

— I support the Robert Schuman Foundation —

The Letter team wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We thank you for your loyalty and look forward to our next edition on 9th January 2017.

Strategic communications: East and South

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Strategic communication includes elements of public diplomacy and "image management", media relations, advertising, recruitment and training, and of course, an excellent understanding of the situation. In operational terms strategic communication involves both the defensive and the offensive. The idea of strategic communication is applicable to Russia and to the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or Daesh), in other words the two external players which have acted in terms of destabilising the neighbouring countries

of the European Union the most over the last few years.

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Foundation :

Foundation hearings on the follow-up to the UK's withdrawal from the EU



Jean-Dominique Giuliani, the Chairman of the Foundation was interviewed by the information mission on the consequences of the British referendum and on the monitoring of negotiations at the National Assembly on 15th December. On 14th December Jean-Claude Piris, former legal director of the Council and member of the Foundation's Scientific Committee, was given an audience by the Senatorial Group on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU... [Read more](#)

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Migration :

The number of primo-asylum requests rising

According to figures published by Eurostat on 15th December over the



third quarter of 2016 the number of primo-asylum requests in the EU rose by 17% in comparison with the second quarter of 2016 totalling 358,300 requests... [Read more](#)



First agreement with an African countries on the return of asylum seekers



The EU signed an agreement on 11th December with Mali, the first of its kind, with the aim of countering the "deep cause of illegal migration" and to "foster the return of Malian migrants from Europe."... [Read more](#)



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Report on the framework partnership on migration with third countries

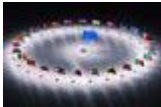


On 14th December the Commission presented the second report on the first results of the framework partnership on migration with third countries; there are notably five priority countries, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal... [Read more](#)



European Council :

Conclusions of the European Council



The 28 heads of State and government of the European Union adopted conclusions on 15th December on migration and security as well as on Ukraine which thereby enabled the Netherlands to ratify the EU-Ukraine agreement. They approved the principle of extending sanctions against Russia for a further six months until 31st July 2017. During an informal meeting between the 27 they adopted a declaration on negotiations with the UK... [Read more](#)



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Commission :

Joint declaration on legislative priorities 2017



On 13th December in Strasbourg the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, the President of the Presidency, Robert Fico and the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker signed the first joint declaration of goals and priorities in the EU's legislative process 2017... [Read more](#)



Parliament :

Nadia Mourad and Lamiya Aji Bachar, winners of 2016 Sakharov prize



Nadia Mourad Bassi Taha and Lamiya Aji Bachar, two young Yazidi survivors of Daesh were awarded the Sakharov Prize 2016 on 13th December in Strasbourg. The European Parliament lauded their bravery and their determination to defend the Yazidi community that has been repeatedly targeted by Islamic State, and to highlight the fate of female victims of sexual violence perpetrated by terrorist organisations... [Read more](#)



Further progress in the reform of trade defence tools



On 14th December MEPs adopted new rules which means that public contracts to supply domestic passenger rail services in EU countries will normally have to be put out to tender. These rules also aim to boost investment and the development of new commercial services... [Read more](#)



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Revision of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure



On 13th December MEPs adopted a major revision of the European Parliament's rules of procedure. They mainly focus on greater transparency within the Parliament and on the organisation of the plenary session and include measures that target greater efficiency and even the possibility for groups to put forward some topical debates... [Read more](#)



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Council :

Conclusions of the Fisheries and Agriculture Council



On 12th and 13th December the 28 Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers adopted conclusions regarding the strengthening of farmers' positions in the food supply chain and the fight to counter unfair competition. They came to a political agreement on a regulation regarding fishing quotas for 2017 regarding the main stocks in the Atlantic and the North Sea... [Read more](#)

5G Internet: Agreement between Parliament and the Council



EU Member States will make 700 MHz wavelength available for wireless broadband by 2020 enabling mobile 5G internet declared an informal agreement that was concluded between the negotiators of the Parliament and the Council on 14th December... [Read more](#)

