

## Crisis exit strategy for Ireland: the Results and the Challenges?

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Ireland, the second euro zone country to benefit from the EU and IMF's financial assistance after Greece, exited the aid programme on 15th December 2013, three years after its launch. The rigorous control of government spending, innovative bank debt management solutions, targeted investments and the constant support of exports have helped revive growth and enabled the country to return to the financial markets where it is now borrowing at historically low rates. However the page cannot be completely turned on the crisis whilst

unemployment is still high, financing the economy is still affected by the fallout of the property crisis and fiscal policy is still being criticised. The lassitude of public opinion in regard to 8 years of austerity will also probably slow work towards budgetary consolidation in the years to come.

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#### Foundation :

"Pourquoi et comment l'Europe restera le coeur du monde, petit traité d'optimisme" according to Jean-Dominique Giuliani



On 21st October Jean-Dominique Giuliani, President of the Robert Schuman Foundation will be presenting "Pourquoi et comment l'Europe restera le coeur du monde, petit traité d'optimisme" (Why and how Europe will remain at the heart of the world, a small treaty of optimism) at 17:30 to the Federal Parliament of Wallonia-Brussels. This conference is part of the event "L'Europe en dialogue avec le monde au XXIe siècle," which provides a series of prestigious conferences, debates and guided tours... [Read more](#)

#### France in the European Union

Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation will be taking part in the conference organised by the Ditchley Foundation from 23rd to 25th October on the theme of the place and role of France in the EU. Hosted by Christine Ockrent participants will



debate France's ability to be a leading country in the EU and its place in the world... [Read more](#)

### The Economic and Social Councils and the expectations of European civil society



On 14th November 2014 the CESE and the European ESC, together with the Robert Schuman Foundation are organising an event entitled "Economic and social councils and the expectations of European civil society." Many speakers will be answering questions about the real levers that we have to establish greater proximity between political leaders and Europeans citizens. After the renewal of the community's institutions, (Parliament, Commission) how can citizens be encouraged to take up the political debates ongoing in Brussels and Strasbourg? How can the Economic and Social Councils of the EU help as venues for dialogue between various socio-professional categories, citizen representation and reduce the European democratic rift?.. [Read more](#)

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### Financial Crisis :

#### The OECD publishes employment rates in the second quarter 2014



On 14th January OECD published new figures regarding employment in the second quarter of 2014. The OECD zone employment rate, defined as the share of people of working age who have a job, remained stable at 65.6% in the second quarter of 2014, after an upward trend over four consecutive quarters. The euro zone has been in the same situation since its employment rate is stable at 63.8%, after increasing over the two previous quarters. The employment rate is up in the UK (by 0.4 percentage points at 72.1%, the fifth consecutive quarter that it has risen) and in the USA (by 0.2 percentage points at 68%) whilst it is decreasing in Canada (by 0.1 percentage points at 72.2%)... [Read more](#)

#### Economic situation in Spain



The European Central Bank (ECB) and the European Commission published an assessment of Spain's economic situation on 13th October based on a study undertaken in the country from 6th to 10th October as part of the second post-programme monitoring mission. According to the ECB's conclusion the structural reforms that have been started, the development of the financial sector and the macro-economic situation confirm the positive trend toward the stabilisation of the situation in Spain, as observed over the last two years. However the European Commission and the ECB remain prudent recalling that the major imbalances of the pre-crisis period continue, notably mass unemployment and that these will have to be absorbed by a wide-ranging political reform supported by the close monitoring of results... [Read more](#)

#### Strengthening of ECB support to Greek banks



On 15th October Yannis Stournaras, the governor of the Bank of Greece indicated that the European Central Bank had sent a message of support the country promising to ensure more liquidities for the Greek banks. The ECB is planning to reduce the haircut on Greek banks' collateral securities which will help these establishments gain more liquidities - 12 to 15 billion euro - said the Bank of Greece. This ECB commitment came just as the Athens Stock Exchange plummeted by 5.7% on 15th October and 6.25% on 16th October. Moreover on 16th October the European Commission, by way of its Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, declared that it would support Greece in every way that it could".. [Read more](#)

