



European strategic interests: choice or necessity?



Author: Michel Foucher

The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a text by Michel Foucher, geographer and member of the Foundation's Scientific Committee on the European strategic interests. In order to "build a power pole of influence" in a polycentric world, Europe has to count on its strategic interests. These zones can represent economic (energy), and also political interests (conflicts, terrorism, immigration). This text is taken from the "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2013" published by Lignes de Repères. The work is available for purchase on our site from our "Bookshop".

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Front page! :

For a two-tiered Europe



The Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation Jean-Dominique Giuliani signed an article in Le Figaro on 7th November 2013 "For a two-tiered Europe". Twenty years after the entry into force of the Maastricht treaty Jean-Dominique Giuliani believes that the European institutions, which are extremely flawed, cannot remain as they are. In his opinion "the paths for European recovery necessarily imply variable geometry which would enable a lifting of taboos on issues which cause problems." He believes that France and Germany must take "the initiative for recovery for example"... [Read more](#)

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to access our information files, a special thumbnail on Robert Schuman and our bookshop... [Read more](#)

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"Comment imaginer l'Europe de demain?"



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The Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani will be taking part in a debate in Marseilles, European Capital of Culture on 15th November 2013 on the theme of "Comment imaginer l'Europe de demain?" (Imagining Tomorrow's Europe)... [Read more](#)

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Franco-German outlook for the EU



On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the death of Robert Schuman the Robert Schuman Foundation is organising a conference together with the General Council of Moselle on "Franco-German outlook for the EU" on 21st November 2013 at 5pm at the Robert Schuman House in Scy-Chazelles. Doris Pack and Nathalie Griesback MEPs as well as Bernard de Montferrand, former Ambassador of France in Germany and Ronja Kempin, Research Director at SWP, will be taking part in the debate. It is obligatory to enrol: info@robert-schuman.eu.. [Read more](#)

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European integration of the Western Balkans



As part of the series of conferences on the "Crisis and the EU's candidate countries" organised by the French Institute Skopje with the support of the Robert Schuman Foundation, a third conference entitled "The Debt Crisis: danger or opportunity for the European integration of the Western Balkans" will be taking place on 14th November 2013 in Skopje with Gaëlle Péro Valéro, a Balkan specialist, researcher for the Robert Schuman Foundation and journalist based in the Balkans for the last few years... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

Cyprus achieves the goals set in the bail-out plan



On 7th November 2013 Cyprus's international creditors, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund indicated that the country was meeting the targets set out in the rescue plan. After a week's audit from 29th October to 7th November 2013 they concluded that the "programme was on track" and opened the way to a new tranche of loans. The troika welcomed the "major progress" made by Cyprus "toward the recapitalization and restructuring of the financial sector.".. [Read more](#)

Unemployment rises in October in Spain to 4.81 million



According to a press released by the Labour Minister on 5th November 2013 the number of people registered out of work in Spain continued to rise in October for the second month running to 4.81 million. The country recorded 87,028 more unemployed over one month. Over one year unemployment has declined however. The Employment Ministry is pleased "that there has been an annual reduction in unemployment for the first time since May 2007.".. [Read more](#)

France: downgrading



On 7th November 2013 the ratings agency Standard and Poor's took France's financial rating down a notch to AA against a previous AA+. In a press release it deems that the country's fiscal room to manoeuvre is restricted and it criticises the effectiveness of the policy being implemented. "We believe that the economic policy measures implemented since 23rd November 2012 have not reduced the risk of unemployment remaining over 10% until 2016," stressed the agency. Moreover it explains that "the present level of unemployment is undermining popular support for further structural and sectoral reform and is affecting long term growth prospects." On 12th November the Bank of France indicated that France's GDP will grow by 0.4% in the fourth quarter of 2013... [Read more](#)

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Ireland: the end of the bail out plan



Ireland is about to become the first euro zone country which has benefited from aid to emerge from the plan in December after it successfully passed the troika's most recent assessment. "Ireland has successfully completed the 12th and final assessment by the European Commission, the ECB and the IMF," said the Irish Finance Minister

Michael Noonan on 7th November 2013. This was a major "stage in Ireland's recovery" which has respected "all of the goals set in the aid plan (...) whilst we were excluded from the financial markets for three years we have successfully laid the foundations to emerge from the EU/IMF programme on 15th December and to make a full return to the markets..." [Read more](#)

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Italy: economic forecasts 2014



