



Future of the euro zone: proposals for political integration



Author: Jean Arthuis

The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a short version of the report by French Senator Jean Arthuis that was delivered to French Prime Minister François Fillon on 6th March with regard to the future of the euro zone with the aim of "strengthening euro zone governance and ensuring its stability long term." He uses a paradox as a base for his argument: whilst the euro is doing well as a currency, the euro zone is in crisis. He reviews the reasons for this, presents the measures that have been taken to respond to them and then submits a series of proposals that aim to create a "coherent structure for governance" for the euro zone. He notably suggests the creation of a post of President of the European Union and the post of Minister of the Economy and Finances of the euro zone, as well as new tools to improve transparency and dialogue on budgetary issues and to respond more effectively to crises.

[Read more](#)

Contents

Front page! : Atlas/EU - China/India **Elections** : Slovakia **Financial Crisis** : ECB - Eurogroup - Austerity - Belgium - Cyprus - Greece - IMF/Greece - Spain - Italy - Slovakia **European Council** : Bosnia-Herzegovina - Armenia **Commission** : Hungary - Water - Finance - Data/Protection - Citizenship **Council** : Borders/Migrations - Environment - Trains **Diplomacy** : Iran **Germany** : Taxation - River - Europe **Denmark** : Birth rate **France** : Article/Europe **Lithuania** : Energy **Slovenia** : Budget **Croatia** : Vote/EU **OSCE** : Russia **World Bank** : Carbon Tax **Eurostat** : Growth - Trade - Women **Eurobarometer** : Women - Tourism **Studies/Reports** : Popularity - Nuclear/Germany - Kosovo - EU/Asia **Publications** : Euro - Defence - Europe/Citizens **Culture** : Exhibition/Paris - Art/Maastricht - Exhibition/Rome - Books/Paris - Library/Sarajevo

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

Front page! :

Discover the Permanent Atlas of the European Union: the first atlas that is always up to date

The Robert Schuman Foundation has published the only permanently updated Atlas of the European Union co-written by Jean-Dominique Giuliani and Pascale Joannin, Chair and General Director respectively of the Foundation. This reference work presents the Union, its institutions



and each of the Member States via their history, culture and statistic reality. With over 50 original maps, historic sheets and updated figures it offers a full, unique overview of Europe. A unique innovation, the data is permanently updated so that everyone can enjoy the most up to date information on Europe via the internet site www.atlas-permanent.eu. Order the atlas on the Foundation's site www.robert-schuman.eu. [Read more](#)

Europe viewed by China and India since the Crisis



How do China and India see the EU and its Member States? What are their views of the crisis of the public debt? What do they think of the euro? What political developments do they foresee for Europe? The Robert Schuman Foundation together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Global Policy Institute has published a study by Karine Lisbonne-de-Vergeron on the view the Chinese and Indian elites have of the political and economic situation in Europe. This paper can be ordered on the Foundation's internet site in paper or PDF form... [Read more](#)

Elections :

SMER-SD led by Robert Fico wins the general elections on Slovakia



Direction-Social Democracy (SMER-SD), a party led by former Prime Minister (2006-2010), Robert Fico, won the early general elections in Slovakia on 10th March. He won 44.41% of the vote and 83 of the 150 seats in the Narodna rada Slovenskej republiky, the only chamber in Parliament (+15). He came out ahead of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) led by Jan Figel and the Party of Ordinary People and Independents (OL'aNO), which won 8.82% and 8.55% respectively with 16 seats each (+1 for the KDH). Most Hid won 6.89% (13 seats, -1). The Democratic and Christian Union and Democratic Party (SDKU-DS), outgoing Prime Minister Iveta Radicova's Party won 6.09% and 11 seats (-11). Turnout totalled 59.11%... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

Mitigated optimism on the part of the ECB



On 8th March after the Council of Governors of the European Central Bank, its President, Mario Draghi, announced that the main rates would remain unchanged. According to recent economic analyses activity contracted by 0.3% in the last quarter of 2011, but since then it has stabilised and is due to start growing again during the year. According to forecasts GDP growth is due to range from -0.5% and 0.3% in 2012, and between 0% and 2.2% in 2013 ie slightly down on estimates made in December. However tension associated to the sovereign debt crisis might affect the real economy and it would seem appropriate to provide a sustainable solution. Finally he believed that the recent three year loans in the banking sector had been an "undeniable success"... [Read more](#)