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#### The IMF publishes a report on Poland



On 17th October the IMF published a report on the economic and financial situation in the euro zone and the effect it has had on Poland. The study offers a simulation that highlights the pro-eminent role played by foreign demand in the Polish economy, notably over the last few years as far as interest rates and inflation are concerned. The report also lays out mid-term prospects and analyses the domestic policy situation... [Read more](#)

## Commission :

### New distribution of portfolio in the Juncker Commission



On 15th October the Council accepted the appointment of Slovenian Violeta Bulc within the European Commission as requested by the President elect Jean-Claude Juncker. Following this decision the latter announced that he was going to give the transport portfolio to Ms Bulc. As a result, Maros Sefcovic, initially intended for this post, will be given the Energy Union portfolio and will also become Vice-President. They will be heard by the competent Parliamentary committees on 21st October and the European Parliament's vote on the investiture of the entire commission will take place on 22nd October... [Read more](#)

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### Euro zone Member States' budgets communicated to the European Commission



The Finance Ministers of the euro zone Member States communicated their budgetary plans for 2015 to the European Commission on 15th October. Since 2010 euro zone governments have to submit their draft budgets for the following year in virtue of the European economic governance rules set out in the Stability and Growth Pact and provided for by the "European Semester". The Commission will make two assessments: an opinion of the plans submitted by each government (assessment of the respect of the SGP) and an overall assessment of the budgetary situation and the outlook for the euro zone as a whole. The European Commission now has two weeks to provide a first opinion on the national budgets. It should be noted that Cyprus and Greece do not need to present their plans, since these two countries are both the focus of macro-economic adjustment plans at the moment... [Read more](#)

### The strategic issue of gas for the countries of Europe



On 16th October the European Commission presented its report on the stress tests it has undertaken on the European gas system. It contains the results of various test scenario, notably a partial or complete six-month halt to Russian gas imports to 38 European countries, including all of the EU member states and neighbouring countries. A continued interruption would have major impact in several European States including Finland and Estonia which would be deprived of 60% of their gas supplies. As a result the report puts forward real, short term recommendations for the most vulnerable Member States and its neighbours... [Read more](#)

### The European Commission and UEFA sign a cooperation agreement



The European Commission and the UEFA (the Union of European Football Associations) signed a three-year cooperation agreement on 14th October in Brussels. The agreement aims to strengthen the positive image of sport particularly football and to use its full potential in all areas of social and economic life. The agreement signed between the two parties also covers most of the challenges that modern sport faces: corruption, match fixing, financial instability, doping, violence and racism... [Read more](#)

## Council :

### ASEM - a key trade partner for the EU



On the occasion of the 10th EU-ASEM Summit that took place in Milan on 16th and 17th October on the theme of "A responsible partner for growth and security" ,leaders welcomed two new members to the partnership, Croatia and Kazakhstan. The heads of State and government of 51 ASEM member countries stressed the importance of maintaining peace, security and stability in the world. They also discussed the way forward in the creation of an environment that would foster prosperity via the strengthening of links between Asia and Europe. Finally they approved their work programme 2014-2016, setting a priority of enhancing the quality of dialogue, focusing more on political and regional issues which are a challenge to both regions... [Read more](#)

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### Fight to counter tax fraud and evasion



The 28 Economy and Finance Ministers met on 14th October and adopted several conclusions notably concerning the EU's investment policies and Member States' fiscal transparency. They stressed "the urgent need" to implement further measures to strengthen competitiveness and European growth potential via public and private investment.

