



The Foundation team is happy to be back after the break and wishes you a very Happy New Year 2013.

The Arctic - A region of the future for the European Union and the world Economy



Author: Damien Degeorges

Over the past few years the effects of climate change have led to an increasing interest of the world's major powers in the Arctic. The issue at stake is not restricted simply to the climate but it is also of economic and strategic interest. The Arctic is revealing itself to be the new frontier in terms of international relations between America, Europe and Asia. If given the necessary means the European Union, a regional player, has an opportunity to assert itself. The strengthening of its relationship with Greenland, a key area for future development in the Arctic, is of vital importance for the European Union.

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Front page! :

Europe, towards Recovery?



In an editorial published on his site on 23rd December 2012 Jean-Dominique Giuliani Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation explained why, ultimately, Europe and the euro have withstood the crisis... [Read more](#)

Talking Europe hosts Viviane Reding



As part of the partnership between the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Audiovisuel Extérieur de la France (AEF), the Foundation is broadcasting its most recent programme "Talking Europe" on its site; this week's guest is Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship. She is interviewed by Pascale Joannin, General Director of the Robert Schuman Foundation regarding the draft directive on male/female quotas on company boards... [Read more](#)

Debate over EU/Russian relations



On 9th January 2013 the Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani took part in a seminar organised by the EPP group at the European Parliament in Brussels on EU-Russian relations... [Read more](#)

Grand Prize of Europe



On 20th December 2012 Pierre Thibaudat, project manager for the Robert Schuman Foundation's Brussels office received the Grand Prize of Europe for International Volunteers, awarded by Ubifrance and the Councillors for French Foreign Trade. This prize is awarded for his commitment to the Robert Schuman Foundation and his knowledge of European affairs... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

Germany: unemployment declines in 2012



The Employment Agency in Germany (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) indicated on 2nd January 2013 that the gross unemployment rate in Germany had increased in December 2012 to reach 6.7%. However it decreased to 6.8% over 2012 as a whole (in comparison with 7.1% in 2011). According to an announcement by the Federal Statistics Office (Destatis) on 2nd January 2013 the number of people living in Germany and in work rose to a new record level in 2012 for the sixth year running... [Read more](#)

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Spain: unemployment still very high in spite of a decrease last month



Unemployment in Spain decreased in December 2012 in comparison with the previous month but it remained high in 2012 overall. According to figures published on 3rd January 2013 by the Employment Minister at the end of December 4.85 million people were looking for a job in Spain i.e. 9.64% more than a year ago... [Read more](#)

In November 2012 the number of job seekers grew in France



On 27th December 2012 French Labour and Employment minister published figures concerning job seekers in November 2012. The number of unemployed including those with reduced working hours increased by 30,400 thereby totalling 4.61 million. The numbers of those without any work at all increased by 29,300 totalling 3.13 million... [Read more](#)

European Council :

The Budgetary treaty entered into force on 1st January 2013



The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG), more commonly known as the European Budgetary Pact entered into force on 1st January 2013. It has been ratified by 12 Euro zone states (Germany, Austria, Cyprus, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia), with Finland ratifying it on 21st

December. It has also been ratified by four non euro zone members (Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania). The treaty aims to step up budgetary discipline in the euro zone via "the budgetary balance rule" and the automatic correction mechanism. The Robert Schuman Foundation offers its readers a special file on this treaty... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

[The European Commission launches the European Year of Citizens.](#)



On January 1st 2013 the European Commission launched the "European Year of Citizen" on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Maastricht Treaty which introduced the idea of European citizenship in 1993. The Commission intends to make information relative to citizens rights in the EU more accessible and much clearer. It also aims to enhance, the involvement of EU citizens via a series of initiatives (events, conferences, seminars, debates with European leaders) developed on the base of a public consultation amongst European citizens in May and September 2012... [Read more](#)

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[Less pollutant buses and lorries](#)



