



## "If we do not give priority attention to the crises we now face we are in danger of having an extremely rude awakening!"



Author: Arnaud Danjean

Just one month before the European Council on 19th and 20th December which will be devoted in part to questions of Defence and just days before the meeting of the 28 Defence Ministers in Brussels and the assessment in plenary session by Parliament of the reports on the implementation of the common security and defence policy the Robert Schuman Foundation has published an interview with Arnaud Danjean, Chair of the European Parliament's Security and Defence sub-committee.

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### Front page! :

#### 12th Congress on European Security and Defence



On 26th and 27th November 2013 the 12th congress on European security and defence will be taking place in Berlin focusing this year on "After Afghanistan: new requirements and opportunities for policy, military and industry". The Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, will be speaking on 27th November 2013 on "New Challenges for Europe after Afghanistan-Middle East and Africa". The congress will bring together various personalities from the military and civilian spheres... [Read more](#)

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## Financial Crisis :

### Eurogroup Meeting



The 17 Finance Ministers of the euro zone met on 22nd November 2013 in Brussels. They noted that the signs for improvements in the economy are more evident and that the coordination of fiscal policies will speed up the process. They discussed the Commission's recommendations concerning the budgets of the 17 euro zone States which they welcomed and which they will try to implement. They recalled the need to continue structural reform and notably to ensure the sustainability of public spending and that efforts should be kept up. They encouraged Malta, Italy, Spain and Finland in this sense. They noted that some countries did not have any room to manoeuvre in terms of their commitments. This included countries like Slovenia, Netherlands and France, which are being encouraged to apply their budgetary estimates rigorously...

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### The OECD lowers its world growth forecast



On 19th November 2013 the OECD published "Economic Outlook". "The world economy is recovering gradually but there are greater risks," declared the OECD. Hence the report lowers the world growth forecasts. In 2013 growth is due to reach 2.7% instead of the 3.1% announced in May 2013. In 2014 growth is due to recover but the OECD is forecasting 3.6% instead of 4%. In 2015 growth is due to lie at around 3.9%. Lower perspectives in some emerging countries are said to be the cause of the forecast downturn. The OECD fears that the fragility of the major economies will take world growth "off track". Above all political clashes over the USA budget seem to be a major risk... [Read more](#)

### Greece: draft budget 2014



On 21st November 2013 Greek Finance Minister Yannis Stournaras presented the draft budget 2014 to parliament which forecasts an end to recession in 2014 with GDP growth of 0.6%. Deputy Finance Minister Christos Staikouras, also said that Greece was targeting a primary budgetary surplus at 1.6% (servicing the debt apart) in 2014, of around 3 billion euro... [Read more](#)

### Economic Activity starting to pick up in Poland according to the IMF



The IMF revised its economic growth forecasts for Poland upwards on 22nd November 2013 to 1.3% this year and 2.7% in 2014. "Recovery is on course and is due to continue in 2014 as it is drawn along by domestic demand. However we are forecasting that it will be progressive given the weakness of the labour market and the moderate expansion of credit." In its previous forecasts the IMF forecasted growth of 1.25% this year and 2.25% next year... [Read more](#)

### The euro zone will pay 3.7 billion euro to Portugal



On 19th November 2013 the EFSF board of Directors announced the disbursement of 3.7 billion euro to Portugal as part of an international rescue plan granted to the country in May 2011. This decision follows a positive opinion on the part of the troika (Commission, IMF, ECB). "After several years of work (...) Portugal has now reached a decisive phase in recovering access to the markets," estimated Klaus Regling, EFSF Director General. After the disbursement of this tranche another 1.2 billion euro is due to be paid to Portugal before the end of the programme planned for June 2014... [Read more](#)

## Commission :

Information Policy Reform and Promotion of European Agricultural Products



On 21st November 2013 the European Commission proposed the launch of a more ambitious, better targeted information and promotion policy for agricultural products. This proposal aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the European agricultural sector by developing and opening up new European and also world markets. The Commission is proposing to raise consumer awareness about quality; increase aid designed for information and promotional activities; to introduce a European promotional strategy; to simplify administrative procedures; and to have facilitated management via a one-stop-shop at the Commission, programmes set out jointly by the Commission and the Member States... [Read more](#)

