordinating the harmonisation of the different agreements which form the legal, operational, and financial basis of the MHTC and its working processes. From now on, and until the MHTC Initial Operational Capability (IOC) is reached by the end of 2023, EDA will progressively transfer this role to Portugal, as the MHTC host nation, which will take over the activities under the supervision of the MHTC Steering Board, and with the support of EDA.

Among the main upcoming tasks in the process of setting up the MHTC are the buildup of the infrastructure in Sintra and the establishment of a contract with a service provider for the provision of a training simulator and instructor capacities to support the Centre's activities.

### ICAO COUNCIL CONDEMNS BELARUS OVER 2021 RYANAIR FLIGHT BOMB THREAT AND DIVERSION



The ICAO Council concluded its discussions on the May 2021 incident in Belarus airspace involving Ryanair Flight FR4978, condemning the actions of the Government of Belarus in committing an act of unlawful interference.

The latest updates to the ICAO fact-finding investigation report into the incident benefited from new information and materials following the Council's initial consideration of the report in January 2022, as well as an interview and audio recordings from the Minsk air traffic controller assigned to the flight.

Following its consideration of the completed fact-finding results, the ICAO Council acknowledged that the bomb threat against Ryanair Flight FR4978 was deliberately false and endangered its safety, and furthermore that the threat was communicated to the flight crew upon the instructions of senior government officials of Belarus.

The Council Representative for the Russian Federation meanwhile expressed his State's strong objection to identifying Belarus as the source of the unlawful interference which took place.

The Council expressed appreciation to the ICAO fact finding investigation team for its strenuous efforts and comprehensive analysis and reiterated its condemnation of the communication of false information endangering the safety of an aircraft in flight is an offence under the *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the safety of Civil Aviation* (Montreal Convention).

The Council also recalled that the use of civil aviation in this manner contravenes the spirit of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* (Chicago Convention), in particular its Preamble and Article 4.

In terms of next steps, the Council has directed ICAO to convey the FR4978 report findings to all ICAO Member States, to report the infractions of the Chicago Convention by Belarus to the ICAO Assembly during its upcoming 41<sup>st</sup> Session (27 Sept. – 7 Oct. 2022), and to post the report for public and media access on the agency's website.

It further requested the President of the Council to forward the fact-finding investigation report, and the Council's related decisions thereon, to United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres for consideration and any appropriate action.

To read the full report : <https://www.icao.int/Security/Documents/Ryanair%20FR4978%20FFIT%20report.pdf>

### RUSSIA SHOULD BE SUSPENDED FROM INTERPOL, SAY MEPS

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) approved a Recommendation to strengthen INTERPOL's ability to stop authoritarian regimes abusing its tools. The Recommendation, which sets out the Parliament's positions on the EU's cooperation agreement with INTERPOL, received overwhelming support from MEPs with 607 voting in favour.

MEPs would like to see the agreement grant relevant EU agencies – Europol (the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation), EPPO (the European Public Prosecutor's Office), Eurojust (the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation) and Frontex (the European Border and Coast Guard Agency) – access to Interpol's databases.

As part of the agreement, MEPs ask for guarantees that European data protection rules are respected when transferring data between the EU and Interpol. The new agreement should clearly spell out the purposes for which data can be transferred and block the retention of data for longer than what is necessary for these purposes. Also, it should ensure that personal data cannot be transferred if it would be used in connection with



death penalties or inhumane treatment. In the event of a data breach, MEPs would like to see clear procedures and minimum transparency requirements.

### Concern over red notices

MEPs note that Interpol's Red Notices, which are requests to arrest a person in another country, have been used in politically-motivated ways, and Interpol's current processing of Red Notices is not transparent enough. To improve this, MEPs would like to see annual publishing of data on these notices broken down by country. The data could then be used to create risk profiles for abusive notices and their diffusion. As authoritarian regimes may try to abuse the Interpol tools, the Commission should establish an EU verification mechanism to exchange information about abusive notices and remove them where necessary, argue the MEPs.

### Questions over the role of Russia

MEPs note that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a direct threat to international law enforcement cooperation, and Russia's continued access to Interpol data is endangering EU cooperation with the police organisation. Therefore, MEPs support removing access rights to Interpol data from Russia and Belarus, and eventually suspend them from Interpol altogether. Russia is a major issuer of Red Notices, and the European Parliament has previously condemned its use of arrest warrants to pursue Lithuanian judges in connection with the country's independence from the Soviet Union.



Jadwiga Wiśniewska

### Background

Currently, only EU member states have access to Interpol's 19 databases, whereas EU agencies have no way of exchanging this information. In July 2021, the Council authorised negotiations for a new co-operation agreement between the EU and Interpol.

After the vote, rapporteur Jadwiga WIŚNIEWSKA (ECR, PL) said: "Interpol is the EU's key partner in countering terrorism and fighting organised crime. However, EU-Interpol collaboration could be further tightened and formalised. My report establishes guidelines for negotiations on a co-operation agreement, and our key priorities are granting EU agencies direct controlled access to Interpol's databases and tackling the misuse of Interpol's red notices and arrest warrants. Also, given the geopolitical situation, I believe strongly that Russia should be excluded from Interpol following its unjustified aggression towards Ukraine." "The most important recommendation is to exclude Russia from Interpol and its databases. There is evidence

of clear and repeated violations of international law by Russia, including the most terrible war crimes committed against Ukrainian civilians. There is no other way than to exclude the Russian Federation from this organisation as the country has lost its international credibility and the relationship of trust that is necessary for international cooperation has been completely destroyed."

### EUROPEAN MEDICAL COMMAND PROJECT NOW OPERATIONAL



**The European Medical Command, a Germany-led PESCO project launched in March 2018, has reached Full Operational Capability (FOC). Supported by 18 countries, it will benefit the EU and NATO with an enduring medical capability to increase medical operational readiness and interoperability for future joint and combined operations.**

Since one of the project's key ambitions was to promote closer EU-NATO medical cooperation, the 18 participating countries agreed to merge the European Medical Command (EMC) with NATO Framework Nations Concept's Multinational Medical Coordination Centre (MMCC) to build up a model for effective use of resources through national efforts and multinational cooperation in one entity. The common structure created from these two initial projects – for both of which Germany is the 'framework nation' – is now called Multinational Medical Coordination Centre/European Medical Command, or MMCC/EMC, operating under one single administrative and infrastructural framework.

From now on, the MMCC/EMC is available for its members, the EU and NATO acting as a medical support coordination and linking body for Baseline Activities and Current Operations (BACO) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations and missions. As an innovative and project-driven interface, the medical projects implemented by the MMCC/EMC will focus on producing direct benefits for its participating nations, NATO and the EU. One of the main goals is to strengthen NATO's and the EU's medical services by increasing interoperability of medical material and standards.

The two-rooted entity is tasked by its participating nations, the EU or NATO and has a bridging function between NATO, EU and international medical stakeholders by acting as a network facilitator and connector. Currently, the MMCC/EMC is acting as a link between civilian and military services of the EU and NATO in supporting the evacuation of wounded and sick people from Ukraine. This lighthouse project is intended to improve cooperation between NATO and EU medical capabilities and services.



Flanked by then-Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy Admiral Viktor Chirkov (left), then-Commander of the Baltic Fleet Viktor Kravchuk (right), and Russian Defense Minister General Sergey Shoygu (far right), Russian President Vladimir Putin visits the Baltic Fleet at Baltiysk (Kaliningrad) on Russian Navy Day in July 2015.

## LONELINESS BEGINS AT HOME

*How a part of Russia came to be isolated and alone – but also good fun?*

What can you say about Kaliningrad? It ought to be the loneliest place on Earth. Instead, it seems to be stuffed full of bars that get good write-ups on Trip Advisor, complete with cabarets and entertainment and there's even a

website to advise young (and not so young?) male visitors where they are most likely to find enjoyable (and easy-going) female company. One assumes that means without interference or intervention by the KGB and without too much concern about moral

standards being upheld? It used to be called Königsberg and it was German until 1946, when it was given to Russia as part of the war reparations: a Russian oblast mysteriously sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland on the Pregolya River, at the head of the Vistula Lagoon on the Baltic Sea. It's the second largest city in the whole area, after St. Petersburg. It is also the only ice-free port of Russia and the Baltic states on the Baltic Sea, making it an important place, even if not many people talk about it. Oh, and it's 322 kilometres from the border of what we might call "Russia proper": they have no border in common. In the light of its wide range of entertainment opportunities (most of which I'd be far too old to enjoy), it obviously has quite a lot to offer the adventurous, especially the young. It poses a question, however: here it is, 15,1002 of Russian territory (roughly half the size of Belgium), surrounded on all sides by Western Europe during a war between Russia and Ukraine





(and very nearly the rest of Europe, too), and nobody is talking about it, or not very much.

Kaliningrad had at one time been the capital of the Dukes of Prussia. Later, it became the capital of East Prussia before being ceded to the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War under the Potsdam agreement. Surrounded by NATO countries, it now allegedly houses nuclear weapons as well as parts of the Russian fleet, there to defend Russia's military interests in the event of war. Lithuania has now imposed a ban on the passage of goods across its territory, on their way to or from Kaliningrad, if they are listed in the EU's embargo. It doesn't mean that Kaliningrad is completely cut off; it is a seaport, after all. Poland's prime minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, has said that something must be agreed to settle the problem and urgently, too. Kaliningrad relies on railways and roads through Lithuania for most of its goods, but it has been cut off from some freight transport networks from mainland Russia since June 17 under sanctions imposed by Brussels.

Things were fine until Vladimir Putin's seizure of Crimea, when pro-Kremlin media suddenly started to portray a number of European countries as "morally depraved" (considering the "physical delights" on offer in parts of Moscow that seems a little like the pot calling the kettle black). Russian media also accused the Western nations of harbouring a visceral hatred of Russia and the Russians, with the Foreign Ministry even going to far as to warn travellers that they ran the risk of being seized by intelligence agencies while out for a walk. It was all utter nonsense of course, just as similar warnings issued to Europeans planning a trip to Russia were nonsense. I was never challenged by the police, despite taking lots of photographs and shooting video footage. When I was in Moscow with a French cameraman and a Belgian sound recordist, we wanted a shot of Lenin's tomb and, not being allowed to set up a tripod in Red Square (nobody was at that time), we entered the Gum department store, climbed to a landing halfway to the first floor and filmed from there through a large window.

I was the "lookout", although I took some photos of my own. It was perhaps 20 years ago, but nobody arrested us or



Soldiers of the KGB Kremlin Regiment changing the guard at Lenin's Mausoleum

even questioned our right to be there, even though we were conversing in French and carrying professional equipment. Да здравствует свободная Россия! (Long live free Russia). Free, but financially poor: I noticed (it was impossible to miss) the groups of people in fairly old and tattered garments on the steps of GUM, offering for sale at just a few kopeks above the prices charged in GUM, the brushes, dusters, tins of polish and other household necessities for which they had patiently queued. They were offering passers-by the chance to sidestep the queues by paying a couple of kopeks more than the full shop price. It's very hard to imagine that their efforts contributed much to the business of putting food on the family table.

### IF VLAD RULED THE WORLD?

Disliking the violence and threatening behaviour of Putin does not imply a hatred of the entire country. Personally, I would recommend that everyone should visit Russia if they get the opportunity, and that they should also sample the historic charms (not just the borscht, shchi cabbage soup and excellent vodka) of Moscow, although possibly not just at the moment. It's worth remembering the words of Honoré de Balzac in *La Peau de Chagrin*: "*La haine est un Tonique, elle fait vivre, elle inspire la vengeance; mais la pitié tue, elle affaiblit encore notre faiblesse*" (Hatred is a tonic, it makes one live, it inspires vengeance; but pity kills, it makes our weakness weaker). The question is: who is trying to whip up hatred here? From all the speeches I've heard and articles I've read, it's not a demonic hate-filled

West that's to blame but a President inside the Kremlin who has dreams of universal leadership, imposed with violence on an unwilling world, the whole narrative marinated in a soup of ultra-nationalist hate. There are times when Putin reminds me of the fictional character created by British comedian Peter Cook. In Cook's sketches his on-going joke was the claim that he believed he should rule the world. The character, "E.L. Wisty", dressed in a long, dull raincoat and hat, spoke in a boring monotone in television comedy shows about the activities of "the World Domination League", of which he was supposedly the leader and almost certainly its only member. In those sketches, he never smiled, nor showed any sort of emotion, however much the audience was laughing. And he was very funny. I'm sure Putin could raise a laugh, too, because, like E.L. Wisty, he seems to really believe that he should be ruling the world. Sorry, Mr. Putin: I love your country and its wonderful historic cities, its friendly, interesting people, its architecture and stretches of incomparable wildernesses. Its history is magnificent, its historical character incomparable, but the idea of you ruling the world (or even Europe)? No; I think I'd prefer to be ruled by E.L. Wisty. At least we'd get to laugh occasionally. Anywhere near Putin would be a totally humour-free zone.

Most Russians, living in the vast, almost measureless heartlands, have never travelled to Europe; nor are they likely to. It's a truly massive country. For them, the Kremlin's unpleasant (and untrue) propaganda works well; if Putin or his goons say something, it must be true, and it's likely to be believed without question in Bashkiria, Dagestan or Kabardino-



'Passage Shopping Centre' on Pobedy Square, Kaliningrad

Balkaria, for instance. However, residents of Kaliningrad have one massive advantage over their fellow countrymen (and women) from the Urals or the Steppes, from the Tyva Republic or Tatarstan. They can travel freely to the EU, if they wish. And they do: to stock up on products that aren't available at home. There's no doubt that Putin's verbal attacks on Western European countries have an effect, but the people from Kaliningrad know them to be untrue, or at least have good reason to doubt them. It's a Russian EXclave (an ENclave would have to be Inside the country) that seems to be quite un-Russian. The city centre of Kaliningrad is 120 kilometres from the Lithuanian border and just 48 kilometres from Poland. On fine weekends and public holidays, there are long tailbacks at the border crossing points, with the port city of Gdansk an especially popular place for Kaliningrad people to visit. The Kremlin's claims about Western governments and citizens are largely seen for what they really are: propaganda. Or in other words, lies. Roughly 70% of Kaliningrad's one million residents hold passports and they often travel to Lithuania and

Poland, compared with just 30% for Russia as a whole. It doesn't mean that Kaliningrad is chock-full of "traitors" or "turncoats", nor is it a liberal stronghold. Many Kaliningrad people see themselves as patriotic Russians, while they also provide plenty of members for the ultra-nationalist pro-Putin National Liberation Movement, in Russian: "Национально-освободительное движение" or "НОД" (NOD).

The region – as a region – was founded by Teutonic Knights in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In Soviet times, travelling to Moscow merely meant a very long train journey, all of it across Soviet territory. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the Soviets annexed it and renamed it in honour of the Bolshevik revolutionary, Mikhail Kalinin. Stalin expelled its German residents, replacing them with Soviet citizens, who viewed it as "moving to the West", whilst technically remaining in the East. As a strong outpost for the Soviet military and their families, it was strictly off-limits for foreigners until 1991. Even so, it was a weak spot, opening up the rigidly controlled Soviet Union to Western influences. Soviet sailors would bring back clothes, books, and records of rock music from the West and even further afield. The city also housed the so-called House of Soviets, an understandably famous example of Soviet-era brutalist architecture, standing on the site of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Königsberg Castle, blown up in 1968 on the orders of the then soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, having already been largely destroyed by RAF bombs and by Soviet shells. The shells were fired in its recapture, a project that took three months and a lot of explosives to complete, leaving the unfinished (and hideous) building looking rather like the head of a robot who has been buried up to its shoulders. During the Cold War, Kaliningrad was home to the Soviet Baltic Fleet.

In more recent times, there have been calls to "rediscover" the city's Prussian past, despite the idea being condemned among Kremlin supporters as "Germanisation". It's an issue about which much has been written in Britain's left-leaning Guardian newspaper. One pro-Putin journalist, Nikolay Dolgachev (not writing for The Guardian), has



Königsberg Castle and Monument for German Emperor William I

described it as being "infantile" and has likened it to modern-day Americans getting nostalgic about the culture of native Americans (and what would be wrong with that anyway?). There have been repercussions, however, such as the forced closure of a local cultural and educational facility known as the "German-Russian House", having been declared a "foreign agent". I'm not sure how a house – a building – can be an "agent". Furthermore, an Aeroflot steward was recently dismissed for referring to Kaliningrad as Königsberg just before take-off. A Russian journalist born in Kaliningrad, Oleg Kashin, has accused the Kremlin of trying to obliterate any part of the region's history that isn't devoted to the Soviet Union, and yet it was only annexed by the Soviets at the very end of World War II.

## FLAGS OF MANY COLOURS

Given the delicate sensibilities of the Kremlin's current occupant, how long before it becomes illegal to sing: "The people's flag is deepest red, it shrouded oft our martyred dead, And ere their limbs grew still and cold, Their hearts' blood soaked its every fold"? Putin could decide (not without reason, I suppose, given the song's revolutionary lyrics) that it is a call to uprising, to arms and to revolt against leaders – any leaders – which is the last thing Putin needs. And yet, if you scratch the surface of most Westerners, you'll find they're NOT anti-Russian, they're NOT even very anti-Putin. They're just anti-anyone who thinks they have the right to determine the beliefs – in very



A victory parade in Kaliningrad



fine detail – of everybody near them. It's the mistake Adolf Hitler made, and Napoleon Bonaparte, not to mention Caligula, Pol Pot and Ivan the Terrible, and, no doubt, all the other self-important leaders throughout history who believed it was their destiny to lead and the destiny of the rest of us to follow. They should remember that E.L. Wisty never actually won.

It's worth noting, however, that Putin's ex-wife, Lyudmila Putina, was born in Kaliningrad in 1958, and despite its relative isolation, the place experienced far more "Western" influences than much of the rest of Russia. The most noticeable remnants of the oblast's Prussian past are seven neo-Gothic gates, encircling the former city limits, as well as its redbrick Lutheran cathedral, where the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, is buried. He died there in 1804. There is now a roaring trade in Immanuel Kant souvenirs, such as fridge magnets that read "Kant touch it" or "Yes, I kant". I don't think he'd like to be remembered for cheap puns when he's rather more famous for his metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, aesthetics, and many other fields. You can, if you prefer, buy miniature busts of Putin and Stalin, decorated with the amber for which the region is famous (I once bought a small brass bust of Lenin, but that was in Budapest, not in Kaliningrad.) What's been called "Germanification" probably won't happen while Putin remains powerful and very anti-European, but there have been attempts to resurrect old street names from Prussian times and even to rebuild the damaged parts of Königsberg Castle. There again, there are still followers of Kant's



Lyudmila and Vladimir Putin during their wedding on 28 July 1983



Russian S-400 Missiles at a victory parade in Kaliningrad

existential philosophy, which he called "transcendental idealism", under which people experience only the "appearance" of things and not really the things themselves. In other words, things don't really exist in any physical way, except in as much as we perceive and experience them.

Nuclear warheads, however, are most certainly real; imagining they're not there won't make them go away. To put it in terms of those jokey slogans: "You Kant fire those things at me". In fact, Russia has placed Iskander nuclear-capable missiles in the region, claiming it was in response to US plans to deploy a nuclear ballistic missile system to defend Europe. The increasingly competitive installation of defensive measures reminds me of a children's story, I think it was called: "The Knights Who Couldn't Fight", in which rival groups of knights try to over-impress each other with the ever-increasing impenetrability of their armour.

