

## What should Europe's policy be towards Russia ?

Author: Robin Niblett



Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, its on-going support for separatist groups in eastern Ukraine, and the robust diplomatic and economic response from the EU have led to the biggest rift in EU-Russia relations since the Cold War. The EU and Russia are heading, at best, towards a protracted stalemate. At worst, they could be on the verge of a serious deterioration in their relations, should Moscow fan further the flames of conflict in the region.

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### Foundation :

#### Growth and Regulation



The Council of the Notariats of the European Union (CNEU) is organising a conference in Brussels on the theme of "growth and regulation" with the Robert Schuman Foundation. Discussions will be led by two panels "Does regulation serve to increase growth?" and "How to regulate effectively?" The Foundation's Chairman Jean-Dominique Giuliani will be taking part in the first panel... [Read more](#)

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#### "Democracy Deficit or Government Gap?"



A round table organised on 24th March in Brussels brings Andrew Duff, the Honorary President of the Union of European Federalists, Richard Youngs, Senior Associate of Carnegie Europe and Julien Zalc, consultant for TNS Opinion - who has published several studies for the Robert Schuman Foundation. Just as the European Union is experiencing a crisis of democratic legitimacy the speakers will notably address issues involving the EU's democracy deficit, citizens' opinion of Europe and the euro zone and the way to reform the European Union in order to reduce divergence between governments...

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### Elections :

## General Elections in Finland - 19th April



On 19th April 4.5 million Finns are renewing the 200 members of their parliament (Eduskunta/Riksdag) elected very four years within 12 constituencies by a proportional voting according to the d'Hondt method (single one round list in the Aland Islands). There is no electoral threshold to reach in order to enter parliament since this would make it difficult for the Swedish minority in Finland to elect representatives. The Centre Party (KESK) is coasting along in the lead with 24.9% of the voting intentions in the latest poll undertaken by Taloustutkimus for the TV channel Yle Uutiset. It is followed by the Social Democratic Party which is due to win 16.8% and the Conservative Assembly (KOK) of outgoing Prime Minister Alexander Stubb, 16.2%. The True Finns (PS) are due to win 15.4%; the Left Alliance (VAS) and the Greens (VIHR) 8.8% each and the Swedish People's Party (SFP) 4%... [Read more](#)

## Financial Crisis :

### Interim economic assessment by the OECD



According to the most recent interim economic assessment made by the OECD, presented on 18th March, world growth is gathering pace, carried along by low oil prices and monetary easing. The short term pace of expansion is still modest however to the backdrop of abnormally low inflation and interest rates which highlight the risk of financial instability. The euro zone is due to witness an increase in activity of 1.4% in 2015 and 2% in 2016. The OECD forecasts growth of 1.7% in 2015 for Germany 2.2 % in 2016, in France growth is estimated at 1.1 % in 2015 and 1.7 % in 2016 and in Italy 0.6 % in 2015 and 1.3 % in 2016... [Read more](#)

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### Reform of Vocational Training in Spain



On 20th March the Spanish government approved a reform regarding vocational training. This reform aims to provide better access to quality jobs as well as strengthen transparency and avoid fraud in the management of resources devoted to vocational training. This reform will enable the introduction of a strategic, multi-annual programme so that training is in line with present and future requirements of the labour market. A training register will be held for each worker so that his career path can be validated. Distance learning and continuous training will be encouraged, particularly in SMEs... [Read more](#)

### Greece must counter corruption



The OECD working group on corruption published a report on 20th March on the implementation by Greece of the Convention on the fight to counter corruption amongst foreign public agents in international trade transactions. In this report the OECD notes high levels of corruption in Greece in terms of transnational trade and invites the government to become more involved in the fight to counter transnational corruption, and also internal corruption. The working group also set several goals i.e. raising corporate awareness, implementing an effective procedure to detect these practices, investing more funds in the fight to counter corruption. The report notes however that some progress has been made by Greece in this area like the clarification of the anti-corruption bill and an increase in sanctions... [Read more](#)

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## European Council :

