

For a credible growth strategy for the euro zone: the obligation to produce results



The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a text by Mathilde Lemoine which has been taken from the "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union in 2013" describing a credible growth strategy for the euro zone. In her opinion any growth strategy is doomed if it does not go together with an improvement in the functioning of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). **Read more**





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Front page! :

"Europe, France and its Defence"



Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation has published a new editorial on his site: "Europe, France and its Defence". Just as the debate over "European Defence" was revived after France's intervention in Mali, Jean-Dominique Giuliani maintains that we must stick to the treaties for the time being. Indeed Europeans

do not share the same world view and are unable to draft a common strategy. Hence we have to agree to disagree; however this does not mean substituting our interests with one that is common yet undefined... Read more

The English version of the "Schuman Report" is available

The English version of the "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union in 2013" a reference work on Europe is available on our internet site. This edition contains an exclusive interview with José-Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. All of the articles point to the same message: will 2013 be the year of recovery? This fourth



edition in English was edited by Thierry Chopin and Michel Foucher and has been published by Springer Verlag... Read more

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8th Meeting of the "Rhénan Club" in Berlin



On 23rd April 2013 in Berlin the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation are organising the 8th meeting of the Franco-German forum on the future of Europe, the Rhénan Club. This meeting will focus on Franco-German cooperation and its developments for the future in order to create "true economic and monetary union.".. Read more

Talking Europe hosts Connie Hedegaard

Audiovisuel As part of the partnership between the Robert Schuman Foundation extérieur de la France (AEF), the Foundation is broadcasting its latest programme "Talking Europe" on its site; the guest this week is Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner for the

Climate. She looks at the impact of the present crisis on climate change and reveals the EU's green strategy for 2030... Read more

Elections :

Giorgio Napolitano, re-elected after an eventful election



The President of the Italian Republic is elected by secret ballot for seven years by a college of grand electors comprising 630 members of the Chamber of Deputies, 315 life senators and 58 representatives of the country's 20 regions (3 per region except for the Aoste Valley which only appoints one) ie a total of 1007. In the first three rounds a

candidate has to win at least 2/3 of the vote ie 671 votes. In the fourth round the simple majority (504 votes) is enough. This year, because of the mitigated result of the parliamentary elections on 24th and 25th February that did not lead to a clear majority, 6 rounds were necessary to elect the President. Outgoing Head of State, Giorgio Napolitano, the last resort, accept to stand (no other president had done this before him) and he was re-elected 738 votes in the 6th round... Read more

Financial Crisis :

The G20 against tax evasion and fraud



After the meeting of the G20 Finance Ministers on 18th and 19th April 2013 in Washington the leaders of the world's main economies called on the euro zone to consolidate effectively and rapidly its economic and monetary base, stressing the importance of completing banking union as soon as possible. They also called for a reform of the IMF

governance system by January 2014. They decided to counter fraud and tax evasion more effectively, notably by stepping up pressure on tax havens and uncooperative countries. Finally they pleaded in support of the automatic exchange of information... Read more

Publication of the spring report by the German economic institutes



In their spring report published on 18th April 2013 the main German economic institutes reduced the economic forecasts slightly which they made for the country. Indeed according to their estimates the German GDP is due to lie at 0.8% in 2013, against a previous estimate of 1% in October. They are more optimistic than the German government

which is forecasting 0.4% of the growth this year and the IMF whose forecasts for this period total 0.6%. The German institutes are targeting a recovery in the economic situation as of the spring. In 2014 they are even more optimistic and are planning for growth of 1.9%... Read more

The French government presents its strategy to consolidate public accounts



On 17th April 2013 the Council of Ministers adopted a "stability and growth" programme which lays out in detail the strategy for the consolidation of France's public accounts between 2013 and 2017 for France. "The government still aims to return to structural balance in terms of its public finances by 2017," said Pierre Moscovici, the French Economy and Finance Minister. In spite of the publication of pessimistic

forecasts by the IMF the day before, which estimates that France will be in recession this year, the government has maintained its growth goals: 0.1% of the GDP in 2013 and 1.2% in 2014. Regarding the public deficit the government maintains that it will total 2.9% of the GDP but only in 2014. In 2013 "there will be no further adjustment plan nor a budgetary collective," said Pierre Moscovici. The effort will then focus on 14 billion euros in savings on spending next year whilst obligatory levies will increase by around 6 billion euros (VAT, tax niches and the fight to counter fraud). This will represent 20 billion euros after 30 billion in 2013... Read more

