



## Can the European Union become a major power?



Author: Maxime Lefebvre

The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a European Issue by Maxime Lefebvre on Europe as a world power. The present crisis experienced by the European Union is pushing it towards greater thought about its future. If the European Union emerges more united, showing greater solidarity it might then find the means to strengthen its presence in the international arena. It would be vain to understand the idea "of Europe as a world power" as one which is Westphalian with a completely harmonised foreign and defence policy. The European Union is developing its "smart power" which is mid-way between "hard power" (military power) and "soft power" (the art of persuasion). Finally successful cooperation between the Member States and the Brussels' authorities is the prerequisite for the assertion of "a powerful Europe".

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### Front page! :

#### Six months to conclude the Multi-annual Financial Framework



On 11th July in Brussels the Robert Schuman Foundation is organising a meeting with Andreas Mavroyiannis, the Cypriot European Affairs Minister and Reimer Böge, MEP and rapporteur on the multi-annual financial framework. The debate will be hosted by Jean-Dominique Giuliani - the Foundation's Chairman. The speakers will discuss the present issues at stake in the multi-annual financial framework and political perspectives. The multi-annual financial framework has to be concluded during the Cypriot presidency and before the end of the year... [Read more](#)

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### Understanding the European Budgetary Pact



10 Member States (Austria, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Ireland, Denmark, Romania, Slovenia, Portugal, Greece) have already ratified the budgetary pact. The Robert Schuman Foundation regularly updates a summary table of the ratifications that have taken place in the various Union countries. It also offers you an explanatory note to the treaty... [Read more](#)

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### Financial Crisis :

#### The ECB lowers its main rate



On 5th July 2012 the President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, announced that the Governors Council had decided to lower its key rate from 1% to 0.75%. This is an historic low since it was created. This measure should enable the support of European growth, which is atone for the time being, whilst continuing to target the ECB's main goal to counter inflation. Mario Draghi then declared his institution's support to the EU's most recent decisions, notably in terms of economic and monetary governance and the restoration of the financial system... [Read more](#)

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#### Austrian Parliament gives the ESM and the Budgetary Pact its go ahead



On 4th July 2012 Austrian MPs at the Nationalrat approved the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) and the Stability, Coordination and Governance Treaty (TSCG). The ESM required a two-thirds majority that ended in a positive vote by the Greens, Social Democrats and Conservatives. 126 of the 183 MPs voted in support of the ESM, 53 against. The TSCG was adopted by a majority of 103 votes, 60 against. The Robert Schuman Foundation has put a special page on line that includes an explanatory note of the treaty as well as a summary table of the ratification procedures in the various Member States... [Read more](#)

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#### Irish Unemployment Estimated at 14.9% in June 2012



On 4th July 2012 the Central Statistics Office (CSO) the Irish national statistics office announced that the unemployment rate in June 2012 totalled 14.9%, with 451,974 now unemployed. The Irish office already revised its June forecasts upwards from 14.3% to 14.7% but this did not prevent the IMF from praising the reforms introduced by Ireland... [Read more](#)

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#### The Decrease of Unemployment in Poland



On 5th July 2012 the Polish Employment Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz published Poland's unemployment figures for the month of June. The number of unemployed totals 1.97 million which confirms the decrease recorded over the last few months. Hence unemployment totals 12.4% of the working population (against 12.6% in May and 12.9% in April). In spite of this positive prospect the unemployment rate is still higher than in 2011 when it lay at 11.8% in June... [Read more](#)

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#### The Bank of England injects £50 billion



On 5th July 2012 the Bank of England announced the injection of £50 billion ie 62.5 billion euros into the British economy. This injection will raise the total support programme given to the country's economy to £375 billion. Moreover the bank maintained its key rate at 0.5%... [Read more](#)

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#### An austerity plan to save 26 billion euros over three years

On 6th July 2012 the Italian government approved an austerity plan



that aims to save 26 billion euros over three years. Mario Monti, the President of the Italian Council, also approved a decision to freeze the recruitment of any more civil servants for the time being and a gradual decrease in the number of high ranking civil servants. The government announced that it wanted to avoid any tax increases before June 2012 and that it wanted to "reduce excessive spending without affecting the quality of services.".. [Read more](#)

