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**FONDATION ROBERT
SCHUMAN**
The research and study centre on Europe

The Letter

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The Strategic Interests of the European Union

Author: Pierre Vimont



Logically the analysis of the European Union's interests should not be a problem. Due to Europe's position in the world, its action in terms of the major challenges facing our societies and its profile within major international organisations, it is quite easy to establish a strategic agenda for the Union without this causing any controversy. Frequently then in the past this exercise has been successfully undertaken. But the reality of the matter is that beyond such descriptions, which are often for academic use, European players, Member States and institutions – have hardly felt concerned by such agendas, since the feeling of common European interest is still weakly shared, if not contested, by the those who primarily look to their own interests. In order to be operational or real Europe's common interests have to be perceived and accepted as such by the Europeans themselves. The problem is that they often seem to be the last ones to be able or to want to do so. [Read more](#)

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Foundation :

Europe and Sovereignty



Together with the Egmont Institute and Eurodéfense France, the Robert Schuman Foundation is organising a seminar on 29th September entitled "Europe and Sovereignty: reality, limits and perspectives". Enrolment online... [Read more](#)

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Migration :

UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants



On 19th September the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants took place in New York. During this meeting the General Assembly adopted a declaration in which the States committed to protecting migrants' fundamental rights to a greater extent, to increase support to host countries which are overflowing and to promote the education of refugee children... [Read more](#)

Rapprochement between the EU and Switzerland over immigration



As it voted on immigration on 21st September the National Council, the lower chamber in the Swiss parliament, opted for a solution that retains the bilateral path with the EU. It rejects the establishment of contingents and states that Switzerland will not be able to introduce corrective measures without Brussels' approval... [Read more](#)

The OECD publishes the "International Migration Outlook 2016"



On 19th September the OECD published the "International Migration Outlook 2016" and stresses that countries must counter negative response to immigration by strengthening integration policies and international cooperation... [Read more](#)

Rise in number of asylum seekers in the second quarter



According to Eurostat's estimates published on 22nd September the number of first-time asylum seekers increased slightly in the EU Member States during the second quarter of 2016. Their number totals nearly 306,000 in comparison with 287, 100 in the first quarter, i.e. a rise of 6%... [Read more](#)

Balkan Migratory Route Summit in Vienna



On 24th September a summit on the migratory issue took place in Vienna - it brought together the leaders of ten countries affected by the mass arrival of migrants via the Balkan route. They reiterated the need to re-establish effective control of the borders notably via more effective relocation and by the employment of more European staff... [Read more](#)

More than 300,000 migrants have crossed the Mediterranean in 2016



More than 300,000 migrants and refugees crossed the Mediterranean travelling to Europe in 2016. This figure is below the arrivals recorded in the first nine months of 2015 (520,000) but it is still higher than all of those recorded for the entire year of 2014 (216.054)... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

The OECD publishes the Interim Economic Outlook 2016



On 21st September the OECD published its Interim Economic Outlook 2016 in which it expresses its concern about world growth which will drop to 2.9% in 2016... [Read more](#)

Commission :

State Aid: Investigation into the Luxembourg's tax treatment of GDF Suez



On 19th September the European Commission launched an in-depth investigation into Luxembourg's tax treatment of GDF Suez group (now Engie)... [Read more](#)

European Researchers' Night

On 30th September the European Researchers' Night will be taking

Roaming fees: the Commission presents its new approach



On 21st September the Commission revised its draft directive regarding the end of roaming fees which are due to be totally abolished on 15th June 2017. It presented its new rules in order to limit abuse taking on board the country of residence of subscribers... [Read more](#)

Council :

Conclusions of the General Affairs Council



On 20th September the 28 European Affairs Ministers met to prepare the next European Council, discuss financial perspectives and to strengthen its legal arsenal against ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Qaeda, and also to discuss the candidature of Bosnia-Herzegovina... [Read more](#)

Informal meeting of Trade Ministers



On 23rd September the 28 European Trade Ministers discussed the future of the international agreements with Canada (CETA) and the USA (TTIP). Although the former received unanimous support, the European Trade Commissioner, Cecilia Malmström declared that an agreement on the latter under the Obama administration seemed unlikely... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Joint declaration on Syria



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On 25th September the German, French, Italian, British and American Foreign Affairs Ministers, as well as the EU's High Representative, Federica Mogherini made a joint declaration on Syria in which they called on Russia to respect its commitments and to stand more with them in support of the establishment of a cease-fire and a settlement to the conflict...

Court of Justice :

ECJ bans cosmetics testing on animals



In its decision C-592/14 of 21st September 2016, the Court declared that EU law did not allow the sale on the common market of cosmetic products that had been tested on animals... [Read more](#)

Appointments at the European Union's General Court



On 20th and 22nd September following the part renewal of the members of the European Union's General Court, Marc Jaeger, President of the Court since 17th September 2007 was re-elected for the fourth mandate until August 2019. Marc van der Woude, judge at the Court since 2010 was elected Vice-President for the same period of time... [Read more](#)

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European Agencies :

Results of the European survey on drugs in schools



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According to the results of a European study ESPAD (European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs), published on 20th September in Lisbon by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) undertaken amongst 15 to 16 year olds in 2015, the use of tobacco and alcohol has declined amongst school children. but the challenges set by new drugs and addictive behaviour are the cause of concern...

OLAF lauds and encourages Romania



During a conference organised in Romania on 21st September, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) underscored the work undertaken by Romania in its fight to counter fraud and make safe its borders... [Read more](#)

Germany :

49th Franco-German Economic and Financial Council



On 23rd September the 49th Franco-German Economic and Financial Council took place in Berlin. Michel Sapin, Wolfgang Schäuble and Sigmar Gabriel addressed themes of the EU's economic and fiscal governance, Banking Union and industrial, digital and trade issues...

