



Assessment of and lessons learnt during the 7th Legislature of the European Parliament 2009-2014



Author: Charles de
Marcilly

Just seven weeks before the European Elections (22nd-25th May), the Robert Schuman Foundation has published an assessment of the 7th legislature of the European Parliament (2009-2014). This study highlights data published in the mid-mandate assessment undertaken at the beginning of 2012. The balance of power between political groups, an analysis of the quantitative action taken by parliament and the national delegations' work are assessed. This is followed by an evaluation of the major issues that have marked this term.

[Read more](#)

Contents

Elections : Hungary **Financial Crisis** : Eurogroup - IMF - ECB - France - Cyprus
Commission : Visas - Energy/USA - Healthcare **Parliament** : Media - Roaming -
Payments - Audit **Council** : China - Africa - Central Africa - Diplomacy
Germany : Minimum salary - Energy - Greece **Cyprus** : Reunification? - Defence
Finland : Katainen/EU **France** : Government - Germany **Italy** : Reform/Senate - UK
Malta : President **Poland** : Energy **UK** : Advantage/EU - Vatican
Armenia : Resignation **Ukraine** : NATO - Security **UN** : Disarmament - Climate
Council of Europe : EU/Agreement **OECD** : Spain - Education
Eurostat : Unemployment **Publications** : World/USA - Europe/Heritage
Studies/Reports : Banks - Eurobonds **Space** : Copernicus **Culture** : Exhibition/Hanau
- Exhibition/Paris - Exhibition/Berlin - Exhibition/Arles - Exhibition/Madrid

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

Elections :

Victory for FIDESZ and Viktor Orban in the general elections in Hungary



Outgoing Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and his party FIDESZ won the general elections on 6th April 2014 with 44.54% of the vote. He is due to take 133 of the 199 seats in the new parliament - in other words the exact threshold which will provide him with a two-thirds majority. He came out ahead of the left alliance which won 26%. The far right party Jobbik came third with 20.54%... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

8.3 billion euro in aid for Greece

On 1st April 2014 the 18 Euro zone Finance Ministers said they were pleased with the results of the fourth adjustment programme mission for Greece. They believe that the necessary factors are in place to



launch further procedures with the aim of approving the next aid plan totalling 8.3 billion euro - of which 6.3 billion will be available at the end of April. Members of the Eurogroup also addressed the situation in Portugal and the possibility of completing aid of 1.2 billion euro on 24th April. The draft budget for Luxembourg was declared to be in line with the stability pact and ministers were happy that a compromise had been found with the European Parliament on banking union which still has to be approved during the plenary session in April... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

End of the recession?



In a speech delivered on 2nd April 2014 Christine Lagarde, IMF Director General deemed that the economy had stabilised overall but that new obstacles were now emerging. In her opinion the world's economy is turning the page on the great recession but if policies are not more ambitious the world might fall into a phase of low growth mid-term... [Read more](#)

The ECB determined to maintain an accommodating monetary policy



On 3rd April 2014 the Council of Governors of the European Central Bank (ECB) decided that the interest rate on main refinancing operations as well as those affecting the marginal lending facility and the deposit facility will remain unchanged at respectively 0.25% (an historic low), 0.75% and 0%. Moreover President Mario Draghi recalled that the ECB was determined to maintain an accommodating monetary policy and to act rapidly if the euro zone situation required it. He repeated that he saw no danger of deflation, synonymous with a general reduction in prices and economic sluggishness, becoming a reality. He added that the euro's rate in comparison with other currencies was a major factor for the stability of prices and will therefore be "monitored very closely" even it was not "a monetary policy goal as such"... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