The Eurogroup satisfied with the success of the trade in Greek bonds



On 9th March the President of the Eurogroup, Jean-Claude Juncker, said that "conditions were being met" for the Member States to give their greenlight to the payment of further aid to Greece after the successful negotiations between the Greek authorities and its private creditors, who have accepted to exchange most of their debt bonds. He also called on the IMF to help towards this new aid... [Read more](#)

Austerity Plan in Austria

On 6th March during a Council of Ministers, the Austrian government approved an austerity plan of 27.9 billion euros in savings to reduce its public deficit and to achieve budgetary balance at the end of 2016.



This austerity plan comprises savings of 17.3 billion euros, the creation and increases in taxes of 9.2 billion euros, as well as the reform of healthcare that will lead to savings of 1.4 billion euros. In all the government comprising the major social-democratic (SPÖ) and conservative (ÖVP) coalition aims to save 27.9 billion euros over five years... [Read more](#)

New Austerity Plan in Belgium



The Belgian government decided on 11th March to implement another series of austerity measures totalling 1.82 billion euros; they are designed to limit the budgetary deficit to 2.8% of the GDP in 2012 and to respect its European commitments. "With this budget our country is one of the best pupils in Europe," said Prime Minister Elio di Rupo as he presented the agreement concluded in the night after six days of negotiations between the six parties in the ruling coalition. These measures come in support of the plan to save more than 11.3 billion euros decided on at the end of 2011 in view of re-establishing budgetary balance. They were made necessary, under pressure from the European Commission, after the official growth forecasts from 2012 were reduced to 0.1% against an original 0.8%... [Read more](#)

Cyprus: the GDP contracts in 2011



According to official revised figures published on 9th March 2012, the Cypriot economy contracted by 0.7% in 2011 after having risen by 1% in 2010. The crisis has had a particular effect on the construction, industrial, electricity, transport and trade sectors, whilst tourism which represents 12% of the GDP, banking, healthcare and education all prospered. In 2011 Cyprus hosted 10.1% more tourists than the previous year, mainly Britons, Russians and Germans. The revenues generated by the sector soared by 12.9% over one year to 1.75 billion euros... [Read more](#)

Progress in restructuring the Greek Debt



On 9th March the Greek Finance Minister announced that most private creditors and investors had accepted to exchange their bonds or to modify the conditions governing their investments. Creditors were invited to make exchange or amendment proposals, notably on 177 billion euros in bonds issued by the Greek State. Proposals were received to a total of 152 billion euros in bonds of this kind, ie 85.8% of the total offered for exchange. Proposals made on these foreign and state bonds rose to 69%. This operation, the most extensive ever made in the world, should enable a reduction of the public debt from 160% to 120.5% of the GDP by 2020 and open the way to a second Eurogroup aid plan... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

IMF: new loan for Greece



The IMF executive is to suggest to Member States that the institution grant a further loan of 28 billion euros to Greece said the IMF's director general, Christine Lagarde on 9th March 2012. The IMF intends to replace the loan granted in May 2010 of 30 billion euros - 10 billion of which are still to be paid out. The remaining sum will be paid in a new loan. The new loan is due to be an extended credit facility - a type of loan that is designed for countries with long term problems. Ms Lagarde suggest paying this loan over four years and for it to be reimbursable over a maximum of ten years... [Read more](#)

Spain: a code of good conduct governing evictions



The Spanish government approved a "code of good conduct" on 9th March designed for the banks, in order to avoid, in the most dramatic situations, evictions of indebted families, who can no longer reimburse their housing loans. "In this Council of Ministers we adopted measures to palliate the dramatic situation of many Spaniards who have lost

everything, who have lost their work," declared the government's spokesperson Soraya Saenz de Santamaria to the press just as the country is suffering a record unemployment rate of 22.85%. There are "many families - more than one and a half million - all whose members are unemployed, families without income and in the face of the impossible task of paying their mortgage, they are about to be evicted ..." she added... [Read more](#)

