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The "Populist Moment": Towards a "post-liberal" Europe?

Author: Thierry Chopin



The "West" is experiencing a "populist moment" and continental Europe is not being spared this. The argument at the centre of this text is that the various forms of populism – which are feeding a Eurosceptic and even Europhobic discourse – all converge towards a crisis over liberalism which has to be surmounted if we are to prevent our societies from closing on the modern world.

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Elections :

Victory of the Social Democratic Party in Romania



The Social Democratic Party (PSD) won the parliamentary elections on 11th December in Romania with 45,5% of the vote in the Chamber of Deputies and 45,71% in the Senate. The National Liberal Party (PNL) won 20,04% and 20,42%. The Union for the Salvation of Romania (USR) followed with 8,83% and 8,88% in the Senate, the Democratic

Union of Hungarians of Romania (UDMR) won 6,19% and 6,25%, the Liberal and Democratic Alliance (ALDE), 5,62% and 6.% and the People's Movement (PMP) 5,32% and 5,64%. Turnout totalled 39.49%... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

Europe and Diplomacy - another way of looking at referendums

In an editorial published on his site, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Foundation looks into the use of the referendum in terms of



diplomacy and on the effect they have on the European Union... [Read more](#)

Migration :

Reports on the progress made as part of the European migration agenda



On 8th December the Commission presented two reports relating the progress made in terms of implementing the EU-Turkey declaration, from the points of view of relocation and resettlement. It also drafted a recommendation for renewed transfers towards Greece under the Dublin regulation... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Justice and Home Affairs Council



On 8th December the Justice Ministers debated the regulation focusing on the creation of the European Prosecutor's Office, reasserting their wish to create it. They came to agreement on the directive on the protection of the EU's financial interests. On 9th December the Home Affairs Ministers discussed the reform of the Common European Asylum System and agreed on a mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament on the Eurodac regulation... [Read more](#)

Frontex launches its rapid intervention pool



The European Agency Frontex announced on 7th December the launch of its rapid intervention pool of 1,500 civil servants designed to help country members in an emergency situation on the external borders of the European Union... [Read more](#)

Agreement to strengthen external border control



On 7th December the Council approved a modification of the Schengen Border Code to strengthen external border control. The modification obliges the Member States to undertake systematic controls of all people crossing the Union's external border... [Read more](#)

Visa suspension: the Council confirms the agreement with Parliament



On 7th December the Council confirmed the compromise text adopted with the European Parliament on a regulation aiming to revise the suspension mechanism applicable to all visa liberalisation agreements. The agreement was made between the Council, Parliament and the Commission on the same day... [Read more](#)

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Commission action plan to combat travel document fraud



On 8th December the Commission presented an action plan including recommendations and measures that aim to counter travel document fraud. It involves improving border protection and the management of migration, thereby opening the way to real, effective Security Union... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Launch of the European Solidarity Corps



On 7th December the European Commission launched the European Solidarity Corps. It will allow young people aged 18 to 30 to provide their contribution to society whilst acquiring new experiences. Further measures designed to boost youth employment and training were also presented... [Read more](#)

The Commission sanctions three major banks



The European Commission set a fine on 7th December to a total of 485 million euro on the Credit Agricole, HSBC and JP Morgan Chase for their participation in a interest rate derivatives cartel... [Read more](#)

Brexit: Michel Barnier's Press Conference



On 6th December Michel Barnier, the European Commission's negotiator-in-chief for the Brexit announced an agreement on the UK's exit of the EU should be concluded with the British government by October 2018... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer Council Conclusions



On 8th December ministers had a debate on the European social rights pillar, reviewed the posted-workers directive and assessed the chapter of the annual review of 2017 growth devoted to public health... [Read more](#)

Interinstitutional agreement to facilitate business access to capital markets



On 8th December the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission came to agreement on the Commission's draft proposal dated 30th November 2015 as part of its action plan for the Capital Markets Union. The reform aims to improve access to financing by businesses and simplify information for investors... [Read more](#)

The Council adopts conclusions to implement the EU-NATO Declaration



On 6th December the Council adopted conclusions on the progress made in cooperation between the EU and NATO since the signature of the joint declaration on 7th July 2016 and on the need to step up work to implement this declaration... [Read more](#)

