

The Future of European Defence - a Strategic Roadmap: "Europe 2020"

Author: Joachim Bitterlich



Just as tension between Ukraine and Russia is at its highest, that negotiations are gathering pace to find a solution to this crisis and after the conference on security in Munich, the Foundation has published a study by Joachim Bitterlich on the future of European defence.

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Financial Crisis :

The European Commission presents its winter economic forecasts



According to the "winter economic forecasts" presented on 5th February by the European Commission the economies in all of the EU's Member States are due to start growing again this year for the first time since 2007. In 2015, economic growth is due to reach 1.7% in the EU as a whole and 1.3% in the euro zone. In 2016 annual growth is due to lie at 2.1% and 1.9% respectively. This positive economic outlook in the euro zone and the EU as a whole are being encouraged by rising domestic and international demand, by a globally neutral budgetary orientation and also by a "particularly accommodating monetary policy" undertaken by the ECB. Although growth perspectives in Europe are still limited by "an environment that does not favour investments, but has high unemployment levels," the Commission notes that a certain number of important factors have improved short term economic prospects since the autumn. Hence the acceleration in the decrease in oil prices, the significant depreciation in the euro, the ECB's quantitative easing and the presentation of the investment plan by the European Commission should have a "positive effect" on growth says Pierre Moscovici, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs. The Commission says however that the decrease in inflation should continue in 2015 before rising again in 2016. It recalls that although the creation of jobs is gathering pace the decline in unemployment is slow. The unemployment rate should drop to 9.8% in the EU and to 11.2% in the euro zone in 2015. Finally the Commission stresses that deficits will continue to shrink in the EU to 2.6% this year against 3.0%

in 2014 and to 2.2% in 2016... [Read more](#)

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Review of Cyprus's macro-economic adjustment programme



After the end of the evaluation mission ongoing in Nicosia since 27th January 2015 the Troika teams (European Commission, European Central Bank, IMF) published a declaration on 6th February on the financial and economic situation in Cyprus. The Troika discussed progress achieved by the country via the economic reform programme with the Cypriot authorities. They also discussed future priorities and stressed the importance of "vigorous economic recovery". They recalled that the application of an effective legal framework regarding foreclosures and the adoption of "modern legislation" on financial insolvency are "key commitments made by Cyprus as part of the macro-economic adjustment programme introduced by the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) in 2013. In this light the Troika notes that "reaching an agreement on assessing the introduction of these commitments was possible not during this visit and they hoped that the review would be completed in a timely manner as soon as conditions are met for a positive conclusion."... [Read more](#)

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France's government deficit totals 85.6 billion in 2014



The French finance ministry published the government deficit figures for 2014 on 5th February. It totalled 85.6 billion euro against 74.9 billion in 2013. This figure confirms the ministry's forecasts that were announced mid-January. The government deficit is 3.4 billion euro lower than the 89 billion forecast in the finance bill approved in December. Moreover according to a report published by the French customs authorities on 6th February France's trade deficit totalled 53.8 billion euro in 2014 in comparison with 60.8 billion in 2013. This improvement is due to a reduction in the energy bill which was down by nearly 11 billion euro in comparison with 2013 due to the clement weather conditions last year and the decrease in oil prices since the autumn. Sales in aviation and the luxury sector, traditionally France's strong points continue and car, machine and chemicals exports are recovering. Conversely agricultural and pharmaceutical product sales are declining... [Read more](#)

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Greece's sovereign rating downgraded



Standard and Poor's took Greece's sovereign rating down a notch on 6th February (B-), whilst Moody's placed its government bonds under creditwatch negative. These new adjustments by the American agencies take Greece to the brink of bankruptcy. Standard & Poor's deem that liquidity issues faced by the Greek banks and the economy are squeezing the time left for the country to come to agreement over its debt with its international creditors... [Read more](#)

Commission :