France's public deficit totalled 4.3% of the GDP in 2013



France's public deficit totalled 4.3% of the GDP in 2013, ie more than the goal of 4.1% planned for by the government according to the first results of national public administration accounts published on 31st March 2014 by INSEE. The 2014 budget plans to bring the deficit down to 3.6% by the end of the year and to 2.8% at the end of 2015 - a trajectory that was already qualified uncertain by the Court of Auditors in January. The public debt totalled 1,925.3 million euro at the end of 2013 ie 93.5% of the GDP - which is slightly over the 93.4% mark noted by the government. In 2012 INSEE revised these figures upwards - the public deficit rose from 4.8% to 4.9% and the from 90.2% to 90.6% of the GDP... [Read more](#)

Payment of 150 million euro to Cyprus



The executive of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) met in Athens on 2nd April 2014 and approved the payment of 150 million euro to Cyprus after the positive assessment of the third quarterly evaluation of the macro-economic adjustment programme. The payment will bring the total amount of financial aid given to Cyprus by the ESM to 4.75 billion euro. On 31st March the Eurogroup President Jeroen Dijsselbloem, who was visiting Nicosia said he was confident in the rapid recovery of the Cypriot economy one year after the European rescue plan that forced the island to make drastic savings... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Commission :

Relaxing visa delivery rules



On 1st April 2014 the European Commission put forward proposals to shorten and simplify procedures significantly for people who want to travel to the EU for short stays. They will be less costly and there will be less red tape whilst a high level of security will be maintained. Easier access to the Schengen area for legal travellers will make visits to friends and family as well as business travel easier. It will stimulate economic activity and the creation of jobs for example in the area of tourism and in those associated to this, such as the restaurant business and transport... [Read more](#)

EU/USA Energy Council



The fifth EU/USA Energy Council which took place on 2nd April 2014 in Brussels reiterated its firm support to Ukraine's efforts to diversify its natural gas supplies. It also stressed its commitment to supporting the EU's work to complete the common, integrated energy market in order to secure greater energy security and more competitive prices for all Member States and neighbouring states in the energy community...

[Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Improving efficacy, accessibility and healthcare systems' ability to adapt



In a communication adopted on 4th April 2014 the Commission unveiled a strategy that aims to improve European healthcare systems given the problems and tension that they are facing. It highlights initiatives that the EU can develop and use to help Member States guarantee citizens the quality healthcare they are hoping for. It will privilege methods and tools that will improve efficacy, accessibility and the ability to adapt healthcare systems, in line with reform recommendations addressed to Member States as part of the European Semester. Member States are also being encouraged to use European financing tools like the Structural Funds to complete the reforms advocated in these recommendations... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

The EU should develop a media broadcast strategy



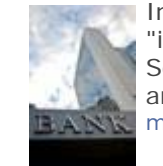
In a recommendation adopted on 2nd April 2014 MEPs stressed that the EU should define a strategy for the European radio and tv network as part of its external policy in order to promote the freedom of expression, pluralism of the media and to strengthen democracy and human rights... [Read more](#)

End of roaming and net neutrality



On 3rd April 2014, via its vote in support of the draft regulation presented by the Commission that aims to make Europe "a connected continent" (single telecommunications market), MEPs decided to bring roaming fees to an end by Christmas 2015. The report suggests granting more consumer rights and to promote a better quality telecommunications offer. Moreover MEPs also adopted measures that aim to prevent Internet service providers from blocking or slowing their competitors' internet services... [Read more](#)

European Parliament caps commissions on card payments



In line with the new measures adopted on 3rd April 2014 by MEPs, the "interchange" commissions set by banks on retailers will be capped. Some measures aiming to make on-line payments safer, to reduce costs and to extend users' choice were also approved on 3rd April 2014... [Read more](#)

Reforming the EU's audit services to regain investor confidence



On 3rd April 2014 the draft agreement with the Council of Ministers on legislation that aims to open the European audit services market beyond the four main companies which dominate at present and to settle audit weaknesses revealed during the financial crisis was adopted by MEPs. The text also aims to improve the quality of audits, transparency and to prevent conflicts of interest. The agreement is due to be approved by the Council of Ministers. Most of the measures would be applicable within two years after the measures enter into force... [Read more](#)