### Conclusions of the European Council



The 28 heads of State and government approved the Commission's plan for Energy Union on 19th and 20th March. They also discussed the means to strengthen economic growth and employment and to manage insecurity on the borders of Europe. They discussed the TTIP agreement. All EU governments support the conclusion of an ambitious, global, mutually beneficial agreement before the end of 2015. Regarding Russia/Ukraine the ultimate goal is still to find a sustainable political solution to the crisis, whilst respecting Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity. Europe's leaders called on all sides to implement rapidly and fully the Minsk agreements. Regarding Libya Europe's leaders called for an immediate, unconditional ceasefire and for a government of national unity. They condemned the terrible terrorist attack undertaken in Tunisia. Finally they approved the appointment of Mr Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen as the next Secretary General of the Council... [Read more](#)

## Commission :

### The Commission presents its package of measures on tax transparency



On 18th March presented a package of measures on tax transparency under the programme to counter corporate tax evasion and harmful tax competition in the EU which deprives the Member States of several billion euro per year. It also undermines fair burden-sharing among tax-payers and fair competition between businesses. The central component is the automatic quarterly exchange of information between Member States regarding their tax decisions. The Commission presented a communication that aims to revise the code of conduct in the area of corporate tax and to quantify the extend of fraud and tax evasion. The two legislative proposals in this package will be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council after which an agreement should be found so that the laws can enter into force on 1st January 2016... [Read more](#)

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### Tripartite Social Summit



The Tripartite Social Summit met in Brussels on 19th March. This summit meets twice yearly bringing together social partners (European employer and workers' representatives), the European Commission, the heads of State and government as well as the Employment and Social Affairs Ministers of the countries ensuring the Presidency of the Council. On this occasion employment, growth and Europe's investment priorities are addressed via the preparation of the European Semester (coordination of economic policies and that of the national programmes planned in April). Jean-Claude Juncker recalled that social dialogue which would help pinpoint problems in order to create jobs, invest and stimulate growth was vital to the functioning of the market economy... [Read more](#)

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### 2 billion € for Greece



On 20th March European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker made "two billion € for 2015" available to Greece; these funds come from unused European funds. "This money will not refill the Greek State's coffers," he said. But it might be used to "strengthen work to foster growth and social cohesion," notably "in response to the massive problem of youth unemployment." Admitting that Greece was suffering a "humanitarian crisis" he explained that he had presented a document to Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras last week regarding the country's capacity to absorb European structural funds more effectively. "We have set up a technical team in Brussels to help the Greek authorities to absorb these funds and our task force in Athens has been established to work with the Greek authorities," continued Mr Juncker... [Read more](#)

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## Council :

### Organic agriculture, CAP simplification and the dairy sector



The 28 European agriculture and fisheries ministers met on 16th March and notably addressed the issue of organic agriculture and its regulation: although they agreed that a harmonised approach by the EU might solve the problem of the presence of unauthorised substances in organic products, a unanimous agreement on the introduction of binding legal measures was not found. Regarding imports however most ministers supported the progressive transfer over to a compliance regime although some derogations as well as a transition period would be necessary. Regarding the CAP ministers said they wanted to simplify direct payments, with "greening" and control measures taking priority. They also debated the abolition of the dairy quota system in April with some Ministers fearing that milk price volatility would affect producers negatively... [Read more](#)

## Diplomacy :

### The EU appoints a new Special Representative for the Near East



On 16th March a new Special Representative, Italian Fernando Gentilini, at present director for Western Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey for the Union's diplomatic service was appointed to take over responsibility for the Near East. This post, which was abolished by Catherine Ashton in view of centralising the EU's approach, had been vacant since the beginning of 2014. The post comprises working for the revival of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Federica Mogherini announced that the EU was trying to "revive the Quartet", a union of the UN, Russia, the USA and the EU, in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, just as the Israeli elections are taking place... [Read more](#)

## ECB :

### Inauguration of new ECB HQ



The European Central Bank inaugurated its new HQ on 18th March on the site of the old wholesale market in Frankfurt/Main. Although the 2000 employees already moved to the new site in November of last year Mario Draghi, ECB President, had not yet inaugurated the building. The unusual architecture of the new building designed by Frank Stepper (twin 185m high towers) is evocative of transparency, light and provides a vast area of communication within its walls. It sends out a message of a politically and economically united Europe and of a prosperous future for its citizens... [Read more](#)

