



## What should Brussels change? How can the functioning of the European institutions be improved rapidly?



Author: Jean-Dominique Giuliani

How can the way the European institutions function be improved rapidly? This is the question that the Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani tries to answer. This paper is based on the belief that European integration is as relevant as ever but that the way it functions has to be revised; therefore it has to be more specific: without changing the treaties, how can the way the common institutions are run be improved, rapidly and in a way that will fulfil most expectations which are multiple and diverse that are now being expressed by the public about "Brussels" - the name which has now become pejorative, easy to wield and unclear? It only requires the personal commitment of the future President of the Commission, of the new Parliament as far as it is concerned and of the Member States in terms of the Council. The European Council on 26th and 27th June 2014 in its quest for renewed impetus might, in line with its vocation, be the trigger and lead to new perspectives.

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**Front page!** :

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

The Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani has published a book entitled "How and Why Europe will remain at the heart of the world - A small Treaty on optimism". Europe is no longer the centre of the world. It is not the leading military force. But to the world Europe is the heart that provides the pace, that feeds minds,



culture and which attracts. It is the leading economic and trade power. According to Jean-Dominique Giuliani Europe has all the assets it needs to rise to the challenge. This book published by Lignes de Repères is available from bookshops and on the Robert Schuman Foundation site in paper format and in digital format for e-readers and tablets.... [Read more](#)

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### 2nd Economic Ideas Forum in Nancy



The second Economic Ideas forum entitled "The Social Contract" will take place in Nancy on 23rd June 2014. Pascale Joannin, the Foundation's General Manager and member of the Economic Ideas' Scientific Committee will be taking part. The day will comprise workshops on confidence, audacity, dialogue, creation of wealth, responsibility and business proposals. The day will end with a gala dinner... [Read more](#)

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### Summer University "European Ideas Network"



The European Ideas Network (EIN) network is holding its summer university in Portugal on 19th June 2014. The aim is to look into the "achievements and the future role" of the network. The Robert Schuman Foundation's General Manager Pascale Joannin will be speaking as part of a round table focusing on "the contribution made by think-tanks and foundations to the process of policy creation.".. [Read more](#)

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### Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2014



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 :

### Early general elections in Slovenia on 13th July



1.7 million Slovenians are being called to ballot in early elections - the second in three years - on 13th July next. Prime Minister Alenka Bratusek resigned from her post on 5th May after having been beaten by Zoran Jankovic during the election for the post of leader of the party Positive Slovenia (PS) on 26th April. The Drzavni Zbor (National Assembly), the lower chamber, comprises 90 members elected for four years by proportional representation. The Constitution guarantees a seat to the country's two minorities (Italian and Hungarian). Just one month before the election the Democratic Party (SDS) is the favourite in the election. Seven political parties are represented in the outgoing assembly: Positive Slovenia (PS), Democratic Party (SDS), Social Democratic Party (SD), Gregor Virant Civic List (LGV), the Democratic Pensioners' Party (DeSUS), the People's Party (SLS), New Slovenia-People's Christian Party (NSi-SKD)... [Read more](#)

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## Financial Crisis :

### Unemployment down in the UK



The Office for National Statistics published unemployment figures for the UK on 11th June 2014. The unemployment rate dropped to 6.6% at the end of April in comparison with 6.8 % at the end of March. The number of people without work has dropped to 2.165 million over the last three months, which is the lowest figure in five years. The employment rate of 72.9% in the UK is therefore close to its May 2008 record before the financial crisis started... [Read more](#)

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### The IMF maintains that the EU should simplify its budgetary rules



During a conference in Brussels on 10th June 2014 the IMF declared that the EU should simplify its budgetary rules. According to the IMF the Union should privilege the reduction of government debt amongst its Member States. Reza Moghadam, the Director of the European Department at the IMF believes that focusing on debt alone would ensure that the Union's governments have greater flexibility without harming market confidence and that this would also make community rules clearer for its citizens. "Simplify the rules whilst maintaining a certain amount of flexibility, make the debt/GDP ratio the ultimate goal and reduce the number of operational goals," he then said during an economic conference... [Read more](#)