Economy and Finance Council Conclusions



On 6th December the 28 Economy and Finance Ministers came to an agreement on a directive that aims to counter tax evasion and on the extension of the lifespan and the financial capacity of the strategic investment funds... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Signature of an EU-Cuba political dialogue and cooperation agreement



On 6th December the Council signed a political dialogue and cooperation agreement with Cuba. The official signature took place on 12th December. The agreement applies temporarily whilst waiting for ratification by all Member States... [Read more](#)

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Declaration about the situation in Aleppo



The heads of State and government from France, Germany, Canada, the US, Italy and the UK asked for a ceasefire, denouncing "a humanitarian catastrophe" in Aleppo... [Read more](#)

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Results of the Foreign Affairs Council



Meeting in Brussels on 12th December the 28 Foreign Affairs Ministers discussed the situation of civilians and humanitarian aid in Syria before debating the migratory issue and the priorities to be given in guiding EU-Africa relations. On the sidelines of the Council ministers and the High Representative also signed a constitutive agreement of the EU Trust Fund for Colombia... [Read more](#)

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ECB :

The ECB extends its purchase of assets at a slower pace

On 8th December, the European Central Bank (ECB) decided to maintain its key interest rate at 0% and to extend its massive debt



purchase programme until December 2017 but these will drop from 80 to 60 billion € per month as of April 2017... [Read more](#)

Germany :

German Chancellor Angela Merkel re-elected as head of the CDU



On 6th December German Chancellor Angela Merkel was re-elected as head of his party, the CDU with 89.5% of the vote at the party's congress in Essen... [Read more](#)

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German Constitutional Court validates the law on exiting atomic energy



On 6th December the German Constitutional Court validated the law on the exit of atomic energy adopted by the German government in 2011, deeming that it was in line with the fundamental law. Berlin will however have to compensate the manufacturers of nuclear energy... [Read more](#)

France :

New French Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve



Following the resignation of Manuel Valls on 6th December French President François Hollande announced the appointment of Bernard Cazeneuve as Prime Minister... [Read more](#)

Greece :

Adoption of the 2017 Budget



The Greek Parliament adopted the 2017 budget on 10th December by a short majority of 152 votes out of 300. During debate issues focused mainly on the 2nd assessment of the aid programme, the debt, recent announcement of the Prime Minister regarding support to pensions... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

President of the Italian Council Matteo Renzi resigns after the adoption of the 2017 budget



As requested by the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella on 5th December the President of the Council Matteo Renzi waited for the final adoption of the 2017 budget by the Senate 166 votes against 70 and 1 abstention on 7th December to present his resignation... [Read more](#)

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Paolo Gentiloni, new head of Italian government



On 11th December Paolo Gentiloni, the Italian Foreign Minister, was asked by the President of the Republic to form a new government. He now has to finalise the composition of his team before a vote of confidence by Parliament which might take place on 15th December... [Read more](#)

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Latvia :

Baltic Council of heads of government



On 9th December the three heads of government from the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Jüri Ratas, Maris Kucinskis and Algirdas Butkevicius met during the Baltic Council of Ministers. They discussed security, foreign affairs and energy policy... [Read more](#)

Portugal :

Publication of the fifth report on the monitoring of post-programme Portugal



On 8th December the IMF published its fifth report on the post-programme monitoring of Portugal. According to the IMF although economic growth has been sustained thanks to exports, Portugal needs to extend its growth relays to maintain its economic dynamism... [Read more](#)

UK :

Report on the future relationship between the UK and Ireland



On 12th December the European Committee at the House of Lords published a report on future relations between the UK and Ireland post-Brexit. The committee invites the respective governments to negotiate a draft bilateral agreement integrating Northern Ireland's interests in order to maintain the existing rights between the two countries... [Read more](#)

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Parliamentary agreement on the calendar to exit the Union



On 7th December a non-binding motion, drafted by the Labour opposition, then amended by government was approved by 448 MPs in the House of Commons. This text stipulates that Theresa May, British Prime Minister, will keep MPs informed on condition that the latter call the government to trigger article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty by 31st March 2017... [Read more](#)

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Macedonia :

