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The Letter in PDF format

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For a European White Paper on Security and Defence

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Developments in terms of world security have dangerously weakened the defence systems of the countries of Europe. An increase in conflicts and threats on the borders of Europe together with a regular risky decrease in European defence budgets over the past 20 years, as well as an inevitable disengagement on the part of the USA are the reasons behind this. This uncertain situation is taking us towards a pooling of forces and capabilities within the European Union, but it has to be acknowledged that to date the States' political will has been lacking. EuroDéfense-France highlights the interest in drafting a European White Paper on Security and Defence and examines the conditions of its feasibility, it identifies

the obstacles to overcome and also the opportunities to seize. The authors put forward an outline and possible prospects.

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Contents

Elections : Latvia **Foundation** : Schuman Report - Debate **Financial Crisis** : ECB - OECD - Greece - Portugal **Commission** : Development - Fisheries - Agriculture **Parliament** : Economy - Russia - Prize/Citizen **Council** : Justice/Interior - Energy **Diplomacy** : Algeria **European Agencies** : CERN - OLAF - Fundamental Rights **Germany** : Digital - Franco-German - G7 **Spain** : France **France** : Franco-German **Latvia** : President - COSAC **UK** : Scotland - Vote/Programme **Bosnia-Herzgovina** : Pope **Turkey** : Elections **Ukraine** : UN - Tension **Eurostat** : Unemployment - Inflation **Studies/Reports** : Finances - Europe **Publications** : Democracy **Culture** : Biennale/Vienna - Arts/Lyon - Exhibition/Vienna

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

Elections :

Raimonds Vejonis elected President of Latvia



The co-Chair of the Green Party (LZP) and Chairman of the Green and Farmers' Union (ZZS) Raimonds Vejonis, Defence Minister was elected President of Latvia on 3rd June by the Saeima, the Latvian parliament, during the fifth round of voting. He won 55 votes in ie the absolute majority. 42 MPs voted against him, 1 voting slip was declared invalid. Mr Vejonis will take over from the present President Andris Berzins, as head of State on 7th July next... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

Publication of the 2015 Schuman Report on the State of the Union

The 9th (6th in English) edition of the Schuman Report on the State of the Union has been published. It gives readers an overall of view of present current affairs: strengthening the euro zone, growth and employment, investments, Energy Union, immigration, terrorism, European defence and



security challenges in the East and South, transatlantic issues, etc. The most respected personalities including Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, as well as the best experts have chosen to contribute articles. The Schuman Report 2015 on the State of the Union is available in bookshops, from the Foundation's site and in digital form. Order your copy!.. [Read more](#)

Debate between European Commissioner for Competition and French Economy Minister



The Robert Schuman Foundation together with other institutions, and on the initiative of the Representation of the European Commission in France, is partner in a debate taking place on 15th June between Margrethe Vestager, European Commissioner for Competition and Emmanuel Macron, the French Minister for the Economy, Industry and the Digital Sector. They will be presenting their view of the European project and will debate with the public on the major challenges facing the EU... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

The ECB raises its inflation forecasts



The ECB's Council of Governors, who met on 3rd June in Frankfurt decided to maintain the Central Bank's key interest rates at 0.05%. Mario Draghi, the ECB President, said he was optimistic about the euro zone's economic recovery based on a revival of domestic demand and private consumption: the ECB maintained its growth forecast for the euro zone at 1.5% in 2015 and at 1.9% in 2016. The ECB also announced the progressive acceleration in inflation which will rise to 1.5% in 2016 and 1.8% in 2017. Mario Draghi did not comment on the proposals made by Greece to the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker. He simply recalled that an agreement with Greece had to be "strong, sustainable and that it should lead to growth" The ECB President said that the ECB wanted to keep Greece in the euro zone but that to do this "a strong agreement" had to be made between Athens and its creditors... [Read more](#)

OECD Economic Outlook



On 3rd June the OECD published its economic outlook which suggests that world growth will gradually consolidate to recover its pre-crisis pace by the end of 2016. The OECD provides that world growth will lie at 3.1% in 2015 before rising to 3.8% in 2016. Notably in the euro zone output is due to grow by 1.4% in 2015 and 2.1% in 2016. However weak investment in many economies, the creation of jobs and rising wages are undermining long-term sustainable growth prospects... [Read more](#)