One type is inevitably superseded by another, even tougher, until peace wins out because both sides are so weighed down by their protective armour that they can no longer fight each other at all. In front of their annoyed but helpless kings, whose worthy aim it had always been to protect their fighting men, all they can do is shout abuse at one another, and even then only in muted tones: their voices are almost silenced by the impenetrability of their face masks and helmets. In the end, they can no longer stand up and return to farming. It seems like an excellent idea to me.

Since Lithuania became a member of the EU, it has been impossible to take the overland route between Mother Russia and "daughter" Kaliningrad without setting foot (or perhaps wheels) on EU territory. Its military importance was reduced by the termination of what had been the USSR, and a great many associated military jobs were lost.



Baltic Fleet warship grouping, including Stoiky corvette, Korolyov major landing ship, and Zarechny missile motor boat, leaving Saint Petersburg for Baltiysk, the main Baltic Fleet base port

However, Kaliningrad is still of considerable strategic importance to Moscow, housing, as it does, the Russian Baltic Fleet at the port of Baltiysk. Both the EU and Russia appear to agree that some sort of plan is needed for the movement of goods between the exclave and the rest of Russia. According to Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, Alexander Grushko, talks are currently underway between the EU and the Kremlin on ways to free up the transit of goods, with Moscow making it ten times harder by threatening to impose a wide range

of retaliatory counter-measures to punish Lithuania if no agreement is reached. It's not a technique noted for its successes in previous cases. Russia is making much of its threats but it's not saying what they might be. One gets the feeling that Putin must really hanker after those "good old days" of threat and counter-threat, continually upping the ante until he can start a war. He's not the sort of chap you'd invite to a party unless you wanted to have to call the police to restore order and an ambulance to carry off the walking wounded.

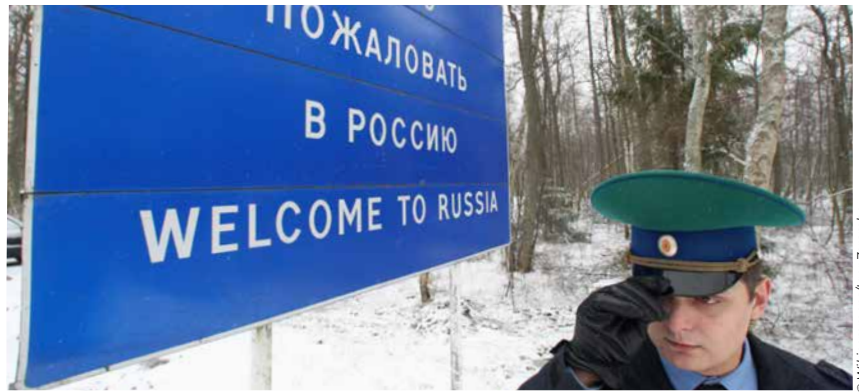
## IMAGINATION, NOT REASON



Alexander Grushko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russia Federation

Kant wrote that "Glückseligkeit ist nicht ein Ideal der Vernunft, sondern der Einbildungskraft" (Happiness is not an ideal of reason but of imagination). However, we are where we are (even if Immanuel Kant might possibly disagree). Moscow and Brussels are now said to be in discussions to try and resolve the issue, which concerns, of course, the transit of goods to and from Kaliningrad via Lithuania. Moscow says it's also working on a package of measures with which to "punish" Lithuania if the talks fail. Negotiating with threats doesn't seem like a very promising way of reaching a mutually agreeable solution, however some form of punitive measures will be applied, according to Grushko.

"After all, we have a certain dialogue with the European Union," he told India's Republic World. "And we have conveyed our concerns [to the EU]. I believe we have been able to explain to them that the decisions Lithuania has insisted on will result in serious costs not only for Lithuania, but also



Border guard at a "Welcome to Russia" sign on the international automobile checkpoint Morskoye, Kaliningrad

for the EU," he said, anything-but-affectionately. "According to public statements made by representatives of the European Commission, this signal has reached the addressee and it has become concerned over the problem," Grushko was quoted as saying. It's the wort of negotiation that might have been familiar to Al Capone and his cohorts or the murderous East London gangs run by the notorious Kray twins, Ronnie and Reggie.

The people of Kaliningrad seem to make the most of the proximity of EU shops and markets. As I pointed out earlier, around 70% of them have passports, compared with just 30% in the rest of Russia. Apparently, Russian cheeses don't enjoy a wonderful reputation (although they're getting better, it seems) and the same goes for various types of ham. But there are some products that many Russians crave and which are not produced at home, such as parmesan, camembert and jamón. The locals, then, see reality in Kaliningrad's streets, rather than the strongly edited (and invariably negative) version permitted in the rest of Russia. Kaliningrad is no utopia, of course, and nor is it a place where the residents hail Europe as perfect.

However, they make the most of their modern shopping centres, even if while shopping there some of them wear T-shirts that show Russian Iskender nuclear missiles ("Россия на первый план!" – "Russia to the fore!"), while independent media has been largely silenced (along with activists for other parties) and Putin's ultra-nationalist NOD followers blame all their problems on the West. Even so, experts say that most of the NOD followers and others will still choose to do their shopping in Poland or Lithuania if possible. They refer to trips to other parts of their massive country – Moscow for instance – as "going to Russia".

Kaliningrad, German from 1255 to 1946, was a vital seaport, known as Königsberg in German or Królewiec in Polish, and it was ceded to the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War under the Potsdam agreement. It lies on the Pregolya river and during the War, it was almost destroyed by Stalin's Red Army. German citizens were evicted in 1947 and new settlers from Russia and Belarus were brought there to replace them, to live and to work, with the city being closed to foreigners until 1991. It's a small city,



Moscow to Kaliningrad Railway Map (1285 km)





Siemens Velaro RUS (Sapsan) en route from Moscow to Saint Petersburg

with a population of less than half a million. Its cathedral, long ignored by the Soviets but now restored, houses the tomb of the great philosopher, Immanuel Kant, who lived and worked in Kaliningrad all his life.

In fact, getting to Moscow used to involve a long (overnight) train journey, crossing a number of various Soviet republics along the way, but all parts of a single political entity. That's no longer an option, even with the visas to cross EU territory demanded by Lithuania and Poland. For Europe's vodka-lovers, it's also a tragedy. Yes, one can still buy excellent vodka from, say, Latvia, but with all the trade restrictions in place, we Europeans no longer have access to such makes as Zyr, Huskie, Green Mark, and Hammer and Sickle, (among many, many others, like the very expensive 'Jewel of Russia' vodka, which I have never tasted). Russia stretches across eleven time zones, so if the people of Kaliningrad are feeling especially patriotic, they can watch Putin's New Year address to the nation a full nine hours before the New Year actually starts for them. According to the excellent Nelmitravel.com website, to get to Kaliningrad from Moscow remains a tricky business. You have to travel through Lithuania and Belarus, and were it still physically possible, this would require a Belarus transit visa (the train from Moscow to Kaliningrad goes to Minsk and then Vilnius and then Kaliningrad). These transit visas need to be obtained before the time of your journey, and you need to have proof of your train tickets when you apply for the requisite visas.

What other fascinating facts can I offer you? Russia has borders with more countries than any other in the world: 18 in all, although three of them (with North Korea, Japan and the United States) are "water borders". Any customs post built to separate them would have to float. Apart from the 1,089 kilometres journey by rail

from Moscow to Kaliningrad (which is no longer an option) it's also 631 kilometres from St. Petersburg to Moscow. The St. Petersburg part of the trip takes just a surprisingly brisk three hours aboard a Sapsan train (rather than the several days it used to take in the days of steam).

The Sapsan, by the way, can travel at a speed of 350 kilometres per hour at its maximum, but normally chugs merrily along at a more modest 240 to 250 kilometre per hour. If you get bored, there are video and audio facilities provided at every seat. Hot and cold meals are on offer from a trolley service and there is also a buffet. It's an irony of modern life: the more comfortable travel provision becomes, the less time you need to spend doing it. But that's just to St. Petersburg; you haven't yet reached Kaliningrad. Still, Russia remains a huge country; in fact, it has been the world's largest since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Few would disagree that the Sapsan is a big step forward, although it's not much help if your ultimate destination is Kaliningrad; the only working option is to fly. Incidentally, Russia is 26 times the size of France, 47 times the size of Germany and makes up almost 11% of the global landmass. For any interested space travellers, its surface area is greater than that of the planet Pluto, too. Look at Russia Beyond <https://www.rbth.com/> for this and other fascinating data about Russia; it's truly mind-blowing stuff about a truly mind-blowing country. It's just a shame that it's ruled over by a megalomaniac like Putin. The Russians deserve better.

## SEVERENCE AND SUSPICION

Some of today's Kaliningrad residents fear that Moscow wants to cut them off

increasingly from the rest of Russia. Hanna Mäkinen, a Project Researcher at the University of Turku's Pan-European Institute in Finland, wrote in an article on Baltic Rim Economics, that Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine has placed Kaliningrad in an especially difficult position. "Being sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland and detached from the mainland Russia," she wrote, "the region has had close connections with its neighbours and high dependence on imports. Although the socioeconomic development of the Kaliningrad region is dependent on the motherland, the special characteristics of the region make it particularly vulnerable to disruptions in the EU-Russia relations and strengthen the effects of isolation." And there has certainly been disruption, on a massive scale, as Ms. Mäkinen points out. "The increasing tensions between Russia and the West already since Russia's annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the war in Donbass in 2014 have affected Kaliningrad's external relations, resulting in decrease in foreign trade and border crossings.

Due to Russia's military aggression towards Ukraine in 2022, the cross-border connections between the Kaliningrad region and the EU are limited further, which affects local businesses and residents alike."

The report paints a bleak picture of the exclave's economic prospects. "Companies in the region are lacking raw materials, equipment and components" due to the Western sanctions restricting exports to Russia. The agricultural sector and food processing industries in the region, also dependent on imports, have already been facing shortages due to Russia's earlier import restrictions on EU foodstuff and agricultural



Avtotor assembly plant in Kaliningrad



© Wikimedia

Acting Governor of the Kaliningrad Region  
Anton Alikhanov

products. In addition, the collapse of the value of the rouble has made imported products more expensive in the region. The withdrawal of foreign companies from Russia is also affecting businesses in Kaliningrad. Car manufacturing company Avtotor, which has been assembling foreign car models directed for the Russian market, is suffering because companies such as BMW have ceased their partnership with it. I'm sure that Russia must have an equivalent saying to one that I know from English: "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs." The question is, does Putin really think it's worth breaking quite so many eggs just to make him into a poor man's tsar?

Even for ordinary citizens of Kaliningrad, crossing the border to buy something a tiny bit exotic has lost its allure with the virtual collapse of the rouble. As Mäkinen shows, COVID-19, taken together with the strained Russia-EU relations and the weak and weakening rouble have limited pleasure trips from Kaliningrad. The expulsion of Russian banks from the SWIFT money transfer system has increased the difficulties, while some EU member states have

been calling for a Schengen-wide ban on the issuance of visas to Russian citizens. However, the rail transport system is still running, meaning that it's not impossible to make such a journey; just very difficult. Sanctions have undoubtedly had an effect, but goods already in transit between mainland Russian and Kaliningrad still move, unaffected by the EU-wide ban on Russian road transport, imposed in April this year, while maritime and air transport between Russia and Kaliningrad don't rely on transit countries.

Mäkinen's report makes it painfully clear that maintaining relatively easy movement of people and goods has been very important both for Kaliningrad's economic viability and its residents' quality of life. "The economic decline and uncertainty in Russia, as well as increasing isolation of the Kaliningrad region, will decrease the wellbeing of its residents, leading to growing discontent with the economic situation and living conditions in the region," writes Mäkinen, but I must point out that she adds a rider: "However, it is very unlikely that the public dissatisfaction will have any concrete consequences, such as to trigger protests against the current regime." No-one protests against Putin unless they have a death-wish or are incredibly courageous. Perhaps it's just a question of "can" or "Kant"?

### BLOOD AND STATISTICS

Sanctions imposed by the EU in protest at Russia's unprovoked aggression are having unintended consequences that have already been affecting industry in Poland. As a result, Moscow and

Warsaw have agreed that some sort of plan must be devised concerning the movement of goods between the main part of Russia and Kaliningrad. So far, it's been mainly steel and industrial goods that have been affected, and it's been suggested that if Poland were to exempt the territory from sanctions aimed at Moscow, a deal could be in place very quickly. The Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, told a press conference that: "It is worth agreeing a plan that will not violate de facto implementation of the sanctions, because, frankly speaking, the Kaliningrad Oblast is a very small part of Russia."



© Gov.

Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki

There may be a problem with Lithuania, however, which has long been a fierce critic of Russia and has already been at odds with Brussels and with Germany over talk of trying to diffuse the row. The fact is that nobody trusts Putin and his "I want to be Tsar" complex. Lithuania, having once been ruled from Moscow, knows how untrustworthy it is. Plato once wrote: "If you do not take an interest in the affairs of your government, then you are doomed to live under the rule of fools." This, sadly, may well be true. How one sets about stopping such an outcome from unfolding is a bigger question and a far harder one to answer. But as the war in Ukraine struggles bitterly on through a sea of blood, I feel tempted to quote a man who knew more about pointless, bloody conflicts than most people: Joseph Stalin. "A single death is a tragedy," he wrote. "A million deaths is a statistic." Well, he should know.

*Anthony James*



© Wikimedia

Government and Administrative Centre of the Governorate of Kaliningrad



# EPIONE

CABINET ELISABETH THURAT

YOUR TRUSTED PODIATRY AND MEDICAL PEDICURE CLINIC IN BRUSSELS



## PLANTAR REFLEXOLOGY LASER THERAPY TARGETED AROMATHERAPY



- Uses APIVITA natural French products
- Proposes various treatments using organic essential oils
- Uses the unique Low Level Laser Therapy (manufactured by Erchonia, a US company and world leader in the field of Low Level Laser Therapy)
- Bespoke treatment programs and state-of-the-art equipment
- Spotless hygiene

### We provide the best care possible

ELISABETH THURAT CLINIC offers a wide range of care specifically tailored for young children, teenagers, adults, athletes, and people with disabilities.

## AT EPIONE CLINIC, YOUR FEET ARE IN GOOD HANDS !

[www.cabinet-thurat.be](http://www.cabinet-thurat.be) • +32 4 94 04 84 24

Avenue Brugmann 292 • 1180 Uccle • Belgium

Consultations only by appointment • From 8am to 8pm • Monday to Saturday



© Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

Green MEP Daniel Cohn Bendit

## RED, GREEN AND IN BETWEEN

*An old fashion industry maxim says “Red and Green Should Never Be Seen, but politician Daniel Cohn-Bendit exemplifies those clashing colours!”*

It's an old but well-known maxim of the fashion industry in Britain: “red and green should never be seen”, suggesting that – as colours for clothes – they don't go well together at all. There are alternative versions of the saying, such as “red and green should never be seen without a colour in between”. Or you could say: “red and green should only be seen upon an

Irish queen.” It prompts the question: “why?” What has the Irish Queen done to deserve such opprobrium? Well, there are various explanations. The most likely, perhaps, is that the colours would clash in a fashion sense, especially back in the days when available dyes weren't really “fast”, hence the saying's common use in clothing design circles, albeit rather less so in these modern days, when such a clash could be seen as merely a “bold statement”, perhaps “startlingly chic” (or just startling, I suppose). Although there is a suggestion that the saying could be a reference to the running lights on ships, too. If seen together they could confuse the person steering another vessel sailing nearby and thereby cause an accident. A green light could suggest safety when things are by no means safe and the offending vessel should be showing red lights. From a political point of view, another saying: “Red and blue will never do” perhaps makes

more sense: a relationship between a Conservative and a Marxist would seem unlikely to flourish. How can anyone shout “Up and Down with the Workers”? German politician Danny Cohn-Bendit, however, is the very embodiment of both red AND green, and he's certainly no Irish queen. Nor is he remembered with much affection in many circles. It's strange: once upon a time Green politics were all the rage in Italy, for instance. The person who changed all of that was the Green group's most famous “star”, the mercurial, capricious, lubricious and unreliable Daniel Cohn-Bendit. He was so certain he was always right that he acted on impulse and very unreliable impulse at that.

Daniel Marc Cohn-Bendit, born in Montauban, Occitania, in France's mid-Pyrénées, lived in Germany and was deeply involved with the French student unrest of 1968. With his vivid red hair and his Marxist political



© NfF

"Danny the Red"





© Stephan Roehl

Green MEP Daniel Cohn-Bendit in 2018

leanings, the nickname ‘Danny the Red’ (Dany le Rouge) was, perhaps, inevitable. He still campaigns for a federalist Europe, for which a very convincing argument could be made, were it not for the violent nationalism that still infests so much of the continent and the doubts over his moral standpoint. He was very critical of Stalin and of Stalinism in his book, “Linksradikalismus: Gewaltkur gegen die Alterskrankheit des Kommunismus” (“Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative”) and, however controversial, he was usually worth listening to (except on the issue of paedophilia, but more about that in a moment or two). For a time, he served as a member of the European Parliament, even leading the political group of the European Greens/European Free Alliance. He liked to shock, and I cannot claim to have ever become close to him during my many years as a journalist there, nor even to have liked him much, despite his undoubted intellectualism and his sometimes-original approach to politics. According to one man who knew him well he was an arrogant show-off who liked to shock. And his manners were awful, by all accounts: rude and without any consideration for others, whom he appeared to see as ‘beneath him’ in some way. The European Parliament’s chauffeurs hated him for his rudeness. One of them (now retired) told me: “Cohn-Bendit was the one MEP who never said ‘good morning’, ‘thank you’ or ‘goodbye’. A mere chauffeur wasn’t important enough to merit a greeting.”

My chauffeur friend used one word to describe him, and it wasn’t flattering (nor repeatable here). He was the same with Parliament staff, who intensely

disliked having to take messages to him. It was standard practice at the time, in the event of a pre-planned visit by constituency figures, that if the requested MEP wasn’t available after all in the end, that another MEP from the same group would take their place. Cohn-Bendit refused to participate, meaning that groups were sometimes left with no-one to address them at all. He explained, when asked why that was, that if they’d come to hear him, no-one else could possibly take his place. He believed deeply in his own uniqueness! His self-importance and arrogance were legendary, and very unpopular.

The so-called “5-Star Movement”, founded by a comedian, Beppe Grillo, and a digital marketing expert called Gianroberto Casaleggio, was determined to be ‘anti-establishment’ in any way it could, so initially it refused to join an alliance with any other party. It was also ‘environmentalist’ (sort of) and ‘populist’ (very). It looked like a sensible decision for Italy’s Green MEPs at the time to join the movement because in the March 2018 elections, 5-Star became the largest party, but that seems to have been because it was “all things to all men (and women)”; whatever sort of future you wanted you could hope that the 5-Star Movement would create it, or at least campaign for it. Grillo himself described it as “populist”, although his supporters didn’t like that. The Greens had been big in Italy. One Italian MEP, Monica Frassoni, co-chaired the Greens Group in the European Parliament alongside Danny Cohn-Bendit for ten years. She was said to be in his “half-shadow”, but apparently didn’t mind. His quixotic response to political issues that arose drove Italy’s Green MEPs to seek the reassurance of being inside a large (but now shrinking) group and they chose the only one in which political leanings didn’t appear to matter. One on-line contributor rather cleverly likened the 5-star movement to a watermelon: green on the outside, red on the inside.