Italy in Recession



Italy entered into recession at the end of 2011 with a contraction of 0.7% of its GDP in the fourth quarter, in comparison with the previous quarter said the statistics institute Istat on 12th March. This new GDP contraction, after that of 0.2% recorded in the third quarter marks the entry of the third euro zone economy into recession, which is typified by a GDP decline over at least three consecutive quarters. Year on year the GDP declined by 0.4% in the fourth quarter against an initial estimation of -0.5% published on 15th February added Istat in its press release. Over 2011 as a whole Italy recorded growth of 0.5% in corrected data against a first estimate of 0.4%... [Read more](#)

Slovakia: GDP increase in 2011



According to the National Statistics Bureau, Slovakia witnessed a 3.3% increase in its GDP in 2011. Although figures are quite encouraging the Slovakian government has however reviewed its growth forecasts downwards for 2012. Because of the euro zone debt crisis forecasts only target 1.1% growth instead of an initial 1.7%. Moreover no recession is forecast for the year to come... [Read more](#)

European Council :

Herman van Rompuy meets the new Prime Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina



On 9th March the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy met the new Prime Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vjekoslav Bevanda. He said he was pleased with the formation of the government, which shows the Bosnians' ability to "overcome their differences". He mentioned the reforms undertaken in order to come closer to European standards. He welcomed the vote on the laws governing the census and State aid. He called on Bosnia-Herzegovina to continue along this route and to bring its Constitution in line with the European Convention on Human Rights. He said that the EU was ready to "provide the necessary aid and assistance" to enable Bosnia-Herzegovina to "accomplish its European aspirations" and that it was still "committed" in support of "the West Balkans' European future"... [Read more](#)

Meeting between H van Rompuy and the Armenian President



On 6th March the President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy and the President of the Republic of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan met in Brussels. Mr van Rompuy declared that the determination for reform and for democratic elections expressed by the Armenian president was a good thing and that this would lead to a strengthening in the links between Armenia and the EU. The President of the Council also said that negotiations for a free trade agreement, an association agreement and also one on visas had moved forward... [Read more](#)

Commission :

The Commission steps up its pressure on Hungary



On 17th January last the European Commission addressed three warning letters to the Hungarian government because it deemed that the new Constitution and the laws that had entered into force did not guarantee the independence of the Central Bank, the national data protection bodies and the legal authorities. Since Hungary has remained silent on this matter, the Commission sent two motivated opinions on 7th March in which it demands expressly that the country brings its laws in line with European law. The two subjects on which the Commission insists are a law

concerning the independence of the personal data protection authority and a law on the reduction of the retirement age of judges from 70 to 62 years of age. The Commission has given the Hungarian government one month to act... [Read more](#)

Access to water in the world



On the occasion of the World Water Forum in Marseilles the European Commission's DG for Development and Cooperation has published a study on the water projects and sanitary installation programmes that it supports. Since 2004, its programmes have made it possible to help more than 32 million people, in over 30 countries thanks to an annual package of around 400 million euros. The EU's water initiative that its Member States adopted in 2002 to help towards achieving the Millenium Goals also enabled the payment of 700 million additional euros... [Read more](#)

New Financial Regulation



The European Commission's DG Internal Market has published a draft regulation that aims to regulate the securities settlement system. Indeed this sector is tightly controlled nationally but not from an international point of view. This document suggests a remedy to this in order to facilitate securities settlement Europe wide, by re-establishing confidence on five points: the length of the settlement cycle, problems linked to paper securities, the lack of regulation, the fragility of operators and notably their exposure to banking aleas and finally the lack of legislation on agreements between central securities depositories... [Read more](#)

Opinion of the European Data Protection Supervisor



On 7th March the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), Peter Hustinx criticised the draft law announced by the Commission on 25th January to reform the European rules governing data protection. In his opinion "we are still far from a coherent set of data protection rules both on a national and European level in all EU policy areas." In his opinion he explains that the reform does not apply to the EU's institutions and bodies. Moreover there are too many possible exemptions in the reform with regard to the transfer of data to third countries. The EDPS also expresses his reticence about the excessive power enjoyed by the Commission notably in terms of the management and harmonisation of the various national supervisory authorities... [Read more](#)