Council :

The EU and China deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership

On the occasion of the visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping on 31st March 2014 Brussels and Beijing insisted on the need to deepen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership - concluded between the EU and



China in 2003 - which now covers issues involving foreign policy, security, as well as global stakes such as climate change and international economic governance. The declaration lays out the points on which the two sides have agreed to deepen cooperation and stress the joint effort needed to counter piracy in the Indian Ocean. The EU and China are pleased with the increase in naval escorts in the World Food Programme which transports food aid to Somalia. Regarding international matters both Chinese and Europeans agreed on the "importance of multilateralism and the central role played by the UN in international affairs.".. [Read more](#)

4th EU/African Summit



During the fourth EU/African Summit on 2nd and 3rd April 2014 in Brussels both sides decided to implement a joint strategy which will focus on priority areas for the period 2014-2017. These areas are peace and security, the promotion of democracy, good governance and human rights, human development, sustainable, inclusive growth, continental integration... [Read more](#)

Military operation in Central African Republic



On 1st April 2014 the Council launched the European military operation in Central African Republic in line with the greenlight given by the UN's Security Council in its resolution 2134. On 2nd April a special meeting on the situation in CAR took place on the sidelines of the EU/Africa Summit. This meeting led to support being given to the Central African transition authorities in their work towards peace, security and dialogue. It also highlighted the joint commitment on the part of the EU and Africa to respond in a coordinated manner to this crisis and to help together towards bringing sustainable stability to the country... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Informal meeting of 28 Foreign Ministers



On 5th April 2014 an informal meeting of 28 Foreign Ministers took place in Athens together with Catherine Ashton, the EU's High Representative. The Ukrainian crisis was on the agenda; ministers also addressed the elections in Afghanistan, the freedom of expression in Turkey and the peace process in the Middle East... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Germany adopts a minimum hourly gross salary of 8.50€



On 2nd April 2014 the German Council of Ministers adopted a draft bill introducing a minimum gross hourly salary of 8.50 €. This minimum salary will enter into force on 1st January 2015 but a transition period is planned for sectors that are still governed by a wage agreement. It will be implemented in all sectors as of 2017 except in the case of the under 18's, trainees and long term unemployed who will not be included in this rule for the first six months of their employment... [Read more](#)

Agreement on the main guidelines to energy transition in Germany



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and 16 "Minister-Presidents" of the Länder found a compromise on the main guidelines of the energy transition bill on 2nd April 2014. Designed notably to lighten consumer bills the project was the target of a great amount of criticism on the part of the Länder. After their meeting Angela Merkel said that "intense discussion" had led to "an agreement on the main guidelines" regarding the urgent reform of the law governing renewable energies and the negotiation strategy with Brussels. This project is due to be put to the council of ministers on 8th April... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

W. Schäuble: Greece's recovery path was the right one

"Greece's recent economic results prove that the path followed was the right one" in order to bring the country out of its financial rut said the German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble in an interview given to



the Greek daily Kathimerini on 6th April 2014. He maintained that "there was no simple solution". "Unemployment in Greece was not the result of the European policy (...) "it can already be seen that public finances have improved as planned for in the programme" and that "consolidation is occurring faster and much better than expected." Four years after being excluded Greece is about to make its return to the financial markets. It is forecasting low growth (0.6%) in 2014... [Read more](#)

Cyprus :

Meeting between Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades with Dervis Eroglu



Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades met the leader of the northern part of the island. He declared that progress had been made but it was vital to continue dialogue in all areas. In his opinion differences and incoherence in the joint declaration have been seen on both sides and these will be dealt with in order to move on to the second phase of discussions as quickly as possible... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