Thanks to the EuroVI standard that entered into force on 31st December 2012 new lorries and buses will be less pollutant from now on. They will emit less nitrogen oxides which will be reduced by 80%, likewise particles will be reduced by 66%. The Commission hopes for positive effects in terms of public health and the environment, as well as in terms of investments... [Read more](#)

[The Commission strengthens European legislation on tobacco sales](#)



On 19th December 2012 the European Commission adopted a new draft directive on the sale of tobacco products. This new legislation aims to be more restrictive in terms of the composition, marketing and trade of these products. It bans for example flavours that are added to cigarettes and loose tobacco as well as false declarations; it also makes it obligatory to place pictures and warnings on cigarette packaging. This directive also regulates the electronic trade of cigarettes and other non-aligned products. The ban on "snus" (tobacco gum) is maintained, except in Sweden... [Read more](#)

Council :

[The Cypriot Presidency reviews the results of it work](#)



The Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union published a review of the results achieved during the six months of its work as head of the Council. In this document it relates to the work achieved in terms of adopting a multi-annual financial framework and the drafting of sectoral policies of the Union for 2014-2020. It also mentions the last minute agreement achieved on the corrective budget 2012 and the adoption of the 2013 budget, the adoption of fishing quotas in 2013, initiatives aiming to strengthen the governance of the euro zone and those aiming to complete the single market. Finally the documents review the agreements adopted in the area of the common European asylum regime, internal affairs, external trade, external relations and citizenship... [Read more](#)

[Ireland takes over the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union](#)



Since January 1st 2013 Ireland has been responsible for the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union that it will be ensuring for the next sixth months. On this occasion Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny and Irish Foreign Minister Eamon Gilmore presented their priorities. These will be part of the agenda of legislative texts that are already ongoing. These priorities will focus on the renewal of economic governance of the euro zone, youth unemployment, the digital economy, trade agreements exterior to the European Union and the continuation of the enlargement process... [Read more](#)

Agreement on fishing quotas for 2013



On 19th December 2012 the 27 ministers responsible for fisheries and agriculture came to agreement on fishing quotas for 2013. Generally ministers approved sharp reductions for most species. This pertains to the herring (up to -65% according to the fishing zone), cod (up to -25%), monkfish (up to -23%), haddock (up to -30%) and sole (-53%) etc ... Few quotas were revised upwards and a total ban was declared on the fishing of some species. As far as agriculture is concerned the Presidency of the Council presented its report on the progress made in terms of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Transport and Telecommunications Council



On 20th December 2012 the 27 Transport and Telecommunications Ministers agreed on the main principles of common criteria that will be used during technical tests on motor vehicles. The minimum criteria will be made stricter and the principle of mutual recognition will be encouraged via the granting of certificates that are valid in all Member States. The Ministers debated the financial aspects of the Interconnexion Mechanism in Europe (pan-European infrastructures network). The financial framework of the European satellite navigation system (EGNOS and Galileo) for 2014-2020 was also on the agenda. The Ministers finally addressed the issue of electronic transaction security; they mentioned the progress achieved in the implementation of the digital agenda... [Read more](#)

Environment Council Conclusions



On 17th December 2012 the 27 Environment Ministers decided to provide better protection to the EU's water resources by offering various types of action: improvements in land use and the fight to counter water pollution. They also stressed the need for the European Semester to pay more attention environmental issues. All of these conclusions comprise a first response by the Council to a recent communication issued by the Commission "A plan to protect water resources in Europe"... [Read more](#)

No notable progress achieved in the EU/Russia Summit



During the EU/Russia Summit on 21st December 2012 held in Brussels Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke categorically about the suppression of visas. He recalled that Russian tourists spend more than 18 billion euros in the European Union yearly. Moscow has been demanding the free movement of its citizens in Europe for years and offering reciprocity. But the Russian government has to face the reticence of several EU member states particularly those from the former communist bloc, like Poland, or Baltic States and so no progress was made... [Read more](#)

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Bulgaria :

The Prime Minister calls to vote "no" in the referendum



In an interview granted to the TV channel TV7 on 6th January 2013 Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov called on the members of his party to vote "no" to the referendum planned for 27th January next the theme of which is the building of a new nuclear power plant. However he did say that he would still support nuclear energy in principle... [Read more](#)