European Citizens encounter difficulties in exercising their right to vote



The debate over the European Citizens' right to vote in local elections has come to the fore once more. On 9th March the Commission published a report which states that only 10% of the 8 million people of voting age and who live in a member country other than their birth country exercise their right to vote at present. This may be happening for several reasons: citizens do not know what their rights are sometimes and legal obstacles remain in spite of the satisfactory transposition of the text in question (Directive 94/80/CE). However the Commission's proposals to make 2013 "European citizens' year" should improve the present situation... [Read more](#)

Council :

Borders and Migrations - the focus of the Justice and Internal Affairs Council



On 8th March the 27 Interior and Justice Ministers addressed the issue of the governance of the Schengen Area, which they agreed to improve, notably regarding relations with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. They also took note of shortcomings in Greece's management of its borders. Ministers adopted conclusions that aimed to guarantee greater solidarity and coordination between the Member States when one of them has to face an exceptional migratory flow in order to be better prepared and to react more effectively. They also discussed progress regarding the Schengen Information System and the Common European Asylum System... [Read more](#)

Difficult debate over GMO's



On 9th March the 27 EU Environment Ministers discussed the possibility of a Member State being able to refuse GMO's, authorised by the European authorities, being cultivated on their territory. A compromise put forward by the Danish presidency suggests that these restrictions would be possible under certain conditions, during and after the authorisation process. But Member States' representatives could not adopt this compromise because of concern over incompatibility with WTO rules and the desire to avoid repetitions and incoherence with existing European rules. Ministers also prepared the next Durban Round conferences and Rio+20... [Read more](#)

Towards a single railway market in Europe



On 8th March the Council adopted at first reading its position on the single European railway market after an agreement was concluded with the European Parliament at the end of 2011. This new text notably guarantees greater independence to supervisory bodies and enables Member States to adapt progressively to the new tariffication rules. It also enables a better organisational separation between the various players in the railway market especially those who manage and use the infrastructures... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Proposals to start up negotiations with Iran again over the nuclear issue



On 6th March, the Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the European Union, Catherine Ashton addressed a letter to Saeed Jalili, leader of the Iranian Supreme Security Council, in which she suggests resuming dialogue between the Iranian authorities and the international community (notably with the EU, the USA, Russia, China, France, Germany and the UK) on the nuclear issue. She stresses the need to restore confidence and gradually come to agreement. This letter follows the recent tension between Iran and Israel and the publication of a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which expressed doubts about the civil aims of the Iranian nuclear installations... [Read more](#)

Germany :

The German government approves the transposition of the rules included in the fiscal package



On 7th March the German government approved the text that plans the transposition of rules included in the European tax package over into German law. The text has to be approved by 2/3 of German MPs although the German law already includes a budgetary discipline rule. This situation might be explained by the fact that the new European pact plans for the possibility of launching legal proceedings with the European Court of Justice against countries that do not respect the new budgetary rules which affects Germany's sovereignty and requires a greater majority on the part of the German parliament. The German government must therefore negotiate with the opposition (firstly with the SPD and then Bündnis 90/Die Grünen... [Read more](#)

Franco-German River Cooperation



The French and German police forces inaugurated the "Franco-German River Police" on 9th March; it comprises a river brigade that will lead to more effective action on the Rhine. This new entity employs 24 civil servants from Bad-Württemberg and 21 French gendarmes (divers, captains, ultra-sound technicians ...) It has three bases, in Kehl in Germany and in the Alsatian towns of Gamsheim (Lower-Rhine) and Vogelgrun (Upper-Rhine). River traffic surveillance, the prosecution of infringements of navigation rules and diving operations are notably some of the missions undertaken on the 160km of the Rhine from Basel to Baden-Baden between the Swiss borders in the south and the German borders in the north... [Read more](#)

Berlin adopts a new communication strategy about Europe



German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle has presented a new communication strategy about Europe. The strategy "Explaining Europe - Debating Europe" is based on the idea that Europe is in a decisive phase of its development right now. Germany's Foreign and European policy continues to move towards a double goal: "We must take part in Europe's integration. At the same time we must convince Germany's population, in Europe and beyond, that we are on the right track.".. [Read more](#)

Denmark :