New Defence Minister



Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades appointed Christoforos Fokaides as Defence Minister on 3rd April after the death of his predecessor, Tasos Mitsopoulos on 22nd March. Member of the DISY party in office, Christoforos Fokaides, aged 40, is a professor of political science at the European University of Cyprus... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Finland :

Finnish Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen targets Brussels



Speaking at a meeting of the National Coalition (Kokoomus) Finnish Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen indicated on 5th April 2014 that he was going to quit his post "possibly towards the end of June". At 42 the Prime Minister's career does not totally lie behind him. Since 2011 he has led a pro-European government to block the path of the country's two eurosceptic parties. Everyone acknowledges that he has undertaken this difficult task with great success and has qualities that might be necessary in Brussels. He also announced that his ambition was now turned to the EU and notably the Eurogroup, - possibly even the presidency of the European Council... [Read more](#)

France :

New government in France



Whilst Manuel Valls, former Interior Minister was appointed Prime Minister on 1st April 2014 the composition of the government was announced on 2nd April. Two ministers have taken up their position in government: Ségolène Royal as Ecology Minister and François Rebsamen as Employment Minister. The 14 other ministers have either kept their post or have changed portfolio. At Bercy there will be two ministers: Michel Sapin will be in charge of Finance and Arnaud Montebourg the Economy and for Productive Recovery. In all the new government comprises 16 ministers of whom 8 are women... [Read more](#)

Two French Ministers visit Berlin



Just as the French government underwent a reshuffle on 2nd April 2014 leading to the reorganisation of the departments in Bercy in line with the German model, two Finance Economy Ministers, Michel Sapin and Arnaud Montebourg travelled to Berlin on 7th April 2014 to meet their German counterparts Wolfgang Schäuble and Sigmar Gabriel. During their press conference W. Schäuble declared that Germany needed a "strong France". For his part the French Finance Minister Mr Sapin added that France was "on the right path". Mr Sapin - comparing himself to Mr Schäuble promised to "continue the reorganisation of public finances". Mr Schäuble stressed his attachment to sustainable growth... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Reform of the Senate approved in the Council of Ministers



The Italian government adopted a draft law on 31st March 2014 which brings radical reform to the Senate. It would like to turn the Senate into a "German" assembly thereby bring perfect bicameralism to an end. The constitutional draft law which ratifies the end of the "perfect bicameralism and the reduction of the number of MPs" abolishes the Senate in its present shape as promised by Matteo Renzi as he took office on 17th February. Until now every draft bill had to pass before the Chamber of Deputies and before the Senate until it was finally adopted. Once this law has been adopted (there will have to be exchange between the two chambers and a 2/3 majority adoption), only MPs will approve the law with the Senate assuming a purely consultative role. This project "adopted unanimously" "is a major turning point for Italian politics" said the Prime Minister... [Read more](#)

"A grand Europe" cannot exist without the UK



On April 1st 2014 during a press conference in London with his British counterpart, David Cameron, the President of the Italian Council Matteo Renzi declared that a "grand Europe" cannot exist without the UK. He stressed that he wanted Europe to reform but for it to remain united. He added "we want a better Europe, not more Europe, but a more balanced Europe." In spite of their political differences the two men managed to agree on several issues. Under pressure from the eurosceptic right of the Conservative Party D. Cameron committed to renegotiating relations between London and the EU... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Malta :

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta



Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was appointed President of the Republic of Malta on 4th April 2014 by Parliament. Social Affairs Minister since March 2013, Ms Coleiro Preca is the ninth president of Malta. Secretary General of her party the new president appointed for five years will replace George Abela... [Read more](#)

Poland :

Poland's offensive for European Energy Union



Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk gave a speech on 1st April 2014 and declared his ambition to create a Europe focused on energy thereby enabling the Union to be less dependent on Russia. He called for a strengthening of "gas solidarity" by financing new transport infrastructures via European funds. He also suggested that the European Union purchase its gas in a collegial manner from third countries. At the same time he called for the development of alternative energy sources... [Read more](#)

