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WOMEN AND POWER
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ITALY'S PRIME MINISTER GIORGIA MELONI

Moving right ahead





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IN THIS ISSUE



■ **GIORGIA MELONI**

The (slightly controversial) election of Giorgia Meloni as Italy's first-ever female prime ministerp.6

■ **NEWS IN BRIEF**

From around the Worldp.12



■ **NO ROAD IS LONG WITH GOOD COMPANY**

The difficult journey of the EPP in seeking a future among friends (and friends to help shape a future)p.20

■ **WOMEN AND POWER**

How female politicians are rising to the topp.26



■ **LISTENING TO THE CRIES FOR JUSTICE**

A German politician is sworn in to uphold the rule of lawsp.34

■ **A PALACE FOR JUSTICE**

A never-ending Belgian storyp.40

■ **INTERPOL**

Launches first global police Metaversep.44

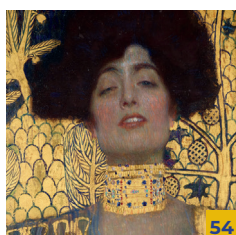


■ **NASA'S PERSEVERANCE**

Rover investigates geologically rich mars terrainp.46

■ **ROLLS-ROYCE SPECTRE UNVEILED:**

The marque's first fully-electric motor carp.48



■ **TO VISIT**

Exhibition Golden Boy Gustav Klimtp.54

■ **TIMELESS CHIC**

.....p.56

■ **Books**

Our selectionp.58

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Nikola Hendrickx

EDITORIAL

DOWN THE PAN (BUT WHICH PAN?)

I remember the campaign over plans for Britain to leave the EU. I was on all the marches to prevent it, without success. The public never really knew what they were voting for, not because of stupidity but because the government lied to them. Those lies were repeated and amplified by generally Euro-sceptic news media who equated leaving the EU with asserting Britain's "imperial greatness" (as they saw it). I knew Boris Johnson when we both worked as journalists in Brussels and where he had a reputation for excessive secrecy about what he was doing and why. He was entertaining company and would try to advise anyone who had a problem, so he was basically kind, too, even if the advice he gave was – how shall I put it? – mainly inadvisable. His chief interest was simply having a good time. Johnson clearly enjoyed the ex-pat lifestyle in Brussels (who wouldn't? I know I did) but he kept his office locked (even against his colleague, working – like him – for the Daily Telegraph) and he kept his papers locked in his desk where no-one had access, just to be safe. Like the last occupant of No. 10, Downing Street, Johnson was a Libertarian, although many of those who knew him well said he was, first and foremost, more of a libertine. He wanted Britain to be out of the EU so that it had no rules to abide by in terms of trading practices. He'd be able to do whatever he liked, he thought.

For many of those following the advice of the popular press in wanting to quit the trading bloc created by Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet in a pointless fervour of ultra-nationalism, it was as if they were about to take up their Brown Bess flintlock guns (smooth bored, of course, and officially called Land Pattern muskets) and set off to repel Napoleon's mighty army. The lucky ones who had proved their skill with a smooth bore musket might be issued with rifles, with which they could achieve greater accuracy at a greater range. But most gunfire was based on a group of people pouring as much flying lead into the enemy lines as possible. Some British newspapers would happily oblige, urging their readers to fight "the continentals".

Quite a few Conservative supporters can see the folly of continuing to fight a war based on lies and which the liars-in-chief have already won. Take, for instance, Guy Hands, a billionaire private equity company chief and a regular and generous donor to the party. It seems as if his generosity may be put on pause until the party "sorts itself out". He wants the party to stop its "internal destructive battles" and also to seek a new deal for life after Brexit. As boss of the private equity firm Terra Firma he urged Britain's newest Prime Minister (at least, newest at the time of writing) to admit to the public that the public were lied to over dealing with the EU. Hands told the "i" newspaper that "the first thing to do would be to admit that the Brexit negotiations were a complete disaster". He went on to say that "As the world has changed a lot since 2016, (that was when the "leave" side triumphed with 52% of the vote; a very narrow margin upon which to base such a massive constitutional change) they have the perfect excuse to change direction and renegotiate a revised Brexit along the lines of Norway or Switzerland". Hands believes Britain needs a different deal, even though re-joining the union is never going to be an option, but it should start with honesty, however difficult that may be. "It is going to take Rishi to be very, very brave," Hands told the newspaper, "willing to tell the truth to the electorate and admit that they were lied to about Brexit, which was really about introducing a radical libertarian tight-wing agenda and little else."

The European Movement would love to see the UK re-joining, although that seems unlikely to happen. On its website it offers advice to the latest in a string of prime ministers: "If Rishi wants to save the economy, he needs to fix the Brexit deal. He must urgently calm the markets, guarantee peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland and remove the threat of a trade war with Europe."

Meanwhile, Brexit campaigners continue to poke holes in the pro-EU argument, pointing out that the movement is part-funded by George Soros's Open Society Foundations. Former MEP David Campbell-Bannerman, who was and still is anti-EU, argues that the Conservative party "should not give it the time of day" and accused its supporters of wanting the UK "to be submerged in a European superstate". The language suggests that he, too, is a Libertarian who would risk endangering cross-Channel trade. He also points out on the "facts4eu.org" website (a firmly anti-EU endeavor) that the European Movement has even fielded parliamentary candidates to stand against Conservatives. In case he's forgotten, that's called "democracy". Meanwhile, with some Brexit supporters seeing their businesses going to the wall or moving to mainland Europe, it's estimated that the move has so far cost the UK economy some £146-billion (€168-billion) since Britain officially left, or in other words more than £440-million (€507-million) per week in lost trade.

It's not possible to reconcile the anti-Europeans and Brexiters with the pro-Europeans. Their visions of Europe's (and Britain's) futures are too far apart. But perhaps even the most ardent Brexiters would not mind seeing Sunak follow Guy Hands' advice? The former co-leader of the Green Party, Caroline Lucas, still hopes that one day Britain will rejoin the Union, although she admits that's unlikely for quite some time. Meanwhile, she has welcomed Sunak's decision to drop Conservative moves to repeal all laws originating in the EU. She wants the UK to re-join the customs union, agree measures to protect workers' rights and work more closely with the neighbors. "The Brexit bonfire does nothing to help people through the crises we face right now – a cost of living scandal; spiralling energy bills; a climate and nature emergency," Lucas said, "It is more cooperation with our closest neighbours – not less – which will help us to rise to those challenges." The Brexiters wanted us to flush our European links "down the pan", but our prospects for prosperity seem to have gone that way, too. Can we fish them out again? Maybe; in late October, thousands joined a march through London to protest at Britain's departure; it's not all over. Among the speakers was former Green Party MEP Molly Scott Cato, who summed up the situation quite succinctly: "Brexit broke Britain," she told the crowd, "It has broken our democracy, because it introduced the use of casual and outrageous lies into our political discourse. But we can still get it back from the pan, if we try hard enough."

Jim Gibbons



Giorgia Meloni

ONLY ONE WINNER

The (slightly controversial) election of Giorgia Meloni as Italy's first-ever female prime minister

“In these elections there is only one winner, who is Giorgia Meloni,” wrote Luciano Fontana, for the television service of the popular Italian daily newspaper, Corriere della Sera. There could be no doubt about it anyway, looking at the voting figures. Ms. Fontana dismisses those who would dispute the outcome, too. “The others who declare themselves winners have actually recovered compared to what were the numbers of the polls, but they have fallen compared to the last elections”, wrote Fontana. So, there you have it: the bald statement of how the Italians chose their next Prime Minister. She may not have been the choice of many in the wider Europe, but it’s what the Italian voters want that matters here. And they very clearly chose Giorgia Meloni. It was not an uncontroversial choice; Meloni joined the youth section of the neo-Fascist Italian Social Movement when she was just 19 years old and is on record as having praised Benito Mussolini, not the most popular figure in the popular

imagination of many in the West, on several occasions. Life for her has not been easy. She claims that her father, Francesco Meloni, walked out on her mother, her sister and her when she was just one year old. He was later arrested by Spanish police when they found 50 bales of marijuana on board a yacht he had just sailed to Majorca from Morocco. He was given a 9-year prison sentence. It’s hardly a great start in life for an ambitious daughter and would-be politician. Her fondness for Mussolini can’t have helped her much, either, although he is not so reviled in the history of his home country as his memory is elsewhere.

Unlike Mussolini, Meloni has never published Socialist newspapers, although it would seem that Mussolini’s commitment to Socialism was, at best, never more than skin-deep. Both were journalists, however. Il Duce, as he was known, wanted to ally Italy with Western democracies, but his invasion of Ethiopia had put paid to that. To cap it all, he then

chose to back Germany’s new Nazi leader, Adolf Hitler, in supporting Francisco Franco’s Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War. It’s strange that he was modelling himself on Hitler, when Hitler had modelled himself on Mussolini. However, it very soon became clear which was the more powerful, and by a considerable margin.



Giorgia Meloni in 2009

© Wikimedia



State visit of King Victor Emmanuel III to London with H.M. King George V

Like Meloni, of course, Mussolini was an arch-nationalist, as well as being a journalist. Through his newspapers, he was an avid supporter of a hard line on nationalism, something that became apparent with the start of the First World War. In the war he had been a highly-regarded sniper, using real bullets instead of a killing turn of phrase. As far as one can tell, Meloni is not famed for her accuracy with a firearm, but her writing is somewhat barbed. Nor does it seem likely that she will begin to find it prudent to assemble large groups of paramilitary supporters. In Mussolini's case, they became known as the Blackshirts, who travelled around committing arson, especially setting fire to government buildings. Their hero, of course, was the man who called himself *Il Duce*, which means "the boss" or "the chief".

It was an odd title to choose, perhaps, but at least it made his intentions crystal clear. In a foretaste of what Donald Trump's supporters attempted on 6 January 2021, in Washington, some 30,000 of Mussolini's "troops" swarmed into the capital in Rome and demanded a revolution. Resistance seemed futile, so King Victor Emmanuel III appointed Mussolini as Prime Minister. Some historians believe that the decision marked the real start of World War II, but in any case, happening – as it did – in late September 1922, Meloni is now able to take advantage of the event's centennial; a useful coincidence for her. But Meloni is not Mussolini and hasn't called for a revolution or a war, although she has made it clear that she wants to see some fairly considerable changes.

LEANING TO THE RIGHT, THEN FURTHER RIGHT

Meloni's far-right "Fratelli d'Italia" party are not like Mussolini's Fascists but he may well have approved of her, believing, as she does, that Italy need take no lessons from its European neighbours. Indeed, Meloni is highly suspicious of the EU's bureaucrats and is much more Eurosceptic than the technocratic prime minister she replaces, the pro-European Mario Draghi. Experts are predicting that Meloni will align her country more closely with the troublesome Hungarians and Poles, especially the Poles. But in order to govern, her Brothers of Italy party still needs allies, which will have to include the populist Northern League of Matteo Salvini and Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia (Go Italy).



Benito Mussolini

But even putting all three parties together, they only account for just over 43% of the overall vote; hardly

a resounding victory. It's enough, though. Even so, Meloni's government will be breaking new ground; she will be Italy's first-ever female Prime Minister, which has allegedly drawn cautious praise from Hilary Clinton, who said in an interview published in *Corriere della Sera* when Meloni was leading the poll but not yet elected: "The election of the first prime minister in a country always represents a break with the past, and it is certainly a good thing." But then, as with any leader, woman or man, she must be judged by what she does. I seldom agreed with Margaret Thatcher, but I admired her determination. Clearly then the ideas are voted on." Whether Clinton still sounds so enthusiastic once Meloni starts to exercise power over her country's government we shall see in time. Will she be more like Thatcher or Mussolini? The jury is still out.



Mario Draghi

So just what can we (and Mrs. Clinton) expect? Well, Meloni is considerably more Eurosceptic than Draghi, and this will show in her policies. She seems especially hostile towards the French view of Europe's future. Draghi had won plaudits for the EU's response to COVID and to its economic consequences, as well as to the euro crisis and to Russia's unprovoked war in Ukraine and the effect it has had on energy supplies and prices.

Draghi, in other words, was a class act, while Meloni is, to a large extent, an unknown quantity. Doing the right thing, though, doesn't always make a politician popular and Draghi's closest political allies, the Democratic Party led by Enrico Letta, won only 26.2% of the votes. Italy had been a driving force behind the development of the European Union – formerly the

European Economic Community and even earlier the European Coal and Steel Community – since it was first suggested by French foreign minister of the time, Robert Schuman, on 9 May, 1950. Back then, Enzo Giaccherio, Italy's member of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (fore-runner of the EU), was an enthusiastic supporter of closer political union. Were he still alive (he'd be 110 years old if he was) he would probably disapprove of Meloni's stated aims. But the world has changed a lot since those heady early days.

As for Meloni, she comes from a poor working-class area of Rome, so her views are not surprising. She has been accused by some (many of whom chose not to vote at all) as a complete fascist and as a homophobe. Marialuisa Vola, a young Roman artist who didn't vote, described her to Microsoft's MSN news website, as a monster. "Stiamo nella merda," she said; "We're in deep sh*t". Political historians will not be surprised. Meloni's Brothers of Italy party was founded by former Fascist loyalists who had followed Mussolini. Meloni was known for not liking the media, which she saw as left-wing and biased, an accusation sometimes echoed by America's Donald Trump. After all, the Brothers only gained some 26% of the vote and Meloni's victory is largely down to Italy's bizarre voting system. The two parties that are now joining the Brothers in a coalition failed even to get 10% of the votes each.

As for policies, Meloni is counting on a degree of native conservatism (with a small "c") as the population turn against what have been described as "woke" politics, while her possible left-wing rivals failed to overcome their

differences on key points of policy. The plain fact is that in an election that saw a very low turn-out, most people did NOT vote for Meloni, even if they didn't vote for anyone else either. A great many Italians simply chose to abstain from participating at all.

Meloni, however, did present the electorate with policies, even if they were not policies that were ever likely to appeal to everyone. One of the central tenets of her policies concerned asylum seekers, who she clearly doesn't like much. She made plain that she was not keen on the sorts of policies sometimes classed as "woke". She pledged to come down hard on inflation, including by abolishing the popular (among the poor) "citizens' income" that helped the most desperate to avoid starvation, but which cost business owners money to fund. She talked tough about immigrants and LGBTQ rights, neither of which meet with her approval. In fact, her political aims and ambitions can be more clearly explained in terms of what she doesn't like and would like to stop. It has been pointed out, however, that Meloni's Brothers of Italy manifesto makes barely any reference to women's rights or gender issues. Could it be, as some have suggested, a position she has adopted purely to win votes and in which she doesn't really believe? Probably not, although Meloni does seem to have softened her stance on some issues since winning the election.

That may weaken the opposition to her which was stoked up by some of the election's sillier moments, such as the call by Meloni's party to ban an episode of the children's TV cartoon show, Peppa Pig. It sounds funny but it

isn't, in fact, at least not to the Brothers of Italy party's supporters and others who see gender rights in the broader sense: the episode in question features two female polar bears raising a child (cub?) and clearly cohabiting and fulfilling the 'mother-and-father' rôles respectively. Unimportant? To those who've never experienced such a situation it may seem trivial, almost a joke, perhaps, but normalising such sexual relationships in the eyes of children may be seen by some as 'potentially dangerous'.



The cartoon show introduced its first same-sex couple in an episode titled "Families" that aired on Channel 5 in Britain

The episode in question has been broadcast in the UK without it causing any problems, it seems, and no gay couples have run cheering into the street, but Meloni's supporters would no doubt point to the 'drip, drip, drip' effect of seeing such relationships as normal over extended periods of time, even in children's television programmes. An attack on Peppa Pig, though, probably does little to reinforce Meloni's "street cred" among the wider public, especially among those predisposed to dislike the far right anyway. No-one seems to have commented on another perhaps equally controversial aspect of this particular episode. In answer to a question about how the family operates in this single-gender household, the cartoon "child" in question, explaining it to a visitor, says: "I live with my mummy and my other mummy. One mummy is a doctor and one mummy cooks spaghetti." To me, this suggests sexual stereotyping: the "male partner" (the "husband" part of the partnership, even if female?) goes out to work while the "female partner" (can we call her the "wife partner"?) is stuck at home with only boring old housework to do. Perhaps political persuasion (indoctrination?) in childhood should be avoided



Hall of the Italian Council of Ministers (Palazzo Chigi, Rome, Italy)

altogether, regardless of the supposed “message”, whether well-intentioned or otherwise. And, of course, there’s much more to Italian cuisine than spaghetti. Even I can cook that.

THE CURRENT MENU

Meloni has relentlessly focussed her political intentions on “God, country (or ‘fatherland’ in some versions) and family”, formerly a slogan of the Fascist movement. That includes rolling back some of the country’s rules aimed at protecting people from COVID, which are among the strictest in Europe. The health rules, introduced by outgoing prime minister Mario Draghi, include compulsory vaccinations for people wanting to use public transport, go to work or patronise shops and restaurants. The obligation for health care workers to be vaccinated will not be renewed when it expires in December, other than to protect the elderly or infirm. The recommendation to get vaccinated will remain in place, however, although she has chosen not to get her daughter vaccinated against SARS-Cov-2, arguing that a person under the age of 19 is no more likely to die of COVID than to be struck by lightning. According to the scientific press, that seems to be wrong. The virus has not been eradicated and there has been an increase in case numbers in the United States, where there have now been more than a million virus-related deaths. Wishing it had gone won’t make it do so.

Meloni’s views on abortion are controversial, too. She has said she doesn’t want to ban it but that women who want one should be offered “an alternative”, with organisations opposed to abortion in principle having access to pregnant women with an office provided where they can attempt to dissuade the woman concerned from going ahead with the procedure. Those supportive of a woman’s right to an abortion fear there will be strong psychological pressure to avoid one, because Meloni is against them. On less controversial ground, Meloni’s party has been promoting a plan to sell off Telecom Italia SpA, using the money thus raised to reduce its debts. She is also opposed to euthanasia, same-sex partnerships (even among cartoon pigs, it seems) and to opening Europe to non-European migrants. She doesn’t much like multiculturalism, either. She supports NATO but isn’t terribly fond of the European Union and prior to Putin’s invasion of Ukraine (which she roundly condemned) she favoured closer relations with Russia. Her right-wing views go back a long way; at the age of just 19 she expressed her admiration for Mussolini and other Nazi collaborators. She admits to being a populist and a nationalist but has denied being a Nazi.

Her father was a tax advisor, as well as being a drug smuggler, who walked out on his young family when she was just 1 year old, to sail off to start a new life in the Canary Islands. However,

he was caught and arrested at the port of Mahon on the island of Menorca. Tax advisor or not, according to the *Diario de Mallorca* newspaper he was carrying rather more than tax forms from Morocco. As for his young daughter, she seems to have been attracted to far-right politics from a young age. She defended Silvio Berlusconi’s right to pass laws that benefited his companies, and this partially led to her being appointed Minister of Youth in 2008, a position she retained until Berlusconi was forced to resign.



Andrea Giambruno

Together with two others, she was instrumental in creating a new political party, Brothers of Italy. In 2016 she took part in demonstrations against the right of LGBT people to adopt babies and young children and later that year she gave birth to a daughter, Ginevra, fathered by her partner, Andrea Giambruno, who works for Berlusconi’s Mediaset TV channel. She gave her support to Vox, the right-wing ultranationalist Spanish party and also signed the Madrid Charter, which accused all left-wing groups of being part of a criminal neo-Communist project linked to Fidel Castro. I should imagine Castro wishes he had such devoted, wide-spread support. At Vox’s party congress she said: “Yes to the natural family. No to the LGBT lobby. Yes to sexual identity. No to gender ideology,” as well as “no to Islamist violence, yes to secure borders”, and hitting out at mass migration, big international finance, and saying “no to the bureaucrats of Brussels!” She spoke at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference in Florida where she urged attendees to defend their views against what she called “progressives”.



