



## Who will the Commission's next president be? A multiple-choice question



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The designation of the President of the European Commission requires a joint agreement on the part of the European Parliament and the European Council, which rests neither on the "Westphalia model" (whereby governments alone make the decision) nor on the "Westminster model" (whereby the President belongs to the party ranking first at the European elections). An analysis of the appointments made since 1979 allows us to identify the four main criteria likely to prevail during the negotiations currently under way: party affiliation, personal profile, country of origin as well as the effect of appointments to other European and international posts.

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Front page! :

### Why and how Europe will remain at the heart of the world



The Robert Schuman Foundation Chairman Jean-Dominique Giuliani has published a book entitled "Pourquoi et comment l'Europe restera le cœur du monde – Petit traité d'optimisme." Europe is no longer the centre of the world. It is not a leading military power. But Europe is the heart which sets the pace, which feeds minds and culture - which creates and attracts. It is the leading economic and trade power. In Jean-Dominique Giuliani's opinion Europe has all of the means to rise to the challenge. This book published by Lignes de Repère is available in all bookshops and from the Foundation's site in paper and digital format (e-readers and tablets)... [Read more](#)



2014 a turning point for Europe? The European elections and the fresh election of all of the Union's political institutions offer an excellent opportunity to analyse the EU's situation and its developments. These issues form the core of the Schuman Report 2014, an annual work of reference on Europe. This is the 8th edition and includes an exclusive interview with French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian who gives his view of European defence issues. This book edited by Thierry Chopin and Michel Foucher is published by Lignes de Repères. It is available in all bookshops and on-line from the Foundation's site in paper and digital format (e-readers and tablets°... [Read more](#)

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#### Elections :

**Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi's Democratic Party wins the early general election in Kosovo**



The Democratic Party (PDK) led by outgoing Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi won the early election on 8th June in Kosovo. With 30.69% of the vote he beat the Democratic League (LDK), led by the former Mayor of Pristina (2007-2014), Isa Mustafa, 25.7%. These were followed by the Self-Rule Movement (Vetëvendosja, VV) with 13,48%, a left-wing party led by Albin Kurti, the Alliance for the future of Kosovo (AAK), led by former Prime Minister (2004-2005) and former commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), Ramush Haradinaj 9.6%, the United Serb List (JLS) 4.21%. Turnout totalled 43.16% ie -5.5 points in comparison with the previous general elections on 12th December 2010... [Read more](#)

#### Financial Crisis :

**Cyprus: GDP contraction**



"Cyprus's GDP contracted by 0.7% in the first quarter to reach -4%" said the Cypriot statistics institute. This contraction is a slighter than that seen in the fourth quarter of 2013 when growth fell by 0.8%. According to the statistics institute this contraction is linked to a reduction in the activity of the main sectors of the economy... [Read more](#)

**Spain makes an early repayment of 1.3 billion euro to the EU**



The Spanish government announced on 6th June 2014 that as an early gesture of confidence the country was going to reimburse 1.3 billion euro of European aid out of a total of over 40 billion received in 2012 by its weakened bank sector. "Spain will pay back 1.3 billion euro of financial aid because we can do it and in order to boost confidence in the economy," declared the government's spokesperson, Soraya Saenz de Santamaria who also announced that thanks to its better health the country will reduce its net financing requirements by 10 billion euro down to 55 billion in 2014... [Read more](#)

**Unemployment drops in Denmark**



Unemployment dropped in Denmark to 5% in April for the first time since June 2009 announced the Danish statistics institute on 2nd June. This level adjusted to seasonal variations - that still lay at 5.7% in November- has declined rapidly over the last six months. Whilst the GDP contracted sharply in the fourth quarter (-0.5%) it made a clear recovery in the first quarter (+0.9%)... [Read more](#)

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**Retirement Reform in Portugal 2015**



The Portuguese government adopted a reform of retirement pensions on 5th June 2014 which notably plans for an increase in employees' contributions to guarantee the continuation of retirement regimes and to reduce the country's deficits. This reform, whose main guidelines featured in the budgetary strategy document for 2018 presented at the end of April, includes a 0.2 point rise in social contributions made by employees bringing these up to 11.2%. Moreover Portugal's GDP dropped by 0.6% in the first quarter after growth of 0.5% in the three previous months, according to revised data that was published on 9th June by the national statistics institute... [Read more](#)