The Commission launches work on Energy Union



On 15th July during the presentation of his political guidelines to Parliament Jean-Claude Juncker recalled that "Europe depends too much on its gas and oil imports." Indeed the EU imports 55% of its energy. Mr Juncker's goal therefore is to "reduce this dependence whilst maintaining our energy market open to non-EU members." Work started on 4th February on the Energy Union sought after by the President of the Commission. The investment plan is notably designed to mobilise financial support for the energy sector. According to Miguel Arias Cañete, the Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, it is not just about simply reviving old ideas, the project includes real measures to guarantee that the vision put forward becomes reality." On 25th February the framework strategy on Energy Union as well as the communication "the Roadmap for Paris" will be adopted. The latter lays out in detail the climate goals to be set by the EU during the Paris Conference on Climate Change that will take place at the end of this year... [Read more](#)

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The European Commission releases 1 billion € to counter youth unemployment



On 4th February the European Commission presented a legislative proposal to release one billion € this year for the youth employment initiative which should multiply the pre-financing paid to Member States in support of youth unemployment by 30. The Commission believes that this early pre-financing could speed up the release of immediate aid and involve between 350,000 to 650,000 young people this year instead of the present 14,000 to 22,000. This new announcement is part of the "young guarantee" that aims

to provide the under 25's with "a quality offer focusing on employment, training and apprenticeship within the four months following the end of their education or the loss of a job." The Commission's legislative proposal now has to be assessed by the European Parliament and the Council... [Read more](#)

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The European position on the World Partnership for Development after 2015



On 5th February the Commission presented its communication on the "World Partnership for the Eradication of Poverty and Sustainable Development after 2015," prepared by Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative, Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development as well as Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. In this communication the Commission presents its proposals for the international community and also for the way Europe will participate worldwide to help eradicate poverty, stimulate sustainable development and protect human rights. The proposals are based on 17 international development priorities presented by the UN in June 2014. The Commission confirms its support to the UN's Secretary General's call for all developed countries to step up their contributions to Official Development Assistance which he believes should total 0.7% of the GNI... [Read more](#)

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TTIP: end of 8th round of negotiations



The 8th round of the TTIP negotiations that brought together some 200 American and European negotiators in Brussels ended on 6th February. Although no real decisions were taken most issues pertaining to the TTIP were addressed - from customs tariffs to the services market, and also the potential opening of public procurement. The EU's chief negotiator Ignacio Garcia Berceo and his US counterpart Dan Mullaney announced that they wanted to "step up discussions" stating that they did not want to give in to citizens' scepticism. Two further rounds will take place before the summer, the first of which will be in Washington in April. Cécilia Malmström recalled the three issues that were of importance to the EU in the TTIP: economic prosperity, effective European governance and the EU's position in the international arena... [Read more](#)

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Parliament :

LuxLeaks: the European Parliament suggests the introduction of a special committee



The chairs of the political groups at the European Parliament decided on 5th February to suggest the introduction of a special committee to assess EU Member States' tax rulings. During the next plenary session that starts on 9th February the European Parliament will vote on the creation of this special committee and its mandate. If there is a majority vote in its support it might start work within the next few weeks, once its members have been appointed by each of the political groups, represented according to the number of seats they have in the Parliament... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Angela Merkel and François Hollande travel to Kyiv and then Moscow



On 5th February the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko hosted the French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Kyiv. Mr Poroshenko thanked his counterparts for their driving role in the process to try and settle the conflict. The heads of State discussed the situation in the Donbass and the solutions that could potentially lead to a cease-fire and the implementation of the Minsk Protocol. François Hollande and Angela Merkel then travelled to Moscow to meet Vladimir Putin on 6th February. The European leaders would like to appease the tension that has been exacerbated over the last few days by renewed fighting and the mention of a possible delivery of arms to Ukraine by the USA. A further meeting will take place between the Ukrainian, Russian and French Presidents as well as the German Chancellor on 11th February in Minsk... [Read more](#)

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The EU releases 1 billion euro for Syria and Iraq



On 6th February the High Representative and the European Commission presented their first global strategy in the fight to counter Da'esh. This strategy, as well as embracing initiatives ongoing in the EU member countries, will strengthen their effectiveness by investing 1 billion additional euro. With this the Commission aims to guarantee emergency aid and the stabilisation and development of the region. Federica Mogherini hopes to