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Denmark :

20th Anniversary of the Arctic Council



On 19th September on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Arctic Council the Foreign Affairs Ministers of eight countries that are on the borders of the Arctic met for talks. In a joint declaration they stressed the progress made and the need to continue their cooperation... [Read more](#)

Estonia :

Last bid to elect the Estonian president on 3rd October



On 24th September the election of the new Estonian president failed and has been delayed again. The electoral college comprising 355 MPs and local representatives did not succeed in choosing between the two candidates, Siim Kallas, former Prime Minister and Allar Joks, former Justice Minister. As a result of this the 101 MPs of the Riigikogu are being called for a final vote on 3rd October... [Read more](#)

France :

The French government's draft financial texts



French Finance Minister Michel Sapin announced on 20th September that growth forecasts of 1.5% in 2016-2017 were to be maintained in the context of a draft budget over a five year period. The government deficit forecast is set at 2.7% of the GDP in 2017. Finally the level of obligatory contributions will lie at around 44.5% of the GDP in 2017...

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Greece :

Greek debt: the IMF asks the EU for further relief



In its annual report on the assessment of the Greek economy published on 23rd September the IMF called on the EU to "give additional relief to the Greek debt". The IMF deemed the goals set by the country's European partners to try and re-absorb the debt as unrealistic... [Read more](#)

Portugal :

The IMF is concerned about the Portuguese economic situation



On 22nd September the IMF published a report on Portugal's economic situation. Whilst acknowledging that there has been a major economic recovery the IMF is concerned about the slowing of economic activity since 2015, the vulnerability of the banking sector and the high government debt... [Read more](#)

UK :

The British Parliament warns against leaving the Single Market



On 20th September the Finance Committee at the House of Commons published a report in which it declared that around 5,500 British companies use the European passport for their business. Based on data provided by the Financial Conduct Authority the committee notes that if the UK were to lose access to the Single Market the survival of these businesses would be threatened... [Read more](#)

The Bank of England warns against an incorrect vision of the British economy



On 22nd September the Finance Committee at the Bank of England recalled that the UK, in spite of good economic indicators in September still faced many dangers in the financial sector, the real estate sector and in terms of foreign investments... [Read more](#)

Sweden :

Sweden's 2017 budget



On 20th September the Swedish government presented its budget to Parliament based on an agreement between the government parties and the left-wing. It said that it intended to make healthcare, education and social services a priority... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine :

World Bank doubtful about a revival of the Ukrainian economy



On 22nd September the World Bank published its most recent forecasts on the Ukrainian economic situation. Although growth increased by 0.8% in the first half of 2016, reforms have been too timid, with weak external growth and the country's war undermining economic recovery... [Read more](#)

UN :

UN Women Council Meeting



The UN Women Council meeting met on 21st September on the side lines of the UN General Assembly. The President of the Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė who is chairing the Council insisted on the violence perpetrated against women and the consequences this has on society...

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WTO :

The WTO rules in Boeing's favour in 12 year old litigation



On 22nd September the WTO gave its opinion in litigation between Boeing and Airbus over a dispute opposing the two plan manufacturers over the 12 years regarding European subsidies of which Airbus is a beneficiary. The WTO ruled in Boeing's favour... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Digital publication to shed light on energy on the EU



On 20th September Eurostat published "Shedding Light on Energy in the EU", an interactive document that aims to make the complex energy process clearer... [Read more](#)

Culture :

"Brueghel. Masterpieces of Flemish Art" at the Palais of Venaria



The Palais of Venaria near Turin, Italy is running an exhibition on the Brueghel family until 19th February 2017... [Read more](#)

Exhibition on "Abstract Expressionism" in London



The Royal Academy of Arts together with the Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao is running an exhibition entitled "Abstract Expressionism" in London... [Read more](#)

Exhibition devoted to Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in Berlin



Until 26th February 2017 an exhibition devoted to the German Expressionist painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner is being held at the Museum for Contemporary Art... [Read more](#)

Tribute to Hergé at the Grand Palais



Georges Remi, better known as Hergé is being given a place of honour at the Grand Palais Paris from 28th September 2016 to 15th January 2017. The exhibition aims to present Hergé from a more personal point of view notably via many eye-witness accounts and personal pictures... [Read more](#)

Design Week Vienna



Design Week in Vienna is taking place from 30th September to 9th October with a variety of events on the agenda... [Read more](#)

International Film Festival on Human Rights in Tirana



The 11th International Film Festival on Human Rights will be taking place from 26th September to 1st October 2016 in Tirana, Albania. This year the festival will be devoted to migration... [Read more](#)

Kumu Art Film Festival in Tallinn



From 29th September to 2nd October the Kumu Art Film Festival is taking place in Tallinn. This festival is the only one of its kind that looks into the links between film and the visual arts, between movement and fixity... [Read more](#)

White Night



On October 1st the White Night Festival will take place in Paris and Brussels. This cultural event which is both artistic and popular invites the public to take back the city that is transformed for just one night into a laboratory of modern creation... [Read more](#)

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Agenda :



26th and 27th September
Bratislava
Informal Meeting of Defence Ministers



29th September
Brussels
Competitiveness Council



30th September
Brussels
Environment Council



2nd October
Hungary
Referendum on the relocation of refugees



3rd October
Estonia
Presidential Election

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The Robert Schuman Foundation, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France, Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani.

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