Spain :

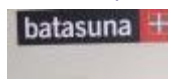
Spain: 2013 budget



On 20th December 2012 Spanish MPs approved the 2013 budget marked by unprecedented austerity, notably with a reduction in spending of 39 billion euros. This budget is part of the savings plan set by the EU for Spain planning for 150 billion euros in savings until 2014, in order to reduce the public deficit which totalled 9.4% of the GDP in

2011. In 2012 the aim is to reach 6.3%, a figure that will be "difficult" to attain said Mariano Rajoy's government, then 4.5% in 2013 and 2.8% in 2014... [Read more](#)

The Basque Nationalist Party announces its dissolution

 On 3rd January 2013 two members of the Basque Nationalist Party Batasuna, Maite Goyenetxe and Jean-Claude Aguerre announced the dissolution of the party, during a press conference in Bayonne. "We maintain that we shall achieve the construction of Euskal Herria (Basque Country) by means of a political path in the face of the French and Spanish States which are the oppressors," they declared. Deemed close to ETA this party has been banned in Spain since 2003 but not in France... [Read more](#)

France :

A new competitive, solidarity-based French model



On 3rd January 2013 during the French council of Ministers, Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault presented the government's work programme for a "new, competitive solidarity-based French model." This five page document recalls the priorities of the five year mandate of François Hollande. It states that everything must be done for employment and that the government's main responsibility is to "consolidate public accounts". Jean-Marc Ayrault also said that this ambitious programme would be implemented "methodically, coherently and informatively... [Read more](#)

The Constitutional Council annuls some measures in the finance law



On 29th December 2012 the Constitutional Council annulled the symbolic measure included in the finance law 2013 that aimed to introduce an exceptional contribution on professional revenues over 1 million euros. Set at 18% this contribution (an addition to the marginal income tax rate of 45%) to the exceptional levy on extremely high revenues (finance law 2012) and on social contributions, led to an overall tax of 75%. The Council rejected the measure for technical reasons pointing to the principle of equality in terms of public contributions: indeed it was based on the revenues of every individual without taking into account the tax base. Other measures have also been annulled... [Read more](#)

France will not succeed in bringing down its deficit below 3% in 2013



In a press release published on 21st December 2012 the IMF said it believed that France would not succeed in reducing its deficit below the 3% mark in 2013 contrary to the goal set by the French government. It also said that the French state's deficit, likewise those of local communities and the social security would total 3.5% of the GDP, thereby matching forecasts made by the European Commission. According to the press release the French government should pay greater attention to "dangers of a downturn" in the country's economy. The IMF believes that France should settle its "competitiveness problem" with regard to its trade partners... [Read more](#)

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Hungary :

The Hungarian Constitutional Court invalidates a part of the new electoral law



The Hungarian Constitutional Court inflicted a sanction against Conservative Prime Minister Viktor Orban on 4th January 2013 by invalidating part of the electoral reform, notably the obligation on the part of citizens to register two weeks before the election at the latest. The Court deemed that part of the new electoral law was not in line with the fundamental law. It had already invalidated a certain number of points in the reform for formal reasons on 28th December 2012... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

Mario Monti candidate



"With Monti for Italy": on 4th January 2013 the head of the outgoing Italian government, Mario Monti revealed the logo of the centrist coalition which will support him during the next general elections on 24th and 25th February next. "The criteria for eligibility of the candidates will be stricter than stipulated by the present legislation and will focus on conflict of interest, anti-mafia standards, people already convicted of a crime or who are still standing trial," declared Mr Monti... [Read more](#)

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Portugal :