#### Work has to be shared by all



The abolition of the 13th and 14th month of salaries for civil servants and Portuguese pensioners, a leading measure in the austerity policy undertaken in this country that is being helped by international funding, was deemed anti-constitutional by the Constitutional Court on 5th July. These cuts are "an infringement of the principle of equality" that is part of the Portuguese Constitution because they oblige civil servants and pensioners to make an "unprecedented additional sacrifice for all of the citizens," explained the Constitutional Court. The Portuguese government answered by saying it would extend wage cuts to all Portuguese employees, which to date had only been limited to civil servants and pensioners. "The only solution to keep up the adjustment of finances, vital for Portugal to fulfil its commitments is to extend the measures to others," it declared... [Read more](#)

#### Commission :

##### More security for financial product consumers



On 3rd July 2012 the European Commission put forward legislation that aims to step up consumer security in terms of financial services. Based on the lack of confidence that the crisis has created, the Commission has realised that the products being sold do not always match consumer requirements. The package comprises three proposals: regarding packaged retail investment products (PRIPs), on the Insurance Mediation Directive, and the on the strengthening of the protection given to investment fund purchasers. According to Michel Barnier, the European Commissioner for the Internal Market, this package places the consumer at the heart of the process so that he can "choose a product based on clear and reliable information.".. [Read more](#)

##### Passenger Rights: new application to know your rights



During the summer holiday the European Commission will be launching a new smartphone application to inform passengers of their rights in the event of the cancellation or the delay of flights, changes to timetables etc ... This application that will work on four mobile platforms (iPhone, and iPad by Apple, Google's Android, Blackberry's RIM and Microsoft's Windows Phone 7) available in 22 EU languages, concerns air and rail transport. The application explains passenger rights for every problem that may occur. For example if you cannot embark due to a cancelled flight you can ask for compensation the total of which may range between 125euro and 600euro. The application also tells you who to complain to if you think that your rights have not been respected... [Read more](#)

##### OLAF survey into fraud to the detriment of the Union's budget



On 3rd July 2012 the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) published its annual 2011 report. According to the 2011 figures there were 463 cases, 691 million euros were recovered and a total of 511 years in prison were ordered. OLAF's battle is particularly important in the present economic crisis. The report notably includes crimes that affected the EU budget (contraband of biofuel, fraudulent calls for tender in the Structural Funds). Indeed the resolution of a case in which there was fraud in the Structural Funds discovered by the Italian authorities led to the recovery of 382 million euros... [Read more](#)

## Parliament :

### The European Parliament rejects an anti-counterfeit trade agreement



On 4th July 2012 MEPs rejected, 478 votes against, 39 in support and 165 abstentions, the Anti-Counterfeit Trade Agreement, otherwise known as ACTA, concluded between the EU and ten other countries including the USA, Japan, Canada, Australia, South Korea, Morocco, Mexico in view of implementing better anti-counterfeit rules at international level. It is the first time that the European Parliament has vetoed an international trade agreement. Hence neither the EU nor any of its Member States will be able to join the treaty. David Martin (S&D, UK), rapporteur, had called to vote against ACTA because of the threats it meant for citizens' freedom, even though the measures should be interpreted as providing greater protection to intellectual property... [Read more](#)

### The European Parliament asks for real proposals "before September"



In a resolution adopted on 14th July 2012, 501 votes in support, 132 against and 38 abstentions, MEPs stress the importance of the measures taken during the European Council in response to the crisis. They believe that an important step has been taken towards banking union. However they are asking the Commission to put forward real proposals to strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union before September. They believe that the Herman van Rompuy report forms a good base for this. However it is not enough just to involve the European institutions but also national parliaments, social partners and civil society... [Read more](#)

### Launch of "projects bonds" pilot phase



On 4th July 2012 MEPs gave the greenlight, 579 votes in support, 32 against and 4 abstentions to the launch of the pilot phase of the "projects bonds". These are loans that are guaranteed by the EIB, and which will aim to fund major infrastructure projects. According to Commission estimates with some 230 million euros in guarantees drawn from the European budget these projects bonds will enable the mobilisation of 4.3 billion euros amongst private investors... [Read more](#)

