



What kind of Europe in what kind of world?



Author: Pierre Vimont

The Robert Schuman Foundation has published the transcription of the speech given by Pierre Vimont, Secretary General of the European External Action Service on the occasion of the seminar on "smart power" organised on 24th January 2012 by the Robert Schuman Foundation and the National Institute for Higher Security and Justice Studies. Speaking of the EU's position in the world, he firstly analyses the difficulties encountered by the Union in asserting itself as a real world power, then he considers the changes ongoing in the world in which the Union is developing. He then sets out recommendations for a European external policy that would enable the continent to recover "its rightful place in the international arena."

[Read more](#)

Contents

Front page! : Report 2012 - Atlas/EU - Television - EU Opinion **Elections** : Armenia - Serbia **Financial Crisis** : ECB - Forecasts - Spain - Ireland - Portugal - UK **Commission** : Air transport - Cars **Germany** : Czech Republic - Taxation/Switzerland **Hungary** : Resignation **Romania** : Resignation **Slovakia** : Government **Bosnia-Herzgovina** : Candidate? **Serbia** : Resignation **Ukraine** : Political Trial **OECD** : Aid/Development **Eurostat** : Industry - Trade **Studies/Reports** : Cohesion - Environment **Publications** : UK/Europe - Federalism **Culture** : Exhibition/Basel - Exhibition/Paris - Exhibition/Bern - Exhibition/Grenoble - Exhibition/Copenhagen

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

Front page! :

Order the "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2012"



The "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union" by the Robert Schuman Foundation, a reference work on Europe has been published. The third edition is devoted to the means to overcome the crisis with an exclusive interview with Jean-Claude Trichet, former president of the European Central Bank. All 26 articles in the Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2012" agree on one thing: "the reasons calling Europeans to unite have never been as numerous as today". Using 67 commented tables and graphs and 34 colour maps, which are mostly unique, the authors help their audience to understand all of the challenges facing the European Union. The book is available in both French and English... [Read more](#)

Order the Permanent Atlas of the European Union, a practical tool for all!



The Robert Schuman Foundation recently published the "Permanent Atlas of the European Union" with Lignes de repères, co-written by Jean-Dominique Giuliani and Pascale Joannin, Chairman and General Director of the Foundation respectively. This Atlas (available only in French) presents the Union, its institutions and each of the Member States via their story, their culture and their statistics. A unique innovation it offers free access to an internet site, www.atlas-permanent.eu, where data is updated permanently, enabling everyone to access the best information on Europe at any time... [Read more](#)

"Talking Europe" hosts Czech President Vaclav Klaus



As part of the partnership between the Robert Schuman Foundation and Audiovisuel extérieur de la France (AEF), the Foundation is broadcasting the most recent programme on its site "Talking Europe" whose guest was Czech President Vaclav Klaus. During this interview the Czech President, often accused of being Europhobic, justifies his vision of a less integrated and less technocratic Europe. The Foundation has also published some entries on the blog "those Europeans, they're mad" that is jointly run by AEF journalists and the Robert Schuman Foundation... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

13th Edition of "The European Opinion"



The Foundation for Political Innovation, in partnership with the Robert Schuman Foundation, has published the 13th edition of the European Opinion with Lignes de Repères under the management of Dominique Reynié. This edition notably includes articles by Jürgen Habermas and Jean-Dominique Giuliani. The book is available in French only on the Foundation's internet site... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Armenia: general elections in May



The Armenians will be renewing their Parliament on May 6th. The National Assembly (Azhgayin Zhghov) comprises 131 members elected for five years. 90 MPs are elected by a majority vote within one national constituency and the 41 others according to a list and by proportional representation in 41 constituencies. Each party has to win 5% of the vote to be represented in the National Assembly (7% of the vote for coalitions). The lists must include a minimum of 15% of women. Candidates must be aged at least 25. Nine political parties are facing each other on 6th May: the five parties represented in the National Assembly: the Republican Party (HHK), Prosperous Armenia (BHK), the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (HHD), Rule of Law (Orinats Erkir, OEK), and Heritage (Z), as well as the Armenian National Congress (HAK), the Communist Party (HKK), the Democratic Party and the United Armenians... [Read more](#)