Birth rate at its lowest since 1988



According to data made public on 5th March by the Danish National Health Council (Sundhedsstyrelsen) only 59,000 babies were born in Denmark in 2011. This figure represents 4000 births less in comparison with the previous year as well as being the lowest birth rate since 1988. In explanation to this specialists point to uncertainty linked to the economic environment. In particular the crisis is said to be encouraging couples to wait longer before they start a family... [Read more](#)

France :

"My credo for Europe" according to François Fillon



On 8th March Prime Minister François Fillon signed an article in "Le Point" in which he pleads in support of political Europe. In spite of his "no" in 1992 to the Maastricht Treaty he explains that with the economic crisis he has become aware of the "fragility of the European structure" and he now feels a kind of "European Patriotism". He reviews the two treaties signed at the start of the year: the one establishing the European Stability Mechanism and the one on Stability, Coordination and Governance. He criticises the Socialist Party for the way it addresses issues without thinking about the seriousness and urgency of the problems Europe faces. The European debate is now the heart of the Presidential campaign. To avoid chaos "the time has come to move on to true political union.".. [Read more](#)

Lithuania :

A new nuclear power plant in 2021



Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip, Latvian, Valdis Dombrovskis and Lithuanian Andrius Kubilius said on 8th March that they supported the construction of a nuclear power plant in Visaginas, Lithuania. They declared that they wanted to step up work to respect the deadline planned for 2021 regarding the implementation of the project. The Baltic Heads of Government also looked into the measures to take to restrict the import of electricity from third countries whose deadlines and implementation would be set in their next meeting... [Read more](#)

Slovenia :

Slovenia: on the path to introducing a "golden budgetary rule" into the Constitution



Following the meeting of all of the representatives of the parliamentary parties on 5th March, Janez Jansa, the Slovenian Prime Minister declared that the golden rule established by the budgetary pact adopted by 25 of the 27 EU Member States on 2nd March will soon be integrated into the Constitution. An amendment to article 148 is therefore being planned. The head of government said that the application of this budgetary rule is due to be governed by an execution law that required a 2/3 majority if it was to be adopted. Janez Jansa also said that the European budgetary pact would be ratified "as soon as possible.".. [Read more](#)

Croatia :

Croatia: signature of the EU membership treaty

Croatian MPs unanimously ratified Croatia's EU membership treaty on



9th March. Of 151 MPs, 136 were present and voted in support of the document signed in Brussels after six years of negotiations. EU Membership was indeed approved by the Croats to a total of 66% in a referendum on 22nd January 2012. Although Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy and Malta have already done so, the treaty still has to be ratified by all 27 Member States of the EU before it enters into force, planned for 1st July 2013... [Read more](#)

OSCE :

The OSCE delivers its report on electoral fraud in Russia



On 5th March the OSCE delivered its report on the Russian presidential election during which it observed infringements, both during the campaign and with regard to procedural irregularities. As outgoing Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin indeed benefited from better conditions - in terms of access to the media for example. The organisation also noted complaints lodged by people who suffered pressure on the part of their superiors who forced them to take part in the new President's campaign. Finally the report reviews voting conditions (ballot stuffing, multiple votes, late additions to the voting lists) and counting (poor organisation and lack of transparency)... [Read more](#)

World Bank :

Airlines denounce the carbon tax



On 11th March Airbus, six European airlines (Air France, British Airways, Lufthansa, Iberia, Virgin, Atlantic, Air Berlin) and two companies (MTU, Safan) sent a letter to the French, German, British and Spanish governments in which they denounce the carbon tax implemented by the European Union. They criticise in particular the "unilateral nature of this measure" that entered into force on 1st January last and which forces airlines that work in the EU to purchase the equivalent of 15% of their CO2 emissions ie 32 million tonnes. This intervention follows fears of trade retaliation on the part of China. Companies are asking for a "general discussion" within the International Civil Aviation Organisation on this subject... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Growth reviewed downwards



According to estimations published on 6th March by Eurostat the euro zone and European Union's GDP recorded a contraction of 0.3% in the fourth quarter of 2011 in comparison with the previous quarter, but figures increased respectively by 0.7% and 0.9% in comparison with the fourth quarter of 2010. In 2011 the GDP rose by 1.4% in the euro zone and by 1.5% in the EU... [Read more](#)