On 4th November 2013 the Italian Statistics Institute (ISTAT) published its economic forecasts for 2014. According to data the Italian GDP, after contracting by 1.8% at the end of 2013, it is now due to rise by 0.7% in 2014 thanks to an increase in both domestic and foreign demand. However the unemployment rate which totalled 12.1% in 2013 is due to rise and total 12.4% in 2014. This increase is linked to delayed adjustments in the labour market in line with the economy... [Read more](#)

Portugal: decline in unemployment in the third quarter 2013



According to a press release by the Portuguese Statistics Institute (INE) published on 7th November 2013 the Portuguese unemployment rate is due to total 15.6% in the third quarter of 2013 which means a reduction of 0.2% in comparison with the same quarter in 2012 and 0.8 points in comparison with the second quarter of 2013... [Read more](#)

European Council :

EU-Korea Summit



On 8th November 2013 during the 7th EU-South Korea Summit Herman van Rompuy José Manuel Barroso and the South Korean President Park Geun-hye adopted a joint declaration commemorating the 50 years of diplomatic relations. Moreover they encouraged dialogue on innovation and creative economy as well as the implementation of a full free-trade agreement between both parties signed in 2011. They decided to step up cooperation in terms of industrial policy in order to strengthen competitiveness, entrepreneurship, innovation and support to SME's. They committed to promoting exchange in the cultural and educational areas. They stressed the importance of the respect of human rights and the non-proliferation of nuclear arms as well as the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula... [Read more](#)

Commission :

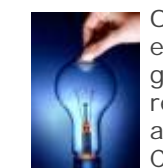
Economic Forecasts in 2013-2015 in Europe



On 5th November 2013 the European Commission published its economic forecasts for the period 2013-2015 when economic recovery might be a possibility even though several external risks persist. The recession was present until the first quarter of 2013 but since the second quarter of this year economic recovery has started. The Commission believes that growth will intensify and total 1.4% in the Union and 1.1% in the euro zone in 2014, then 1.9% and 1.7% respectively in 2015. The Member States are continuing with the internal and external adjustment policies via major structural reforms and budgetary consolidation measures which are fostering better conditions for growth in Europe... [Read more](#)

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Towards an internal electricity market?



On 5th November 2013 the European Commissioner responsible for energy, Günther Oettinger presented a communication proposing several guidelines to EU Member States relative to the internal energy market regarding the way they can take best advantage of public intervention, adapt existing intervention measures and draw up new ones. The Commission insisted on the impact of public intervention which if not assessed correctly can disrupt the functioning of the electricity market and increase energy prices. The communication aims to provide Member States with information, guidelines and best practice to enable them to make the best choices as far as their national regimes are concerned... [Read more](#)

Prosecution for European road traffic infringements



The directive facilitating the cross-border exchange of information regarding road safety infringements entered into force on 7th November 2013 in the EU - excluding the UK, Ireland and Denmark. The directive aims for car drivers from 25 Member States, signatories of the directive, to be subject to prosecution in his home state if he infringes one of the eight rules stipulated in the text (speeding, driving without a safety belt, ignoring a red light, drunk driving and the illegal use of a telephone)... [Read more](#)

Five billion euro for the Sahel



On 4th November 2013 the European Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs announced that the EU was going to increase its support to the Sahel by granting Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad five billion euro so that these countries can rise to national and regional challenges and for them to guarantee security, stability, the rule of Law, local service provision, food safety and even regional integration. The Commission's decision still has to be approved by the European Council and the European Parliament... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Facilitating worker mobility in the EU



On 5th November 2013 the European Parliament's employment and social affairs committee adopted, 41 votes in support, 2 against and 2 abstentions, measures to help citizens who want to work in another EU Member State. These measures aim to clarify and improve the implementation of existing legislation. The goal is to step up the means for appeal in the event of discrimination and to create a national contact point network Europe wide in order to improve cooperation between the Union's countries in the implementation of mobile workers' rights... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Iranian nuclear industry: no agreement concluded in Geneva



The group of six (Germany, China, USA, France, UK, and Russia) met Iranian Foreign Minister, Mohammed Javad Zarif in Geneva. The EU's High Representative Catherine Ashton moderated the negotiations. It was the second round of talks since the election of the Iranian president Hassan Rohani. No historic agreement was concluded in spite of hopes expressed at the start of this session. The stumbling blocks were: uranium storage, the Arak reactor, and nuclear enrichment generally. "Some real progress was made but some disagreements persist," concluded Catherine Ashton and Javad Zarif after the meeting. A third round of talks was planned for 20th and 21st November next... [Read more](#)