Serbia: Presidential and general elections on 6th May



On 13th March the President of the Republic Boris Tadic (Democratic Party DS) set 6th May as the date for the next general elections in which the Serbs will be renewing the 250 members of the National Assembly, the only chamber in Parliament. This election is the first not to take place early since the fall of Slobodan Milosevic (October 2000). On 4th April the head of State announced his resignation and convened a presidential election (that is early by a few months) on the same day as the general elections. On 6th May next the Serbs will be appointing their local representatives and the electorate of Vojvodina (a region in the north of the country) will be appointing the members of their regional Assembly... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

The ECB maintains its main rate at 1%

After the European Central Bank's Governing Council, its president,



Mario Draghi, announced that its main rates would remain unchanged, notably due to inflation that remained over 2% and to the recession that is settling over the euro zone. He also repeated his request for national leaders to undertake vital structural reforms and to consolidate public accounts to support sustainable growth and employment... [Read more](#)

Three institutes forecast another decline in economic activity in the euro zone



On 3rd April three European statistics institutes, IFO, Istat and INSEE published a paper on the economy in which they anticipate a further decline in economic activity in the euro area in the first quarter of 2012 (-0.2%), after that registered in the last quarter of 2011. This is due to be followed by two quarters of almost total stagnation (0% and +0.1%). Indeed although financial tension has calmed, policies to reduce public spending and also the labour market, are due to continue to weigh on consumption and growth. Moreover because of rising oil prices, inflation is due to decrease very little... [Read more](#)

Historic record unemployment in Spain



According to a press release by the Spanish Employment Ministry dated 3rd April the number of unemployed reached a new record high for the 8th consecutive month with 4.75 million people out of work. The government is forecasting that the figure will rise to 24.3% by the end of 2012... [Read more](#)

A report demands additional budgetary consolidation work



A report by the Irish Fiscal Advisory Board that was published on 3rd April asks the government to make further savings to ensure that the deficit goal of 8.6% of the GDP set for 2012 is reached. According to this report, given that growth prospects have worsened since the 2012 budget was announced, there is uncertainty about whether the government can fulfil its commitment without having to take "additional discretionary measures". The government reacted to this publication saying that the data on which the report was based was not sufficiently up-to-date but it did re-iterate its commitment to achieving the goal of an 8.6% public deficit in 2012... [Read more](#)

The IMF approves payment of 5.17 billion euros to Portugal



On 4th April the Board of the IMF approved payment of 5.17 billion euros to Portugal. This is part of an economic aid programme for Portugal over a three year period, the total amount of which is 27.63 billion euros... [Read more](#)

The Bank of England maintains its main rate at 0.5%



On 4th April the Bank of England (BoE) announced, unsurprisingly, that its main rate of 0.5% would be maintained. The latter has remained unchanged since March 2009. The BoE's Monetary Policy Committee also chose not to change the amount of its asset purchase programme that remains at £325 billion... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Airlines that are banned from flying in the EU



On 3rd April the European Commission adopted the 19th update of the airlines that for security reasons are banned from using or have restricted use of EU airspace. Conviasa, a Venezuelan airline was added to the list because of unsolved security problems. This new list will replace the one established in November 2011... [Read more](#)

Simplification in vehicle registration in another Member State



On 4th April the European Commission put forward a proposal that aims to simplify the registration of motor vehicles in another Member State. The measures are mainly due to benefit citizens who change State of residence, as well as businesses that provide company cars or car hire firms. They should also help in preventing the trafficking of stolen cars in Europe. Direct cooperation between competent national authorities will save users a great amount of long, difficult administrative procedures... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Angela Merkel makes an official visit to Prague



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Czech Prime Minister Petr Necas met on 3rd April in Prague. On the agenda were the European fiscal pact and the nuclear issue. Angela Merkel was received by President Vaclav Klaus and took part in a debate with students at the law faculty of the Charles of Prague University... [Read more](#)