A NO-VAX graffiti in the town of Legnano in Lombardy, Italy



Giorgia Meloni speaking at CPAC 2022 in Florida, USA

When it became clear from exit polls that she was set to win the 2022 general election, Meloni received the congratulations of the European Commission's least-loved European leader, Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán, and also from Britain's Liz Truss (once a pro-EU Liberal, now the UK's anti-EU and very right wing Prime Minister) and France's Marine Le Pen, of Front National fame. A popular lady among Europe's more right-wing leaders is Meloni, it seems. The Republican Party in the United States has also praised her. Meloni has said she won't change Italy's abortion laws, despite her personal opposition to the practice, although she will allow doctors to refuse to perform the operation. She has also spoken out against same-sex parenting (by adoption) and has denied that homophobia exists in Italy, making any laws against it pointless. She said that it was not "Italian reality" to claim that there is discrimination against gay people. Her response to claims of anti-gay discrimination is to say it doesn't exist, although same sex couples hoping to adopt have to travel abroad to be recognised as potential parents.

STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

She has expressed support for moves to make it illegal for same sex couples to adopt children. Peppa Pig must be wary. Meloni stands accused of xenophobia and of Islamophobia and seems to support the conspiracy theory beloved of white nationalists that there is a plan to replace white Italians with incomers from elsewhere. What, all of them? It was a popular idea, and not only in Italy. As for beliefs, Meloni says she is what she appears. She told a rally held in Rome that: "I am Giorgia, I'm a woman, I'm Italian, I'm Christian". Some in the higher levels of the Catholic church may dispute that; on the same day as people were voting, Pope Francis was urging his fellow-Italians to help migrants. As the Catholic Herald reported: "This is a pontiff, after all, who has called on Catholics to take in refugees in the past, asking 'why not make a policy of the West where immigrants are included with the principle that the migrant should be welcomed, accompanied, promoted, and integrated?'"

He said on his return from Kazakhstan, 'migration I think at this time should be taken seriously, because it raises the intellectual and congenial value of the West a little bit.' Speaking one Sunday, the Pope said: "Migrants are to be welcomed, accompanied, promoted and integrated." This clearly does not resonate with many Italians, with their country at the forefront of migrant crossings from Africa. It would seem likely that a conversation between the Pope and Meloni would not be characterised by a discussion

on points of belief. The Catholic Herald reported that: "Strikingly, Meloni has said she has failed at times to understand Pope Francis. In her autobiography, while Meloni called St. John Paul II 'the greatest pope of the modern era,' and even 'a saint,' she said of the incumbent, 'even though I'm Catholic and I've never allowed myself to criticise a pope, I admit that I haven't always understood Pope Francis.' Back in 2020, she was quoted as saying: "I'm a believer and I listen to the words of His Holiness, but on a political level I don't always share them."

The Religion Unplugged website pointed out that Meloni had run under her slogan "God, Homeland (or Fatherland) and family", a slogan she shared with the pre-war Fascists. She ended her speech by quoting St. Francis of Assisi: "Start by doing what's necessary, then do what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible." She would like to curb Muslim extremism, too, and wants Italy to raise the issue of human rights with Saudi Arabia. She has been described in the Mirror Online as Italy's "most extreme leader since Benito Mussolini." It's worth remembering, though, that: "In Italian politics, governments are formed via alliances. So, while Meloni's Brothers of Italy party got nowhere near a majority of votes, help from other parties with shared ambitions could see her lead a government." Not only "could" but "will", despite the in-built conservatism (with a small "c") of the Italian electorate. Meloni has praised Mussolini on several occasions, such as during an interview for a French news channel. "Everything he did, he did for Italy," she said, "and there have been no politicians like him for 50 years." There may be a good reason for that. Yes, he did what he did for Italy, but he seems to have (according to some) ignored other nations and nationalities.

FOR HOW LONG?

British right-wing political commentator Piers Morgan is not surprised by the nature of political change. "The more insanely woke the left becomes, the more European voters are gravitating to right-wing parties," he Tweeted. "Until the left



Main facade of Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome



Giorgia Meloni, Matteo Salvini and Silvio Berlusconi

gets a grip of the lunatics steering its agenda into the PC (politically correct) abyss, this will keep happening.” What about the lunatics steering the right’s agenda into what could turn out to be a reactionary abyss? Meloni does not have the government of Italy to herself, of course. The Brothers of Italy is just the largest of the three right-wing parties now sharing the top position, and getting to the top and staying there will be a struggle. Giorgia Meloni of the Brothers of Italy (FdI), Matteo Salvini of the Northern League (Lega Nord) and former premier Silvio Berlusconi of Forza Italia (Forward Italy!), now aged 85, appeared before thousands of supporters in Rome. Berlusconi warned Meloni not to take too strong a Eurosceptic view when in power. It remains to be seen if she was listening. Political group leaders in Italy are not known for retaining their influence once they’re no longer in power.



Matteo Salvini

Former MEP and human rights campaigner Alan Donnelly is concerned, not only about Meloni but about the growing influence of intolerance and hate in politics. “There is a troubling trend where right wing populist parties are taking power in European countries. They are rolling back equality laws - which is of course a direct challenge to the fundamental foundations of the EU,” said Donnelly, who is openly gay himself. He doesn’t share Meloni’s optimism that there is no violence against gay people: “I’m convinced we will see a rise in physical attacks on LGBT citizens and a systematic dismantling of national equality laws. The EU institutions must be robust in their response.” Meloni would seem to embody the very attitudes Donnelly fears. Whilst denying being homophobic, she has said: “the state must try to reserve adoption for a man and a woman” and also “take care of the weakest”. Having said that, it’s understandable that parents may show reluctance to place a child with adoptive carers who are in a gay relationship.

Real parents presumably want the child to be raised in what most people would recognise as a “normal” household, although few would probably go as far as Meloni, who has claimed that the real goal of “gender ideology” is the disappearance of women and “an end to motherhood”, which sounds like a biological impossibility. The Brothers of Italy, along with their political allies, Silvio Berlusconi’s Forza Italia and the populist and federalist Lega Nord, led by Matteo Salvini may squabble over



Putin and Berlusconi in Russian-occupied Crimea, September 2015

who’s in charge, and whether or not the apparent winners can hold their positions for long is anybody’s guess. Italy is famous for its short-lived and fragmented governments and an on-line question posed to citizens: “how many governments has Italy had since World War 2?” produced several answers, the most popular being “too many”. With so many short-lived coalitions, it’s hard to count. Very few have lasted longer than (or even as long as) 400 days. Only time will tell if Meloni does any better. She is said to be a huge fan of J.R.R. Tolkien’s “Lord of the Rings” books. I wonder if she identifies with the heroic elf princess Galadriel or with the dark lord Sauron, ruler of Mordor? And where is Bilbo Baggins when you need him?

T. Kingsley Brooks

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NEWS IN BRIEF

AUTOMOBILI PININFARINA DELIVERS FIRST BATTISTA CARS TO U.S. CLIENTS AND FURTHER STRENGTHENS PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA



The first Battista pure-electric hyper GT cars crafted for clients in North America are delivered to new owners, marking another significant milestone for Italian luxury car brand Automobili Pininfarina. The first bespoke Battista is followed by the exclusive Battista Anniversario, which will also leave the Battista Atelier in Cambiano, Italy this month to be received by another U.S. owner.

The arrival of the first two Battista cars in the U.S. coincide with a strengthened presence in the region for Automobili Pininfarina, through the addition of a new retail partner in Dallas, Texas.

Per Svantesson, Automobili Pininfarina CEO, said: *"The team and I are very proud of Automobili Pininfarina's expansion in the U.S. and the delivery of the first Battista cars stateside. This symbolises our creation of a new luxury electric car segment both in the U.S. and globally. With a passionate collector receiving the first Battista in North America, we see tremendous confidence in this masterpiece of design and technology in this influential community."*

"North America is a very special region for Automobili Pininfarina. The appetite in the community for peerless design and the demand for innovative electric luxury cars means that the majority of the 150 bespoke Battista we handcraft in Italy will be owned by U.S. clients."



The Battista will be the most powerful car ever designed and built in Italy and it will deliver a level of performance that is unachievable today in any road-legal sports car featuring internal combustion engine technology. Faster than a current Formula 1 race car in its 0 -100 km/h sub-two second sprint, and with 1,900 hp and 2,340 Nm torque on tap, the Battista will combine extreme engineering and technology in a zero emissions package. The Battista's 120 kWh battery provides power to four electric motors – one at each wheel – with a combined WLTP range of up to 476 km (U.S. combined EPA: 300 miles) on a single charge. No more than 150 examples of Battista will be individually hand-crafted at the Battista Atelier in Cambiano, Italy. Price tag is around \$2.2 million.

COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

THE RIGHT TO COMPENSATION FOR AIR PASSENGERS SUBJECT TO LONG DELAYS APPLIES TO CONNECTING FLIGHTS MADE UP OF FLIGHTS OPERATED BY SEPARATE OPERATING AIR CARRIERS



The request for a preliminary ruling has been made in proceedings between flightright GmbH, a German company providing legal assistance for air passengers, and American Airlines Inc., an air carrier, concerning compensation under Regulation No 261/2004, requested due to a long delay to a flight's arrival at its final destination.

A passenger purchased, through a travel agency, an electronic plane ticket for a journey on 25 July 2018 from Stuttgart to Kansas City made up of three flights. The first flight from Stuttgart to Zurich was operated by Swiss International Air Lines, whilst the two flights from Zurich to Philadelphia and from Philadelphia to Kansas City, respectively, were operated by American Airlines. The electronic ticket number appeared on the boarding passes for those flights. In addition, that ticket showed that American Airlines was providing services and contained a single reservation number relating to the entire journey. Furthermore, the travel agency issued an invoice showing a total price for the whole of that journey and for the return.

While the flights from Stuttgart to Zurich and from Zurich to Philadelphia, respectively, ran to schedule, the arrival of the flight from Philadelphia to Kansas City was delayed by more than four hours. Before the German courts, flightright, a company providing legal assistance to air passengers to which the rights arising from that delay had been assigned, is claiming compensation of € 600 from American Airlines, pursuant to

Regulation No 261/2004 concerning compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation or long delay of flights.

The German Federal Court of Justice, before which the case has been brought, has put questions to the Court of Justice regarding the interpretation of certain parts of that regulation.

By its judgment on October 6, the Court of Justice holds that the concept of a 'connecting flight' covers a transport operation departing from a Member State made up of a number of flights operated by separate operating air carriers which do not have a legal relationship, where those flights have been combined by a travel agency which has charged an overall price and issued a single ticket for that operation.

The Court points out that the concept of a 'connecting flight' must be understood as referring to two or more flights constituting a whole for the purposes of the right to compensation for passengers provided for in Regulation No 261/2004. That is the case when two or more flights were booked as a single unit. In the present case, it appears that the passenger had a ticket constituting proof that the reservation for that passenger's entire journey from Stuttgart to Kansas City had been accepted and registered by a tour operator. Such a transport operation must be regarded as being based on a single reservation and, therefore, as a 'connecting flight'.

The flights comprising the connecting flight at issue were operated by separate operating air carriers, namely Swiss International Air Lines and American Airlines, there being no legal relationship between them.

The Court considers that no provision of the regulation concerning compensation of air passengers renders the classification as a connecting flight subject to the condition that there is a specific legal relationship between the operating air carriers operating, where relevant, the flights which make up the connecting flight. Such an additional condition would also be contrary to the objective of ensuring a high level of protection for passengers, in that it would be capable of limiting, in particular, their right to compensation, where there is a long delay to their flights.

EMSA SNIFFER DRONE SUPPORTS FRENCH AUTHORITIES TO MONITOR SHIP EMISSIONS ON MEDITERRANEAN SEA COAST

EMSA has responded to a request from the French authorities to provide surveillance support for multiple tasks including the monitoring of emissions from passenger

and commercial ships using the busy ports in the area of Marseille (Port of Marseille, Port of Fos). The sniffer drone deployed takes measurements from the exhaust plumes of passing ships to help verify compliance with EU and IMO rules capping the sulphur content of marine fuels (Directive (EU) 2016/802 and MARPOL Annex VI), with a view to reducing harmful effects on human health and the environment. The operation follows recent successful trials and is expected to run until 23 December 2022.



The ship safety inspectors of the Interregional Directorate for the Mediterranean Sea (DIRM MED) in charge of dockside controls will be directly involved in the targeting of vessels in close contact with the pilots of the drone. Each flight will be followed in real time through EMSA's RPAS Data Centre and the measurements taken will trigger follow-up inspections via the THETIS-EU database for port state control where instances of non-compliance are suspected.

The particular model of RPAS in use is ideal for rapid mobilisation from different sites. The ATLAS 4 vertical take-off and landing quadcopter manufactured by ALTUS LSA and supplied by the ALTUS LSA-led consortium with ADAPTIT is under contract to EMSA and fully equipped with different payloads including cameras and emissions measurement sensors.

While emissions monitoring will be the primary task of the operation, the RPAS may also be deployed for other complementary tasks within a designated area. In this way, it can also serve the purposes of search and rescue, fisheries control, and marine pollution monitoring depending on the specific needs of the authorities at any given time.

ABOUT RPAS

Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) services are offered free of charge to all EU countries by EMSA. They have been developed to assist in maritime surveillance operations and ship emission monitoring and can operate in all seas surrounding the European Union. RPAS services can provide support to traditional coast guard functions, including search and rescue and pollution prevention and response. The services are offered to member countries as part of EMSA's regional RPAS strategy, which allows

multiple coast guard functions in several EU countries to be supported by one or more RPAS services. See where EMSA is flying.

ABOUT EMSA

The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) is a decentralised agency of the EU, based in Lisbon, Portugal. EMSA serves the EU's maritime interests for a safe, secure, green and competitive maritime sector, delivering value for member states through support for pollution prevention and response, maritime surveillance, safety and security, digitalisation and the provision of integrated maritime services, and technical assistance.

EUSPA LAUNCHES THE #MYEUSPACE COMPETITION 2022



EUSPA is looking to support the development of innovative commercial applications that leverage data coming from the EU Space Programme.

Have an idea for a commercial application that leverages the power of the EU Space Programme? Looking for support to turn that idea into a prototype or to take it to market? Then check out the #myEUSpace 2022 competition!

The annual competition, which is organised by the EU Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA) as part of the European Commission's CASSINI – Space Entrepreneurship Initiative, challenges innovators and entrepreneurs to create game-changing commercial solutions that use data coming from Galileo, Copernicus or both.

“Space data is at the heart of the technological revolution currently sweeping Europe, and this competition is another example of how EUSPA supports innovative entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs from across the EU who are leveraging Copernicus and Galileo data, information and services, during the different steps of their evolution cycle,” says EUSPA Executive Director Rodrigo da Costa.

While ideas can range from mobile applications to hardware-based solutions, all must be tied to one of three targeted innovation areas:

- **Space My Life:** Consumer solutions like mobile applications, wearables (smart watches, smart

glasses, fitness trackers, etc.), drones or robotics that address major societal challenges in focus areas such as health, citizen safety and security, gaming and entertainment, sports and fitness, and tourism.

- **Our Green Planet:** Innovative solutions addressing environmental challenges and sustainable life and that contribute to the implementation of the European Green Deal, as well as solutions that aid the green transformation of corporations. The proposed solutions must address major societal challenges in focus areas such as the conservation of ecosystems, green mobility, sustainable agriculture and the management of energy and resources.
- **Dive in Deep Tech:** Innovative solutions that combine EU Space data with deep technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), quantum (quantum computing, sensing, simulation, encryption, etc.), blockchain, the metaverse and extended reality (augmented reality [AR], mixed reality [MR], virtual reality [VR]). The proposed solutions must address major societal challenges in focus areas such as biotech, medtech and fintech.

Ready, set, disrupt!

The #myEUSpace competition is open to teams from all EU Member States plus Switzerland, Norway and Iceland and has a total prize purse of nearly **EUR 1 million**. In addition to the cash prize, the competition provides support to entrepreneurs during the entire innovation cycle, from early-stage start-ups to scale-ups.

“Start-ups and entrepreneurs are particularly enthusiastic about embracing the potential offered by the EU Space Programme and translating it into the innovative solutions that are sure to disrupt a wide range of sectors,” says EUSPA Head of Market, Downstream and Innovation Fiammetta Diani. “The #myEUSpace competition can help you turn that enthusiasm into action – and success.”

Depending on the maturity of the solution at the time of submission, entrepreneurs can compete and win in three different prize tracks:

- **Best Ideas:** for promising theoretical ideas that leverage EU space data and have a high market potential. The best 15 ideas will receive a cash prize of EUR 10K each.
- **Best Prototypes:** for tested prototypes or beta versions that you want to bring to market. The 10 best prototypes will receive a cash prize of EUR 30K each.
- **Best Products:** for existing commercial products that are looking to scale-up. The 5 best products will receive a cash prize of EUR 100K each.

Teams who win in one category can take the same award-winning idea or prototype and apply again in another track to compete and win additional prizes!

The details

All applications will be assessed based on their innovativeness, market potential, feasibility, relevance to the EU Space Programme and operational capacity. Awarded teams will be invited to showcase their solutions to the public and investors during the Contest Finals, part of next June's Entrepreneurship Day.

More information about the contest :

<https://www.euspa.europa.eu/myeuspacecompetition>

The application platform is now open for all three tracks and the application process is very easy!

The deadline for the Best Ideas track is 30 November 2022, 10 February 2023 for the Best Prototype track, and 23 April 2023 for the Best Products track.

Source : European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA) (<http://www.euspa.europa.eu>).

THE GIANT BIBLE OF MAINZ DIGITIZED BY THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



The Giant Bible of Mainz, one of the last handwritten giant bibles in Europe, has now been digitized by the Library of Congress, ensuring online access to an important national treasure from the 15th century.

The Giant Bible is famous for having been copied by a single scribe, who precisely dated his progress between April 4, 1452, and July 9, 1453. These dates are remarkable because they place the creation of this manuscript bible in proximity to the first printed bible crafted in Europe, the Gutenberg Bible.

While it has never been in question that the Giant Bible and the Gutenberg Bible were created around the same time, scholars were previously less certain about the location of Mainz, Germany, as the birthplace of both bibles. The Giant Bible of Mainz received its name from an inscription on the first leaf of the manuscript, which states that in 1566, Heinrich Stockheim, cantor at the Mainz Cathedral, signed the bible over to the cathedral's custody. This early evidence of the bible's presence in Mainz, coupled with the stylistic influence of the Middle Rhine upon certain aspects of its paintings and illuminations, suggested Mainz as a place of origin. But it left room for doubt.

New scholarship is putting those doubts to rest. historian John Jefferson recently identified the coat-of-arms on the first leaf of the manuscript as those of Bishop Rudolph von Rudesheim and Abbot Emmerich Nauta of Winkel, both of whom were local to the Mainz area when the Giant Bible was being copied. This identification makes it much more likely that the Giant Bible was created within the greater Mainz area, and brings it within greater historical proximity to the beginning of European printing.

In its digital form, the Giant Bible of Mainz can now be accessed by people across the globe and will be preserved for future generations. In keeping with Rosenwald's commitment to encouraging broad cultural engagement with the history of the illustrated book, these images allow anyone interested in medieval manuscripts to encounter each page of this singular codex.