Trade surplus



According to a Eurostat study published on 12th March, the European Union recorded a 4.4 billion euro surplus in its current account in the fourth quarter of 2011, compared to a deficit of 21.4 billion in the fourth quarter of 2010. In the fourth quarter of 2011 the Union's trade in goods was in deficit by 11.3 billion euros compared to a deficit of 30.4 billion in the fourth quarter of 2010. In the 4th quarter of 2011 trade in services recorded a surplus of 31.4 billion euros against a surplus of 25.1 billion in the fourth quarter of 2010... [Read more](#)

Women, Old Age and Precarity



On the occasion of international women's day and as part of the European Year of Active Ageing, Eurostat published a study on 8th March on the share of women in the population aged 65 and over. There are nearly 40% more women in this age group than men, a figure that rises to around 50% in the Baltic States. Moreover, more women than men are threatened by poverty and social exclusion,

bearing witness to the progress that still has to be made. Finally the study shows that the higher the level of education the less differences there are between men and women in terms of employment rates... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Inequality between men and women in the EU



On the occasion of international women's day the European Parliament and Eurobarometer published a survey on "Inequality between men and women in the European Union". According to the results 52% of Europeans believe that inequality between men and women is still a major problem. Although 60% of Europeans think that the phenomenon has tended to decline over the last decade major problems still exist. Inequalities deemed more important are violence against women (48%) and wage inequality (43%). To counter this inequality those interviewed are divided with regard to incentives (26%) and restrictive measures (27%). Most of them (47%) believe that the response should be taken on a European level... [Read more](#)

In spite of the crisis, Europeans continue to travel



Eurobarometer has published a survey on European behaviour with regard to tourism. In 2011 72% of Europeans travelled and more than 80% of them said they would travel again in 2012. Spain was the most visited country in 2011 (11%), followed by Italy (9%), France (8%), Germany (5%) and Greece (4%). The study also shows that more citizens chose to stay in Europe for their holidays in 2011. Even more Europeans said they would do the same in 2012... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Analysis of the Popularity of European Leaders



Amongst the leaders of the five main European countries, German Chancellor, Angela Merkel is the most appreciated by European citizens and French President Nicolas Sarkozy is the least popular, according to a BVA survey undertaken in Germany, Spain, Italy, France and the UK. Although Mr Sarkozy and Angela Merkel are both known equally in these five countries (93% for the first and 92% for the latter), the French president is only liked by 33% of the population whilst 58% dislike him, and the German leader is liked by 50% of those interviewed and disliked by 41%... [Read more](#)

Germany's exit from Nuclear power: the presentation of various scenarios



The French Institute for International Relations (IFRI) has published a study on the issues at stake in Germany's withdrawal from nuclear power in 2011 and its effects on the economy and the energy policy. The study is based on an analysis by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which was published in August 2011. The study by six German climate and energy experts analyses the various scenario for energy transition and looks into the effects in terms of energy requirements, electricity prices and CO2 emissions. The various effects of gas and coal powered plants in replacement of nuclear energy have been calculated and then compared, other possibilities were also looked into... [Read more](#)

Will the EU road open for Kosovo as well?



Following Serbia's achievement of EU candidate country status on 2nd March the Finnish Institute of International Affairs published a study on 7th March entitled "Will the EU road open for Kosovo as well?" Reviewing the agreement made between Serbia and Kosovo, the author looks into Kosovo's future relations with the EU in view of Serbia's new status... [Read more](#)

What is the EU's commitment in Asia in terms of Maritime Security



The Foundation for International Relations and External Dialogue (FRIDE) has published a study on "Maritime Security in Asia: what the EU can do". It shows the need for greater political commitment on the part of the EU in Asia, which may help enhance its role as a global player. More precisely the author analyses the investment required of the EU in the maritime security sector... [Read more](#)

Publications :

Report on the future of the euro zone



On 6th March French Senator Jean Arthuis delivered a report to the French Prime Minister François Fillon on the future of the euro zone; this paper aims to "enhance euro zone governance and to guarantee its long term stability". He suggests the development of "governance that is specific to the euro zone" with the creation of a European Treasury and the merger of the posts of President of the European Council (also president of the euro zone summits) with the post of President of the European Commission. He pleads in support of making the Eurogroup official (euro zone ministers) by providing it with the power of decision. He also suggests turning the European statistics office (Eurostat) into an "independent agency", to "harmonise the presentation of the national budgets". He would also like to create a "parliamentary euro zone supervisory committee comprising national MPs and MEPs"... [Read more](#)