### MISCHIEF IN THE PLAYGROUND?

Cohn-Bendit’s admission that he had engaged in sexual activities with minors who were under his care at a kindergarten in Frankfurt didn’t do

much to improve his public profile. It didn’t help the Greens, either. Years later, he said that his descriptions of such events at the time (the mid-1970s) were not actually true but had instead been what he called “an obnoxious provocation”. It was certainly obnoxious. It still haunts him, however, and always will, although I’m not sure he cares. It gave a massive supply of ammunition to his political rivals. I think he might have agreed with the ultra-patriotic nationalist British writer, Rudyard Kipling, who wrote in his short story collection, ‘Limits and Renewals’: “A man can never have too much red wine, too many books, or too much ammunition.”

I certainly agree with the first two suggestions. With the paedophilia scandal, Cohn-Bendit’s name was forever tarnished, probably beyond repair, in too many cases taking the Green movement with it. To most normal people, the very notion of paedophilia is too loathsome to contemplate, and any reputation thus destroyed can never be seen as wholly clean ever again; suspicion will always hang over it. If he wrote about it as “an obnoxious provocation”, as he has claimed, it shows he lacks sound political (and moral) judgement at the very least and it irretrievably discredits all his other beliefs. It’s a great shame, because this particular scandal aside, he had many useful viewpoints to contribute to popular debate, as well



as being a natural-born short-term leader and intellectual. 'Short term' because he upset too many people to last for long.

Cohn-Bendit is the only MEP to have represented two countries, elected on the German list in 1994 and the French list in 1999. He also wants to see Strasbourg – arguably Europe's most cosmopolitan European city – dropped as a seat for European Parliament sessions. It's not the only controversy in a long and strange career. German authorities had asked for Cohn-Bendit's immunity from prosecution (all sitting representatives who have been elected enjoy such immunity) to be waived so that he could face charges over his alleged links to German terrorist Hans-Joachim Klein, who was jailed for nine years in 2001 for murder, attempted murder and kidnapping. The European Parliament voted not to comply. As a long-term left-winger (theoretically) one might expect Cohn-Bendit to favour the working classes, but he's actually (deliberately) hard to read. He has condemned the '*Mouvement des gilets jaunes*' (the 'Yellow Vest' movement) and has denounced their opposition to tax cuts for the rich. He's also against those who describe the rich as 'fascists'.

The World Socialist Website denounces Cohn-Bendit, for his "boundless political corruption" which, it says: "exemplifies the drastic rightward evolution of an entire layer of 1960s middle class youth that still play an outsized role in official 'left' politics." We have them in every EU country and even in Britain. On-line, one unnamed contributor suggested that: "M5S is not a Green Party at all, they dip their foot in literally every issue, trying to be as many-faced as possible to get votes from everyone (right now their prominent figures are a centrist leader, a populist 'president', a leftish leader of parliament and a rightwing dude in South America that's about to come back. This is all controlled by a company that tells them what to do, when to do it and how to say it". You could mistake M5S for literally anything if you cherry-pick some of their statements. Cohn-Bendit seems to be 'cherry-picker-in-chief'. Many link the Movement with the Mafia, too, although that could be an exaggeration..

It was nationalism, of course, that strange unreasoned conviction that one's own country is superior in every way to anyone else's, that fuelled Britain's departure from the EU. I recently heard from an old friend and former British member of the European Parliament who wanted to talk about a Pakistani couple who had settled with their children in the northern British industrial town of Blackburn. On their first nights there, their windows were smashed by stone-throwing racist bullies. The father is a self-employed taxi driver but all three of his children have qualified as doctors, making a much more useful contribution to British life than those stone-throwing bullies ever will, although that's presumably not how the racists themselves see things. Racism is, of course, rooted in nationalism and a belief that one's own home country should attempt to suppress anyone else's. Even today, you can see television "vox-pop" interviews (interviews conducted in the street. You should never trust them. It's the journalist who gets to choose the parts that get used and anyone putting forward a moderate, reasonable viewpoint will get cut out) with those who clearly still view Britain's departure as some sort of 'heroic achievement', as if the UK had been locked in and only managed to escape through acts of patriotic heroism and tunnelling under the Channel. All it had really taken was for the British voters to have believed the anti-European nonsense trotted out by a



Cohn-Bendit's May 1968 poster "We are all German Jews"

third-rate (but expensively-educated) journalist and printed eagerly by third-rate, flag-waving newspapers. They said such articles were "popular" with their more nationalist readership, an attitude they applauded. They still do it because although they know it's mostly untrue, it sells papers and gives racist thugs something to shout on the football terraces.

Cohn-Bendit is certainly no racist, as far as I've been able to find out. He doesn't look down on people because of their country of origin, their religious observance, their mother-tongue or the colour of their skin. No; he looks down on them because they're not him. He simply sees himself as superior to anyone else. He is both a writer and an actor, (among other things), his writing credits including "*Le Vent d'est*" ("The Wind From the East"), which is described in the inevitable blurb as "a filmic essay on class struggle which draws on images from westerns but has no plot and is both an experiment in making a revolutionary film and an interrogation of how successfully such a film can be revolutionary". Yes, it does sound counter-intuitive (and possibly somewhat deep, to the point of being boring, even 'sleep-inducing') but it's what Cohn-Bendit said and presumably believed in at the time, and that has followed him around ever since. That was back in 1970. Despite such an ambivalent write-up, the film was released and, presumably, watched, although I have no idea by whom. Cohn-Bendit went quiet for a spell then (cinematically, if not politically), with his next movie credit being in 1991 for a film called "*C'est la Vie*" ("That's Life"), which he co-wrote and co-directed. In 2015, he wrote and directed a documentary called '*On the Road with Sócrates*', which was released in both French and Portuguese. He also appeared in "*Un Amour à Paris*", a somewhat bizarre love story about two immigrants with unlikely ambitions. In 2021 he penned the screenplay for "*Nous Sommes Tous Juifs Allemands*" – "We are all German Jews". Written by Cohn-Bendit himself, the film was directed by Niko Apel, who also directed the German movie "*From Muslim to Muslim*" in 2018, which shows how moderate Muslims are still trying to protect their faith from bloody-minded extremists and





© Wikimedia

Daniel Cohn Bendit and former Green MEP Rebecca Harms in 2004

from those who are simply dismissive of their beliefs. “Muslims don’t do anything against the progressing radicalisation of their faith brothers?” runs the blurb. “- but they do. Day by day Ron W. from Berlin and Mustapha L. from Frankfurt am Main face the radicalisation process in schools and mosques.”

### POINTS OF VIEW AND MYSTICISM

The movie looks at how their faith is being misinterpreted, mis-quoted and misused to help extremists who don’t want to see Islam prevail but rather to see themselves uplifted into positions of power, Islam itself becoming no more than a vehicle for their self-conviction. In that sense, it rather follows the line of Danny Cohn-Bendit in supporting the moderate with reasonable, non-extreme views, an admirable viewpoint. The plain fact is that most of those who favour extremist viewpoints have never read the works upon which their faith is supposedly based. It’s impossible to fight against a belief you don’t understand, let alone support. How many Islamic extremists have ever read the Qur’an in its entirety? Nowhere near enough, it would appear. I’ve tried – honest! – but rather like the books of other faiths, such as the Christian Bible, or the Hindu faith’s Bhagavad Gita or even the same faith’s Rig Veda, Yajour Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda, these are not works to calm your spirit before trying to get off to sleep. Or how about the Upanishads of Hinduism. Millions of people, millions of interpretations. There must be a reason to explain why religious works are so impenetrable, but I have no idea what it is. Perhaps

prophets (or those who would like to be seen as “prophets”) like to be viewed as mystical beings who understand more than we can even imagine, when in reality they don’t. I remember reading a comment about how different followers of the same faith within a large monastery differ on points of detail. The quote (and no, I don’t remember where I saw it) is something like: “a thousand monks, a thousand different faiths”. But I have wandered off my main path here: the real question is: who (and what) is Daniel Cohn-Bendit?

He’s a winner, for one thing, or he can be. He has won elections in both France and Germany and has been described as a “bridge-builder between nations”, for which he was awarded the Theodor Heuss Prize.

Cohn-Bendit has long courted a controversial life-style and became a mouthpiece for a generation of the free-thinking young. Many a college room was adorned with his picture, even if a few were taken down and binned over his controversial attitude

to paedophilia. “I kept in touch with left-wing friends in the Federal Republic of Germany,” he told the German media, “and declared on 13 June 1967, almost three weeks after the shooting of the student Benno Ohnesorg in Berlin: ‘After this first death in Germany, one should not believe that the potential for violence in other countries is smaller.’” He was never one to turn his back on an opportunity to vent his views for a mainly (but not exclusively) young audience, preferably among those whose views already inclined towards the left. “In February 1968 I met Rudi Dutschke at the Vietnam Congress in Berlin,” Cohn-Bendit said. Dutschke was a German sociologist and political activist who, until he was severely injured in an assassination attempt in 1968, was a leading figure in the West German Socialist Students Union and also the Federal Republic’s broader ‘extra-parliamentary opposition’. “After the assassination attempt on Rudi Dutschke,” Cohn-Bendit went on, “SDS chairman Karl Dietrich Wolff spoke at my invitation in Nanterre. (SDS is the Sustainable Design School of Bircham International University, part of the Université Côte d’Azur). This was the prelude to the Paris riots in May 1968. The French government expelled me after the country’s unrest. After 1968 I became involved in the children’s shop movement in Frankfurt. I worked in a bookstore, participated in the founding of a group “Revolutionärer Kampf” and, together with Joschka Fischer, belonged to the Frankfurt Sponti (it means ‘leftist’) scene, which tested the social revolution with squats, street fights and agitation in large manufacturing companies (Opel and Hoechst).”



© Facebook

Rudie Dutschke and Daniel Cohn Bendit



Green MEPs Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Joschka Fischer at the European Parliament in 2011

Fischer, now retired, was a member of Alliance 90/The Greens and served as Foreign Minister and also as Vice-Chancellor of Germany in the government of Gerhard Schröder. During Schröder's administration, opinion polls suggested that Fischer was the most popular politician in Germany and was active in the formation of the Spinelli Group, a serious attempt to convert the European Union away from an assemblage of individual nations pooling their abilities within separate voting regimes into a fully federal system. Fischer remains a popular figure, unlike Cohn-Bendit and his former assistants, one of whom declined to respond to a greeting inside the European Parliament and when asked why explained that she was an assistant to Cohn-Bendit and could therefore ignore everyone else.

Danny Cohn-Bendit was to become the Spinelli group's leader, in theory. Many keen Europeans are saddened that the Spinelli Group failed to develop into a fully-functioning Europe-wide campaign with a large following. It had some top-ranking politicians among its followers (Cohn-Bendit aside), such as Jacques Delors, Mario Monti, Joschka Fischer and Pat Cox. It's a long list in reality, all of them major and all but one beneficial figures in European history. Sadly, the nationalists blocked their path and tripped them up at every turn. It's fairly certain that the presence of Cohn-Bendit in their ranks did them no favours, either.

## MILD UNDERSTATEMENT?

For the Greens, paedophilia came to dominate much of the discussions, with talk of "paedophile rights", although it's still somewhat unclear as to whether that means children being able to 'enjoy sexual acts' with each other or with adults, or adults being able to participate in sexual acts with children for their personal pleasure. In fact, it seems to me that it's the second version that is more likely to happen, whatever the intention, good, bad or innocent. Cohn-Bendit spoke about the issue on French television in 1982; this is the translation of what he said: "The sexuality of a child is something marvelous. You have to be sincere, serious, it's something else with the little ones, but when a 5-year-old girl starts to undress you, it's amazing, because it's a game. An incredibly erotic-manic game." It's not a game I would ever want to try and I'm positive I would not find it in the least bit "erotic" (or manic, for that matter). Cohn-Bendit's claim that the original story was faked begins to look less convincing, I fear, given his fairly obvious enthusiasm. To call it "an obnoxious provocation" would be putting it mildly, I think.

Cohn-Bendit is still active politically, even if he is less frequently in the news these days. In the UK, of course, which seems to be pretending it's no longer in Europe, even in a geographical sense, it means British people are denied access to information about what's going on in Europe, apart from occasional snide anti-European propaganda from the very right-leaning press from time to time. What's more, many of today's most prominent Greens started out as reds and rather extremely so. In the



Daniel Cohn-Bendit on French TV programme, 'Apostrophes' in 1982 when he declared: "It's fantastic when a 5 year-old girl begins undressing you"



Monica Frassoni

eyes of the world, the party is forever inextricably linked with the Greens apparent agenda: pro-war when it comes to unseating right wingers for the sake of protecting human rights, but also upholding "gender justice" and fair play.

Joe Biden's Democrats like them, especially when it comes to a commitment to environmentalism, the fight against racism and xenophobia as well as fighting for fairness. From 2002 to 2009, Monica Frassoni served as co-chair (alongside Cohn-Bendit of the Greens/European Free Alliance group, by then the fourth largest group in the European Parliament). In the previous Parliament, the Greens had been lost inside Italy's 5-Star movement, into which they had been lured to campaign alongside such people as Nigel Farage and his Brexit party, a position about which they were not at all happy: very bright reds and stunningly green greens really do clash. The four Italian Greens who crossed the floor to today's Greens group seem much more relaxed, while Farage, his 'mission' accomplished and the UK weakening by the day, fades ever more into history and irrelevance.

Most of the Greens' more prominent founder members - people like Joschka Fischer, Jürgen Trittin and, of course, Danny Cohn-Bendit, started out as left-wing militants. Fischer worked at Frankfurt's Karl Marx book shop and took part in civil unrest in Stuttgart, while Cohn-Bendit was busy earning himself the nickname "Danny the Red". Trittin was a member of a Stalinist group that called itself 'the Communist League'. Political scientist Horst Mewes described the Greens' first 'Programme of Action' in 1980 as "a pacifist, environmentally compatible welfare state, with totally emancipated self-governing Green republics, existing autonomously in a pacified world of international mutual





© Wikimedia/Leonhard Lenz

Jürgen Trittin

assistance and political harmony.” It was, perhaps, simply too utopian to exist in the real world, although it sounds like a perfect place in which to travel on broomsticks and breed unicorns. For the movement’s individual members, how to proceed was the big question.

Which, strangely, brings us back to Rudyard Kipling: “The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe” Kipling wrote. “To be your own man (or woman, one assumes) is a hard business. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself.”

Sadly, for the keen Green supporters of the 1970s, that also means espousing ‘paedophile rights’. Somehow, a sort of logic evolved that linked any opposition to paedophilia to the works of an Austrian Communist and disciple of Freud, Wilhelm Reich, who had written that there is a link between authoritarianism in general and society’s oppression of sexuality in its various forms, including amongst children. Reich produced pamphlets

under the title “*Massenpsychologie des Faschismus*” (Mass Psychology of Fascism), which circulated widely in student dormitories. Words from it were even daubed on the walls of the Sorbonne as graffiti. Reich had succeeded in linking in people’s minds the suppression of children’s sexuality with fascism. He wrote: “Suppression of the natural sexuality in the child... makes the child apprehensive, shy, obedient, afraid of authority, ‘good’ and ‘adjusted’ in the authoritarian sense; it paralyzes the rebellious forces because any rebellion is laden with anxiety; it produces, by inhibiting sexual curiosity and sexual thinking in the child, a general inhibition of thinking and of critical faculties. In brief, the goal of sexual suppression is that of producing an individual who is adjusted to the authoritarian order and who will submit to it in spite of all the misery and degradation.” I feel compelled to ask: “whose misery” and “whose degradation.”

A funny lot, these psychologists! At the Greens’ first Convention, held in the German city of Karlsruhe, participants discussed paedophilia as a human right and in 1980 they advocated removing two sections of Germany’s penal code, which made sex between adults and children illegal.

### COUNTING THE DAYS

It all descended into murky, dirty little stories of adult males and very young girls engaging in acts I won’t try to describe here, although I suspect you can guess. One leading Green, Volker Beck, who had written an article in 1988 on how to modify the legal framework, advocated “Amending Criminal Law: An Appeal for a Realistic New Orientation of Sexuality Politics”, in which he called for paedophilia to be

decriminalised, which sounds to me rather like decriminalising child rape. In 2015, the Greens commissioned a report into underage sexual activities and were shocked to discover that the activity was too commonplace to sweep under the carpet. Some Green candidates had already been convicted of sexually abusing children while one candidate for state parliament, Dieter Ullman, saw nothing wrong with what he’d been doing and who therefore ran his election campaign from his prison cell, where he was serving time for sexually abusing children. It was all a bit too far for many supporters of the Greens and may ultimately have cost them votes. In fact, it’s thought that the “paedo-sexuals”, as they were called, retained a strong influence in Green Party circles until the mid-1990s, which they only lost because of the growing influence of feminists and of some gay men. By that time, there was a new taboo to smash; as Yugoslavia started to break up, the Greens were advocating getting ready for war, which was still considered a step too far, just three decades or so after the end of World War II.

Cohn-Bendit wasn’t surprised when President Macron lost his absolute parliamentary majority back in June. Indeed, he told Der Spiegel that such a majority would be unnatural for France.

© NFI  
Daniel Cohn Bendit and Emmanuel Macron

“The French Revolution is still constitutive for the political thinking of the French,” Cohn-Bendit said. “There is one ruler, that is the king; the only difference is that now he is now sitting in the Élysée.” Even so, Cohn-Bendit reminds voters, the power of the public doesn’t end there. “But you still want to reserve the right to trim him, maybe even decapitate him. Madame Guillotine still haunts the



© Wikipedia

Wilhelm Reich



Jean-Luc Mélenchon during the May 2022 Convention of his electoral coalition « La Nouvelle Union Populaire Écologique et Sociale (NUPES) »

public mind. The French are a rebellious people. There is little room for the boring compromise search of a German system. In France, to compromise means to compromise oneself. On the other hand, those who are straightforward and stick to their goals do not betray their ideals. This radicalism is seen as being of higher value, even if it no longer suits a society that has become more diverse.” Cohn-Bendit has a way of projecting an outcome – any outcome – as one of his own brilliant predictions coming true, whether or not it is.

Der Spiegel pointed out that the conservative Xavier Bertrand had said that entering into an alliance with Macron would be like checking in on the Titanic shortly before it sinks, to which Cohn-Bendit had replied: “All of these politicians don't understand that they themselves are sitting on the Titanic. You are part of a political system that has just been voted out and has no future. But they still believe that President Charles de Gaulle's world is still alive,” he reminds listeners. “That's over, France is divided into many different camps, there are no longer any clear majorities. Only a parliamentary debate with different majorities can do justice to this new diversity”. This radicalism is seen as the higher value, even if it no longer suits a society that has become more diverse. “That's the madness of this system,” according to Cohn-Bendit. “There is a republican king sitting in the Élysée Palace, and this king says: La République, c'est moi. I think Macron was convinced that when you are elected president you are automatically confirmed by a parliamentary majority. That's why he didn't campaign. Now he is faced with the shambles of his own hubris.”

The 5-Star movement saw itself as 'balancing' other mainstream parties in Italy and seemed happy to share power

with the far-right Lega Nord and others from that side of Parliament, such as Britain's Brexit group, as well as left-wing Socialists. In policy terms, it advocates free water, sustainable transport, sustainable development, free internet access and environmentalism. Not all of its followers share all of those aims. After all, no party can be both far-right and far-left, while few politicians would find such a group easy to represent and few voters would find such a group easy to support (or even understand). So, Italy had no MEPs actually elected as Greens. It has now, because 4 of them have left 5-Star and reformed the Green group, in the hope that all that silliness will fade into the past. Some of his former followers think it would help if Danny Cohn-Bendit faded into the past, too. When real leadership was needed for Italy's Greens, Cohn-Bendit and Frassonni let them down, doing nothing to prop up the party, when they could have done easily, according to colleagues at the time. However, they were more obsessed with drinking champagne in Brussels than solving constituency issues in, say, Palermo.