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**Finland went back into recession in the first quarter of 2014**



With over eight successive quarters without growth Finland finds itself once again in a long period of recession. Indeed the data from the Finnish statistics bureau published on 5th June indicates that the GDP continued to decline in the first quarter contracting by 0.4% in comparison with the previous quarter. Finland has been in economic contraction for the last two years (-1.4% in 2013 after -1% in 2012) and it is wondering whether the third quarter will not be the same. Finland is still suffering from weak demand for its main export products, notably paper and from sluggish domestic consumption. To this we might add the difficulties experienced by Nokia over the last few years and more recently the tension between Russia and Ukraine... [Read more](#)

#### Commission :

##### Strategic framework for health and safety at work



To provide better protection to more than 217 million workers in the EU against accidents and work related sickness the European Commission put forward a new strategic framework for health and safety at work on 6th June 2014 (2014-2020) which reveals major challenges and goals in this area and puts forward the main measures and instruments to be implemented. This new framework aims to help the EU continue to play a leading role in promoting high standards in terms of working conditions, in Europe and across the rest of the world, in line with the "Europe 2020" strategy... [Read more](#)

##### Commission proposes that Lithuania join the euro area in 2015



On 4th June 2014 the European Commission released its 2014 Convergence Report, which assesses eight Member States' readiness to join the single currency. These countries have made uneven progress on the road to euro adoption, but Lithuania stands out from this group as it now fulfils the convergence criteria. The Commission is therefore proposing that the EU Council of Ministers decide that Lithuania can adopt the euro on 1st January 2015. The Council will take the final decision on the matter in the second half of July, after EU Heads of State and Government have discussed the subject at the 26th-27th June European Council, and after the European Parliament has given its opinion... [Read more](#)

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##### Brussels recommends to grant Albania candidate status to the EU



The European Commission confirmed on 4th June 2014 its recommendation to grant candidate status for the European Union to Albania, paving the way for a decision by the Heads of State and Government during the EU 28 summit at the end of June. In a progress report released on 4th June, the Commission highlights the progress made by the small Balkan country in the fight against corruption and organized crime, as well as the establishment of the rule of law. The decision to grant candidate status to Albania, to which it has aspired since 2009, will be submitted to the leaders at the summit on 26th and 27th June in Brussels. It paves the way for long negotiations with members of the EU before the decision to integrate the candidate... [Read more](#)

##### Europe, Israel and the Future of the Middle East



On June 8th 2014 the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso was in Jerusalem for the 14th annual Herzliya Security Conference. During this meeting he spoke of the recent European elections, EU-Middle East relations and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He recalled that a two-State peace solution between Israel and the State of Palestine has been one of the EU's political goals for many years. He suggested a privileged partnership with Israel and a future Palestinian State in the event of future successful peace negotiations, which would cover political, economic and security areas. He encouraged the two players to continue on the path of negotiations to establish a zone of peace in the Middle-East... [Read more](#)

#### Parliament :

##### Manfred Weber, elected as Chairman of the EPP group

German MEP Manfred Weber was elected on 4th June 2014 Chairman of the European People's Party (EPP, Conservatives), the leading political group in the new European Parliament. Manfred Weber, 41, a member of



the Bavarian CSU, was elected Chairman of the EPP Group by 190 votes (192 votes). He was the only candidate for this position and succeeds Frenchman Joseph Daul. Mr. Weber has been an MEP since 2004 and Deputy Chair of the group since 2009. The EPP group also elected 10 Deputy Chairs including Sandra Kalniete MEP, former Latvian Foreign Minister, former European Commissioner and member of the Robert Schuman Foundation's Board... [Read more](#)

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#### Council :

##### Justice and Internal Affairs Council: Mediterranean, Terrorism, Europol



The 28 European Ministers responsible for Justice and Internal Affairs met on 5th and 6th June in Luxembourg. They noted the Commission's report on the implementation of operational action under the working group on the Mediterranean and held a debate on the future development of the area of justice and internal affairs. An indepth discussion took place regarding foreign fighters and repatriated soldiers in view of the fight to counter terrorism especially regarding Syria. They also came to a common agreement on a draft regulation on Europol and adopted conclusions on the anti-corruption report put forward by the European Commission... [Read more](#)