"Digitization is an important part of equitable access to early materials, and we are excited that new voices will have an opportunity to become part of the future of the Giant Bible at the Library of Congress," said Marianna Stell, reference librarian in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

To access The digital form of the The Giant Bible of Mainz : <https://www.loc.gov/item/52002226/>

HORIZON EUROPE INFO DAYS TO TAKE PLACE ON 15-16 DECEMBER

The European Commission has announced that new Info Days for Horizon Europe Cluster 5 - Climate, Energy & Mobility - will be held as a hybrid event on 15-16 December 2022.

The hybrid (virtual/limited physical) Info Days will present the research and innovation topics proposed for 2023 under the Work Programme 2023-2024 of Horizon Europe (HE) Cluster 5 - Climate, Energy & Mobility.

They will give the opportunity to prospective applicants to learn more about the funding options under the new Work Programme with focus on twin green and digital transitions to achieve climate neutrality in Europe by 2050.

The goal of the Info Days is to present 107 open topics of the Horizon Europe Cluster 5 2023 calls by way of a plenary and four parallel sessions.



Registration

Limited physical registrations will be possible via the official Info Days registration page (coming soon!). Participants wishing to attend remotely or who cannot attend physically will be able to follow all sessions as well as the NCP project pitching session online through this main event page. No registration is needed to follow the online sessions.

Brokerage event

A separate physical pitching session and brokerage session organised by the National Contact Points (NCP) will take place in the afternoon on 15 December at the same venue - the Centre de Conférences Albert Borschette (CCAB) in Brussels. The brokerage session will provide to future project partners the opportunity to network, through dedicated meetings organised by sector.

The NCP brokerage session on Thursday afternoon (15.00-17.30) will require physical presence for networking, and Info Day participants who will not attend this session are encouraged to attend remotely, in order to facilitate access to those participants who wish to attend both.

For a detailed agenda, participation information and practical details, visit the event website :

https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/events/horizon-europe-info-days/cluster-5_en

NICARAGUA: EU SANCTIONS REGIME PROLONGED FOR A FURTHER YEAR

The Council has prolonged the framework for imposing targeted restrictive measures in view of the situation in Nicaragua for an additional year, until 15 October 2023.

The restrictive measures currently in place apply to a total of 21 persons and three entities. Those designated are subject to an asset freeze and EU citizens and companies are forbidden from making funds available to them. Natural persons are additionally subject to a travel ban, which prevents them from entering or transiting through EU territories.

This decision takes place following the unjustified decision of the Nicaraguan regime to expel the Head of the EU Delegation from the country, and cut diplomatic ties with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as well as the EU reciprocal response to declare the Head of the Mission of the Republic of Nicaragua to the EU as *persona non grata*.

The EU reaffirms its continued commitment to the Nicaraguan people and to defending democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The current political crisis in Nicaragua should be resolved through genuine dialogue between the government and opposition. The EU remains open to dialogue with Nicaragua, provided that this dialogue is conducted in a respectful manner.

Background and next steps

The sanctions regime was first introduced in October 2019 to address Nicaragua's deteriorating political and social situation, after the Council had repeatedly expressed its concern about such deteriorating situation in the country.

On 4 May 2020, the Council adopted the first restrictive measures against six individuals. They targeted persons and entities responsible for serious human rights violations or abuses, or for the repression of civil society and democratic opposition in Nicaragua, as well as persons and entities whose actions, policies or activities undermine democracy and the rule of law in the country.

The EU follows developments in Nicaragua constantly and can decide to renew sanctions and amend the list of targeted entities or persons based on developments in the country.



Josep BORRELL FONTELLES (High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy)

Nicaragua: head of mission to the EU declared persona non grata

On the initiative of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council agreed on 10 October that the head of the Mission of the Republic of Nicaragua to the European Union will be declared *persona non grata*.

This is a reciprocal response to the decision by the Nicaraguan government on 28 September to declare the head of the EU Delegation to Nicaragua as *persona non grata*. The EU considers the Nicaraguan decision unwarranted.

The EU reaffirms its continued commitment to the Nicaraguan people and to defending democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The current political crisis in Nicaragua should be resolved through genuine dialogue between the government and opposition. The EU remains open to dialogue with Nicaragua, provided that this dialogue is conducted in a respectful manner.

REGISTRATION OPENS FOR EUROPEAN DRUGS WINTER AND SUMMER SCHOOLS 2023



The EMCDDA and the University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL) have opened registration for two upcoming joint events in 2023: the European Drugs Winter School (EDWS) and the European Drugs Summer School (EDSS)

EDWS: 13–24 February 2023 (online): This year, the theme will be ‘Displaced populations and drug-related issues’, with one full day dedicated to this topic. The two-week course will feature live lunchtime lectures with experts and practitioners, followed by afternoon exercises. Virtual fieldwork tours will also be offered. Completion of exercises and an exam are compulsory for those wishing to obtain credits. The sessions will be recorded and available for subsequent viewing.

EDSS: 26 June to 7 July 2023 (Lisbon): In 2023, this face-to-face two-week course will focus on the issue of mental health. Sessions will include lectures on drugs and mental health, dual diagnosis and integrated interventions. Study visits will be organised to one of the Portuguese commissions for dissuasion as well as to mobile methadone units and a drug consumption room in Lisbon. During the course, students will participate in interactive workshops to discuss their own projects and views. The course will conclude with an open debate with guest speakers, followed by an exam for those wishing to obtain credits.

The target audiences for the two events are: university students, researchers, professionals and administrators interested in working on drug issues. The previous rounds of these courses brought together students from the EU

Member States as well as from Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas. Profiles of former alumni and their testimonials can be found on the official summer school website and their statements viewed in a promotional video.

The courses prepare professionals and students to meet the complex policy challenges that face Europe in the field of drugs. Involving scientific experts from the EMCDDA, university professors and policymakers, they provide a multi-disciplinary and inclusive approach to the study of the drugs problem in Europe and beyond.

Details on scholarships in 2023 are available on the event web pages. Both events will be conducted in English.

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https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2022/registration-opens-european-drugs-winter-and-summer-schools-2023_en

EUROPEAN DEFENSE AGENCY PROJECT SEEKS LIGHTER BALLISTIC ARMOUR

Ballistic, or bullet proof, armour is used to protect vehicles against different threats. But it also makes them heavier, especially when seeking to protect against more powerful weapons. Taken together, armour and the vehicle structure constitute more than half of vehicle's weight, requiring more fuel and potentially making it harder to manoeuvre.



In search of a lighter armour, the European Defence Agency (EDA) launched a project on 20 October 2022 to use new advances in metallic materials for ballistic steels.

Known as the Additive Manufacturing of Metallic Auxetic Structures and Materials for Lightweight Armour, (AMALIA), the project aims to enhance the performance of ballistic and blast protections using auxetic structures, which become thicker when stretched or thinner when

compressed. Making use of specific alloys developed for ballistic applications, this material can be tailored for the additive manufacturing process.

In response to a violent impact, the auxetic materials have the advantage of being denser in the strike zone and allow a higher energy absorption, offering more protection.

The AMALIA project, costing slightly less than € 5 million, is funded by seven EDA Member States (Italy, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovenia), led by RINA Consulting - Centro Sviluppo Materiali.

The state-of-the-art structures are still mainly at a theoretical level, involving numerical simulations. Several studies have assessed the positive effect of these structures on energy absorption, suggesting that auxetic structures can be used for protective equipment, including armour for military vehicles. However, due to the manufacturing difficulties of such structures, not many 3D metallic structures have been developed.

Some examples of parts with auxetic structures are made in aluminium, stainless steel and titanium alloys (EBM technology) but are still on a small scale.

The AMALIA project aims to explore technical issues related to the difficulties of manufacturing such auxetic structures using traditional manufacturing methods. Material development will also have an important role in producing alloys specifically developed for the additive manufacturing process by means of thermodynamic, kinetic and solidification tools.

The materials will be investigated to better understand the response of auxetic materials to static and dynamic impact loading conditions at different strains, an aspect not yet sufficiently explored.

The project will rely on extensive simulations, in order to test the ballistic properties of new auxetic structure topologies and fine tune the process parameters for the actual structures production.

The properties of the additive manufactured part will be improved through gas atomisation, a process aiming at synthesizing high-quality metal powders with controlled particle sizes.

NEW REPRESENTATIVE FOR DENMARK AT EUROJUST TAKES UP DUTIES

Mr Torben Thygesen was appointed Eurojust Representative for Denmark in October 2022. He replaces Mr Jesper Hjortenbergh, who served as the National Member for Denmark between 2010 and 2019, and as a Representative since the Eurojust Regulation entered into force in December 2019.

Commenting on his new role, Mr Thygesen, stated: As a prosecutor, working with serious and organised cross-border crime, I have experienced the value and importance of close national cooperation in investigating and prosecuting transnational crime, and I have experienced

the benefits of Eurojust. I am honoured to be appointed as the new Representative for Denmark at Eurojust, and I look forward to building on the work done by Mr Jesper Hjortenbergh and to support transnational cooperation in combatting cross-border crime. Also, I look forward to meeting my new colleagues at Eurojust.

Mr Thygesen has been a prosecutor since 1998 and has worked at the Office of the State Prosecutor for several years. He has prosecuted many cases before the Western High Court of Denmark, including cases involving terrorism and serious and organised cross-border crime.

From 2010 until 2019, Mr Thygesen was Deputy State Prosecutor and Chief Prosecutor in different sections of the Danish Prosecution service and from 2017 to 2019 head of a section investigating and prosecuting serious and organised cross-border crime. Since 2019, he has been Deputy State Prosecutor at the State Prosecutor of Viborg.

Alongside this, he is attached to and appointed as examiner at the faculty of law at Aarhus University and Copenhagen University.



Eurojust Representative for Denmark Torben Thygesen

Eurojust and Denmark agreement on judicial cooperation

Protocol 22 of the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 states that EU legislation in the area of freedom, security and justice does not apply to Denmark. Since the entry into force of the Eurojust Regulation in December 2019, Denmark is no longer a member of Eurojust.

Eurojust and the Kingdom of Denmark have signed an Agreement on Criminal Justice Cooperation that enables the parties to coordinate investigations and prosecutions during cross-border cases. The Agreement takes into account Denmark's status as an EU Member State and a Schengen Area Country. Under the Agreement, Denmark may second a Representative, a Deputy and an Assistant to Eurojust to coordinate its criminal investigations and prosecutions with other Member States as well as third countries that have a cooperation agreement with Eurojust.

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



EPP Summit, 20 October 2022

NO ROAD IS LONG WITH GOOD COMPANY

The difficult journey of the EPP in seeking a future among friends (and friends to help shape a future)

The title for this article is an old Turkish proverb, but it seems to fit quite well. Building Europe together sounds like an excellent idea, with different peoples and nations bringing their own unique perspectives to the project, all together in harmony for the greater good of all and with shared aims and beliefs. You've probably spotted the flaw in this concept already. After the Second World War many Europeans were trying to come up with a way forward that would preclude the possibility of another war. Various ideas were put forward, but it was clear that the means to conduct a war involved a great deal of energy and steel. Without them there could be no weapons, no means of propulsion for military vehicles, no shell cases for explosive materials, so no effective way to wage a war. Without supplies of fuel and steel it's so difficult to kill people, as our ancient ancestors discovered.

It was the French government that proposed bringing the production of coal and steel in both France and Germany under a single system of control, the so-called High Authority. Their aim was not, of course, mass slaughter but its avoidance. The proposal was put forward by Robert Schuman, a French politician born in Clausen, a suburb of the city of Luxembourg, in 1886 and holding German citizenship through his father, although he also became a German citizen when Lorraine was annexed by Germany in 1871. During the Second World War, he objected to German methods of rule and was arrested and interrogated by the Gestapo, but a German lawyer won him his freedom before he could be transferred to Dachau concentration camp, as the authorities had intended. His experiences undoubtedly influenced his political views. He was already a Christian Democrat, a political

philosophy he retained throughout his life. He wanted peace and, presumably, to avoid further confrontations with bodies like the Gestapo.



Former French foreign minister Robert Schuman

The High Authority would eventually turn into the European Commission and its task was to achieve, in the words of the Jean Monnet Foundation's "L'Europe: Une Longue Marche" – and in the shortest possible time – "the modernisation of production and the improvement of its quality; the supply of coal and steel on identical terms to the French and German markets as well as to the markets of other member countries; the joint development of exports to other countries; the equalisation and improvement of the living conditions of workers in these industries." Christian Democracies originate in Roman Catholicism and support the ideas of social and economic justice, recognising the need for occasional state intervention to support some communities and to defend human dignity. In its purest form it cannot be said to be either "left" or "right", but with its belief in private property and its opposition to state intervention in social life and education, it is normally (and accurately) viewed as being right-wing, if only moderately so. It has become more secular over the course of time. Christian Democrat parties have led coalition governments in Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. They gained influence in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the USSR.

It clearly isn't necessary to be a Roman Catholic or a follower of any religion to be a Christian Democrat. Indeed, some Christian Democrat parties actively sought the support of agnostics and even atheists as the movement developed. At the bottom of it, of course, is the Christian Democrat belief in the right to the ownership of private property and a dislike of outside intervention, however official, in people's day-to-day lives. Founded only in 1976 through its change of name to the European People's Party (EPP), it is now the largest political grouping in the European Parliament, the European Council and also the European Commission, whose President, Ursula von der Leyen is a member. It includes not only Christian-democratic but also conservative and Liberal-



President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis

conservative member parties and others from the centre-right of politics. It even describes itself now on its own website as "the family of the political centre-right".

The EPP was founded in Luxembourg on 8 July 1976 on the initiative of Jean Seitlinger, Leo Tindemans, who was the Prime Minister of Belgium at the time and who went on to become the first President of the EPP, and Wilfried Martens, who later became both President of the EPP and, like Tindemans, Prime Minister of Belgium. Its predecessor had been the *Secretariat International des partis démocratiques d'inspiration chrétienne*, which had been founded in 1925. Next came the *Nouvelles Equipes Internationales*, founded in either 1946 or 1948 (no-one seems quite clear on that point) and then in 1965 the *European Union of Christian Democrats* was established: yet another step along the road, but only a step. It was not until the late

1990s that Finnish politician Sauli Niinistö negotiated the merger of the European Democrat Union (EDU), of which he was president, with the EPP. In October 2002 the EDU ceased to exist as a separate body after being formally absorbed by the EPP at an event in Estoril, Portugal. In recognition of his efforts, Niinistö was elected Honorary President of the EPP the same year.

FACING INTO DARKNESS?

The overall aims of the EPP are set out on its website. "The EPP political family has been to the fore of efforts to make Europe a safer place," it states. Of course, being part of a single political movement doesn't mean everyone is in total agreement about everything. Even in a large monastery with, perhaps, a thousand monks, it's been said that if you ask them all of them what exactly it is they believe you would end up with a thousand different versions of the same faith. Only slightly different in some cases but massively varying in others. Even so, they would probably agree on general principles. The EPP may embrace a variety of approaches to a single issue but its members will be in widespread agreement about it being an issue. So let's take a look at its other published aims: "It is the foremost duty of public authorities to protect their citizens and to uphold the rule of law in our societies." I don't think many people would argue with that as a laudable goal. The website continues: "Our work is mainly focused on four



Finland's former President Sauli Niinistö

areas: securing our external borders, preventing illegal migration, fighting terrorism and combatting organised crime and corruption. In these areas, strengthening the rule of law, good law enforcement, strong intelligence services, effective exchange of information and a strong and resilient civil society, firmly rooted in the core values of the Union, are a precondition to preserving and enhancing the security we live in.”



Jimmie Åkesson

The EPP does face a big problem, however, in terms of how to address various issues. Never mind the differences among a few monks: this would tax the wisest abbot to find a workable solution. Look, for instance, at the recent Swedish elections. The centre-right won a tiny majority – 176 seats out of 350 in parliament, compared with 174 for the left-leaning Social Democrats, while the far-right Sweden Democrat party (SD) surprised people by picking up

more than one in five of the votes cast. The success of the SD was down to the concentration during the campaign on such issues as immigration and violent crime. Originally founded by Nazi sympathisers, the party has been largely kept out of national politics. Members are said to be anti-immigration, nationalist and against multiculturalism, but the party has tried to distance itself from the traditional racism with which it was associated.

Its leader, Jimmie Åkesson suspended the party's entire youth wing in 2015 because of its links with the far-right. It has even dropped its “Keep Sweden Swedish” slogan. Some party officials have publicly called for the repatriation of certain Middle-Eastern migrants, apparently with Åkesson's support. Sweden, it's claimed, has experienced the highest per-capita number of asylum seekers in the world. After the results of the election were announced, Åkesson said: “Now work begins to make Sweden good again.” Sweden's Moderates, who sit with the EPP in the European Parliament, lost votes, perhaps because the group's leader, Ulf Kristersson, collaborated with the far right during the campaigning and the signs are that he may now collaborate with them in the Riksdag, Sweden's parliament, a possibility flagged up by Swedish Left party MEP Malin Björk, who has been critical of the Moderates for displaying a willingness to cooperate with extremists.



Ulf Kristersson on his way to speak at the Riksdag on 12 October 2022



Green MEP Ska Keller

Åkesson has said on Swedish radio that he finds it hard to choose between the policies of Emmanuel Macron and Vladimir Putin. It's an issue also raised by Green MEP Ska Keller. In a letter to Commission president Ursula von der Leyen she wrote: “what will it mean for the EU's climate policy to be dependent on climate deniers?” From the tone of the email there is genuine concern there. “What will it mean for the EU's policy on democracy and the rule of law,” she asks, “that the government of the country holding the EU presidency relies on a bunch of people who, on a straightforward question, cannot choose between Macron and Putin?”

Åkesson also doubts the reality of climate change, despite the mounting scientific evidence. I think it's probably fair to say that not too many voters in Western Europe would be unable to spot the differences between the policies of Macron and Putin so perhaps Åkesson was merely exaggerating to make a point. Putin is out on his own, seemingly wanting to rule the world. As it is, it's expected that the Moderates, Liberals and Christian Democrats will form enough of a loose alliance to run a government, albeit with the occasional collaboration of the far-right, who join them on certain issues, like immigration (of course), integration and the budget. The Moderates' willingness to collaborate with the SD is thought to have cost them votes. Add to this the departure from the EPP of its Hungarian membership: Hungarian



A captured Russian T-80BVM tank used by 93rd Mechanized Brigade of Ukrainian Army

prime minister Viktor Orbán led his ruling Fidesz party out of the EPP, albeit only just before the party was expelled anyway. The Fidesz decision followed a change in the rules of the EPP (overwhelmingly agreed) which would have allowed the suspension or expulsion of the party, a move Orbán described as “antidemocratic, unjust and unacceptable.” In other words anyone who doesn’t share Orbán’s far-right policies is not a democrat and may face discrimination and isolation. He sought to exclude anyone who didn’t share his extreme views, but the expulsion from the largest political caucus in the European Parliament has weakened Fidesz in terms of committee chairmanships and lobbying power. Orbán had accused the EPP of being antidemocratic, yet firmly believed his group could adopt any policies it wished, despite the disapproval of the much larger caucus. Others before him have tried similar tactics, but with only varying degrees of success.

Of course, Europe changed a lot when Putin decided to re-invent himself as Adolf Hitler, seizing neighbouring independent countries and calling them his own. As we all know, he hit on Ukraine and excused his brutal, unprovoked aggression by claiming that the independent country was run by Nazis and that the Ukrainian people must be set free. The first Russian soldiers who crossed the border were surprised to find that, despite what Putin had said about them being welcomed as ‘liberators’, they were in reality most

unwelcome, with little old ladies lying down in front of their military vehicles to force them to stop and to shout at them to keep them out. Politicians and the wider public are well aware that this will not be a short conflict, despite Ukrainian successes in resisting the Russians and driving them back. Furthermore, if Putin is ultimately defeated he will almost certainly ensure that his forces leave no infrastructure intact for the Ukrainians to enjoy or build upon.