Politically, Italy is in a mess, too, with the prime minister, Mario Draghi, losing the backing of the right-wing parties in his coalition, Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia and Matteo Salvini's League his resignation will almost certainly lead to an early election this autumn, likely to plunge Italy into months of upheaval. Draghi had said he would stay on as Prime Minister for the time being, at least, because most Italians want him to, but if he does, it will remain a precarious position. By the time you read this, anything could have happened, of course. Politics is an unstable business. Perhaps we'll be taken over by Martians. Unlike some of Europe's political leaders (and very unlike Cohn-Bendit) Draghi seems to be an honest man trying to walk a tightrope that is not of his making. If anyone can reach the other side unharmed, it's Draghi, but the present prospects are not good. It might be a good idea to bring a safety net, just in case.

### ONE ROUTE AMONG MANY

According to the article in Der Spiegel this puts Cohn-Bendit in something of a dilemma with regard to other rival political groups. He told the

paper: “Among other things, Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen want to leave NATO and also not comply with EU agreements.” But if that's the case and if, as Cohn-Bendit says he believes, this runs against the tide of French politics. Why do the French vote for such politicians? What does that say about French society? According to Cohn-Bendit, “The boys who voted for Mélenchon are not necessarily anti-European. And they just don't care about NATO. They wanted to vote left again,” (he hopes) “and after years of humiliation they wanted to be able to say: We are on the left, while there is also a right-wing France that openly votes for the national right.” Very far right indeed, as far as I can see. The Der Spiegel journalist continues: “This right-wing France has helped Marine le Pen's Rassemblement National (RN) party to 89 MPs in parliament, up from just eight. Aren't they all that serious after all?”

It's a fair question, to which Cohn-Bendit responds: “A part of French society is totally unsettled to the point of being racist, it is much harder and more divided than in Germany. This also has something to do with the terrorist attacks in France, whose psychological impact should not be underestimated.” Spiegel quotes him as saying: “That's hard for a society to digest.

The RN MPs will continue to fuel this division, but many of their projects will not stand a chance.” Cohn-Bendit has also said that France's middle-of-the-road right is not as far to the right as many people (including its leaders) think. He said that if Marine le Pen proposed a law against Islam that began with a ban on wearing headscarves in public places, virtually everyone in the Parliament would vote against it, including



Marine le Pen at the European Parliament



Mélenchon. Many of his opponents have accused Macron of deliberately stirring up dissent, promoting extremists of both left and right.

Meanwhile, Cohn-Bendit still has the paedophile allegations to deal with. According to research by Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, a German weekly, the allegations about Cohn-Bendit's behaviour haven't gone away. One mother who attested that Cohn-Bendit 'never behaved improperly' with her son later admitted that the boy in question had never been in the group for which Cohn-Bendit was responsible. Hessian Green Marcus Bocklet described Cohn-Bendit's remarks about an "erotic" game with a 5-year-old girl as "unbelievable crap", with no proof to set against his own claims. The current leader of the Greens, Claudia Roth, told Spiegel Online that any charges of paedophilia against party members from the early years should be pursued vigorously. "If the party were pro-paedophilia," she told the website, "It wouldn't be winning votes.

There were groups, such as the so-called 'Urban Indians' group and the 'Working Group on Gays and Pederasts' which were openly seeking to liberalize and decriminalize sex with children." But political scientist Gero Neugebauer, in an interview with Deutsche Welle, said such groups never had much influence within the Greens. He dismissed the claims about paedophilia, likening them to Germany's new "Pirate Party", championing the cause of freedom of the internet and civil rights in telephony, while opposing European data retention policies, such as its Internet Censorship law, called Zugangserschwerungsgesetz, which is an attempt to curb access to child pornography. It's a tough call if you're not a psychologist (I'm not) but I think a



Gero Neugebauer

majority would not favour open access to child pornography in case it encourages the consumers of such material to think it's normal or to try it out for themselves. I'm inclined to think that the majority would be simply disgusted and feel soiled just for looking at it.

Strangely (or perhaps not) one of the emblems for the Pirate Party, used on political posters and in promotional leaflets, is a marijuana leaf.

As for claims that today's Greens still flirt with the idea of underage sex, Neugebauer suggests that this is still talked about largely because some of today's more vocal politicians simply don't like the Greens or their policies. As Neugebauer says, "it's a publicity problem", rather than one rooted in a different set of genuine and rather distasteful political (or moral) beliefs. Well, that's a relief, although I don't suppose it encourages those with long memories and a strict set of views on what's right and what's wrong to vote Green. On the other hand, if you want to vote for a party that claims on its website to defend "social and environmental justice", that believes that Earth's resources are finite and must be protected and preserved, then the Greens would seem to be a fair bet. I don't suppose any party goes out on the campaign trail promising to chop down forests, concrete over all the natural landscapes, scatter poisonous garbage in children's play areas and over-use chemical fertilizers to poison the world, all in the name of making fast (and vast) profits. It may be what they intend, but it's not what they say. Obviously, it's true that different parties have different policies, some of which express greater concern with protecting our environment, our natural wildlife and our future generations than others, but people don't vote for their own destruction, nor for the poisoning of

their children and grandchildren for the sake of a few more bucks in the bank.

Getting back to Danny Cohn-Bendit, he is clearly an extremely intelligent and highly creative man, an avid self-publicist and a talented actor, politician and writer, even if his judgement can be suspect at times. The shadow overhanging his reputation is of his own creation. He believes the current French political system needs an overhaul. As he has said in the media, the days of such presidents as Charles de Gaulle are behind us. Other contemporaries of his have gone, too: people like Konrad Adenauer or Harold Macmillan. There is a wider range of political views today; it's not just restricted to a conservative (please note the lower-case 'c') versus a Socialist, whose views could range from 'just-left-of-center' and a mild trade union member, to hard-line Maoism.



Daniel Cohn-Bendit at the Sorbonne, Paris 1968

We're getting back to our "thousand monks" analogy, with people less willing to compromise these days. Is there a perfect way to do politics? If there is, nobody has found it yet. But I can also predict that if such an idealistic system exists, it's likely to be Danny Cohn-Bendit who discovers it, if only anyone will listen to him. And if they do, will he say anything interesting or encourage them to listen with a quick, polite "hello" by way of encouragement? Probably not.

*Martin Gardiner*



© AG Gymnasium Melle

Claudia Roth



© Fishmongers.org.uk

## WHEN THE BOAT COMES IN?

*How Brexit is affecting the UK's fishing industry*

I was raised on Tyneside in North East England, in the fine old (if somewhat scruffy and soot-covered) town of Jarrow. The soot (and what we called 'smuts' – the effluent from a plant producing coke for fuel) – came mainly from the coke works behind my parents' house, turning coal into coke day by day for those with a boiler to fuel but also for the steelworks down the road. A vital industry it was, but it was a dirty one for anybody living close to it, leaving smuts on any washing my mother hung out in the back yard. Mind you, the coke plant itself was impressive. It could be a stirring sight on a dark winter's evening, a blaze of seemingly infernal light glowing hot and devilish against the smoky cloudscape, as if Satan and his infernal legions had taken up residence there. But there was more to being raised on Tyneside, even if the people living on either side of the river didn't really mix with each other very much. Just across the River Tyne, on the northern shore was North Shields, with its fish quay, where

local people could go to buy the best parts of that day's catch.

Jarrow was a mining and engineering town, complete with its own coal mine and steel rolling mill, but the area was heavily dependent on the fishing industry, too, and had been since mediaeval times, even though most of the fishing was based on the Tyne's northern bank. That had given rise to a whole folk culture and to a great many folk songs, too, such as "When the Boat Comes In", in which a grandfather is trying to distract his grandson from his hunger by talking of a future in which they will be wealthier. It's written in North Eastern (Geordie) dialect:

"Dance ti' thy daddy, sing ti' thy mammy,

Dance ti' thy daddy, ti' thy mammy sing;

Thou shall hev a fishy on a little dishy,

Thou shall hev a fishy when the boat comes in."

(In more normal English: "Dance for your father, sing to your mother, dance for your father, to your mother sing. You will get a small fish on a small dish when the boat comes in.") The boat "coming in" really means when they somehow live to see better times and perhaps make a bit of money.



North Shields Fish Quay

My upbringing gave me a fondness for my old home turf – I still have a sister and brother-in-law living there – although I've lived in many other



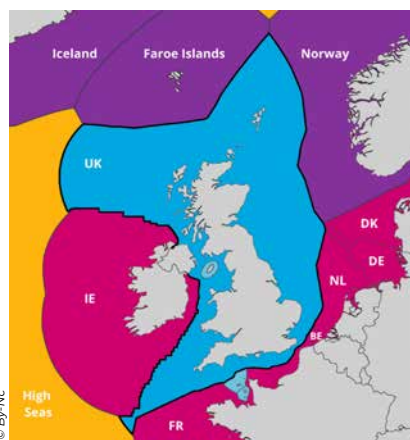
places since leaving Tyneside, from various parts of Britain to a spell in fascinating and historic Brussels. But back to North East England: on the River Tyne's northern side, in around 1225, the Prior of Tynemouth Priory, Germanus, built some very basic homes for the starving families of the poor living there and eking out an existence of sorts from fishing. They were just huts, known as "shielings", but they provided shelter for very poor families. Eventually, his action would be copied on the other side of the river, creating another town (or village, rather) and the two became the north shielings and the south shielings, now known (and for many, many years) as North Shields and South Shields. Coming from south of the river, I knew South Shields rather better when I was a teenager, being a closer (and thus cheaper) option for a night out with friends than posher Newcastle, but North Shields was more important to the fishing industry and, apparently, it still is. I recall the smell of fish in the air when I rode my bicycle through those streets with their fishy debris, which I often did on my way to explore further up the coast. Of course, it developed over the years. Better houses, better shops, several chapels (the fisher-folk were mainly low-church in their religious choices and seemingly quite devout), and, of course, places of entertainment and hostelry for the passing trade, like the Northumberland Arms. It was built in 1806 as part of the New Quay development, providing space for markets and fairs and the town's first deep-water quay. It also provided what was, at its opening, a first-rate hotel, the Northumberland Arms, which later gained worldwide fame and notoriety as 'The Jungle', the sort of drinking establishment that sensible people avoided. I was asked about it once by an Indian man who was a sailor and was going out with a distant cousin at that time, somewhere in the rural south of England. The Jungle's fame had spread far and wide.

### SHIVER ME TIMBERS

During all the wrangling about the government's proposals to quit the European Union, the issue of fishing and fisheries was subjected to a determined (if not always truthful) campaign by the Anti-EU and heavily

Eurosceptic UK Independence Party and the right wing of the increasingly right-leaning Conservative Party.

They were not alone. The British government was equally keen to rid itself of the Common Fisheries Policy, which right-wing Conservatives saw as a concession of British rights over our coastal waters to "foreigners" (they never came to terms with seeing our friendly continental near neighbours as anything other than "foreigners", despite our shared history, and therefore irredeemably viewed them as "evil" in some way). The campaign used very nationalist (all Britons good, all foreigners bad) memes.



Exclusive Economic Zones of the UK and neighbouring coastal states (Updated: 25 Feb 2020)

The European Union's fishing policy was based upon granting fair and equal access to Europe's fishing waters for all member states. It came into force in 1983 as part of the European Community's agricultural policy. Under this agreement EU nations no longer control their own territorial waters or set their own quotas for catching fish. Instead, fish are classified as a "common resource" (if you asked them I suspect that is how they would see themselves) and the rules governing fishing quotas, catch levels, subsidies, discards and a whole range of other measures are set centrally by the European Commission. Although the individual EU member states are still responsible for policing their waters and enforcing the regulations, all EU countries with a coastline and a fishing industry were to share their territorial waters (the Exclusive Economic Zone – or EEZ – as it was called) with each other, and all would have the right to fish in each other's

waters, with the EU setting the catch levels for each country in each specific area.



Captain Pugwash, depicted in the title sequence of the 1975 series

The UK's more nationalist politicians found this state of affairs with regard to Europe distasteful and seemed to develop a "Captain Pugwash" complex, (Captain Pugwash was a rather silly cartoon pirate in a children's television programme) setting their sails and priming their cutlasses for the fray, no doubt crying "Avast there, landlubbers!" or "Yo, Ho, Ho and a bottle of rum!" under their breaths). Obviously, this is an overstatement, but to hear comments from such members of Parliament as arch-Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg you'd be excused for thinking that. When asked by the HuffPost UK website if Brexit had been worthwhile in monetary terms, the Minister for "Brexit Opportunities and Efficiency" (that is Rees-Mogg's title, seriously) accepted that financial savings were hard to spot (although he told the London radio channel LBC that there could perhaps be "very slight" (and undefined) savings on cheeses and fish fingers) that: "I've always thought it's all about democracy. Can you change your government, can you make decisions about how you are governed?" It seems not; at least, it has proved impossible to get rid of a prime minister who has lost much of his public support. Rees-Mogg thinks it's worse in the EU: "That is the big and overwhelming advantage of Brexit, and then you come to the debate as to whether democracy also makes you more prosperous and I think it does and there's a great deal of evidence for that." He failed to show any, however, when asked. It seems to be closer these days to shouting "shiver me timbers", "splice the mainbrace!" or

“cleave him to the brisket”. No, I don’t know what they all mean (the last one is apparently an especially nasty thing to do with a cutlass to someone tied to a mast in an upright posture) but the phrases rightfully and more accurately belong to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries anyway and may never have been carried out in real life. At least, I sincerely hope not. Certainly such behaviour played no part in the daily lives of the fishermen who sailed from the Tyne in the hope of returning with fish to sell, or at least returning alive.



UK MEP Jacob Rees-Mogg © Ben Shread

The North Sea is a tempestuous place at the best of times. There are many tales of disaster there, few more tragic than the capsizing and sinking of a London and Aberdeen passenger steamer, the Stanley. It, and a schooner called the Friendship, also carrying passengers, together with a brigg (name not recorded) became stuck on the Midden Bank rocks, according to the local records of Thomas Fordyce, written on 24 November, 1864. With a heavy sea running, it was impossible for a lifeboat to reach the vessels, which gradually capsized and sank close enough to shore for the locals to watch in mounting horror. Those travellers were not the first to suffer such a fate. The “Black Middens”, as they’re known, are hidden at anything less than a very high tide, and they’re extremely deadly. In three days of blizzards in 1864, the Middens claimed 32 passengers and two lifeboat men, all within sight of shore. Fishing in the North Sea was never a job for softies. Local lifeboats were launched but none of them could get close enough to the stricken Stanley, nor the passenger schooner Friendship, due to the high seas. The fact that the disaster was played out so close to land and in full

view of the people watching from the shore, caused horror and outrage. A public meeting was called afterwards, following which the Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade (TVLB) was formed, the oldest organisation of its kind in the world. It was a very good development, but a very heavy price had been paid for its creation. The TVLB has gone on to save many lives.

## PROMISES, PROMISES

If only Brexit had worked out quite so well for those making a living from the sea by the harvesting of its fish. Fishing contributes around £1-billion (£1.16-billion) to Britain’s GDP, which means that in economic terms it’s a relatively unimportant industry. However, with the UK being an island nation, any activity related to nautical matters assumes an importance well above its monetary value. Many British people will happily witter on about how “vital” our fishing industry is and how bold our fishermen, even if most members of the British public eat less fish these days than their parents and considerably less than their grandparents used to consume.

The fishing industry was given a lot of promises about their post-Brexit future. Without the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), voters were assured, the UK would have complete control of British waters and, of course, a bigger share of catches made in UK waters. They would no longer be bound by the hated CFP, either, allowing Britain to set up its own, conservation-based fishery management system. Brexit gives the UK control over its 200-nautical mile (370-kilometre) Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), recognised under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In fact, given the geographical facts of life, the EEZ fails to stretch to 200 nautical



The English Channel

miles: across the Irish Sea, the English Channel and the southern North Sea, it soon runs into the EEZs of other countries, equally determined to defend their fish stocks. Several of them have historic claims to access, although the UK is not legally obliged to honour them under UNCLOS, it would be expected to in most cases. As Aaron Hatcher of the University of Portsmouth wrote in a report: “The UK is not obliged to grant access to its EEZ, although under UNCLOS it would be expected that it would. The UK is also not obliged to grant access to all the EU boats which currently fish in UK waters, but the UK EEZ forms such a large part of Europe’s seas that catches from the UK zone are of very considerable economic importance to a number of EU member states.” Hatcher points out that Denmark, for example, “would find it impossible to catch its quotas of herring and mackerel if it could no longer fish in UK waters, with devastating consequences for its industry.” Its fish-eating population would be rather annoyed, too.



Boris Johnson visiting Grimsby Fish Market (From left, fish merchant Chris Sparkes, Boris Johnson, Lia Nici and Martin Vickers)

Let’s just take a look at the types of fish the North Shields boats go after. There’s brill, for instance, not to mention brown crab and cod, dab, Dover sole and gurnard. Or how about haddock, hake, and halibut? Or lemon sole, ling and mackerel? Monkfish, plaice and pollack are there, too, along with squid, turbot and whiting, plus wild salmon and something called witch. No spells, no cauldrons and no flying broomsticks; witch is just a strange-looking flatfish that has both its eyes on its right-hand side of its head, which means its appearance is extremely odd. It’s unlikely to win a beauty contest and this has undoubtedly dented its popularity. It has seldom





*Nephrops norvegicus* known variously as the Norway lobster, Dublin Bay prawn, langoustine

featured on anyone's "favourite fish" list. Perhaps that's why it was "re-branded" as "Torbay sole". But it's the North Sea's shellfish that come first anyway. *Nephrops norvegicus*, also known as Norway lobsters or Dublin Bay prawns, live in burrows in muddy sea-beds, the surrounding sediments being normally 20 to 30 centimetres beneath the surface and surrounded mainly by silt and clay. The burrows they build are more-or-less permanent and vary little in design, being usually 50 to 80 centimetres from front entrance to rear. Norway lobsters spend most of their time either lying inside their burrows, apparently relaxing (do shellfish dream?) or near the entrance. They normally only leave their shelters to forage or to mate. A little like some of the humans back on shore, really, if North Shields is still much as I remember it.

*Nephrops* make up a large proportion of the catch for North Shields boats. According to research carried out by Newcastle University, the fishery has seen long-term decline in employment, with the numbers involved dropping by some 36% between 1996 and 2002, although that is for the whole of England

and Wales, not just the Northeast coast. Over the same time period, the fishing fleet of more than 10-million vessels fell by the same proportion. According to the report, expectations regarding further declines in fishing employment and vessels in the light of forthcoming European Council decisions on TACs (Total Allowable Catches), effort limitations and stock recovery plans and the persistently poor economic state of key fisheries; the European Commission's upper estimate of job losses due to forthcoming recovery measures amounts to 28,000 EU jobs, even taking a very optimistic view of stock and economic scenarios. All in all, it's not a pretty picture for the future prospects of fishing in the North Sea, nor for the fishermen who rely upon the fishing industry for their livelihoods.