Early elections in Macedonia



On 11th December early elections took place in Macedonia. After the count of 99.7% of the voting slips the VMRO-DPMNE, at present in office, is said to have won with 38.06% of the vote against 36.69% for the Social Democrats (SDSM)... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Poland: human rights defenders raise the tone



The amendments that were approved in the Polish Sejm would infringe the right to free assembly if they lead to a law, said Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner at the Council of Europe for Human Rights... [Read more](#)

Protecting Human Rights whilst fighting Terrorism



The Human Rights Commissioner at the Council of Europe, Nils Muižnieks hopes to raise awareness of Human Rights, to strengthen confidence in democracy as well as the role of national Human Rights structures in the fight to counter terrorism... [Read more](#)

OECD :

Survey on the state of the education in the world



On 6th December the PISA survey 2015 which compares 15 year old pupils' results in the education systems of the OECD countries was published. In most of the EU countries more than 15% of the pupils have difficulties... [Read more](#)

Pensions Outlook 2016

On 5th December the OECD published the Pensions Outlook 2016. In the face of ageing populations the organisation encourages countries to re-establish fairness between civil servants and wage earners in the private sector as well as to foster the diversification of pensioners' revenue sources... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

GDP increase in the EU and the euro zone



During the third quarter of 2016 the GDP rose by 0.4% in the EU and by 0.3% in the euro zone in comparison with the previous quarter according to an estimation published by Eurostat on 6th December... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

European arms industry is winning market shares



In its latest estimations on the sales of arms in 2015 published on 5th December the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) shows that the European arms sales industries have won shares in the world market. The American industry still dominates the sector. However the total sale of arms in the world declined for the sixth year running... [Read more](#)

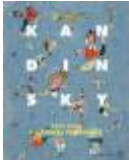
Culture :

7th edition of "Art-o-mat" Zagreb



From 16th to 23rd December the "Art-o-mat" festival is taking place in Zagreb. During the Advent week more than 70 exhibitors will be presenting their work (paintings, craftwork). The event goes together with exhibitions and concerts... [Read more](#)

Kandinsky - the Paris Years



The Museum of Grenoble is running the exhibition "Kandinsky-the Paris Years" until 29th January 2017 which focuses on the last ten years of the artist's life... [Read more](#)

Baltic Artistic Cooperation



The exhibition "Invisible dreams and streams" is being presented at the Contemporary Art Center in Vilnius, Lithuania until 15th January 2017. This exhibition bringing together 22 artists from three Baltic countries (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia) aims to promote cultural cooperation and cultural links that exist between these countries... [Read more](#)

Madrid: Charles III and the diffusion of Antiquity



From 15th December 2016 to 18th March 2017 the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Saint-Ferdinand of Madrid is commemorating the third centenary of the birth of King Charles III with an exhibition entitled "Charles III and the Diffusion of Antiquity"... [Read more](#)

Exhibition "Carl Laemmle presents - a Swabian Jew invents Hollywood" in Stuttgart



Until 30th July 2017 the exhibition "Carl Laemmle presents - a Swabian Jew invents Hollywood" at the House of History in Bad-Württemberg in Stuttgart tracking the career followed by a founder of the Universal Studios on the 150th anniversary of his birth... [Read more](#)

China-Swiss Exhibition in Zurich

The work resulting from the encounter of the Swiss and Chinese contemporary arts is on show at the Helmhaus of Zurich until 5th February 2017... [Read more](#)



Exhibition on Gustav Klimt in Venice



From 14th December 2016 to 5th March 2017 the Centro Culturale Candiani in Venice, Italy is paying tribute to Austrian artist Gustav Klimt, a major artist of the Art Nouveau movement between the 19th and 20th centuries... [Read more](#)

Exhibition devoted to Otto Dix at the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar



The Unterlinden Museum of Colmar is paying tribute to German painter Otto Dix until 30th January 2017. The exhibition, which brings together more than a hundred of his paintings, shows how the Isenheim Altarpiece, one of the museum's main pieces, inspired the artist his whole life long... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



12th December
Brussels
"Foreign Affairs" Council



12th and 13th December
Brussels
"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council



12th to 15th December
Strasbourg
Plenary Session of European Parliament



13th December
Brussels
"General Affairs" Council



15th December
Brussels
European Council



19th December
Brussels
"Environment Council"

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