



A Political Union for Europe



Authors: Thierry Chopin,
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Just as the Westerwelle group, an informal group on the "Future of Europe" that rallies 11 European Foreign Ministers delivered its final report on 17th September containing proposals to reform the Union's institutional system, the Robert Schuman Foundation has published a unique text by Thierry Chopin, Jean-François Jaet and François-Xavier Priollaud who identify a certain number of concrete proposals to set in place for a political union of Europe. The legal feasibility of each of these proposals is analysed with this in view.

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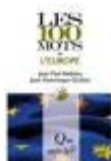
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Front page! :

"Understanding Europe Better" Prize 2012



Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation and Jean-Paul Betbèze, economist, member of the Foundation's Scientific Committee are the winners of the "Understanding Europe Better" Prize 2012. The prize will be given to them on 26th September 2012 at the townhall of Saint-Jean d'Angély for their book "Les 100 mots de l'Europe" published by PUF in the series "Que sais-je"... [Read more](#)

Free Trade Agreement EU/Korea, one year afterwards



On the occasion of the first EU/Korea Forum organised by the Robert Schuman Foundation, the Korea Foundation and the Yonsei University at the European Parliament on 19th September 2012, the European Commissioner for Trade, Karel de Gucht, reviewed the state of play one year after the adoption of the free trade agreement between the EU and Korea. He recalled that this agreement, apart from lifting tariff barriers, had enabled the emergence of an agreement on all of the technical norms, which usually

impede the liberalisation of trade. He stressed that since the conclusion of the agreement the Union's trade deficit with Korea had decreased significantly, dropping from 11 billion euros in 2010 to 3.6 in 2011. Finally he insisted on the fact that the Korean cars sold in Europe were also mainly produced there too and that they did not threaten employment... [Read more](#)

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European Defence: myths and realities



Pascale Joannin, General Director of the Robert Schuman Foundation has signed an article on European Defence as part of the media partnership. According to her the establishment of a common European Defence tool is a "vital political goal"... [Read more](#)

Television programme with Bernard Cazeneuve - European Affairs Minister



As part of the partnership between the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Audiovisuel Extérieur de la France (AEF), the Foundation has broadcast on its site the most recent programme "Talking Europe" whose guest was the French European Affairs Minister, Bernard Cazeneuve. Interviewed by Pascale Joannin, General Director of the Foundation, Bernard Cazeneuve insisted on the importance of Franco-German relations to turn the project of Europe's political union into a reality... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Results of the Belarus General Election



The Belarusians "elected" the 110 members of the Chamber of Representatives (the lower chamber of Parliament) on 23rd September. This legislative election was nothing but a sham. The country, in which the opposition forces have been absent from parliament since 1996, has not seen free, transparent elections in nearly two decades. The MPs appointed on 23rd September are mostly "independents", ie they do not belong to a political party but owe their election to the loyalty they demonstrate towards the authoritarian power of Aleksander Lukashenko. None of the opposition forces was elected... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

The Finnish Deficit revised upwards in 2013



The Finnish government announced on 17th September 2012 that according to its 2013 budget proposal the deficit in 2013 will total 2.8% of the GDP whilst it believed at the end of August that it would only be 1%. This deficit is due to total 3.4% of the GDP in 2012. The public debt is due to total 54.9% of the GDP in 2013 against 53% in 2012. As for growth it will remain at the same level in 2013 as in 2012 ie 1%. Finally unemployment will rise clearly to 8.1% in 2013 against 7.6% in 2012... [Read more](#)

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Netherlands: youth unemployment rises



According to CBS figures (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek) published on 21st September 2012 108,000 young people in the 15-25 age bracket were unemployed in the second quarter of 2012 which represents a rise of 26,000 over one year. The unemployment rate is particularly high amongst young people who have not done any studies, with their number rising nearly by half from 31,000 to 45,000... [Read more](#)