### PRAWN FREE

Apart from the declining earnings and the dwindling profitability of several key fleet segments, particularly within the whitefish sector, when taken together with decreasing profits for crew, skippers and owners, fishing has less of an appeal. Despite a suggestion of possible improvements in the *nephrops* sector, there remains the problem of recruiting adequate crews, especially among young people, largely because pay in the sector is generally poor and work conditions are hard, dangerous and unattractive, despite much of the region's sky-high unemployment. Who wants to be battling to keep their feet on the tossing and slippery deck of a small vessel being buffeted in a force 10 gale off the Black Middens rocks, just to haul a few shellfish out of the sea, when

they could be working in an office or a factory somewhere, or merely receiving unemployment benefit? It may seem boring but it's unlikely to kill you. Work conditions are not appealing, which, taken together with a greater concentration in the processing industry and an increasing reliance on overland deliveries, makes the industry unappealing and unrewarding, as well as dangerous.



Overall British trends have been echoed within the Northeast, with 66 vessels being decommissioned between 1993 and 1996 alone, representing a 33% reduction in fleet capacity, the highest rate in England. From an overall fleet strength of some 10-million vessels nationwide, numbers have progressively declined from 159 in the Northeast in 1994 to 76 in 2002 – a drop of 52%. The number of people employed in the industry has also (inevitably) declined, from 944 in 1995 to just 623 in 2002. That's a drop of 34%. The number of vessels for which North Shields was the home port is down by 17, the biggest drop recorded in any of the Northeast fishing ports, although the picture is by no means rosy for any of the others, either. Perhaps Britain's traditional love of fish and chips is being overtaken by a taste for burgers, pizzas or Kentucky fried chicken (or its imitators), or at least fewer snacks to be gobbled out in the street? However, it's clear that there is still a demand for scampi, which is how *nephrops* are usually served. I must admit that asking for "scampi-in-a-basket" sounds better than "nephrops-in-a-basket".



Fishing boats in Newlyn Harbour, Cornwall, UK

According to the North Shields Fish Quay (NSFQ) company, “North Shields is the busiest and most important fishing port on the East Coast of England.” On its website, NSFQ makes clear that “The vibrant fishing industry is still going strong on the Quay and remains the core character and uniqueness, which draws people and businesses to the area on a daily basis.” In my youth, I recall going to a friend’s house for Sunday tea, and if I was lucky my friend’s mother had been to the fish quay, crossing the Tyne aboard the Hebburn passenger ferry, and brought back the freshest fish anyone could buy at the time.

Certainly, Britain’s departure from the EU has not made things easier for the UK’s fishing industry, according to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Fisheries. “One Producer Organisation found that: ‘Obtaining equipment for vessels has been challenging due to administrative burdens of customs and the cost of duty,’ while another respondent had experienced “system failures with software/labels required to export post-Brexit”. One fishermen’s association highlighted that Brexit had for them resulted in “an increase in the need for representation from the fishing industry in meetings with government and the media, all on a much-reduced budget”. Similar impacts were felt by respondents of various backgrounds, the report continued. “A pot fisherman (owner of lobster pots) said he was ‘having to throw at least 90% of the catch back’, because while demand still existed, his former buyers were dissuaded by the onerous paperwork required and the extra export costs, compared to buying similar products from Ireland.” A respondent from the shellfish aquaculture industry faced

similar difficulties, reporting that “we were sending between 50 and 100 tons of large oysters to Europe every year at an average price of €1,500 per ton, but we have not sent a single oyster to the EU since January 2020, resulting in lost sales amounting to £300,000 (€347,470) since 2020.” In another example quoted in the report, a small fishmonger found that “our sales to one customer in Belgium made up around 35% of total sales, pre-Brexit, but that has now fallen to less than 5%”. The picture across the whole of the UK is much the same. Why buy from a non-EU Britain, with all that extra paperwork and taxes and duty payments when Ireland is there and still an active EU member? It’s much easier to get your Dublin Bay prawns when they actually come from Dublin Bay.

### HIDDEN IN THE SMALL PRINT, (OR IN THE SMALLER THINKING)?

Bureaucracy is never popular and seldom very profitable, either. According to a report from the London School of Economics (LSE) published in 2020: “The fishing industry has been promised a lot from Brexit: exclusive control over UK waters, with tightly restricted access for EU boats; bigger shares of the catch quotas for a number of fish stocks, more in line with their actual abundance around the UK; and an end to burdensome and inflexible regulation under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).” It looks very promising. That is, until you look at the detail, as an LSE researcher, Aaron Hatcher, has done. “The fishing industry has been promised a lot from Brexit,” he wrote. “Exclusive control over UK waters, with tightly restricted access for EU boats; bigger shares of the catch quotas for a number of fish stocks, more in line with their actual abundance around the UK; and an end to burdensome and inflexible regulation under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).” It all sounds wonderful. There is a “but”, of course, despite what look at first glance like many advantages. “It will have control of its own 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), with rights and responsibilities

internationally recognised under the UN’s Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).



HMS Mersey is a River-class offshore patrol vessel. Together with her sister vessels, she protects the UK’s fishing rights



French offshore Patrol Vessel “Pluvier” used for the surveillance of fisheries and the economic zone of 200 nautical miles

The UK can indeed then decide who has access to its waters. Of course, the UK’s geographical position means that its EEZ extends to a lot less than 200 nautical miles in most places, in particular, in the southern North Sea and Channel and in the Irish Sea, where the UK’s own EEZ meets the EEZs of other countries.” All OK so far? Hmm... “Nevertheless, the UK EEZ does represent a significant part of the area in which other EU member states are accustomed to fish. It is also worth recalling that the UK has never actually had exclusive control over its own 200-mile EEZ.

When the UK joined the EEC in 1973 its fishery limits only extended out to 12 miles, and some other European countries already had historical fishing rights in the 6-to-12 mile zone (rights that were written into the UK’s accession treaty, and subsequently into the CFP). Beyond 12 miles were international waters, open to all. It was only in the late



© twitter.com/CityLaw\_ILAC



1970s that the EEC Member States, acting in concert, extended their EEZs out to 200 miles, forming a *de facto* European fishing “pond” to which equal access had already been enshrined in the very first of the CFP regulations. As a result of this, other EU Member States have strong historical claims to fishing rights within the UK’s EEZ. The UK is not obliged to grant access to its EEZ, although under UNCLOS it would be expected that it would.

The plain fact is, despite all those tales of the British loving their “fish ‘n’ chips”, that British people don’t actually consume very much fish (and seem to have gone off the more traditional type of chips, wrapped in newspaper, too). British appetites have been won over by largely US-based tastes in fast-foods, such as beefburgers or what the Americans call pizza, (which generally bears little resemblance to the somewhat tastier stuff that is served up in Italy) and other popular fast foods. “What really matters to UK fishermen is access to markets,” says Hatcher’s excellent and concise report. “UK consumers eat relatively little fish compared to consumers elsewhere in Europe, and what they do eat is largely supplied by non-EU imports (think canned tuna, tropical prawns, Norwegian/Icelandic cod and frozen blocks of Alaskan pollack).”



Most of the UK’s high value catch is exported, the great majority to the EU. Tariff-free trade in fish with the EU is therefore vital for the UK fishing industry.” And that, of course, is precisely what the UK government signed away when Britain left the EU. Dividing up the access to the various bit of sea is a complicated business about which there is often a bit of

squabbling and Britain’s departure from the EU is unlikely to have much effect upon it, other than to postpone some of the squabbling until the media have become involved. Then it comes down to vicious slanging matches between right-wing “we-hate-all-foreigners and couldn’t give a toss about accuracy or fairness” newspapers and more liberal “let’s-be-kind-and-generous-to-everyone” left wing and centrist journals. In any case, zonal attachment to certain fish varieties (and yes, of course I know that nephthrops are not, technically speaking, fish) and their preponderance within a given EEZ seem likely to become lost in the wrangling still to come. “Ironically, by leaving the EU,” Hatcher warns, “the UK might lose access to the flexibility that is built into the system – the facility for international quota swaps – which UK fishery managers currently use extensively in support of the industry.”

“Don’t give a child a fish but show him how to fish,” said Mao Zedong (allegedly). Perhaps we should adapt the aphorism to make it more appropriate for negotiations about fishing rights. How about: “Don’t tell countries who can fish where and how much they can catch; tell them how best to argue about it afterwards for a few months or years.” Come back five years later and ask if they’ve managed to agree anything. They are most likely to still be arguing. Fishermen’s leaders were said to have been “jubilant” about leaving the EU but it seems as if the euphoria was short-lived. Fish (and nephthrops) are not very nationalistic and patriotic creatures; they really don’t care whose flags are flying from the masts of the vessels out to catch them.

Why should they care if they’re only going to be eaten anyway? “This island is made mainly of coal and surrounded by fish,” wrote British post-war Labour politician Aneurin (“Nye”) Bevan. “Only an organizing genius could produce a shortage of coal and fish at the same time.” I suppose that’s what happens when the boat goes out, or at least fails to “come in”. Bevan, who had worked as a low-paid coal miner from the age of 13, believed essential

services, including health, should be free at the point of delivery. After holding the post for two months he resigned because the new Labour government announced the start of charging for eyesight and dental prescriptions. What he would have made of the current impasse over fisheries is anybody’s guess.



British post-war Labour politician Aneurin (“Nye”) Bevan

As for the Northeast coast’s remaining fishermen, it seems to be a case of making their demands known in high places. As the old Geordie saying goes, “shy bairns get nowt” (shy children don’t get anything). Whether that makes any impression on a government apparently convinced that Brexit has made things better for our fishermen and for fish markets, albeit with no evidence to back them up and quite a lot that suggests the opposite to be true, is anybody’s guess. It seems certain that it’s what they believe, anyway, so they are, at least, telling the “truth” as they see it. And of course, fish can’t “belong” to anyone. Can you imagine a sort of maritime version of Rawhide, with Clint Eastwood helping to round up the fish (and the nephthrops) so they can be “branded” in some way? All we really need to do is to stop politicising our taste in seafood and just eat what we like, wherever it comes from. It’s a great big global marketplace out there, as it should be; let’s make the most of it, while we still can.

Jim Gibbons

# THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS



© U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

Seven representatives of Commonwealth Armed Forces marching with a Union Jack flag. Left to right they are soldiers from India, East Africa, South Africa, New Zealand, a Canadian airman, an Australian soldier and a Royal Navy sailor

## THE PLAYING FIELDS OF AFRICA

*African nations with no UK connections queue up to join what was the British Commonwealth*

Let's start by looking at exactly what a "commonwealth" is. According to my ancient Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary of 1850 (bought on a stall in a second-hand book market), it's "a polity, an established form of civil life; the publick, the general body of the people; a government in which the supreme power is lodged in the people, a republic." In the English language we normally associate the word with what is now officially called the "Commonwealth of Nations". Needless to say, it has rather imperialist roots, but we must ignore those. What we have now is an association of nations, rooted in Britain's old colonial days and dating back to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was originally created as "the British Commonwealth of Nations" through the so-called "Balfour Declaration" at the Imperial Conference on 1926. It was formalised in 1931 through the Statute of Westminster, which increased the

individual sovereignties from the British Empire of the Empire's self-governing Dominions. In many ways, it could be seen as the final curtain for Britain's mighty empire by giving the various countries thus controlled back to their rightful masters and mistresses. Perhaps the most important part of the Balfour Declaration was that it removed

the power of the British Parliament to legislate for its former dominions. They were free at last!

According to the Commonwealth (officially "the Commonwealth of Nations" these days), the Commonwealth is one of the world's oldest political associations of states. Its roots go back



21<sup>st</sup> April 1949: Commonwealth premiers, who are in London for the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, along with King George VI at Buckingham Palace. From left to right, DS Sananayake (Ceylon), Lester Pearson (Canada's minister for external affairs), Liagat Ali Khan (Pakistan), King George VI, Clement Attlee (Britain), JB Chifley (Australia), Daniel Malan (South Africa), Peter Fraser (New Zealand) and Pandit Nehru (India)

© Wikimedia



to the distant days of the British Empire, when countries around the world were ruled by Britain. Over time different countries of the British Empire gained different levels of freedom from Britain. Semi-independent countries were called Dominions. Leaders of the Dominions attended conferences with Britain from 1887 onwards. The 1926 Imperial Conference was attended by the leaders of Australia, Canada, India, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland, New Zealand and South Africa. At the 1926 conference, Britain and the Dominions agreed that they were all equal members of a community within the British Empire. They all owed allegiance to the British king or queen, but the United Kingdom did not rule over them. This community was called the British Commonwealth of Nations or just the Commonwealth.

After that, full independence happened in a piecemeal fashion as the various countries became fully independent of the United Kingdom. India gained its independence in 1947. It actually wanted full independence, so that it would be a republic, owing no allegiance to a British monarch, if that could be avoided, but it wanted to remain a part of the new Commonwealth, too. At a conference of Commonwealth prime ministers held in London in 1949, the so-called "London Declaration" was announced, allowing republics and other countries with other structures to join the Commonwealth and the modern "Commonwealth of Nations" was born. The Commonwealth's first head was, of course, the ruling monarch at the time, King George VI, with his daughter, the present Queen Elizabeth II taking over upon his death. That doesn't mean that Prince Charles, the Heir to the British throne, will automatically become head of the Commonwealth when Queen Elizabeth dies. Commonwealth member states choose the organisation's chief when the time comes, and they may vote to by-pass the Prince of Wales and select somebody from one of the other member states. As the Commonwealth says of itself on its website: "Since 1949 independent countries from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific have joined the Commonwealth. Membership today is based on free and equal voluntary co-operation."

## GOING FORWARD TOGETHER

The Commonwealth's two newest member states are Gabon and Togo, both of which had once been French possessions. About his country signing up, Togo's Foreign Minister Robert Dussey said membership opened the door to 2.5-billion consumers in the Commonwealth realm, offered new education opportunities, and tapped into a "craze" for English among his countrymen.



Robert Dussey, Togolese Minister of Foreign Affairs

So, the Commonwealth can now boast 56 member countries with a joint population, as Dussey accurately put it, of 2.5-billion. Clubbing together is never a bad idea, especially when so many of the problems and challenges we face are global. What's more, of the world's 42 smallest states, 32 of them are Commonwealth members, with populations of 1.5-million or fewer. Another interesting fact is that 60% of the Commonwealth population are aged 29 or under, so they could be a rich source of labour for the rest. The member states are very diverse, too, being listed among the biggest, smallest, richest and poorest countries in the world. It's doubly important for them to cooperate and work together, too, because they are especially vulnerable to such challenges as climate change and development issues, especially in a world dominated by very large countries, or groups of countries, such as the United States and the European Union. In the Commonwealth, size doesn't matter, nor does wealth: all Commonwealth members get an equal say, regardless of size or how rich they are.

So for Gabon and Togo, now Commonwealth members, never having had much to do with Britain or

its imperial ambitions, or not directly, trade within the Commonwealth is a strong possibility. What exactly do they bring to the club? Togo is Africa's 6<sup>th</sup> largest producer of cocoa, tiny when compared with, say, Ghana or the Ivory Coast, and from Togo's perspective, its cocoa crop may not bring much in as GDP but it's still an important export, providing an income for almost 20,000 families. It's not the country's most important export, however; the top exports of Togo are petroleum oils and oils from bituminous minerals, although not from crude oil, to a value of \$240-million (€234-million), along with preparations that don't easily fit into any alternative classification. Natural calcium phosphates are another export, along with natural aluminium calcium phosphates and phosphatic chalk, worth \$118-million (€115-million). In addition, there is Portland cement, aluminous cement (also known as ciment fondu which is a calcium aluminate-based hydraulic binder), slag cement, supersulphate cement and similar products worth \$104-million (€101-million), electricity worth \$97.2-million (€94.5-million) and soya beans, broken or whole, worth \$84.2-million (€82-million). Valuable things, these beans.



Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali in June 2022

The success of Togo's private enterprises in the field of cocoa production is remarkable. Crops there and in other parts of Africa have been severely harmed by what's called the 'swollen shoot' virus, caused by a pathogenic virus of the caulimoviridae family, which greatly reduces cacao yield in its first year of infection, usually killing the plant completely within five years. Togo's chocolate does have its own advantages, however, such as its use of the rare old

Amelonado variety of cocoa bean, which carries a special bitterness, very popular with true chocolate-lovers (as opposed to those who prefer it stuffed full of milk and sugar). Even so, many of Togo's younger generation are keen to leave the land and seek employment elsewhere. Despite a gradual flight from the farms and plantations, Choco Togo (as the company is called) is actively seeking to expand its market to the rest of Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States. Its chocolate products are available in various boutiques in the Togolese capital, Lomé, as well as in France, Italy and Belgium and also closer to home in its neighbouring countries: Benin, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast (although I've yet to see any in the UK). Furthermore, from the Commonwealth's perspective, gaining two more members engaged in global trade can only be a positive step. The Commonwealth hopes to be expanding further, reaching a trade level of some \$2-trillion (€1.94-trillion) by 2030. Idealists come and go but it's money that makes the world go round. €1.94-trillion could make it go round very fast indeed.



A hand-peeled cacao bean from Choco Togo. Kpalime, Togo

What about Gabon? Its exports have been rather less edible but perhaps more traditionally valuable on world markets. After all, a man can hardly parcel up a box of manganese ore for his lady friend (or a lady for her gentleman friend). In 2020, Gabon exported \$1.23-billion (€1.18-billion) of manganese ore, making it the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest exporter of the stuff. In the same year, manganese ore was the 2<sup>nd</sup> most exported product in Gabon. The main destinations of Gabon's manganese ore exports have been China (exports worth €737-million), India



BW Energy is the operator of the Tortue field, which is located within the Dussafu Marin permit, offshore Gabon

(€142-million), Norway (€98-million), the United States (€52-million), and Russia (just short of €35-million). That route may be temporarily blocked right now because of Putin's imperialist ambitions. Gabon also exports wood, sawn or chipped, wood sheets for veneering (including those for plywood), along with petroleum oils from bituminous minerals (although not from crude oil) and other related products. You will certainly get the picture from that: Gabon's main exports are petroleum products, which make up around 80% of them in value terms, followed by manganese, uranium and timber. Roughly 50% of its overall output goes to the United States, just ahead of the Netherlands, China and Malaysia. Gabon's economy looks fairly healthy: according to the OEC (the Organisation of Economic Complexity), its exports were worth \$4.34-billion (€4.16-billion) while its imports amounted to just \$2.21-bn (€2.12-billion). Over the last few years, Gabon has been recording trade surpluses because of its impressive petroleum exports. With virtually no manufacturing industry of its own, Gabon is dependent on imports of consumer goods and capital equipment. Gabon's main trading partners are China, the United States and the European Union. Manganese ores and concentrates remain the country's chief exports, followed by sheets for veneering. It also exports cocoa beans, whole, broken, raw and roasted, along with gold and other metals.

### WAVE THE FLAG (WHICH FLAG?)

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Gabon's performance has been mixed. Non-oil economic growth looked healthy

at the start of the international financial crisis, driven by high oil and commodity crises. Manganese, with the chemical signature Mn and at number 25 in the periodic table has high electrical conductivity. It easily forms alloys and gives extra strength to steel, which means it is used in the manufacture of rifle barrels and the bars of prisons, among other things you don't want to break too easily. Your body probably contains around 12 milligrams (Mg) of manganese and takes in a further 4 mg daily. Without it your bones could become spongy. Manganese is essential for the proper functioning of the medulla oblongata – the place where the base of your brain meets your spinal cord and therefore an essential route for the passage of information between them, and for the entire nervous system. In the body, Manganese is reserved in the kidneys, bones, and liver. Plants such as beans, vegetables, nuts, etc. are vast reservoirs of the manganese nutrients.