The Portuguese President submits the 2013 Budget to the Constitutional Court



On 2nd January 2013 the Portuguese President Anibal Cavaco Silva asked the Constitutional Court to give a decision on the legality of three articles in the 2013 budget (articles 29,77 and 78) because of serious doubts about the fairness of the effort demanded of the Portuguese people. Believing that "everyone will be affected but some more than others", three austerity measures are specifically being targeted: the suspension of holiday bonuses paid to civil servants and pensioners as well as the new exceptional solidarity tax applied to pensions over 1,350 euros. In order not to "deprive the government" of its main economy policy tool" the Portuguese president did however promulgate the 2013 budget which plans to make savings of 5.3 billion euros funded by tax increases to a total of 80%... [Read more](#)

Romania :

New government in Romania



On 20th December 2012 Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta announced the composition of his government. Several members of the previous executive will retain their portfolio including Titus Corlătean in Foreign Affairs, and Mona Pivniceru for Justice. Daniel Chițoiu, former Economy Minister was appointed to Finance. The government won the confidence of Parliament on 21st December. On the same occasion Mr Ponta presented an agreement signed with President Traian Băsescu to guarantee the smooth running of their cohabitation. In this document both parties notably promise to respect the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law... [Read more](#)

UK :

D Cameron and N Clegg review their mid-term results



The British Prime Minister David Cameron and his right hand man, Nick Clegg, presented their mid-term results on 7th January 2013. This review has been published at a time when the EU is at the heart of debate in the UK. Hence in an interview given to the BBC on 6th January 2013 D Cameron said that he wanted greater negotiation about EU/UK relations and promised that the Conservatives would offer voters a real choice over Europe in 2015... [Read more](#)

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D Cameron wants the G8 to take "courageous measures" to revive the world economy



In a letter dated January 1st 2013 the British Prime Minister David Cameron, whose country is ensuring the presidency of the G8 this year, has called on the leaders of the eight richest countries to "take courageous measures" to revive the world's economy. "As leaders of the eight countries representing around half of the world's GDP the ambitious criteria we have set ourselves and the courageous steps that we shall take working together within the G8 can make a real difference in terms of boosting the economy," he wrote. The British Prime Minister wants to introduce economic changes long term within the G8 countries and in the rules that govern relations between these countries. The next G8 summit is planned for 17th and 18th June 2013 in Northern Ireland... [Read more](#)

Warnings about the dangers of the British leaving the EU



The rise of euro-scepticism in the UK is worrying European leaders. In an interview granted to the Guardian and published on 27th December 2012 the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, warned British Prime Minister David Cameron about the dangers of the country's exit from the EU. Herman van Rompuy declared that the attempts made by the Prime Minister to recover competences at the expense of the EU might cause the dissolution of the Union. Indeed he believes that "If every member state were able to cherry-pick those parts of existing policies that they most like, and opt out of those that they least like, the union in general, and the single market in particular, would soon unravel..." [Read more](#)

Slovenia :

Borut Pahor, new Slovenian President



The new Slovenian President Borut Pahor officially took office on 22nd December 2012 and promised to do everything possible to settle the disputes between the opposition and the government so that a solution to the economic crisis can be found. Borut Pahor easily won the presidential election taking 67.37% of the vote on 2nd December during the second round of voting against outgoing President Danilo Türk... [Read more](#)

Iceland :

Iceland's progress towards membership



On 18th December 2012 the fifth meeting between the EU and Iceland took place. Six new chapters were launched and one was provisionally closed. Eleven chapters have now been completed provisionally. Significant progress is expected in the first half of 2013... [Read more](#)

Montenegro :

Finalisation of the first negotiation chapter with the EU



Montenegro opened and finalised its first negotiation chapter with the EU on 18th December 2012, six months after the official launch of membership negotiations. The chapters totalling 35, cover all aspects of community law. The chapter settled between the EU and Podgorica is relative to science and research (chapter 25)... [Read more](#)

NATO :

Deployment of Patriot Missiles



The American army announced on 4th January 2013 that it had started deploying NATO's surface-air missiles designed to protect Turkey against any potential Syrian threats. According to a press release by the commander of the American army in Europe based in Germany, "American soldiers and materials have arrived at the airbase Incirlik (in Turkey) to ensure the deployment of batteries of NATO patriot missiles," requested by Turkey... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Euro zone inflation rate estimated at 2.2%