UK: unemployment up and the loss of the triple A rating



On 17th April 2013 the Office for National Statistics published the most recent unemployment figures for the UK. This now totals 7.9% covering the period from December 2012 to February 2013 i.e. an increase of 0.2% in comparison with the three previous months (from September to November 2012). The number of people looking for work

totalled 2.56 million this quarter, ie 70,000 people more than in the previous quarter. Long term unemployment has also increased with 900,000 people out of work for more than a year, a figure that is up by 8000 in comparison with the previous quarter. Given the continued downturn in the country's economic and budgetary forecasts Fitch decided on 19th April to withdraw the UK's triple A rating, two months after Moody's... Read more

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Commission :

CAP: towards transitional rules for 2014



On 18th April the European Commission suggested a series of transitional rules regarding the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The new CAP must be formulated by January 1st 2014, but negotiations are still ongoing between the Commission, Parliament and the Council. To ensure transition between the two multi-annual cycles the Commission

has therefore suggested a series of measures mainly concerning direct payments. They should enable paying agencies to continue working and the States to have enough time to introduce all of the necessary administrative procedures. According to the Commission's proposal direct payments would continue to be distributed according to the previous method and measures linked to ecology would not be implemented until 2015... Read more

Strategic Report on the Cohesion Policy



On 18th April 2013 the European Commission presented a strategic report on the cohesion policy. According to this the Member States' structural funds is a motor for growth and is helping to overcome the crisis. Employment aid for start-ups and small companies, broadband connection, the building of new transport routes and even investments

in research and development are some of the examples mentioned as being vectors of improving the economy in Europe. The European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund contribute to forming the Cohesion Policy and represent 347 billion euros over the period 2007-2013 ie 35% of the total of the EU's budget... Read more

EU-Japan Trade Agreement: Commission Confident



On 19th April 2013 the European Commission indicated that the first round table for negotiations with Japan in view of concluding a freetrade agreement had been a success. In spite of some "areas of difficulty" it believes that "major progress" is possible within the next few months. The next meeting is to take place in Tokyo in June. According to the Commission's estimate an agreement like this would lead to European growth of between 0.6% and 0.8% - a 32.7% increase in EU exports to Japan and the creation of 400,000 jobs in Europe... Read more

Anti-terrorist exercise in 9 EU countries



On 17th and 18th April 2013, nine EU Member States simultaneously launched the biggest anti-terrorist exercise ever organised in Europe. The European Commissioner for Internal Affairs, Cecilia Malmström declared that the aim of this simulation of terrorist attacks was to work towards "strengthening the competences and expertise of all special intervention units, and also that of public security." These exercises

took place as part of the ATLAS network, an initiative that was launched in 2001 after the attacks of 11th September. Its goal was to enable cooperation between polices units responsible for counter terrorism and to train them for the exchange of good practice... Read more

Green Paper on Natural and Human Disasters



On 16th April 2013 the European Commission published its strategy that aims to prepare Europe better for both natural and human disasters. This file includes a chapter on adapting to climate change in order to improve the preparation of texts that enable the EU to adapt

and a Green Paper on the insurance of natural and human disasters. The aim is to foster action amongst the Member States, action by the EU in support of resilience vis-à-vis the climate and enlightened decision making. Michel Barnier, the European Commissioner for the Internal Market and Services said that "possible solutions had to be looked into on a European level in order to remedy problems, likewise common means of prevention and awareness raising amongst citizens and businesses." A public consultation on the issue will be open until 30th June... Read more

The Commission has published the results of horse DNA tests



Requested and co-funded by the European Commission in the wake of the horsemeat scandal, the tests organised across the EU to establish the presence of horse DNA and that of phenylbutazone revealed that less that 5% of the products analysed contained horse DNA and that