The most recent developments in the Greek crisis



Short of money, Greece quoted an almost forgotten clause on 4th June requesting the grouping together of its four reimbursements into one. To date this regulation called "bundling" had only been used once in the IMF's history, which was by Zambia thirty years ago. In theory Athens had until 5th June to start paying back the IMF otherwise the country would have been in arrears and risked triggering a chain reaction. Athens now has until 30th June to honour all of its commitments, a total of 1.6 billion euro. The Greek crisis was discussed at the G7 Summit during which Jean-Claude Juncker said he was "disappointed with the speech delivered by the Greek Prime Minister to Parliament in Athens" on 5th June. Alexis Tsipras may just have complicated his relations with the President of the Commission slightly more, whose support he will need to continue negotiations that will be undertaken on the side lines of the EU-Latin America Summit on 10th June... [Read more](#)

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Portugal is to reimburse 2 billion € to the IMF



Portugal is to reimburse 2 billion € ahead of deadline to the IMF after already settling 6.6 billion euro announced Finance Minister Maria Luis Albuquerque on 7th June. "We are going to make an early, additional payment to the IMF (..) of nearly 2 billion € to make savings on

interest rates," declared the minister in a speech broadcast on Portuguese TV... [Read more](#)

Commission :

European Development Days



On 3rd and 4th June 2015 the European Development Days took place in Brussels. Entitled "Our world, our dignity, our future" these days are one of the leading events on the European development agenda. There are many conferences, debates and meetings being organised over the next two days addressing the various issues at stake in development. All of those involved in this area will be working towards this end... [Read more](#)

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Consultation on Fisheries in 2016



On 2nd June 2015 the Commission presented its annual document on fishing opportunities for 2016, in which it indicates its goals for the definition of fishing quotas. Europe's positive fisheries results show that the sustainable management of resources is possible. To continue to do this the Commission has to step up its work and it has to foster dialogue with countries in the Mediterranean. A public consultation is designed to collate the positions of all of those involved before the Commission makes its proposals on 2016 fishing opportunities public in the autumn... [Read more](#)

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Entry into force of transparency rules on CAP financing



The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, adopted in 2013, introduces further requirements in terms of transparency. As of 1st June 2015 the Ministry of Agriculture in every Member State will have to publish the list of beneficiaries of CAP financing (name of beneficiary, amount given as well as its purpose). This measure is part of the Commission's aim to improve transparency measures in terms of its budget management. Phil Hogan, the European Commissioner for Agricultural and Rural Development "hopes that these new transparency rules will enable a better understanding of the CAP by the public as well as the way it meets society's concerns." The new EU financing will notably help young farmers, foster sustainable agriculture and support the rural economy in a wide sense of the term... [Read more](#)

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Parliament :

Macro-economic imbalance



The European Parliament has released an overview in the shape of a map of the countries in imbalance. Only 10 countries, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe do not have any macroeconomic imbalance. France is one of the countries where imbalance is the greatest, likewise Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria and Portugal... [Read more](#)

The European Parliament's response to the Russian "blacklist"



Following the ban introduced by the Kremlin on 89 European citizens travelling to Russia, the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz announced on 2nd June a restriction of access by the members of the Russian delegation to the European Parliament. Only the Ambassador of Russia to the European Union, Vladimir Chijov will be able to enter the European Parliament accompanied by a diplomat. The Russian blacklist, delivered to European diplomats on 28th May includes a certain number of former and present MEPs who have openly criticised the Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia's position in the war in Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Award of European Citizen's Prize



On 3rd June 2015 the European Parliament published a list of winners of the European Citizen's Prize 2015. 47 European citizens have been awarded the prize that since 2008 has aimed to reward citizens who have contributed towards European cooperation as well as the promotion of common values. 74 names were put forward by national juries. The main ceremony will take place in October next at the European Parliament in Brussels... [Read more](#)

Council :**Meeting of European and American Justice and Home Affairs Ministers in Riga**

European and American Justice and Home Affairs Ministers met on 3rd June in Riga to discuss cooperation between the EU and the USA in the area of freedom, security and justice. Bringing together representatives of the Commission, the present Latvian presidency of the Council, and the future Luxembourg presidency, as well as European agencies such as Eurojust, Europol and Frontex, leaders came to an agreement - the Riga Declaration - which strengthens transatlantic cooperation and defines short term goals (personal data protection, migration and border control, judicial cooperation and information exchange, the fight to counter terrorism and cybercrime, the fight to counter drugs and the sale of fire-arms)... [Read more](#)

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Conclusions of the Energy Council