According to figures published by Eurostat on 4th January 2013 the annual inflation rate in the euro zone was estimated at 2.2% in December 2012 - a stable rate in comparison with the rate in November... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

European citizens approve the EU as an effective actor in the settlement of the crisis

After the most recent survey by Eurobarometer published on 20th



December 2012, it emerges that 41% of Europeans believe that the EU is on the right path to settle the crisis. However 85% of those interviewed believe that the Member States should cooperate more closely to achieve this goal. The European Union achieves the favour of public opinion (23%) as being the most effective actor to counter the crisis, ahead of national governments (20%), the G20 (14%) and the IMF (15%). Ranked according to their importance unemployment, the general economic situation, inflation and the public debt area still the main areas of concern for European citizens. The trends seen via the answers collated by the survey vary strongly depending on the member state... [Read more](#)

Publications :

"Transitions stratégiques"



The January 2013 edition of the review "Défense nationale" has been published. Its theme is "Transitions stratégiques". Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation has published an article entitled "Ouvertures stratégiques: les 7 portes du futur" (Strategic opportunities: seven windows for the future). In this article he suggests ways to move forward and reasons for hope for France in spite of the crisis... [Read more](#)

"Le journal de Moscou - Ambassadeur au temps de la guerre froide"



Armand Colin publishing has just released "Le journal de Moscou - Ambassadeur au temps de la guerre froide" by Henri Froment-Meurice. This book presents a collection of documents from his diary that he kept during the three consecutive positions he occupied in the USSR, including during his time as an Ambassador. It is a precious historic document which relates the particular links entertained by France and the USSR during the Cold War... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Marseilles and Kosice, European Capitals of Culture 2013



Marseilles (France) and Kosice (Slovakia), the two European capitals of culture in 2013 will start their cultural agenda on 12th and 19th January respectively. The cultural programme of Marseille-Provence 2013 will start with an inaugural ceremony in Marseille together with the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, the opening of a contemporary art exhibition in Aix-en-Provence, a paper-chase and a fireworks display in Arles. In Kosice festivities will start with the European Commissioner for Education, Multilingualism and Youth, Androulla Vassiliou in attendance. Events will be launched from various points in the town, notably from the theatre and the Steel Arena. On 1st January 2013 the Commissioner recalled the importance of these events for the towns which have been appointed... [Read more](#)

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Arte's audience is rising



For several months Arte, the Franco-German TV channel has witnessed increases in the audiences of its programmes. In 2012 the channel witnessed a 20% rise in its audiences. Arte's successes came in all categories (films, documentaries, internet sites etc ...) Arte's news programme at 19:45 has also played a part in the channel's rise in popularity. Its audience (450,000 viewers on average) has risen by 30%... [Read more](#)

Treasures of the World's Cultures



The Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn is presenting a share of the vast collections of the British Museum until 7th April 2013. The exhibition "Treasures of the World's Cultures" brings together a selection of some 200 objects. Without pretending to cover the History of Humanity completely the exhibition is presenting its cultural history with a variety of exhibits ranging from Stone Age tools from Africa, ancient sculptures, precious jewels from Mesopotamia and drawings from the Renaissance. The

exhibition is divided into seven areas organised according to a geographical and chronological order... [Read more](#)

Photography in 100 works of art



The National Library of France in Paris is putting on an exhibition that shows one hundred photographs from its collection. The exhibition is organised neither according to chronology nor theme but follows the poetry in the works and the association of images. All styles are represented: portraits, landscapes, reports, advertising, nudes and scientific photography. On the walls major names in photography in the 19th and 20th centuries are placed next to each other including Félix Nadar, Edgar Degas, Man Ray and Gilles Caron. Amongst the prints the visitor will discover the photographs of some writers like Emile Zola, and the intimate friends of Victor Hugo. The exhibition is open until 17th February 2013... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



10th January
Frankfurt am Main
ECB Governors Council



11th and 12th January
Presidential election in the Czech Republic (1st round)



14th and 17th January
Strasbourg
Plenary Session-European Parliament

The Letter is also available in:



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