



The Juncker Commission, the return of politics ?

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The elected President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, announced on 10th September a so-called "shock" team, the members of which underwent a hearing before the European Parliament from 29th September to 7th October and then on 20th October for two of them, prior to a vote of approval held on 22nd October. After a general presentation of the appointed commissioners which demonstrates a concentration of strong and varied competency, and then an analysis which refers to the

innovative matrix organisation and the questions raised by this new organisational architecture, the study details the programme described in the team members' roadmap.

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Foundation :

Economic and social councils faced with the expectations of European civil society



On 14th November in Paris, the European economic and social committee and the French economic, social and environmental council will organise, with scientific support from the Robert Schuman Foundation, a conference entitled: "Economic and social councils faced with the expectations of European civil society". You are invited to come and discuss with the speakers who will attempt to explain how greater proximity can be established between political leaders and European citizens. Entrance is free of charge but prior registration is required... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

Euro zone summit



Following the European Council, heads of state and government of euro zone member countries met on 24th October with ECB president Mario Draghi. They looked specifically at the economic situation and the employment position in the euro zone. They recalled the need to coordinate economic policies more closely to ensure the correct running of the economic and monetary union by means of convergence and solidarity between Member States. In this respect, they invited the European Commission, the president of the Eurogroup and the president of the European Central Bank, to

prepare new initiatives aimed at improving economic governance in the euro zone for the next Council meeting, which is planned for the end of December... [Read more](#)

Fall in unemployment in Spain



In the third quarter unemployment fell to 23.67% in Spain, dropping below the 24% mark for the first time since the end of 2011, said the National Statistics Office (INE) on 23rd October. Mariano Rajoy's government is forecasting an unemployment rate of 24.2% by the end of the year and 22.2% by the end of 2015. In spite of this notable progress, unemployment in Spain is still amongst the highest in the developed countries... [Read more](#)

Increase in the unemployment rate in France



The French Ministry of Employment published its latest unemployment statistics on 24th October 2014. The number of job seekers without any employment at all in the month of September increased by 0.6% to 3.43 million. This increase is sharper still when one includes people whose activity has been reduced: +1%, taking the amount to 5.13 million. As for seniors - people aged over 50 - the increase is still more significant, with 1% more job seekers. Concerning the long term unemployed, the rate has increased by one and a half points in just one month, which corresponds to +10% over one year... [Read more](#)

Slight slowing of growth in the United Kingdom during the third quarter



According to estimates published on 24th October by the Office for National Statistics, growth in GDP in the United Kingdom slowed over the course of the third quarter 2014, with an increase in GDP of 0.7% after an increase of 0.9% during the second quarter. Since the beginning of the year growth in Britain has amounted to 2.8% (calculated during the 3rd quarter 2014). For the whole of 2014, the United Kingdom is expecting annual growth of 3%... [Read more](#)

Sweden: The government presents its draft budget



The new Swedish government presented a draft budget on 23rd October showing its highest deficit since 1996 and a limited increase in credits for defence. The forecast budgetary deficit is 2.2% of gross domestic product. Sweden has the specific characteristic of a lowering of public debt, this is thanks to its growth (2.1% forecast in 2014 and 3% in 2015) and extremely low interest rates. It should drop to 40.2% of GDP in 2014, compared to 40.5% in 2013... [Read more](#)

European Council :

European Council: Climate, Ebola, Ukraine, economy



On 23rd and 24th October in Brussels, the 28 EU heads of State and government reached a general agreement on climate. This agreement includes 3 objectives: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% between now and 2030, bringing the share of renewable energies up to 27% (compared with the current level of 14%) and improving energy efficiency by 30% by 2030. They announced that the European Union is to contribute a billion euros to help with the fight against the Ebola epidemic in West Africa and made the future European Commissioner for humanitarian affairs, Christos Stylianides, responsible for coordinating the European response to the Ebola outbreak. They passed a ruling prolonging through until the end of 2015 unilateral trade preferences applied in favour of Ukraine. In terms of the economy, they supported the initiative of the next Commission to launch a plan that will mobilise 300 billion euros for additional investments, and saluted the launch, on 4th November, of the Single Supervisory Mechanism which "will contribute to supporting economic recovery". Finally, they ratified the composition of the European Commission which will operate as from 1st November, for a 5 year period. This was the last European Council to be presided by Herman Van Rompuy... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Formal approval of the new Commission by Parliament and the Council