Sergei Pugachev

ANYONE WANT A COW?

Putin is an extremely ruthless and brutal man. Take the case of Sergei Pugachev, at one time a powerful figure in Moscow’s corridors of power. He met with Catherine Belton, author of the terrifying but excellent book “Putin’s People” in

his Chelsea home in London, the day after he had sought the protection of the UK’s counter-terrorism service. His bodyguards had spotted what seemed to be bombs underneath his Rolls Royce and – significantly – also under the vehicle used to transport his children (aged 7, 5 and 3) to school. You’re never too young to escape Putin’s murderous barbarity, it seems. If you ever eat with him, be sure to use extra-large utensils. As the old saying goes, “Marry, he must have a long spoon that must eat with the Devil”.

That quote is from Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors*, although the phrase originally came from Geoffrey Chaucer’s 14th century *The Squire’s Tale*:

“It well behooves him take a lengthy spoon

Who eats with Devils,’ so I’ve heard folk say.”

And there can be no serious doubt that Putin qualifies as a devil in human form. Pugachev had used his skills to help Putin on his way to power, but that didn’t save him from being framed for a bank scam because it saved Putin from being held to account. It’s never safe to be a friend to Putin; he has no sense of loyalty and doesn’t appear to understand friendship. Or truth, for that matter, or honesty. Those now helping him in various ways must watch carefully to check if they still have his support. He is a most unreliable ally.

The EPP has described Putin’s invasion as an international crime which “dramatically altered the geopolitical reality of Europe”. The group wants to step up the pain being inflicted on Russia by increasing the sanctions that have already been applied. Holding a fake referendum at the barrel of a gun, then accusing the country being invaded on doing the invading because you’ve decided the land is now yours would be seen as an amusing joke, if anyone other than a psychopath like Putin was doing it. He is deadly serious; literally deadly serious.

The EPP also sees it as Europe’s duty to protect its borders against illegal immigration. It may seem an

odd thing to get excited about; it's a very different approach to that of Barack Obama, who said: "My fellow Americans, we are and always will be a nation of immigrants. We were strangers once, too." What a very civilised and understanding approach; if only more leading politicians thought that way... The former President of the United States clearly hoped to encourage a more welcoming attitude to those who had travelled some distance – and often at some expense and at considerable risk – in the hope of a better present day and a more promising future for themselves and their children.

However, in the United States – as well as here in Europe – many people get very cross at the idea of people from other countries trying to settle in their homeland, even though all of us had ancestors who came once in a very distant past from a long way away. But politicians must bow to popular belief if they're to succeed. That's one reason why the EPP likes to emphasize its work in preventing people from trying to emigrate to Europe in an unofficial manner.

On its website, the EPP stresses that it effectively protects Europe's external borders as a precondition to: "securing our citizens and the trust in our Union. It is also a precondition to ensure borderless travel within the Schengen area. This is why we will make sure that no one can enter European Union territory without the knowledge and explicit approval of our authorities." In case



Silvio Berlusconi, Giorgia Meloni, Matteo Salvini

that sounds a little harsh, there is an additional rider: "At the same time, we assume our Christian and humanitarian responsibility to help those in need and to improve living conditions in their home countries." It looks, at first glance, rather like trying to back a horse "both ways", as the betting fraternity would put it (it means you still get some winnings – albeit not as much – if the horse comes in second or third). Alternatively, an "on-the-nose" bet, betting that one horse will win, pays the most if it comes in first. Showing friendship and sympathy to newcomers doesn't count as anything other than a vague hope that they'll contribute to the workforce and thus eventually to

the wealth of everybody. That's not a concept that's likely to be expressed by the SD, perhaps.

PICK A SIDE, ANY SIDE...

Meanwhile, the EPP is under pressure to expel Silvio Berlusconi and his supposedly centre-right Forza Italia group over his apparent support for Giorgia Meloni, Italy's newly-elected Prime Minister and leader of the far right, although given the man's reputation for wiliness, he may have just opted to give the lead horse a push rather than fall out of the saddle altogether. Furthermore, he has a well-publicised weakness for attractive young women, which



President Barack Obama and Former Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk in 2011

could have influenced his attitude. In any case, Berlusconi has been supporting the idea of aiding Meloni's bid to run the government (as Italy's first female Prime Minister), much to the annoyance (and fear?) of other, more regular supporters of the EPP. Now some German MEPs have written to Manfred Weber, as head of the EPP, to expel Berlusconi and his party. They want nothing to do with Meloni, nor with her Brothers of Italy far-right party. Berlusconi has been photographed snuggling up to her, but it's something he's inclined to do with attractive women anyway, regardless of their politics.

Are we witnessing here the resurgence of the Far Right in European politics? Is it just a case of "out with the old, let's try something new"? Or are people really flirting once again with Fascism and Fascist ideas, just like people did back in the 1940s? Or is this just a case of slipping from the sublime to the ridiculous? After all, Muhoozi Kainerugaba, a Ugandan general and son of the country's President, the remarkably long-lasting Yoweri Museveni, has offered Meloni one hundred cows if she'll marry him. She should think very seriously about such an offer.



Lt Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba

I once interviewed Museveni for a long time in the beautiful gardens of the presidential palace and we got on very well. He seemed a most civilised man and very charming. I liked him. He came over to greet me when we almost bumped into each other inside the European Parliament in Strasbourg a few

weeks later and we had a pleasant and very informal chat. No cows were involved but I really liked Uganda and Museveni. Maybe I should retire there. Still, offering cows in return for a country's newly-elected leader may not have been the most diplomatic move to make. The cows in question are, according to Kainerugaba, of the Ankole breed, which are native to that part of Africa; Kainerugaba pointed out that "in our culture you give a girl a cow". Where I come from boys bought girls drinks, not cows. They didn't fit comfortably in a car or on a bus. Museveni has apologised online for his son's somewhat tactless approach, but maybe Meloni should think about it. Museveni has ruled Uganda, if not without occasional controversy, since January 1986. European leaders tend not to stay in power for as long. And Nkore cows are extremely handsome, with long, thick, curved horns. It would be interesting to take one for a walk through the streets of Rome. No mugger would dare come near you.

However, cows cannot form political parties and who can tell if they'd support the EPP, anyway? Would they be more likely to support the Greens? I'm inclined to think they'd demand access to grass and edible foliage. Cows at least provide an interesting distraction from the reality of the far right returning to power. It's a very long time since the Second World War, of course, and people either die or forget. Thirty years ago, there was widespread optimism as Europeans set aside their fears and embraced the notion of more open societies, with open markets, and a more united Europe. Surveys today suggest a growing fear among the public about people's political and economic realities. Do their political systems function normally? Research by the Pew Research Centre finds that most people living in the former Eastern Bloc approve the changes they've witnessed – but not always wholeheartedly. Many people still worry about the future, especially when it comes to equality and their political systems. For instance, ask people if they believe their elected officials care what they think, the results are, perhaps, surprisingly

negative. In France, for example, 76% believe they don't care what electors think. It's 48% in Poland, 68% in Italy, and a surprising 84% in Greece, while the doubters reach 58% in Russia and 80% in Ukraine, although the survey was conducted before Putin's invasion.



Viktor Orbán, PM of Hungary, during the EPP Summit in December 2012

A majority, at least, view EU membership as having been a good thing. By and large, views seem largely positive, but there's not much cause for jubilation.

It's almost certainly true to say that there is no system of governance that gets overwhelming approval. "Better than nothing" would seem to be the most common verdict. Asked what impact EU membership has had on their country's economy, an average approval rating reached just 56%, with lower figures for France (42%), Greece (35%), Bulgaria (25%) and – surprisingly – founder-member Italy, (just 22%). Whether this scepticism would lead to countries quitting the bloc or not, given such an option, is hard to judge. Britain did, of course, and there are no signs that the economy is booming as a result. Perhaps we should all just close our borders and order a herd of cattle from Muhoozi Kainerugaba. It may not bring much economic satisfaction, but at least we won't be short of milk.

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Hermann Stille: Joan of Arc in Battle (Central Part of "The Life of Joan of Arc" Triptych) Hermitage Museum

WOMEN AND POWER

How female politicians are rising to the top

If all men are born free," asked the English poet and early feminist Mary Astell in her 1706 book 'Some Reflections upon Marriage,' "how is it that all women are born slaves?" It's a fair and arguably overdue question. Partly, it's because of religion. Virtually all the major religions cast women in the rôle of homemaker, cook, cleaner, carer for children and elderly relatives and source of amusement for their male partners at bed-time. And, of course, only women can bear children, so if the "lord and master" wants descendants, the only way to achieve that is with the cooperation of a woman. Yes, the man can force himself on a woman and thus produce children but then the act is invariably violent and fuelled by simple lust, not by a desire to procreate. But why should women accept this subservient position in which they have been cast? Cast by men, of course. Yes, a lot of women believe that once they are married with children then they should stay at home and look after the family: an accident of evolution and biology means that they alone are best

suited to that task and many of them prefer it that way, as is their right. But not all.

Sex and gender do not mean the same thing. "The term sex indicates biological characteristics, and the

term gender indicates the socially constructed characteristics between masculinity and femininity," says an on-line study paper jointly written by Arjun Sekhar Pm of Kristu Jayanti College, and Parmeswari Jayeraman of Perigar University. "Gender



The Meeting between Cleopatra and Octavian after the Battle of Actium, 1787-1788, by Louis Gauffier (1761-1801)

includes the rules and norms,” they point out, “which exist in each culture about women and men.” However, whatever the rôle society sets for women, however many the constraints it tries to impose, there is nothing physical or mental that can prevent women from rising to the top and taking control.



Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Giorgia Meloni in 2019

There have been many examples throughout history. Joan of Arc, for instance, in the 15th century, who led the French forces to defeat England, only to be burned at the stake, allegedly in the name of religion. Long before her, Cleopatra was the last Pharaoh of Ptolemaic Egypt and famed for her brilliant mind. She is also famed for having affairs with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, although they were of less importance than her intelligence. You may not have heard of her (I hadn't) but Borte Ujin was the wife of Genghis Khan and empress of the Mongolian Empire, from 1161 to 1230. She ruled the huge empire for long periods – and very successfully – while her husband was away at war. He was away a lot. Engaging his neighbours in bloody battles was certainly more appealing to him than, say, a game of football. The list goes on and on. In more recent times, few in Britain would dispute the strength of Margaret Thatcher's Premiership, nor her determination. She wasn't nick-named 'the Iron Lady' for nothing.

Look around us today and female leaders are not so unusual, even if they're not yet “usual” enough. Ursula von der Leyen, for instance, is President of the European Commission. Giorgia Meloni has just become Italy's first female Prime Minister, as well as leading the country's first far-right government since Benito Mussolini. But at the same time, sex

discrimination continues. A United Nations Report in September 2022 draws our attention to increasing episodes of violence against women, especially those who are most vulnerable.

The 2022 Global Citizen Festival is part of a worldwide campaign calling on world leaders (male and female) to end extreme poverty straight away, including by making funding more easily available, by tackling climate destruction and by empowering women. More than 380-million women and girls are struggling to live on less than \$1.90 per day (€1.96 per day). Current research suggests that things are getting worse, too, with even more women and girls living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 than is the case today, while child marriage remains commonplace.



President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen

Claudine Uwamwiza is the Senior Investment Officer at the East African Development Bank. She talked about the problems facing poor African girls when she addressed a Brussels Soirée organised by Frank Schwalba-Hoth, a former MEP and founder of Germany's Green Party. Uwamwiza, originally from Rwanda, told of how she had fled her home country because of genocide, but she was one of the lucky ones: she got out. She told other guests how a lot of young girls get married at the age of 14 because they are so poor and it is the only way to gain enough money to finish school. Those who went to school at all were fortunate, she told her audience. Sometimes they were forced out of school because they had no money. “Some got married at 14 so they could continue their studies,” said Uwamwiza, “although it meant that

they had children themselves at an early age.” They don't get much help from the men, either, most of whom earn a living of sorts from fishing in Lake Tanganyika, the world's second oldest freshwater lake. But they had to follow the fish, so the teenage mothers were left alone to raise their children, with no nearby help while their men sought the shoals. Violence is still rife with no-one to turn to for help. Worldwide, one woman or girl is killed by a member of their own family every eleven minutes, while 130-million girls remain out of school, denied an education for political and gender-related reasons. One in three of the poorest girls aged from 10 to 18 have never attended classes of any sort while in rural areas 61% of girls do not attend secondary school.

Of course, that doesn't mean they've been idle. They've been looking after children for one thing. Globally, women worked 512-billion unpaid hours at childcare, as well as doing household chores. What it means, of course, is that for women affected that way there's no time left for education, even if it's available. No time for jobs, either, so no chance to earn money and escape all that drudgery. No money means no escape from food insecurity, for instance, which last year afflicted one in three women around the world. As for jobs, meanwhile, the UN estimates that to get rid of sexist and discriminatory laws will take another 286 years at the current rate of progress. Don't hold your breath. Just one in three managers or supervisors is female, and women hold only a little over 25% of parliamentary seats in all the various lower chambers. In 23 countries, the UK says, women hold fewer than 10% of the seats, with no signs of early change.



Silvana Koch-Mehrin

AFTER THE GLOOM, SOME CHEER?

It's a depressing catalogue of cruel discrimination. The so-called "morality police" of Iran, for instance, mainly target women, not men. But in some parts of the world, women seem to be gaining more public representation and greater political power. There is now, for instance, a group called Women Political Leaders (WPL). It defines its existence online like this: "WPL communities are women in political office – Presidents, Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliaments, Mayors. WPL strives in all its activities to demonstrate the impact of more

women in political leadership, for the global better. To accelerate, women need three things: communication, connection, community." What is more, their number are increasing while their determination is growing. "WPL is an independent, international, post-partisan and not-for-profit foundation based in Reykjavik, Iceland (the world champion of gender equality)," says the website. She is clearly a most formidable lady. Silvana Koch-Mehrin is the President and Founder of Women Political Leaders (WPL), the worldwide network of women Politicians. WPL is a foundation that aims to increase both the number and influence of women in political leadership.

Silvana served as Vice-President of the European Parliament (2009-2011) and Member of the European Parliament (2004-2014). Before her time in politics, she founded and ran a public affairs consultancy in Brussels, which later merged with a larger US firm. In addition to her work for WPL, she also serves on the board of the Council of Women World Leaders and is a member of the European Leadership Network (ELN) and a number of other mainly politically neutral organisations that seek to empower the partially (at least) disenfranchised. In 2018 and 2019, she was ranked as one of the 100 most influential persons in gender equality by the organisation, known as 'Apolitical'. She is a Young Global Leader of the Alumni of the World Economic Forum. She lives in Brussels, Belgium with her three children and their Irish father. Encouraging, but it doesn't go far enough, according to the United Nations. "Women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030," says the UN's website. "However, data show that women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making worldwide, and that achieving gender parity in political life is far off." There are signs of progress, but not as much as there should be and it's slow, the website points out. "Women are underrepresented as voters, as well as in leading positions, whether in elected office, the civil service, the private sector or academia. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally in democratic governance."

Women face several obstacles to playing a full part in political life. There are structural barriers, such as discriminatory laws, while various institutions still limit women's possibilities to run for office. "Capacity gaps mean women are less likely than men to have the education, contacts and resources needed to become effective leaders", the site admits. The 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation notes: "Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender

Our time, our right:
**WE WANT
EQUAL LEADERSHIP!**

SEATS IN PARLIAMENTS: $\frac{1}{4}$ HELD BY WOMEN, $\frac{3}{4}$ BY MEN

<p>WHAT DO WE HAVE?</p> <p>More women in political office but not nearly enough, woefully inadequate funding for gender equality, shrinking civic space, attacks on women in politics.</p>	<p>WHAT DO WE WANT!</p> <p>Effectively use temporary special measures to bring more women into politics; sanction political parties that do not comply. Significantly scale up resources for gender equality action plans and scrutinize public budgeting so that all investments work for gender equality. Empower women's rights organizations to demand that decision-makers act on their commitments.</p>
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GENERATION EQUALITY

When she won election in 2015 in her municipality in Guatemala, Irlanda Pop became the only indigenous mayor and 1 of only 10 women mayors. Local people were surprised when she ran for office, predicting she would not win. She beat the odds by promising real changes in people's lives, such as new water services.
Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

UN WOMEN

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stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women.” Individual women have overcome these obstacles with great acclaim, of course, and often to the benefit of wider society. But for women as a whole, the playing field needs to be level, opening opportunities for all.

One depressing thing to note is that the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women was agreed and signed in New York in December 1979. That’s 43 years ago as I sit here at my laptop writing today, and I still don’t see a revolution taking place. The Convention itself was the culmination of a lot of work which was launched by the Commission on the Status of Women, beginning its work in 1946. That was before I was born and I’m an old man.

Projects aimed at levelling the playing field so that women, like men, can score goals, seem to take an eternity to come to fruition, if they ever do. The UN points out that: “The Commission’s work has been instrumental in bringing to light all the areas in which women are denied equality with men.” I’m sure that’s a comfort of sorts, but it doesn’t really change anything. “These efforts for

the advancement of women have resulted in several declarations and conventions, of which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is the central and most comprehensive document.” In the great ‘Battle of the Sexes, it’s what Jonathon Swift referred to in 1692 as “The artillery of words.” It’s like the old saying: “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” They can, of course, but not in any way likely to require medical attention, let alone surgery.

Sometimes the UN comes across as rather self-congratulatory and pleased with itself. Yes, it has talked about women’s rights and equality with men for many, many years, but that’s all it’s done: talk. In many instances, women are still denied the rights that are automatically conferred on men. Take, for instance, this example: “The legal status of women receives the broadest attention. Concern over the basic rights of political participation has not diminished since the adoption of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1952. Its provisions, therefore, are restated in article 7 of the present document, whereby women are guaranteed the rights to vote, to hold public office and to exercise public functions.” A reference back to 1952, when yet more words were exchanged and agreed. “But for your words, they rob the Hybla bees and leave them honeyless,” says Cassius in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar. “Not stingless, too?” Antony replies. “O yes, and soundless too, says Cassius, “For you have stol’n their buzzing, Antony, and very wisely threat before you sting.” In gender politics, it seems, there is no stinging at all, but no end of words.

As of 19 September, 2022, there were 28 countries where 30 women serve as Heads of State or Government, according to the UN Women website, which further points out that at the current rate of progress, we should reach gender parity in terms of power in around 130 years from now. Only thirteen countries have a female head of state (that’s probably fourteen with the election of Giorgia Meloni).



The National Association Opposed to Women Suffrage (NAOWS) was founded in the United States by women opposed to the suffrage movement in 1911. It was the most popular anti-suffrage organization in northeastern cities



Women Heads of State and Government on stage on September 22, together with the President of the General Assembly and his predecessor, for a meeting on the sidelines of UNGA77, part of the newly established Platform of Women Leaders

21% of government ministers in Europe were women, while of ministerial portfolios the five most commonly held by women were employment, labour, vocational training, women's affairs and (somewhat ironically) gender equality. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF): "instilling gender parity across education, health, politics and across all forms of economic participation will be critical." That's probably what they thought back in 1946 and 1952, so the situation demands constant monitoring, which is what the WEF does. "This year's report highlights the growing urgency for action. Without the equal inclusion of half of the world's talent, we will not be able to deliver on the promise of the Fourth Industrial Revolution for all of society, grow our economies for greater shared prosperity or achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals."

