

France in quest of a European narrative

Author: Olivier Rozenberg



The draft bill on growth and activity that was promoted by Brussels as one of the reforms that France was going to introduce to match European criteria was only adopted due to the 49-3 procedure included in the Constitution. This highlights deep divisions within the majority and augurs badly for the future reforms that are however necessary. Olivier Rozenberg draws a picture of France's relationship with Europe highlighting its difficulties in defining a European narrative.

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Elections :

Prokopis Pavlopoulos, new Greek President



On 18th February Prokopis Pavlopoulos was elected President of the Greek Republic. He won 233 votes, which is 33 more than the required 2/3 majority during the first round. He was elected with the votes of SYRIZA, its sovereignist right-wing partner, the Independent Greeks (Anel) and right-wing New Democracy. Nikos Alivizatso, the candidate put forward by To Potami, the party led by Stavros Theodorakis and supported by the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), won 30 votes. Prokopis Pavlopoulos will take office on 13th March next... [Read more](#)

General elections in Estonia on March 1st



979,910 Estonians are being convened to vote on March 1st next to renew the 101 members of the Riigikogu. MPs are elected every four years by a proportional vote within 12 multi-name constituencies. Four political parties are represented in Parliament at present: the Reform party (ER), of Prime Minister Taavi Roivas, the Centre Party (K), the Pro-Patria Union-Res Publica (IRL) and the Social Democratic Party (SDE). According to a poll by TNS EMOR for the daily Postimees, the Reform Party is due to come out ahead in the general elections on March 1st. With 23% of the vote it is due to pull ahead of the Centre Party with 22%. The Social Democratic Party is due to win 20%, Pro-Patria

Union-Res Publica 14%, the New Free Party of Estonia 9% and the People's Conservative Party (EKRE) 9%... [Read more](#)

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Financial Crisis :

Conditional agreement of the Eurogroup on the extension of the assistance plan to Greece



An agreement was found on 20th February regarding the extension of the assistance plan to Greece. The Greek and German Finance Ministers Yanis Varoufakis and Wolfgang Schäuble came to agreement on a joint text that was approved by the euro zone finance ministers.

This initial six month extension will in fact last four months, the time taken to come to a new agreement. Jeroen Dijsselboem, President of the Eurogroup announced that the negotiations had been "intense" because the "aim of this meeting had been to re-establish confidence between us." He said he was satisfied that "the work we did this week has paid off". Greece now has to indicate which reforms it will introduce. A first list was presented to the Eurogroup on 23rd February which the finance ministers now have to approve... [Read more](#)

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Euro Zone - growth at its highest in 7 months



Euro zone growth reached its highest level in 7 months in February indicated Markit on 20th February - the company published the PMI index (Purchasing Managers Index). The composite PMI of the euro zone lay at 53.5 in February against 52.6 the previous month according to a first estimate. This is better than forecast since analysts were counting on 53 points. When it rises above 50 points this means that activity is increasing whilst it is declining if it falls below this threshold. In spite of the Greek debt crisis economic growth is gathering pace and this trend is due to continue over the next few months... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Towards a capital markets union



During its meeting on 18th February the European Commission launched a consultation on the creation of a Capital Markets Union and debated vital action to take to counter tax avoidance and aggressive tax planning. After this public consultation the Commission will adopt an action plan this summer that should lead to the introduction of a single capital market by 2019. In order to stimulate growth the European Commission now wants to strengthen the role of the markets in the financing of businesses since SMEs must be able to "raise funding as easily as big companies," being able to seek capital in any Member State... [Read more](#)

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Humanitarian aid to Sahel and Palestine



The European Commission announced on 16th January that it would provide an extension of 156 million euro in humanitarian aid to Sahel. This additional sum is to help some 20 million undernourished people in Sahel, 5 million of whom are children suffering from acute malnutrition. Moreover 212 million euro will be paid to the Palestinian Authority and the UN's Office for Relief and Works Agency for the Refugees of Palestine in the Near East (UNRWA). These funds will be devoted to education, healthcare and Palestinian social services... [Read more](#)

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Council :

European Defence Ministers' Meeting in Riga



On 18th and 19th February the 28 European Defence Ministers agreed on the need to bring the European Council together over defence in June to discuss the strategic and security issues as well as the European response to provide to these challenges. They concluded that recent events on the EU's southern borders to a backdrop of hybrid war are a joint challenge to the EU. On 18th February NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg demanded that Russia withdraw its forces from the East of Ukraine and bring its support to the separatists to an end... [Read more](#)