On 22nd October, the European Parliament approved the new



Commission with 423 votes for, 209 against and 67 abstentions amongst the 699 MEPs present at the session. Jean-Claude Juncker, elected president, had previously given a speech at the European Parliament. He explained the changes made to the portfolios of some of the commissioners and answered questions put by MEPs. In order to give a new thrust to Europe, Jean-Claude Juncker has surrounded himself with an experienced team who will concentrate on a programme of work focussed on growth, employment, the environment and the Union's place in the world. On 23rd October, the European Council officially appointed the new Commission for the period from 1st November 2014 to 31st October 2019... [Read more](#)

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5 countries asked to provide details on their budget



In accordance with European regulations, euro zone Member States transmitted their respective budget plans for 2015 to the European Commission on 15th October. The Commission then has 15 days in which to give its opinion on the budgets. On 22nd October, before giving its opinion and according to the procedure set forth in European regulations, the European Commission sent a letter to 5 (France, Italy, Slovenia, Austria and Malta) of the euro zone Member States asking them to provide "details" on their respective budget plans by 31st October. The French and Italian economy and finance ministers replied to the European Commission by sending a letter to its Vice-President Jyrki Katainen on 27th October, in which they make new budgetary commitments for their respective countries... [Read more](#)

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Meeting between the Russian and Ukrainian ministers and the European energy commissioner



On 21st October the Russian and Ukrainian energy ministers, Alexandre Novak and Iouri Prodan, and the European commissioner for energy, Gunther Oettinger, met in Brussels to discuss the recommencement of deliveries of Russian gas to Ukraine. The parties reached joint conclusions on matters of disagreement, notably the price of gas. It will be 385 dollars for 1000 m3 through until the end of March. The next Russia-Ukraine-EU meeting will be held on 29th October in Brussels. It may result in the signature of an agreement... [Read more](#)

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177 billion in VAT income lost, according to the European Commission



On 23rd October, the European Commission published a study on lost VAT income. It believes that 177 billion euros in VAT income was lost due to non-compliance and failure to collect VAT in 2012. The VAT gap is the difference between forecast VAT income and the amount of VAT actually collected by the national authorities. The lowest VAT differences were recorded in the Netherlands (5% of expected income), Finland (5%) and Luxembourg (6%). The biggest gaps were in Romania (44% of expected VAT income), Slovakia (39%) and Lithuania (36%)... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Vote on the European data protection controller



On 21st October, the civil liberties commission at the European Parliament chose Giovanni Buttarelli as candidate for the position of European data protection controller following the hearings held on 20th October. The parliamentary commission also rendered a majority vote in favour of Wojciech Wiewiorowski for the position of deputy controller. The choices made by the civil liberties commission will be passed to the Presidents Conference, which will then find an agreement with the Council with regard to the final appointment... [Read more](#)

The Sakharov Prize awarded to Congolese gynaecologist Denis Mukwege



The 2014 Sakharov Prize was awarded on 21st October by the European Parliament to Congolese gynaecologist Denis Mukwege. The European Parliament and leaders of political groups wanted to honour him for his work with women victims of rape and sexual violence during armed conflicts, notably those in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Denis Mukwege will be invited to Strasbourg on 26th November to receive his award during the plenary session... [Read more](#)