Yes, things have improved and continue to do so, but nothing like fast enough, according to the WEF: "It is forecast to take just 12 years to attain gender parity in education, and in fact, overall, gender parity has been fully achieved in 40 of the 153 countries ranked. Drilling down into the facts and figures, it will take 95 years to close the gender gap in political representation, with women in 2019 holding 25.2% of parliamentary (lower-house) seats and 21.2% of ministerial positions." But there have been triumphs and it would be wrong to downplay them. According to the website 'Emily's List' women have long been 'the power behind the throne'; the difference today is that they're stepping out of the shadows to claim credit for what they've long been doing behind the scenes. According to the Forbes website, "While only

5 percent of nations are currently helmed by a woman, the top four spots on Forbes' 2019 list of Most Powerful Women all went to female political leaders, highlighting the outsize influence they command on the world stage. Collectively, these women oversee \$54-trillion (€55.35-trillion) in GDP and more than 3.5 billion people."

On Forbes' 2021 list of the world's most powerful women, not all the names will be familiar. The philanthropist Mackenzie Scott, for instance, or how about Samia Suluhu Hassan, the President of Tanzania, or Kamala Harris, the Vice-President of the United States? Angela Merkel headed the European list as Chancellor of Germany from 2005 until she stepped down at the end of her term of office in 2021. Christine Lagarde, as head of the European Central Bank, blamed "male group-think" for some of our financial problems in what is very much a male-dominated industry. She wants gender reform and, as a French politician and lawyer, may be in a good position to achieve it. Tsai Ing-wen became Taiwan's first female leader when she was elected in 2016 and she has caused fear and trepidation in mainland China by making overtures to Washington. In 2021 Rosalind Brewer was appointed CEO of Walgreens Boots Alliance, the only black woman to take the helm of an S&P 500 company, thus overcoming two different kinds of prejudice.



President Samia Suluhu of the United Republic of Tanzania, one of the few female heads of State from Africa addressing the UN General Assembly in New York in 2021



Magdalena Andersson is elected Sweden's first female Prime Minister on November 24, 2021



Mette Frederiksen Prime Minister of Denmark

Closer to home, Magdalena Andersson is Prime Minister of Sweden and leader of the Social Democratic Party. Mette Frederiksen has been Prime Minister of Denmark since June 2019, the second woman to hold the post and also the youngest Prime Minister in Danish history. Natalia Gavrilita is a Moldovan economist and has been Prime Minister of Moldova since 2021. Kristalina Georgieva is a Bulgarian economist and she was Chief Executive of the World Bank Group from 2017 to 2019, going on to serve as Acting President of the World Bank Group for a few months in 2019.



Katrin Jakobsdóttir has been Prime Minister of Iceland



Moldovan Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita

Ingrida Simonyte is a Lithuanian economist who has served as her country's Prime Minister since December 2020. Katrin Jakobsdóttir has been Prime Minister of Iceland since 2017 and in 2020 was named Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders. The list goes on and on, albeit not quite as far as true equality would suggest as appropriate, not only in the field of politics, but also in science and technology, among other things. Even Margaret Thatcher was a chemist who then studied law before turning to politics.

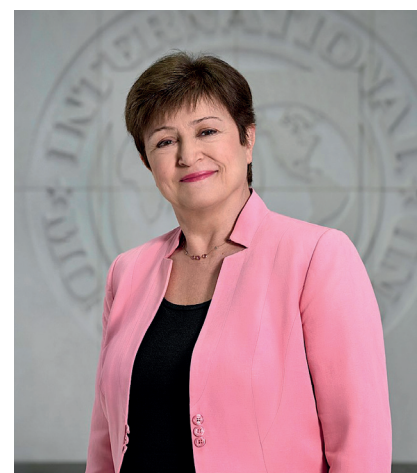
Of course, there are men around the world who try to prevent women from rising to prominence, presumably out of a fear of being overtaken in their own climbs to the top. Women have proved themselves to be every bit as capable as their male colleagues. Even every bit as ruthless on occasions. Politics, though, has tended to be something of a "gentleman's club", with few or no provisions for women. But without a fairer system, the human race is denying itself the very skills held most usefully by the distaff side of society. And there have been a great many female scientists, for instance, such as Marie Curie, discoverer of radium and polonium, whose books and papers are still so radioactive that they are kept stored in lead-lined boxes and anyone requiring access to them has to wear protective clothing. There have been female astronauts, too, like Valentina Tereshkova, who has a crater named after her on the moon.

There's nothing new about women studying the sciences. In Athens in the 4th century BCE, Agnodike trained herself to become a physician or midwife, even though it was

supposedly against the law at the time for a woman to be a scientist or doctor. History doesn't really tell us why. Her story was told by Roman writer Gaius Julius Hyginus in his *Fabulae*, and she may not have existed other than as an illustration that women could do such work and should be allowed to, even if she had to disguise herself as a man to do it. It all ended happily in Hyginus' story with the law being changed, although, as I mentioned, Agnodike was probably fictional, not real.



Christine Lagarde



IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva



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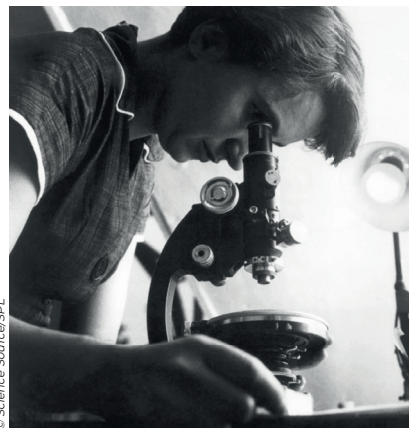
Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova, member of the Russian State Duma, and former Soviet cosmonaut. She is known for being the first and youngest woman in space



The Women of Influence website conducted a survey to see what are the principle obstacles to women advancing. 42% of the respondents cited a “lack of mentor or sponsor”, suggesting that there are not enough women in prominent positions to encourage others to progress. Others included the difficulty of maintaining a work/life balance and also the fact that a suitable professional network is simply missing. “What women feel they lack the most,” the survey reported, “are meaningful connections with senior leaders who can not only help guide their careers with advice, but also advocate on their behalf.” Other research has suggested that many women – perhaps most – imagine that if they show themselves to be extra competent and able it will automatically lead to promotion. Sadly, that’s not the case. Women need to work strategically. As Forbes puts it: “They should always be asking, ‘Is what I am doing contributing to organizational impact?’ And need to look for ways to benefit both their company and its various markets. By keeping an eye on the outcome of their activities — not just on the activities themselves — women can thereby increase their corporate effectiveness.” They have to overcome favouritism, too, with men most often being the favourites of their mainly male bosses.

Very often, women are not given the recognition they deserve for their achievements. For example, female scientists were sometimes told to give their discoveries to male colleagues to announce, because – they were told – nobody would believe something “discovered by a woman”. It’s just about stupid enough to be true. Given such

obstacles to progress and recognition, it’s amazing that women have, even so, succeeded in their chosen field of endeavour. As the British Medical Journal (BMJ) mentioned in an article, back in the 1900s, it was Jocelyn Bell Burnell’s male boss who was awarded the Nobel Prize for proving that pulsars exist.



© Science Source/SPL

Rosalind Franklin, whose work was central to the understanding of the molecular structures of DNA, RNA, viruses, coal, and graphite

Rosalind Franklin died before she could contest the 1962 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, which went – famously – to James Watson, Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins, even though it was Franklin’s x-ray crystallography – used without her consent – that allowed them to decipher the double-helix of DNA. In fact, there have been many famous women scientists. Marie Curie won two Nobel Prizes for discovering Polonium and Radium; her daughter Irene, working with her husband, discovered artificial radioactivity, winning a Nobel Prize of her own. Emmy Noether developed

the theory that became the foundation of quantum physics, thus helping Einstein to formulate the General Theory of relativity.



© NFI

Marie Curie

Ruzena Bajcsy conducted ground-breaking research into robotics and artificial intelligence. Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin discovered that the sun and stars are mainly composed of hydrogen and helium. Rosalind Franklin, after taking x-ray photographs of crystallized DNA, discovered that it takes the form of a double helix. The list goes on and on. If you want a bit of glamour, Hollywood film star Hedy Lamarr was an accomplished inventor, working with George Antheil during World War II, to develop a radio guidance system for Allied torpedoes that could not be tracked nor jammed. The principles of their work can be found in Bluetooth technology and Wi-Fi. It may be harder to find their names among those credited with the discovery; they weren’t men, after all.

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Dr. Katarina Barley, 4th Vice-President of the European Parliament

LISTENING TO THE CRIES FOR JUSTICE

A German politician is sworn in to uphold the rule of laws

When Ur-Namma seized power in the Mesopotamian city of Ur, in 2112 BCE, he set aside the brutality and cruel despotism of his predecessors. According to the opening chapter of Fernanda Pirie's superb book, *The Rule of Laws* (which I heartily recommend anyone who has ever had an interest in governance and fairness), he declared: "I did not deliver the orphan to the rich. I did not deliver the widow to the mighty. I did not deliver the man with only one shekel to the man with one *mina* (sixty shekels). I did not deliver the man with only one sheep to the man with one ox...I eliminated enmity, violence, and cries for justice." Ur-Namma even got his scribes to write out his claims on clay tablets and he also drew up a set of rules for himself to follow. Pirie who is professor of the anthropology of law at the University of Oxford writes that they are "the earliest laws that archaeologists have discovered anywhere in the world." We should all be thankful to Ur-Namma,

a man who put fair governance and proper order above greed and self-enrichment. Living, as he did, more than 4,000 years ago, that makes him a very unusual figure in world history, if little known today. We ought to know him better. Why isn't there a statue of him somewhere?

Today's world often seems cruel and unfair: the richest and most ruthless tend to get to the top of the pecking order, while gentleness and kindness get overlooked. Pirie writes that Ur-Namma's rules form "the origins of a legal tradition that developed over the next two thousand years, serving as examples for lawmakers in very different lands as they pursued very different visions of order." Ur-Namma sounds like a thoroughly decent chap; the sort you could invite round for tea to meet your mother and with whom you could enjoy a slice of cake or two.

It seems likely that Ur-Namma would have got along quite well with Dr.

Katarina Barley, 4th Vice-President of the European Parliament. "I'm a lawyer by passion," she told journalist Andreas Rogal for his article about her in the *Parliament Magazine*. The rule of law is central to her world view; she dislikes seeing the way some member states are engaged in seeming to dismantle public institutions and undermine the principle of an independent judiciary. The plain fact is that to enjoy the benefits of membership of any club, whether it's political, sporting, literary or whatever, it is necessary to abide by the rules. Within the EU, however, there are invariably some countries that don't like the idea of listening to critical views from a different polity that is happy (fairly) to accept the "downside" (if it is one) of obedience to a set of rules or principles you've happily signed up to in order to enjoy the various benefits of belonging. There is that old saying in English: "there's no such thing as a free lunch". Everything carries a price; all you have to decide is whether or not it's one worth paying.

Currently, it's Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki who is defying the EU. He sees compliance with the Union's long-established rules as, effectively, "kow-towing" to the Brussels bureaucrats. This particular problem is really a continuation of a long-running and hoary old disagreement over who holds the reins of power and how tightly. What lies behind it are various principles of democracy, such as the independence of the courts, a free press (media freedom), women's rights, attitudes towards and the rights of migrants and the rights of people who identify as being LGBTQ. These are the sorts of issues with which, I think, Ur-Namma would have had no problems. Neither would Katarina Barley. As it is, Poland's 'go-it-alone' attitude to the law has most certainly set Warsaw up in direct opposition to Brussels, denying that EU law overtops Polish law, even if that's what it says in the Treaties. Poland's Constitutional Court has accused the EU institutions of acting outside their remit and overstepping their own rules. It would seem that Poland alone holds such a view. Poland has the support of Hungary, of course. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is no lover of Brussels, although the massive pro-EU demonstrations held in Poland would tend to suggest that 'Polexit', if it ever happens, won't happen very soon, especially because most Poles support membership. A poll of Poles suggests that 88% of them want their country to remain a member. Orbán clearly has a lot of propagandizing to do.



Mateusz Morawiecki during a demonstration of solidarity with Ukraine



Dutch prime minister, Mark Rutte

WARNINGS AND EMPTY GESTURES

The leaders of France and Ireland have urged Poland to get back into line, while Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has issued oblique warnings that it may be hard for the EU to agree funding for Warsaw's pet projects if the anti-Brussels rhetoric continues. He also urged other member states to be tough over it. Perhaps the problem - at least partially - is that today's leaders are too young to remember the savage rule of the Third Reich and the countless millions who died, or else think it would be much better this time around because "they" would be in charge, instead of a bunch of uniformed Nazis wearing swastikas. Rutte would seem to have the undoubted support of Katarina Barley. She has issued an ultimatum to Poland, warning that it could be blocked from receiving any further EU funds, including money from the Covid rescue package, if Warsaw really moves away from EU legislation. The furious outburst, echoed by leading political figures across Brussels, came after Poland's Constitutional Tribunal ruled that parts of EU law are incompatible with the Polish constitution.

Which rather begs the question: in that case, how did Poland join the EU in the first place? And why? Barley warned that: "The Polish government has its constitutional court, which is occupied by political forces, who certify that it will no longer have to comply with European law in the future." Most Poles like their country being in the EU, so much of the rhetoric and posturing by their political leaders would appear to be gamesmanship, rather than policy. The Constitutional Court's decision, however, creates a huge dilemma: the country cannot comply with both courts simultaneously. The court's decision, according to Barley, "forces the [European] Commission to really take concrete action, and this action has to be and will be financial action because there are measures in place that the Commission can take now." It seems so obvious that it will be impossible to prioritise EU judgements AND those of Polish courts, where they disagree, at least in the conventional three-dimensional universe we all inhabit. Perhaps Morawiecki has found a way to cross the space-time divide and travel in two (or more) directions at once: a Dr. Who of politics.



Katarina Barley

Katarina Barley told the news service Deutsche Welle that the EU is all in favour of the Polish people, but added that it may become necessary "for us to take a stance towards their government," following the court's ruling. It's strange that in all the time since Poland joined on 1 May 2004, nobody has hitherto noticed that it shouldn't have done. Only now has the country's Constitutional Court

noticed that EU laws and Polish laws are not compatible. The Constitutional Court's decision has been published in the official gazette, making it legally binding. It would seem, then, that Poland wants to stay in the EU but not abide by its rules. It's a bit like joining, say, a golf club, then insisting on playing rugby on the greens.

TAKING TURNS AND BEING FAIR

Barley is a firm believer in caution; she is not in favour of impetuous actions without full consideration being given to the various factors. Few things are decided well on the spur of the moment. For instance, the EU is considering letting Ukraine become a candidate for EU membership, but Barley has urged caution. "I'm pretty sure that all EU member states are willing to smooth the way for Ukraine to join the EU," she told *Der Spiegel*. She pointed out that different member states have different ideas about the time scale. Of course, it would be wrong to admit a new country into the club just to annoy Vladimir Putin. That would be dangerously rash. Even so, "Candidate status," Barley told *Der Spiegel*, "would be an important signal to Moscow that the EU will not be intimidated when it comes to defending our values." She did add a cautious rider, however, that the associated requirements should not be interpreted too loosely. Barley has made it plain that this is not because Ukraine requires extra care; far from it. "This is also important with a view to other accession candidates, some of whom have been waiting for



Former European Parliament President, David Sassoli

years for their procedures to move forward." In other words, there must be no queue-jumping. "We owe them equal treatment," she said. But it's not just fairness that makes her cautious. "There must be no hasty accession," Barley told the *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*. "Once you are in the EU, you cannot be excluded."

That will probably be seen as reassuring in Poland, but only if the Polish courts start obeying EU rules, something they seem unlikely to do. Barley reminded readers that: "It is all the more important that the criteria laid down for accession, such as institutional stability, a functioning market economy and the rule of law, are fully met." The European Commission has already recommended granting Ukraine the status of "EU Accession Candidate". However, we shouldn't forget the old saying in English:

"There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip", especially while Putin is trying to jog your arm.

Strangely, Putin has raised no objection to Ukraine joining the EU. The Russian President told TRT World: "We have nothing against it. It is not a military bloc. It's the right of any country to join economic unions". This was Putin's response when asked about Ukraine's chances of being accepted for membership. The EU doesn't worry him, it's NATO that does. He has claimed that it was the fear of Ukraine becoming a member that led to his "special military operation" (which everyone else calls an invasion). Dmitri Medvedev, who has come up with some bizarre comments, such as that Joe Biden is a "strange grandfather with dementia", that the EU leaders are "lunatics" and that Russia will ensure that Ukraine "disappears from the map" in the near future, was once Russia's president and is now its prime minister, and he claims Russia had no choice but to invade Ukraine; it was the right decision, he says. "It was very hard to make it, but it was forced and necessary. It was a decision by a sovereign country that has an unconditional right, based on the U.N. Charter, to defend its security," he added. How Russia's security was threatened is not clear. Medvedev regularly repeats the lie that Ukraine isn't really a country at all. Putin repeated the claim to US President George W. Bush at the 2008 NATO summit, but as the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic it came into being in 1922 – exactly a century ago. In 1932, Joseph Stalin imposed a deliberate



Russian President Vladimir Putin and French President Emmanuel Macron

famine on the country, killing some three million Ukrainians in one year. It was so bad that some Ukrainians even welcomed the Nazi occupation as a way to challenge Moscow's control. Bad idea: the Nazis murdered more than 1.5-million Jews, while millions of non-Jewish Ukrainians were forced to do hard labour for the Nazis. One way or another, Ukraine always seems to get cards dealt from the bottom of the deck, and almost invariably bad ones.



German MEP, Nicolaus Fest

The European Parliament is not short of people who see hatred as a useful political tool. When the European Parliament President, David Sassoli died in January, 2022 from a serious complication related to his immune system, a far-right German MEP, Nicolaus Fest of the *Alternativ für Deutschland* party, Tweeted “finally, that filthy pig has gone”. It was the sort of hate speech that the *AfD* is known for, but although Fest has expressed regret that his Tweet was leaked, he has not apologised, nor shown any sign of regret. Sassoli never permitted hate speech in the Parliament, which may be why it was targeted at him when he died. The *AfD* leader, Jörg Meuthen, has expressed his regret at the comments but Fest seems unrepentant. Other MEPs have been swift to pay their respects for Sassoli, including, of course, Katarina Barley. Katarina Barley, vice president of the Parliament and a member of the German Social Democrats, told *ARD* Fest's comments were “characteristic of their author and of that contempt for humanity against which Sassoli has always stood resolutely.” She told *POLITICO*: “One of the many reasons why David Sassoli

was respected across party lines was that he did not tolerate hate speech in the European Parliament. Mr. Fest's statement is despicable and an example of the hatred and indecency that David always stood firmly against. The fact that Mr. Fest refuses to apologize for his indecent remarks speaks for itself.” It's an unusually fierce comment from the normally cautious Barley, not given much to hyperbole.

FOLLOWING WHAT'S RIGHT (FAR RIGHT, THAT IS)

If it was the aim of the far-right parties in Europe to disrupt normal proceedings and, if possible, damage or even dismantle moves towards European unity, they would appear to be winning, at least on one level. It's only necessary for one of the more extreme politicians of Poland or Hungary to utter some comment to the media and there are immediate headlines: “Is the EU getting soft?” or “EU caves in” or “Far right wins again”. Of course, many of the newspaper printing these stories are, at the very least, far right sympathisers. Their reactions to signs that Brussels is, at least, putting up with these things come as no surprise. The row with Warsaw over whose laws are the most important is inevitable.