From a tax point of view they approved a draft directive that extends the field of obligatory automatic information exchange between tax authorities, thereby enabling them to counter tax evasion and improve the effectiveness of tax collection. According to the newly agreed rules, the tax authorities in the EU will have an obligation to exchange information on all relevant income automatically (interests, dividends and similar types of income) but also regarding account balances and sale proceeds from financial assets... [Read more](#)

#### Conclusions of the "Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer Council"



The Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer Council met on 16th October and adopted a proposal to create a European platform to address the issue of undeclared work. This opens the way to launching negotiations with the European Parliament. Moreover ministers made a mid-term assessment of the Europe 2020 programme. Finally they discussed "parental leave and maternity leave: a means to reconcile work, family and private life".. [Read more](#)

#### Diplomacy :

##### Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council



On 20th October the 28 European Foreign Ministers demanded that the elections that are to be organised on 26th October in Ukraine be organised "freely" and "across the entire country", warning that the EU would not acknowledge the elections being organised by the pro-Russian separatists on 2nd November. "Ukrainian leaders and the electorate must be able to prepare the elections freely, and all candidates must be able to campaign freely and safely across the entire county," insisted the 28 European Ministers. In addition to this a united, concerted effort is required to bring the Ebola epidemic to a halt and provide necessary aid to the affected countries," maintained ministers. The EU is notably promising to provide "at least half a million euro" to help the most affected countries. Promises of aid have totalled around 480 million euro to date, 180 of which are to be provided by the European Commission. Finally they stepped up their sanctions against the Syrian regime... [Read more](#)

#### European Agencies :

##### The EU launches "Mos Maiorum" to counter illegal immigration



Schengen Member States launched the operation "Mos Maiorum" on 13th October. This is a vast operation, supervised by the EU's agency Frontex aimed to put a halt to illegal immigration and improve understanding about illegal immigration routes in Europe. It is taking place between 13th and 26th October 2014 on the EU's external borders and within the Schengen Area. The 22 Schengen Member States and four associate countries (Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland) will be taking part in this action which will be coordinated by the Italian Home Affairs Minister. This type of intervention is undertaken every six months by the country which is ensuring the presidency of the Council of the European Union... [Read more](#)

##### European countries provide their technical support to TRITON



On 14th October Frontex announced that fifteen countries had provided equipment, technical means and border guards for the Triton operation for the patrol of the Mediterranean and to save struggling migrants. Frontex will also fall back on the Italian authorities for support in the collation of information on the human smuggling networks that operate in Libya and other countries. The monthly budget planned for the operation totals 2.9 million euro starting 1st November. The European countries taking part are Germany, Austria, Spain, Finland, France, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland... [Read more](#)

#### Germany :

##### Merkel exhorts Member States to respect the Stability Pact



During her speech to the Bundestag on 16th October German Chancellor Angela Merkel stressed the importance of everyone "respecting the European stability pact," whilst in Brussels the assessment of the French budget, which includes some deviation from the path, is now underway. "I insist on this point, all Member States must respect the stability and growth pact to the letter," she declared to MPs in the German Lower

**Paris and Berlin try to agree on economic reform**

The French Economy and Finance Ministers, who travelled to Germany on 20th October to plead the cause of growth, left with the promise of joint proposals on investment but which must not cost Berlin a penny (or almost). By December 1st "we agreed to draft a joint proposal regarding investment possibilities for both countries and in which we shall provide a joint vision of Europe," declared Mr. Schäuble after the meeting in Berlin with his German colleague, Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel and French Ministers, Michel Sapin (Finance) and Emmanuel Macron (Economy). But Mssrs. Schäuble and Gabriel quickly indicated that in their opinion most of the vital investments would come from the private sector which would quell French hopes of a German public spending programme which other European countries might benefit from as a result... [Read more](#)

**Germany - a round table on parity**

On 15th October Angela Merkel invited around one hundred women to discuss the issue of parity in Germany: business leaders, researchers, students etc ... The family minister Manuela Schwesig spoke in support of establishing quotas in businesses. The Chancellor is aware of the very low number of women in Germany who occupy "management" posts. Quotas will be introduced and a first assessment will be drawn up at the next meeting at the beginning of 2016... [Read more](#)

**Belgium :****Belgium government wins MPs confidence**

The new Belgian government led by Prime Minister Charles Michel won the confidence of the majority of MPs on 16th October - 84 votes in support, 58 against and 1 abstention. This government, which was sworn in on 11th October, is the result of a totally unique coalition between three Dutch-speaking parties including the N-VA and one French-speaking party the Reform Movement (Liberal) led by Charles Michel... [Read more](#)