Report on the plenary session: budget, economic reforms, Human Rights



During its plenary session held from 20th to 23rd October in Strasbourg, the European Parliament passed several texts. MEPs voted for an increase in credit commitments to 146.4 billion and payment credits to 146.4 billion for the 2015 draft budget by 464 in favour, 186 against and 46 abstentions. They also voted in favour of the resolution drafted by Philippe de Backer (ADLE, BE) on implementation of the economic reform priorities of the "European semester" for 2014 with 426 votes for, 240 against and 10 abstentions. Regarding Human Rights, they passed three resolutions on dissolution of the Memorial NGO (Sakharov prize 2009) in Russia, on Uzbekistan and the disappearance of 43 student teachers in Mexico... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Report on the Tripartite Social Summit



At the Tripartite Social Summit, European Union leaders and social partners, who met in Brussels on 23rd October, agreed on the importance of recommencing investments to encourage the creation of more, better quality jobs in order to firm up the objectives of Europe 2020 strategy. They looked at the report on the Europe 2020 strategy drawn up by the Commission, and at the mid-term examination of the European semester, and discussed action to be implemented to create "an employment-generating recovery"... [Read more](#)

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Conclusion of the General Affairs Council



On 21st October, the 28 European Affairs ministers prepared for the European Council to be held on 23rd and 24th October. Within the context of follow-up to the meeting held in June, ministers addressed matters concerning freedom, security and justice, with particular attention paid to the question of foreign combatants and illegal immigration into the European Union. Finally, in relation with the Commission and the Parliament, ministers asked for the establishment of a consultation process, to ensure the reinforcement of annual and pluriannual inter-institutional planning... [Read more](#)

Auditor's Court :

Report from the Auditor's Court on the use of mixed finance



On 22nd October, the Auditor's Court published its report on the use of mixed finance by the new Commission. It considers to be generally efficient the implementation of mixed financing which combines subsidies and loans granted by financial institutions using regional investment facilities. However, it refers to several major problems which must be remedied as quickly as possible... [Read more](#)

ECB :

Examination by the ECB of the quality of assets held by 130 banks



On 26th October 2014, the ECB unveiled its report on the examination of the balance sheets of 130 European banks, the "asset quality review". Its aim is to find out exactly the financial position of the banks on 31st December 2013. The ECB has revealed that 25 banks (9 Italian, 3 Greek, 3 Cypriot, 2 Belgian, 2 Slovenian, 1 Portuguese, 1 Austrian, 1 Irish, 1 French, 1 German and 1 Spanish) had an insufficient level of equity, evaluating their capital requirements at some 25 billion euros. They will have two weeks in which to present the ECB with a recapitalisation plan and between six and nine months to implement it. This will restore confidence between the banks and investors and is an essential stage prior to the implementation of a banking union... [Read more](#)

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EIB :

The EIB approves a new investment plan



The Board of the European Investment Bank (EIB) approved on 22nd October the release of loans amounting to 8.4 billion euros, of which 2.9 billion euros will go to benefit SMBs and medium capitalisations in the European Union. This brings up to 13.1 billion euros the total amount of support given by the EIB to SMBs and intermediate size businesses since the beginning of the year. In addition to SMBs, loans of a total value of 3.4 billion euros were approved for investment in strategic infrastructure, which will

notably support transport projects in France, Spain and Greece, as well as telecommunications in Malta... [Read more](#)

Germany :

National Digital Conference in Hambourg



On 21st October in Hambourg, at a government conference on digital changes, 800 representatives from the political, economic and scientific sectors discussed the topic "Working and living with digital changes - innovating together". German Chancellor Angela Merkel and her Economy and Environment minister, Sigmar Gabriel, presented their "Digital Agenda 2014-2017", which comprises measure including the infrastructure, research, innovation and the protection of private data... [Read more](#)

France :