### Single European Railway Area



On 30th July 2012 MEPs adopted a resolution designed to stimulate the supply and improve the quality of international freight and passenger services. This text finalises the separation between the managers and users of the networks to guarantee fair competition between the latter. National and independent regulators will ensure the perfect implementation of these competition rules. The text also includes incentives to modernise trains and make them safer and quieter. The text now has to be adopted by the Council by December. The Commission is also due to put a text forward soon that will aim to foster the deregulation of railway traffic for passengers on the national markets... [Read more](#)

## Council :

### More transparency of derivatives



On 4th July 2012 the Council gave the green light to all amendments approved by the European Parliament on a text that aims to strengthen the transparency of derivatives. This text notably plans for the clearing of standardised OTC derivative contracts through central counterparties as well as the obligation to declare all derivative contracts. The European Securities Market Authority will guarantee the surveillance of this market and notably the respect of this text that will enter into force at the end of 2012... [Read more](#)

## Finland :

### New Defence Minister

The head of the party representing the Swedish minority in Finland,



Carl Haglund took office as Defence Minister on 5th July 2012, replacing Stefan Wallin who has resigned. Aged 33 Carl Haglund MEP since 2009 is the youngest member of the wide Finnish government coalition led by Jyrki Katainen... [Read more](#)

## France :

### Franco-German Friendship Festival in Reims



The French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel met on 8th July 2012 in Reims to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Franco-German reconciliation. Fifty years after the meeting of General de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in the same town the two leaders called for the strengthening of friendship between the two countries. "Our friendship inspires Europe. We do not want to give anyone any lessons. We just want to be an example," said François Hollande. Angela Merkel stressed that "Europe is more than just a currency and the Franco-German relationship is inevitable in this regard, it has influenced the unification of Europe quite significantly and it has taken Europe forwards," but "it is not an exclusive relationship, everyone is invited to join in..." [Read more](#)

### Third Conference of the "Friends of the Syrian People"



The "Friends of the Syrian People", a group formed by around 100 States and several representatives of the Syrian opposition met on 6th July 2012 in Paris. Participants called solemnly on the Syrian regime to respect its commitments in view of implementing the six point crisis resolution plan set out by Kofi Annan, the UN/Arab League Special Envoy. They also called on all Syrians and all civil society organisations to publicly dissociate themselves from the infringements to Human Rights committed by the Syrian regime. Russia and China, both permanent members of the UN's Security Council boycotted the meeting saying they were against the forced departure of the Syrian President... [Read more](#)

## Greece :

### Antonis Samaras gains parliament's confidence



On 6th July 2012 in his general policy speech to Parliament Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras indicated that he would try to convince his European partners to privilege recovery instead of austerity asking for two extra years so that Greece could balance its public finances in exchange for a greater pace in privatisation. "We shall ask for two more years to adjust" our budgets that were initially supposed to be finalised by 2014," he said. In exchange Mr Samaras presented 9 immediate measures that are to focus on more rapid privatisation schemes. He also announced a tax amnesty for those who brought back funds invested abroad, stressing that it was imperative for the country to recover its liquidity. The head of government won the vote on confidence on 8th July, 179 MPs out of 300... [Read more](#)

## Hungary :

### The Law on the Central Bank Approved



On 6th July 2012 the Hungarian Parliament approved the final version of the law on the Central Bank. This law had been the cause of concern on the part of the IMF and the ECB before modifications, deemed to be vital, had been made - this will enable the release of aid of 15 billion euros. The conservative party alone, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orban, achieved the necessary two-thirds majority for the law to be passed. Hence 283 MPs voted in support and 30 against - there were 3 abstentions... [Read more](#)

## Italy :

### Bilateral Italy-Germany Summit

On 4th July during the German-Italian Summit the head of the Italian





government Mario Monti and German Chancellor Angela Merkel tried to dissipate any misunderstanding over tension that might have emerged in Brussels during the European Council. Showing an "excellent entente" Ms Merkel said that "we have found satisfactory solutions for everyone", during a joint press conference with Mr Monti. "We are experiencing a difficult period, but we want to overcome the problems together..." [Read more](#)