Switzerland and Germany modify their fiscal agreement for 2013



On 5th April Switzerland and Germany signed a complementary protocol to their tax agreement signed in September 2011. The text is due to be put to the Swiss parliament and is due to enter into force in 2013. The content of the agreement remains unchanged according to the two parties; it guarantees taxation on German assets placed in Switzerland. The fiscal agreement is due to come before the Bundesrat (the Chamber of the Länder in which a majority of SPD and Greens sit) who have already said they are against it... [Read more](#)

Hungary :

Resignation of the Hungarian President Pal Schmitt



On 2nd April Hungarian President Pal Schmitt announced his resignation to Parliament. The previous week the scandal whereby he plagiarised his doctorate thesis in 1992 led to the withdrawal of his diploma by the Semmelweis University of Budapest. The opposition demanded the resignation of the head of State. Refusing to quit office at first he then admitted that he had not been honest. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced that the new president would be appointed on 16th April next... [Read more](#)

Romania :

Resignation of the Romanian Environment Minister, Laszlo Borbely



The Romanian Environment Minister, Laszlo Borbely resigned on 5th April, the day after the request to lift his immunity by the anti-corruption court (DNA), announced Prime Minister Mihai Razvan Ungureanu. The latter said that he would take over Mr Borbely's post immediately... [Read more](#)

Slovakia :

Robert Fico, Slovakian Prime Minister



Slovakian President Ivan Gasparovic officially appointed Robert Fico (SMER-SD) as Prime Minister on 4th April. For the first time since Slovakia's independence in 1993 the government has been formed with one party only. With 83 seats out of the 150 members of the Slovakian Parliament, the government comprises 14 ministers including one woman and three non-aligned experts. He is to deliver his programme to Parliament in order to win its confidence within 30 days... [Read more](#)

Bosnia-Herzegovina :

Bosnia-Herzegovina must make "decisive steps" towards the EU



On 3rd April, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the 1992-1995 war, British Foreign Minister, William Hague and German, Guido Westerwelle asked Bosnia-Herzegovina to make "decisive steps" towards the EU. Aware that the government has to make an effort, notably with regard to the Constitution that has been deemed discriminatory by the European Court of Human Rights, the two ministers said that Bosnia-Herzegovina might ask for the status of candidate country by the end of 2012... [Read more](#)

Serbia :

Serb President, Boris Tadic, resigns



Serb President Boris Tadic announced on 4th April that he was resigning thereby putting an end to his mandate 9 months ahead of the officially planned date. He took advantage of the occasion to announce an early presidential election that will take place at the same time as the general elections on 6th May next, as well as his decision to stand again. Several people have already said that they will run... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Political Repression continues in Ukraine



Former Ukrainian Environment Minister in Yulia Timoshenko's government, Gueorgui Filipchuk was sentenced to three years in prison for abuse of power on 6th April - a judgement that has been denounced by the opposition as "a continuation of political repression." He is the third former minister to be convicted after Ms Timoshenko, former Prime Minister who is serving a seven year prison sentence and former Interior Minister Yuri Lutsenko, who was sentenced to four years in prison... [Read more](#)

OECD :

OECD: public development aid decreasing



On 4th April the OECD published figures on public development aid for 2011. It is down by 2.7% in comparison with 2010 ie total aid of 133.5 billion \$. This total represents 0.31% of the GDP. The crisis brought the continuous rise, ongoing since 1997, to an end. The USA is still the primary donor with 30.7 billion, ahead of Germany (more than 10 billion euros) and the UK. The EU provides 54% of aid on the part of developed countries... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

A rise in industrial production prices in the euro zone and in the European Union



According to figures published by Eurostat on 3rd April, in February 2012, in comparison with January 2012, the industrial price index increased by 0.6% in the euro zone and by 0.8% in the European Union. In January prices increased by 0.8% and by 0.6% respectively. In February 2012, compared with February 2011, industrial production prices recorded a rise of 3.6% in the euro zone and 4.3% in the Union... [Read more](#)