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Conclusions of the "Economic and Financial Affairs" Council

The 28 European Economy and Finance Ministers who met on 17th February examined the Commission's proposal that aims to create a



European Fund for Strategic Investments that should mobilise at least 315 billion € in private and public investments over three years. Ministers also adopted conclusions on growth prospects and macro-economic imbalances in the light of the "European Semester". The conclusions will integrate the process that will lead to specific recommendations addressed to each Member State in July 2015. Finally ministers agreed on the Council's priorities in view of negotiations with the European Parliament on the EU budget for 2016. In light of this they recommend that the European Parliament allow the Commission to implement the EU's 2013 budget. Moreover the first review of the high level group that is looking into the EU budget's own resource system was presented to the ministers by the group's chair, Mario Monti... [Read more](#)

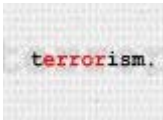
The Council approves an agreement on the landing of fishing captures



On 20th February the Council approved the final compromise text on "the omnibus regulation" (the landing obligation of fishing captures). The progressive elimination of waste in all EU fisheries thanks to the introduction of a landing obligation is one of the reformed common fisheries policy's main goals. An annual report on the implementation of this regulation will also be prepared by the Commission on the basis of available information communicated by the Member States and by the consultative councils. Moreover a pragmatic solution to stock fish on board trawlers will be introduced. The text will be presented to Parliament and then approved by the Council... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Federica Mogherini at the Washington Summit against Terrorism



The head of the EU's diplomacy and Vice-President of the Commission Federica Mogherini attended the World Summit in Washington on the fight to "counter violent extremism." Although the American President tried to mobilise the international community against jihadi terrorism no real measure was taken. Ms Mogherini recalled that the attacks in Paris and Copenhagen had again shook the European continent years after those in London and Madrid. She stressed the importance of international collaboration in the fight to counter terrorism: "The tasks ahead call for a coordinated effort between national governments, regional organisations and social groups. Only a global alliance can counter this threat effectively..." [Read more](#)

ECB :

ECB Decisions



The European Central Bank (ECB) decided on 18th February to extend the emergency loans mechanism granted to Greek banks by two weeks, a lifesaver for the country's banking sector. It raised the ceiling to 68.3 billion euro. The loans will serve as a parachute for the Greek banks which are suffering liquidity problems. The ECB set the volume of these loans at 60 billion € at the beginning of February, a sum that was raised to 65 billion € last week. It would like Greece to introduce capital control to prevent the bank sector from running completely dry. Moreover after the Governors' Council on 19th February the ECB published the "ECB's Financial Statements 2014". According to the annual accounts certified by the ECB for the financial year ending 31st December 2014 approved by the Council of Governors the ECB's net profit in 2014 lies a 989 million € in contrast with 1,440 billion in 2013, whilst the net total of interest totalled 1,536 billion euro in 2014 against 2,005 billion in 2013... [Read more](#)

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EIB :

The Commission gives the greenlight to SME financing before the summer



The governing council of the EIB (European Investment Bank) voted in support of allocating financing to a new European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) on 17th February: SME's will be able to receive the first payments before the summer as part of a pre-financing of SME projects linked to the investment plan. "It is a big day for SMEs in Europe. This news from the EIB means that by the summer innovative SMEs but also those lacking liquidities will be able to receive vital injections of capital. We promised to help Europe invest and this is exactly what we are doing today," announced Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Employment, Growth, Investments and Competitiveness. The aim is therefore to have

the draft regulation for the EFSI adopted by July 2015 so that the Funds are available in September 2015 at the latest. Work on the creation of a European investment project reserve as well as a European Council investment advisory hub will also be speeded up to be operational as soon as the European Funds for Strategic Investments are implemented... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Meeting between François Hollande and Angela Merkel



On 20th February French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel met notably to discuss the Greek debt and the Ukrainian crisis. This meeting is part of Ms Merkel's tour in preparation for the next G7 summit that will take place on 7th and 8th June in Elmau. The Franco-German couple agreed on a number of priorities including the "preparation of the conference on the climate, healthcare, notably in Africa and the fight to counter terrorism." The two leaders also repeated that Greece must remain in the euro zone. Regarding Ukraine Angela Merkel and François Hollande are to continue working on the implementation of the Minsk Agreements, deeming that any country that breaks the ceasefire again will suffer sanctions. A meeting between the French, German, Russian and Ukrainian Foreign Ministers will take place on 24th February in Paris... [Read more](#)