#### Czech Republic :

##### New Justice Minister in the Czech Republic



Pavel Blažek, Vice President of the Democratic Civic Party -ODS- of Czech Prime Minister Petr Necas was appointed on 3rd July 2012 as Justice Minister. He will replacing Jiri Pospisil who was dismissed by the head of government. The new minister is to continue the reform of the Czech legal system and reduce the budget in this sector... [Read more](#)

#### Romania :

##### Parliament suspends the President of Romania



On 6th July 2012 Romanian MPs approved the suspension of President Traian Basescu 256 votes in support out of a total 432. This suspension will only turn into impeachment if it is validated by a referendum that will take place on 29th July. The interim head of State will be guaranteed by the leader of the Senate, Crin Antonescu, the head of the Social Liberal Union (USL). Given the concerns expressed by the European Commission about the country's stability, Prime Minister Victor Ponta reassured his European partners saying that Romania would still respect the rule of law in line with European standards... [Read more](#)

#### UK :

##### Farnborough Airshow



The Farnborough Airshow started on 9th July 2012. American aircraft builder, Boeing is due to announce many contracts notably regarding its new 737 MAX. Airbus will probably be more discreet, even though the European company announced last week that it would be opening an outlet in the US in Alabama... [Read more](#)

##### Drastic Cuts in Armed Forces



British Defence Minister Philip Hammond gave details on 5th July of the reductions in the numbers of troops that will affect 20% of the regular armed staff by 2020, leading to the suppression of 17 units. With this draconian slimming exercise implemented as part of the "Strategic of defence and security revision (SDSR), the number of soldiers in the British armed forces will be at their lowest since the start of the 19th century. The minister admitted that these reductions were "difficult" and would be "perceived badly" in the units affected, but that they were "fair and balanced". He said that the plan had been designed "to minimise the effects of the reduction in numbers of troops and to maximise the army's effectiveness..." [Read more](#)

#### Kosovo :

##### Kosovo will achieve "total sovereignty" in September 2012



On 2nd July 2012 the International Steering Group on Kosovo announced in a press release that Kosovo will achieve "full sovereignty" in September 2012. This decision, planned for since January 2012, will be effective only in September so that the Kosovar government has time to adopt the necessary legislative texts. Kosovar Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi believes that it is a "new stage" for his country. The announcement of this decision also heralded the end of the ISG monitoring mission, which comprises the 25 countries that supported Kosovo's independence as of 17th February 2008... [Read more](#)

## Ukraine :

### The ECHR deems the arrest and detention of former Minister Lutsenko arbitrary



On 3rd July the European Court of Human Rights notably concluded that in the affair Lutsenko vs Ukraine the arrest of one of the main opposition leaders was arbitrary and the legality of his detention had not be adequately verified... [Read more](#)

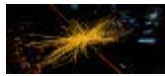
### Ukraine: the law on the Russian language leads to a real political crisis



On 4th July 2012 a thousand demonstrators gathered together in the wake of a call by the opposition notably on the part of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, at present in prison - this was in protest against the final adoption on 3rd July of a law on the Russian language approved by 248 votes out of 450 MPs. The demonstrations were such that President Viktor Yanukovich convened the leaders of parliament on the same day to discuss the means that will enable the end of the crisis. This law is still a focus of controversy since it means that Russian will become the country's second official language. The Ukrainian Parliament has suspended its work until 4th September. "The law cannot be validated by the president because of the great number of infringements that occurred during its adoption," declared the leader of Parliament, V Litvine, as he spoke in an interview... [Read more](#)

## CERN :

### Discovery of Higgs Boson



On 4th July 2012 the physicians of the CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research) officially discovered the Higgs boson. The existence of this particle, that is supposed to be at the origin of interactions with all of the other particles that exist was concluded by the physicians Peter Higgs, François Englert and Robert Brout in 1964. The confirmation of the existence of this particle comprises a major change that will influence our understanding of the universe... [Read more](#)