Restricted security council



On 22nd October, French president François Hollande held a meeting of the restricted security council (foreign and defence ministers, and the chief of the armed forces) for an update on the crises in the Middle East and the Sahel, as well as the combat against the Ebola outbreak. In Iraq, France maintains its aim of weakening armed terrorist movements and continues to assist the authorities. In parallel, France is willing to support Kurdish forces in their combat in Syria. Finally, with regard to Ebola, France has currently mobilised over 100 million euros for equipment, training and the opening of treatment centres... [Read more](#)

Laguiole knives protected once again



On 21st October European justice returned their name to Laguiole knives, cancelling the brand name registered by a person who is not a resident of the Aveyron village to sell cutlery, whilst at the same time authorising him to use it for a series of other products. It indicated that the protection of the business name "Forge de Laguiole" was intended exclusively for activities effectively being carried out by that company on the date on which the request was made for the Laguiole brand in 2001". Pointing out that prior to that date "Forge de Laguiole was exclusively carrying out activities in the cutlery sector and in the gifts and souvenirs sector", it concluded that the Laguiole brand could be registered by the foreign person "for products and services in other sectors"... [Read more](#)

UK :

Reform of the British health system



The survival of the British health service (NHS), threatened by a deficit that could reach 30 billion pounds sterling (38 billion euros) in 2020, will require an ambitious reform, as well as increased public financing, warned six health organisations on 23rd October, with the publication of a draft five-year reform aiming to modernise the NHS, a real institution in Great Britain. The plan presented provides for a saving of 22 billion pounds sterling (28 billion euros) per year between now and 2020 by improving prevention measures, notably in the fields of obesity and alcoholism, and relying on technological innovations and a rethink of the way in which care is given... [Read more](#)

Sweden :

Meeting between the Swedish and Estonian Prime Ministers



On 21st October Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Roivas received his Swedish counterpart, Stefan Löfven. Discussions involved issues of security in the Baltic Sea, the European Council meeting on an agreement on climate and energy, as well as economic cooperation between the two countries. They confirmed the good relations that exist between the two countries... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Ukraine: Victory for the pro-Europeans

On 26th October pro-European and pro-Western parties won the parliamentary elections in Ukraine. According to results that are now almost final, involving 85% of ballot papers, Prime Minister Arseni



Iatseniouk's Republican Front party comes top with 22.03%, ahead of President Petro Porochenko's block which has scooped 21.67% of the vote. Another pro-European party, Samopomitch, comes in third position with 10.95%. The opposition block led by former energy minister Iouri Boïko obtains 9.46%, populist Oleg Liachko's Radical Party (7.47%) and Batkivchtchina (5.6%), the party of former Prime Minister Ioulia Timochenko comes in at 5.7%. The Svoboda party (4.7%) and the Communist party (3.9%) did not pass the 5% mark required in order to be represented in the Rada (Parliament)... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Ukraine: a new law for displaced persons within Ukraine



On 20th October, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, saluted the law guaranteeing respect for the rights and liberties of displaced persons within Ukraine, which has been adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada). He pointed out that, according to this law, Ukraine was willing to take the necessary measures to protect the most vulnerable people, respecting their human rights in spite of the country's difficult situation... [Read more](#)

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UN :

Conference on climate change in Bonn



The 190 member countries of the UN Convention on climate met from 20th to 25th October 2014 in Bonn with the aim of making progress with drafting the first world agreement on combatting global warming, prior to the annual UN Climate Conference to be held in December in Lima. Discussions involved mainly the contributions to be made by each country to the global effort on greenhouse gas reduction. The conference was marked by numerous disagreements between Southern countries and more developed countries, notably in terms of the evaluation of contributions made by each State to the reduction in emissions and the financing of the global objective of limiting the increase in the planet's temperature to 2°C. In the absence of any overall consensus, participants decided to hold 3 intermediate negotiation sessions between the Lima conference and the conference to be held in Paris in December 2015... [Read more](#)

WTO :