### The OECD sees a "positive change" in euro zone growth



On 10th June 2014 the OECD published its composite leading indicators (CLI). In this report the OECD maintains that unlike developing countries which are not accelerating the euro zone is due to witness an increase in its growth over the next few months. "For the euro zone as a whole notably in Italy the CLIs continue to show a positive change in growth. In Germany and France the indicators show a stable growth trend," writes the organisation... [Read more](#)

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### Finance Ministers welcome the situation in Portugal



The EU's 28 Finance Ministers met on 12th June 2014 and issued a statement on Portugal's decision to abandon the last disbursement of the European Financial Stability Mechanism (EFSM). They commended the Portuguese authorities on achievements in terms of consolidating public finances, stabilising the financial sector and bringing the economy back to a path of recovery. They also took note of Portugal's Constitutional Court ruling of 30th May that certain budgetary measures are regarded as unconstitutional. Finally Ministers welcomed the authorities' reaffirmed commitment to maintaining the reform momentum and the targets agreed in the course of the programme in order to safeguard its achievements... [Read more](#)

### Viability of the Greek debt according to the IMF



In its most recent study published on 10th June 2014 on the progress made by Greece as part of the international rescue plan the IMF warned that the government debt remained "very high". The IMF continues to believe therefore that the viability of the Greek debt to be a source of "serious concern" due to uncertainty about the development of the country's economy mid-term, even if progress has been made. Moreover Greece is very likely due to move back to a path of growth in 2014 but this will depend on the reforms implemented and on the atmosphere on the international markets deemed the Bank of Greece (BdG) in its June report. "The calming of the recession since the start of 2013 is significant and if the trend continues, the GDP will rise to 0.5% approximately," indicated the 2013-2014 annual report on the country's economy which has been in deep recession for the last six years... [Read more](#)

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### The World Bank lowers its economic forecasts for 2014



The World Bank has reviewed its forecasts downwards. It brought 2014 economic growth in developing countries down to 4.8%, instead of 5.3% at the beginning of the year. The World Bank explained this reduction by "the storms in the US, the crisis in Ukraine and re-balancing in China." It announced that the geopolitical crisis between Russia and Ukraine will lead to a collapse of Russian growth (barely 0.5 % this year) and a 5% downturn in the Ukrainian economy. The euro zone (1.1% growth in 2014) and Japan (1.3%) will not grow less than planned but the increase in world trade will only be 4.1% and not 4.6%... [Read more](#)

### The IMF calls on Sweden to cool down its property market



The IMF exhorted Sweden to cool down its property market on 13th June 2014. The latter has been marked by a continuous rise in prices and household debt. "Financial instability is an issue of growing concern," deemed the institution in Washington in a preliminary version of its annual report on the Swedish economy. "House prices

have risen again over 7.5% in April year on year for individual houses and by 12.5% for flats occupied by their owners. The rise in household borrowing has also remained strong taking their debt to nearly 175% of available revenues in 2013," it stressed... [Read more](#)

#### Agreement on the direct recapitalisation of banks



On 10th June 2014 the 18 Member States of the euro zone came to an agreement on the direct recapitalisation instrument under the European Stability Mechanism. Following national procedures and its adoption by the ESM's Governing Board, the instrument will be added to the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) when it enters into force in November 2014. The instrument can be activated in the event of bankruptcy in order to attract adequate capital from private sources and if the ESM member in question cannot recapitalise, including via the ESM's indirect recapitalisation instrument. With its maximum recapitalisation capacity at 60 billion euro this new ESM instrument will form another major pillar of Banking Union, alongside the Single Supervisory Mechanism and the Single Resolution Mechanism... [Read more](#)

#### Since 2009, Spain has disbursed over 61 billion euro in government aid to banks



On 12th June 2014 just days after the government's announcement that it would start immediate repayment of part of the European aid it had received, the Bank of Spain published a report in which indicated that the Spanish banks, which were severely affected by the economic crisis, had received 61.495 billion euro in government aid between 2009 and 2013. To date the State had only been reimbursed to a total of 3% of this sum (1.76 billion euro). According to the Bank of Spain this aid had notably helped to restructure the sector by reducing significantly the number of savings banks... [Read more](#)