UK :

The EU is vital for the British car industry



A report published on 2nd April 2014 by the British Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) concluded that 92% of industrialists in the sector want the UK to stay in the EU. The attractiveness of the single market gives to the UK, the integrated level of production chains in Europe, the Union's weight in international negotiations, reduced costs created by the introduction of European norms, R&D financing and the free movement of workers are all factors quoted to be important for British competitiveness... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Visit by Queen Elizabeth II to the Vatican



Queen Elizabeth II travelled to the Vatican on 3rd April 2014 to meet with Pope Francis. Protocol was relaxed for this visit between the two religious leaders. The Queen of the United Kingdom is the "Supreme Governor" of the Anglican Church, placed under the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In addition to questions about society and dogma over which the two Churches do not agree, the visit by the British monarch to the Pope, originally from Argentina, was of particular significance although the Vatican remained neutral over the debate associated with the Falklands War... [Read more](#)

Armenia :

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sarkissian resigns



Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sarkissian resigned on 3rd April 2014 according to a declaration made by Parliament's Deputy Leader Edward Charmazanov. Tigran Sarkissian has been Prime Minister since 2008 but has suffered severe criticism along with his government due to the entry into force of a new law on retirements which forced people born after 1974 to pay 5% of their wages into private pension funds... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Declaration by NATO member countries' foreign ministers



On April 1st 2014 Foreign Ministers of NATO's member states condemned Russia's illegal military intervention in Ukraine. They do not acknowledge the illegal and illegitimate bid to annex Crimea by Russia and call for the respect of international law and Ukraine's internationally acknowledged borders. They suspended NATO's civilian and military cooperation with Russia in response to its intervention in Ukraine whilst maintaining political dialogue with Moscow in view of promoting a solution to the crisis... [Read more](#)

Security stepped up and criticism of Russian attacks in the country's east



On 7th April 2014 Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk accused Russia of implementing a "plan to dismember Ukraine" via incidents in the east of the country. These incidents are part of a "plan to destabilise the situation so that a foreign army can pass the border and invade Ukrainian territory, which we shall not allow," he maintained. On April 1st the Ukrainian Parliament approved the organisation of joint military manoeuvres with NATO countries and the EU. It also approved the disarmament of paramilitary groups which took part in the pro-European demonstrations and which still control the centre of Kiev. On 3rd April the prosecutor general, the interior minister and the head of the Ukrainian security service also presented the first conclusions of the investigation into the killings that took place on Maidan during the uprising which finally led to the fall of President Viktor Yanukovych... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

UN :

17 European States ratify the Arms Trade Treaty



17 European countries (Germany, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the UK)- and one non EU member - Salvador - ratified the Treaty on Arms Trade on 2nd April 2014 one year to the day after its adoption by the UN. The treaty aims to regulate the sale of conventional arms in the world. "If these rules are implemented worldwide and in an effective manner they will prevent arms from falling into the hands of terrorists and criminals, which feed conflict and instability around the world," declared British Foreign Minister William Hague. The treaty will enter into force as soon as fifty countries have ratified it... [Read more](#)

In Brussels Ban Ki-moon calls for a collective effort against climate change



In the face of visible, worrying signs of climate change across the world the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon again insisted on 3rd April 2014 in Brussels on the need for a major collective effort to counter this phenomenon before it is too late and stressed the decisive role to be played by Europe in this area. "My aim is to make Member States understand, both the private sector and the man on the street, that climate change is an obstacle to the safety, prosperity and development of humanity long term," declared the Secretary General... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Cooperation agreement with the European Commission on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law

The European Commission and the Council of Europe (47 Member States) signed a "Declaration of Intention" on 1st April 2014 aiming to



introduce a new cooperation framework in the enlargement countries and the EU's neighbourhood for the period 2014-2020. The agreement will enable both organisations to work together more strategically and with greater focus on results to aid the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the enlargement countries and in the EU's neighbourhood by implementing binding international conventions, the monitoring bodies and assistance programmes of the Council of Europe... [Read more](#)