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Angela Merkel meets Pope Francis



During a private visit to Rome on 21st February German Chancellor Angela Merkel met with Pope Francis at the Vatican. Discussions focused on the preparation of the next G7 summit that will take place in Bavaria on 7th and 8th June 2015. Angela Merkel and Pope Francis also addressed the issue of the fight to counter poverty, women's rights and the challenges to public health, religious freedom in the world as well as the situation in Ukraine. As part of the G7 Angela Merkel recalled that the German Presidency wanted to highlight several themes including the protection of the environment, healthcare, and the strengthening of the role played by women... [Read more](#)

Spain :

Completion of the Franco-Spanish electricity interconnection project



Miguel Arias Cañete, European Commissioner for Energy and Action for the Climate, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and French PM Manuel Valls, together with Mario Monti, the project's European coordinator inaugurated the power line linking Santa Llogaia to Baixas on 20th February. This line will double the electricity interconnection capacity between France and Spain which will rise from 1400 to 2800 megawatts and will enable the integration of the Spanish market with the European energy markets. Energy interconnections are vital elements in Energy Union one of the priorities set by the Commission, which will publish a communication on 25th February on the means to achieve an electric connection of 10% in all Member States by 2020... [Read more](#)

France :

French President's Speech on Nuclear Dissuasion



On 19th February French President François Hollande travelled to the airbase at Istres and gave a speech on nuclear weapons. Given the tragic events of the last months he insisted on the fact that nuclear dissuasion remained a means of defence: "nuclear dissuasion aims to protect our country from any aggression on the part of state against its vital interest, wherever it may come from and whatever shape it may take. I might add that France believes that the nuclear arm is not designed to gain any kind of advantage in a conflict. Because of the devastating effects of nuclear arms it has no place in an offensive strategy, it is only designed as a defence strategy." He then reviewed the nuclear arms programme and announced modernisation measures... [Read more](#)

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The French National Assembly rejects the motion of censure against the government



On 17th February French Prime Minister Manuel Valls decided (after coming to agreement in the Council of Ministers) to use article 49-3 of the Constitution to push through a bill that aims to reform the French economy, without a first reading vote in the National Assembly. This procedure aims to engage the government's responsibility before the Assembly on the draft bill which is deemed adopted except if a motion of censure is introduced and

approved, thereby leading to the government's resignation. Mr Valls chose to use this article to ensure that the bill passed whilst his majority is weak. A motion of censure was introduced by the centre-right UMP and UDI as well as by the far left (Front de Gauche). This was rejected on 19th February since it did not win the necessary 289 votes (234 voted in support). As a result the bill was adopted without a first reading vote in the National Assembly and will now be assessed by the Senate... [Read more](#)

Greece :

Prokopis Pavlopoulos, new Greek President



The former Interior Minister Prokopis Pavlopoulos, was elected on 18th February as President of the Hellenic Republic by the Greek Parliament, an honorary but also federating role in the crisis-stricken country, announced the leader of the Assembly. 64 year-old, Mr Pavlopoulos won 233 which is more than the 180 minimum necessary of the 300 MPs. He was elected with the votes of SYRIZA, its sovereignist right-wing partner, the Independent Greeks (Anel) and right-wing New Democracy from whose ranks the new head of State originates. This election ends the electoral process that was started in December. At the time Parliament failed to elect a head of State on three occasions which ultimately led to the snap election won by SYRIZA... [Read more](#)

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Hungary :

Viktor Orban hosts Vladimir Putin



Russian President Vladimir Putin made an official visit to Budapest on 17th February. He was hosted by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Russia and Hungary came to a political agreement on gas since Hungary depends on Moscow for 80% of its gas. But the two countries also signed a 10 billion euro contract to increase the capacity of the nuclear power station of Paks. Whilst the Russian-Ukrainian crisis rages Mr Orban did not find it difficult to hold Russia up as a model. But this rapprochement with Moscow is not to the taste of everyone. A demonstration took place at the same time as this visit in the Hungarian capital... [Read more](#)

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Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban loses the super-majority



During a by-election on 22nd February Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban lost the 2/3 super-majority that he had enjoyed since 2010. Indeed this depended on one seat only. But the candidate supported by the opposition in the constituency of Veszprem (West) was elected with 43% of the vote against 34% for the candidate of the party in office, FIDESZ. This defeat in a usually conservative stronghold is seen as a yellow card for the government... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Italy: completing reform