When military spending in Asia exceeds that of Europe



Asia's military spending is due to rise above that of Europe for the first time this year according to the annual report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) on the balance of power in the world "Military Balance in 2012". "Whilst spending levels per capita in Asia are significantly less than in Europe in 2012, at the present pace military spending in Asia will probably be more than in Europe in 2012 according to estimates." According to the report by the IISS, China, that has started a modernisation programme of its armed forces and military equipment funded by its strong growth rate leads the way in Asia as far as military spending is concerned... [Read more](#)

From the Europe of States to the Europe of Citizens



On 8th March Le Monde published an article by Yves Bertonecini (Secretary General of Notre Europe), Thierry Chopin (the Foundation's Studies Director), Jérôme Cloarec (chair of Atelier Europe), Jean-François Jamet (spokesperson of EuropaNova), Thomas Klau (director of the European Council's Bureau on Foreign Relations) and Dominika Rutkowska-Falorni (Secretary General of Mouvement européen) in which they call for a "re-balancing between the two legitimate bodies that make up the European Union: that of the States and that of the Citizens". They suggest the "direct or indirect election of the President of the Commission," the appointment of commissioners by "representatives of the peoples of Europe" and a more proportional representation of the European Parliament. The crisis invites us to rethink the political, social and economic model of the European Union. All plead for greater federalism... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Degas at the Musée d'Orsay



The Musée d'Orsay is organising an exhibition devoted to Edgar Degas (1834-1917) until July 1st 2012. It focuses more particularly on the place of the nude in this artist's work, since he explored this theme using various techniques ranging from painting, sculpture, drawing, prints to pastels... [Read more](#)

Art Fair in Maastricht

Until 25th March 2012 the 25th Art and Antique's Fair (TEFAF) is taking place in Maastricht. On this occasion collectors will be able to admire,



and even buy pictures, decorative objects and other works of art and antiques that have been assessed by 29 specialised committees... [Read more](#)

Salvador Dali Exhibition in Rome



The Vittoriano Complex is hosting an exhibition devoted to Spanish artist Salvador Dali until 1st July - it is called "An artist, a genius" and brings together drawings, paintings, photographs, films, letters and objects that illustrate his work. The exhibition aims to review the personal and artistic journey of the eccentric maestro (1904-1989), whose art and personality go hand in hand... [Read more](#)

Book Fair



The 32nd book fair is being held in Paris at the Porte de Versailles from 16th to 19th March. This year it will be hosting 2000 authors and 1,200 editors from 40 countries. One year after the catastrophe in Fukushima, Japanese authors take the place of honour. A major place is also being made for the digital market. For the first time a stand is being held by Amazon, an American e-trade company which mainly sells books online... [Read more](#)

The European Union funds the reconstruction of the national library in Sarajevo



On 7th March the EU granted 4.9 million euros to the town of Sarajevo in order to complete the reconstruction of its national library. Destroyed in the wake of a fire during the 1992-1995 war, work started in 1996 with the aid of many European countries. According to the Mayor of Sarajevo, Alija Behmen, thanks to European aid the last part of work will be completed in 2014... [Read more](#)

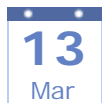
Agenda :



12th March
Brussels
Euro Zone Finance Ministers Meeting



12th-15th March
Strasbourg
European Parliament Plenary Session



13th March
Brussels
EU Economy-Finance Council



14th March
Presentation of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union in 2012" (6th edition)



16th March
Brussels
Trade Council



18th March

18
Mar

Presidential Election - Germany

19
Mar

19th-20th March
Brussels
Agriculture-Fisheries Council

The Letter is also available in:



 I love the Robert Schuman Foundation's Letter

The Letter's Editorial Team :

Magali Balent, Pauline Massis Desmarest, Inga Groth, Charles de Marcilly, Pierre Thibaudat ;
Perle Baillard, Katrin Gebhard, Mélanie Laplace, Camille Stephan, Marion Zosi.

Chief Editor: Pauline Massis Desmarest
Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin

Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

The Robert Schuman Foundation, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France, Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani.

You no longer wish to receive our letters. {LINK}