OECD :

Reform of the Spanish public sector on the right path according to the OECD



The OECD published a report on 1st April 2014 entitled "Public Governance Review of Spain: From Administrative Reform to Continuous Improvement" in which it indicates that the reform of the Spanish public sector is on the right path. This reform should lead to a strengthening and effectiveness of the country's institutions whilst proposals aim to improve transparency and eradicate corruption thereby helping significantly in re-establishing public confidence... [Read more](#)

Publication of the OECD's PISA programme



The OECD published its evaluation of the problem resolution test from the PISA programme on 1st April 2014. It emerges that pupils in Singapore and Korea achieved the best results because they learn quickly, are extremely curious and able to solve unstructured problems in unique contexts. The PISA evaluation was undertaken by 85,000 pupils in 44 countries and economies. The computer test was based on real life situations and designed to gauge competences that young people use to solve problems. The OECD indicates that Canadian, Australian, Finnish, English, Estonian, French, Dutch, Italian, Czech, German, American and Belgian pupils all achieved results above the OECD average... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Unemployment at 11.9% in the euro zone and 10.6% in the EU



According to Eurostat on 1st April 2014 unemployment adjusted to seasonal variations lay at 11.9% in the euro zone in February 2014 - stable since October 2013. It lay at 12% in February 2013. In the EU unemployment lay at 10.6% in February 2014 down in comparison with the rate of 10.7% in January 2014. It lay at 10.9% in February 2013... [Read more](#)

Publications :

"Un monde nouveau en manque d'Amérique"



Odile Jacob publishing has released a book entitled "Un monde nouveau en manque d'Amérique" by Simon Serfaty, a member of the Robert Schuman Foundation's scientific committee and professor of foreign policy at the University of Old Dominion in Norfolk (Virginia). In this book the author looks into the hypothesis that the USA will gradually disappear from the world arena to the benefit of new non-Western powers and its effects in terms of world peace... [Read more](#)

L'Europe en héritage



2014 is the year when the European institutions will be voted anew. On this occasion Bernard Bonno, curator of the Maison de l'Europe in Rennes and Haute-Bretagne aims to show in his book "L'Europe en héritage" his view of the EU which he believes comprises the greatest adventure the continent has experienced since the end of the second world war. The book is prefaced by Jacques Barrot, Member of the Constitutional Council and a Member of the Foundation's Board... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

IMF concerned about the weight of banking giants in Europe

In a report published on 31st March 2014 the IMF indicated that it was



concerned about the weight of European banking giants in the international financial system. These banks that are too big to fail are said to be taking advantage of implicit aid totalling 300 billion dollars and continue to enjoy government protection - since the latter cannot afford to let them fail because this would endanger the stability of international finance. Although the IMF indicates that since the beginning of the crisis governments have undertaken reform to reduce the implicit guarantees given to these banking giants, not enough progress has been made and as long as these banks exist the stability of the international financial system will not be guaranteed... [Read more](#)

Publication of the report on pooling the debt



The report by the group of experts which assesses the possibility of pooling the debt via the joint emission of eurobonds was published on 31st March 2014. The report does not make any recommendations but concludes that eurobonds would stabilise States' borrowing markets, improve monetary policy transmission and promote financial integration stability. The report also points to some risks and highlights the need to assess and undertake prior reform. On April 1st several experts including Graham Bishop, a British expert were auditioned by the European Parliament's ECON Committee... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Space :

Launch of the first satellite in the Copernicus programme



On 3rd April 2014 the first satellite devoted to Copernicus, Sentinel 1A was launched from the European space centre in Guiana. Copernicus, the European earth observation programme ensures the constant observation and monitoring of land surfaces, the atmosphere, the oceans and continental surfaces. It provides reliable, valid, certified information which is supported by applications and many decisions in terms of the environment and security. This launch marks a decisive phase for Copernicus. Specific data about the earth will be available immediately for operational services... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Culture :