#### Commission :

##### Last stage in OLAF reform process



On 12th June 2014, the Commission proposed measures to further safeguard procedural guarantees in OLAF investigations, in order to complete the already comprehensive reform of the EU's anti-fraud office. The proposal foresees the creation of a new Controller of Procedural Guarantees, who would have two main functions. First, he would be responsible for reviewing and providing recommendations on complaints that might be lodged by anyone involved in an OLAF investigation. Second, OLAF will have to have the Controller's greenlight before inspecting the offices of EU Member States' institutions, or before taking any documents or data from these offices. Today's proposal is another step to ensure that OLAF can continue to work efficiently and independently in protecting EU financial interests, while also guaranteeing the effective protection of fundamental rights... [Read more](#)

##### 2015 EU draft budget



"Combining the legacy of the past with helping Europe recover from the crisis, and this with scarcer resources". This is how EU budget Commissioner Janusz Lewandowski describes the EU's 2015 draft budget as adopted by the Commission on 11th June 2014 (commitments: €145.6 billion; payments: €142.1 billion). The bulk of the commitments is for future projects that make Europe stronger economically whereas some 40% of the payments still cover EU funded projects from the 2007-2013 financial period. Also the Commission is proposing a further 1% reduction in its staff numbers, the third such cut in three years... [Read more](#)

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##### Ukraine: continuation of the EU's macro-financial aid programme (MFAII)



On 10th June 2014 as part of the MFAII the European Commission, under the aegis of the Union, raised 500 million euro on the capital markets in order to finance the first tranche of an aid loan to Ukraine. In terms of investment 30% of this aid will be allocated to official financial institutions and 59% to the bank treasury and 11% to management funds... [Read more](#)

#### Parliament :

### The group of European Conservatives and Reformists elects a new leader



English MEP Syed Kamall was elected on 12th June 2014 as head of the group of European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR). He replaces Martin Callanan who led the group from 2009 to now, but who was not re-elected as MEP. The group comprises 63 members from 13 Member States, in comparison with 54 members between 2009 and 2014. The German party, Alternative für Deutschland - AfD - created in 2013 decided to join the ECR. With 63 MEPs the ECR takes third place after the European People's Party and the Socialists and Democrats... [Read more](#)

### Greens appoint their leaders in the European Parliament



On 11th June 2014 the European Greens MEPs elected Belgian Philippe Lamberts and German Rebecca Harms co-chairs of their group in the European Parliament. Harms, who co-chaired the group in the previous legislature already alongside Daniel Cohn-Bendit, was the only woman candidate, while Mr Lamberts ran against French Yannick Jadot. It took two ballots to decide. The duo was elected for the first half of the legislature, said the Greens. Austrian Ulrike Lunacek was also chosen to stand for the position of Deputy Leader of the European Parliament. The group has 54 members... [Read more](#)

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### The European United Left elects Gabi Zimmer to chair the group of 52 MEPs



The European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) met on Wednesday 11th June. Gabi Zimmer was elected as the group's Chair whose number of seats has risen from 35 to 52. Amongst its new members the GUE/NGL includes Podemos (Spain), L'Altra Europa con Tsipras (Italy), the animal rights defence parties from the Netherlands and Germany, Bildu (coalition Los Pueblos Deciden, Spain) and Luke 'Ming' Flanagan, an independent MEP from Ireland. According to the Chair the GUE/NGL will be able to influence debate in the next mandate and work more effectively for the poor, the excluded, unemployed and young people. Amongst the group's priorities is the fight to counter austerity, poverty and unemployment, the rejection of the negotiations under the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the transition towards a sustainable economy... [Read more](#)

### Five Star Movement opts for an alliance with UKip



On 12th June in an online referendum, Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement voted overwhelmingly in support of an alliance in the European Parliament with the British movement UKip led by europhobic Nigel Farage. Supporters of M5S followed Grillo's recommendations in the main in the referendum organised on the Cinque Stelle's blog. UKip won 23,000 of the vote out of 29,000 cast (nearly 80%) whilst only 12%, or 3,533 people voted to stay in the non-attached category, 2,930 (10%) wanted to join forces with the ECR... [Read more](#)