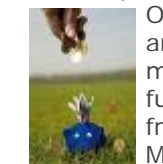
Successful negotiations between the Serb and Kosovar Prime Ministers in Brussels



On 6th November 2013 the Serb and Kosovar Prime Ministers, Ivica Dacic and Hashim Thaçi met in Brussels to discuss new elections in the north of Kosovo. This exchange took place under the chairmanship of Catherine Ashton the EU's High Representative for External Affairs. The latter maintained that negotiations had been fruitful since the Prime Ministers had agreed to organise new local elections in the northern part of Kosovo (Serb majority) on 17th November 2013. On 3rd November Serb extremists prevented the elections taking place in this region. The introduction of the April agreement should therefore continue in the best conditions according to the men's commitments... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

Annual report on the EU's budget in 2012



On 5th November 2013 the European Court of Auditors published the annual report on the EU's budget in 2012. The Court concluded that in most areas of budgetary spending European legislation was not always fully respected. The report invites the Union to simplify the legislative framework as well as its regulation regarding the Union's spending. Moreover the Court stresses that 138.6 billion euro were spent in 2012,

80% of which was jointly managed by the Commission and the Member States. Finally the report says that the error margin estimated for the entire budget in the Union had increased rising from 3.9% in 2011 to 4.8% in 2012... [Read more](#)

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ECB :

The ECB reduces its interest rates



The European Central Bank (ECB) decided to reduce its main rate on 7th November 2013 bringing it to an historical low. The rate was brought down to 0.25% whilst it had remained at 0.5% since May. The ECB also reduced its marginal lending rate by a quarter of a point to 0.75% but maintained its deposit rate at 0%. "We have not reached the limits of our action," indicated Mario Draghi stressing that the ECB might reduce its rate again and that it has a wide range of tools at its disposal... [Read more](#)

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Germany :

New record German trade surplus



According to figures published on 8th November 2013 by the German statistics agency Destatis, the German trade surplus continued to rise in September 2013 by 3.6% to reach a new record of 20.4 billion euro... [Read more](#)

22% of German women aged 40-44 are childless



During a press conference on 7th November 2013 the Germany statistics agency Destatis published a study on the situation of German families. According to 2012 figures 22% of German women aged 40-44 were childless. The number of childless women has increased since 2008 especially in the new Länder (+5). In 2012 48% of women had two children, 15% had 3 and 6% had four children... [Read more](#)

Estonia :

"Estonia has much to offer the rest of Europe," maintains Estonian Prime Minister



On 5th November 2013 Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip delivered a speech to the Estonian Parliament, the Riigikogu, concerning Estonia's European policy. He said he was very optimistic about the future of Europe, notably regarding the dynamism of its economy. But he recalled that the Union still has work to do in terms of creating a single digital market. Finally Mr Ansip called for the continuation of reforms in the euro zone in order to create better integration and the adoption of a long term budget. "Estonia has much to offer the rest of Europe," he concluded at the end of his speech... [Read more](#)

France :

European leaders mobilise to counter youth employment



On 12th November 2013 24 heads of State and government (except for Luxembourg, Malta, Czech Republic and the UK) the main leaders of the European institutions (H.v Rompuy, J.M Barroso, M. Schulz) and social partners met in Paris for a conference on youth employment which follows the first organised in Berlin by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel on 3rd July last. All highlighted the need to "move quickly" to reduce unemployment amongst the under 25's, who now total 6 million in Europe. "The future of a generation is at stake which has been affected by unemployment for many years," and which is "experiencing doubt and despair" said French President F. Hollande. The President of the European Commission JM Barroso said that "financing mainly depended on the Member States". "We need real action, and results very quickly," he explained. "Policy does not create jobs, businesses do" insisted Chancellor A Merkel. In all around 45 billion euro will be mobilised over the next three years in support of youth employment... [Read more](#)

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The French President meets the G20's heads of international organisations



On 8th November 2013 the French President François Hollande met the heads of international organisations within the G20: Christine Lagarde, IMF Director General; Jin Yong Kim, President of the World Bank; Guy Ryder, Director General of the International Labour Organisation;

Roberto Azevedo, Director General of the World Trade Organisation and Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the OECD. During this meeting the president re-iterated France's priorities in terms of absorbing world economic imbalances. He spoke of the global challenges such as solidarity with developing countries and the fight to counter climate change... [Read more](#)