On 8th June 2015 the 28 Energy Ministers met in Luxembourg to debate the implementation of the energy security strategy. This strategy aims to enable the EU to withstand any shock to or disruption in its energy supplies as well as reduce its dependency. Moreover they adopted conclusions on the implementation of the strategic framework for Energy Union and the end goal is to provide European consumers with safe, sustainable, affordable energy whilst encouraging vital investments. Finally the Commission informed them of progress in terms of international relations in the energy sector, notably progress in trilateral negotiations between the EU, Russian and Ukraine as well as regarding the Energy Community... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :**9th Association Council between EU and Algeria**

The Association Council between the EU and Algeria which took place on 4th June led to further progress towards an Association Agreement. During this meeting both sides mentioned the present and future issues with which they are confronted such as the situation in Mali and Libya, migration, terrorism and energy. The EU notably asked Algeria to continue work to modernise its economy, Human Rights and democracy. The EU and Algeria also concluded a protocol thereby opening the path to various "Euro-Mediterranean" programmes... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :**Large Hadron Collider starts up again (LHC)**

The European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) started up the biggest particle accelerator in the world again on 3rd June - the large hadron collider (LHC) - at the CERN Centre in the canton of Geneva. This new run should lead to the achievement of a total 13 teraelectronvolts (TeV), ie nearly double the collision energy of the first run which lasted three years. This will provide scientists with vital research data... [Read more](#)

Review of OLAF Activities in 2014

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) presented its 2014 report on 2nd June. It has made a record number of recommendations over the last five years and has reduced the duration of its investigations, enabling it to recover 901 million euro, a sum that will be invested into European projects. "Our work is producing real results," indicates Giovanni Kessler, OLAF's Director General... [Read more](#)

Study by the EU's Agency for Fundamental Rights into exploitation at work

A report by the EU's Agency for Fundamental Rights highlights that migrant workers from EU countries and those outside of the EU are in danger of being exploited at work. The report also reveals the lack of sanctions taken out against employers who make migrant workers work in abusive situations (maximum sentence is under two years in prison in some EU Member States). According to Constantinos Manolopoulos, "the EU Member States must do everything they can to promote a climate of zero tolerance regarding the most serious forms of exploitation at work..." [Read more](#)

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Germany :**Round table of European industrialists on the digital economy**

On June 1st 2015 a round table took place in Berlin with European industrialists as well as German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President François Hollande and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker in attendance. They exchanged views with the representatives of around 20 of the biggest European companies regarding the digital agenda and digitalisation. Discussions focused on the conditions necessary for European businesses to be able to succeed in the digital world. These conditions notably cover investment issues and also regulation along with the need to find a balance between data protection and the creation of value. Angela Merkel highlighted the need to harmonise national strategies undertaken on a European level... [Read more](#)

Joint Franco-German Position for a relocation mechanism

On 1st June France and Germany called for greater EU solidarity, pushing the European Commission to review its proposals in terms of migrant distribution. "France and Germany are prepared to look into the Commission's proposal" regarding a mechanism to distribute "asylum seekers who clearly need protection" within the Member States maintained the French Home Affairs Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and his German counterpart Thomas de Maizière, in a joint press release. This mechanism should be based on the equally important principles of "solidarity" and "responsibility". The ministers believe that "balance has not yet been reached in the proposal put forward by the Commission.".. [Read more](#)

G7 Summit at Schloss Elmau

On 7th and 8th June 2015 the G7 Summit took place at Schloss Elmau (Germany, France, UK, Italy, Canada, USA, Japan). The EU was also invited. Under the banner 'Think ahead, act together' this summit addressed economy, foreign affairs, and security related issues as well as energy and the climate. On this issue the seven industrial powers set a goal to reduce emissions by 40 to 70% by 2050 in comparison with 2010. They re-iterated their unity against terrorism and international areas of conflict (Middle East, Africa and Ukraine/Russia). German Chancellor Angela Merkel stressed that Russia should be a partner but recalled at the same time that the latter could not reintegrate the G8 given the situation in Ukraine... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)**Spain :****The King of Spain visits France**

Two months after the cancellation of the first State visit due to the crash of the Germanwings Airbus the Spanish King travelled to France for his first State visit. King Felipe VI and his wife Letizia started a three day visit on 2nd June. According to the Elysée the King's visit illustrates "the exceptional partnership that links France and Spain" and the convergence between the two countries on major international issues. On 3rd June Felipe VI spoke to the National Assembly, a rare privilege enjoyed by three Kings only, including King Juan Carlos in 1993. Felipe VI stressed that friendship, cooperation and solidarity especially defined relations between France and Spain within the European Union... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)**France :****Europe: solidarity and differentiation**