The influential Dutch politics professor, Cas Mudde, argues in his book, *The Far Right Today*, that the movement he studies is set apart from the more common area of right-wing thinking by being “anti-system” and, to a large extent, “hostile to liberal democracy”. He further divides the far right into two parts: the “extreme right”, which rejects the essence of democracy (such as popular sovereignty and majority rule), and the “radical right”, which accepts the democratic system but “is opposed to fundamental elements of liberal democracy, such as minority rights, the rule of law and the separation of powers”. Under his “extreme right” heading, you'll find Germany's Nazis and Italy's Fascists from the 1930s, along with the more modern movements like the alt-right in the US, or the Identitarian movement in Europe. Telling them apart is never simple and, some would argue, is also fairly pointless. As it is, von der

Leyen stands accused of giving in to what amounts to blackmail. Doing that means abandoning “European-ness”, which Barley would never have done, nor approved of seeing done in her name. “There are three main reasons,” Barley told a television interviewer. “One is a personal one, that I am really a European from head to toe. My whole family is European, where I live is at the border of four European countries, and my whole life has been European. The second one is that, of course, now is the time where a lot of decisions are being taken in Europe, a lot of decisions that really will determine how this Europe will develop, where we're going to go and what kind of Europe we want, and it's the place to be at the moment.



Dutch politics professor, Cas Mudde

The third reason is my political party, which I wanted to support. We're having a hard time at the moment in Germany and I wanted to do my share to help.” There's no room in Barley's world for political compromise, no ‘half-way house’. If one is to hear those cries for justice wherever you are, you must listen hard and shut your ears to the white noise of unimportant (but noisy) political squabbling. Being truly European is very important.

Katarina Barley, in her rôle as Vice President of the European Parliament, is on record as having called for the removal of Hungary's right to vote in the EU because of the frequent threats of extortion by the Orbán government. In an interview with *MDR Aktuell*, in *n-tv.de*, Barley pointed out that Hungary was abusing the principle of unanimous consent that is commonly used in the European Union. Barley

believes that because of its frequent violations of the rule of law, Hungary's right to vote can in principle be suspended. She said it is no longer possible to talk about "democratic and constitutional conditions" now that the country has gradually fallen into the hands of Viktor Orbán.

Quoted in the publication 'Hungarian Politics', Barley noted that "the principle of unanimous consent was adopted when the European Union had only six members, but has become unwieldy for 27 Member States. The problem is that the principle of unanimity can only be resolved through unanimous consent," she said. The Orbán government recently drew yet more negative attention for repeatedly threatening to veto the sanctions package containing an oil embargo on Russia if the name of Moscow's Patriarch Kirill, an ardent Putin supporter (whose claims to being a Christian are at best dubious), is not removed from a list of people facing sanctions.

It was. Barley is not alone in her concerns that EU leaders tend to give in to Hungary and Poland, however outrageous their demands. In this case, Orbán alleged that targeting the acquisitive patriarch amounted to religious persecution, even though, to outsiders, Kirill seems to display no sign of religion at all. It's even alleged that he served in the KGB and has been involved in drug and sex trafficking. Not very holy, if true.

There is also deep concern about Poland's law courts, which Barley claimed were mere puppets of the Law and Justice Party, which appears to want to enjoy all the benefits of EU membership but without abiding by

any of its rules. Barley has described it as "shameful" that Viktor Orbán is demanding billions of euros to prop up his government and, if he does not receive it, he will refuse to vote to stop Russian oil imports. Barley has proposed that the EU launches a boycott without Hungary which of course is far from optimal, but "Orbán wants a lot of money, and the EU cannot let itself be led," Barley said. She considered that what the Hungarian leadership is "producing" is "just a taste of what is expected of Budapest, and not only in relation to Russia." After being re-elected by a large majority, "Orbán will sprinkle sand into the machine even more often," Barley stressed, adding that "the responsibility for the blockade lies solely with the Head of Government, because the Czechs, Slovaks and Bulgarians are also in a difficult situation, but they are trying to find an acceptable solution. In contrast, Hungary is exploiting the situation for political purposes and is trying to squeeze more money out of Brussels."

IN GOD, WE MAKE EXCUSES

Barley has other fears about developments in Germany: a rise in anti-Semitism, for instance. This follows an attack in Berlin on a young man, wearing a kippah the traditional Jewish skullcap of Jewish men. A man wielding belts rushed at him, yelling "Jew" in Arabic and trying to strike him. Barley swiftly condemned the attack, which follows an increasingly common pattern. According to Germany's commissioner for anti-Semitism, German police register around 1,500 anti-Semitic attacks each year, not dissimilar to this one. In this case, the perpetrator was

caught and arrested. He was Syrian. But the police say there are two or three such incidents every day and it would be wrong to point the finger of blame at one particular such incident or the nationality of its perpetrator. It's thought that the breaking of a window at a synagogue in Hanover in the middle of an act of worship for the holy day of Yom Kippur may have been an anti-Semitic attack, too.



Dr. Katarina Barley and Olaf Scholz in 2019

In response to the kippah attack, Berlin's Jewish community is planning a "Berlin wears a kippah" campaign, calling on people of any faith or none to wear the prescribed head covering in a display of solidarity. The upsurge in anti-Semitic attacks is just one more problem for Katarina Barley to wrestle with. Ask a perpetrator what exactly it is about the Jewish faith that they oppose, you'd be lucky to get an answer at all. "We have to admit that anti-Semitism is becoming socially acceptable again," Barley told the Funke Media Group. "It's our job to work against this development." Barley told the Handelsblatt newspaper that the increase in anti-Semitic crimes was "shameful for our country". She said it's important that those who promote anti-Semitism – or any racist activity – will be dealt with severely by the law. Hers is an all-embracing Germany, not one that picks and chooses who will be welcome and who will not. If they do feel hostile towards incomers or those of different faiths, they will have Katarina Barley to deal with. Whatever kind of religious hatred may be in the rise, at least we can be sure that Barley is on the side of the angels.

Martin Gardiner

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Vladimir Putin with PM Viktor Orbán on a visit to Hungary in February 2015

How to avoid MOBILE SIM SWAPPING?



WHAT IS A SIM SWAPPING ATTACK?

In a SIM swapping attack, an attacker takes over your mobile phone number by asking the mobile telecom provider to link your number to a SIM card under the attacker's control.



1 Collect victim's personal data
Via phishing, data breaches, social media searches, malware



2



2 Carry out the fraudulent SIM swap
In-store, contacting company's representative over the phone or online through the provider's app or portal



3



3 Exploit the swapped SIM
The fraudster receives calls or messages addressed to the legitimate user to make bank transactions and accessing email accounts, sites and social media

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS?

- **Before the attack:** You receive strange phone calls asking you to share codes or SMS messages that you have received from your mobile telecom provider.
- **During the attack:** Your phone loses network connection for a longer period, and you are not able to make or receive phone calls.
- **After the attack:** You may see suspicious transactions in your banking accounts, or lose access to your social media or email accounts, or see other activity you do not recognize.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A VICTIM?

If you experience any of the above signs, contact your telecom provider as soon as possible.

If it confirms the SIM swap, immediately contact your bank and change the passwords to your online accounts. Furthermore, report the fraudulent activity to the police.

HOW TO PREVENT THE ATTACK?

- Avoid providing any personal information to someone pretending to be representative of the telecom provider.
- Never communicate, over the phone, the one-time passwords you receive from your mobile operator.
- Choose app-based 2-factor authentication, instead of two-factor via mobile phone or SMS.
- Be cautious with the personal information that you share on websites and social media.
- Do not open suspicious hyperlinks or attachments received through email or SMS





© Wikimedia/Martin Mycielski

The Brussels Palace of Justice

A PALACE FOR JUSTICE

A never-ending Belgian story

“If something is serious, it must be old. If it is old... it must be serious”.

With these words, Jef van Hout began his guided tour, during which he introduced me to one of Brussels' most important buildings, the Palace of Justice

The Korei guide - Korei Guided Tours has been shedding light on Brussels architecture, urbanism, visual arts and history for more than 20 years with guided tours, walking tours and unique interior visits - is very fond of the building and speaks passionately about its history and present. And this building really deserves it, because it is impressive from the very first step.

The Palace of Justice is located on Place Poelaert in the Marolles/Marollen district in the southern part of Brussels.

This building, which was the largest in the world at the time of its

construction and remains the largest courthouse in the world today, has captivated many, but has also caused much controversy. Its history begins in the 1800s. The idea of building a



Joseph Poelaert

large palace of justice arose during the time of the first King of the Belgians, Leopold I.

On the initiative of the Minister of Justice Victor Tesch, an international architectural competition was therefore announced in March 1860. After several failed proposals, the Brussels chief architect of the time, Joseph Poelaert, was commissioned in 1861 to draw up the designs for the new building. He was probably chosen because of his reputation, as he had already designed some wonderful buildings in the city, such as St Catherine's Church, and coordinated the restoration of the Royal Theatre La Monnaie.

In April 1862, Joseph Poelaert submitted a first design for the building, which was approved. Together with a team of architects including Charles Laisné and Édouard Corroyer, he then undertook the final work.



The Palace of Justice en 1890

The project was intended to be grand and impressive, and so Poelaert originally chose a classical Greco-Roman style, but with many influences from other styles. The end result is an eclectic style, original and unique.

However, from the first plans to the final form, the building underwent numerous changes, made by the chief architect himself, as he wanted a monumental building and a reference throughout the world. This is one of the reasons why the construction site almost doubled

in size from start to finish and also why the total construction costs of the building were completely underestimated in the beginning. The final figures (today around 450 million euros) were more than ten times higher than the original estimates. This inevitably led to fierce discontent and protests at the time.

Another important reason for the general dissatisfaction with this impressive building was the fact that an entire city quarter was razed to the ground to make room for it. More than 600 houses were demolished and the residents were forced to move to other parts of the city, sometimes to much smaller and cramped dwellings. The building site for the Palace of Justice was not chosen at random, however. The impressive building is located on the top of a hill from which there is a breathtaking view of the city and which gives the impression that justice is above all else. It is also symbolically located on one of three hills, as Mr Van Hout suggests, one for Justice, one for the Royal Palace and one for the Parliament building, representing the three main pillars of the Belgian state.

Built on the 'Mont des Potences' (Gallows Hill), where convicts were executed in the Middle Ages and where, according to legend, in the 16th century the famous physician Vesalius stole corpses at night to study the human body, the building

was destined to become a symbol and impress everyone who enters it.

The architect himself lived nearby, so perhaps it wouldn't be fair to accuse him of not caring about the fate of the neighbourhood he destroyed to complete his work.

Construction officially began on 31 October 1866 under the direct supervision of the engineer François Wellens, who was Inspector General of the Ministry of Public Works and President of the Royal Monuments Commission between 1865 and 1897.

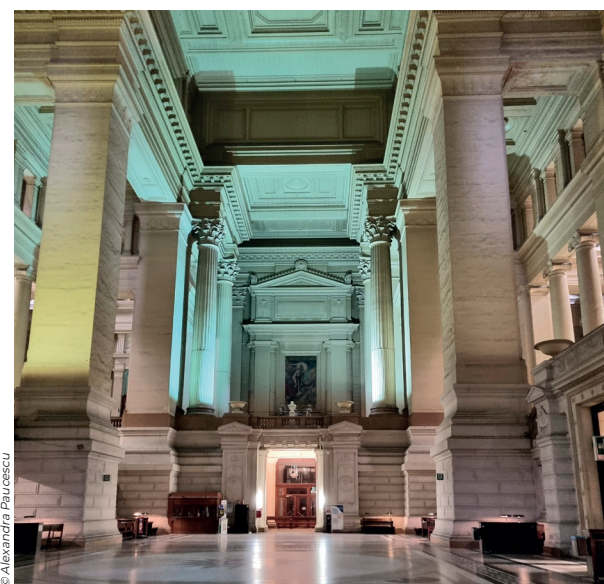
Unfortunately, Poelaert didn't live to see the completion of his masterpiece, nor did the king who'd begun the project. After Poelaert's death on 3 November 1879, the building was taken over by the architect Joseph Joachim Benoît.

The building was inaugurated personally by King Leopold II in October 1883 after 17 years of hard work.

With a floor area of 26,006 square metres and 250 rooms, it was the largest building constructed in the 19th century and is still one of the largest of its kind. By comparison, it is larger than St Peter's Basilica in Rome. This monument has left no one indifferent, even though it has sometimes been revered or ridiculed. Joseph Poelaert's project is colossal and aims to summarise the history of all mankind in the architecture of a single building.



King Leopold II of Belgium



The Salle des pas Perdus (Hall of lost steps)



Palace of Justice (Lima Peru).

It is impossible not to be impressed by its size and massive columns, reminiscent of an Assyrian royal palace. The entire façade is full of symbols with ancient connotations that reinforce the thought mentioned by the guide at the beginning: "It must be serious and old". Hundreds of Belgian lions made of stone can be found all over the palace, scales engraved on the walls (symbolising justice), coats of arms on the entrance doors, the sign of Medusa (a symbol meant to protect against and ward off the negative), feathers and snakes (evil), the triangle of the Freemasons (Poelaert was the leader of the Belgian Freemasons at the time), dozens of statues of former jurists, Belgian ministers of justice, but also great orators and legislators of antiquity such as Demosthenes, Lycurgus or Cicero.

The sight is impressive. After climbing exactly 21 steps (symbolic of 'adult age'), as you enter the building you discover long, marble-lined corridors where you can still hear the hurried footsteps of the hundreds of lawyers and judges who have passed through here and still do every day. Although it is so high, it only has two floors, but the most important and impressive area in the entire building is the "Salle des Pas Perdus" (Hall of Lost Steps), a huge room 80 metres long, 50 metres wide and 80 metres high, located under the dome.

The materials used in the construction were a rich assortment of stone and marble, mostly of Belgian and French origin. Inside, steel structures (including iron floor and roof beams) support the heavy stone masses, themselves a revolutionary work of art. This is somehow understandable, considering that Belgium was one of the largest steel producers in the world in 1866 (and the third greatest economic power between 1865 and 1914).

Because of its grandeur, the Palace of Justice was the inspiration for another beautiful building. The Palace of Justice in Lima, Peru (Palacio de Justicia) was built between 1929 and 1939 as an imitation of the Palace of Justice in Brussels. This attempt at reproduction by the Polish architect Bruno Paprowsky is smaller, the interior is more cramped and it does not have the gilded dome of the Brussels palace.



Palais de Justice on fire in 1944

The original Palace of Justice in Brussels is 186 metres long, 177 metres wide, 116 metres high and has a circumference of about 950 metres. Two large doors, each weighing 10,000 kg, guard the main entrance. As they are made of bronze, they were melted down during the First World War, when the precious metal was used to make cannons needed at the front. After the war, they were rebuilt in their original form.

In fact, three times in history the entire building was damaged and catastrophically destroyed, and three times it was rebuilt in all its glory. The last time, however, it was badly damaged at the end of the World War II, on 3 September 1944. The burning of the Palace of Justice remains one of the key moments in the final liberation of Brussels. During the war, in the rush of the last days before Brussels' liberation by the Allies, positioned machine guns inside the palace on 1 September, targeting Poelaert Square.

By 3 September, more than half of the German soldiers had left the area, but the few remaining hundred were preparing to blow up the building in a desperate attempt to destroy any incriminating documents and technical equipment inside. So explosives were placed outside and in the basements. The explosion was heard at around 5.00 p.m. and caused considerable damage to the entire structure. The dome crumbled, the walls collapsed and the furniture and decorations burnt.

Reconstruction began immediately after the war, and the palace was even built 2.5 metres higher than the original. By 1948, most of the building was remarkably well repaired. Life resumed its course. But it seems that despite its immense symbolic, cultural and practical value, the building was not properly managed for decades. Its former innovative iron framework was not preserved, and water penetration caused the iron to rust, increasing its volume and cracking the stone masonry. Mould began to multiply dangerously in the corners of the courtrooms.

In some cases, parts of the ceiling even collapsed, causing widely reported injuries. In 2017, one hall



The Brussels Palace of Justice in 2006

had to be closed after part of the floor collapsed. Loose stones, falling ceilings, collapsing floors and mould infestation are actually nothing new for the court staff in the building anymore. Due to the considerable size of the building and the fact that it has an enormous number of windows (every room has plenty of daylight), there is a constant indoor temperature of 15 to 16 degrees Celsius in the old walls. The guide explains that this is quite pleasant in summer, but in winter the cold is unbearable, so many of the courts that once worked in this building gradually moved to other buildings, some even to neighbouring ones. Many areas of the building are now empty (almost 80% of the entire building), and only 45 courtrooms are still in use. One of the most impressive halls you can visit is the Court of Cassation, the highest

court in Belgium. It is an impressive hall, decorated with black marble and large paintings on the walls. The overall atmosphere and design convey the feeling of seriousness and weight of the decisions made here.

The building needs constant support and renovation, and in the 1980s it became clear that it was time to do so. To protect pedestrians from the falling plaster of the façade, scaffolding was erected in 1984 when the extensive renovation work was due to begin. Almost four decades later, the scaffolding is still there, but it has since rusted and become unsafe for the project to continue, so that renovation of the scaffolding itself is now necessary. Perhaps this is the reason for the many jokes that are made about it:

"Where do you find the Palace of Scaffolding ? Only in Brussels...", "The motto of the Palace of Justice: do not judge a book by its cover" or "What crime has the Palace of Justice committed? Why is it behind bars?"

The Palace of Justice has been on the provisional World Heritage List of UNESCO since 2008. It has also been protected by the World Monuments Fund (an independent organisation based in the USA that works to protect the world's most precious places) since 2016. It was also included in 2016 in the programme 'The 7 Most Endangered' of 'Patrimoine Culturel Immobilier', a Belgian heritage protection organisation working together with the Poelaert Foundation, founded in 2011 by the Dutch and French-speaking bar associations of Brussels.

In February 2016, the Belgian Ministry of the Interior announced a ten-year plan to restore the palace and bring all Belgian courts back into the building

In 2018, after part of the ceiling collapsed, Jean de Codd, President of the Court of Cassation and the country's highest judge, spoke publicly about the situation and openly called for additional funding to ensure the sustainability of the building and the safety of those working in it.

The Belgian Chamber of Deputies has reviewed the building's strange case several times. The Palace of Justice is officially the property of the Belgian federal state and is managed by the 'Régie des Bâtiments'. A formal request was made for an official statement on the current state of the building, and the status of the renovation work, but as of the publication of this article, there has been no reply.



The Court of Cassation

The project, which is expected to cost more than 100 million euros, is not scheduled for completion before 2030 when Belgium celebrates 200 years since declaring its independence. We all hope that one day in the not-too-distant future, we will be able to see this magnificent building in all its glory.

But that takes time.

Alexandra Paucescu



The lawyers' changing room



© Interpol
Users can tour a virtual facsimile of the Interpol General Secretariat Headquarters in Lyon, France without any geographical or physical boundaries

INTERPOL LAUNCHES FIRST GLOBAL POLICE METAVERSE

The virtual world allows INTERPOL to offer immersive training courses to law enforcement across the globe

At a surprise session of the 90th INTERPOL General Assembly in New Delhi, the global police organization unveiled the first ever Metaverse specifically designed for law enforcement worldwide.

Fully operational, the INTERPOL Metaverse allows registered users to tour a virtual facsimile of the INTERPOL General Secretariat headquarters in Lyon, France without any geographical or physical boundaries, interact with other officers via their avatars, and even take immersive training courses

in forensic investigation and other policing capabilities.

The INTERPOL Metaverse is provided through the INTERPOL Secure Cloud, ensuring its neutrality.

During the interactive session, General Assembly delegates in New Delhi were able to digitally enter the Lyon building through avatars, using virtual reality headsets.

“The Metaverse has the potential to transform every aspect of our daily lives with enormous implications for law enforcement,” said Madan

Oberoi, INTERPOL’s Executive Director of Technology and Innovation.

“But in order for police to understand the Metaverse, we need to experience it,” Mr Oberoi added.

In a follow-up panel discussion, INTERPOL also announced the creation of an Expert Group on the Metaverse to represent the concerns of law enforcement on the global stage – ensuring this new virtual world is secure by design.