#### Citizen Mobility



On 25th November 2013 the European Commission adopted a communication which highlights the Member States' and community institutions' shared responsibility concerning citizens' rights to live and work in another Member State. To support the Member States' work the Commission's document defines five areas of action designed to strengthen the right to free movement whilst helping States to take best advantage of this. The documents details EU citizens' rights to free movement and access to social benefits and it addresses the concern expressed by some States regarding the challenges that migratory flows can cause for local authorities... [Read more](#)

#### Simplification of the European of the small claims settlement procedure



On 19th November 2013 the European Commission suggested to make the small claims procedure simpler, less costly and more pertinent. The ceiling of demands set at present at 2000 euro will rise to 10,000 euro in order to take on board small claims, which will benefit SMEs. Moreover the Commission suggests widening the definition of the cross-border nature of a case and to cap legal fees so that they do not rise beyond the total of the claim. Finally the proposal also plans to reduce red tape and transport fees since it will be possible to make requests on-line... [Read more](#)

#### Parliament :

##### MEPs support having more women on the boards of firms listed on the stock exchange



On 20th November 2013 MEPs adopted 459 votes in support, 148 against and 81 abstentions the directive obliging stock exchange listed companies in the EU to implement transparent election procedures so that by 2020 at least 40% of their non-executive board members will be women. They suggested that sanctions be set if businesses did not introduce these measures. We should note that these recruitment rules are not applicable in companies which employ under 250 people. Member States must adopt this directive so that it can enter into force... [Read more](#)

##### MEPs want to develop Galileo, an alternative to GPS



On 20th November 2013 MEPs adopted, 603 votes in support, 29 against and 59 abstentions new non-legislative rules to develop the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay service system under civilian supervision. Galileo and EGNOS will offer citizens an alternative to the American GPS and Russian Glonass systems and should improve safety, effectiveness and reliability in the aviation, maritime and agricultural sectors. Moreover these two services should represent potential for industry and create jobs... [Read more](#)

##### Malala Yousafzai, receives the Sakharov Prize 2013



On 20th November 2013 Malala Yousafzai, a young 16 year old Pakistani militant who is working for girls' right to education received the Sakharov Prize 2013. In her speech Malala declared that "there was poverty, a lack of freedom, fear and terrorism but there was also hope because we are united to help children, to speak for them and to act." She invited the States to measure the strengthen of a country not by its army but by the number of educated adults it has... [Read more](#)



MEPs adopted the multiannual financial framework on 19th November 2014-2020. The budget plans for 908 billion euro in credit payments and 960 billion in commitment payments, ie 3.7% and 3.5% less than for the 2007-2013 budget respectively. This vote closes the three year debate between the European Commission, MEPs and the Member States. On 20th November 2013 MEPs adopted, 494 votes in support, 153 against and 13 abstentions, the EU 2014 budget. They succeeded in obtaining 500 million euro in additional credit payments in comparison with the proposal made by the Council of 135.5 billion and granted 142.6 billion euro in commitment payments... [Read more](#)

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### Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy



On 20th November 2013 MEPs adopted five legislative projects (draft regulation on direct payments, on rural development, the common organisation of markets, on financing, the management and supervision and on transitory rules for 2014) which reform the common agricultural policy (CAP). They voted in support of a greener, fairer CAP which will place greater emphasis on protecting the environment, will guarantee fairer distribution of European funds and will help farmers to meet market challenges. Over the period 2014-2020 373.2 billion euro will be allocated to the agricultural policy which is the biggest line in the European budget... [Read more](#)

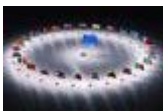
### Council :

#### Conclusions of the "Education and Youth" Council



On 25th November the 28 Education Ministers discussed new sources of digital training Europe wide. In order to guarantee the competitiveness of European establishments of higher education in the digital race Ministers highlight the need to coordinate action and strategic partnerships between European universities notably the new programme "Erasmus+". They also stressed the importance of encouraging two-directional international diplomas and the mobility of teaching credits for students. During the part of the Council devoted to Youth, Ministers adopted conclusions to improve the social inclusion of young unemployed people, who are not studying or following any type of training. Some political initiatives covering prevention, education, employment and the transition from school to work were presented... [Read more](#)