**France :****French National Assembly approves the draft energy transition bill**

On 14th October the French National Assembly adopted on first reading the draft bill on energy transition for green growth, 314 votes in support, 219 against and 32 abstentions. This draft bill provides for a 50% reduction in nuclear power by 2025. According to Ségolène Royale, the French Ecology and Energy Minister the aim is to reduce nuclear and fossil fuel dependency for the production of electricity in France... [Read more](#)

**French Economy Minister presents the guidelines of the draft activity bill**

During a press conference on 15th October 2014 Emmanuel Macron (French Economy, Industry and Digital Minister) presented the guidelines behind the draft activity and equal economic opportunities bill which will be put to the Council of Ministers mid-December. Macron has selected three main reform priorities: removing impediments to activity, ie opening up certain sectors and certain professions like coach transport, regulated professions and even housing and commercial planning; investing ie renovating the framework of the State's intervention as shareholder, the improved management of civil service delegations and public/private partnerships and also the reform of remunerated shareholder status; finally work, ie renovating labour litigation tribunals and simplifying Sunday-working even further... [Read more](#)

**Ireland :****The Irish government puts forward a budget to end austerity**

On 14th October the Irish government put forward to budget to end austerity by 2015. It plans for increased spending and tax reductions for the first time in seven years. Moreover Michael Noonan, the Finance Minister announced the end of a fault in the tax system, nicknamed the "Double Irish" - a method used by American multi-nationals to register their profits in

offshore tax havens via Ireland. This announcement notably follows an inquiry by the European Commission into the agreements made by Apple and the Irish tax authorities which enabled the company to pay corporate tax of just 2% in Ireland where its European HQ is located... [Read more](#)

## Italy :

### Rome presents its 2015 budget to Brussels



On 15th October during a press conference Matteo Renzi presented Italy's 2015 budget. He notably plans for an 18 billion euro reduction in taxes. The head of the Italian government is reckoning on a 3% GDP deficit this year and 2.9% in 2015. He also postponed the structural deficit balance goal by two years, as requested by Brussels, from 2015 to 2017... [Read more](#)

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## Portugal :

### Portugal presents its draft 2015 budget



On 15th October Portugal presented its draft 2015 budget. It is planning to reduce government debt from 4% to 2.7% of the GDP, without affecting the population's buying power. As a result the Portuguese government has decided not to change taxes and to increase the minimum wage. It is counting on the growth of the economy and the recovery of employment to increase tax revenues. According to the government's first estimates the latter are due to rise by 2.4%. In 2015 the growth forecast lies at 1.5% and unemployment at 13.4% against a previous forecast of 14.8%... [Read more](#)

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## Czech Republic :

### The coalition in office wins the senatorial elections in the Czech Republic



According to official results the three parties in the coalition in office in the Czech Republic won the senatorial elections in the second round of voting which took place on 17th and 18th October. During the election, marked by the lowest turnout ever recorded since the country's independence in 1993 (16.63%), the Czechs elected 27 senators out of the 81 who sit in the upper chamber. The coalition parties won 19 of the 27 senatorial seats that were open, and now hold 46. In the majority the coalition does not enjoy a qualified 3/5 majority however which would allow it to change the constitutional laws. The Social Democratic Party (CSSD) led by Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka, won 10 seats, the Christian Democrats KDU-CSL 5 seats and the centrist, populist movement ANO led by Finance Minister Andrej Babis, 4 seats... [Read more](#)

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## UK :

### Vote in support of a referendum



The text planning the organisation of a referendum on the UK remaining a member of the European Union by 2017 was adopted on 17th October on first reading by the British House of Commons. British Prime Minister David Cameron promised at the end of 2013 to hold a referendum on this issue if he won the next general elections in May 2015 given the rise of the populist and anti-European UKIP. 283 MPs of the 650 voted in support of the text, Labour and the Lib-Dems decided to boycott the vote... [Read more](#)

### Nicola Sturgeon to chair the SNP



The Scottish National Party (SNP) confirmed on 15th October that Alex Salmond's successor would be Nicola Sturgeon. Ms Sturgeon was Alex Salmond's second in command for 7 years and was the only candidate standing for the post. Her first task will be to increase Scotland's autonomous powers comprising new tax and welfare programmes... [Read more](#)