German Economy Minister, Sigmar Gabriel and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron published an article on 4th June in which they advocate strengthening the euro zone. They want to create joint budgetary capacity and tools to avoid situations like the one in Greece. "It is time to strengthen the euro zone as part of a wider reform of the EU," they advocate in a text published in several European daily newspapers: Le Figaro, Le Soir, Die Welt, El País, La Repubblica, The Guardian, La Tribune de Genève and the Tages Anzeiger... [Read more](#)

Latvia :**Raimonds Vejonis elected President of Latvia**

On 3rd June the Saeima, the Latvian parliament, comprising 100 MPs,



elected the present Defence Minister Raimonds Vejonis, (ZZS) President of Latvia by 55 votes in the fifth round of voting. He will take over from the present President Andris Berzins, who did not run again, on 7th July next... [Read more](#)

National parliaments meeting within COSAC



From 31st May to 2nd June the plenary meeting of COSAC (Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union) took place in Riga bringing together MEPs and the European Affairs Committees of the various national parliaments. This meeting led to debate about energy, trade, terrorism in the Middle East and the Eastern Partnership... [Read more](#)

UK :

Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland's First Minister in Brussels



Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon was campaigning for the upkeep of the UK in Europe, as she visited Brussels on 2nd June . During her first speech in the Belgian capital the nationalist leader set out clearly what Scotland's new ambitions are: more European and less British. Crowned with victory during the election on 7th May in which the Scottish National Party (SNP) clinched 56 of the 59 seats in Scotland she declared that if the UK withdrew from the EU, Scotland would in turn demand its withdrawal from the UK... [Read more](#)

The British Parliament adopts the government's legislative programme



The British parliament adopted the government's legislative programme on 4th June 326 votes in support, 279 against. The Queen's speech marked the start of six days of parliamentary debate which led to a vote of confidence in David Cameron's government re-elected on 7th May last. Further budgetary cuts are planned for a total of £3 billion over one year (ie slightly more than 4 billion €), notably with the privatisation of the Royal Mail, the British postal service. The Queen's speech and Parliament's vote also firmly set the issue of the referendum on the UK remaining within the EU that is to be held in 2017... [Read more](#)

Bosnia-Herzgovina :

Pope Francis's Visit to Sarajevo



Pope Francis travelled to Sarajevo on 6th June and paid tribute to the victims of the civil war that took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995). He notably bowed before Father Zvonimir Matijevic, who was witness to the fighting, asking him for his blessing. Given the climate of tension in the world at present the Pope declared "in the face of so much cruelty, do the contrary: tenderness, fraternity and forgiveness.".. [Read more](#)

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Turkey :

The Turkish President's party loses its absolute majority in Parliament



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (AKP)'s party lost its absolute majority that it had held for the last thirteen years during the general election on 7th June. According to provisional figures and after the counting of 98% of the voting slips, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) unsurprisingly came out ahead in the election but with only 40.8% of the vote, thereby forcing it to form a coalition government. The Kurdish party HDP (People's Democratic Party) succeeded in rising beyond the 10% voting mark necessary to be represented on the benches of the National Assembly where it will have more than 70 MPs out of the 550 in the Chamber. The two other main parties running for power, the People's Republican Party (CHP, Social Democrat) and the Nationalist Action Party (MHP right), are due to win 25% and 16% of the vote... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Call for the respect of the ceasefire and a report on violence

The UN's Security Council met on 5th June regarding Ukraine and recalled that both Ukrainians and Russians had to respect the



ceasefire. In addition to this, serious, constant infringements of Human Rights continue in the east of Ukraine in spite of relative calm said a new report released by the UN on Ukraine. The number of deaths between mid-April 2014 and 30th May 2015 lay at 6,417 and 15,962 injured in the zone of conflict in the east of Ukraine said an update in the report. Amongst these infringements the UN's bureau for human rights speaks of "bombardments, arbitrary executions and illegal imprisonment, torture and poor treatment, human trafficking as well as a lack of justice and prosecution." The report covered the period 16th February 2014 to 15th May 2015... [Read more](#)

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Fighting starts again



Fighting has started again in the Donbass. A new offensive was launched by the pro-Russian rebels on 3rd June against the town of Mariinka. In its surveillance report dated 3rd June the OSCE notes the movement of heavy weapons in the self-proclaimed "People's Republic of Donetsk" towards the front. OSCE observers also report that they heard around 100 rounds of artillery fire coming from Donetsk. During the G7 Summit on 7th June American President Barack Obama, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and President of the European Council, Donald Tusk stood together in support of Ukraine. They called for unity in maintaining sanctions against Russia... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Unemployment slightly down in April 2015 in the EU