Rather strangely, you will also find it in fungicides such as "Maneb" (manganese-ethylene bisdithiocarbamate) because it helps to kill a variety of dangerous plant pathogens. Among its many advantageous qualities, it helps to protect banana and nut plantations



Mozambique independence day celebration



from viral infections. Mind you, it's not exactly rare. In fact, it's the fifth most plentiful metal in nature. It's also very reactive when mixed with other metals, readily melding with iron to help make various metallic felting designs. It's useful stuff, if not exactly rare.

As for the Commonwealth, which began life as the "British" Commonwealth, made up of former British colonies enjoying the new-found taste of freedom, Mozambique was its first member with no history of involvement with Britain in any political sense. Mozambique, which had been a Portuguese territory, was the first country to join the Commonwealth without a previous British connection. That was in 2009, and its neighbours had been British colonies and had already joined the organisation. Membership for Mozambique made sense and undoubtedly boosted trade. Rwanda, which was a former Belgian colony, joined the Commonwealth in 2009, yet it hosted the 2022 annual conference of Commonwealth leaders, even if there are considerable doubts as to just how committed Rwanda is to democracy and human rights. Democratic countries that respect human rights use the Commonwealth to put pressure on their more dubious fellow-members. The United Kingdom is not in a strong position to emphasize the need for human rights, having announced its intention to quit the Council of Europe's European Convention of Human rights in favour of some sort of charter of its own devising.

## HUMAN RIGHTS ARE UNIVERSAL RIGHTS

Dunja Mijatović, the Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights, said that replacing the proper Human Rights act with a British bill of rights would send the "wrong signal", perhaps suggesting that a pick-and-mix selection of rights, selected to please a particular government (especially a particular prime minister), rather than protect its citizens, would suffice. It very clearly would not, although it would appear to be the option that would be preferable to British prime minister Boris Johnson. Mijatović concluded a five-day visit to the UK in June, which included a meeting with the deputy prime minister and lord chancellor, Dominic Raab. Afterwards, she said:



Dunja Mijatović, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights

"It is worrying that the proposed legal reforms might weaken human rights protections at this pivotal moment for the UK, and it sends the wrong signal beyond the country's borders at a time when human rights are under pressure throughout Europe."

Raab admitted that the change was intended as a way to "restate" Britain's sovereignty (why should it need that?) by sweeping away the country's commitment to a universally recognised set of rules. The Council of Europe is the guardian of the European Convention of Human rights (ECHR); it could hardly hold sway over a rag-bag collection of odds and ends, hand-picked to please Boris Johnson and silence his critics. That's not how the Commonwealth is supposed to work. The laws passed in Westminster for Britain are important as an example to other members of the Commonwealth, although they're not obliged to copy them, of course. Mijatović pointed out that the new system touted by Boris Johnson's government would "widen the gap between the protection of ECHR rights by UK courts and the case law of the European court". She added that the changes had been proposed in a wider context of recent laws and policies that will inevitably impact heavily on human rights in specific areas, such as the right to freedom of peaceful assembly (Johnson would have apparently liked to make demonstrations – especially against him or his government – illegal), or on specific groups, such as refugees and asylum seekers, as well as, for example, Roma, Gypsy or Traveller communities. Mijatović is also worried about the possible impact of repealing the Human Rights Act on the so-called 'Good Friday agreement', which brought an end to bloodshed between the Catholic and Protestant communities

of Ulster and thus on peace in Northern Ireland. The Republic of Ireland is not a member of the Commonwealth. A recent letter to *The Irish Times* explains why: "The Commonwealth Charter sets out its vision and aims, which include the aspiration to a Commonwealth which is 'a strong and respected voice in the world, speaking out on major issues'. The recent UN General Assembly vote (March 2<sup>nd</sup>) on the condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine provided evidence of how close the Commonwealth is to reaching this goal. Of the 35 countries to abstain from this vote, nine of those who failed to speak out belonged to the Commonwealth." In fact, Ireland left the Commonwealth in 1948, when the then Taoiseach, John A. Costello made the surprise announcement during a visit to Canada, possibly over an alleged slight but really because he could see no advantage for Ireland in staying.



An unidentified public meeting during John A. Costello's September 1948 visit to Canada (second from left)

The current British government's determination to extract itself from the European Convention on Human Rights stems from the verdict of a Court of Human Rights judge that deporting asylum seekers to Rwanda, as the UK planned to do, is illegal. The UK government clearly doesn't like being told that its preferred solution to a problem contravenes international law. The *Law Gazette* reported that: "Lord chancellor Dominic Raab has said that the Bill of Rights, 'will strengthen our UK tradition of freedom whilst injecting a healthy dose of common sense into the system'. However, the *Law Society* described it as 'a lurch backwards for British justice', and one public law expert told the *Gazette* that the bill would 'dilute the rights of the individual, or rather some individuals, against executive decision-



Signing in Rome, on 4 November 1950, of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the first international legal instrument to guarantee the protection of human rights

making'. Presumably that is the UK government's intention. Mijatović stressed the importance of the protection of rights that are granted under the European Convention on Human Rights to peace in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement, saying: 'It is crucial that this foundation is not undermined as a result of the proposed human rights reforms.' It rather looks as if that is precisely what is happening. The Bill of Rights, if voted through, would mean the ECHR's rulings and decisions will no longer be binding upon the British courts. Britain's ministers have assured the Court that the UK would not abandon the European Convention on Human Rights and that it will still be under the jurisdiction of the ECHR based in Strasbourg. Mijatović pointed out, however, that the Bill of Rights would significantly alter the way in which people can bring cases to UK courts and have their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights effectively enforced.

To digress from the Commonwealth for a moment, in an attempt to put Northern Ireland's past behind it, the UK has proposed what it called "the Legacy and Reconciliation Bill", which would grant conditional immunity from prosecution to people accused of very serious crimes, including murder, during the 3-decades-long conflict there, with terrorist groups from both sides airing their grievances with bombs and bullets. As I said, it doesn't relate to the Commonwealth, but it could if some Commonwealth countries decided to adopt a similar approach. Mijatović is not happy about the proposed new Bill, suggesting it would represent not so much 'immunity' as 'impunity'. She

stressed that the proposed legislation casts doubt over the potential of "justice" to contribute to truth and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, also urging a thorough investigation into the murders of journalists Martin O'Hagan and Lyra McKee and that the accused be punished without impunity. The Commonwealth nations would never accept such rules. Mijatović urged the UK government to ensure that the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission can operate "independently and effectively" in line with the Paris Principles of the UN. In case you're wondering what that means in practical terms, the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions were adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1993. As a consequence, a national institution "shall be vested with competence to promote and protect human rights". It must also "be given as broad a mandate as possible, which shall be clearly set forth in a constitutional or legislative text, specifying its composition and its sphere of competence". Given these provisions, Johnson's government risks not only breaching the European Convention on Human Rights (about



High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay addresses the 25th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva

which he doesn't seem to care very much) but also the United Nations' 'Paris Principles'.

Just to be clear, the Paris Principles have no link with the Commonwealth, although they should apply to every country in the United Nations, including Commonwealth countries, of course. The Principles were drafted at an international workshop of the National Human Rights Institutions in Paris in 1991, and they were subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993.

The Anniversary of the Principles coincided with the 20th Anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. "This provides a unique opportunity to reflect on the NHRIs' achievements and to reiterate the importance of ensuring that NHRIs attain and maintain credibility at the national, regional and international levels by remaining in compliance with the Paris Principles," said UN Human Rights Chief Navi Pillay at the time, the 26th session of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the promotion and protection of Human Rights (6-8 May 2013).

It's not clear if it's a matter about which Johnson's cabinet have given much thought. But, as trade opportunities dwindle as a consequence of Johnson back-sliding on human rights, what options are the government left with? International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan has now met with representatives of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Riyadh to begin negotiations over trade with them. The six-nation bloc includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE, not all of them famed for their respect for human rights. There is an old saying in English: if you sup with the devil, you must use a long spoon. I don't know how long a spoon they've been using, but it won't have been long enough for everyone.

MPs from the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green, and Scottish National parties said the UK government risked "facilitating" human rights abuses by pushing ahead without the protections. In a letter to Anne-Marie Trevelyan the MPs said the new policy "presents a clear U-turn





International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan

in UK policy" and that the launch of talks was "in direct contradiction to the former Foreign Secretary's assertion that the UK 'shouldn't be engaged in free-trade negotiations with countries abusing human rights'."

The MPs noted that the government had "failed to even mention human rights in its public statements" regarding the planned free trade agreement and that meetings with top officials from the countries "were held during parliamentary recess, thus limiting their potential to be scrutinised by this House".

MPs to sign the letter include Peter Bottomley, Conservative MP and Father of the House, Caroline Lucas the former Green Party leader, Drew Hendry, Scottish National Party trade spokesperson, and Brendan O'Hara, the chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Human Rights in the Gulf.

The government is proposing new laws to restrict the right to protest, for example by setting an upper noise limit. Under it, you could protest but only if you whisper your slogans. It would not be a case of shouting: **up with the workers, or else!** It would have to be more like a very subdued: up with the workers, please, if it's no trouble! The proposed new rules also use terms that are open to a wide variety of interpretations, such as 'intensity' and 'serious unease', which leave a lot of judgement in the hands of individual police officers. Police officers I have spoken to prefer to have clear-cut rules that anyone can understand, so they know why they're performing an arrest, not a set of proposal whose interpretation is down to the individual judgement of an officer at the scene. That's not a judgement call most police officers

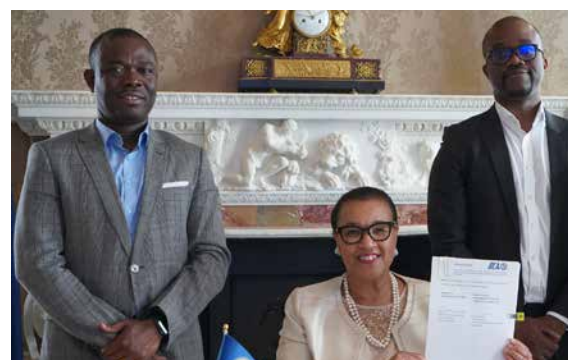
I've spoken to feel qualified to make. The Commonwealth clearly could not be based on such amorphous and lily-livered principles

## COMMONWEALTH OR COMMON POVERTY?

Nobody can ever know for sure if joining the Commonwealth will bring prosperity to a country. How can they? Crystal balls are in short supply. But the Commonwealth has certainly proved helpful up to now; it has a positive record. One of the greatest challenges facing many Commonwealth countries is the global food crisis and soaring prices. For instance, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture have now signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation on key agricultural and fisheries challenges confronting the Commonwealth Caribbean, the region of the Caribbean where English-speaking countries and territories once constituted the Caribbean portion of the British Empire but which are now part of the Commonwealth, and to deepen ongoing cooperation on digitalisation in agriculture. It was signed by the Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt Hon Patricia Scotland, QC and IICA Director General, Manuel Otero. As Secretary General Scotland said afterwards, "In uncertain times, strengthening regional and global cooperation is key. If we are to build the resilience of the most vulnerable members in our Commonwealth family, then we must work together to fight what can seem to be the overwhelming challenges of climate change and threats to food security. I am delighted that IICA and the Commonwealth Secretariat are joining forces to tackle these challenges."



Brendan O'Hara, the chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Human Rights in the Gulf



Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt Hon Patricia Scotland and IICA Director General, Manuel Otero showing the signed Memorandum of Understanding

The Director General of the IICA, Manuel Otero was equally enthusiastic: "Caribbean countries are key to ensuring food security at the global level," he told reporters. "At IICA we are committed to supporting the development of resilient, innovative, inclusive and profitable agriculture where new generations have opportunities to feed their families with dignity and generate well-being in their communities."

As recently as June, thousands of international delegates gathered to investigate what science-based innovative actions could be taken or intensified to preserve and develop our oceans. Hosted by Kenya and Portugal, it was the largest such get-together yet. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Patricia Scotland, QC, made a powerful plea for more to be done – and urgently – to help the sea's inhabitants. She pointed out what she called "the alarming lack of funding for 'ocean action' and called for 'enhanced finance and partnerships' to tackle the most urgent challenges, such as climate change, overfishing, marine plastic pollution and coral reef decline. She told delegates: "We meet at a critical moment for the ocean – the most precious, life-giving, and yet undervalued, under-researched and



recklessly exploited, natural wonder of our planet.” More than three billion people around the world depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods, according to the United Nations. The ocean also plays a vital role as a climate regulator and a mitigator of climate change, due to its capacity as a ‘carbon sink’, absorbing large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. It has also absorbed more than 90 per cent of the excess heat in the climate system.

We have witnessed worldwide declines in the viability of inshore fisheries, both in Commonwealth waters and elsewhere. Writing in Scientific American’s May edition, journalist Ellen Ruppel Shell wrote about the problems facing fisheries in the United States: “The truth is that soon fish farming may be the only way for Maine’s struggling seafood workers to make any bucks at all.” It sounds depressing, and she goes on to explain how we’ve reached this parlous state-of-affairs when humankind is blessed with bio-rich oceans and what we used to think was a limitless supply of fish and crustaceans. “Thanks to overfishing, parasites and rising

ocean temperatures, along other threats, nearly all of Maine’s commercial fisheries are in free fall,” Shell wrote. Or, as Patricia Scotland told that conference: “We meet at a critical moment for the ocean - the most precious, life-giving, and yet undervalued, under-researched and recklessly exploited, natural wonder of our planet.” We have, it seems, been rather taking it for granted. The English poet John Masefield loved the sea. “I must go down to the sea again,” he wrote in his 1902 poem, *Sea Fever*, “to the lonely sea and the sky, And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by, And the Wheel’s kick and the wind’s song and the white sail’s shaking, And a grey mist on the sea’s face and a grey dawn breaking.” In another poem, called “*Cargoes*”, he eulogised its less romantic aspects: “Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack, Butting through the Channel in the mad March days, With a cargo of Tyne coal, Road-rails, pig lead, Firewood, ironware and cheap tin trays.” Perhaps if we’d taken more notice of the damage that “dirty British coasters” might be doing instead of waxing lyrical about the sea’s undoubted beauty, we’d have done less harm to it.

But there’s more to the Commonwealth, of course, than the world’s oceans and their sustainability as sources of food. It was the prospect of easier trade deals and an “entrée” (if I may use that word under the circumstances) into the Anglophone world, chiefly represented by the United States, of course, that drew Gabon and Togo to join the ‘club’. What’s in for them? Well, the statement of the Heads of Government that wound up this

conference says it all. It includes such aspirations as: “We acknowledge that land, including its waterbodies, is both a source and sink of greenhouse gases and supports billions of people for their food, livelihoods, and wellbeing. The Earth’s climate is changing at an alarming rate and the associated impacts and risks are being felt increasingly across a range of terrestrial ecosystems, which are essential for nature and people.”

It continues by stating that the leaders: “Note that these impacts threaten global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), climate goals including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement, and the Convention on Biological Diversity. For many vulnerable Commonwealth member countries, especially developing countries.” It’s basically a recognition that things have been going wrong and a solemn undertaking to address that problem (or problems). In the short term, it could mean for Gabon quicker, easier sales of Manganese ore and its derivatives and for Togo, wider sales possibilities for its chocolate. The Conference pledged to do more to address insecurities over food, energy and climate whilst pledging to take a stand against violent extremism. Then there is the Prince of Wales and his initiative to help save the planet, which he named *Terra Carta*. He told the conference that he wants to see all countries overcoming long-term difficulties and meeting challenges in terms of health so as to enrich themselves and their communities without damaging the world around them. “The ‘Terra carta,’” he told the delegates, “offers the basis of a recovery plan that puts Nature, Peoples and the Planet at the heart of global value-creation – one that will harness the precious, irreplaceable power of Nature, combined with the transformative innovation and resources of the private sector.” It sounds like a good idea, as long as somebody keeps a close eye on what the private sector is getting up to and just how it aims to achieve the Prince’s admirable goals.

*T. Kingsley Brooks*



© Pifbc-cbfpa.org



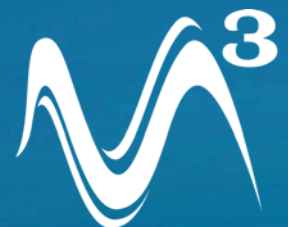


**25-26  
SEPT  
2022**

## **2° EDITION MONACO SMART & SUSTAINABLE MARINA**

Design, innovate and  
build an ecosystem  
that invests  
in smart solutions

Organiser:



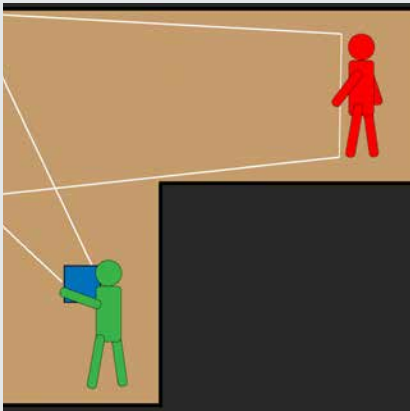
MONACO MARINA MANAGEMENT

[www.sustainablesmartmarina.com](http://www.sustainablesmartmarina.com)

#monacosmartmarina

# OUT OF THE SHADOWS:

## *New imaging method reveals concealed objects*



Even though the figure in red lies hidden, out of the direct line of sight of the figure in green, radiation naturally emitted by the concealed figure at submillimeter wavelengths betrays its presence. At these long wavelengths, many types of walls act as partial mirrors, reflecting the light into view of the green figure

A new way of imaging concealed objects, devised by a researcher at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and his colleagues, might take all the fun out of hide-and-seek, but could also help save lives.

Imaging scenes that lie outside an observer's direct line of sight could greatly enhance search and rescue missions, such as finding a lost child in an abandoned factory, as well as military and police surveillance operations, such as exposing a hidden terrorist or enemy stronghold. The ability to see around corners and reconstruct a full image of a hidden object or obstacle in real time also could someday improve robotic vision and the safety and accuracy of self-driving cars. (At present, the prototype method cannot create an image instantaneously.)

Most conventional methods used to image objects behind an obstruction use an external source of light — ultra-short pulses of visible or infrared laser light, for example. The light source initially illuminates a wall that scatters the light into the concealed region. When the light strikes a hidden object, the object re-scatters some of the light back to the wall where it can be detected.

However, imaging hidden objects using only visible and infrared light is challenging. At those relatively short wavelengths, a typical wall — no matter how smooth to the human touch —

presents itself as a rough surface and scatters incoming light in all directions. It therefore reveals less information about objects than light reflected from a smooth or mirrored surface and requires sophisticated algorithms and significant computing time to create even a semi-sharp image. In addition, the illumination could tip off adversaries that they are under surveillance.

Other methods, which don't require a light source, analyze shadows cast by a hidden object on a wall, or detect the heat (infrared radiation) naturally emitted by the concealed body and scattered diffusely into view. But these approaches also require extensive computing time and analysis. "A good algorithm and lots of computer power might extract an image, but not a very good one," said NIST physicist Erich Grossman.

Grossman and his colleagues based their new approach on detecting the tiny amounts of much longer wavelength radiation — the "submillimeter" range of the spectrum of light that lies just beyond microwave radiation and which people and objects also naturally emit. At these long, invisible wavelengths, ranging from 300 micrometers up to 1 millimeter, walls made of a variety of materials appear relatively smooth and act as partial mirrors, reflecting rather than diffusely scattering into view radiation from a concealed object.