## Ukraine :

### Ukraine: new Defence Minister



On 14th October the Ukrainian parliament confirmed the appointment of Stepan Poltorak as Defence Minister. To date he was the head of the National Guard comprising volunteers who were fighting alongside regular troops in the pro-Russian separatist east. The National Guard was formed on the base of troops from the Home Ministry which integrated the "self-

defence" units during the Maidan demonstrations... [Read more](#)

#### Ukraine: draft law on the legal system



On 13th October Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk presented a draft bill on the judicial system and the status of judges. The draft bill plans on the one hand to give greater power to the Supreme Court and to do away with economic and administrative courts and to guarantee access to the courts. Moreover the government has suggested the launch of an e-justice system... [Read more](#)

#### Agreement between Ukraine and Russia on the temporary price of gas



Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko confirmed that he had come to an agreement with the Russian President Vladimir Putin during a meeting in Milan on 17th October on the temporary price of gas delivered to Ukraine (385 dollars for 1000m3) and said that this would enable the rapid end of their gas conflict. "On the basis of these talks I can say that Ukraine will have gas and heating," he maintained. The Russian group Gazprom stopped its deliveries of gas to Ukraine after the arrival of the pro-Europeans in office who rejected an increase in prices set by Russia... [Read more](#)

#### Eurostat :

##### Annual euro zone inflation rate down in the euro zone and in the EU



According to a press release by Eurostat on 16th October, the euro zone's annual inflation rate lay at 0.3% in September 2014 against 0.4% in August. This is the lowest rate registered since October 2009. It lay at 1.1% in September 2013. Regarding the EU the annual inflation rate lay at 0.4% in September 2014, against 0.5% in August. In September it lay at 1.3%. The monthly inflation rate lay at 0.3% in September 2014... [Read more](#)

##### Surplus in international goods trade



According to Eurostat estimates for August 2014 published on 16th October, the euro zone recorded a surplus of 9.2 billion euro in terms of its international goods trade with the rest of the world against +7.3 billion in August 2013. Moreover exports adjusted to seasonal variations decreased by 0.9% and imports by 3.1% in August 2014 in comparison with July 2014. Regarding the balance of extra-EU goods trade in August 2014 a deficit of 8.9 billion euro was recorded against -2.3 billion in August 2013... [Read more](#)

#### Studies/Reports :

##### Edmund Stoiber presents his report "Cutting red-tape in Europe"



On 14th October in Brussels Edmund Stoiber presented the final report by the High Level Group on Administrative Burdens that he has led to advise the European executive. According to the conclusions of the former Bavarian Prime Minister it would be necessary to exempt SMEs from industrial rules "as much as possible". He also advised the future Commission led by J-C Juncker to undertake further administrative reform to reduce red-tape which would lead to savings of 41 billion euro per year and convince the UK to remain in the EU... [Read more](#)

##### Report on Human Trafficking in the EU



On 17th October on the occasion of the 8th EU Anti-Trafficking Day (18th October) the European Commission published a statistical report on the action undertaken 2010-2014 to eradicate human trafficking. The report published together with several European agencies including Frontex and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) observed that there had been a total 30,146 victims of human trafficking registered in the 28 Member States over the three years 2010 to 2012. It should be noted that amongst that number 80% of the victims were women whilst 16% were children. The report highlights that significant progress has been made to counter this scourge and that authorities are managing to spot the victims and are finding it easier to enter into contact with them... [Read more](#)

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#### Publications :

## "I witnessed the birth of Europe"



Paul Collowald, who was notably the general manager for information at the European Commission and the director of the cabinet of the President of the European Parliament Pierre Pflimlin, has published "J'ai vu naître l'Europe", with Nuée Bleue. This book of interviews with Sophie Allaux-Izoard reviews the life of a pioneer of European integration. Prefaced by Jacques Delors the book recounts the small and great history of Europe as Paul Collowald has experienced it since 1948; it is a story marked by his meeting with Robert Schuman and his Declaration of 9th May 1950, which, for Paul Collowald, became the focus of a study and his passion... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