## UN :

### Introduction of a special rapporteur to observe Belarus



On 5th July 2012 the UN Human Rights Council decided to create the position of Special Rapporteur to observe the Human Rights situation in Belarus. Established on the request of the EU, this post will comprise making recommendations on the situation in Belarus in order to help the government assume its duties regarding Human Rights. Amongst th infringements of concern to the Council are greater restrictions on the freedom of association, meetings, opinion and expression including with regard to the media as well as accusations of torture and poor treatment whilst in detention, of the harrasement of civil society organisations. Belarus announced that it would not acknowledge the mandate of the special rapporteur and therefore that it would not cooperate with him... [Read more](#)

## OSCE :

### 21st annual session of the OSCE parliamentary assembly



On 5th July 2012 the 21st annual session of the OSCE's parliamentary assembly was opened. Human Rights were foremost in the debate. On 8th July a resolution on the Iranian nuclear programme was adopted but the proposal to extend the partnership with non-Members in the Mediterranean to include the National Palestinian Authority was rejected after lively debate, 28 votes against, 22 in support and 7 abstentions. They also approved a resolution to call on the national parliaments to ban visas and freeze aid to countries that infringe the respect of Human Rights... [Read more](#)

## NATO :

The President of NATO's Parliamentary Assembly travels to Ukraine



On 3rd and 4th July the President of NATO's Parliamentary Assembly, Karl Lamers travelled to Ukraine to talk with the Ukrainian authorities on the "apparent regression in terms of Ukraine's democratic progress" and on the imprisonment of former political leaders. After having visited Yulia Tymoshenko he then said there was a need to guarantee adequate conditions of treatment to the former Prime Minister and also to Yuri Lutsenko, former Home Affairs Minister and Valery Ivashchenko, former Defence Minister. He also insisted on the relations between NATO's Parliamentary Assembly and the Ukrainian Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada. It is in this regard he said that he was extremely worried about a system of selective justice and a lack of independence on the part of the judiciary... [Read more](#)

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**Publications :**

**Baltic States in Transition**



Peter Lang publishing has just released a book entitled "Les Etats baltes en transition - le retour à l'Europe" by Céline Bayou and Matthieu Chillaud. This book, published with the support of the Robert Schuman Foundation, is prefaced by the Foundation's Chairman, Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

**Eurobarometer :**

**Europeans extremely concerned about cyber security**



According to the latest Eurobarometer survey published on 9th July 89% of internet users in the EU avoid giving personal data on-line and 74% think that the danger of falling victim to cybercrime has increased over the last year. Moreover 12% of internet users in the EU have already been victims of on-line fraud, 8% of stolen identity. However 53% of internet users have not changed any of their pass words over the last year... [Read more](#)

**Studies/Reports :**

**"A New Approach for Greece"**



The German "Wissenschaft und Politik Stiftung" (SWP) has published a study by Daniela Schwarzer entitled "A new approach for Greece" which analyses the country's situation after the general elections. The authors make a series of recommendations for economic reforms and the strengthening of local administrations... [Read more](#)

**Euro-Russian Partnership: Complicated Relations**



The Foundation for International Relations and External Dialogue (FRIDE) has published two studies on EU-Russia relations. The first focuses on the Saint-Petersburg Summit that took place at the beginning of June 2012. The study highlights how little progress was made and difficult the relationship is between the two powers due to reciprocal mistrust and differences over strategy and priority. The second study looks into the new context in which the partnership is developing (return of Vladimir Putin to power in Russia and economic crisis in the EU) which complicates the relationship in that short term economic interests prevail over long term political commitment issues... [Read more](#)

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**Schengen and Solidarity: fragile balance between mutual confidence and mistrust**




The European Policy Centre has published a study by Yves Pascouau on the functioning of the Schengen area. Following the Arab Spring and the arrival of Tunisians on its shores, since Italy did not achieve the support it had expected from the EU, it turned to France, a decision that led to greater patrols on the French borders of the Schengen area. This response that was qualified as inadequate by Cecilia Malmström, the European Commissioner responsible for Internal Affairs, was both a protective response and a call for solidarity. The decisions taken in the wake of the Arab Spring sowed the



seeds of mistrust between countries, impeding the freedom of movement. In the author's opinion it was an example. Other areas are affected but he concludes that Schengen and free movement will not be affected... [Read more](#)