The setup for the experiment at Erich Grossman's home, where the hidden object (Grossman himself) sat just behind an occluding, or concealing, wall, out of direct view of detectors. "Wall under test" connotes the various types of walls, including ceramic tile and plywood, that the team examined to determine which were best at reflecting submillimeter radiation

To create an image, the reflected radiation has to be directed and focused. Unlike visible light, submillimeter radiation can't be steered by glass lenses. Instead, Grossman and his colleagues relied on curved mirrors to focus the invisible light.

Experimenting with their prototype, Grossman and his collaborators at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in Minneapolis demonstrated that they could construct images of objects hidden behind walls in about 20 minutes.

The prototype technique employs state-of-the-art indium phosphide transistors, which amplify submillimeter radiation with little noise over a wide range of wavelengths. The method does not require complex algorithms or intensive computer analysis. "What's cool about this method is its simplicity," Grossman said. "There's no quantum mechanics, no relativity, there's nothing cryogenic or anything fancy — just transistors and a basic computer and mirrors," he added. The entire apparatus is small enough to fit in a backpack.

With NIST facilities closed during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Grossman used his own home — converting the bedroom of his daughter, who had left for college, into a makeshift laboratory. Grossman himself was the body hidden behind a wall.

He tested walls made of a range of common indoor building materials to determine which ones reflected enough submillimeter radiation to form an image, including wet and dry wallboard, plywood, wood paneling, unpainted cinderblock and stone kitchen tiles. Walls that reflected at least 5% of the submillimeter radiation were best at producing images of concealed bodies. These included dry wallboard, wood paneling, vinyl floor planking, plywood, stone kitchen tiles and medium-density fiberboard.

With a larger array of detectors and transistors, Grossman said that the method should be able to image hidden objects in real time.

The work was supported by NIST and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).





© NCA-UK

# MAJOR OPERATION AGAINST MIGRANT SMUGGLING IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL: 39 ARRESTS

Supported by Eurojust and Europol, judicial and law enforcement authorities in France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have dismantled a criminal network suspected of using small boats to smuggle up to 10 000 migrants across the English Channel over the last 12 to 18 months. It is believed to be the biggest ever international operation targeting small boat people smugglers.

During an action day, 39 suspects were arrested and over fifty locations were searched. Seizures include 1 200 lifejackets, close to 150 boats and 50 engines, several thousand euros in cash, firearms and drugs. The operation targeted the leaders of the criminal network, as well as its financial means.

The action dealt a severe blow to one of the most significant crime groups involved in cross-Channel migrant smuggling.

The investigation started in France on 30 November 2021, following the

arrest of 16 suspects. It is believed that the organised crime group (OCG) has, among others, facilitated the smuggling of Vietnamese nationals from France to the UK. In order to do this, the criminal network set up a large infrastructure in Calais, France. The investigation showed that migrants were transported from France to the UK in motorised boats delivered from Germany.

The suspects charged on average EUR 2 500 to 3 500 per migrant, depending on the migrant's nationality, to facilitate their transfer across the English Channel. At times, up to 15 boats were launched almost simultaneously, with half successfully making it across to the UK.

One of the members of the smuggling network was wounded by a gunshot in a migrant camp in France in September 2021. This incident is allegedly linked to a subsequent attempted murder case in Osnabrück, Germany, on 13 November 2021.

In Belgium, several cases of migrant smuggling showed links, and a separate case was started to dismantle the criminal organisation behind the supply chain.

## MAJOR SIMULTANEOUS OPERATION

The action is a result of close cooperation between the five countries involved, supported by Eurojust and Europol. During an action day on 5 July, 39 people



© OCRIEST



@ OCRIEST

were arrested and over fifty searches were carried out simultaneously. 1 200 lifejackets, close to 150 boats and 50 engines, several thousand euros in cash, firearms and drugs were seized. Over 900 police officers were deployed in the operation.

In France, nine suspects were arrested.

In Germany, the Osnabrück Public Prosecutor's Office simultaneously executed a total of 18 European Arrest Warrants (EAWs) and 30 search warrants in four federal states on behalf of the Belgian and French authorities. The 18 suspects arrested by the German police are intended to be extradited and prosecuted in Belgium or France. Around 900 officers of the Federal Police and the Osnabrück Police Directorate participated in the action.

In the UK, six suspects were arrested during a series of raids in London. The National Crime Agency deployed around 50 officers.

In the Netherlands, six suspects were arrested and seven home searches were carried out.

Eurojust set up a coordination centre to enable rapid cooperation between the judicial authorities involved in the action day. Four coordination meetings were hosted by the Agency to facilitate judicial cooperation and the preparation of the joint action day.

Europol supported the operation by facilitating information exchange, organising operational meetings and providing analytical support.

## INTENSIVE COOPERATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The successful action demonstrates that good results can be achieved through intensive cooperation and information exchange, which is essential to tackling this growing form of human trafficking. The influx of migrants into the European Union is accompanied by degrading human smuggling practices. People smugglers often operate in international criminal organisations and their activities put lives at risk. The risky sea crossings and other forms of transit regularly result in casualties.

## BACKGROUND

Tackling migrant smuggling is one of the priorities for the European Union, Member States and Eurojust. The role of the Agency has recently been enhanced in the renewed EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling, reinforcing the need for cooperation between the judiciary and law enforcement in Member States as well as with Europol.

Eurojust has built up extensive expertise in the field of migrant smuggling, with the Agency last year supporting 292 cases and 11 joint investigation teams. For instance, the Agency assisted with the taking down of a smuggling network which used taxis to transfer migrants through Greece, as well as helping to dismantle another organised crime group which smuggled Syrian migrants to the EU via the Hungarian border. Recently, the Agency also assisted in the successful takedown of a migrant smuggling network in Romania and Moldova.

Europol launched its European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) in 2016. The goal of the Centre is to proactively support EU Member States in dismantling criminal networks involved in organised migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The EMSC focuses on geographical criminal hotspots, and on building a better capability across the European Union to fight people smuggling networks. In 2021, Europol's EMSC supported 55 on-the-spot action days and the identification of 26 High Value Targets. 28 758 SIENA messages related to migrant smuggling and human trafficking cases were received in 2021.



Boat storage location on a farm near Osnabrück searched by NCA and German police.

The following national authorities took part in the operations:

- **France:** Court of Lille (Tribunal Judiciaire de Lille); Central Office for Combating Irregular Migration and Irregular Labour (OCRIEST)
- **Germany:** Public Prosecution Office Osnabrück (Staatsanwaltschaft Osnabrück); Federal Police (Bundespoleizei)
- **The Netherlands:** Public Prosecution Service and Police of Oost-Brabant and Zeeland-West-Brabant; Royal Military Police
- **Belgium:** Prosecution Office of West-Flanders and Investigative Judge in Bruges (Parket Brugge); Federal Prosecutors' Office (Federaal Parket); Federal Judiciary Police (Gerechtelijke Politie)
- **United Kingdom:** National Crime Agency

Source : [eurojust.europa.eu](https://eurojust.europa.eu)





Choose the Best Artists for your  
Luxury Private and Corporate Events



Make your high society cocktail reception,  
birthday party or wedding celebration a  
unique and unforgettable happening



More than 20 years of experience worldwide

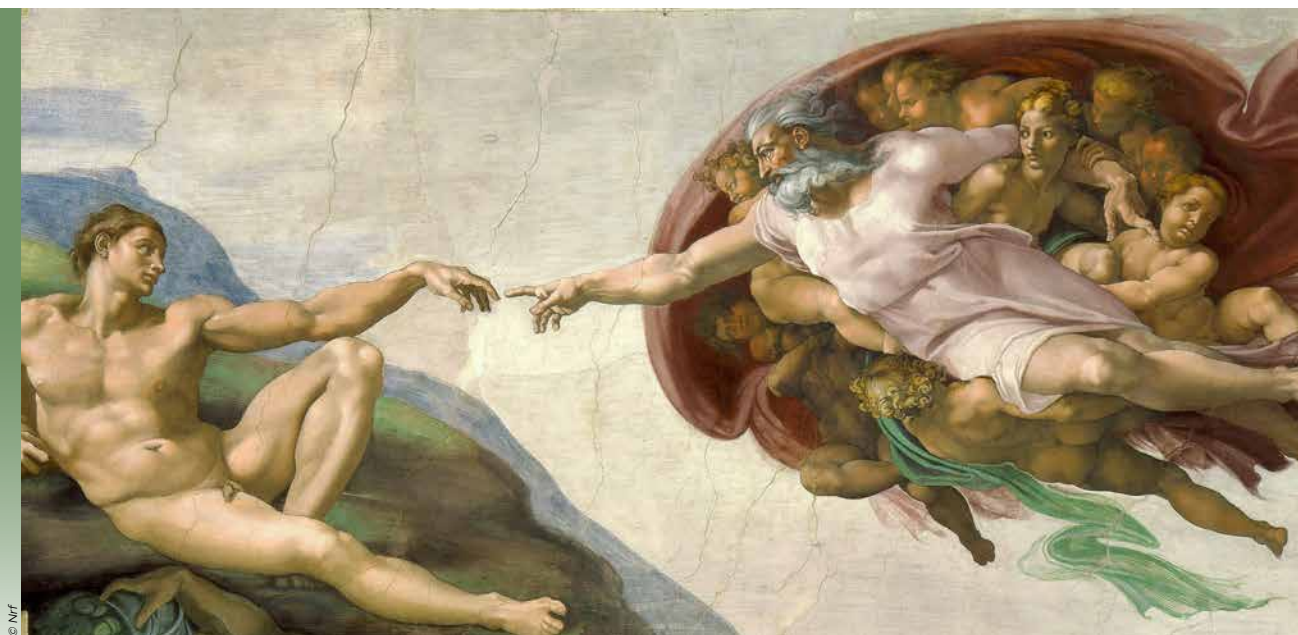


Our staff has been trained to ensure  
Covid19 compliance outdoor parties



Tel. : +33 (0)4 93 20 43 32 - Port : +33 (0)6 22 14 45 60 / +33 (0)6 23 46 79 53  
Email : [contact@noubamusic.com](mailto:contact@noubamusic.com) - Web : [www.noubamusic.com](http://www.noubamusic.com)





The Creation of Adam by the Italian artist Michelangelo

## HUMANKIND, WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

**F**rom the first known humans living more than 5 million years ago to the nearly 8 billion modern humans we are today, humankind has come a long way.

It is believed that the first humans appeared in Africa and then came to Asia and Europe. These first humans on Earth used precarious stone or bone tools, lived in caves and fed mainly on what they could hunt, living a life that was very different and dangerous from our lives today. Anthropologists suggest that modern Homo Sapiens appeared on the world stage about 40,000 years ago. Evidence of evolved consciousness, more advanced tools, paintings on cave walls, burial rituals and even jewelry are proof of the early evolution of the human species, which was able to develop and thrive.

After the Great Famine (1315-1317) and the Black Death (1350), both of which decimated the world's population, the number of people on the planet grew exponentially over centuries - from about 370 million people in the 14th century to about 1 billion in the 20th. The world's first billion inhabitants were officially recorded around 1800. The Industrial Revolution brought a new era of development and growth

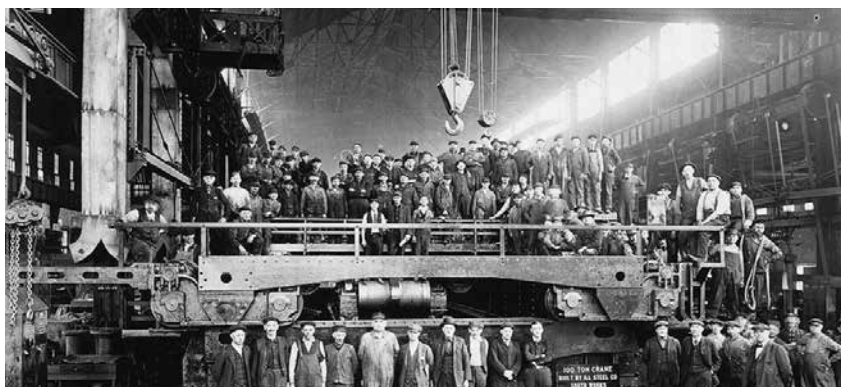
to countries such as Great Britain or the USA, also in terms of population. Combined with a decline in infant mortality and improvements in sanitation, hygiene and food supply, this led to rapid population growth.

However, the highest growth rates were recorded in the 20th century, naturally favoured by better living conditions, major discoveries in medicine and technological progress. With growth rates of 1.8% per year (between 1955 and 1975) or even 2.1% (between 1965 and 1970), it is only natural that the human population increased so dramatically. In only about 220 years, the earth's population exceeded 7 billion, and is

expected to reach 8 billion by 2023. According to the United Nations, it increases by more than 90 million people every year.

In the course of humanity's long history, experts estimate that around 109 billion people have lived and died on this planet.

Asia is the most populous continent and is home to 60 % of the world's population (4.64 billion people). Africa comes next with 17 % (1.34 billion people). Among the ten fastest growing regions in the world, nine are in Africa. On the other hand, Bulgaria is projected to be the country with the fastest population decline (22.5 %)



The Industrial Revolution



between 2020 and 2050 (source: United Nations).

The sex ratio in 2021 will be 101.68 males to 100 females, with 50.42% males (3.97 billion) and 49.58% females (3.90 billion). This means that there are 65.51 million more men than women in the world (source: Statisticstimes.com).

Although there are more women than men in most countries, the two most populous countries on earth, China (1.41 billion people) and India (1.37 billion people), have a surplus of men to make up the difference in global numbers.

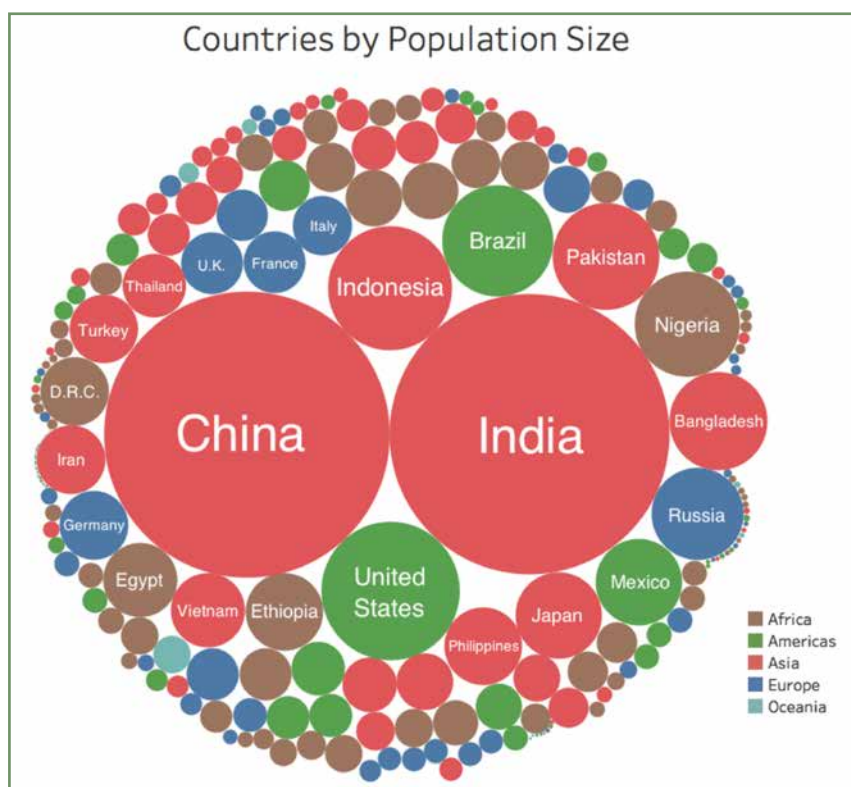
This gender imbalance could have some logical explanations. In China, for example, boys have been favoured for many years. This is partly economic, as men can earn and produce more in agriculture, and has also been encouraged by the "one-child policy", a nationwide family planning regulation introduced in the country in 1980. The strict demographic policy to slow down China's population growth, which was considered far too abrupt and damaging to the country's economic ambitions at the time, and also sex-selective abortions led to the current situation. The "one-child policy" officially ended in 2016, but its consequences are still being felt. Currently, there are over 33 million more men living in China, so the birth rate is low, the labour force is slowly decreasing and the Chinese population as a whole is ageing.

In India, too, the gender ratio is unbalanced, with 54.5 million more men. The reason for this is deeply rooted in old cultural beliefs. Indians prefer boys because they see them as the successors to the family legacy and believe that men will protect parents in old age. Daughters tend to leave the family home as soon as they are married and also require higher traditional costs, such as dowries. Malnutrition and neglect of girls are also often a cause of this demographic reality in India.



© Michael E. Arth

Chinese crowd in 1978



Globally, the sex ratio at birth is 107 boys to 100 girls. In general, there are more men than women worldwide, but more women over the age of 50. This is partly due to the two previous catastrophic world wars, which were mainly fought by men and resulted in millions of male casualties. General life expectancy is also slightly different for men and women. While men generally have a life expectancy of at least 75.1 years (2020 statistics), women generally live five years longer, so that in the 90-94 age group, women outnumber men by a ratio of two to one.

The median age of people worldwide is currently 31 years. It has increased steadily, especially since the 20th century. Compared to an average age of 21.5 years in 1970, this is a considerable difference, which clearly shows the general trend of an ageing world population. The citizens of Monaco have the highest average age (55 years), followed by Japan, which also has a record number of centenarians. China also has a high average age (38.4 years) and is also the country with the largest number of old adults (65+) with 166.37 million people. If we talk about percentages, Japan with 28.2%, Italy with 23%, Germany with 21% and the USA with 16% are among the countries with the highest percentage of old people. (Source: www.prb.org).

In general, Southern and Western Europe (Greece, Portugal, Malta, Spain, Slovenia, Romania, Germany, France) are the regions with an elderly population, where on average 21% of citizens are 65 years or older. This situation will certainly seriously affect the fertility and also the reliable labour force of these countries in the not too distant future. Problems with the pension system and its sustainability are already foreseeable.

On the other hand, the youngest region in the world, with 46% of the population under 15 years of age, is middle Africa. Some Latin American countries also have good figures.

The Covid 19 pandemic has affected the world's population and will continue to do so. The infectious disease has claimed the lives of more than 6 million people worldwide, but the long-term impact has yet to be studied. More data is needed to properly assess the global impact on life expectancy and also on fertility trends.

That being said, the global fertility rate has been steadily declining in recent decades, from 3.2 in 1990 to 2.3 in 2020. The total fertility rate (TFR) is a standard demographic indicator used internationally to estimate the average number of children a woman will have in her lifetime, taking into account current birth trends. It is calculated by

adding the average number of births per woman in the five-year age groups. While the total fertility rate is currently 2.3, there are large fluctuations worldwide. With TFR values ranging from 0.81 in South Korea to 7 in Niger and 6.1 in Somalia, this demographic indicator highlights the wide disparities between different regions of the world. Studies show that women who have access to reproductive health services are more likely to be able to lift themselves out of poverty, while those who work are more likely to use birth control. Moreover, countries where governments promote family planning and responsible parenthood have reasonable fertility rates.