0.5% of slaughtered horses contained residues of phenylbutazone. "The results published confirm that we have a problem of foodstuffs fraud and not of food safety," declared Tonio Borg, a member of the Committee responsible for the health and protection of consumers... Read more

Parliament :

New rules for European banks



MEPs adopted further reform on 16th April 2013 concerning the stabilisation and consolidation of the European banking system as of 1st January 2014. Bankers' bonuses will notably be limited in a bid to counter speculation and own funds will be increased. Supervision will also be stepped up. These measures should lead to better response on the part of the banks to crises, but also to the facilitation of loans to businesses in

order to revive the real economy... Read more

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Parliament votes against the freezing of surplus CO2 quotas



On 16th April 2013 MEPs opposed the freezing of the auction of some 900 million tonnes of C02 in the EU's emissions quotas exchange system (ETS), 334 for, 315 against and 63 abstentions. The freeze was requested by the European Commissioner for Climate Change Connie Hedegaard, who deems that it was "urgent to act". The measure that was welcomed by the representatives of the industrial world caused the

collapse of CO2 prices to 3 euros a tonne on the ETS market, its lowest level ever. The emissions quotas market is the main financial tool in the European climate policy. Each industrial site is allocated a certain annual quota and can purchase additional credits on the market... Read more

Concern about constitutional change in Hungary



On 17th April 2013 with the Hungarian Prime Minister in attendance, the European Parliament debated the constitutional changes adopted on 11th March 2013 by the Hungarian Parliament. This discussion was marked by major division. Some suggested that "checks be made to see whether European values and principles have also been infringed

in other countries." Others asked for the European Commission's intervention including the use of the procedure in article 7 of the TEU that authorises sanctions against Member States that do not respect European fundamental values, notably the right to suspend the vote of a Member State at the Council. On 19th April Viktor Orban declared that Hungary was ready to make some concessions on two of the three points raised on 12th April by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission... Read more

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Council :

Agreement on the Single Bank Supervisory Mechanism



On 18th April the Council approved an agreement with the European Parliament on the implementation of the single supervisory mechanism of credit institutions. The first regulation confers supervisory tasks over to the European Central Bank and the second will be the responsibility of the European Banking Authority. This agreement notably enables a

balanced vote within the new institutions in order to prevent them being dominated or vetoed by a group of countries... Read more

Agreement on the governance and funding of European satellites



On 17th April 2013 the European Council and Parliament reached agreement on the funding and governance of the European satellite navigation systems, Egnos and Galileo. The agreement notably includes a European payment of 6.3 billion euros, the division of backgroup the Commission the specialized agreement and the European

responsibilities between the Commission, the specialised agency and the European Space Agency, together with rules in terms of public procurement. The Parliament and the Council still have to approve this agreement formally before it enters into force as part of the next multi-annual European budget 2014-2020... Read more

Decisions on greenhouse gases adopted by the Council



On 22nd April 2013 the Council adopted several decisions concerning greenhouse gas emissions. The first decisions concern action associated with emissions and the absorption of greenhouse gases resulting from activities linked to land use, the change in land use and forestry. The second decision aims to strengthen the impetus within

the International Civilian Aviation Organisation to enable to the implementation of a world market mechanism in view of reducing greenhouse gases in the aviation sector. Finally the Council adopted a regulation relative to the mechanism for the supervision and declaration of greenhouse gases both on a national and EU level... Read more

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Competitiveness



On 22nd April the Council adopted a directive on alternative means to settle disputes (ADR and ODR). This new system is part of the "Single Market Act" and comprises a series of measures designed to revive the European economy and to create jobs. The goal is to settle disputes between consumers and traders rapidly - without great cost - and

without turning to legal procedures. This new directive will lead to the harmonisation and spread of alternative means to settle disputes in all trade sectors in Europe and notably those involving on-line sales... Read more

Diplomacy :