Further progress in the reform of trade defence tools



On 13th December ministers validated their joint position after three years of negotiation. This will enable them to launch discussions with Parliament in view of concluding a legislative agreement... [Read more](#)

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Conclusions of the General Affairs Council



On 13th December the 28 European Affairs Ministers adopted a negotiation position regarding the Europeans sustainable development funds... [Read more](#)

Environment Council Conclusions



On 19th December the 28 Environment Ministers discussed the CO2 emissions reductions and the legislation on chemical products. Although they did not adopt a general approach regarding the revision of the emission quota exchange system they did adopt conclusions on the protection of human health and the environment thanks a rational management of chemical substances... [Read more](#)

Economic sanctions against Russia extended by 6 months



On 19th December the Council extended the economic sanctions against specific sectors in the Russian economy until 31st July 2017. The duration of the measures is linked to the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements. They target the finance, energy and defence sectors as well as the area of dual-use technology... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

EU-Ukraine Association Council



On 19th December the 3rd Meeting of the Association Council between the EU and Ukraine took place. The Union welcomed the reforms undertaken by Ukraine in spite of the economic difficulties that it is experiencing... [Read more](#)

Stabilisation and Association Council with Montenegro and Serbia



The 3rd Stabilisation and Association Meetings between EU and Serbia as well as 8th meeting with Montenegro took place on 13th December. These meetings provided an opportunity to discuss progress achieved by both countries in their preparations to join the EU... [Read more](#)

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ECB :

The Central Bank adopts the priorities of banking supervision in 2017

On 15th December the European Central Bank adopted three major priorities in terms of banking supervision for 2017. It will concentrate mainly on business models and profitability drivers, on risk credits,



placing emphasis on bad debts, the concentrations and supervised bank risks... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Galileo up and running



On 15th December after 17 years of work the European satellite navigation system, Galileo started offering its initial services to public authorities, businesses and citizens. In four years time this competitor of the American GPS will be totally operational and will be of benefit to all citizens with its data services... [Read more](#)

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Germany :

Franco-German Digital Conference



François Hollande travelled to Berlin on 13th December for the second Franco-German digital conference. With Angela Merkel he put forward a monitored digital market that is governed by its own tax system. Both leaders hope to take on a leading role worldwide... [Read more](#)

Germany: the Bundesrat approves the 2017 budget



On 16th December the German Bundesrat approved the German budget for 2017. This decision comes after that of the Bundestag on 22nd November 2016. The Federal State will therefore have 329.1 billion € next year... [Read more](#)

Croatia :

Meeting between Angela Merkel and Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic



German Chancellor Angela Merkel hosted Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic on 12th December. They discussed German-Croatian relations and the need to strengthen support for countries in South Eastern Europe which are aiming to join the EU... [Read more](#)

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Denmark :

Denmark prepares its withdrawal from Europol



On 15th December the President of the European Commission, that of the European Council, Donald Tusk and the Danish Prime Minister Mr Lars Løkke Rasmussen published a joint declaration setting a timetable preparing Denmark's exit from Europol following the referendum on 3rd December 2015 in order to reduce the negative effects of this

development... [Read more](#)

Spain :

IMF: end of the consultation mission in Spain



On 13th December the IMF published the conclusions of its consultation mission in Spain. On 14th December the Bank of Spain revised its GDP growth forecast slightly upwards for 2017 to 2.5%... [Read more](#)

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Greece :

Alexis Tsipras in Berlin



On 16th December German Chancellor Angela Merkel hosted Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in Berlin. They discussed the migratory issue, the reunification of Cyprus but also Greece's economic situation after Germany advocated the suspension of the relief of its debt... [Read more](#)

Italy :

New Italian government



On 12th December the President of the Italian Council Paolo Gentiloni announced the composition of his new government of 18 ministers of whom five are women. Most ministers will be retaining their posts. Angelino Alfano will be taking over as head of Italian diplomacy. Alfano is being replaced by Domenico Minniti detto Marco... [Read more](#)