Franco-German exhibition on the Parisian avant-garde



French modern art is on exhibition in Germany. The historic museum of Hanau (Hessen) is running an exhibition until 29th June 2014 on the Parisian avant-garde at the beginning of the 20th century through to the 1960's. The exhibition is called "Paris mon amour: Picasso, Baumeister, Poliakov ...". It brings together 54 pieces of work in a historic-political perspective of the avant-garde's development then its revival over the generations... [Read more](#)

"Paris 1900, city of entertainment" at the Petit Palais



You have until 17th August 2014 to see the exhibition "Paris, 1900, City of Entertainment" which invites the public to relive the French capital's "années folles" when it hosted the Universal Exhibition at the beginning of the 20th century. Never before had the town shone in the eyes of the world as it did then as a city of luxury and fine living. More than 600 works - paintings - artwork, costumes, posters, photographs, films, furniture, jewellery, sculptures ... will take you back to the Paris of the Belle Epoque... [Read more](#)

"Evidence" exhibition by Ai Weiwei at the Martin-Gropius Bau in Berlin



The biggest exhibition ever devoted to Ai Weiwei is running until 7th July 2014 at the Martin Gropius-Bau in Berlin. Three years after his spectacular arrest, Ai Weiwei, who spent 81 days in prison, is still waiting to pick up his passport which was confiscated by the Chinese authorities. In his exhibition entitled "Evidence" the artist shows objects which document his life and artistic work like evidence in a trial. He has rebuilt a life-like copy of the cell in which he was imprisoned... [Read more](#)

Inauguration of the Vincent van Gogh Foundation



After three years of work the Vincent van Gogh Foundation opened its doors in Arles where the painter lived from 1888 to 1889. The exhibition entitled "Van Gogh Live!" is on until 31st August 2014. This first exhibition focuses on the idea of "colours of the north, colours of the south", retraces the development of the artist's palette from dark tones to the colours of Provence. Work by other Van Gogh contemporaries or those who influenced him are also on show: Courbet, Pissaro, Monet and Monticelli are part of the exhibition for example... [Read more](#)

El Greco Library at the Prado



On the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the death of El Greco the Prado Museum in Madrid is showing the library of Greek artist, El Greco until 29th June. This comprises 130 books. The exhibition comprises five parts each matching a time that influenced El Greco's paintings. The first part focuses on Ancient Greece and shows how the painter was influenced by the cultural heritage of his native country. The second part entitled "Metamorphosis in Italy" covers the artist's time in Italy and the effect this had on his way of painting. The third part is devoted to the "scientific" approach adopted by El Greco. He thought he could depict the invisible or the impossible. The fourth part is devoted to El Greco's architectural work and the fifth focuses on issues linked to depicting religion... [Read more](#)

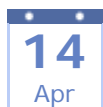
Agenda :



8th April
Publication of "Schuman Report 2014: State of the Union"



13th April
1st round Presidential election in Macedonia (FYRM)



14th April
Luxembourg
Agriculture and Fisheries Council



14th & 15th April
Luxembourg
Foreign Affairs Council extended to Defence (15)



14th-17th April
Plenary session - European Parliament

The Letter is also available in:



I love the Robert Schuman Foundation's Letter

The Letter's Editorial Team :

Inga Groth, Pauline Massis Desmarest, Charles de Marcilly ;
Claire Darmé, Raphaël Frison, Jelena Isailovic, Marine Le Lann, Salomé Larcher

Chief Editor: Pauline Massis Desmarest
Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin

Contact/Suggestions

info@robert-schuman.eu

The Robert Schuman Foundation, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France, Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani.

You no longer wish to receive our letters. [{LINK}](#)