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## Council :

### Environment Council: GMOs, climate and energy policy



On 12th June 2014, the 28 European Environment Ministers reached a political agreement on a draft directive in terms of the possibility of Member States restricting or banning the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in their territory. There was then a public debate on a communication issued by the Commission on the 2030 framework for the climate and energy policy. There was also debate over two legislative proposals which are part of the Clear Air Programme for Europe. Finally they adopted conclusions on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)... [Read more](#)

### Energy Council: land, price and international relations



The 28 European Energy Ministers reached a political agreement on 13th June 2014 on the draft directive on indirect land-use change. They reviewed the work of the European Council on energy security, interconnections and more generally the 2030 climate and energy framework. Ministers adopted conclusions on prices and energy costs, the protection of vulnerable consumers and competitiveness. Conclusions focus on three aspects: the internal energy market, the external dimension and the consumer. Finally discussions focused on existing multilateral energy frameworks: the Energy Community, the European Energy Charter and the

International Energy Agency. They also addressed the issue of energy cooperation in the Mediterranean... [Read more](#)

#### Directive on Nuclear Safety



The Council of the European Union took note on 11th June 2014 of the agreement on the revised directive on nuclear safety. The revised Directive establishes nuclear safety objectives Europe wide that aim to limit the consequences of a nuclear accident and to cover the entire life cycle of nuclear facilities (location, design, construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning), including the preparation of on-site emergency response. It also strengthens the independence and the role of national regulatory authorities... [Read more](#)

#### Agriculture Council: school fruit, vegetables, milk



The 28 European Agriculture Ministers met on 16th and 17th June 2014 in Luxembourg. They first highlighted the progress achieved during the first half of 2014 on a draft regulation regarding an aid scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in schools. The proposal aims to streamline existing schemes with a view to increasing their effectiveness and reducing red-tape. Conclusions on the milk sector prepared by the Presidency were not adopted because of differences in opinion. They also adopted conclusions on the Commission report on the fruit and vegetable sector since the 2007 reform and a decision enabling the launch of negotiations on agreements between the EU and third countries on trade in organic products... [Read more](#)

#### Court of Justice :

##### Fine of 1.06 billion euros at Intel for abusing its dominant position



On 12th June 2014 the European Court upheld the fine of 1.6 billion euro imposed on Intel Microprocessors by the European Commission in 2009 for non-compliance with competition rules. Intel was accused of abusing its dominant position between 2002 and 2007. This fine is the largest imposed on a single company by the European Commission up to now... [Read more](#)

#### Germany :

##### Angela Merkel meets with Serb Prime Minister Aleksander Vucic



On 11th June 2014 German Chancellor Angela Merkel hosted Serb Prime Minister Aleksander Vucic in Berlin. During their meeting the Chancellor gave her support to the Prime Minister and the Serb people as they face floods that have plunged the country into a crisis. She welcomed the good relations that typify the political and economic relations between the two countries. Whilst she lauded her Serb counterpart on his ambitious reform programme the Chancellor did say that it was urgent to implement this to counter corruption and improve the country's economic situation. The Serb Prime Minister re-iterated that his country was determined to integrate Europe more and that Serbia could play a role as mediator from a regional point of view... [Read more](#)

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#### Spain :

##### Spanish MPs vote in support of the abdication of King Juan Carlos



Just as the King of Spain announced on 2nd June 2014 to everyone's surprise that he intended to abdicate from the throne in favour of his son Felipe, Spanish MPs in the lower Chamber of Parliament approved an organic law on 11th June - almost unanimously - confirming the monarch's abdication - 299 votes in support, 19 against and 23 abstentions. To enter into force the bill must now be approved by the Senate where the vote will take place on 17th June. This vote opens the way to Prince Felipe's accession to the throne on 19th June... [Read more](#)

#### Finland :

Alexander Stubb takes the lead of the party in office and is due to become Prime Minister