World trade report



On 20th October the WTO published its "Report on World Trade 2014". This report indicates that growth in world trade in volume terms reached only 2.2% in 2013, a level similar to 2012 (2.3%). According to the WTO the weakness of trade and production at world level can be explained in large part by the recession and unemployment, as well as by uncertainty with regard to the timetable of the American Federal Reserve in terms of its policy on monetary stimulus. The WTO explains how it has helped developing countries to adapt to four recent trends that have considerably modified the relationship between trade and development... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

The EU public debt increases over the second quarter 2014



On 23rd October, Eurostat published a report on public debt in the European Union. At the end of the second quarter 2014, the public debt ratio compared to GDP was 92.7% in the euro zone compared with 91.9% at the end of the first quarter 2014. Within the European Union the ratio increased from 86% to 87%. Compared to the second quarter 2013, the ratio of the public debt compared to GDP increased both in the euro zone (from 91.7% to 92.7%) and in the European Union (from 85.1% to 87%)... [Read more](#)

Publication :

"Notre européenité" by Alfonso Mattera

Published by LGDJ, the book "Notre européenité" (Our Europeanness) by Alfonso Mattera is the tale of the European adventure: reconciling, after over a thousand years of fratricide wars, the nations of the European



continent, building a shared house in which to welcome all European peoples, giving them a privileged place of peace, freedoms and prosperity, and building a better world. This book is written above all for the young generations, born into a culture of dialogue and wanting to know about their roots, their "Europeanness": a heritage of values which, from Socrates to Jean Monnet, have forged our identity... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Exhibition of Spanish drawings at the Prado Museum



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From 30th October 2014 to 8th February 2015, the Prado Museum in Madrid is holding an exhibition that brings together nearly half of an exhibition held by the Hamburger Kunsthalle, of Spanish drawings outside of Spain. Visitors will see almost 200 drawings including drawings by Cano, Murillo and Goya, which give a representative view of Spanish drawings between the 16th century and the beginning of the 19th century... [Read more](#)

Velazquez exhibition in Vienna



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A baroque artist, appointed by the Court of Philippe IV, Diego Velázquez is one of the main representatives of Spanish painting. For the first time, the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Fine Art Museum) of Vienna is devoting an exhibition exclusively to him, held from 28th October 2014 to 15th February 2015. It is mainly made up of portraits taken from its own collections but works on loan from London's National Gallery and the Prado Museum in Madrid are also included... [Read more](#)

Victor Hugo in exile exhibition in Brussels



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Through until 29th March 2015, The Brussels Museum of Letters and Manuscripts is holding an exhibition entitled "Victor Hugo in exile". Visitors will discover a little known side to the great 19th century French romantic novelist, who was also a talented thinker and politician. The drawings of maritime landscapes, poems and famous publications such as Les Misérables and Hugo's vast correspondence demonstrate just how much his relationships, political ideas and the solitude of his exile influenced the writer's work... [Read more](#)

Opening of the Polish Jews History Museum



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On 28th October the Polish Jews History Museum will open. To mark the opening concerts, readings and meetings will be organised on the theme of "museum of life" lasting over a period of two days and two nights and devoted to the history of Polish Jews... [Read more](#)

Opening of the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris



Following its official inauguration on 20th October in the presence of French President François Hollande, the Louis Vuitton Foundation opened its doors to the public in Paris on 27th October. The Louis Vuitton Foundation is home to 11 galleries where some of the greatest contemporary artists are on show, in a building designed and built by the American-Canadian architect Frank Gehry. The Foundation will be opened in three phases, spanning from October 2014 to September 2015 - each presenting an exhibition, a viewing of the collections and an events programme. The first phase will focus on the building's architecture, with an exhibition devoted to Franck Gehry's building, which will last through until March 2015... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



28th October

28
Oct

Luxembourg
Meeting of the Environment Ministers Council

1
Nov

1st November

The European Commission presided by JC Juncker begins its mandate

2
Nov

2nd November

Presidential election in Romania (1st round)

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