## Germany :

### Angela Merkel hosts Alexis Tsipras



Alexis Tsipras, the Greek Prime Minister was on an official visit to Germany on 23rd March for the first time since he took office. He met German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Discussions focused on the Greek debt crisis. The Chancellor insisted on the fact that Greece must adhere to the decisions taken and to the reform plans that have been made to end the crisis. She declared that she wanted to see an "economically strong Greece" and to do this the Greeks had to fight to counter unemployment and to follow the reform advice put forward by the European institutions. Alexis Tsipras insisted on the need to counter corruption and asked for Germany's help in this area. Finally the two leaders declared that they wanted to cooperate and maintain dialogue. The Chancellor attempted to minimise Germany's role by exhorting her counterpart to realise the importance of the Europeans in terms of undertaking reform - "Germany is not the institution that decides whether the reform programme is correct or inadequate, but this is assessed by the three institutions and the decision lies in the hands of the Eurogroup.".. [Read more](#)

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### Angela Merkel at the CeBIT Hannover



On 16th March German Chancellor Angela Merkel took part in the opening ceremony of the CeBIT, the digital market and new technologies fair in Hannover. Ms Merkel announced the 10 priorities of the digital agenda. Amongst these priorities: developing broadband networks, developing public WiFi, supporting start-ups, completing the European digital market and developing on-line public services... [Read more](#)

## Denmark :

### Association agreement between the European Union and Greenland



The President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, Kim Kielsen and Helle Thorning-Schmidt signed an association agreement between the EU and Greenland on 19th March. This joint declaration updates the one made on 27th June 2006 to take on board institutional changes that have occurred between Denmark and Greenland, notably in terms of fishing, tourism, culture, natural resources, energy, the environment, research and workers' mobility. Greenland's share in all of the rare earth resources today is estimated at 3.44% but this might triple over the next few years thanks to the introduction of projects to mine gold, silver, lead, zinc and olivine... [Read more](#)

## France :

### French Prime Minister Manuel Valls visits Brussels



On 18th March French Prime Minister Manuel Valls travelled to Brussels where he met the college of Commissioners. The President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and Manuel Valls exchanged their points of view on France's budgetary situation, the fight to counter terrorism, the preparation of the climate conference in Paris in December 2015 and also present geopolitical developments. Mr Valls promised Mr Juncker that France would achieve its goals to reduce its government deficit and said that reform would continue - however he warned that he would not accept sacrificing economic recovery. Jean-Claude Juncker declared that there "was a major virtuous convergence of views" between France and the Commission on economic strategy... [Read more](#)

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## Greece :

## The Greek Parliament approves two bills to revive the economy



On 18th March Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced to Parliament that he did not want to go back on the promises he made during the electoral campaign. His government has defied the European Commission by proposing a bill to counter the humanitarian crisis. The Greek government therefore approved the first bill in its mandate (with the support of the opposition New Democracy and PASOK) devoted to a package of social measures which are due to cost around 200 million €. On 20th March a wide majority in the Greek Parliament approved a bill entitled "Regulations to revive the economy" - thereby facilitating the settlement of taxpayers' debts to the State and the social security which total some tens of billions of euros... [Read more](#)

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## Italy :

### Meeting of French and Italian Foreign and Defence Ministers



On 21st March Laurent Fabius, the French Foreign and International Development Minister together with Jean-Yves Le Drian, French Defence Minister met their Italian counterparts Paolo Gentiloni and Roberta Pinotti in Caen. This "2+2" format enabled discussions about the main current international issues - preparation of the European Council on 25th and 26th June devoted to European Defence, the situation in Ukraine and Libya, the fight to counter terrorism, notably in Africa. Bilateral cooperation including in the defence industry was also discussed... [Read more](#)

### UN Secretary General visits Rome



On 18th March the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited Rome. He spoke with the President of the Italian Council Matteo Renzi and Foreign Affairs Minister Paolo Gentiloni. Then he was guest at the Quirinal Palace with President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella. At the heart of discussions was the Libyan question and the need to find a political solution to the crisis. Ban Ki-moon thanked his hosts for Italy's support to the UNs political and humanitarian work in Libya and for the country's contribution to world efforts to counter terrorism, notably in Syria and Iraq... [Read more](#)

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## Poland :