Sweden: measures to support employment and growth



On 20th September 2012 the Swedish Finance Minister, Anders Borg, presented the draft budget 2013 to the Riksdag. The latter includes further measures designed to stimulate growth and employment. These measures, totalling an estimated 2.7 billion euros, include investments in infrastructures, research and development, as well as youth employment aid and the modernisation of the legal system. The Swedish executive also included in the draft budget 2013 a significant reduction in business

taxes (from 26.3% to 22%) - an important measure because it represents 70% of the support package to the economy... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

The Commission reports on the spending of the 2011 budget



On 20th September 2012 the European Commission published its report on the European budget 2011. This report reviews the spending in 2011 in line with the multi-annual financial framework. Nearly half of the 126 billion of the 2011 budget were devoted to the Strategy 2020 goals, ie spending in investments, research and development, in pan-European transport networks, support to SME's and continuous apprenticeships. The Cohesion Policy is a strong part of this report since the rate of implementation of the various existing European funds have reached record sums, totalling sometimes 100%. The agricultural budget (CAP) involved nearly 44% of the entire 2011 budget. Finally 6% of the budget was devoted to the Neighbourhood Policy and 6% to the running of the European institutions... [Read more](#)

Towards a Volunteer European Humanitarian Corps



The European Commission announced on 19th September 2012 the creation of a corps of Humanitarian Volunteers which would be able to deploy 10,000 people to natural disaster zones between 2014 and 2020. This initiative is designed to respond to the significant increase in natural disasters across the world which is leading to "an increased need for well prepared people" for humanitarian organisations. The proposal anticipates a budget of 239.1 million euros. The first deployment is due to be undertaken in January 2014... [Read more](#)

EMI-Universal Merger- Agreement on the part of the Commission under conditions



After an inquiry the European Commission deemed on 21st September that the purchase of EMI by Universal was possible under certain conditions. Indeed this purchase respects the competition rules, together with cultural diversity and consumer protection goals. However the reserves set by the Commission are quite significant: Universal will have to relinquish several labels and many musical assets that are held by EMI at present. Universal will have to give up the "Most Favoured Nation" clause in the contracts that it concludes or renegotiates. The number of "majors" on the world musical market will drop from four to three... [Read more](#)

Council :

The Cypriot Presidency of the Union presents a revised negotiation framework



As part of the negotiations over the Union's budget the Cypriot Presidency gave a 48-page document to the Member States on 18th September 2012 explaining the way the multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020 will be negotiated. According to the report and the Cypriot Presidency it seems "inevitable" that the EU's budget will be reduced over the years to come. The Presidency is calling for Member States to negotiate on an "appropriate" level of spending, but above all, one of "quality"; it also recalled national budgetary restrictions. This document also calls on the EU to simplify the spending programmes to reduce administrative charges and costs that result from this... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

EU/China Summit - the difficulty in communicating ...



ON 20th September 2012 the 15th EU/China summit took place. The state of bilateral relations between the two powers were the focus of discussions; each side also repeated its attachment to the Strategic Partnership Agreement concluded in 2003. During this meeting the European and Chinese leaders spoke of their various joint interests (multi-lateralism, attachment to the UN, the reduction of the nuclear arsenal, respect of Human Rights, the rule of law), as well as their respective concerns (euro

crisis, the peaceful development of China, and the upkeep of a strong growth strategy). In view of strengthening the Strategic Partnership Agreement both sides pinpointed new opportunities for technical, scientific, cultural and political cooperation... [Read more](#)

Strengthening the partnership with South Africa



On 18th September 2012 during the 5th EU/South Africa Summit both sides jointly declared their priorities as part of the strategic partnership which unites them. These priorities involve the securisation of the high seas, the situation in Somalia, Sahel, Syria and Zimbabwe. The European and South African leaders repeated their shared point of view over the content of the arms trade treaty concluded at the UN, financial regulation that has to be discussed within the G20 and the respect of trade rules established by the WTO... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Start of the Festivities of the 50th Anniversary of the Elysée Treaty



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President François Hollande met on 22nd September 2012 in Ludwigsburg to celebrate the start of the festivities marking the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty. The two leaders both spoke in the very same place where General de Gaulle delivered his speech to German youth fifty years ago. "Long live Franco-German Youth. Long live European youth" declared the German Chancellor in French. The French President also spoke to the young audience, "It is your role to make the European dream real and to make it happen. Long live the Franco-German friendship." A Franco-German internet site www.elysee50.de (in German)/50ans.france-allemande.fr (in French) provides all of the information on the festivities that are taking place during this Franco-German year... [Read more](#)