According to its most recent study devoted to Italy the OECD believes that reform, if it is completed, should lead to an additional 6% in GDP growth in 10 years. Amongst the projects that would enable progress is the improvement of the structure of Parliament and also the distribution of responsibilities between the central and regional administrations which would facilitate the effectiveness of the legislative process and prevent delays in the implementation of measures. An effective application of the December 2014 bill on employment should enable the return of growth. The model work contract that has been advocated as a part of this, says the OECD, will be implemented and applied via greater flexibility in terms of working hours, the improvement of parental leave and affordable, high quality childcare services. Finally a great deal of work remains to improve the economic effectiveness of public spending, increase transparency and step up the fight to counter corruption. However the future bill on taxation could also help bring improvements to these areas... [Read more](#)

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The EU extends the Frontex mission in the Mediterranean



On 19th February the European Commission announced that it was increasing its aid to Italy. Firstly operation Triton, jointly undertaken with Frontex, will be extended until the end of the year at least. Secondly, the European Commission decided to attribute 13.7 million € to Italy's emergency asylum funds, migration and integration (AMIF). The European Commission also said it was "ready to respond rapidly to any request made by Italy to

increase resources for the joint operation Triton." The decision to extend the Triton mission comes at a time of geopolitical instability in many neighbouring countries, which is strengthening migratory pressure on the EU's Mediterranean borders... [Read more](#)

Poland :

Eva Kopacz hosts Viktor Orban



Polish Prime Minister Eva Kopacz hosted her Hungarian counterpart Viktor Orban on 19th February in Warsaw. Discussions mainly focused on EU-Russia relations and the situation in Ukraine. "During this sincere and difficult conversation I informed Prime Minister Orban that the unity of the EU's Member States and the Visegrad Group regarding the situation in Ukraine is of utmost importance," summarized Ms Kopacz... [Read more](#)

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Romania :

Romania: project for fiscal reform



The Romanian government is planning to divide and reduce taxation down into several bands by 2020 in order to stimulate growth says a fiscal code reform project published on 18th February. According to this project VAT would be reduced from 24% to 20% in January 2016 and to 18% in January 2018. According to the government's calculations the reduction in fiscal pressure would lead to an additional 1% in GDP next year said Romanian Finance Minister Darius Valcov. This measure will lead to a deficit of 2.6 billion euro in 2016 (ie 1.5% of the GDP) in the government budget. But this will be compensate for by the creation of 145,000 jobs and a rise in consumption, two factors that will generate revenues estimated at 1.4 billion euro said the ministry. The project also plans for the reduction of the flat rate tax on profits and income by two points - taking it down from 16% to 14% in 2019. "This project will be discussed with business leaders before being sent to Parliament within the next month," declared Prime Minister Victor Ponta... [Read more](#)

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UK :

£859 million investment in shipbuilding



British Prime Minister David Cameron announced on 20th February that the British shipbuilding industry would be boosted with the signature of a contract between the Defence Ministry and BAE Systems to a total value of £859 million. Some 1700 jobs will be maintained thanks to the investments made in the building of Type 26 warships, the new generation of Royal Navy frigates and 600 jobs will be saved in Scotland the site of the construction of the 26 Type. "This is a major investment for our shipbuilding industry. Investing in warships guarantees the upkeep of our country's security, both domestic and foreign," indicated David Cameron... [Read more](#)

A report criticises the management of the Ukrainian crisis by the EU and the UK



According to a report by a House of Lords parliamentary committee published on 20th February the EU and the UK have made catastrophic mistakes in their management of the Ukrainian crisis. According to Christopher Tugendhat, the committee's chair, the "lack of any sound analytical capacity, in the UK and across the EU has led to a catastrophically wrong interpretation of the atmosphere prior to the crisis," he said. The relationship between the EU and Moscow has for a long time been based on an "optimistic basis" whereby Russia was committed to the path of "improving" democracy. The government immediately challenged the conclusions of this report: "The UK has played a leading role in the work to support the Ukraine's right to decide its own future that led the EU to impose severe sanctions on Russia, which is trying to dictate its choices," responded the Foreign Ministry's spokesperson... [Read more](#)

Slovenia :

IMF Report on Slovenia



On 19th February the IMF published its report on Slovenia. Conclusions indicate that the Slovenian economy is recovering now after the crisis, with growth totalling 2.6% in 2014 (-1% in 2013). The IMF stressed the importance of high export levels and European public investments behind this recovery. Forecasts for 2015 and 2016 lie at around 1.9% and 1.7% respectively. These growth forecasts that are lower than in 2014 and below the pre-crisis levels, are due to high unemployment rates (9.7%) and to public and private

finance imbalances. Finally this report points to the need to continue with structural reform, notably the strengthening of the banking sector and the privatisation of government banks. Budgetary balance also has to be found and the role of the State in the economy reduced... [Read more](#)