"We may be entering a new world, but our commitment remains the same", said INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock

NOT JUST FOR GAMERS

Far from being simply a gadget for gamers, the Metaverse is often discussed as the potential next stage in the development of the Internet. By 2026, one in every four people will spend at least an hour a day in the Metaverse to work, study, shop and socialize, according to technology research firm Gartner.

As the newly released **INTERPOL Global Crime Trend report** shows, crime has increasingly moved online as the pace of digitalization has increased. If the boundaries of our physical world move ever further into a digital – and seemingly borderless – realm, the panel discussion asked, 'how can law enforcement continue to protect communities and guarantee the rule of law?'

How can police enhance their awareness of the threats but also harness the opportunities?

Criminals are already starting to exploit the Metaverse. The World Economic Forum, which has partnered with INTERPOL, Meta, Microsoft and others in an initiative to define and govern the Metaverse, has warned that social engineering scams, violent extremism and

misinformation could be particular challenges.

As the number of Metaverse users grows and the technology further develops, the list of possible crimes will only expand to potentially include crimes against children, data theft, money laundering, financial fraud, counterfeiting, ransomware, phishing, and sexual assault and harassment.

For law enforcement, some of these threats are likely to present significant challenges, because not all acts that are criminalized in the physical world are considered crimes when committed in the virtual world.

"By identifying these risks from the outset, we can work with stakeholders to shape the necessary governance frameworks and cut off future criminal markets before they are fully formed," Mr Oberoi said. "Only by having these conversations now can we build an effective response."

NEW WORLD, SAME COMMITMENT

The Metaverse holds many benefits for law enforcement, notably in terms of remote work, networking, collecting and preserving evidence

from crime scenes, and delivering training.

Capacity building in the Metaverse holds particular promise, offering students more opportunities to collaborate and network, ensuring a greater engagement through immersion and enabling hands-on activities.

In a live demonstration, experts from the INTERPOL Capacity Building and Training Directorate delivered a training course on travel document verification and passenger screening using INTERPOL capabilities in a Metaverse classroom. Students were then teleported to an airport where they were able to apply their newly-acquired skills at a virtual border point.

"For many, the Metaverse seems to herald an abstract future, but the issues it raises are those that have always motivated INTERPOL – supporting our member countries to fight crime and making the world, virtual or not, safer for those who inhabit it," said INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock.

"We may be entering a new world, but our commitment remains the same."



© NASA/JPL-Caltech/MSSS

Perseverance Workspace at 'Skinner Ridge': NASA's Perseverance rover puts its robotic arm to work around a rocky outcrop called "Skinner Ridge" in Mars' Jezero Crater. Composed of multiple images, this mosaic shows layered sedimentary rocks in the face of a cliff in the delta, as well as one of the locations where the rover abraded a circular patch to analyze a rock's composition

NASA'S PERSEVERANCE ROVER INVESTIGATES GEOLOGICALLY RICH MARS TERRAIN

The latest findings provide greater detail on a region of the Red Planet that has a watery past and is yielding promising samples for the NASA-ESA Mars Sample Return campaign.

NASA's Perseverance rover is well into its second science campaign, collecting rock-core samples from features within an area long considered by scientists to be a top prospect for finding signs of ancient microbial life on Mars. The rover has collected four samples from an ancient river delta in the Red Planet's Jezero Crater since July 7, bringing the total count of scientifically compelling rock samples to 12.

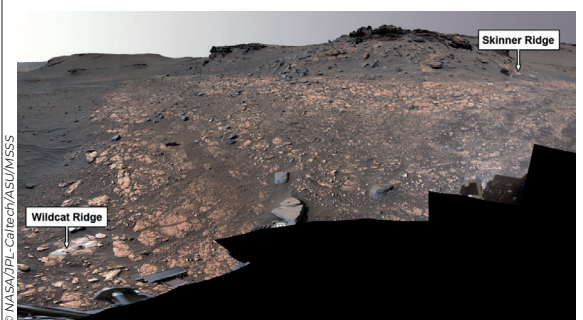
"We picked the Jezero Crater for Perseverance to explore because we thought it had the best chance of providing scientifically excellent samples – and now we know we sent the rover to the right location," said Thomas Zurbuchen, NASA's associate administrator for science in Washington. "These first two science campaigns have yielded an amazing diversity of samples to bring back to Earth by the Mars Sample Return campaign."

Twenty-eight miles (45 kilometers) wide, Jezero Crater hosts a delta – an ancient fan-shaped feature that formed about 3.5 billion years ago at the convergence of a Martian river and a lake. Perseverance is currently investigating the delta's sedimentary rocks, formed when particles of various sizes settled in the once-watery environment. During its first science campaign, the rover explored the crater's floor, finding igneous rock, which forms deep underground from magma or during volcanic activity at the surface.

"The delta, with its diverse sedimentary rocks, contrasts beautifully with the igneous rocks – formed from crystallization of magma – discovered on the crater floor," said Perseverance project scientist Ken Farley of Caltech in Pasadena, California. "This juxtaposition provides us with a rich understanding of the geologic history after the crater formed and a diverse

sample suite. For example, we found a sandstone that carries grains and rock fragments created far from Jezero Crater – and a mudstone that includes intriguing organic compounds."

"Wildcat Ridge" is the name given to a rock about 3 feet (1 meter) wide that likely formed billions of years ago as mud and fine sand settled in an



Two Perseverance Sampling Locations in Jezero's Delta: NASA's Perseverance rover collected rock samples for possible return to Earth in the future from two locations seen in this image of Mars' Jezero Crater: "Wildcat Ridge" (lower left) and "Skinner Ridge" (upper right)

evaporating saltwater lake. On July 20, the rover abraded some of the surface of Wildcat Ridge so it could analyze the area with the instrument called Scanning Habitable Environments with Raman & Luminescence for Organics & Chemicals, or SHERLOC.

SHERLOC's analysis indicates the samples feature a class of organic molecules that are spatially correlated with those of sulfate minerals. Sulfate minerals found in layers of sedimentary rock can yield significant information

phosphorus, and sulfur. While there are chemical processes that produce these molecules that don't require life, some of these compounds are the chemical building blocks of life. The presence of these specific molecules is considered to be a potential biosignature – a substance or structure that could be evidence of past life but may also have been produced without the presence of life.

In 2013, NASA's Curiosity Mars rover found evidence of organic matter in rock-powder samples, and Perseverance has detected organics in Jezero Crater before. But unlike that previous discovery, this latest detection was made in an area where, in the distant past, sediment and salts were deposited into a lake under conditions in which life could potentially have existed. In its analysis of Wildcat Ridge, the SHERLOC instrument registered the most abundant organic detections on the mission to date.

"In the distant past, the sand, mud, and salts that now make up the Wildcat Ridge sample were deposited under conditions where life could potentially have thrived," said Farley. "The fact the organic matter was found in such a sedimentary rock – known for preserving fossils of ancient life here on Earth – is important. However, as capable as our instruments aboard Perseverance are, further conclusions regarding what is contained in the Wildcat Ridge sample will have to wait until it's returned to Earth for in-depth study as part of the agency's Mars Sample Return campaign."

The first step in the NASA-ESA (European Space Agency) Mars Sample Return campaign began when Perseverance cored its first rock sample in September 2021. Along with its rock-core samples, the rover has collected one atmospheric sample and two witness tubes, all of which are stored in the rover's belly.

The geologic diversity of the samples already carried in the rover is so good that the rover team is looking into depositing select tubes near the base of the delta in about two months. After depositing the cache, the rover will continue its delta explorations.

"I've studied Martian habitability and geology for much of my career and know first-hand the incredible scientific value of returning a carefully collected set of Mars rocks to Earth,"

said Laurie Leshin, director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "That we are weeks from deploying Perseverance's fascinating samples and mere years from bringing them to Earth so scientists can study them in exquisite detail is truly phenomenal. We will learn so much."



Potential Driving Routes for NASA's Perseverance Rover

MORE ABOUT THE MISSION

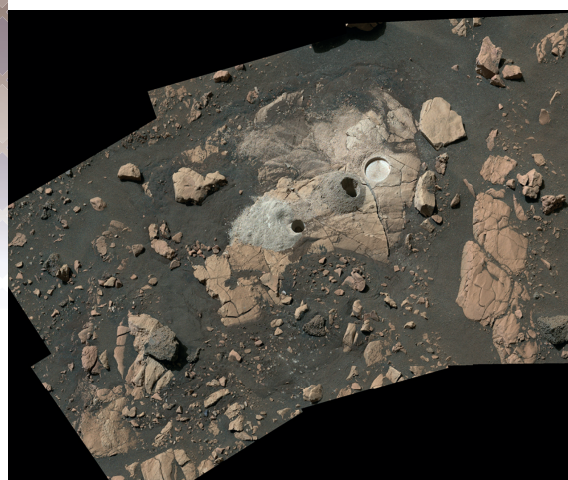
A key objective for Perseverance's mission on Mars is astrobiology, including caching samples that may contain signs of ancient microbial life. The rover will characterize the planet's geology and past climate, pave the way for human exploration of the Red Planet, and be the first mission to collect and cache Martian rock and regolith.

Subsequent NASA missions, in cooperation with ESA, would send spacecraft to Mars to collect these sealed samples from the surface and return them to Earth for in-depth analysis.

The Mars 2020 Perseverance mission is part of NASA's Moon to Mars exploration approach, which includes Artemis missions to the Moon that will help prepare for human exploration of the Red Planet.

JPL, which is managed for NASA by Caltech, built and manages operations of the Perseverance rover.

Source : Nasa

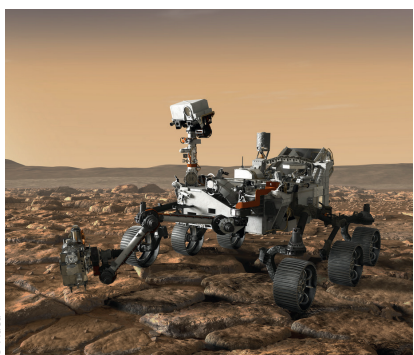


Sample Collection and Rock Analysis at 'Wildcat Ridge': Composed of multiple images from NASA's Perseverance Mars rover, this mosaic shows a rocky outcrop called "Wildcat Ridge," where the rover extracted two rock cores and abraded a circular patch to investigate the rock's composition

about the aqueous environments in which they formed.

WHAT IS ORGANIC MATTER?

Organic molecules consist of a wide variety of compounds made primarily of carbon and usually include hydrogen and oxygen atoms. They can also contain other elements, such as nitrogen,



Artist's concept depicting NASA's Mars 2020 rover, exploring Mars



ROLLS-ROYCE SPECTRE UNVEILED: THE MARQUE'S FIRST FULLY- ELECTRIC 400.000 € MOTOR CAR

A prophecy fulfilled. a promise kept. an extraordinary undertaking

"The electric car is perfectly noiseless and clean. There is no smell or vibration. They should become very useful when fixed charging stations can be arranged."

In 1900, Rolls-Royce co-founder, Charles Rolls, prophesied an electric future for the motor car. Having acquired an electric vehicle named The Columbia Electric Carriage, he foresaw its suitability as a clean, noiseless alternative to the internal combustion engine – providing there was sufficient infrastructure to support it. Today, more than 120 years later, the time has come for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars to fulfil the prophecy of its founding father.

This prophecy could not have been fulfilled without a more recent promise, when Rolls-Royce CEO, Torsten Müller-Ötvös, made a public commitment to electrification by announcing that he would bring a fully-electric Rolls-Royce to market within the current decade. Charles Rolls' prophecy and Torsten Müller-Ötvös' promise led to an historic moment. In September 2021, the marque confirmed that it had commenced testing of Spectre, the first Rolls-Royce to be conceived and engineered from the very beginning as an electric car.

"Spectre possesses all the qualities that have secured the Rolls-Royce legend. This incredible motor car, conceived from the very beginning as our first fully-electric model, is silent, powerful and demonstrates how perfectly Rolls-Royce is suited to electrification. Spectre's all-electric powertrain will assure the marque's sustained success and relevance while dramatically increasing the definition of each characteristic that makes a Rolls-Royce a Rolls-Royce."

"At Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, perfection is about more than making the very

best products. It is a culture, an attitude and our guiding philosophy. Indeed, it is our founding father Sir Henry Royce who said, 'strive for perfection in everything you do'. Spectre has been conceived within this culture. It is perfectly in tune with the sensibilities of our time. It states the direction for the future of our marque and perfectly answers a call from the most discerning individuals in the world to elevate the electric motor car experience, because Spectre is a Rolls-Royce first and an electric car second."

"This is the start of a bold new chapter



for our marque, our extraordinary clients and the luxury industry. For this reason, I believe Spectre is the most perfect product that Rolls-Royce has ever produced.” Says Torsten Müller-Ötvös, Chief Executive Officer, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.

To ensure that this transformative motor car was sufficiently prepared for the most demanding consumer in the world – the Rolls-Royce client – the marque devised the most exhaustive testing programme it had ever conceived. Spectre is being subjected to a journey of more than 2.5 million kilometres, simulating more than 400 years of use for a Rolls-Royce. On its completion in 2023, Spectre will represent a prophecy fulfilled, a promise kept and an undertaking completed.

Spectre is not only an historic moment for Rolls-Royce, but also an historic moment for electrification – with Spectre, the marque confirms that the technology has reached a standard that can contain the Rolls-Royce experience. To that end, Rolls-Royce has confirmed that by the end of 2030 its entire product portfolio will be fully-electric.

THE FUTURE BEGINS

Spectre is more than a motor car. It is a statement of intent and a symbol of a bright, bold future as Rolls-Royce progresses into an all-electric era. This commitment to an all-electric powertrain will only enhance the Rolls-Royce experience – instant torque, silent running and

the sense of one imperceptible gear have defined the characteristics of an extraordinary canon of products dating back to the very first Rolls-Royce, the 1904 10 H.P.

With Spectre, Rolls-Royce has harnessed a revolutionary ‘Decentralised Intelligence’ system that allows for the free and direct exchange of information between more than 1,000 vehicle functions, further elevating the marque’s celebrated quality of ride. Its designers have captured a contemporary yet timeless aesthetic that significantly progresses the brand’s iconography as it embarks on its electric age. Its craftspeople have created a suite of contemporary prêt-à-porter personalisation possibilities, including Starlight Doors and Illuminated Fascia, inspiring clients to realise their own Bespoke visions.

DESIGN

In unveiling Spectre, Rolls-Royce sets a new precedent in the creation of an entirely original class of motor car: the Ultra-Luxury Electric Super Coupé. This designation refers to Spectre’s indulgent proportions, specified in response to a commitment that there is no greater luxury than that of space.

The marque’s designers are deeply rooted in the context occupied by their motor cars. Therefore, their inspiration is drawn from worlds far beyond automotive, including haute couture, modernist sculpture, nautical design, tailoring and contemporary art. In conceiving the principal sketches for Spectre, the marque’s creatives were drawn to modern yacht concepts, specifically the clarity and precision of line, intelligent use of reflection and application of taper to emotionalise silhouettes.

From the front, Spectre’s split headlight treatment is intersected by the widest grille ever bestowed on a Rolls-Royce. The vanes of the Pantheon grille are now smoother in section and a flusher fit, designed to help guide the air around the motor car’s front.

The relaxed angle and polished stainless steel finish of the grille does much to enhance Spectre’s presence using environmental reflection. Along with an aero-tuned Spirit of Ecstasy figurine – itself the product of 830 combined hours of design modelling and wind tunnel testing – the grille enhances the motor car’s unprecedented drag coefficient, which at just 0.25cd makes Spectre Rolls-Royce’s most aerodynamic motor car, ever.





This intelligent treatment has been married to the iconography of Spectre's spiritual predecessor, the Phantom Coupé. Spectre clearly acknowledges its forebear with its generous proportions and split headlight treatment – a contemporary Rolls-Royce design tenet. Spectre's sharp daylight running lights emphasise the motor car's imperious two-metre width and are offset with lower lamp clusters that appear darkened, at first glance, but hide jewellery box-like darkened chromium housings for the headlights. To affirm Spectre's expression after dark, the grille is softly illuminated, with 22 LEDs lighting up the sandblasted rear side of each of the vanes, their gentle glow reflected in the polished front surfaces for a subtle and three-dimensional night signature.

In profile, the sharp, vertical bow line at the front of Spectre draws the eye rearward to its monolithic flanks. The lower line – known as the 'waft line' – borrows directly from yacht design. Instead of exaggerating movement with busy detailing or appliqué, Spectre's coachwork gently tucks into the sill, lightening the surfacing and creating an uncomplicated sense of motion by reflecting the road passing beneath it, much as the hull of a racing yacht reflects the ocean as it cuts through water. This 'waft line' is the visual

representation of the 'magic carpet ride' and its upwards sweep toward the front is inspired by the gently lifting bow of an accelerating power boat.

The silhouette's most dramatic feature is Spectre's fastback, which recalls the most evocative motor cars and watercraft in history. The seamlessness of the greenhouse surfacing significantly contributes to achieving the lowest drag coefficient ever for a Rolls-Royce. Following the roofline back, the tail lamps are set into the largest single body panel ever produced for a Rolls-Royce, which extends from the A-pillar to the luggage compartment. The jewel-like vertical tail lamps themselves are colourless for neutrality, in anticipation of the myriad of colourways selected by clients during the commissioning process. Their precision and reduced dimension complement the generous flow of the bodywork from the muscular shoulders backwards into the tail section with its characteristic tapering plan view.

The proportional demands of Spectre's scale required Rolls-Royce to embolden its wheel strategy. Spectre is the first production two-door coupé to be equipped with 23-inch wheels in almost one hundred years.

Inside, Spectre is provisioned with the most technologically advanced Bespoke features yet, drawing inspiration from the timeless mystique of the night's sky. For the first time on a series production Rolls-Royce, Spectre is available with Starlight Doors, which incorporate 4,796 softly illuminated 'stars'. The coach doors can also be commissioned with a backdrop of wood Canadel Panelling, which takes its name from the cove in the South of France where Sir Henry Royce and his design team spent their winters.

The ethereal night-time theme continues with Spectre's Illuminated Fascia. Developed over the course of two years and more than 10,000 collective hours, it incorporates the Spectre nameplate surrounded by a cluster of over 5,500 stars. Located on the passenger side of the dashboard, the illuminations are completely invisible when the motor car is not in operation.

Alongside the extraordinary, illuminated surfaces, Spectre is equipped with a completely redesigned digital architecture of luxury named SPIRIT, presented in quintessential Rolls-Royce style. Not only will SPIRIT manage the motor car's functions, but it is seamlessly integrated into the marque's Whispers

application, allowing clients to interact with their car remotely, and receive live information curated by the marque's luxury intelligence specialists.

For the first time ever, clients are now able to extend their Bespoke commission beyond the physical world and into the digital architecture that underpins SPIRIT. Inspired by the marque's clients' love of bespoke timepieces, the colour of the dials can now complement the interior hue of the motor car.

As with all Rolls-Royce motor cars, Spectre's interior suite offers clients near-infinite Bespoke possibilities. The all-new front seat design has been inspired by British tailoring, with lapel sections that can be rendered in contrasting or matching colours to the main base. Bespoke stitching, embroidery and intricate piping has, as ever, been considered in their inception.

ALL-ALUMINIUM ARCHITECTURE OF LUXURY

2003 saw the first Goodwood-era Phantom, built upon its own Bespoke architecture. This renaissance of the brand was Rolls-Royce 1.0. Following this, the 'Architecture of Luxury' was conceived – a new, highly flexible all-aluminium spaceframe architecture, and visionary feat of engineering, that could be tailored for electric drive, as well as today's Phantom, Cullinan and Ghost models, and Coachbuild projects. This expansion of the marque's offering was Rolls-Royce 2.0.