Final Agreement between Kosovo and Serbia

Following the agreement on 19th April 2013 between Serbia and



Kosovo to settle their relations the European Commission recommended on 22nd April the opening of Serbia's accession negotiations to the EU. "The Commission believes that Serbia has fulfilled the criterion of utmost importance that comprised taking steps in view of improving visibly and sustainably its relations with Kosovo," indicated the Commission in a report that was submitted to the ministers responsible for European Affairs. "As a result the Commission is recommending the launch of negotiations with Serbia for its accession to the Union." At the same time the European Commission suggested the opening of negotiations in view of concluding an association agreement between the EU and Kosovo. The decision to follow the Commission's recommendations or not will be up to the heads of State and government during the June European Council... Read more

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The Parliament and the Council support Croatia's accession

The European Parliament held a final debate on 18th April 2013 on Croatia that will become a member of the European Union on 1st July next. The representatives of the parliamentary groups said that Croatia deserved to enter the EU adding that the country should continue its work to reform its legal system, to fight against corruption and

organised crime and to find solutions to the crisis. On 22nd April 2013 the Council stressed that "Croatia had shown that it had the determination and the ability to fulfil all of its other commitments prior to its accession and that it should now finalise the last measures before it joins... Read more

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Court of Justice :

The Court of Justice rejects Spain and Italy's objections to the European patent



On 16th April 2013 the European Union's Court of Justice rejected the appeal made by Spain and Italy against the enhanced cooperation agreement to introduce a single European patent. Spain and Italy are challenging the translation of the patents into only three of the EU's working languages (German, English and French), but the Court of Justice deemed that this measure did not contravene the rules of the

internal market nor the States' powers. The single European patent was adopted after 30 years of negotiations by the European Parliament in December 2012 and this should enable a six-fold division of patent registration costs, whilst ensuring greater protection Europe wide... Read more

Germany :

Bundestag MPs approve the Cyprus bail-out plan



On 18th April 2013 MPs from the German lower chamber (Bundestag) approved the bail-out plan for Cyprus 486 votes out of 601. Before the vote the German Finance Minister and member of the Robert Schuman Foundation's board, Wolfgang Schäuble, stressed the need to help the island to "prevent Cyprus's problems from becoming further problems

for the euro zone." In other euro zone countries, notably Finland and Austria, a vote by parliament is also necessary for the release of aid to Cyprus... Read more

Germany fulfils its European commitments in terms of budgetary stability



The German government adopted its annual stability programme on 17th April 2013 in during its Council of Ministers. This document is designed for the European Commission which assesses the national budgetary strategy. According to the programme adopted Germany is keeping to the commitments it made as part of the European Stability

Pact and is continuing to consolidate its public finances. In 2016 the German budget is due to be in surplus once more. According to the Finance Ministry the consolidation strategy should help Germany to emerge from debt. By 2017 the German debt is due to drop from 80.5% to under 69% of the GDP... Read more

No female quotas in supervisory boards of German businesses

On 18th April 2013 the Bundestag decided not to introduce a bill that



would impose a quota of women on the supervisory boards of businesses in Germany. The German Chancellor Angela Merkel has promised to introduce a legal quota of 30% by 2020. Hence if the CDU wins the general elections in September it will adopt a matching bill which will enter into force in 2020, if businesses have not achieved this

level by then. In Germany the number of women on company boards of the 200 biggest German groups lay at 4% last year in a country where 68% of women work or in which one third of MPs are female... Read more

France :

Latvia seeks France's support for its entry into the euro zone



Latvian Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis made an official trip to France on 18th and 19th April 2013. He notably met French Prime Minister Jean-March Ayrault and French President François Hollande in order to achieve their support to his country's entry into the euro zone and the OECD. On 4th March Latvia made its official request to join

the single currency. By doing this it will become the 18th Member State of the euro zone on January 1st 2014. The country is now expecting the European Commission and the European Central Bank's greenlight regarding its entry into the euro zone. Both institutions are due to give their opinion by the middle of the year... Read more

Meeting between François Hollande and Borut Pahor



On 17th April 2013 Slovenian President Borut Pahor met French President François Hollande. Discussions between the political leaders focused mainly on the strategic partnership signed between the two countries in 2011, "which is enabling (from a cultural, economic and political point of view) the rapprochement of our two countries," said

the French President. Both men agreed on the fact that the Slovenian economic situation was not comparable with other European states which have had to resort to European financial aid, notably Cyprus... Read more