### Bronislaw Komorowski calls for a change in NATO's strategy towards Russia



During a National Polish Security Council session on 18th March Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski called on NATO to review its strategy in the East so that a pertinent response can be made to the Russian threat. Indeed Vladimir Putin unilaterally decided to intervene in neighbouring countries, whose policy line it deems is contrary to Russian interests. Since Poland finds itself under direct threat due to its geographical position, Bronislaw Komorowski believes that the West must strengthen its "unity and potential to defend itself." NATO's enlargements are, in his opinion, the greatest threat to Russia and so he insisted on the need for the Alliance to strengthen its Eastern front... [Read more](#)

## Portugal :

### Visit by the Portuguese President Anibal Cavaco Silva to France



On 17th March the President of the Republic of France François Hollande hosted Portuguese President Anibal Cavaco Silva. It was the first journey by the Portuguese President to France in ten years. The visit was devoted to economic exchange between the two countries. It also enabled the discussion of security issues, the fight to counter terrorism, Libya, the climate conference in December 2015 in Paris, and the single energy market in which electricity and gas interconnections between the Iberian peninsula and Europe have recently been discussed... [Read more](#)

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## Romania :

### Meeting between the Ukrainian and Romanian Presidents



Romanian President Klaus Iohannis was on an official visit to Kyiv on 17th March to meet his Ukrainian counterpart Petro Poroshenko. Both presidents decided to step up cooperation between the two countries in several areas like trade, energy, transport and infrastructure. The Ukrainian President thanked Romania for its support and for having been the first European country to ratify the Association Agreement between the EU

and Ukraine. The heads of State also discussed border issues and notably Moldova. They would like to coordinate their work to help prevent conflict in Transnistria and "help sovereign, independent Moldova win back its territorial integrity and re-integrate the region of Transnistria." Finally the head of the Romanian State said he supported the introduction of a visa-free regime in Europe for Ukrainian citizens under the Eastern Partnership that will take place in Riga on 22nd and 23rd May... [Read more](#)

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UK :

#### Presentation of the UK 2015 Budget



On 18th March the British Finance Minister George Osborne unveiled the UK 2015 budget the last one before the general elections. With growth at 2.5% this year - higher than expected, the minister declared that the "UK was walking again with its head held high" after five years of austerity; he stated that the government had achieved the goals it had set itself in 2010. The budget notably includes tax reductions on fuel and alcohol and allowances for private savers and new house buyers, as well as the introduction of a tax on multinationals' "diverted profits". Moreover on 17th March the government announced that the minimum wage would be increased by 3% in October (to £6.70/hour ie 9.40€) the biggest rise since 2008... [Read more](#)

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Turkey :

#### Turkey makes the gas pipeline project Tanap official



Turkey has officially launched the trans-Anatolian gas pipeline Tanap. This project, estimated at 10 billion euro, will enable the transfer of gas from Azerbaijan to the EU as of 2018. Brussels offered its support to the project since it will satisfy 20% of the Union's gas requirements and help reduce dependency on Russian gas, a major stake in times of geopolitical crisis...

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Ukraine :

#### Visit by Ukrainian Prime Minister in Brussels



Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk met Jean-Claude Juncker in Brussels on 19th March. The financial stabilisation of Ukraine was notably addressed, and with this the financial support process provided by the European Commission to Ukraine. Mr Yatsenyuk and Jean-Claude Juncker also discussed the policy to adopt towards Russia's aggression. The Ukrainian Prime Minister believes that sanctions against Russia are not to be called into question - only their duration and their extension. "Russia is not showing any desire to return these territories to Ukraine." It was with the region's stabilisation in view that the Ukrainian Parliament voted on 18th March, approving a resolution asking the EU and the UN to "dispatch Blue Berets to ensure the application of the Minsk agreements." Mr Yatsenyuk also met Donald Tusk, President of the European Council and his Polish counterpart Eva Kopacz... [Read more](#)

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#### Ukraine joins the Horizon 2020 programme for science and research



On 20th March Ukraine joined the Horizon 2020 programme to work with the European Union in science and research. Ukrainian businesses and researchers will be able to take part in the programme alongside other EU Member States as they can now request subsidies for innovative SMEs, support to scientific research policies and participation in the programme's governance. This is the first real implementation of the provisional association agreement between the EU and Ukraine. The European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas, recalled that Ukraine's entry into Horizon 2020 would help the country revive its economy and in return the EU would benefit from the country's "potential to contribute to research and innovation in Europe.".. [Read more](#)