Moldova :

Chiril Gaburici, new Prime Minister of Moldova



The Parliament of Moldova approved the appointment of Chiril Gaburici as Prime Minister on 18th February who intends to bring the country closer to the European Union. 60 of 101 MPs voted in support, ie 9 more than the minimum required to win. Aged 38, Chiril Gaburici said that European integration and the respect of the EU agreements would be the government's number one priority... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine :

1st anniversary of the Maidan



Just a year ago former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich fled in the face of popular pressure and after ordering that demonstrators should be shot. Ukraine celebrated the first anniversary of the brutally repressed demonstrations in Maidan deemed to be the first stage in Ukraine's new transition. Several European leaders were present in Kyiv for a "walk of dignity" with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, including the President of the European Council Donald Tusk and the German, Polish, Lithuanian, Slovakian, Georgian and Moldovan Presidents... [Read more](#)

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Interview between the French, Ukrainian, Russian Presidents and the German Chancellor



On 19th February French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke with the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin discussing the incessant breaks in the ceasefire that was supposed to enter into force on 15th February. The four leaders agreed to implement the entire package of measures quite rigorously as agreed on 12th February in Minsk: ceasefire along the entire front line without exception; continued withdrawal of heavy arms to complete this within the timetable agreed; monitoring and follow-up by the OSCE of these measures by guaranteeing free access and security to observers and the acceleration of the process to free prisoners... [Read more](#)

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The Security Council calls for a halt to fighting in Debaltseve



The UN Security Council said it was extremely concerned about the continued fighting in and around the town of Debaltseve in Ukraine - which had led to the death of many civilians in spite of the entry into force of the ceasefire on 15th February. The Council members called on 17th February "for all parties to stop fighting immediately and to respect the commitments agreed in Minsk, including facilitated access by the OSCE's observation mission which is responsible for monitoring and checking the respect of the Minsk agreements..." [Read more](#)

Agreement to withdraw heavy arms from the front



The Ukrainian authorities and the separatist rebels are said to have come to agreement on 22nd February on the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the buffer zone. This withdrawal had been planned for in the Minsk II agreements, negotiated on 12th February between the French, German, Russian and Ukrainian leaders. Since the entry into force of the ceasefire on 15th February fighting has continued, particularly around the town of Debaltseve, and the final application of the truce seems to be in danger. The signature of this agreement on heavy weapons might revive the peace process. However a terrorist attack took place in Kharkiv on 22nd February during a commemoration of the events that took place a year ago in the Maidan. The situation is confused in the region around Mariupol. Moreover the Ukrainian army announced on 23rd February that a withdrawal of heavy arms from the buffer zone is impossible for the time being. In these conditions the agreement signed on 22nd February has little chance of surviving. In Brussels the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk announced that he was consulting the European States again on the steps that they should take... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Report by Commissioner of Human Rights on France



In a report published on 17th February the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, Nils Muiznieks, welcomed the legal framework to counter discrimination but highlighted the acts of hate and continued dysfunctions. He published a set of conclusions and recommendations in five areas: intolerance and racism, travellers, Roma, handicapped. Nils Muiznieks said he "was delighted to see that the fight to counter racism and anti-Semitism had become a national cause in France," during a press conference in Paris. His report lauds the "legislative progress" and the "measures" taken by the government. But "not only do discourse and acts of hate and discrimination continue but they are rising in France", and "it is urgent to counter them better in a sustained, systematic manner." He notes the twofold rise of anti-Semitic acts in 2014 and high emigration (aliyah) of Jews from France to Israel which had more than tripled between 2012 and 2014 (rising from 1,923 to 6,658 departures)... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Current account surplus in the fourth quarter



The EU's current account recorded a surplus of 33.4 billion euro for the fourth quarter of 2014, double the surplus made in the third quarter of 2014 (15.1 billion euro). An increase was also noted in comparison with the fourth quarter of 2013 (surplus of 29.9 billion euro). In the fourth quarter of 2014 in comparison with the third quarter of 2014 the service account surplus increased rising from 37.9 billion to 40.7 billion... [Read more](#)