"restore peace and security in a region which is so close to us but which has been devastated by terrorism and violence for a very long time." This new strategy will include both political and also diplomatic measures, as well as practical measures: development of anti-radicalisation programmes, the fight to counter the financing of terrorism, improvement of border controls... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council



The 28 Foreign Affairs Ministers met on 9th February in Brussels. Further measures involving Ukraine were notably taken: 19 people and 9 entities involved in action against Ukraine's territorial integrity will be banned from coming to the European Union and their assets will also be frozen if the Union's diplomatic efforts do not succeed by 16th February. The Foreign Ministers also recalled the key role played by the EU in the coordination of policies to counter terrorism: enhancement of international partnerships, the fight to counter radicalisation and violent extremism, the promotion of international cooperation and action against factors connected to crises will be the Council's priorities which decided to "integrate the fight to counter terrorism entirely within the EU's foreign policy." Finally work to guarantee democratic transition in Africa was welcomed - although it encouraged continued work in Central African Republic and Libya the EU is extremely concerned about developments in Yemen... [Read more](#)

ECB :

The ECB puts pressure on the Greek government



On 4th February the ECB's Council of Governors decided that it would no longer accept the Greek State's bonds as a guarantee in its main refinancing operations. In real terms this means that the ECB has decided to suspend the special regime it had granted to Greek banks to date, which were allowed to borrow money with lower guarantees than those usually demanded on the financial market. Some interpret this ECB decision as a move to force the Greek government into accepting the negotiation path set by its European and international creditors. This firstly means coming to an agreement about the payment of the second assistance plan to Greece (130 billion euro) launched in 2012 and which will end on 28th February 2015. The last tranche of 3.6 billion € will be paid to the country only if the government accepts the introduction of additional reform rapidly in support of budgetary discipline. However the ECB decided to maintain the procedure whereby Greek banks can obtain emergency liquidities from the Greek Central Bank - the so-called ELA (Emergency Liquidity Assistance). By doing this the ECB aims to prevent the Greek banking system from collapsing due to a lack of liquidities. At the same time it is forcing Greece to come to agreement with its creditors... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Appointments at the European Defence Agency and the EU Mission in Somalia



Jorge Domecq, appointed as Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency took office on 2nd February. He said that he wants to turn the EDA into a "reliable agency at the service of the Member States." The Council's Policy and Security Committee has appointed a new commander to the EU's training mission in Somalia: Brigadier General Antonio Maggi will replace Massimo Mingiardi on 8th March. This mission is part the EU's strategic framework for the Horn of Africa. The Union hopes to take part in the establishment of a stable, prosperous, democratic Somalia; 4000 Somali soldiers have been trained since the start of the mission... [Read more](#)

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Germany :

Conference on Security in Munich



After visiting Kyiv and Moscow on 5th and 6th February with French President Hollande, Chancellor Angela Merkel attended a Conference on Security in Munich on 7th February. Ms Merkel gave a speech in which she insisted on Germany's commitment to the international arena but explained why she did not want to deliver arms to Ukraine. Russian Foreign Minister Serguey Lavrov spoke positively of the Franco-German initiative but he was especially critical of the Ukrainian and US governments. Joe Biden, the American Vice-President recalled that the Obama Administration had done a great deal as of 2009 to build "constructive relations with Russia" but since "2012 President Putin had adopted another path." Recalling that borders were not to be violated and that "each nation had the right to choose its allies," Joe Biden said "he did not believe in a military solution in Ukraine

but Russia did not have the right to do what it was doing and that the Ukrainian people had the right to defend itself.".. [Read more](#)

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Belgium :

