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European Parliament: redistribution of political balance

Authors: Charles de Marcilly, François Frigot



At the mid-term of the 8th legislature, the European Parliament, in office since the elections of May 2014, is implementing a traditional "distribution" of posts of responsibility. Article 19 of the internal regulation stipulates that the chairs of the parliamentary committees, the Deputy-Chairs as well as the questeurs hold their mandates for a renewable 2 and a-half year period. Moreover internal elections within the political groups have supported their Chairs whilst we note that there has been some slight rebalancing in terms of the

coordinators' posts. Although Italian citizens draw specific attention with the two main candidates in the battle for the top post, we should note other appointments if we are to understand the careful balance between nationalities, political groups and individual experience of the European members of Parliament.

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European Council :

Malta Declaration



The 28 heads of State and government of the European Union adopted the Malta Declaration on 3rd February in response to illegal migratory flows passing via the Mediterranean... [Read more](#)

Future of the EU



On 31st January the President of the European Council Donald Tusk addressed a letter to the 27 heads of State and government (except the British) calling for unity in preparation of the future of the European Union... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Commission report on Energy Union



On 1st February the Commission published its second report on the State of the Energy Union which shows that the EU is on the right path to achieve the goals set for 2020 in terms of greenhouse gas reductions, energy efficiency and renewable energy... [Read more](#)

Signature of the "road transport alliance" and modernisation of driver training



On 1st February the European Commission proposed updating the rules governing the qualification and life-long training of HGV and bus drivers. Moreover Transport Ministers of nine European countries signed a "road transport alliance" to counter unfair trade practices... [Read more](#)

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The Commission acts in the face of increasing airplane emissions



On 3rd February the Commission proposed a modification of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) so that it takes on board CO2 emissions produced by the aviation sector... [Read more](#)

Agreement between the EU and Mexico to speed up trade negotiations



On 1st February the Mexican Minister for the Economy Guajardo and European Commissioner for International Trade, Cecilia Malmström announced that two additional rounds of negotiations would take place between 3rd and 7th April and 26th and 29th June next in a bid to speed up talks over a new free-trade agreement... [Read more](#)

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Launch of public consultation over the future of the CAP



On 2nd February the Commission launched a 3 month public consultation over the future of the Common Agricultural Policy... [Read more](#)

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The Commission opens three inquiries into three suspected incidents of unfair trade practice



The European Commission launched three inquiries on 2nd February into suspected incidents of unfair trade practices in the area of e-trade. These inquiries involve the sectors of electronics, video games and hotel accommodation... [Read more](#)

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Parliament :

Interinstitutional agreement over roaming



On 1st February in view of bringing roaming fees to an end before 15th June, an agreement was found to regulate the roaming markets. A European traveller abroad will only pay 0.032€ per minute for a call and 0.01€ per SMS... [Read more](#)

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In support of automatic cross border adoption recognition



On 2nd February MEPs voted in support of a resolution asking the Commission to oblige all Member States to recognise automatically adoption certificates issued in another Member State... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Blocking the appointment of the new US Ambassador to the Union?



The procedure to accredit the new US Ambassador to the EU - Ted Malloch - sets a serious problem for the European institutions due to the extremely undiplomatic nature - even disobliging - public remarks made by the latter regarding the EU and its leaders... [Read more](#)

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Conclusion of the Foreign Affairs Council



On 6th February the European Foreign Affairs Ministers met in Brussels. They discussed the need to foster the return of stability in Libya with regional partners, since this is a major partner regarding migratory flows. They then reasserted their wish to finalise a peace agreement and a two-State solution between Israel and Palestine before reviewing the EU's support to the economic and democratic reforms set in place in Ukraine and Egypt...

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Court of Justice :

Asylum and terrorism



The ECJ recognised in a decision delivered on 31st January that a "request for asylum can be rejected if the seeker has taken part in the activities of a terrorist network..." [Read more](#)

Germany :

Meeting between the German Chancellor and the Turkish President



On 2nd February the German Chancellor Angela Merkel met Turkish President Erdogan to discuss the discord ongoing between the two countries. They spoke of the pact concluded regarding migrants in March last between Turkey and the EU, of the situation in Syria and Iraq as well as trade relations and the freedom of expression... [Read more](#)

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Visit by German Chancellor to Sweden



On 31st January German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to Sweden where she met Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to discuss the future of the EU as well as difficulties encountered in terms of security and migration... [Read more](#)

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German Foreign Affairs Minister visits the USA