##### Transport and Telecommunications Council: lorry size, railways and maritime transport



On 5th June 2014 EU Member States' Transport Ministers reached political agreement on new rules for the maximum weights and dimensions of lorries, buses and coaches. They also reached agreement on the draft directives on the interoperability and safety of European railways and the draft regulation on the European Railway Agency. Then, they adopted conclusions on the mid-term review of the EU's maritime transport policy leading up to 2018 and on prospects for 2020. The conclusions include the Athens Declaration endorsed by maritime transport ministers at their informal meeting on 7th May... [Read more](#)

#### Diplomacy :

##### G7 Summit Conclusions



The heads of State of the G7 (US, Germany, France, UK, Italy, Canada, Japan) met on 4th and 5th June 2014 in Brussels. During their first meeting on 4th June, the heads of state welcomed the smooth organisation of the presidential elections on 25th May in Ukraine and reaffirmed their support; again, they condemned Bashar al-Assad's regime before discussing the situation in Mali, Iran and other sensitive areas. During talks on 5th June they recalled the importance of supporting growth and employment. They also stressed the importance of energy security and the need for urgent action to counter climate change. As for development they declared that continued sustainable, inclusive development and greater prosperity everywhere was a major commitment that was common to all populations and countries... [Read more](#)

#### ECB :

##### Reduction of rates and four year loans to banks to encourage lending



On 5th June 2014, Mario Draghi, the ECB president decided to lower the interest rate on the main refinancing operations down to 0.15% and the rate on the marginal lending facility down to 0.40%. The rate on the deposit facility was lowered to -0.10%. He announced a series of measure to encourage lending to the real economy including the launch of two four year loans to euro zone banks "to support bank lending to households and non-financial corporations, excluding loans to households for house purchase, the bank will be conducting a series of targeted longer-term refinancing operations (LTROs). The Governing Council also decided to step up preparatory work related to outright purchases in the ABS market to enhance the functioning of the monetary policy transmission mechanism. Mario Draghi added that he could not see any deflationary threat emerging in Europe and that ECB interest rates had reached "their limits". It should also be noted that ECB macro-economic forecasts estimate that growth will be 1% in 2014, 1.7 % in 2015 and 1.8% in 2016, inflation will total 0.7% in 2014, 1.1% in 2015 and 1.4% in 2016... [Read more](#)

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## Germany :

### German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble meets his Italian counterpart Pier Carlo Padoan



German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble met his Italian counterpart Pier Carlo Padoan in Berlin on 5th June. The two men discussed the economic situation in Italy, in the knowledge that the latter was one of the most affected countries during the crisis. According to the Italian minister the GDP is due to increase to an estimated 0.5% and consumer spending by a total 0.1% in 2014. The country is due to experience slight recovery in 2015 with a GDP rate of +0.9%. The Italian Minister said however he was optimistic and that the EU's priority should be based on growth and employment. His German counterpart confirmed the need to strengthen the means to increase growth and to counter unemployment in Europe. The German minister also stressed the need to increase investments not only with public funds but also with public/private partnerships... [Read more](#)

## Bulgaria :

### Bulgaria - early elections - suspension of South Stream



The Bulgarian party of the Turkish minority - Movement for Rights and Freedom, whose votes in parliament are vital for the upkeep of the minority government, demanded early elections on 5th June. According to Lutvi Mestan, the party's Chairman, the results of the European elections make it impossible for Plamen Oresharski's government to finish its term in office. Bulgarian President Rosen Plevneliev has started discussions in this regard. Moreover Mr Oresharski's government is being heavily criticised by the European Commission which is against the construction of the gas pipeline South stream. On 8th June Sofia suspended preparatory work to build the Russian/Italian South Stream pipeline which was due to start this summer in Bulgaria, after Brussels and Washington expressed criticism said Prime Minister Plamen Oresharski... [Read more](#)

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## Cyprus :

### Meeting between Nicos Anastasiades and Dervis Eroglu



Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and the representative of the northern part of the island, Dervis Eroglu, met on 2nd June to continue negotiations over fundamental issues regarding reunification. UN representative in Cyprus Lisa Bittenheim declared that it was a meeting that involved reviving the various technical committees and other fundamental issues. She added that the leaders will meet twice a month in a bid to step up the negotiation process to be able to come to a solution as fast as possible... [Read more](#)