The Commission opens an enquiry into Belgium's fiscal regime



On 3rd February the European Commission opened an "in depth enquiry" regarding the Belgian tax measure that enables businesses that are part of a multi-national group to make significant cuts to the corporate tax they are supposed to pay in Belgium. In real terms, via an early tax arrangement allowed by the Belgian tax authorities, this system provides an opportunity to deduct so-called "surplus" benefits from the tax base of a company on the pretext that it has the advantage of belonging to a larger multi-national group. The Commission fears that the Belgian system of "surplus benefits" is a major over-estimation of the real advantages procured by belonging to a multi-national group. Moreover this system seems "only to benefit multi-national groups whilst Belgian businesses which only work in Belgium cannot pretend to similar advantages." This procedure is one of a series undertaken by the Commission since June 2013 in virtue of rules pertaining to State aid and to practices implemented by some Member States in terms of "fiscal rulings"... [Read more](#)

Croatia :

No genocide between Serbia and Croatia according to the International Court of Justice



On 3rd February the International Court of Justice delivered a judgment regarding mutual requests by Croatia and Serbia for condemnations for the crime of genocide. These requests were made following the armed conflicts that took place between 1991 and 1995 after Croatia's declaration of independence. This conflict led to around 20,000 deaths. The Court rejected Croatia's request, notably deeming that the acts committed by the Serbs at the beginning of the conflict did not aim to "destroy" Croatian ethnic groups in certain areas of Croatia reclaimed by Serb separatists, but to "displace them by force". According to the Court there was no genocidal intention. The Court also declared that Croatia had not committed genocide against the Serb population either, deeming that "although acts that were constituent of genocide had been committed, this was not on a scale that would illustrate genocidal intention." This judgment is final, without appeal and binding... [Read more](#)

Denmark :

Monetary Stability in Denmark affected by the Swiss decision



The Swiss National Bank's decision to give up the fixed exchange rate on the Swiss franc against the euro on 15th January has led to unexpected repercussions in Denmark. In 2000 the Danes rejected euro zone membership but the Danish crown has remained extremely dependent on the single currency since the crown is pegged against the euro, at approximately 2.25% thanks to the European exchange II mechanism. In fact margins lie at around 0.5%. The institutions that lost money in Switzerland are now looking to Denmark. To prevent a massive influx of foreign capital which would destabilise the crown the Danmarks Nationalbank (DNB) reduced its key (already negative) savings rate by -0.05% to -0.20% on 20th January 2015. This did not discourage potential investors and so the DNB further reduced the rate to -0.50% on 30th January and then to -0.70% on 5th February. There ensued the sale of 106.3 billion crowns on the market... [Read more](#)

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France :

François Hollande gives a press conference



On 5th February French President François Hollande held a press conference. Firstly he indicated that he would be travelling with German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Kyiv to draft a settlement to the Ukrainian conflict that was to be presented in Moscow. Mr Hollande also reviewed the attacks that shook France at the beginning of 2015 and insisted on the role of school and secularity as arms against intolerance; regarding reform there will be a new civic contract with the introduction of a universal period of service for young people, the creation of a citizens reserve, and the strengthening of participatory democracy together with the development of measures at school (better teacher training, greater value given to professional high schools to prevent school drop-out). The President also mentioned the reforms that are to involve youth employment, the re-employment of the long term unemployed, improvement in

company results, the facilitation of financing to the French economy. Mr Hollande also called for Energy Union... [Read more](#)

The French Senate calls to remove the TTIP's dispute settlement mechanism



In a resolution adopted on 3rd February the French Senate expressed its reticence regarding the dispute settlement mechanism provided for in the transatlantic treaty (TTIP) as well as in the free-trade treaty with Canada. The non-binding text calls "for a change to be made to the arbitration procedure to ensure the complete transparency of debates and disclosure of proceedings, the independence and impartiality of arbitrators, and the effective establishment of a system of appeal against decisions before an independent tribunal." The resolution also calls to "provide for the support of an inter-state dispute settlement mechanism based on the WTO's system.".. [Read more](#)

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Greece :

Alexis Tsipras's general policy speech



Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras gave his general policy speech on 8th February to the Greek Parliament. He firstly committed to "keeping the promises contained within his programme," whilst honouring Greek's debt with its creditors. He then recalled that Greece "did not want an extension to the assistance programme" provided by the Troika. "Greece wants to pay its debt" he declared and invited "the partner countries to come to the negotiation table to discuss the means to make things viable." He has given himself 15 days to create a "relay programme" that would apply as of June 2015. Amongst the emergency social measures presented on Sunday evening are the "gradual re-establishment of the minimum salary from 580€ to 750€ by 2016, a "merciless war against corruption" and the "re-establishment of the State TV channel ERT.".. [Read more](#)

