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The Letter in PDF format

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## Hard or Soft Brexit?

Author: Pierre-Alain Coffinier



On 2nd October during the Conservative Party conference in Birmingham, three months after the referendum, British Prime Minister Theresa May, who is under the pressure of both economic circles and European partners, announced the main outlines of her vision for a UK, that had "won back its sovereignty" after its exit of the European Union. The country would control its immigration and legislation once more, whilst guaranteeing businesses the opportunity of "acting and operating with a maximum amount of freedom in the Single European Market." The Prime Minister's insistence on sovereignty and immigration control, its social overtones, intimate that she would privilege a "hard Brexit" outside of the European Economic Area.

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**Front page!** :

**In defence of international trade agreements**



In an editorial published on his site, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Foundation highlights the importance of international trade agreements for world growth and for employment, notably in Europe. He calls for a rejection of Wallonia's blackmail which is being instrumentalised for political ends... [Read more](#)

**Elections** :

General election results in Lithuania



The Farmers' and Green Party (LVZS) came out ahead in the 2nd round of the general election organised on 23rd October in Lithuania taking 56 seats (against a previous 1). It was followed by the Homeland Union-Christian Democratic Party (TS-LKD), the main opposition party which won 30. The Social Democratic Party (LSP) of the outgoing Prime Minister came third with 17 seats... [Read more](#)

**European Council :**

**Conclusions of the European Council**



The 28 heads of State and government, who met in Brussels on 20th and 21st October adopted conclusions on migration, trade and world and economic issues and the EU's external relations... [Read more](#)

**Migration :**

**The new "partnership agreement for migration" is bringing results**



In a report published on 18th October the European Commission announced that the partnership with Niger, Ethiopia, Senegal and Mali is starting to produce results. This means that the flows of migrants from these countries is being regulated and stopped... [Read more](#)

**Meeting of G6 Home Affairs Ministers**



The Home Affairs Ministers of Germany, Spain, Italy, France, Poland and the UK met in Rome on 20th and 21st October. The French, German and Italian Ministers came to agreement regarding the dispatch of illegal immigrants from Africa back to their country of origin... [Read more](#)

**Commission :**

**The Commission calls to strengthen the Union's trade defences**



In a press release on 19th October the Commission called on the Member States to support the fight to counter unfair trading by adopting proposals that aim to modernise European trade defence instruments... [Read more](#)

**Council :**

**Conclusions of the Environment Council**



On 17th October the 28 European Environment Ministers assessed new texts that aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in transport, buildings and waste. They adopted conclusions on the sustainable management of water and on biodiversity... [Read more](#)

**The Council revises the rules governing the rail passenger transport market**



On 17th October the Council adopted new rules aiming to stimulate train travel in Europe. This reform will open up domestic rail passenger transport markets in the Member States by notably creating fairer conditions for competition between rail companies in terms of access to the markets... [Read more](#)

**Conclusions of the General Affairs Council**

On 18th October the European Affairs Ministers examined the state of progress in work regarding the mid-term assessment of the multi-



annual budgetary framework and the inter-institutional agreement on improving regulation... [Read more](#)

## Diplomacy :

### EU-Iraq cooperation Council



On 18th October an EU-Iraq Cooperation Council discussed the offensive launched against the jihadists in Mosul. Federica Mogherini, the head of European diplomacy recalled that Europe had released a package of 134 million € this year in aid to Iraq... [Read more](#)

### 6th High Level Dialogue between China and the European Union



On 18th October the 6th Sino-European high level dialogue on the economy and trade took place to increase mutual confidence, practical cooperation and to implement the agreements concluded during the 18th China-EU Summit... [Read more](#)

### The EU and its Eastern Partners strengthen their environmental cooperation



The first meeting of the Eastern Partnership on the Environment and Climate Change took place on 18th October in Luxembourg. The EU and its partners in the east (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) adopted a Ministerial Declaration confirming that they wanted to step up cooperation in terms of environmental challenges and climate change... [Read more](#)

### Agreement to facilitate cooperation between European and American researchers



On 17th October in Brussels the European Union and the USA signed an agreement enabling European and American researchers to work more closely together on projects funded by the European research and innovation programme Horizon 2020... [Read more](#)

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## ECB :

### Decisions of the Council of Governors



On 20th October the ECB's Council of Governors decided not to change the interest rates on main refinancing operations, likewise those applied to the marginal lending and deposit facilities, at respectively 00.0% and 0.25% and -0.40%. The bank's President Mario Draghi said that "the 80 billion € debt purchase programme would be extended until the end of March 2017, and beyond if necessary"... [Read more](#)

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## European Agencies :

### ExoMars: arrival and landing



The European Space Agency was happy with the entry into orbit of the TGO probe but is still without news of Schiaparelli, which was due to land on Mars on 19th October... [Read more](#)

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## Germany :

### Meeting on Ukraine and Syria in Berlin



On 19th October German Chancellor Angela Merkel met French President François Hollande, Russian President, Vladimir Putin as well as Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in Berlin to discuss the Ukrainian conflict and the war in Syria. They came to agreement on a roadmap to a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Ukraine based on the Minsk agreements... [Read more](#)

**Croatia :****Andrej Plenkovic's government approved by Parliament**

On 19th October the new Croatian Prime Minister, Andrej Plenkovic, presented his new government coalition and the outline of his future policies to Parliament which adopted it, 91 votes in support, 45 against and 3 abstentions... [Read more](#)

**Spain :****No further elections in Spain**

On 23rd October the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) announced during a federal committee meeting that it would abstain from the next investiture debate, thereby allowing Mariano Rajoy, the Spanish Prime Minister in office since 2011, to form a minority government. This decision taken by a large majority (139 votes against 96) thereby brings a ten month political crisis to an end... [Read more](#)