General decrease in Europe in the volume of retail trade sales



According to figures published by Eurostat on 4th April for February 2012 the volume of retail trade sales is declining. It dropped by 0.1% in the euro zone and by 0.9% in the EU. According to an analysis per sector "food, drink and tobacco" increased by 0.4% in the Union whilst the non-food sector has declined by 0.3%. According to an analysis per Member State, Slovenia (-0.5%) and Poland (-2.7%) recorded the greatest decreases whilst Malta (+4.7%) and Luxembourg (+2.2%) recorded the highest increases... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Le Pacte de cohésion à l'épreuve de la crise"



"Notre Europe" has published a study by Marjorie Jouen entitled "Le Pacte de cohésion à l'épreuve de la crise". The author analyses the cohesion policy 2014-2020 and reviews the problems set by the renewal of the cohesion pact. She also looks into the ways to come to a bilateral, sustainable compromise post-2013... [Read more](#)

Results of the Danish environment policy



The Economic Council (Det økonomiske råd) has published a report on the Danish environment policy 2000-2010. According to the Council during this period progress was made in terms of air pollution but the results of the policies undertaken were disappointing in terms of the protection of biodiversity and water quality. This body is also sceptical about the investment strategy in green energies launched by Denmark. Amongst the main recommendations put forward there are greater efforts to be made in support of developing the CO2 quota market, on placing higher taxes on profits made by oil extraction companies in the North Sea and in terms of measures taken to protect biodiversity... [Read more](#)

Publications :

The UK and Europe



An essay entitled "On the edge: Britain and Europe", by Brendan Donnelly and Hugh Dykes has just been published. The two authors look into the debate over European issues in the UK and particularly the attitudes towards these subjects adopted by those, ie media and politicians, who are in a position to influence opinion. They say that this debate has been deformed by various ideas that have little to do with the EU and call for a change in the "tactics" and "rhetoric" used by British politicians... [Read more](#)

Confederation and Federation: antithesis



Whilst many refer to federalism without really knowing what it is or without wanting to apply the method, Federop has published "Confédération et fédération: antithèse". This book intends to help put an end to the errors made in interpreting federalism and in particular those which confuse and mix ideas about confederation and federation... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Renoir, between Bohemia and Bourgeoisie



Until 12th August 2012 the Art Museum of Basel is organising an exhibition devoted to the beginnings of the artistic career of Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), one of the main personalities of the French Impressionist movement. It reveals the diversity of influences reflected in the work of the young painter... [Read more](#)

Leonardo da Vinci's ultimate masterpiece



An exhibition is being held at the Louvre until 25th June 2012 - it is devoted to the "Virgin and Child with Saint Anne" a masterpiece by Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci that is not so well known. Visitors will be able to admire a series of objects and documents associated with the history of this work, such as sketches, preparatory drawings and landscape studies... [Read more](#)

Exhibition devoted to poet and painter, Hermann Hesse



For the 50th anniversary of the death of writer Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), the Fine Arts Museum in Bern is presenting the first retrospective devoted to the artist's paintings in partnership with the

Hermann Hesse Museum. The exhibition is eintitled "die Grenzen überfliegen" (Going beyond the borders). It presents subjects, genres and styles that influenced the artist. The exhibition is open until 12th September 2012... [Read more](#)

"Die Brücke: back to the origins of Expressionism"



The Museum of Grenoble is presenting a unique exhibition, which will be on until 17th June 2012, devoted to "Die Brücke". Founded in 1905 by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Fritz Bleyl, Karl Schmidt-Rottluf and Erick Heckel and then joined by Max Pechstein, Cuno Amiet and Otto Mueller, this group distinguished itself by its determination to break with artistic convention and convey, via its work, the passion and violence of life. It was the precursor of German Expressionism. On this occasion 130 pieces of work, on loan from the Die Brücke Museum of Berlin, will be on show... [Read more](#)

Hammershoi and Europe



The National Museum of Denmark (Statens Museum for Kunst) is showing the work by Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershoi (1864-1916) until 20th May 2012. This exhibition seeks to place Hammershoi in the artistic context of his time by comparing his work against that of his contemporaries such as Whistler, Carrière, Fantin-Latour, Gauguin and Khnopff... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



16th April 2012

Appointment of the new President of the Republic of Hungary



16th-19th April

Strasbourg

Plenary Session of the European Parliament

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, 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}