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Alexis Tsipras on an official visit to Brussels



On an official visit to Brussels on 4th February Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras met the presidents of the three European institutions. After speaking with the President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz and the President of the European Council Donald Tusk, Alexis Tsipras said he was "optimistic" about the possibility of finding "a joint, viable and mutually acceptable solution" for the common future of the EU and Greece. Donald Tusk stressed the "need to find an acceptable solution for all Member States involved in the negotiations on financial aid to Greece". These negotiations "will take place within the Eurogroup" and would be "difficult", requiring "cooperation and dialogue, as well as a decisive effort on the part of Greece," he added in a dispatch. On his return to Greece Mr Tsipras indicated that he would put a plan forward to his partners next week... [Read more](#)

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Greece's leader visit their European partners



After taking office Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and his Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis undertook a tour of Europe with the aim of finding support for a compromise over their country's debt. On 3rd February Alexis Tsipras visited his Italian counterpart Matteo Renzi who said he was optimistic, declaring "that it was possible to come to agreement with the European institutions." A similar discourse advocating "dialogue and the respect of commitments" was adopted by French President Hollande in Paris on 4th February. At the same time the Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis met his British counterpart George Osborne on 2nd February. On 4th February he met with Mario Draghi. Mr Varoufakis ended his tour in Berlin on 5th February with a meeting with his German counterpart Wolfgang Schäuble, which can be summarised by the following statement "we have agreed to disagree". The German Finance Minister expressed his scepticism about the measures to be taken by the Greek government and rejected any possibility of cancelling the debt and of changing relations between Greece and the troika. A Eurogroup meeting devoted to Greece will be held on 11th February... [Read more](#)

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Hungary :

Angela Merkel visits Budepest

German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke with Hungarian Prime



Minister, Viktor Orban in Budapest on 2nd February. Ms Merkel recalled the importance of fundamental rights in Europe whilst the Hungarian Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister declared that different countries "can interpret democracy in a different manner." Moreover Ms Merkel highlighted that Germany would not provide arms to Ukraine and that a military option was not the solution... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

The new president of the Italian Republic is sworn in



On 3rd February Sergio Mattarella swore loyalty to the Italian Republic and to the Constitution before the Parliament which met in joint session (Chamber of Deputies and the Senate) and the regional delegates at the Montecitorio. He thanked his two predecessors Carlo Azeglio Ciampi and Giorgio Napolitano. He then focused his speech on his wish to represent national unity and to defend constitutional principles "which cannot afford to run the risk of being affected by the crisis." The head of State believes that the priorities are the right to work on the part of young people and the completion of the reform process. In line with Italian tradition the new President asked for the immediate revival by the EU of the European project that should "represent a frontier of hope.".. [Read more](#)

Further privatisations in Italy



The Italian Treasury is about to launch the sale of a 5% to 6% stake in Enel's capital. A possible offering could take place through an accelerated book build, which would allow the closure of the sale in a few hours (sometime between 9th and 20th February). At the same time the Treasury announced that it had chosen BoFA Merrill Lynch and Cleary Gottlieb as its advisors in the privatisation of the Ferrovie dello Stato (FS) planned for the end of the year. The aim is to send out a strong message to international investors of the Treasury's determination to adhere to its privatisation goals... [Read more](#)

Lithuania :

Lithuania joins the European Stability Mechanism (ESM)



On 3rd February the Republic of Lithuania became the 19th member of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) following the adoption of the euro by the country on 1st January 2015. ESM Member States can only ask for financial aid when they encounter financing problems on the market if assistance like this is deemed necessary for the protection of the euro zone's financial stability as a whole. As an ESM Member State Lithuania subscribes to the mechanism's capital totalling 2.86 billion €, of which 327.2 € million in terms of capital paid... [Read more](#)

Malta :