**Finland :****Towards the end of energy dependency in the Eastern Baltic Sea**

On 21st October the EU, Estonia and Finland signed a convention for an investment of 187 million € in the Baltconnector, the first gas pipeline linking Finland and Estonia. This first gas interconnection will bring Finland's energy isolation to an end by 2020... [Read more](#)

**France :****Joint Franco-British Programme to counter maritime mines**

During the Euronaval Exhibition on 20th October Harriet Baldwin, the Minister for Defence Procurement for the UK and Laurent Collet-Billon, the General Director for French Procurement Agency signed a joint Franco-British programme to counter maritime mines... [Read more](#)

**Italy :****Meeting of Defence Ministers of South East Europe**

The Defence Ministers of South East Europe met on 17th and 18th October in Rome and asserted that they wanted to cooperate in terms of peace and defence... [Read more](#)

**Luxembourg :****15th German/Luxembourg Economic Seminar**

The European and Foreign Affairs Ministers of Luxembourg and Germany met for their 15th German/Luxembourg Economic Seminar on 17th October to discuss the theme "Europe without Borders - Germany and Luxembourg as economic engines"... [Read more](#)

**Portugal :****Publication of the Portuguese Budget**

On 17th October Portugal sent its draft budget to the Commission. This went together with a justification of the government's economic action which committed to respecting European budgetary criteria... [Read more](#)

**UK :**

### Hilary Benn (Labour) will chair the new House of Commons "Brexit" committee



On 19th October Hilary Benn was elected to chair the newly created "Brexit" committee at the House of Commons. This committee will be responsible for assessing and offering expertise to the government on the process of leaving the EU... [Read more](#)

### British banks are worried



During the annual conference of the British Bankers Association on 21st October, Chairman Anthony Browne did not fail to mention that the international banking sector was the most affected by the Brexit... [Read more](#)

### Scotland: a new referendum project on independence



On 20th October the Scottish government published a draft bill on a new independence referendum. It is the second time since 2014 that people in Scotland will have been called to vote for its independence... [Read more](#)

### Council of Europe :

#### Council of Europe's Strategy to prevent radicalisation



The report adopted on 19th October engages the Congress to consolidate its work to promote pluralist societies in Europe, but also it introduced the idea of "interconvictional dialogue"... [Read more](#)

### Eurostat :

#### Union trade balance in surplus in August in 2016



According to Eurostat estimates published on 20th October the EU's current account recorded a surplus of 13.5 billion euro in August 2016. The surplus totalled 11.0 billion euro in terms of services... [Read more](#)

#### Eurostat has published figures on government debt and deficit in Europe



According to Eurostat estimates published on 21st October government deficits in the EU and the euro zone lie at around 2.4% and 2.1% of the GDP respectively. Government debt totals between 85% and 90.4% of the GDP... [Read more](#)

#### Euro zone annual inflation up to 0.4%



According to Eurostat data published on 17th October the euro zone's annual inflation rate was at 0.4% in September 2016, in contrast to 0.2% in August 2016 and -0.1% in September 2015. A similar increase was noted for the European Union... [Read more](#)

### Studies/Reports :

#### French National Assembly Report on the European Minimum Wage



A report by the European Affairs Committee at the National Assembly delivered on 19th October to the government pleads in favour of a minimum wage in each EU Member State, suggesting gradual convergence in order to prevent wage competition... [Read more](#)

### Brexit: the House of Lords in favour of Parliament's involvement



On 20th October the European committee at the House of Lords published its report on the role to be played by the British parliament regarding the Brexit. According to the report Parliament should be actively involved in negotiations on Britain's exit of the EU and not after decisions have been taken... [Read more](#)

### Employment Situation in the OECD zone



On 19th October the OECD published its report on the employment situation in the OECD zone in the second quarter of 2016... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

### Short film Festival in Uppsala



The 35th International Short Film Festival of Uppsala is taking place until 30th October in Sweden... [Read more](#)

### New Museum Lisbon



Since 5th October the MAAT, a new art, architecture and technology museum opened its doors to the public in Lisbon. French woman Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster has been chosen to offer the museum's first installation... [Read more](#)

### Picasso sculptures in Brussels



More than 80 sculptures expressing Picasso's creative force will be presented at the BOZAR of Brussels, together with the Picasso Museum of Paris from 26th October to 5th March 2017... [Read more](#)

### Rubens exhibition Milan



From 27th October 2016 to 2nd February 2017 an exhibition on Rubens is taking place at the Palazzo Reale, Milan, and more precisely on the start of his career, which coincided with the start of the Baroque movement... [Read more](#)

### The MAPFRE Foundation hosts an exhibition on Fauvism in Madrid



The MAPFRE Foundation is organising an exhibition in Madrid until 29th January 2017 on "Los Fauves. La pasión por el color" devoted to Fauvism. It brings together more than one hundred paintings, water colours and drawings by many artists (Henri Matisse, André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck, Georges Braque)... [Read more](#)

### Tate Modern: exhibition on Paul Nash's work



From 26th October to 5th March 2017 the Tate Modern is hosting an exhibition on the work by Paul Nash, a British Surrealist painter... [Read more](#)

### Ludwig van, the Beethoven Myth

Offering a new view of one of the greatest European musicians, by trying to



see how he has continued to influence the religious, social, political and artistic landscape since his death: this is the goal set by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Paris which is devoting an exhibition to Ludwig van Beethoven until 29th January 2017... [Read more](#)

#### Agenda :



24th-27th October  
Strasbourg  
Plenary Session of the European Parliament



25th and 26th October  
Santa Domingo  
Meeting of EU-CELAC (Latin America) Foreign Affairs Ministers



29th October  
Iceland  
Early General Elections

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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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