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Italy :

Giorgio Napolitano re-elected as President of the Republic of Italy



Outgoing President Giorgio Napolitano, 87, who was called on for help by a Parliament in stalemate was re-elected on 20th April 2013 provoking the fury of Beppe Grillo, who declared that it was a "coup d'état" as he launched an appeal for a "popular day of action". In his first public response after his re-election Mr Napolitano stressed that the country was in a "difficult position" and said that he would lay out

his intentions as he was sworn in and during his speech to Parliament on 22nd April. The re-election, a first in Italian history - 738 votes in support out of 997 of this president, who will be celebrating his 88th birthday in June, was given a long ovation by a majority of the "grand electors"... Read more

Poland :

Celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising



This year Poland is celebrating the 70th anniversary of the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto, that occurred on 19th April 1943. On this occasion Polish MPs commemorated the event on 16th April 2013 and adopted a resolution that describes this rebellion as "an heroic bid to oppose the final liquidation of the ghetto by the Germans." On 19th April 2013

official ceremonies took place before the memorial to the heroes of the uprising notably with Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski and European Parliament President Martin Schluz in attendance. As part of the commemoration the Polish Institute for National Remembrance also presented one of the two original examples of the report by the German Commander of the Warsaw Ghetto ordering its liquidation between April and May 1943... Read more

The Deauville Partnership supports Arab countries in transition in Washington



On 19th April 2013 the Finance Ministers and the international financial institutions that are members of the Deauville Partnership together with the Arab countries in transition met in Washington with the aim of taking forward the development of open economies and inclusive growth in the Arab countries in transition. Ministers re-iterated their

support the economic transition in Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and in Yemen stressing the importance of a coordinated response on the part of the international community in support of financial stabilisation and the various reforms which foster economic growth and the creation of jobs. The IMF also announced that it had come to an agreement of principle with the Tunisian authorities in view of granting a credit facility that might total up to 1.75 billion dollars... Read more

IMF :

The IMF reduces its world growth forecast for 2013



On 16th April 2013 the IMF announced that it had revised its growth forecasts for the world economy for this year and next downwards, notably due to budgetary cuts in the USA and continuing difficulties in Europe. The IMF is now counting on world growth of 3.3% this year, i.e. 0.2 points less than expected in January and 4% in 2014, against

4.1% planned just three months ago. For the advanced economies, which includes the USA and the euro zone, the IMF is counting on growth of 1.2% only this year against 1.4% in January. The international financial institution is forecasting a 0.1% contraction of the GDP for France this year against growth of 0.3% planned in January but it is maintaining its forecast of 0.9% in 2014... Read more

Euro zone Banks and Businesses cause IMF concern



According to the "Six monthly report on Global Financial Stability" published on 17th April 2013 by the IMF businesses on the EU's periphery, from Greece to Ireland and also SME's across the entire Monetary Union are now the "weak link" in the euro zone crisis. Between the core and the periphery of the euro zone the fragmentation of the banking and financial market is still total. Just as

rates at which the banks are lending, notably in Germany, have practically continued to decrease since 2009 returning to 3%, the rates in practice in Spain, Italy and Portugal are at their highest, at over 5%. The financial institution is suggesting three types of action to governments: facilitating the consolidation and restructuring of businesses in countries facing excessive private debt; helping healthy businesses which are suffering from a lack of credit; completing the restructuring of their national banking sector... Read more

Eurostat :

Annual inflation rate down

On 16th April 2013 Eurostat indicated that the annual inflation rate had dropped by 0.1 point in March 2013 in comparison with the previous month to lie at 1.7% in the euro zone and at 1.9% in the EU. A year ago this rate totalled 2.7% and 2.9% respectively, i.e. a decrease of 1 point over a year. It varies from -0.2% in Greece to