According to a Eurostat study published on 3rd June the unemployment rate declined slightly between March and April 2015 in the euro zone. Indeed the latter lay at 11.1% in April 2015 against 11.2% the previous month (and 11.7% in April 2014). In the EU the unemployment rate remained stable between March and April 2015 (9.7%), but decreased in comparison with April 2014 (10.3%). The lowest unemployment rates in the EU were registered in Germany (4.7%) whilst Greece (25.4% in February 2015) and Spain (22.7% in April 2015) have the highest rates... [Read more](#)

Euro zone annual inflation rate up to 0.3%



The euro zone's annual inflation rate was estimated at 0.3% in May 2015 up in comparison with April when it lay at 0%, according to a Eurostat estimate published on 2nd June... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Publication of the Commission's Synthesis Report on Financial Management



On 3rd June the Commission published its "Synthesis Report" on the achievements of its Financial Management Policy 2014. It highlights the accountability of the Commission as well as the improved management of European taxpayers' money. Indeed emphasis was placed on the culture of results notably via the EU budget: the added value of EU financing has progressed and key goals were set in view of reaching pre-defined political goals... [Read more](#)

Pew Research Center Study



On 2nd June 2015 the Etude du Pew Research Center published a study called "Faith in European Project Reviving" which was undertaken in six Member States (France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the UK) representing 70% of the EU's population and 74% of its GDP. The Pew Research Center covers many themes linked to citizens' faith in the European project. Hence we see that confidence is rising amongst those interviewed regarding European institutions with 61% of favourable opinions + 9% in comparison with 2013. Finally the study reveals that the euro is supported by most European citizens with a total of 72% in Germany and France... [Read more](#)

Publications :

Analysis "Participatory Democracy and Civil Society in the EU"



In his book "Participatory Democracy and Civil Society in the EU" published by Palgrave Macmillan, Luis Bouza Garcia, Professor of European Studies at the Collège d'Europe (Belgium) analyses the implementation of European democratic participatory mechanisms between 1997 and 2012. As he looks into the aim sought by the European institutions and the players in civil society in the tabling of the institutionalisation of these mechanisms the author notes that the institutions of Europe have moved forward in support of greater transparency and debate whilst the role of the players in civil society has not yet stabilised and continues to evolve... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Biennale Vienna



From 11th June to 4th October 2015 an interdisciplinary biennale called "Ideas for Change" will be taking place for the very first time in Vienna (Austria). This biennale aims to bring together the sectors of art, design and architecture to define new ways "to make positive change with creative ideas and artistic projects." Emphasis will be placed on digital modernism, which the organisers compare, in terms of its social and cultural effects, to the industrial revolution. Exhibitions and projects will be on show at the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/Contemporary Art (MAK) at the Kunsthalle Wien, at the "Angewandte Innovation Laboratory" at the University for Applied Arts in Vienna, at the Centre for Architecture of Vienna as well as in public venues... [Read more](#)

Les Nuits de Fourvière



The 2015 Nuits de Fourvière are taking place in Lyon until 31st July. Many disciplines will be putting on some 60 shows in the shape of theatre, dance, opera, music and circus acts. This year notably there will be George Ezra, Ben Harper, Lilly Wood and the Prick, Iggy Pop, Björk, Christine and The Queens, Calogero, Charlie Winston, Patti Smith, Matthieu Chedid, Tim Robbins. As far as theatre is concerned "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" as well as plays by Chekov, Shakespeare and Molière will be performed... [Read more](#)

Rembrandt, Titian and Bellotto Exhibition in Vienna



The exhibition entitled "Rembrandt-Titian-Bellotto: Spirit and Splendour of the Dresden Picture Gallery" will be taking place at the Winter Palace from 11th June to 8th November. It will be showing many works by these painters who were part of the Baroque movement, of which the Winter Palace will become the capital for a few short months... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



8th June
Luxembourg
Telecommunications and Energy Transport Council



8th to 11th June
Strasbourg
Plenary Session of European Parliament



10th and 11th June
Brussels
EU-EULAC Summit



11th and 12th June
Luxembourg
Transport and Telecommunications Council



12th June
Brussels
EU-Mexico Summit



15th June
Luxembourg
Environment Council



15th and 16th June
Luxembourg
Justice/Internal Affairs Council

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