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The Bundesrat votes in support of a minimum quota of women on company boards



On 21st September 2012 the Bundesrat (the upper chamber of the German parliament) voted in support of a motion that will oblige large companies to have at least 20% of women on their boards as of 2018 and 40% five years later. The motion must now be assessed in the Bundestag, the lower chamber of parliament where the majority is divided over the issue. The General Director of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Pascale Joannin has published a study on this theme entitled "Mixity, a European model"... [Read more](#)

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Even fewer children in Germany



The German Federal Statistics Bureau (Destatis) in Wiesbaden declared on 20th September 2012 that the average number of children per woman in Germany was 1.36 in 2011 - again below the 2010 rate (1.39). According to the study by the institute for demography in Germany the birthrate of qualified women has increased but they have their children at an increasingly later age (as of 35 years)... [Read more](#)

Spain :

The Spanish Government's Priorities are Growth and Employment



On 19th September 2012 the head of the Spanish government, Mariano Rajoy defined growth and the creation of jobs as his government's priorities. He also declared that the government had adopted a budgetary stability law and a labour reform in order to help the country recover. Whilst the Spanish government is committed to an austerity policy, the unemployment rate (26.63% of the working population) and poverty continue to rise... [Read more](#)

France :

The Council of Ministers proposes a "European Package"



On 19th September 2012 French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault proposed a European package to the council of ministers. The latter includes the draft law enabling the ratification of the treaty on stability, coordination and governance in the Economic and Monetary Union, the draft law relative to the programming and the governance of public finances and the European Pact for growth and employment adopted during the European Council on 28th and 29th June 2012. This European package aims to enable France to move forwards towards the integration of Europe... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

[Mario Monti receives Mariano Rajoy, Enda Kenny and Antonis Samaras](#)



On 21st September 2012 the President of the Italian Council, Mario Monti was host to Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras, Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny and the head of the Spanish government, Mariano Rajoy. The situation in the euro zone was the focus of discussions. They all repeated their joint belief in maintaining the integrity and stability of the euro zone whilst continuing European integration as mentioned in the report by the President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy... [Read more](#)

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[FIAT commits to maintaining its position in Italy](#)



On 22nd September 2012 in Rome after a meeting with the President of the Italian Council Mario Monti, FIAT executives announced that they were committed to maintaining their industrial presence in Italy. Mario Monti and the CEO of Sergio Marchionne's group promised to undertake joint work over the next few weeks to define the conditions required for the enhancement of the company's competitiveness. These joint commitments are a bid to provide reassurance after the car maker's announcement on 13th September 2012 that it was giving up its idea of "Fabbrica Italia"... [Read more](#)

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Netherlands :

[A 2013 austerity budget presented to the Dutch MPs](#)



On 18th September 2012 the resigning Finance Minister, Jan Kees de Jager presented an austerity budget for 2013 to Dutch MPs. This anticipates bringing the deficit down to 2.7% in 2013 against the 4.7% of 2011, thereby satisfying European requirements in terms of public deficit. He presented a series of measures to a total of 12.4 billion euros in savings... [Read more](#)

Slovenia :

[Building of the Transeuropean rail link in Slovenia](#)



On 18th September 2012 the electronics group Thalès announced that it had signed a 40 million euro contract with the Slovenian Transport Minister, Zvonko Cernac, for the equipment of the Slovenian part of the trans-European rail link with a common European signaling system. This work involves 350 kilometres of line that extends from the Hungarian border to Italy. The D link is also part of the European Commission's programme that aims to develop the technical interoperability of this railway line over 3,000 km. On this theme the Robert Schuman Foundation published a study entitled "Transeuropean Networks Policy and European Growth Investment: Lyon-Turin, it's happening now!". This study notably puts forward proposals submitted by the Commission in October 2011 on the transeuropean transport networks (TEN-Ts)... [Read more](#)

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Iceland :

[The Central Bank of Iceland advises on the adoption of the euro](#)



In a report entitled "Options for the Icelandic currency and exchange rate", published on 17th September 2012, the Central Bank of Iceland believed that belonging to the euro zone would be the best solution for the needs of the Icelandic economy, in spite of the euro zone crisis.