#### 2014 EU Budget approved by the Member States



On 19th November 2013 the 28 European Affairs Ministers approved the agreement concluded with the European Parliament on the 2014 budget as well as the amending budget no.9 which compensates four Union countries for flooding and drought. Moreover ministers looked at the roadmap for the European Semester 2014 and the annual growth assessment 2014 thereby kicking off the fourth European Semester for the coordination of the Union's economic policies. Finally they noted the preparatory work undertaken for the European Council that will take place on 19th and 20th December... [Read more](#)

#### 21st EU-Japan Summit



On 19th November 2013 on the occasion of the 21st summit between the EU and Japan, European and Japanese leaders supported the progress made in the negotiations over an economic partnership agreement and a free-trade agreement. They highlighted the importance of science and technology for growth and competitiveness. Moreover they committed to cooperating more closely in negotiations within the WTO, over issues related to climate change and liberalisation of the energy market. They expressed concern about the situation in North Korea, Iran, Syria and Somalia... [Read more](#)

#### Diplomacy and Defence



On 18th and 19th November the 28 Foreign Ministers noted the preparatory work undertaken for the European Council of December as well as for the Eastern Partnership Summit which will take place on 28th and 29th November 2013. Moreover they repeated their support for the transition process in Tunisia and expressed their concern about the situation in Libya and Syria. Joined by the Defence Ministers they debated the Common Security and Defence Policy in view of the European Council on 19th and

20th December. At the same time several countries, including Germany, France, Spain, Greece, Italy, Netherlands and Poland committed to launch joint programmes on drones aiming to produce, the next generation of remotely controlled planes Europe-wide by 2020... [Read more](#)

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### 16th EU-China Summit



On 21st November 2013 on the occasion of the 16th summit between the European Union and China both European and Chinese leaders committed to strengthening their strategic partnership in order to consolidate peace, prosperity and sustainable development. They launched negotiations for an investment agreement covering both the protection of investments and market access. Moreover they recalled that they wanted to launch bilateral dialogue on the rule of law... [Read more](#)

### Diplomacy :

#### Agreement on the Iranian Nuclear Programme



Iran and the major powers (US, China, Russia, UK, France and Germany) came to a first historic agreement on 24th November 2013 to contain the Iranian nuclear programme, whilst highlighting that this was simply a "first stage". After five days of bitter discussion the six countries and Iran came to an agreement in which the Islamic republic accepted to limit its nuclear programme in exchange for a relaxation in economic sanctions, thereby opening a new period of talks over the next six months. This agreement establishes a wider range of constraints and checks on the Iranian nuclear programme even though there is a share of ambiguity which allows for differing interpretations... [Read more](#)

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### Germany :

#### Annual Report: results of the German reunification



On 20th November the German government published its annual report which assesses the results of reunification. Nearly 25 years after the end of the GDR the marks of Germany's division are still visible but former East Germany has also made clear progress. The document notes for example the declining difference in salaries, that the birth rate is rising and that fewer young people leave the East to settle in the West... [Read more](#)

#### Angela Merkel's Speech to the Bundestag



On 18th November 2013 German MPs debated American spying and the future of the Eastern Partnership during an extraordinary session in the Bundestag, the lower chamber of the German Parliament. German Chancellor Angela Merkel asked for a full explanation of the spying issues. In view of the summit in Vilnius on 28th and 29th November next the German Chancellor announced that she preferred to support countries of Eastern Europe in the face of Russian pressure. She warned Russia against any attempt to form a front against the EU... [Read more](#)

#### Angela Merkel defends Germany's trade surplus



On 21st November 2013 German Chancellor Angela Merkel defended her country's trade surplus in an economic forum organised by the German daily "Süddeutsche Zeitung" saying that Europe should focus on the competitiveness of other regions. "It would be absurd for German businesses to reduce their output," declared Ms Merkel. "Germany's competitiveness cannot be reduced," she maintained. Speaking to 300 leaders and industrial managers including the President of the ECB, Mario Draghi, the Chancellor declared that Germany had "recovered remarkably well, thanks to its export successes." In her speech Ms Merkel also declared that Germany was prepared to take the creation of banking union forwards in Europe... [Read more](#)