The Kokoomus (National Coalition Party) affiliated to the European People's Party (EPP), appointed its new leader on 14th June. Alexander Stubb was elected 500 votes in support, 349 against for Paula Risikko, the present Social Affairs Minister. In this capacity Alexander Stubb is due to take over from Jyrki Katainen as Finnish Prime Minister - since the latter has announced that he intends to join the next European Commission. Mr Stubb, 46 was European Affairs and Foreign Trade Minister to date. The new Kokoomus leader will take office with a number of challenges to overcome. The country's economy has gone into recession and the government debt has grown to total 60% of the GDP. Finally general elections are planned in 2015... [Read more](#)

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#### Italy :

##### Matteo Renzi announces the strengthening of the National Agency against Corruption



"The Italian Council of Ministers adopted a bill on 13th June that steps up the fight to counter corruption in Italy after several scandals involving officers and political figures," indicated the head of government Matteo Renzi. "We have decided to attribute powers of authority to the National Anti-Corruption Agency (ANAC) so that it can oversee government contracts and services," Mr Renzi declared after the Council of Ministers. The Italian government has decided to create a kind of "super authority" to counter corruption by rallying several services under the supervision of the Judge Raffaele Cantone, who is at present the Chairman of the ANAC... [Read more](#)

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#### Poland :

##### Adoption of the main budget lines 2015



"The Polish government approved the State's main budget lines on 10th June for 2015, forecasting a rise in the GDP of 3.8%," announced the government press service. The government is counting on growth of 3.3% in 2014 after a GDP increase of 1.1% in the first quarter in a quarterly comparison and of 3.5% over one year. The average annual inflation rate in 2015 is due to rise to 2.3% against 0.9% in 2013 and 0.3% at present... [Read more](#)

#### Czech Republic :

##### The Czech Republic could join the euro zone by 2017 according to its president



Czech President Milos Zeman declared on 11th June 2014 that his country could join the euro zone by 2017 as it enjoyed the support of the pro-European parties in the national Parliament. The Czech Republic promised to adopt the euro when it joined the Union in 2004 but this initiative was frozen during the mandate of eurosceptic President Vaclav Klaus. Since his election in March 2013 Milos Zeman, the first president to be elected by direct universal suffrage in the country's history, has been implementing a policy in support of the euro's adoption. "I believe that we could join by 2017. Let us be confident that we'll do it," declared Mr Zeman to the press. To date executives at the Czech Central Bank CNB and members of parliament have spoken of 2019 as a possible adoption date... [Read more](#)

#### Sweden :

##### North European country summit on the future of the European Union



Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt hosted heads of government from the Netherlands (Mark Rutte), UK (David Cameron) and Germany (Angela Merkel) in Harpsund to discuss the future of the EU on 9th and 10th June 2014. During their meeting the heads of government stressed the need to continue modernising the EU, notably regarding competitiveness, the creation of an internal market and worker mobility. But this meeting was also an opportunity for the heads of government to discuss the next President of the European Commission, with David Cameron opposing the appointment of Jean-Claude Juncker, unlike Angela Merkel. Whilst Ms Merkel reiterated her support for the Luxembourg candidate and that Mr Cameron remained firm in his stance, Mssrs Reinfeldt and Rutte expressed no opinion over the issue... [Read more](#)

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#### Ukraine :

## Failure of negotiations on gas between the EU, Russia and Ukraine



The European Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger took part in a new but hardly successful round of discussions between Russia and Ukraine on 14th to 16th June in Kiev in a bid to settle the dispute over gas deliveries. On 16th June the day of the Russian ultimatum "Gazprom, in virtue of the contract in force transferred Naftogaz over to a prepayment system for gas deliveries," indicated the Russian group in a press release. "As of today the Ukrainian company will only receive the volumes of gas that it has paid for," it added without saying whether gas supplies had been cut off. Günther Oettinger did however warn of gas shortages this winter in Europe. Finally the Ukrainian gas company announced that it had turned to the Stockholm arbitration court to challenge the price of gas set by Russia and to demand the reimbursement of 6 billion dollars paid unduly, in its opinion, to the Russian gas giant Gazprom... [Read more](#)