The ability to tailor the Architecture of Luxury for electric drive was a fundamental consideration when it was first conceived. However, it is only now that electric drive technology is advanced enough to fulfil the Rolls-Royce experience. The introduction of a fully-electric powertrain and Decentralised Intelligence into the marque's portfolio represents Rolls-Royce 3.0 and the beginning of the bold new all-electric era.

By ensuring from the outset that the Architecture of Luxury could be tailored to the requirements of an all-electric Rolls-Royce, the marque's engineers ensured the continuity of experience from its current portfolio, each evolution of which has done much to secure the brand's ongoing global success. Indeed, the inherent flexibility of the architecture and ease of integration of an electric powertrain has freed engineers, designers and craftspeople to focus on the quality of experience, authenticity of design and innovation in Bespoke.

For Spectre, Rolls-Royce engineers have unlocked further benefits. The sophisticated extruded aluminium sections and integration of the battery into the structure of the motor car enable it to be 30% stiffer than any previous Rolls-Royce. The flexibility of the architecture has also allowed engineers to place the floor halfway between the sill structures rather than on top or underneath them. A channel has been created for wiring and climate control pipework between the battery and the floor, with the battery mounted underneath, providing a perfectly

smooth underfloor profile. This not only creates a low seating position and enveloping cabin but realises a secondary function for the battery – almost 700kg of sound deadening.



DIGITAL ENGINEERING

For Spectre, Rolls-Royce's engineers have seen much of their discipline pivot from the workshop to the digital space. Spectre is the most connected Rolls-Royce in history, and in harnessing the power of the motor car's remarkable Decentralised Intelligence processing capabilities there is more requirement than ever for expert human experience.

To ensure the continuity of the Rolls-Royce experience, as well as its progression, the marque selected the most experienced test and development engineers to lead the project, some of whom have been with the marque for more than two decades and were responsible for creating the first 'Goodwood-era' Phantom. These engineers describe the experience offered by Spectre as akin to "Rolls-Royce in high definition" on account of the speed and accuracy of the motor car's response to a worldwide spread of road and weather conditions.

For this to be realised, a dedicated control has been handmade for each of the 141,200 sender-receiver variables, and in nearly all cases engineers have designed several more sub-variables for variations in climate, ground speed, road type, vehicle status and driving style. These have been crafted over the course of Spectre's 2.5 million kilometre testing programme both on advanced proving grounds and on real roads around the world.



PLANAR SUSPENSION

In testing Spectre, the process includes extreme driving conditions – development of the motor car began just 55km from the arctic circle in Arjeplog, Sweden, at temperatures as low as -40 degrees centigrade, and it will continue across Southern Africa, in temperatures of up to 55 degrees centigrade. Yet, 55% of testing is taking place on the very roads that many production Spectres will be driven on. Of particular significance was the French Riviera. It was on the Côte d'Azur that Spectre's digitally integrated evolution of the renowned Planar suspension system was finalised.

Planar suspension is an orchestra of systems with precisely defined responses to driver inputs and road conditions, made possible by the latest software and hardware developments, delivering Rolls-Royce's hallmark 'magic carpet ride'.

Using a suite of new hardware components and leveraging Spectre's high-speed processing capabilities, the Planar system can decouple the car's anti-roll bars allowing each wheel to act independently, preventing the rocking motion that occurs when one side of a vehicle hits an undulation in the road. This also reduces high-frequency ride imperfections caused by shortcomings in road surface quality.

Once a corner is identified as imminent, the Planar system recouples the components and stiffens the dampers, the four-wheel

steering system is then prepared for activation to ensure effortless entry and exit. Under cornering, 18 sensors are monitored, and steering, braking, power delivery and suspension parameters are adjusted so that Spectre remains stable. The result is effortless control.

POWER, RANGE AND DIMENSIONS

The final power, acceleration and range figures are still being refined, as the extraordinary undertaking of finessing Spectre enters its final phase before concluding in the second quarter of 2023. Preliminary data shows that Spectre is expected to have an all-electric range of 320 miles/520 kilometres WLTP and offer 900Nm of torque from its 430kW powertrain. It is anticipated to achieve 0-60mph in 4.4 seconds (0-100km/h in 4.5 seconds).

With many months of testing and optimisation of Spectre still ahead, these figures are subject to change ahead of official confirmation prior to market launch in Q4 2023.

SPECTRE DIMENSIONS:

Number of doors / seats:
2 doors / 4 seats

Vehicle length:
5453 mm / 214.685 in

Vehicle width:
2080 mm / 81.889 in

Vehicle height (unladen):
1559 mm / 61.377 in

Wheelbase:
3210 mm / 126.378 in

Turning circle:
12.7 m

Kerb weight:
2975 kg

MARKET DEBUT

Spectre is available for commission immediately, with first client deliveries commencing in Q4 2023. Spectre pricing will be positioned between Cullinan and Phantom.

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the BMW Group and is a completely separate company from Rolls-Royce plc, the manufacturer of aircraft engines and propulsion systems. Over 2,000 skilled men and women are employed at the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars' head office and manufacturing plant at Goodwood, West Sussex, the only place in the world where the company's super-luxury motor cars are hand-built.

SPECTRE CO2 EMISSIONS AND CONSUMPTION FIGURES

WLTP: Power consumption: 2.9 mi/kWh. / 21.5 kWh/100km*

Electric range: 323 miles / 520 kilometres*

Co2 emissions 0 g/km.

*Preliminary data not yet confirmed, subject to change.





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TO VISIT EXHIBITION GOLDEN BOY GUSTAV KLIMT

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam



Gustav Klimt, *Water Serpents II*, 1904/1906-07, private collection, courtesy of HomeArt

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) is one of the most fascinating artists of western art history. He is world-famous for his golden and decorative paintings and his portraits of strong women. But who was this 'golden boy', and what is the story behind his talent? You perhaps know Klimt's work, but have you actually seen it?

Golden Boy Gustav Klimt. Inspired by Van Gogh, Rodin, Matisse... explores how Klimt developed his unique style and how the Austrian artist was inspired by the work of Van Gogh, Toorop, Rodin, Whistler, Toulouse-Lautrec, Monet, Matisse and many other artists.

New research has revealed which artists influenced Klimt, and which he admired. Klimt co-founded the Vienna Secession art society, where European modern art was exhibited for the first time in 1898. From then on, each exhibition organised by the society offered Klimt a new wave of inspiration and creativity.

ICONIC MASTERPIECES

Dozens of Klimt's iconic masterpieces are on display in this large-scale exhibition: from decorative landscape

paintings and powerful figure drawings to monumental, colourful female portraits such as *Judith* (1901), *Emilie Flöge* (1902) and spectacular paintings such as *Water Serpents II* (1904/1906-07).



Gustav Klimt, *Judith*, 1901, Belvedere, Vienna

One of the highlights of the exhibition is the life-sized reproduction of the Beethoven Frieze. Klimt presented this mural in the Secession in 1902 as an homage to Symphony No. 9 by Beethoven, the definitive cult figure of the new generation. The monumental Beethoven Frieze represents the start of Klimt's 'golden period', in which he used gold leaf in his paintings.



Gustav Klimt in 1902

BAS VAN BEEK INSPIRED BY...

Designer and artist Bas van Beek (1974) was inspired by Klimt's expressive style to create a space especially for the exhibition with various patterns.

Van Beek has also developed a 'Klimt vocabulary', a form language based on the decorations in Klimt's paintings. This colourful vocabulary has been printed on stickers, so you yourself can compose new patterns on the staircase walls.

COLLABORATION

The exhibition is a collaboration with the Belvedere Museum in Vienna, which is home to the world's largest collection of oil paintings by Gustav Klimt. Klimt. Inspired by Van Gogh, Rodin, Matisse... will be on display at the Belvedere from 3 February to 29 May 2023.

Exhibition Golden Boy Gustav Klimt. Inspired by Van Gogh, Rodin, Matisse... Until 8 January 2023



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TIMELESS CHIC

Standout Fashion and Beauty trends

Six countdowns to Christmas

It's no secret. Beauty Advent calendars have become a huge success for some years.

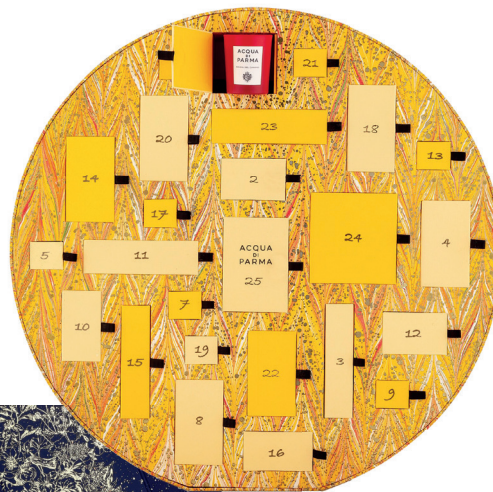
With one month before the countdown to Christmas, it's time to discover the most lavish ones to order before they sell out.

Acqua di Parma

Lovers of exquisite fragrances, this calendar inspired by the iconic Acqua di Parma hatbox is definitely for you!

Here are a few clues: Each of the 25 windows unveils a daily surprise to immerse in the complete Acqua di Parma universe, from Colonia and Blu Mediterraneo fragrances to the scented candles of the Home Collection.

(acquadiparma.com)



© ACQUA DI PARMA



© DIOR

Dior

For this new edition of the Dior Advent calendar, the artist Pietro Ruffo, friend of the House of Dior, has imagined a magical and luxurious astral world where a profusion of flowers, wondrous constellations, stardust and fantastic beasts mix and seem to dance around the North Star, symbolised by the iconic brand's address: 30 Avenue Montaigne.

Some clues: Open each of the 24 windows of the Advent calendar one by one, and discover a lipstick, an iconic fragrance or even a mascara, to fill each day in December until Christmas with magic and wonder.

(dior.com)

Rituals

When it comes to Rituals Advent Calendar, you know you're getting at the most dazzling countdown to Christmas possible. Among the three calendars on offer by the brand, all eyes remain focused on this 3D Christmas tree, lit up with string lights for some seasonal sparkle.

Some clues: Twenty four luxurious gifts are nestled amongst the twinkling branches, ready to delight you every day throughout the month of December. Let's enjoy foaming shower gels or soap bars, body creams, a body shimmer oil, as well as wonderful perfumed candles.

(rituals.com)



© DIOR

TIMELESS CHIC

Standout Fashion and Beauty trends



The Body Shop

No matter your age, Christmas should be filled with magic. And good news, the countdown to Christmas Day just got even more exciting with this “Share the Love & Joy Ultimate Advent Calendar”.

Some clues: collection of 25 surprises and accessories for truly seasoned beauty lovers, including heaps of mini and full-sized bestsellers. Perhaps you’ll find an unbelievably refreshing Chinese Ginseng & Rice face mask. Or maybe you’ll find the new full-sized Shea Shampoo and Conditioner to leave very dry hair feeling seriously loved and nourished. There might even be the bestselling Drops of Youth™ Concentrate, to help leave skin feeling smoother and moisturised.

thebodyshop.com

For those who can't wait, there is a spoiler alert: the websites of most of these brands tell you exactly what's in store for you in those amazing Beauty Advent Calendars.

Jo Malone

Be ready to fill your month of December with 25 days of scented treats enclosed in an elegant cream design, based on a classic jewellery box

Some clues: Mood-boosting home fragrances, popular colognes in miniature, seasonal adornments and a couple of full-sized surprises await. The box can also be enjoyed to house your keepsakes for years to come.

jomalone.eu



© JO MALONE

L'Occitane

For lovers of the L'Occitane fragrances, this advent calendar which is one of the cutest, is for you ! The brand has launched a 100% recyclable box that transports you to its joyful Christmas world.

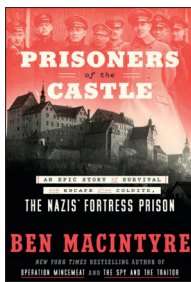
Some clues: Featuring a generous selection of L'Occitane favourites, this calendar includes an array of travel sizes from the iconic Almond and Verbena shower products, to the Shea Butter Hand Cream and many more.

loccitane.com



© LOCCITANE

BOOKS



PRISONERS OF THE CASTLE

By Ben Macintyre

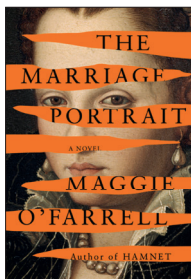
AN EPIC STORY OF SURVIVAL AND ESCAPE FROM COLDITZ, THE NAZIS' FORTRESS PRISON

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • The "entertaining yet objective and often-moving account" (*The Wall Street Journal*) of one of history's most notorious prisons—and the remarkable cast of POWs who tried relentlessly to escape their captors, from the author of *The Spy and the Traitor*.

In this gripping narrative, Ben Macintyre tackles one of the most famous prison stories in history and makes it utterly his own. During World War II, the German army used the towering Colditz Castle to hold the most defiant Allied prisoners. For four years, these prisoners of the castle tested its walls and its guards with ingenious escape attempts that would become legend.

But as Macintyre shows, the story of Colditz was about much more than escape. Its population represented a society in miniature, full of heroes and traitors, class conflicts and secret alliances, and the full range of human joy and despair. In Macintyre's telling, Colditz's most famous names—like the indomitable Pat Reid—share glory with lesser known but equally remarkable characters like Indian doctor Birendranath Mazumdar whose ill treatment, hunger strike, and eventual escape read like fiction; Florimond Duke, America's oldest paratrooper and least successful secret agent; and Christopher Clayton Hutton, the brilliant inventor employed by British intelligence to manufacture covert escape aids for POWs.

Prisoners of the Castle traces the war's arc from within Colditz's stone walls, where the stakes rose as Hitler's war machine faltered and the men feared that liberation would not come soon enough to spare them a grisly fate at the hands of the Nazis. Bringing together the wartime intrigue of his acclaimed *Operation Mincemeat* and keen psychological portraits of his bestselling true-life spy stories, Macintyre has breathed new life into one of the greatest war stories ever told.



THE MARRIAGE PORTRAIT

By Maggie O'Farrell

A NOVEL

NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLER • The author of *Hamnet*—*New York Times* best seller and National Book Critics Circle Award winner—brings the world of Renaissance Italy to jewel-bright life in this unforgettable fictional portrait of the captivating young duchess Lucrezia de' Medici as she makes her way in a troubled court.

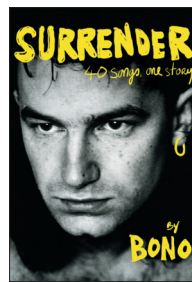
"O'Farrell pulls out little threads of historical detail to weave this story of a precocious girl sensitive to the contradictions of her station ... You may know the history, and you may think you know what's coming, but don't be so sure." —*The Washington Post*

Florence, the 1550s. Lucrezia, third daughter of the grand duke, is comfortable with her obscure place in the palazzo: free to wonder at its treasures, observe its clandestine workings, and devote herself to her own artistic pursuits. But when her older sister dies on the eve of her wedding to the ruler of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio, Lucrezia is thrust unwittingly into the limelight: the duke is quick to request her hand in marriage, and her father just as quick to accept on her behalf.

Having barely left girlhood behind, Lucrezia must now enter an unfamiliar court whose customs are opaque and where her arrival is not universally welcomed. Perhaps most mystifying of all is her new husband himself, Alfonso. Is he the playful sophisticate he appeared to be before their wedding, the aesthete happiest in the company of artists and musicians, or the ruthless politician before whom even his formidable sisters seem to tremble?

As Lucrezia sits in constricting finery for a painting intended to preserve her image for centuries to come, one thing becomes worryingly clear. In the court's eyes, she has one duty: to provide the heir who will shore up the future of the Ferranese dynasty. Until then, for all of her rank and nobility, the new duchess's future hangs entirely in the balance.

Full of the beauty and emotion with which she illuminated the Shakespearean canvas of *Hamnet*, Maggie O'Farrell turns her talents to Renaissance Italy in an extraordinary portrait of a resilient young woman's battle for her very survival.



SURRENDER

By Bono

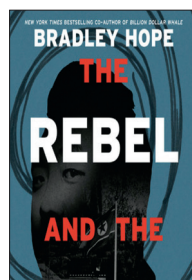
40 SONGS, ONE STORY

Bono—artist, activist, and the lead singer of Irish rock band U2—has written a memoir: honest and irreverent, intimate and profound, *Surrender* is the story of the remarkable life he's lived, the challenges he's faced, and the friends and family who have shaped and sustained him.

"When I started to write this book, I was hoping to draw in detail what I'd previously only sketched in songs. The people, places, and possibilities in my life. *Surrender* is a word freighted with meaning for me. Growing up in Ireland in the seventies with my fists up (musically speaking), it was not a natural concept. A word I only circled until I gathered my thoughts for the book. I am still grappling with this most humbling of commands. In the band, in my marriage, in my faith, in my life as an activist. *Surrender* is the story of one pilgrim's lack of progress ... With a fair amount of fun along the way." —Bono

As one of the music world's most iconic artists and the cofounder of the organizations ONE and (RED), Bono's career has been written about extensively. But in *Surrender*, it's Bono who picks up the pen, writing for the first time about his remarkable life and those he has shared it with. In his unique voice, Bono takes us from his early days growing up in Dublin, including the sudden loss of his mother when he was fourteen, to U2's unlikely journey to become one of the world's most influential rock bands, to his more than twenty years of activism dedicated to the fight against AIDS and extreme poverty. Writing with candor, self-reflection, and humor, Bono opens the aperture on his life—and the family, friends, and faith that have sustained, challenged, and shaped him.

Surrender's subtitle, *40 Songs, One Story*, is a nod to the book's forty chapters, which are each named after a U2 song. Bono has also created forty original drawings for *Surrender*, which appear throughout the book.



THE REBEL AND THE KINGDOM

By Bradley Hope

THE TRUE STORY OF THE SECRET MISSION TO OVERTHROW THE NORTH KOREAN REGIME

How did an Ivy League activist become a global fugitive? The *New York Times* bestselling co-author of *Billion Dollar Whale* and *Blood and Oil* chronicles the heart-pounding tale of a self-taught operative his high-stakes attempt subvert

the North Korean regime.

"Propulsive ... Hope's account is both deeply reported and novelistic."—Ed Caesar, contributing staff writer for *The New Yorker*, author of *The Moth and the Mountain*.

When Pope Pius XII died in 1958, his papers were sealed in the Vatican Secret Archives, leaving unanswered questions about what he knew and did during World War II. Those questions have only grown and festered, making Pius XII one of the most controversial popes in Church history, especially now as the Vatican prepares to canonize him.

In 2020, Pius XII's archives were finally opened, and David I. Kertzer—widely recognized as one of the world's leading Vatican scholars—has been mining this new material ever since, revealing how the pope came to set aside moral leadership in order to preserve his church's power.

Based on thousands of never-before-seen documents not only from the Vatican, but from archives in Italy, Germany, France, Britain, and the United States, *The Pope at War* paints a new, dramatic portrait of what the pope did and did not do as war enveloped the continent and as the Nazis began their systematic mass murder of Europe's Jews. The book clears away the myths and sheer falsehoods surrounding the pope's actions from 1939 to 1945, showing why the pope repeatedly bent to the wills of Hitler and Mussolini.

Just as Kertzer's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Pope and Mussolini* became the definitive book on Pope Pius XI and the Fascist regime, *The Pope at War* is destined to become the most influential account of his successor, Pius XII, and his relations with Mussolini and Hitler. Kertzer shows why no full understanding of the course of World War II is complete without knowledge of the dramatic, behind-the-scenes role played by the pope. "This remarkably researched book is replete with revelations that deserve the adjective 'explosive,'" says Kevin Madigan, Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Harvard University. "*The Pope at War* is a masterpiece."

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