### Cyprus :

#### The President of the Republic of Cyprus meet the leader of the Turkish Cypriot Community

On 25th November 2013 the President of the Republic of Cyprus and



the leader of the Greek Cypriot community, Nicos Anastasiades met the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community Dervis Eroglu. In a press conference President Anastasiades explained that he had organised this meeting with the aim of ensuring the signature of a joint declaration that would open the path to a settlement of the Cypriot issue. Although he welcomed the good atmosphere that reigned in the meeting he stressed however that there was still a great deal of work to do before the signature could be made... [Read more](#)

#### Greece :

##### Meeting between the Greek Prime Minister and German Chancellor



On 22nd November 2013 German Chancellor Angela Merkel encouraged Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras to continue painful reforms which she says are beginning to "bring about the first fruits of success". She welcomed the "primary surplus of the Greek budget - ie without servicing the debt - achieved this year, and also the implementation of "deeper" structural reform. She lauded the work undertaken by the Greek population and the "difficult decisions" taken by Athens. Antonis Samaras said he was pleased with what had been achieved. "Do you remember where we were fifteen months ago?" He said that his country would adhere to its commitments. The Greek draft budget 2014 plans for a return to growth next year and a surplus in public accounts after years of recession... [Read more](#)

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#### France :

##### The Commission asks the SNCM to pay France back



On 20th November 2013 the European Commission deemed that the Société Nationale Corse Méditerranée (SNCM) had benefited from an economic advantage which was incompatible with the EU's rules on State aid. The Commission asked the SNCM to pay France back to a total of 220 million euro. The Commission later doubled the fine bringing the total to be paid back to 440 million euro. At the same time the Commission turned to the European Court of Justice for the non-recovery by France of unlawful subsidies granted to the SNCM regarding the Marseilles-Corsica ferry-link during the tourist season for its provision of an "additional" service whilst this already existed on the private market... [Read more](#)

#### Italy :

##### 31st Franco-Italian Summit: for a "Europe of Growth"



The 31st Franco-Italian Summit took place in Rome on 20th November 2013. After a joint press conference the Italian head of government Enrico Letta and French President François Hollande decided to work together for "a Europe of growth". They want to "continue and complete banking union" and "provide the euro zone with financial capabilities". In view of the European Council on 19th and 20th December they advocated the adoption of the "bank resolution mechanism and the possibility of direct recapitalisation of banks via the European Stability Mechanism." Finally Paris and Rome recalled that they wanted to make the Turin-Lyon link a priority. On this issue the Foundation published a study entitled "TransEuropean Network Policy and European Growth Investments: the Lyon-Turin link - it's happening now!".. [Read more](#)

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##### Italian government gives up shares in 8 companies including ENI



On 21st November 2013 the Italian Council of Ministers discussed a privatisation plan of 8 Italian public companies aiming to reduce the country's public debt. The government is planning to earn around 12 billion euro with this operation. Amongst the 8 companies feature the gas and oil giant "ENI" 3% of which the government is planning to relinquish, ie 2 billion euro, whilst retaining at least 30% of the business; Fincantieri (shipyards); Grandi Stazioni (railway network); STMicroelectronics (semi-conductors); Enav (air control); Sace (insurance) and Tag (metallurgy)... [Read more](#)

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#### Luxembourg :

##### Homage to Pierre Werner

From 26th November to 9th December 2013 the Christian-Social Party



of Luxembourg (CSV), together with the Werner family and the Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe (CVCE) are organising a series of events in homage to Pierre Werner. "This eminent Luxembourg politician" who would have been 100 on 29th December 2013 marked his country's political, economic, social and cultural life. He also played a major role in European integration (notably regarding Economic and Monetary Union). On 27th and 28th November 2013 a seminar will look into Pierre Werner's vision of Europe... [Read more](#)