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## Ukraine: Poroshenko faces an increasingly tense situation in the East



On 10th June 2014 the Ukrainian President Pyotr Poroshenko ordered the creation of humanitarian corridors to enable civilians to leave areas of fighting in the East. This decision was announced after the meeting between the president and the heads of the security services, Interior and Defence Ministers, as well as the State Service for Emergency situations. On 13th June the President asked the governor of the Oblast of Donetsk, Serguey Taruta, to relocate regional administrative offices to Marioupol which has been stabilised for the time being. On 14th June a Ukrainian military transport plane was shot down by armed pro-Russian rebels in Lougansk killing 49 people on board. This was the bloodiest attack amongst the ranks of the Ukrainian forces to date and since the start of an "anti-terrorist" operation in April on the part of Kiev in the rebel East. "Those involved in this act will be punished," guaranteed the President in a press release decreeing 15th June a national day of mourning... [Read more](#)

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## Space :

### Integration of the European Space Industry



Aeronautic giant Airbus Group and Safran made a move towards the integration of the European space industry on 16th June 2014 in response to American competition. Airbus Group, the manufacturer of the European rocket Ariane and Safran which produces its engines signed an agreement memorandum to create a joint venture that is due to facilitate the development of Ariane and make it more competitive. Ariane dominates the commercial launchers' market at the moment but is threatened by the entry of a new American competitor, SpaceX... [Read more](#)

## Eurostat :

### Employment increasing in the euro area and in the EU



According to estimates based on national accounts published by Eurostat on 13th June 2014, the number of people in employment increased by 0.1% in the euro area and by 0.2% in the European Union in the first quarter of 2014 compared with the previous quarter. In the fourth quarter of 2013, employment also increased by 0.1% in the euro area and by 0.2% in the Union. Compared with the same quarter of the previous year, employment increased by 0.2% in the euro area and by 0.7% in the Union in the first quarter of 2014 (after -0.4% and 0% respectively in the fourth quarter of 2013). According to Eurostat estimates, 224.2 million men and women were employed in the Union, of which 146.1 million were in the euro area, in the first quarter of 2014. These figures are seasonally adjusted... [Read more](#)

### Euro zone international goods trade surplus



According to estimates published on 13th June 2014 by Eurostat, the first estimate for the euro area trade in goods balance with the rest of the world in April 2014 gave a 15.7 billion euro surplus, compared with +14.0 bn in April 2013. The March 2014 balance was +16.7 bn, compared with +21.8 bn in March 2013. In April 2014 compared with March 2014, seasonally adjusted exports fell by 0.2% and imports by 0.5%. The first estimate for the April 2014 extra-EU trade balance was a 1.3 bn euro surplus, compared with +8.5 bn in April 2013. In March 2014 the balance was +4.1 bn, compared with +14.7 bn in March 2013. In April 2014 compared with March 2014, seasonally adjusted exports fell by 1.0% and imports by 0.9%... [Read more](#)



## May 2014: euro area annual inflation down to 0.5%



The euro zone's annual inflation rate lay at 0.5% in May 2014 against 0.7% in April. A year ago it lay at 1.4%. The monthly inflation rate was -0.1% in May 2014. The EU's annual inflation rate lay at 0.6% in May 2014 against 0.8% in April. One year ago it lay at 1.6%. The monthly inflation rate lay at -0.1% in May 2014. These figures were published on 16th June by Eurostat... [Read more](#)

## Studies/Reports :

### Rapid alert system for food and feed



On 12th June 2014 the European Commission published the 2013 report on the rapid alert system for food and feed. In this report food poisoning, the composition of dietetic foodstuffs and food supplements, pesticide residues, animal feed, pathogenic micro-organisms and even mycotoxins are examined. There is also a focus on the horsemeat scandal and the entry of Croatia into the alert system. Tonio Borg, Commissioner for Healthcare and Consumers says that strengthening the European fight to counter food fraud will improve food safety systems. And it is in Europe that the highest standards of food security in the world are to be found and where permanent vigilance is the order of the day... [Read more](#)