#### The Ukrainian Parliament adopts a resolution granting more autonomy to the regions in the east of the country



The Rada, the Ukrainian Parliament, adopted a resolution on 17th March granting greater autonomy to the regions in the east of the country. This document enables the organisation of local elections in the regions controlled by the pro-Russian separatists. The regions concerned by the measure match the demarcation line laid out in the Minsk Agreement. With this Kyiv intends to make concessions to the separatists in

order to take the peace process forward. Russia and the pro-Russian separatists immediately rejected the draft bill. Russian Foreign Minister Serguey Lavrov explained that the bill "is in essence a re-draft of the Minsk Agreements, or to put it simply, it violates them". He added "Kyiv is trying to replace officially elected representatives by other people," referring to the leaders of the self-proclaimed republics of Lugansk and Donetsk. The latter said that Ukraine is rejecting peace and that "Kyiv wants to destroy the Donbass with violence and an economic blockade.".. [Read more](#)

#### Iceland :

##### Icelanders against the government's decision to withdraw its EU bid



Some 63% of the Icelandic population is against the country's withdrawal of its bid to join the EU according to a survey published on 20th March in the daily Frettabladid. On 12th March the Icelandic government announced that it was withdrawing as an EU candidate deeming that "Iceland's interests are better served outside of the EU."

But the announcement is deemed illegal by the opposition since neither parliament nor the population were consulted. According to a poll 44% of those asked are "totally against" the government's decision and 19% "rather against it". 15% are "totally in favour" and 9% "rather in favour".." [Read more](#)

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#### Switzerland :

##### Conclusion of an agreement between the EU and Switzerland on tax transparency



On 19th March the European Commission concluded negotiations with Switzerland on an historic agreement on tax transparency thereby marking a major step forwards in the fight to counter tax evasion. This agreement will notably encourage the EU's Member States and Switzerland to exchange tax information automatically to counter tax fraud in the member countries as undeclared incomes are transferred to Switzerland. The States will notably receive the names, addresses, tax identification numbers and dates of birth of their residents who hold accounts in Switzerland... [Read more](#)

#### Council of Europe :

##### Launch of new Action Plan 2015-2017 for Ukraine



On 18th March the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland, launched an Action Plan 2015-2017 for Ukraine along with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin. This programme, which follows on from the Action Plan 2011-2014, aims to promote Human Rights, democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine as well as help the country respect the commitments it made when it joined the

European Council in 1995. On 17th and 18th March Thorbjørn Jagland met with several leading Ukrainian political leaders in Kyiv notably President Petro Poroshenko, Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk, the leader of Parliament Volodimir Groysman and Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin... [Read more](#)

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##### The Convention of the Council of Europe against the trafficking of human organs



The Council of Europe Convention against human organ trafficking will be opened for signature during an international conference organised by the Council of Europe which will take place on 25th and 26th March in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. This conference will bring together more than 200 experts, judges, policemen, health professionals and aims to exchange views on the challenges set by the Convention and to encourage States to sign it. It is the first text ever to address the trafficking of human organs in spite of a worldwide problem that violates both human dignity and health, deemed today by the Council of Europe as a crime... [Read more](#)

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#### OECD :

##### World Forum on transparency and the exchange of information for tax purposes



On 16th March the World Forum on Transparency and the Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes published nine new peer review reports including a supplementary Phase 1 paper that focuses on Switzerland. They show that the international community is continuing to progress towards the implementation of an international standard in terms of the exchange of information. Notably the OECD welcomes Switzerland's recent initiatives in support of tax transparency deemed adequate to remove this country from the list of jurisdictions at that are blocked in the peer review process. Since the adoption of the Phase 1 report in 2011 Switzerland has introduced a new

law on international administrative assistance, which is applicable to all information exchange mechanisms. It also updated its conventions network, by signing new bilateral agreements, as well as the Convention on mutual administrative assistance for tax purposes. At present it has information exchange mechanisms with 127 jurisdictions. Switzerland has now finally fulfilled the necessary conditions to move into Phase 2 which will be launched in the second half of 2015... [Read more](#)