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Lithuania :

New Lithuanian Government



On 13th December the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas) approved the government's programme 86 votes in support, 3 against and 40 abstentions. Led by Saulius Skvernelis, the government comprises 16 ministers three of whom are women... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Report on the future Anglo-European cooperation in the area of security and police



In its report published on 16th December the House of Lords maintained that access to the EU's tools and agencies in the area of security is a vital element in Britain's ability to counter crime... [Read more](#)

report on the future of the financial sector after Brexit



On 15th December the House of Lords published a report on the future of the British financial services after the Brexit. The report stresses the importance of concluding a transition agreement for financial services to protect this sector that is both vital for the UK and the EU... [Read more](#)

Report on the future trade basis between the EU and the UK



On 13th December the House of Lords published a report on the future trade base between the UK and the EU... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Commission report on economic reform



On 13th December the European External Action Service and the European Commission published a joint report in view of the third meeting of the EU-Ukraine association council which will take place on 19th December 2016. It stresses the unprecedented nature of the reforms made to the economic and political systems in Ukraine... [Read more](#)

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Meeting between Lithuanian and Ukrainian Presidents



On 12th December Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko hosted the President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė. The meeting was marked by the signature of several bilateral agreements in the economic, energy and transport sectors... [Read more](#)

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UN :

The next UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres sworn in



On 12th December Antonio Guterres was sworn in as the next Secretary General of the UN as of January 1st. On this occasion he declared that the UN had to change in order to be more effective regarding the various challenges that it is facing... [Read more](#)

WTO :

China files a complaint with the WTO against the EU and the US



On 12th December China filed a complaint with the WTO in protest against the so-called substitution method used by the US and the EU in the calculation of anti-dumping measures applied to Chinese exports... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Increases in Inflation



According to data published by Eurostat on 16th December the EU's annual inflation rate and that of the euro zone lay at 0.6% in November 2016 against 0.5% in October... [Read more](#)

Surplus in international goods trade in the euro zone



According to Eurostat estimates published on 16th December in October 2016 the euro zone recorded a trade surplus of 20.1 billion €. That of the EU is estimated at 2.7 billion... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Exhibition: "L.A. Ring between Light and Darkness" in Copenhagen



Until 26th February 2017 an exhibition is running in Charlottenlund, Denmark, entitled "L.A. Ring between Light and Darkness" devoted to the work by Danish realist painter L.A. Ring and his wife, Sigrid Kähler's work... [Read more](#)

"Paolo Monti. Photographs 1935-1982 at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan



Until 12th March 2017 an exhibition is being held on the Italian photographic artist Paolo Monti at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan... [Read more](#)

"Gingerbread Mania" 2016 in Tallinn



Until 4th January 2017 an exhibition of gingerbread creations is running at the Design and Architecture Gallery Parnü in Tallinn in Estonia... [Read more](#)

Southbank Centre: Adventures in Moominland



From 19th December 2016 to 23rd April 2017 the Southbank Centre in London is organising an exhibition with Finnish artist Tove Jansson and his creations, the Moomins... [Read more](#)

Exhibition "Magical Tale in Grandfather's Beard" in Riga



Until 27th February a jewellery exhibition is running in Riga, Latvia entitled "Magical Tale in Grandfather's Beard". It can be seen at the Putti Gallery where the work by European and international artists is on show... [Read more](#)

The Museum of Perfume in Paris

The new perfume museum in Paris at 73 Faubourg St-Honoré in Paris at



the heart of the luxury and fashion quarter opens its doors to the public on 22nd December. The institution aims to be scientific, creative and open to the general public... [Read more](#)

"Treasures of the Rhine" exhibition in Berlin



As of 20th December the exhibition "Schätze aus dem Rhein. der Barbarenschatz von Neupotz" is being held at the Museum for Pre-and Proto-history in Berlin. It will be devoted to all of the objects found over time in the Rhine... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



19th December

Brussels

"Environment Council"

Brussels

EU-Ukraine Association Council

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