Joseph Muscat in Berlin



German Chancellor Angela Merkel hosted her Maltese counterpart, Joseph Muscat in Berlin on 4th February. During discussions they addressed the situation in the Mediterranean, notably Libya. They also spoke of the Ukrainian conflict and the stability of the euro zone. In a press conference Mr Muscat recalled that the stability of Libya was "vital" for security in Europe. "The European Union cannot act and then be surprised," he stressed. Regarding Greece he recalled that Malta "was against any lightening of the Greek debt but supported flexibility that would afford the country some respite.".. [Read more](#)

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UK :

The most modern navy in the world



On the occasion of a visit to Portsmouth (UK) British Finance Minister George Osborne unveiled a new national naval strategy that will aim to help the Royal Navy remain the most modern navy in the world. He notably announced the construction of numerous Global 26 combat ships to maximise the export possibilities and also the construction of a new complex warship every two years. With this strategy the British government hopes to guarantee that the Royal Navy will continue to enjoy the capacity it requires "to protect the UK's national interests" and "maintain its status as the most modern navy

in the world.".. [Read more](#)

New Economic and Development plan in Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire



British Prime Minister David Cameron announced on 5th February the launch of a new development plan for Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire. Employment, transport, manufacturing industry, science and tourism are the main elements on which the government wants to focus its policy. The government hopes to reduce the number of unemployed in the region by 100,000, increase investment aid for transport by £6.4 million and improve living standards in Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire by focusing on the region's cultural, creative, sporting assets and by building 20,000 new homes... [Read more](#)

British Report on Tax Avoidance



The Public Accounts Committee at the House of Commons delivered a report on 6th February regarding tax avoidance and more particularly the role played by accountancy firms in the promotion of various possible techniques. Hence a British firm offered tax avoidance advice for Luxembourg, thereby participating in an increasingly globalised, standardised strategy. The Committee notes that the promotion of tax avoidance is in fact allowed in the rules of conduct of certain companies. Hence, the need for the government's intervention to regulate the sector by introducing a code of conduct in terms of taxation... [Read more](#)

Kosovo :

Kosovo Labour Minister dismissed under suspicion of insulting Albanians



The Labour Minister for Kosovo Aleksandar Jablanovic, a member of the Serb minority, was dismissed on 3rd February. This decision was taken to pacify many Kosovars who went out into the streets on 26th February in protest against the insults that Mr Jablanovic is said to have made against the country's Albanians. Demonstrators accused him of having qualified Albanian demonstrators as "heathens" as they prevented a group of Serbs from visiting a monastery on the occasion of the Orthodox Christmas. The demonstrators said they would continue their action until the Minister resigned. These events led to the injury of 80 people... [Read more](#)

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USA :

Joe Biden on an official visit to Brussels



The Vice-President of the USA was on an official visit to Brussels on 6th February. He notably met Martin Schulz, the President of the European Parliament and Donald Tusk, the President of the Council, as well as heads of the European political groups. His visit aimed to highlight the strength of EU/USA relations. Martin Schulz declared that "transatlantic relations have been tested over the last few years but there are more things that unite us than those that divide us." The Presidents of both the Council and the European Parliament called for a tightening in relations: "We must bring our continents closer together" and "together we have to face the realities of a changing world.".. [Read more](#)

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John Kerry visits Kyiv and Munich



The American Secretary of State John Kerry travelled to Kyiv on 5th February. He met with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk and Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkine. They recalled that Russia had violated international law by illegally annexing Crimea and by invading the East of Ukraine. "What we need is peace. To achieve this we need to take control of the border, push back the Russian forces and stop the supply of arms to the terrorists who are led by Russia," he declared. John Kerry announced that 16.5 million dollars would be added to the donations made by the USA to Ukraine which now total 355 million dollars. Mr Kerry then travelled to Germany from 6th to 8th February where he took part in the 51st Security Conference in Munich... [Read more](#)

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NATO :

[NATO defence ministers progress on the Readiness Action Plan](#)