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## France :

### Defence: François Hollande re-iterates financial commitments for the military programming law



French President François Hollande re-iterated "the financial commitments made for the military programming law" (LPM, 2014-2019) on 2nd June 2014. At the same time he asked the government to "put forward ideas to improve the management of equipment and projects." The head of State gave this decision during a Defence Council, whilst Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and military leaders have been concerned about further cuts to the armed forces' budgets. The head of State recalled "the vital nature of our defence work to enhance our international influence, protect our vital interests and to ensure France's security," stressed the Presidency in a press release... [Read more](#)

### 70th Anniversary celebrations of the Normandy Landings



On 6th June 2014 the heads of State of 19 countries, including the USA, Russia, Germany and Ukraine met in France on the invitation of French President François Hollande to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Allied D-Day landings in Normandy on 6th June 1944. On this occasion the heads of State and government met for lunch which led to a meeting between the Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Pyotr Poroshenko. The D-Day celebrations continued at the beach of Ouistreham during which François Hollande lauded the courage of the veterans and recalled the importance of this for the liberation of France and the establishment of

peace in Europe. The day came to an end with a commemoration ceremony for Polish soldiers who fell during the landings which was attended by Bronislaw Komorowski. On D-Day five heads of State and government (Angela Merkel, David Cameron, Bronislaw Komorowski, Stephen Harper and François Hollande) and John Kerry published articles in Ouest France on the lessons they had learned from 6th June 1944... [Read more](#)

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Greece :

#### Greek Ministerial Reshuffle



On 9th June 2014 the Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras reshuffled his government. This was marked by the appointment of Guikas Hardouvelis to the vital finance portfolio. The latter, a professor of finance at the University of Pireus and economic advisor to the Eurobank, one of Greece's main banks, was director to former Prime Minister Lucas Papademos between November 2011 and May 2012 at the height of the Greek crisis. A pro-European, like his predecessor Yannis Stournaras, Guikas Hardouvelis took part in the negotiations to restructure the Greek debt in 2012 which led to the cancellation of 106 billion euro in bonds held by private creditors, especially banks. This reshuffle, during which at least five ministers were replaced including Education, Healthcare, Development, Interior, aims mid-mandate to restore the government's image that was damaged by the European election victory of the main opposition party, Syriza... [Read more](#)

Hungary :

#### The Hungarian Parliament approves Viktor Orban's new government



The Hungarian Parliament invested the government put forward by Prime Minister Viktor Orban on 6th June 2014. This small government of 10 ministers has no women members!.. [Read more](#)

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Italy :

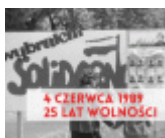
#### The Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union will strive for "growth and employment"



The central theme of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union which starts on July 1st will be "growth and employment" since the debate over "yes or no to austerity" is now "sterile and will take us nowhere," maintained the Italian Economy Minister Pier Carlo Padoan. Italy's agenda during its six month presidency will focus on "three main themes: priority to the internal market, the establishment of structural reform and the financing of growth. "Italian growth, which is still very weak (the GDP contracted by 0.1% in the first quarter of 2014 in comparison with the precedent), must be given new impetus by launching a structural reform programme", emphasised Pier Carlo Padoan... [Read more](#)

Poland :

#### Poland celebrates 25th anniversary of its first free elections



On 4th June 2014 Poland celebrated the 25th anniversary of its first "semi-free" elections - a major step towards the end of communism in the country. These elections, in which some of the seats in the Assembly (Sejm) and all of the mandates in the Senate were open to competition on the part of the opposition, led by the union Solidarnosc, were followed by the creation of a government led by Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki. On the occasion of this anniversary the Polish government put a game online that is designed to highlight the changes and transformations that Poland has experienced over the last 25 years. It insists on the progress made in terms of freedom, modernity and democracy. American President Barack Obama, who was present at the commemorative ceremony, celebrated Poland's victory over communism and maintained American commitment to its NATO allies in Central and Eastern Europe... [Read more](#)

Portugal :

#### 27th Luso/Spanish Summit

The Spanish and Portuguese heads of government, Mariano Rajoy and Pedro Passos Coelho met in Vidago, Portugal, on 4th June for a