#### Poland :

##### Poland: government reshuffle



On 20th November 2013 Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk announced a government reshuffle. "We need new energy and acceleration," he declared. Hence Elżbieta Bieńkowska has become Deputy Prime Minister and will also remain Infrastructure and Development Minister. Jan Rostowski, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister for the last six years has been replaced by Mateusz Szczurek. Environment Minister Marcin Korolec has left his seat to Maciej Grabowski. Andrzej Biernat has become Sports Minister, Grazyna Joanna Kluzik-Rostowska, Education Minister, Lena Kolarska-Bobinska Science and Higher Education Minister and Rafal Trzaskowski, Administration and Digitization Minister. The new ministers will enter office on 27th November... [Read more](#)

#### Czech Republic :

##### Czech Government



On 21st November the President of the Czech Republic, Milos Zeman officially asked Bohuslav Sobotka, leader of the Social Democratic Party (CSSD), which came out ahead in the general elections on 25th and 26th October last, to form a government. Tripartite negotiations between the Social Democratic Party, ANO (Discontented Citizens' Action) and the Christian Democrats (KDU-CSL) to form a coalition government are due to start next week. If these discussions, the focus of which will be taxes and the return of Church property, progress well, the government might be formed before the end of the year... [Read more](#)

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#### Slovenia :

##### Resignation of the Slovenian Economy Minister



The Slovenian Economy Minister Stanko Stepisnik announced on 20th November 2013 that he was resigning after revelations in the media suggesting that his ministry had granted State subsidies to a company which partly owns. "I am resigning because of these accusations and the trouble they have caused, I shall return to Parliament as an MP," declared Mr Stepisnik, member of the main coalition party in power, Slovenia Positive... [Read more](#)

#### Georgia :

##### The new Georgian Prime Minister approved by Parliament



On 20th November 2013 the Georgian Parliament approved the appointment of Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili. Aged 31 he was chosen on 2nd November 2013 by Bidzina Ivanishvili as his successor. The latter said after the presidential election that he intended to quit his post on 27th November next. Parliament approved the new government 93 votes in support, 19 against. The new president elected on 27th October 2013, Giorgi Margvelashvili, was sworn in on 17th November for a five year mandate. Interior Minister and a graduate of the Sorbonne where he studied international relations Irakli Garibashvili is the youngest Prime Minister in Georgia's history... [Read more](#)

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#### Ukraine :

##### No association agreement between the EU and Ukraine



On 21st November the Ukrainian Parliament rejected the laws that would enable former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who is suffering from slipped discs, from leaving the country to receive healthcare abroad. The texts were approved by less than 200 MPs, whilst a

majority of 226 votes was required to approve them. On the same day the Ukrainian government decided to suspend negotiations with the EU in view of the signature of an Association Agreement. The two European Parliament representatives Pat Cox and Aleksander Kwasniewski said they were disappointed at Ukraine's unilateral decision to postpone the signature of an Association Agreement with the EU which was planned during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius on 28th and 29th November next. They also highlighted that the decision taken by the Ukrainian authorities might complicate the resumption of talks in the future. On 22nd November Yulia Tymoshenko called for people to demonstrate against the relinquishment of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU. On 25th November Herman van Rompuy and José Manuel Barroso denounced the Russian position. Has Ukraine, under the influence of Russia taken the right decision?.. [Read more](#)

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Space :

#### Launch of three European "Swarm" Satellites



On 22nd November 2013 the European Space Agency launched three "Swarm" satellites into orbit. The satellites were lofted in Russia with a "Rokot" launcher. For four years they will examine the earth's magnetic field, the depths of our planet's core and the confines of its upper atmosphere. They will undertake precise measurements that will enable the assessment of the present weakening of the earth's magnetic field in a bid to understand how this phenomenon is contributing to climate change... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

#### Democracy in the Digital Era



Organised by the Council of Europe, the second World Forum for Democracy (until 29th November 2013) will focus on the role played by the internet in democratic practice - "Re-wiring Democracy: connecting institutions and citizens in the digital age". Contributing to debate a study by the Council of Europe offers new ideas about digital democracy and advocates on-line creativeness to put a halt to declining political participation. Governments and parliaments are invited to grant greater attention to internet initiatives and avoid reproducing on-line outmoded tools like consultations and public assemblies... [Read more](#)

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UN :