In addition to the ageing population, one of the reasons for declining fertility rates is the general tendency, especially in highly developed countries, to delay motherhood. In Europe, for example, 25% of all new mothers are 35 years or older. In contrast, in low-income countries, the number of births to teenage mothers is quite high. 16 % of all births in sub-Saharan Africa are to mothers between the ages of 15 and 19. Lack of information, unsafe sex education and also the lack of available contraceptive methods are the main

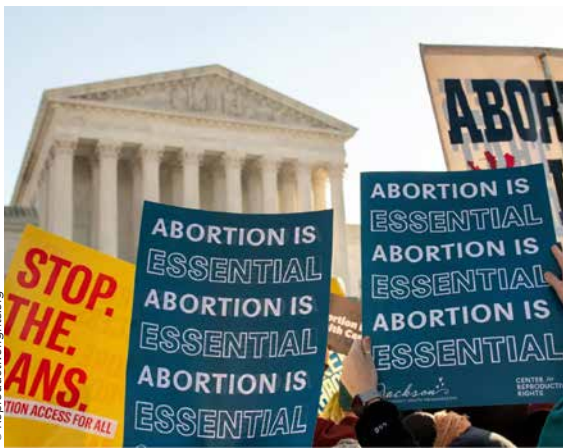
reasons for this shocking reality. The lives of these young mothers will be changed forever and their chances for a better education and a decent economic situation will be diminished.

The total fertility rate of 2.1 is generally considered the replacement level, i.e. the average number of children a couple needs to replace themselves on earth. Experts predict that the total fertility rate will fall below replacement level in the 21st century and subsequently lead to a much-needed "zero growth" in the world's population by 2100.

Rising costs of living, changing social norms and also access to sexual education from an early age are possible factors in the projected decline in the birth rate.

In Europe, the average birth rate is currently around 1.55 (already well below replacement level), with rates higher in France, Romania, Sweden and Ireland and among the lowest in Portugal, Spain, Greece, Italy and Malta (1.23).

In recent decades, the wave of emigration in which millions of young Eastern Europeans left their home countries has led to a sharp population decline in countries such as Ukraine,

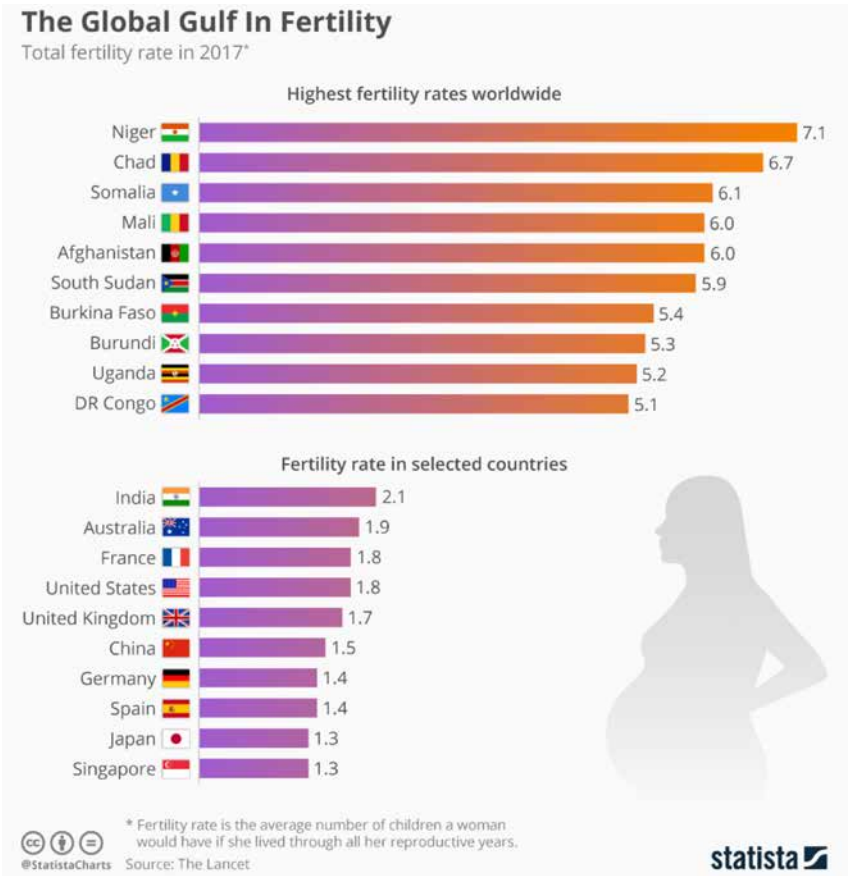


A pro-abortion protest in front of the US Supreme Court

Romania, Moldova or Bulgaria, and this trend is expected to intensify over time. On the other hand, the influx of emigrants to countries like Germany is expected to help inject fresh blood into the population and the ageing labour force.

In the Americas, the birth rate has declined across the board. From an average of 1.6 in North America to a slightly higher 2.1 in the southern and central parts of the continent, these low birth rates have resulted in modest population growth accompanied by an ageing population. In an attempt to combat the decline in births, although the stated motives were more religious and spiritual, the US Supreme Court recently overturned the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, striking down the 49-year-old constitutional right to abortion. This paved the way for many of the 50 US states to officially ban abortions. Worldwide, 5% of all women of reproductive age are not allowed to have an abortion under any circumstances, while about 36% are only allowed to do so under certain regulated conditions. (Source: Centre for Reproductive Rights).

Countries that have banned abortions include Egypt, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Congo and Senegal, as well as Malta and Poland in Europe. However, history has shown (Ireland is one example) that banning abortions one way or another has not prevented the procedures, but only made them more expensive (sometimes requiring travel to another country or region) and even life-threatening. For years, filmmakers have exposed these kinds of dramas and tried to raise awareness of the issue under discussion. From the famous "Dirty





Dancing" (1987) to the Palme d'Or and Goya Award winning film "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" (2007) to the most recent film "Happening" (2022), all these films tell similar stories and dramas that could and should be avoided.

The total number of births is projected to increase from the current 140 million per year to 141 million per year in 2040 and then decrease to 126 million per year around 2100. At the same time, the total number of deaths worldwide is likely to increase from 57 million per year in this decade to almost 121 million in 2100.

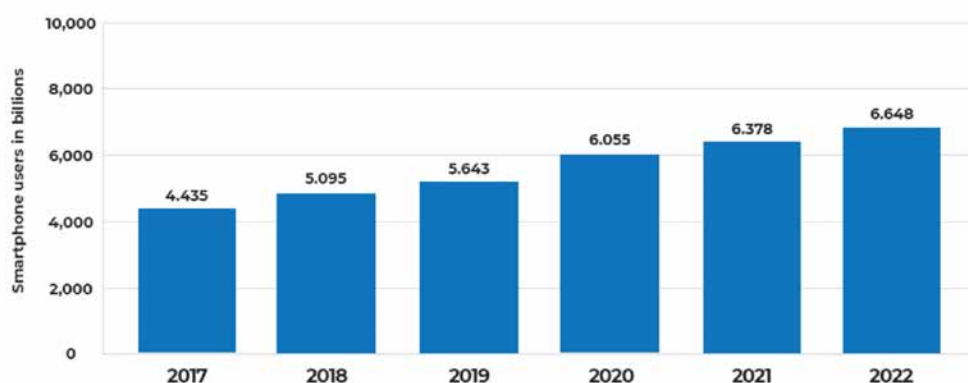
The birth rate issue can be viewed from two different angles. On the one hand, a low birth rate leads to an ageing population over time; on the other hand, it slows the pace of global population growth, calming fears of an impending demographic apocalypse. More than at any time in recent years, there is now talk of possible famine and severe food shortages because of the war in Ukraine and also because of rising energy prices, which now seem to be out of control around the world. The latest projected trends could perhaps allay the major concerns of recent decades about the exponential growth of the world's population with a simultaneous shortage of resources.

The prospect of a rapidly growing world population has been a source of anxiety for many years, but although the current economic situation is a cause for concern, there seems to be a glimmer of hope.

The United Nations continues to project that the world's population will reach 11.2 billion by 2100. However,



### Number of Smartphone Users Worldwide data from 2017 - 2022 in billions



Source: Statista

a study by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Vienna confirmed in 2014 that the world's population will probably peak around 2040 and then decline to about 9 billion people by 2100. A few years later, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in Seattle, USA, published a new study stating that the population peak will be reached around 2064 and will decline to about 8.8 billion people by 2100 (source: [www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com)).

In view of the strong population decline in Spain, Italy, Thailand or Japan, the main difference between the projections of UN and those of the two institutes mentioned lies in the different forecasts for the fertility rate, which are more optimistic under UN.

The importance of accurate and reliable projections is enormous, as they will

shape public policy in most countries and determine the future of our planet. So far, the United Nations' forecasts have proven to be accurate.

Collecting accurate data is an essential element. One of the modern tools for determining population density today is mobile phone traffic monitoring. This allows researchers to detect significant movement trends in local populations, which also leads to better estimates for the future. However, the old methods of population counting are still in use, and national censuses remain the most important resource considered when setting population policy.

In recognition of the importance of global population issues, 11 July has been officially declared "World Population Day".

No matter which institute or official organisation, all agree that global population growth is slowing. This should stimulate discussions and debates about the future of humanity and the danger of uncontrolled population growth on our planet. However, all agree that demographic trends need to be closely monitored as they are one of the key factors for human survival on Earth.

"Instead of controlling the environment for the benefit of the population, perhaps it is time to control the population for the survival of the environment" (David Attenborough).

Alexandra Paucescu



A anti-abortion protest in Washington DC

# TIMELESS CHIC

Standout Fashion and Beauty trends

## Three fashion essentials you will love this summer

### Spotted: The coastal grandmother trend

According to TikTok and Instagram influencers, this trend is inspired by the wardrobes of the female leads in romantic Nancy Meyers films. This cozy, yet refined style is trademarked by crisp, white button-ups, linen pants, simple linen blouses, and of course a straw hat.

While the reference points of this aesthetic may be Diane Keaton, Ina Garten, and Meryl Streep, celebrities such as Reese Witherspoon and Anne Hathaway have proved that **you don't need to be grandmother to fit to this aesthetic.**



« I have been ready for #costalgrandmother chic since before TikTok was born. May this moment never end”  
**(Anne Hathaway)**



### Style your own summer bracelet

‘Pandora’ needs no further introduction: this iconic brand of charms transforms each bracelet into a unique creation. Oceans are the this summer’s main theme; the sound of their waves and their fauna and flora that are all incorporated into ravishing charms.

Our directions for use: Bring a splash of the ocean to your styling. Mix woven textures and Murano glass with travel and nature-inspired charms, and experiment with stacking your bracelets, for even more impact.





# TIMELESS CHIC

Standout Fashion and Beauty trends

## *“Girls just wanna have sun”*

Holidays, at last ! There has never been a better moment to investigate the trends in sunglasses for 2022. If you're looking for inspiration for your next go-to sunnies, then you might want to look to some celebrities for ideas. Especially when they join forces with famous brands as ambassadors, and sometimes as creative partners.

Our favourite ?

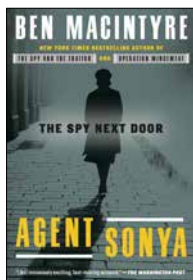
The frames designed by **Hailey Bieber**, the American model and the brand's ambassador.

“I wanted to stay true to some of the classic shapes that Vogue Eyewear produces, they have such a range,” says Bieber. “I wanted it to feel very classic.” For some of the finishings, like the tortoise marbling or the golden frames, she looked to what she's drawn to with her own personal style. “I pulled from a mix of inspirations, eras of time, and shapes that I've loved on myself,” she says. “Then, I reworked them.”

So, which are **your** favourites ?



## BOOKS



## AGENT SONYA

By Ben Macintyre

THE SPY NEXT DOOR

**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER** • The “master storyteller” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) behind the New York Times bestseller *The Spy and the Traitor* uncovers the true story behind one of the Cold War’s most intrepid spies.

“[An] immensely exciting, fast-moving account - *The Washington Post*.”

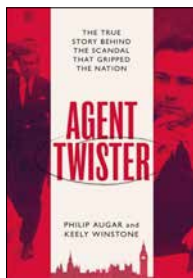
**NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *Foreign Affairs* • *Kirkus Reviews* • *Library Journal*.**

In 1942, in a quiet village in the leafy English Cotswolds, a thin, elegant woman lived in a small cottage with her three children and her husband, who worked as a machinist nearby. Ursula Burton was friendly but reserved, and spoke English with a slight foreign accent. By all accounts, she seemed to be living a simple, unassuming life. Her neighbors in the village knew little about her.

They didn’t know that she was a high-ranking Soviet intelligence officer. They didn’t know that her husband was also a spy, or that she was running powerful agents across Europe. Behind the facade of her picturesque life, Burton was a dedicated Communist, a Soviet colonel, and a veteran agent, gathering the scientific secrets that would enable the Soviet Union to build the bomb.

This true-life spy story is a masterpiece about the woman code-named “Sonya.” Over the course of her career, she was hunted by the Chinese, the Japanese, the Nazis, MI5, MI6, and the FBI—and she evaded them all. Her story reflects the great ideological clash of the twentieth century—between Communism, Fascism, and Western democracy—and casts new light on the spy battles and shifting allegiances of our own times.

With unparalleled access to Sonya’s diaries and correspondence and never-before-seen information on her clandestine activities, Ben Macintyre has conjured a page-turning history of a legendary secret agent, a woman who influenced the course of the Cold War and helped plunge the world into a decades-long standoff between nuclear superpowers.



## AGENT TWISTER

By Philip Augar and Keely Winstone

THE TRUE STORY BEHIND THE SCANDAL THAT GRIPPED THE NATION

He lived a double-life in the sixties.

Faked his own death in the seventies.

And retained his cover in the eighties.

A period thriller with powerful political and espionage themes, *Agent Twister* is the remarkable story behind one of the greatest scandals of the 1970s, told in full for the first time. If you think you know the true story of John Stonehouse – think again.

It’s November 1974 and John Stonehouse MP, once a star in Harold Wilson’s Labour government, is missing in Miami, presumed drowned. His disappearance exposes the most lurid details of his life, including identity fraud, corporate corruption, a love triangle, blackmail, links with the Mafia and a decade-long career as a Soviet spy. The public are gripped by this story, happy to forget the strikes, IRA bombs and rising prices that are making daily life a misery.

On Christmas Eve, Stonehouse is tracked down in Melbourne, Australia, where he is suspected of being that other missing Englishman, Lord Lucan. The comic absurdity of the story is offset by claims of a mental breakdown and a refusal to resign as an MP, even when he is extradited back to the UK and up on charges at the Old Bailey. For the first time, *Agent Twister* reveals the corporate crimes at the heart of Stonehouse’s business empire, the true extent of his ten-year collusion with powerful Soviet proxies and the political consequences of his antics. It’s a scandal greater than Profumo that lay buried for thirty years, with three prime ministers – Wilson, Callaghan and Thatcher – covering it up for very different reasons.

Written by the makers of the Channel Four documentary *The Spy Who Died Twice*, *Agent Twister* is the first impartial account to put this extraordinary scandal in political context and reveal why John Stonehouse really disappeared.

[www.simonandschuster.co.uk](http://www.simonandschuster.co.uk)



## CAFÉ EUROPA REVISITED

By Slavenka Drakulic

HOW TO SURVIVE POST-COMMUNISM

“Drakulic’s composite portrait provides a clear-eyed look at European values, and what they really amount to.” - *The New Yorker*.

An evocative and timely collection of essays that paints a portrait of Eastern Europe thirty years after the end of communism.

An immigrant with a parrot in Stockholm, a photo of a girl in Lviv, a sculpture of Alexander the Great

in Skopje, a memorial ceremony for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soviet led army invasion of Prague: these are a few glimpses of life in Eastern Europe today. Three decades after the Velvet Revolution, Slavenka Drakulic, the author of *Café Europa* and *A Guided Tour of the Museum Of Communism*, takes a look at what has changed and what has remained the same in the region in her daring new essay collection.

Totalitarianism did not die overnight and democracy did not completely transform Eastern European societies. Looking closely at artefacts and day to day life, from the health insurance cards to national monuments, and popular films to cultural habits, alongside pieces of growing nationalism and Brexit, these pieces of political reportage dive into the reality of a Europe still deeply divided.



## JOAN: A NOVEL OF JOAN OF ARC

By Katherine J. Chen

“A secular reimagining and feminist celebration of the life of Joan of Arc that transforms the legendary saint into a flawed yet undeniable young woman.”—*USA Today*.

“It is as if Chen has crept inside a statue and breathed a soul into it, re-creating Joan of Arc as a woman for our time.”—Hilary Mantel, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the Booker Prize winner *Wolf Hall*.

“This is not your grandmother’s St. Joan. . . . If every generation gets the Joan it deserves, ours could do worse than an ass-kicking, avenging angel fighting simply for the right to fight.”—*The New York Times Book Review*.

1412. France is mired in a losing war against England. Its people are starving. Its king is in hiding. From this chaos emerges a teenage girl who will turn the tide of battle and lead the French to victory, becoming an unlikely hero whose name will echo across the centuries.

In Katherine J. Chen’s hands, the myth and legend of Joan of Arc is transformed into a flesh-and-blood young woman: reckless, steel-willed, and brilliant. This meticulously researched novel is a sweeping narrative of her life, from a childhood steeped in both joy and violence, to her meteoric rise to fame at the head of the French army, where she navigates the perils of the battlefield and the equally treacherous politics of the royal court. Many are threatened by a woman who leads, and Joan draws wrath and suspicion from all corners, while her first taste of fame and glory leaves her vulnerable to her own powerful ambition.

With unforgettably vivid characters, transporting settings, and action-packed storytelling, *Joan* is a thrilling epic, a triumph of historical fiction, as well as a feminist celebration of one remarkable—and remarkably real—woman who left an indelible mark on history.



## THE NEW RUSSIANS

By Hedrick Smith

**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER** • From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Russians*, a “lively and provocative” analysis of the Soviet Union in its twilight years.

\**The New York Times Book Review*.

Even from afar, the transformation in the Soviet Union held a special fascination for all of us, and not only because it affected our destiny, our survival, even the changing nature of our own society. What happened there riveted our interest for a deeper reason: It was a modern enactment of one of the archetypal stories of human existence, that of the struggle from darkness to light, from poverty toward prosperity, from dictatorship toward democracy. It represented an affirmation of the relentless human struggle to break free from the bonds of hierarchy and dogma, to strive for a better life, for stronger, richer values. It was an affirmation of the human capacity for change, growth, renewal.

*The New Russians* is about how that story of change began and what this change meant for the Russian people—and for the rest of the world.



# EUROPE *Diplomatic* magazine

YOUR ESSENTIAL MONTHLY  
NEWSMAGAZINE



Offer a printed edition subscription to a friend  
Contact us : [europediplomaticmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:europediplomaticmagazine@gmail.com)

# BY YOUR SIDE IN MONACO FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS

---

Discover our solutions in Private Banking,  
Retail Banking and Corporate Banking.

[privatebanking.societegenerale.mc](http://privatebanking.societegenerale.mc)

**THE FUTURE  
IS YOU**



**SOCIÉTÉ  
GÉNÉRALE**

The present document has been distributed in Monaco by Société Générale Private Banking (Monaco) S.A.M., located 13/15, bd. des Moulins – 98000 Monaco – Principality of Monaco, governed by the *Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution* and the *Commission de Contrôle des Activités Financières*. The financial products marketed in Monaco can be reserved for qualified investors in accordance with the Law No. 1339 of 07/09/2007 and Sovereign Ordinance No 1.285 of 10/09/2007. Further details are available upon request or on [www.privatebanking.societegenerale.mc](http://www.privatebanking.societegenerale.mc). © Getty Images.