Bishops for Europe



The Bishops of France who met in plenary assembly on 7th November 2013 are alarmed about at "euroscepticism and abstention which are increasingly a threat" as the European elections draw closer. "Wake up!" declared Monseigneur Jean-Pierre Grallet - Archbishop of Strasbourg "We should not forget that after two bloody wars and its division into two opposing blocks that Europe has been beneficial, peace has been a daily event." In his opinion "we are behaving like spoiled children, like adolescents suffering a crisis of ingratitude and irresponsibility." Monseigneur Grallet who is also a delegate of the Bishops Conference of France at the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (Comece) will be attending its plenary session next week where he hopes for a joint declaration on the part of European bishops... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Meeting between Italian and Irish Prime Ministers in Dublin



On 7th November 2013 the President of the Italian Council Enrico Letta travelled to Dublin to meet Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny. They discussed the European Council of December 2013, Ireland's exit from the international aid plan and the upcoming Italian presidency of the European Union's Council of Ministers in the second half of 2014. They also addressed Banking Union and youth unemployment, both issues which are affecting Ireland and Italy severely. Enrico Letta lauded Ireland's successful exit of the aid plan which will herald the start of a new era for the country. This was the second official bilateral meeting between the two leaders... [Read more](#)

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Latvia :

Meeting between the three Baltic Prime Ministers



On 8th November 2013 the heads of government the three Baltic States, Latvian Valdis Dombrovskis, Estonian Andrus Ansip and Lithuanian Algirdas Butkevicius discussed transport and energy infrastructure projects. In their joint declaration they recalled that they wanted to step up cooperation between the three States to liberalise the electricity and natural gas market in view of creating a true common energy market. The continuation of European single market integration is also on the list of common goals in the three Baltic States. Other issues were also discussed such as transport, climate change, science and education... [Read more](#)

Portugal :

Payment of 1.9 billion euro by the IMF to Portugal



The IMF announced on 8th November 2013 that it had approved the payment of 1.9 billion euro in support of Portugal as part of the international bail out plan. The greenlight was given by the Fund's board which represents its 188 Member States, thereby bringing the total amount of loans granted by the Washington institution since the country's rescue in May 2011 to a total of 21.3 billion euro, indicated the IMF in a press release... [Read more](#)

UK :

What should the EU's competences be?



In July 2012 the British government launched an audit of European competences. It is an analysis of what the EU does and the various influences this can have over the UK. The audit is divided over four semesters. At the beginning of each semester the government is launching calls for contributions by all experts who want to provide proof of any type of information. At the end of each semester reports are published to cover a certain number of areas: the single market (free movement of goods and people); immigration; trade and investment; environment and climate change; transport; research and development; tourism, culture and sport; justice...

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Ukraine :

Ukraine - still no solution for Yulia Tymoshenko



From 6th to 8th November 2013 Aleksander Kwasniewski and Pat Cox, two emissaries from the European Parliament were on a mission in Kyiv hoping to find a solution for imprisoned opponent Yulia Tymoshenko. They met Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and opposition representatives. On 8th November the Ukrainian Parliament failed to approve a text that would enable Ms Tymoshenko to leave and receive care abroad - but this text is expected in order to enable the signature of the association agreement with the EU, planned for 28th and 29th November in Vilnius... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Control of the European Union's Borders



Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe declared on 6th November 2013 on the publication of a study devoted to the right to leave an EU country that "border control policies [should] be more respectful of Human Rights, and be more transparent and more responsible." He accuses the "EU's externalisation of external border control policies which has had negative effects on Human Rights especially regarding the right to leave a country which is necessarily a prior condition to the fulfilment of other rights, notably the right to asylum..." [Read more](#)

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NATO :

NATO's "Steadfast Jazz 2013" Exercise



From 2nd to 9th November 2013 NATO is organising the exercise "Steadfast Jazz" in the Baltic States and Poland which is due to be "biggest operation organised by the Alliance since 2006". Some 6000 soldiers will be mobilised so that NATO's rapid response force, the NRF, will be prepared for the defence of an ally. On this occasion NATO's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen met the Presidents of the three Baltic States on 6th November. On 7th he travelled to Poland. This exercise highlights the importance of the implementation of joint defence... [Read more](#)

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Eurostat :

Book on Agricultural Statistics



Eurostat published a paperback on agricultural, fishing and forestry statistics on 7th November 2013. This publication presents a selection of tables and graphs which provide a statistical glimpse of the agricultural, forestry and fishing sectors. The book is divided into eight chapters the first of which provides an overview of agriculture in Croatia, a new EU Member. The other chapters provide information on the agricultural census, agricultural accounts and prices, agricultural production, agro-environment, rural development as well as regarding forestry and fishing... [Read more](#)