Luso/Spanish Summit on cross-border cooperation between the two countries. During the joint press conference which was held after the summit the Spanish Prime Minister called on the EU to grant more support the countries which are emerging from a serious crisis to help to gain strength. Lisbon and Madrid also deemed that the EU should take steps to respond to youth unemployment. Finally the two heads of government called on the Union to implement an energy policy that will bring the Iberian peninsula's isolation to an end. On this issue the Portuguese Prime Minister stressed that as long as energy markets were not integrated in Europe the single market would not really exist... [Read more](#)

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UK :

[Elizabeth II opens the parliamentary session and unveils the government's programme](#)



The Queen's Speech was delivered on 4th June 2014 by Queen Elizabeth II during the inaugural session of parliament 2014/2015. It lays down the government's policy and Parliament's legislative programme. This speech, the last for the Conservatives in office was therefore also David Cameron's last opportunity to put forward new ideas for the election in 2015. Eleven draft bills were announced comprising changes to retirement regimes, more proposals designed to protect the most vulnerable and also an initiative to impose a fee on plastic bags in supermarkets. Nine of these draft laws are applicable in Scotland, which is due to vote "yes" or "no" on 18th September to a question regarding independence... [Read more](#)

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[State Visit by Queen Elizabeth of England to France](#)



Just as France was celebrating the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Landings in Normandy on 6th June 2014 French President François Hollande welcomed Queen Elizabeth II of England on a State visit between 5th to 7th June 2014. The Queen was officially welcomed on 5th June during a ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe after which she spoke with François Hollande. During this interview Mr Hollande offered a gift to the Queen in the shape of a set of photographs of journeys made by the Queen to France during her reign. On 6th June after the D-Day ceremonies the President offered the Queen a State dinner at the Elysée Palace and the next day they went to the Flower and Bird Market in Paris which has been named after the British monarch... [Read more](#)

[Tony Blair appeals for EU reform](#)



On 2nd June as he spoke to the Confederation of British Industry former British Prime Minister Tony Blair supported a reformed Europe. The European election results are "a warning" in his opinion. The UK must move on from being an observer to being a leader. He suggests greater cooperation in areas like the fight to counter organised crime and structural reform in Member States in order for the ECB and the Commission to be able to revive growth. In his opinion David Cameron's strategy, as he threatens to quit the Union, is counter-productive. Tony Blair also said that he was not interested in standing for the Presidency of the Commission... [Read more](#)

Sweden :

[Sweden leads on digital research funding](#)



While Sweden may be a global leader in R&D investment, the EU as a whole is still lagging behind the Japan and the US: new data shows that 6.6% of total R&D government support is invested in ICT in the EU, compared to 9.1% in Japan and 7.9% in the US. Figures from the Digital Scoreboard show that more effort is necessary to meet the goal set by the Digital Agenda for Europe: to reach €11 billion of annual total public spending on ICT R&D by 2020... [Read more](#)

USA :

[One billion \\$ to strengthen security in Central and Eastern Europe](#)

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings at the end of the Second World War American President Barack Obama started a tour of Europe. On 3rd June 2014 as he was in Warsaw the



latter offered to grant up to one billion dollars to deploy new American land, air and sea forces in Eastern Europe, which is concerned about the Ukrainian crisis. This "initiative to re-assure Europe" still has to be approved by Congress. It should also help to develop the capabilities of non-NATO member countries like Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova to enable them to cooperate with the USA and their Western allies and to strengthen their own defences. The American President is also asking Moscow to use "its influence" amongst the pro-Russian separatists in the east of Ukraine to achieve a halt to their attacks against government troops. "Any further Russian provocation will lead to further costs for Russia, including more sanctions if necessary", he announced... [Read more](#)

#### Barack Obama tours Europe



On 4th June in Warsaw during the ceremonies of the 25th anniversary of the collapse of communism Barack Obama met his Polish counterpart Bronislaw Komorowski in Warsaw. He also met his Ukrainian counterpart Pyotr Poroshenko and re-iterated his military support to Kiev. On 5th June he met British Prime Minister David Cameron in Brussels. On 6th June during the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Landings in Normandy Barak Obama and Vladimir Putin spoke together briefly. This was the first time they had spoken to one another since the start of the Ukrainian crisis. The American President asked his Russian counterpart to "appease the tension in Ukraine" otherwise Russia's isolation would worsen... [Read more](#)