### 41st International Fair of Contemporary Art - FIAC in Paris



The 41st FIAC - International Fair of Contemporary Art, will be taking place in Paris from 22nd to 26th October 2014 at the Grand Palais. 191 art galleries from 26 countries will be showing - 65% are European. There were 184 last year. Hoping to "explore new ground" with young artists, the fair is launching an event parallel to this one entitled "(OFF) ICIELLE" which will be taking place at the "Cité de la Mode et du Design" on the river Seine. This artistic week organised in various well known Parisian cultural venues will end with the re-opening on 25th October of the Picasso Museum after five years of renovation work. This date was not chosen by chance since Picasso was born on 25th October 1881... [Read more](#)

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### German history at the British Museum



The British Museum is running an exhibition until 25th January 2014 "Germany, Memories of a Nation". This unique exhibition starts in the main hall of the museum with a Volkswagen Beetle car, 1953 model, a real "car for the people" and a perfect symbol of the renaissance of the country just after the 2nd World War. In all nearly 200 exhibits, various objects, beers tankards, bank notes and coins, the hat lost by Napoleon at Waterloo, pictures including the famous picture of Goethe by Tischbein, and even sculptures have been brought together for this exhibition that will occur at the same time as the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9th November 1989... [Read more](#)

### European film makers petition for the release of Ukrainian Oleg Sentsov



On the initiative of the European Film Academy Committee a group of European film makers have launched a petition in support of Ukrainian director Oleg Sentsov, addressed to the Russian authorities. Several film makers have already signed including Frenchman Jacques Audiard, Elie Chouraqui, Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Finn Mika Kaurismaki and Briton Christopher Hampton. Sentsov, who is opposed to Crimea's annexation to Russia, was involved in the support of the EuroMaidan demonstrations in Kiev. He has been gaoled in the Lefortovo prison in Moscow since May and Russian justice decided to extend his detention until 11th January 2015. He is accused with three others of "terrorism", the "organisation of a terrorist group" and of "arms trafficking". He risks twenty years in prison... [Read more](#)

### Presentation of the Lux Prize finalists 2014



Every year on the occasion of the Lux Film Days, the European Parliament awards the Lux Prize. This year three finalists' films are running for the Lux Prize 2014 "Class Enemy" by Roz Bicek, "Girlhood" by Céline Sciamma and "Ida" by Pawel Pawlikowski. Film amateurs will be able to see the three films and vote for their favourite in 165 sessions during film festivals, special showings and events organised in the 28 Member States. The results will be announced in December... [Read more](#)

### The Origins of the European Union - Architecture and Art for the Farnesina Palace"



During the semester of the Italian presidency the travelling exhibition "The Origins of the European Union - Architecture and Art for the Farnesina Palace" has made its début in Europe. It will be starting off its journey with the Italian Institute for Culture in Stockholm where the public will view it until 6th November, before it moves to the Italian Embassy in Berlin until 4th December. It will end its tour with the National Macedonian Gallery "Chifte Hamam" of Skopje where it will remain from 11th December to 21st January 2015.



This exhibition offers an opinion of the artistic and architectural debate in Italy during the period in which the EU was launched... [Read more](#)

### Art and history together in Liège in an exhibition devoted to the Sale of Luzern



The Cité Miroir of Liège is running an exhibition until 29th March 2015 which combines art and history and is devoted to the works that were sold by auction by the Germans in Luzern in 1939. This exceptional exhibition "Degenerate Art according to Hitler" brings together the names of the greatest artists of the time, Gauguin, Chagall, Matisse, Kokoschka and Picasso. Dispersed around the world in various prestigious collections, both private and public, most of these works from the sale will be brought together for the first time ever and will be on show exclusively at La Cité Miroir of Liège... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



20th and 21st October  
Luxembourg  
Foreign Affairs Council



20th-23rd October  
Strasbourg  
Plenary Session at the European Parliament



21st October  
Luxembourg  
General Affairs Council



23rd and 24th October  
Brussels  
European Council



26th October  
General Elections in Ukraine

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