### Tax trends in the EU



On 16th June the European Commission published the report on taxation which includes a detailed statistical and economic analysis of the tax regimes in the EU's Member States, as well as of those in force in Iceland and Norway which are members of the European Economic Area. Data are presented in a single statistics framework (SEC95 of national and regional accounts) which enables a comparable assessment of the heterogeneous national tax systems. The ratio of fiscal bases ie the total amount of taxes and social contribution in terms of GDP % lay at 39.4% of the GDP in 2012 in the EU which is up in comparison with 2011 when it lay at 38.8%. The overall fiscal burden has also increased in the euro zone to total 40.4% of the GDP in 2012 in comparison with 39.5% in 2011... [Read more](#)

### What would the economic consequences be if the UK left the EU?



The CER, Centre for European Reform, today published a report entitled "The economic consequences of leaving the European Union". A committee comprising economists, researchers and politicians met to analyse the economic consequences of a possible "Brexit". The CER concludes that the UK would not benefit from exiting the 28. The report stresses that Union membership has been a boon to the country in several ways - a list of which has been established, maintaining that no proof can be found that exit would stimulate the British economy... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

### Launch of the International Film Festival in Edinburgh



The 68th International Film Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland is taking place between 18th and 29th June 2014. Encouraged by a will to promote the cinema in all shapes and sizes the festival's dynamic programme of fiction and documentary brings to the fore innovative and passionate film makers. The International Film Festival in Edinburgh seeks to promote the development of new talent in the UK and abroad... [Read more](#)

### Art Fair in Basel



Organised annually since 1970 the Basel Art Fair that will be taking place from 19th to 22nd June brings together leading contemporary artists from galleries in North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa. All forms of art are on show - paintings, sculptures, installations, videos, prints, photographs, shows, conferences and meetings with the artists are also being organised. Because of the diversity and its level of excellence the fair has been nicknamed "The Olympic Games of World Art"... [Read more](#)

### The London Royal Academy of Arts opens its summer exhibition



The London Royal Academy of Arts is running its "Summer Exhibition" exhibition until 17th August - the which is showing the work of some emerging and confirmed contemporary artists. The variety of work on show each year makes the Summer Exhibition an inevitable cultural event. This year you can admire, amongst others, the work by Cornelia Parker, Thomas Heatherwick and Bob and Roberta Smith... [Read more](#)

### The Brancusi Effect



The Kunsthalle in Vienna is running an exhibition until 29th September on the Karlsplatz focusing on Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), one of the most influential artists in the 20th century. His thoughts on the relationship about the base and the presentation of his work initiated a new trend in relations between the object, the audience and space... [Read more](#)

### The Gardens of Versailles taken over by Korean artist Lee Ufan



After the exuberant work of Jeff Koons in 2008, Takashi Murakami in 2010 and Joana Vasconcelos in 2012, installed in the royal apartments, followed by the bronze trees fashioned by Giuseppe Penone in the park - it is now Lee Ufan's turn - a 77 year old artist and sculptor from Korea - to set up his contemplative, minimalist installations in the garden of Versailles. Lee Ufan is offering the public ten unique works of art made of stone, cotton or steel from 17th June to 2nd November 2014... [Read more](#)

### Exhibition on the Liberation of Paris in Photos



On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Liberation of Paris and as part of Photography Month, the Carnavalet Museum is running an exhibition until 8th February 2015 on "Paris libéré, Paris photographié, Paris exposé." This exhibition reviews the liberation of 1944 showing photographs by Robert Doisneau, René Zuber, Jean Séeberger, which add to and put into perspective films of the time, video interviews with eye-witnesses, books published at the time or various objects which illustrate the commitment of the Parisian resistants to their cause. This unique collection of original materials enables an understanding of how images were created in times of war... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



16th and 17th June  
Luxembourg  
Agriculture and Fisheries Council



19th June  
Luxembourg  
Meeting of euro zone Finance Ministers and Ministers responsible for Employment



20th June  
Luxembourg  
Economic and Financial Affairs Council

Luxembourg  
Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer Council



23rd June  
Luxembourg  
Foreign Affairs Council



 I love the Robert Schuman Foundation's Letter

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