#### UN Conference on Climate Change



From 11th to 23rd November 2013 the 11th conference on climate change took place in Warsaw. At the end of negotiations countries came to an agreement which "invites all sides to launch or step up preparations on the contributions they intend to make" and "to communicate them ahead" of the next conference in Paris in 2015. The developed countries have been asked to "continue mobilising public money at higher levels" from the emergency aid levels decided for 2010-2012 ie 10 billion \$/year. A major decision concerning the reduction of greenhouse gases would make it possible to limit global warming to 2°C and the fight against deforestation. The REDD+ mechanism (Reduction of emissions due to deforestation and the degradation of forests) adopted in Cancun in 2010 was completed... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

#### 505.7 million inhabitants in the EU on January 1st 2013



On 20th November 2013 Eurostat indicated that on January 1st 2013 the EU's demography was estimated at 505.7 million people whilst it only totalled 504.6 million a year earlier. In 2012 the population grew by 1.1 million ie an annual growth rate of +2.2 per 1000 inhabitants. The population experienced natural growth of 0.2 million (+0.4%) and a migratory balance of 0.9 million (+1.7%). Moreover 5.2 million babies were born in the Union in 2012. The countries with the highest birth rates are Ireland (15.7%), the UK (12.8%), France (12.6%), Sweden (11.9%) and Cyprus (11.8%). However the lowest rates were observed in Germany (8.4%), Portugal (8.5%), Greece and Hungary (9.1%), Italy (9%)... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :



### Reviving reform in the emerging countries



On 20th November 2013 the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) published its annual report on transition, entitled "Transition Report 2013". In this report the EBRD notes that reform in Central and Eastern Europe has been reduced to zero since the start of the world economic crisis thereby preventing economic investment and growth. The report establishes a correlation between the lack of economic and political results and the halt of economic progress. But it is still optimistic and shows that the countries studied have the means to prevent this vicious circle thanks to a climate that favours reform (international integration, improved domestic governance etc ...). The countries of Central Europe and the Baltic are succeeding however says the report... [Read more](#)

### Life expectancy rising even though healthcare spending is decreasing



On 21st November 2013 the OECD published its "Health at a Glance 2013". In this study the OECD presents the main healthcare indicators and healthcare systems in its 34 member countries. The organisation indicates that healthcare spending is down in almost all member states due to budgetary cuts made necessary by the crisis. However the report highlights that the crisis has had more positive effects on healthcare indicators. Life expectancy has risen over 80 in all OECD countries. Likewise infant mortality has dropped radically, the number of doctors has increased, intensive care and primary care quality have improved etc ... Other indicators are not so clear. Hence the OECD is inviting countries to privilege "affordable and sustainable" healthcare spending... [Read more](#)

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### Culture :

#### Re-opening of the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome



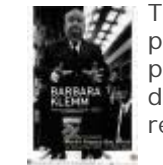
The Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome re-opened on 19th November 2013 after five years of restoration. Thanks to restoration by laser, religious frescos, all blackened by time, have been brought out of the darkness. In addition to this the re-opening also provides an opportunity to see history and technology at work together. Thanks to an agreement between the Pontifical Institute for Christian Archeology and Google it is now possible to take a virtual walk of 360° in this part of the necropolis which extends over several kilometres... [Read more](#)

#### Pop Art in Milan



The Royal Palace of Milan is running an exhibition until 9th March devoted to pop art originator Andy Warhol. The exhibition organised by an artist friend Peter Brant brings together more than 150 works of art - paintings, photos, sculptures - which are part of the Brant Foundation collection. The exhibition presents the development of Andy Warhol's artistic output from his beginnings until his death... [Read more](#)

#### "Barbara Klemm. Photographs 1968-2013"



The Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin is running a retrospective of photographs by Barbara Klemm until 9th March 2014. The photographer/journalist's work spanning a 40 year period for the German daily "Frankfurter Allgemeiner Zeitung" is a true reflection of Germany's recent history and its personalities... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



25th and 26th November  
Brussels  
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council



28th and 29th November  
Vilnius  
European Union Summit devoted to the Eastern Partnership

Nov



2nd and 3rd December  
Brussels  
Competitiveness Council

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