2014 edition of Agricultural Statistics



Whilst the Agricultural Fair took place this weekend in Paris, Eurostat published the 2014 edition of its agricultural, forestry and fisheries statistics on 20th February. This publication is subdivided into seven chapters comprising facts and figures on agricultural accounts, prices, products, the environment, forestry and fisheries. Since 2014 was declared as the International Year of Family Farming by the UN the publication highlights family farming in the EU and analyses the development of farms over a five to ten year period... [Read more](#)

Publications :

"Goodbye Poutine"



The newly published "Goodbye Poutine" (Gingko éditions) is not just a slogan copying the "Get lost!" of the Arab Spring or Maidan in 2013 and 2014. Under the guidance of H el ene Blanc, many opinions provided by the best observers of the EU, Russia and Ukraine analyse one of most serious crises suffered by Europe. Their insight is useful for our joint future. Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, who signed the book's preface is one of the 30 authors... [Read more](#)

"Union europ enne: le d fi maritime"



The "Centre d' tudes strat giques de la Marine" has published the 7th edition of its marine studies devoted to the EU under the guidance of Rear-Admiral Thierry Rousseau. The authors, including Chairman of the Foundation Jean-Dominique Giuliani, have looked into what drives European integration along in terms of maritime policy. Apart from the common fisheries policy the Union is often drawn to the sea due to catastrophes and accidents (oil slicks, massive illegal immigration etc...). The authors see that at the moment there is an opportunity for change. The basis for integrated maritime policies has been set and interests are converging - only common ambition is missing... [Read more](#)

"Qu'est-ce que l'Europe?"

"Qu'est-ce que l'Europe?" is the most recent publication by Daniel-Louis Seiler, professor emeritus Sciences Po Aix-en-Provence published by the University of Brussels press in the series Political Science. The author looks into the definitions and ideas of Europe, the various models that underpin European integration. This book offers an analysis grid to understand the



crises that are shaking the EU at present - such as Greece or on its periphery in Ukraine. The analysis of the various European regions also allows the author to compare different models in the European mosaic... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Cézanne, Van Gogh, Bonnard, Manguin ...



The Kunsthalle of Hamburg is running a unique exhibition until 16th August 2015 that reveals the collection of art historian Hedy Hahnloser and Arthur-Bühler, a Swiss couple who, between 1906 and 1936, put together an impressive number of post-Impressionist masterpieces at the Villa Flora in Winterthur. After being introduced to leading artistic circles in Paris by Swiss painter Félix Vallotton (1865-1925) in the first years of the 20th century the couple soon made friends with Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard, Henri Manguin and later Henri Matisse. The exhibition presents a selection of over 200 works by 18 artists notably Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh, Auguste Renoir and Edouard Manet. This collection of world renown is on show for the first time in Germany... [Read more](#)

"Monet, Gauguin, Van Gogh ... Japanese Inspiration" at the Kunsthaus, Zürich



The Museum of Modern Art in Zürich (Kunsthaus) is running an exhibition until 10th May 2015 entitled "Monet, Gauguin, Van Gogh ... Japanese Inspiration", devoted to a fascinating chapter in French art of the second half of the 19th century. More than 350 pieces of work from the world over have been brought under the same roof, highlighting the image that Europeans had of Japan at that time. Emphasis is placed on the period 1860-1910 which matches the beginnings and peak of the popularity of Japanese art in France. Apart from the paintings there is also a representative selection of prints by Japanese artists like Hokusai, Hiroshige and Utamaro which partly come from the artists' collections of that period... [Read more](#)

Vienna Congress, a major event in European history



The Belvedere Palace in Vienna is running an exhibition until 21st June 2015 entitled "The Vienna Congress 1814-1815, Europe in Vienna." Via the use of art organisers want to relate one of the most important events in European history. Two hundred years ago Vienna became the political, cultural and social centre of Europe. All of the major European powers convened to agree on the way to re-organise the continent, which had lost its stability during the Napoleonic wars. Many pictures and famous sculptures highlight both the political and social aspects of this event... [Read more](#)

European Photography School Open Days



From 27th February to 1st March 2015 the European Photography School Open Days will (JEEP) be taking place in Paris. The event aims to bring art schools together with photography professionals to help young European talent. These open days are part of a constant quest to promote the cultural and artistic wealth of the European Union. JEEP is organised by Fetart, which over the last four years, has helped the emergence of many young photographers across Europe, notably by organising the Circulation(s) Festival... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



25th February

Brussels

Mini-session of the European Parliament in Brussels



1st March

General elections in Estonia



2nd and 3rd March

Brussels
Competitiveness Council

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