### Proposal on regulation on retail investment products

 The Cicero Group published its report on 3rd July on the European Commission's proposed regulation on retail investment products that offer small investors the chance to access the financial markets. The regulation aims to create a document with key information that investment product designers will have to set out and communicate to private investors when they want to purchase these products. It is the first of three legislation proposals in the same package adopted by the Commission on 3rd July that aims to improve consumer protection in the area of financial services... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

### My name is Bond, James Bond.



Until 5th September the Barbican in London is hosting an exhibition devoted to the most famous of spies : James Bond. The exhibition, "Designing 007 - fifty years of Bond Style" reviews the many adventures of the most British spy from his costumes, the James Bond Girls to the gadgets and the furniture... [Read more](#)

### Tyrolean Festival in Erl, Austria



The Tyrolean Festival in Erl, Austria is putting on operas, concerts and chamber music until 29th July in an idyllic setting. Founded by stage director and conductor Gustav Kuhn, the Festival is a meeting point for music amateurs from the world over. On the programme this year are notably Wagner, Puccini, Beethoven and Händel... [Read more](#)

### 66th anniversary for the Avignon Festival



Every year Avignon that has become "the theatre-town" puts on around forty different shows totalling around 300 individual performances as part of its famous Theatre Festival that will be on until 28th July 2012. Meetings with the actors performing in the festival are also organised, there are unique readings, together with film shows and exhibitions. The associate artist in this, the 66th anniversary, is stage director Simon McBurney... [Read more](#)

### Jazz Festival in Nice



The Nice Jazz Festival is being held until 12th July 2012 with Dee Dee Bridgewater as its lead artist. In this, the 19th edition, the programme is particularly rich: Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Ahmad Jamal, and many others. Several French jazz men are also on the list alongside Belgian singer Selah Sue and the new jazz star Gregory Porter. The festival pays special tribute to the gipsy culture with notably Thomas Dutronc and Emir Kusturica... [Read more](#)

### International Lyrical Art Festival in Aix-en-Provence



One of the most prestigious lyrical art festivals in Europe will be taking place in Aix-en-Provence until 27th July 2012 - every year it hosts an exceptional panel of singers, conductors and stage directors. On the agenda in July : Le Nozze di Figaro and La Finta Giardiniera by Mozart and David and Jonathas by Marc-Antoine Charpentier. Music lovers and lyrical arts amateurs will also be able to listen to Ravel's "L'enfant et les sortilèges" and Rossini's La Cambiale di Matrimonio. During the festival the public is invited to discover young talent, lyrical voices and songs from all over the world, as well as listening to jazz in various parts of the town... [Read more](#)

## Verona Arena Festival



The 90th edition of the Verona Festival will be taking place until 2nd September 2012. Many operas will be performed, amongst them "Figaro's Wedding" by Mozart, "Tosca" by Puccini, "Carmen" by Bizet ..... [Read more](#)

## Treasures from the Goethe and Schiller Archives in Weimar



On the occasion of the re-opening of the Goethe and Schiller Archives in Weimar, after two years of renovation, the Klassik Stiftung Weimar is devoting this special exhibition to Goethe and Schiller entitled "Treasures from the Goethe and Schiller Archives". This exhibition notably has manuscripts by Goethe, Schiller, Herder and Wieland on show as well as letters written by Mozart and Beethoven. The exhibition is open until 28th September... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



9th July  
Brussels  
Eurogroup Meeting (Euro Zone Finance Ministers)



10th July  
Brussels  
"Economy and Finances" Council

Nicosia  
Informal Healthcare Ministers Meeting



11th July  
Brussels  
Conference on the multi-annual financial framework



12th July  
Nicosia  
Informal Employment and Social Policy Ministers Meeting



16th and 17th July  
Brussels  
Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Nicosia  
Informal Transport and Telecommunications' Ministers Meeting

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Magali Balent, Pauline Massis Desmarest, Inga Groth, Charles de Marcilly, Pierre Thibaudat ;  
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Chief Editor: Pauline Massis Desmarest  
Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin

Contact/Suggestions  
[info@robert-schuman.eu](mailto:info@robert-schuman.eu)

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