Iceland started negotiations in view of joining the EU on 17th June 2010... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

The effectiveness of judicial systems assessed by the Council of Europe



The Committee for the assessment of the effectiveness of the judicial systems in the Member States of the Council of Europe (47 States), the CEPEJ, delivered its report on 20th September last. This explains and compares the functioning of the judicial systems in 46 Member States (except for Liechtenstein) that took part in the report. The points of comparison are vast: public spending devoted to the judicial system, the existence or not of legal aid systems; mediation mechanisms, jurisdictional organisation within the States, male/female distribution within the judicial pillar, and even the duration of procedures. This report was adopted after a Conference that rallied all of the Justice Ministers of the Member States in Vienna... [Read more](#)

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UN :

Time is running out for the Iranian nuclear programme



On 20th September 2012 during a debate at the UN Security Council, the US, the UK and France warned Iran that time was running out to negotiate a settlement to its nuclear programme. Suspected of trying to provide itself with the atomic bomb in spite of its denials, Iran has been condemned by six UN Security Council resolutions and has forced the major Western powers to set in place a financial and oil embargo against it. American Ambassador Susan E Rice summarised this Western warning : we do not intend to continue endless negotiations which produce no results - time is running out...".. [Read more](#)

WTO :

Slowing in world trade growth in 2012 and 2013



In a press release published on its internet site on 21st September 2012 the WTO announced that its economists had reviewed their world trade growth figures downwards from 3.7% to 2.5% in 2012 and from 5.6% to 4.% in 2013. The WTO explains that these estimates have decreased because of disappointing production and employment figures from the US, slow growth in China, the world's leading export power and above all because the sovereign debt crisis in the euro zone is still ongoing. The latter makes it harder to undertake fiscal adjustments and feeds volatility in peripheral economic areas... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

The EU's Trade Deficit with China has Dropped



According to Eurostat, the European Statistics Office, the trade deficit between the 27 Member States and China contracted over the first six months of the year 2012. The EU's exports towards China rose from 66 billion euros in 2011 to 73 billion over the first six months of this year, whilst imports have remained stable since 2011. Only Germany has a trade surplus with China. Germany is also the first exporter towards China amongst the 27 EU Member States (47% of its exports) and the main importer from there (21%). China is the EU's second trade partner after the USA focusing 9% of all EU exports and is at the origin of 16% of its imports... [Read more](#)

Euro zone trade surplus - a net rise



According to a press release by Eurostat published on 17th September 2012 in July 2012 the euro zone registered a trade surplus of 15.6 billion euros against only 2.1 billion during the same month the previous year. Moreover out of the six first months of 2012 euro zone exports increased overall in value in comparison with the same period in 2011 with most of its trade partners. The first estimates of the trade balance in goods outside of the EU in July 2012 indicate a surplus of 3.1 billion euros,

against -10.9 billion in July 2011. In June 2012 trade was balanced compared to a deficit of 15.3 billion in June 2011. In July 2012 in comparison with June 2012, exports adjusted to seasonal variations, decreased by 1.7% and imports by 1.3%... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

The "Future of Europe" group pleads for European federalism



On 17th September 2012 the informal group on the "Future of Europe" rallying 11 European Foreign Ministers delivered its final 8-page report in which it puts forward some institutional reforms for the European Union. In terms of external policy, the Group advises the revision of the functioning of the European External Action Service, the adoption of majority decisions and even the adoption of a real European Defence Policy. As far as the institutions are concerned this Group recommends the creation of two statutes for "Junior" and "Senior" European Commissioners short term as well as the direct election by European citizens of the President of the European Commission. Finally this document proposes merging the posts of the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council... [Read more](#)