NATO defence ministers together with Federica Mogherini, the EU's head of diplomacy approved the Readiness Action Plan on 5th February. This plan comprises a series of measures that aim to respond to the challenges set by Russia, the Middle East and North Africa as well as strengthening the collective defence of the member countries and their crisis management capabilities. The NATO Response Force will become a division size joint force with significantly increased readiness capacities and highly capable and flexible multinational forces. It will be trained to respond rapidly to all types of circumstances. The Defence Ministers also decided to introduce a new "Very High Readiness Joint Task Force" (VJTF), which will include up to five manoeuvre battalions ready for action within two to three days. With this NATO confirms its determination to remain a "ready, robust, responsive Alliance prepared to face present and future challenges wherever they occur.".. [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Which policy mix to end the euro zone crisis?



In the review "Vision Franco-Allemande" the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI) has published "Which policy mix to end the euro zone crisis? New Franco-German Convergence" by Pascal Kauffmann and Henrik Uterwedde. This explores the "constituent elements of a policy mix and an economic agenda that aims to make the Economic and Monetary Union structurally viable and settle its serious economic problems.".. [Read more](#)

Culture :

Pinacothèque Paris: "In the time of Klimt, the Vienna Secession "



The Pinacothèque in Paris will be unveiling its new exhibition on 12th February which is devoted to the Secession Movement - a vital element of Art Nouveau which developed in Vienna at the beginning of the 20th century. The exhibition focuses on Gustav Klimt who played a major role in the emergence of this movement. The latter was the source of Expressionism - a major trend in modern art - just a few years later. The heart of the exhibition lies in a selection of Klimt's main works - from his initial years of study to the major works of this golden era like Judith I (1901), or the Beethoven Frieze, a monumental piece of work built to scale and on show in France for the very first time. The exhibition will run until 21st June 2015... [Read more](#)

"Poetry of Light." Venetian drawings from the National Gallery of Art in Washington at the Correr Museum - Venice



The Correr Museum in Venice is running an exhibition until 15th March 2015 : Poetry of Light. Venetian drawings from the National Gallery of Art in Washington. Reviewing the development of Venetian art from the 16th to 19th century more than 130 works from the Washington National Gallery of Art are on show including Venetian masters (Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, Tintoret, Tiepolo) and some foreigners in love with Venice (Whistler, von Alt, Lear Werner, Callow, Sargent)... [Read more](#)

Portraits at Bozar in Brussels



The Fine Arts Museum of Brussels (Bozar) is running an exhibition, "FACES THEN Renaissance Portraits in the Low Lands" until 17th May 2015. Portrait painting flourished in the Renaissance. The individual found a place within society and the wealthy bourgeoisie wanted their portrait to be painted. This exhibition offers visitors 50 16th century portraits by masters like Quentin Metsys, Joos van Cleve and Joachim Beuckelaer. They immortalised their contemporaries in astonishingly deft and extremely detailed, almost photorealistic paintings... [Read more](#)

The Philharmonic Orchestra of Berlin gives five concerts in London



The conductor Simon Rattle, the Musical Director of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Berlin, is celebrating his 60th birthday this week and has decided to make it a date: the British capital will be hosting the Philharmonic Orchestra of Berlin for five exceptional concerts at the Barbican and at the Southbank Centre from 10th to 15th February. For the occasion the conductor has chosen to conduct some of the works that have marked his career such as Mahler's second symphony, for which he received several prizes. A full series

of Sibelius symphonies will also be played in honour of the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth... [Read more](#)

BAFTA Awards 2015



The 68th BAFTA Awards (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) took place on 8th February with prizes being given for the best British films 2015. The prize for the best film went to "Boyhood" whose main actress Patricia Arquette won the prize for the best supporting actress. Julianne Moore won the prize for best actress in "Still Alice" in which she plays a woman affected by Alzheimer's disease. "The Great Budapest Hotel" by Wes Anderson won 5 trophies including the best original screenplay... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



9th and 10th February
Brussels
Foreign Affairs Council



9th-12th February
Strasbourg
European Parliament Plenary Session



10th February
Brussels
"General Affairs" Council



11th February
Brussels
Eurogroup Meeting



12th February
Brussels
Informal Meeting of heads of State and government

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Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

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