4.9% in Hungary... Read more

EU registers a rising surplus in its current accounts

Eurostat released the results of the EU's current account on 19th April 2013. The EU registered a surplus of 31.4 billion euros in the fourth quarter of 2012 ie a rise of 9.6 billion euros in comparison with the fourth quarter of 2011. The goods account balance rose over one year from a deficit of 16.8 billion euros to a surplus of 3.4 billion. Germany (+53.5 billion euros), the Netherlands (+17.1 billion) and Sweden (+7.2 billion) are the Member States with the highest surpluses in comparison with the fourth quarter of 2011, whilst the UK (-14.3 billion) and France (-11.2 billion) have the greatest deficits... Read more

Euro zone and EU public deficit respectively at 3.7% and 4% of the GDP



According to figures published by Eurostat on 22nd April 2013 the euro zone's public deficit contracted in 2012 totalling 3.7%" of the GDP against 4.2% in 2011. The same applies to the public deficit in the EU which contracted from 4.4% of the GDP in 2011 to 4% in 2012. Public debt however increased in the euro zone totalling 90.6% of the GDP at

the end of 2012 against 87.3% a year earlier. It is also up in the EU totalling 85% of the GDP in 2012 against 82.5% in 2011... Read more

Studies/Reports :

Reduction in the number of illegal entries



The European Agency for Border Management, FRONTEX has published its report on the analysis of risks for 2013. In 2012, and for the first time since 2008, the number of illegal detected entries made into the EU was below 100,000 lying at 73,000. Although the circuits passing

via Greece have been reduced those transiting via the Western Balkans have remained stable. Most of these migrants come from Afghanistan. Of the 350,000 illegal residents detected most come from Afghanistan, and also Morocco. FRONTEX believes that the instability in North Africa and in the Middle East are still the main threats which expose the borders of the Mediterranean and the Eastern frontiers of the EU in particular... Read more

Intergenerational justice in aging societies

The Bertelsmann Foundation has published a study focusing on intergenerational justice in aging societies. Give this complex, often controversial subject in which the interests of older and younger generations should not be used to political ends researchers have undertaken a comparative study of 29 OECD countries. Amongst the latter Estonia is

the best positioned in terms of justice between generations. Then come other equally performant countries such as South Korea, Israel, New Zealand, Hungary and countries in Northern Europe... Read more

Culture :

Fragile, Murano at the Maillol Museum



Until 28th July 2013 two hundred pieces of glassware are on show at the Maillol Museum dating from the Renaissance to the 21st century. From the lattimo nuptial cup decorated with refined enamels to the audacious mirrors of the 16th century and the 17th century diamond point engraved cups and also the installations of major contemporary artists such as Jean Arp, Ceasar, Jean-Michel Othoniel, Jan Fabre,

Maria Grazia Rozin - nothing has been left out of this exhibition that has been created together with the city of Venice... Read more

Dali Retrospective at the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid



The Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid is putting on the first Spanish retrospective of Salvador Dali's work in over 30 years from 27th April to 2nd September 2013. More than 200 paintings, sculptures and drawings by the artist will be on show, spread across eleven chronological themes. This exhibition looks notably into the artist's Surrealist period. The retrospective also looks into the lesser known periods of Dali's

life such as his childhood, the time he spent at the students' residence in Madrid with film maker Luis Buñuel and even his experiences in the USA... Read more

"Gerhard Richter, Elbe, November u.a"



The Ludwig Museum of Cologne is devoting an exhibition to Gerhard Richter until 8th September 2013. This exhibition entitled "Gerhard Richter. Elbe, November u.a", provides visitors with a chance to see some of his most famous work... Read more

Slovenian Impressionists and their Time at the Petit Palais in Paris



For the very first time and until 13th July 2013 the Petit Palais in Paris is paying tribute to Slovenian beaux-arts dating 1890 to 1920. Although the country was still a province of the Austro-Hungarian empire (Carniola), this period was one of an assertion of a feeling of national identity, which the artists tried to shape. This exhibition presents the work of four Impressionist painters who tried to rise

beyond anecdotal realism and only retain the landscape for its emotional power. The exhibition offers a review of the work created in Ljubljana notably with sculptures, Art Nouveau illustrations, photographies and caricatures... Read more

Agenda :



22nd April Luxembourg Foreign Affairs Council

Luxembourg Agriculture and Fisheries Council



23rd April Luxembourg General Affairs Council



27th April General Elections - Iceland

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