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#### Ukraine :

##### Pyotr Poroshenko sworn in as President



During his investiture speech to Parliament on 7th June 2014 the new Ukrainian President Pyotr Poroshenko committed to protecting the country's unity including in the East which is in the grip of a pro-Russian, separatist uprising. Mr Poroshenko addressed the people of the Russian-speaking industrial region of the Donbass, which is mainly under the rebel control and where he intends to travel very shortly, promising them to implement decentralisation and to guarantee the free use of the Russian language. He indicated that he would refuse any "compromise" with Russia over the European trajectory adopted by his country and over Crimea being a part of Ukraine. "Crimea was and will remain Ukrainian," he declared. "I said it clearly to the Russian leader in Normandy," he added... [Read more](#)

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##### Sworn in as Mayor of Kiev, Klichko commits to fighting corruption



On 5th June Vitaly Klichko, leader of the pro-European protest movement in Ukraine was sworn in as Mayor and promised to make the capital into a model of the changes that the entire country has to undergo. He promised "zero tolerance for corruption. "The changes to be made to our country will start in the capital, in Kiev," he declared after having won 56.7% of the vote in the election on 25th May, which took place at the same time as the presidential election. "I declare that there will zero tolerance regarding corruption. We will audit the services provided by the town's authorities," he continued. "Kiev must become a true European capital," he insisted... [Read more](#)

##### Ukraine and the energy issue



As part of the negotiations started between the Russian gas company Gazprom and Ukrainian Naftogaz, which aim to come to an agreement on a plan to settle the gas debt, as well as a price on gas itself, discussions on 9th June 2014 were not successful said European Commissioner for Energy Gunther Oettinger who is acting as mediator. However negotiations are continuing. On 5th June 2014 the G7 met to draft a new energy strategy amongst other things. The G7 agreed on the organisation of a donors' coordination meeting in Brussels next month to extend support to the country in crisis. European Commission President José Manuel Barroso also declared that the EU had a particular responsibility because of its proximity to Ukraine. Finally the European Commission drafted a report on a new energy security strategy for the Union. This report will be discussed at the European Council on 27th June next... [Read more](#)

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## Council of Europe :

### Council of Europe deplores continued discrimination against the Roma in Romania



The Roma minority in Romania is still far too often the victim of discrimination or insults including on the part of the political classes without anyone reacting, regretted Council of Europe experts in a report that was published on 3rd June 2014. "The political classes frequently insult the Roma, which hardly raises any criticism, but which the press, the audiovisual media and the internet then repeat," deplore the experts of the ECRI (European Committee Against Racism and Intolerance). The authors of the report are worried that some MPs have suggested, in a draft law put to parliament, that there is link between the Roma and crime" and accuse the minority of "not trying to integrate". However according to the authors of the ECRI report the Roma are not protected adequately against discriminatory behaviour on the part of the police force and their children are still subject to "segregation" and "discrimination" in school... [Read more](#)

## NATO :

### The fight to counter piracy, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Georgia



Meeting in Brussels on 3rd June the NATO Members' Defence Ministers decided to extend the mission Ocean Shield's mandate to counter piracy " until December 2016. Launched in August 2009 this mission operates in the region off the Horn of Africa in cooperation with the EU's mission Atalante. Since its launch NATO indicates that the mission has helped significantly in the reduction of acts of piracy undertaken committed in this region. NATO notes however that piracy is still a threat to merchant ships which cross through the region and it is with this in view that it was decided to extend Ocean Shield's mandate. During the meeting in Brussels Defence Ministers also met their Ukrainian and Georgian counterparts to discuss the latter's situation; they looked into the ISAF mission in Afghanistan with the countries that are contributing to this together with the Afghan Defence Minister . They discussed the next NATO summit in Wales in September. Ministers re-iterated their support to Ukraine and its sovereignty... [Read more](#)

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## Eurostat :

### Euro zone and EU GDP in the first quarter



According to estimates published by Eurostat on 4th June 2014, seasonally adjusted GDP rose by 0.2% in the euro area and by 0.3% in the European Union during the first quarter of 2014, compared with the previous quarter. In the fourth quarter of 2013, GDP grew by 0.3% in the euro area and by 0.4% in the Union. Compared with the same quarter of the previous year, seasonally adjusted GDP rose by 0.9% in the euro area and by 1.4% in the Union in the first quarter of 2014, after +0.5% and +1.0% respectively in the previous quarter... [Read more](#)