Learning of foreign languages rising



According to a study published jointly by the Eurydice network and Eurostat on 20th September European children are learning foreign languages earlier and earlier. Most children start learning between 6 and 9 years of age, some as early as three. Moreover a growing number of young people study at least two foreign languages. English is still the most studied language, ahead of French, German, Spanish and Russian. 95% of pupils study at least one of these five languages. The European Commissioner responsible for Education, Youth and Multilingualism, Androulla Vassiliou recalled that "linguistic and cultural diversity is one of the EU's main assets." The report also looks into the practical experience of foreign language teachers in Europe, which varies greatly from one country to another... [Read more](#)

Settlement of minor cross-border disputes



The Network of European Consumer Centres and the European Commission have published a report together on the settlement of minor cross-border disputes. This procedure enables cross-border litigation, valued at under 2000 euros, to be processed faster and in an easier manner. This report identifies five main difficulties: the lack of information on the part of magistrates and consumers, linguistic problems, a complicated procedure for the defendants, unsatisfactory enforcement of the judgements, magistrates' unions and consumers need to be better informed, statistics need to be collated systematically and fewer official languages have to be employed... [Read more](#)

Culture :

The Beer Festival in Munich



Between five to six million visitors travel each year to the Munich Oktoberfest, better known as the Beer Festival. This enormous popular festival, which dates back nearly 200, years, is one of the best known events in Germany. Every tent has a folk orchestra, people are served chicken, sausages, potato salad, cheese, bretzels and beer in jugs. The Oktoberfest will take place from 22nd September to 7th October 2012... [Read more](#)

Exhibition on Edgar Degas



The Beyeler Foundation in Riehen is putting on an exhibition on Edgar Degas (1834-1917), one of the most famous painters at the end of the 19th century. The 150 works on show take visitors on a voyage of discovery of the themes and patterns that typify the painter's sensual and lively artistic style. Art amateurs will be aware of the obsessive frenzy that possessed Edgar Degas, which meant he went to the heart of colour, where past and present merge together. The exhibition is on from 30th

Bronze in London



The Royal Academy in London is devoting an exhibition to bronze. There are over five hundred castings displaying all types of patina and size. For the first time ever the different schools, styles, centuries and cultures are mixed together, artistic flair being the only common criteria. The exhibition is open until 9th December 2012... [Read more](#)

Impressionism and Fashion



The Orsay Museum in Paris is devoting an exhibition to Impressionism and fashion. From Manet to Monet, notwithstanding the most important Impressionist painters of the end of the 19th century, this pictorial trend, although avoiding any pure representation of appearance and habitat, does not give any less account of life, fashion and attitudes of men during the 1860's through to the 1880's. The Impressionist works on show take up genre scenes both from a typological and topographical point of view. Visitors can see the exhibition from 25th September 2012 to 20th January 2013... [Read more](#)

The 30's: art in Italy beyond fascism



The Palazzo Strozzi in Florence is putting on an exhibition devoted to Italian art in the 1930's. Amateurs of modern Italian art and of the country's history will be able to view Italy as it was in the 1930's beyond fascism. More than 99 paintings, 17 sculptures and 20 design objects made by forty of the most important Italian artists such as Mario Sironi, Giorgio de Chirico, Alberto Savino, Achille Funi and Lucio Fontana try to define this decade as the culminating point of modernisation that marked a way of life. Visitors will be able to explore the various themes of the exhibition such as mass communication, industrial design and artistic creation. An educational programme and activities will take place in the Palace. The exhibition will be open until 27th January 2013... [Read more](#)

The San Sebastian Film Festival



The international San Sebastian film festival is taking place from 21st to 29th September 2012. For the 60th edition many stars are due to appear including John Travolta, Ewan McGregor, Oliver Stone, Dustin Hoffman and Tommy Lee Jones, who will each receive a Donostia, the prize awarded in honour of their career. Although 14 films will be running in competition, vying for first place, the prestigious silver shell, there will also be prizes for the best actor and best actress. Cinema fans will be able to follow the various events and prize giving ceremonies on "TV live" that is available on the festival's official site... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



24th September
General Affairs Council



24th and 25th September
Brussels
Agriculture and Fisheries Council



25th September
Inauguration of the General Assembly of the UN

Sep



1st October
General Elections Georgia

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