## Eurostat :

### International goods trade surplus of 7.9 billion euro



The international goods trade in the euro zone and the EU were in surplus by 7.9 billion and 10.6 billion respectively in January 2015. Intra euro zone trade declined by 5% in January 2015 in comparison with January 2014. The countries with the highest trade balances were Germany (+16,1 bn), which lies far ahead of the Netherlands (+4.8 bn) and Ireland (+3.3 bn), whilst the countries with the lowest surpluses were the UK (-13.4 bn) and France (-5.8 bn). On 20th March according to Eurostat estimates the EU's current account, adjusted to seasonal variations registered a surplus of 15.8 billion euro in January 2015, in contrast to surpluses of 13.1 billion in December 2014 and 6.4 billion in January 2014... [Read more](#)

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### Record 625,000 asylum seekers in Europe in 2014



The number of asylum seekers in the European Union is said to have risen to 625,000 in 2014 ie an increase of 191,000 in comparison with 2013 (+44%). The number of Syrian asylum seekers who totalled 50,000 in 2013 increased by 72,000 people to total a record 123,000 in 2014. One third of the asylum seekers made their request in Germany. Other countries with the highest numbers of requests were Sweden (81,200, ie 13%), Italy (64, 600, ie 10%), France (62,800, ie 10%) and Hungary (42, 800, ie 7%). Nearly half of the judgments delivered were positive in 2014 (since these requests had been registered in previous years), the leading beneficiaries of which were Syrians, with 66,300 being granted the status of protected refugee... [Read more](#)

### The EU's inflation rate up to -0.2%



According to a new Eurostat study published on 17th March the euro zone's inflation rate increased in February in comparison with January 2015 to reach -0.3% against -0.6% in January. The EU's inflation rate increased over the same period to lie at -0.2% in February against -0,5% in January. In February 2014 however inflation lay at 0.7% and in January of the same year, 0.8%. Extremely negative rates were seen in Greece (-1.9%), in Bulgaria (-1.7%) and in Lithuania (-1.5%). Positive annual rates were recorded in Sweden (0.7%), Malta (0.6%), Austria (0.5%), Romania (0.4%) as well as in Italy (0.1%)... [Read more](#)

### EU Employment rate up by 0.2%



A new Eurostat study dated 17th March notes that employment increased by 0.1% in the euro zone and by 0.2% in the EU in the fourth quarter of 2014 in comparison with the third quarter of the same year. In comparison with the fourth quarter of 2013 employment rose respectively by 0.9% and 1.0%. The countries with the sharpest increases in employment are Spain and Latvia (+0.7% each) as well as Ireland and Slovakia (+0.6% each). Conversely Portugal's employment rate decreased (-1.4%), likewise Cyprus (-0.6%), Poland (-0.3%), Italy (-0.2%) and Malta (-0.1%)... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

### Pierre Bonnard at the Musée d'Orsay



The Musée d'Orsay in Paris is running a retrospective of all the periods of Pierre Bonnard's work until 19th July 2015. Matisse's contemporary the painter belongs to a generation of artists who succeeded Impressionism. Passionately enthralled by Japanese print work and especially using Gauguin as his inspiration, Bonnard's work is mainly decorative, with lively, luminous colours. His sensitive, instinctive brush strokes make Pierre Bonnard a modern artist and a representative of the Arcadian trend... [Read more](#)



### "Chagall. Love and Life" Exhibition



The Cloister of Bramante in Rome is running an exhibition until 26th July devoted to Marc Chagall and particularly to the artist's intimate, private, spiritual dimension. Around 150 works from the Museum of Israel in Jerusalem tell of Chagall's deep links with his first wife Bella Rosenfeld, his native town of Vitebsk and finally his links with Judaism... [Read more](#)

### Art Fair in Paris



The Grand Palais in Paris is running an exhibition from 26th to 29th March 2015 promoting art from Singapore and South East Asia. It will be supported by a programme of conferences and videos designed by the curator Lola Lenzi, a specialist of art in Southern Asia. This year's Art Paris Art Fair is taking place at the same time as the launch of the "Singapore Art Festival" at the Tokyo Palace in celebration of the city-state's 50 years of independence... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



23rd to 26th March  
Brussels  
Parliamentary Committees' Week



24th and 25th March  
Riga  
Informal meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)



26th and 27th March  
Riga  
Informal meeting of ministers responsible for competitiveness

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