### Unemployment at 11.7% in the euro zone



According to figures published by Eurostat on 3rd June 2014 in the euro zone the unemployment rate adjusted to seasonal variations lay at 11.7% in April 2014 down in comparison with the 11.8% registered in March 2014 and that of 12% in April 2013. In the EU the unemployment rate lay at 10.4% in April 2014 down in comparison with the 10.5% in March 2014 and that of 10.9% in April 2013... [Read more](#)

### Euro area annual inflation decreasing



According to estimates published by Eurostat on 3rd June 2014, euro area annual inflation is expected to be 0.5% in May 2014, down from 0.7% in April, according to a flash estimate by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Looking at the main components of euro area inflation, services are expected to have the highest annual rate in May (1.1%, compared with 1.6% in April), followed by food, alcohol & tobacco (0.1%, compared with 0.7% in April), non-energy industrial goods (0.0%, compared with 0.1% in April) and energy (0%, compared with -1.2% in April)... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

The Venice Biennale hosts the architecture exhibition "Made in Europe"



The 14th Venice Biennale, which opened on 7th June and runs to 23rd November, is looking into the way architecture "absorbs modernity", drawing lessons from the last 100 years, explained its organisers. According to the theme "Fundamentals" Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, the curator of the 2014 Biennale intends to investigate all of the contradictions of a century marked by the loss of national identity and the expansion of globalisation. An exhibition which brings together the finalists of the EU modern "Mies van der Rohe" architecture prize over the last 25 years will also be unveiled. The exhibition "Made in Europe", which presents 150 projects, as well as audiovisual material, was inaugurated with a seminar on 6th June together with architects Dominique Perrault, Vittorio Gregotti, Inaki Abalos and Kjetil Traedal Thorsen. It will run at the Palazzo Michiel until 4th August 2014... [Read more](#)

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#### [International Theatre Festival in Romania - 6th to 15th June](#)



More than 600,000 visitors are expected at the International Theatre Festival of Sibiu, the FITS, one of the most important arts festivals in Europe. Many events are being planned between 6th and 15th June bringing together participants from over 70 countries. "The festival's programme is rich and varied representing the essence of artistic and cultural diversity in Europe," declared Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education and Culture just before the launch. The festival theme this year is "Unity in Diversity".. [Read more](#)

#### [The Tate Britain presents its new Summer 2014 exhibition](#)



The Tate Britain one of the Tate Gallery Museums of London unveiled its new summer exhibition 2014 on 10th June: British Folk Art. This is an exhibition of popular British art in which the work of unknown UK artists is one show. There are objects created by self-taught artists and craftspeople, like for example, the intricate sculpture of a young cockerel made using sheep bones by POWs during the Napoleonic Wars. The exhibition aims to illustrate the energy, variety and idiosyncrasy of British Folk Art... [Read more](#)

#### [Rock in Roma 2014](#)



In just five years the "Rock in Roma" festival has asserted its international status as one of the biggest rock festivals in Italy. In the previous years more than 370,000 people met on the vast site of Capannelle. The festival will take place between 3rd June and 2nd August with 20 concerts being organised in that time. "Rock in Roma 2014" is due to attract nearly 300 million viewers. Reserve your seats fast!.. [Read more](#)

#### [At Le Havre an exhibition for the centenary of Nicolas de Staël](#)



MuMa, the André Malraux Modern Art Museum is running an exhibition devoted to "Nicolas de Staël. Light of the North. Light of the South" from 7th June to 9th November 2014. This exhibition is part of the Nicolas de Staël centenary commemoration. The artist was born in St-Petersburg in 1914 and died in Antibes in 1955. The exhibition explores landscapes in the work of this major figures of the 20th century art world and brings together more than 130 pieces of work (80 paintings and 50 drawings) created between 1951 and 1955. One quarter of them are unique and have never been on show in Europe before... [Read more](#)

#### **Agenda :**



10th and 11th June  
Athens  
EU-Arab League Ministerial Meeting



12th June  
Luxembourg  
Environment Council



13th June  
Luxembourg  
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council



17th June  
Luxembourg  
Agriculture and Fisheries Council

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