827 million air passengers in the EU



On 5th November 2013 Eurostat indicated that in 2012 the number of air passengers had risen (+0.7%) in comparison with 2011 and totalled 827 million in the EU. In comparison with a dip in 2009 following the financial crisis, air passenger transport has increased by 10% but only by 3.6% in comparison with 2008. Countries with the highest rise in air passenger numbers are Lithuania (+17.6%) and Estonia (+15.5%), whilst Slovenia (-14.1%) and Slovakia (-13.5%) have experienced the greatest decreases. EU Member States with the greatest number of air passengers are the UK (203 million), Germany (179 million), Spain (160 million), France (135 million) and Italy (116 million)... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Study of the sovereign risk in the euro zone

On 6th November 2013 the IMF published a study called "Sovereign Risk and Belief-Driven Fluctuations in the Euro Area". In this study the



institution analyses the "sovereign risk" ie the probability of one country not paying back its debt and the fluctuations associated to belief in the euro zone. The study suggests that the sovereign risk has increased quite significantly since 2008 in the euro zone which is also endangering the private sector. Researchers then put forward a neo-Keynesian model of a monetary union comprising two regions on the model of the euro zone and show that coordinated, asymmetrical fiscal policies might prevent debt crises caused by a lack of credibility vis-à-vis investors... [Read more](#)

"How to build a modern European Union?"



The Centre for European Reform has published a report entitled ""How to build a modern European Union?". In this report experts put forward a series of reforms to bring the Union out of ths political, social and economic crisis in which it is now plunged. The report suggests that the European population's pessimism does not just come from the euro zone but that it is linked to European political sluggishness which needs reform... [Read more](#)

Perspectives of the French and German economic policies



The French Institute for International Relations (Ifri) has published a study by Henrik Uterwedde, Deputy Director of the Deutsch-Französisches Institut in Ludwigsburg which analyses perspectives of the French and German economic policies. According to the author there are some problems with the German successes and that beyond its weaknesses the French economy also has strong points. The author advocates new economic convergence within the euro zone... [Read more](#)

Publications :

"European Integration and the future of the nations"



Maxime Lefebvre, diplomat and teacher at Sciences Po Paris, has published a book entitled "La construction de l'Europe et l'avenir des nations" with Armand Colin publishing. He notes that Europe comprises a range of nations that all have different cultures and histories. On this basis he invites European leaders to redraft the role played by nations in the European project. The author puts forward a new model founded on cohesion between the nations of Europe. This model does not suggest Europe as a federation like the USA nor as a confederation of Nation-States. In his book the author places the Franco-German couple back in the heart of the European Union... [Read more](#)

Culture :

"Writers' Europe" a new programme on Arte



The Franco-German TV channel is offering a new programme called "Writers' Europe" until 4th December 2013. This programme presents a European country by way of one or several native writers every Wednesday as of 10:20pm. Gradually a mosaic of Europe will be drawn up using unique archive material. The first episode will be broadcast on 6th November 2013 the first. It is devoted to Ireland with four national writers. The next programmes will be devoted to Italy, England, Spain, Hungary, Germany, Turkey, Iceland, Sweden and Portugal... [Read more](#)

1914 - The avant-gardes at war



As part of the commemoration of the First World War the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn is running an exhibition until 23rd February on pre-1914 works of art. This exhibition entitled "1914-the avant-guards at war" reveals a series of pre-1914 paintings finalised just before the start of the first world war. It shows artists' response to this turbulence which marked the work of Klee, Picasso; Schiele, Kandinsky, Macke and many others... [Read more](#)

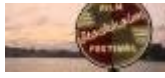
International Film Festival in Rome

The city of Rome is organising its 8th international film festival until 17th November 2013. Films in competition will be presented in seven



halls of the Parcol della Muscia Auditorium. At the same time the Rome Cinema Foundation will be showing films by Federico Fellini at the "Cinema Barberini" in the Via Veneto. This year it will be the 20th anniversary of his death... [Read more](#)

24th International Film Festival Stockholm



On 6th November 2013 the International Film Festival in Stockholm opened its doors showing amongst others the Steve McQueen film "Twelve Years a Slave" . This is the 24th year the festival has run. It has taken place yearly in November since 1990. This year the event will end on 17th November with the award of the Bronze Horse - the main prize delivered during this festival... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



14th November
Brussels
Meeting of Euro Zone Finance Ministers



15th November
Brussels
Economic and Financial Affairs Council



18th & 19th November
Brussels
Foreign Affairs Council



18th -21st November
Strasbourg
Plenary Session at the European Parliament

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