On 2nd and 3rd February the German Foreign Affairs Minister Sigmar Gabriel travelled to the USA where he met his counterpart Rex Tillerson as well as Vice-President Mike Pence... [Read more](#)

Estonia :

Signature of the "Rail Baltic" Agreement between the Baltic States



On 31st January the Baltic States signed the Rail Baltic Agreement, which aims to improve their cooperation in the rail sector and to promote regional integration... [Read more](#)

Hungary :

Viktor Orban hosts Vladimir Putin



On 2nd February Hungarian President Viktor Orban hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin in Budapest. The two leaders would like to enhance their cooperation, notably in the field of energy, since Russia is due to build and finance the enlargement of the nuclear power station of Paks... [Read more](#)

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Ireland :

Meeting between Enda Kenny and Theresa May in Dublin



On 30th January British Prime Minister Theresa May met Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny in Dublin to discuss trade relations and free movement between the two countries after Brexit... [Read more](#)

Romania :

Under pressure the government withdraws its contested draft bill



Criticised on all side for its emergency decision to relax anti-corruption legislation the Romanian government repealed it on 5th February given the response on the part of thousands of people who turned out into the street. In spite of this repeal the demonstrations are continuing... [Read more](#)

UK :

Vote in the House of Commons



On 1st February the British House of Commons gave the greenlight to Prime Minister Theresa May with 498 votes in support, against 114, to trigger article 50 of the TEU which will formally launch the UK's exit from the EU... [Read more](#)

Publication of the White Paper on the Brexit



On 2nd February the British government published a White Paper containing the Brexit road map. In 12 points it develops the British government's strategy to negotiate the country's exit from the EU... [Read more](#)

Macedonia :

Nikola Gruevski fails to form a new government



On 30th January former Prime Minister and leader of the VMRO-DPMNE Nikola Gruevski did not succeed in forming a majority in Parliament with the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and therefore failed to form a government before the final deadline... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Ukrainian President visits Berlin



On 30th January Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko met German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin. Together they discussed the implementation of the Minsk Agreements... [Read more](#)

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The ceasefire is not holding



The situation in the East of Ukraine is not improving. The Ukrainian government has indicated that the ceasefire has been infringed. Ukraine, a member of the UN's Security Council in 2017, is counting on greater support on the part of the international community which is calling for the respect of the Minsk Agreements... [Read more](#)

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Norway :

New partnership for submarines with Germany



On 3rd February the Norwegian government decided to conclude a partnership with Germany in the area of submarines... [Read more](#)

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Migration :

Germany: launch of a new aid programme for the return of migrants



On 1st February the German government announced the introduction of a "Starthilfe Plus" programme, which will provide aid for voluntary returning migrants who have little chance of being given asylum in Germany... [Read more](#)

Hungarian Justice Minister speaks about the Union's borders

On 30th January the Hungarian Minister of Justice László Trócsányi warned that if the Union's external borders were not strengthened the flows of migrants might lead to the building of walls between Member States... [Read more](#)



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Call for alternative to the detention of migrants

On 31st January Nils Muiznieks, the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe call on the States to invest in an alternative to migrant detention... [Read more](#)



Eurostat :

Decline in unemployment rate in the EU and the Euro zone



According to figures published by Eurostat on 31st January the unemployment rates lay at 8.2% in the EU and at 9.6% in the euro zone in December 2016. These were the lowest rates recorded since 2009... [Read more](#)

Rise in inflation up to 1.8% in the euro zone



According to a study published by Eurostat on 31st January the euro zone's annual rate of inflation is estimated at 1.8% in January 2017 in comparison with 1.1% in December 2016... [Read more](#)

GDP up in the EU and the Euro zone



According to Eurostat data published on 31st January in the fourth quarter of 2016 the GDP rose by 0.6% in the EU and by 0.5% in the euro zone in comparison with the third quarter 2016... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Publication of the ECB's Economic and Monetary Bulletin



On 2nd February the ECB published a bulletin on economic and monetary developments within the euro zone. This document welcomes the signs of world and European economic recovery whilst announcing a decline in growth in the euro zone... [Read more](#)

Report on Gender Equality Strategy



On 2nd February the Council of Europe published its report on the implementation of the strategy for gender equality 2014-2017... [Read more](#)

Culture :

The Berlinale, the Berlin International Film Festival



From 9th to 19th February the 67th Berlinale, the international film festival of Berlin is taking place. The jury this year is chaired by Dutch director Paul Verhoeven... [Read more](#)

"1917: Romanov and Revolution" in Amsterdam



Until 17th September the Hermitage Museum of Amsterdam reviews the history of the Romanov, who witnessed troubled times in Russia at the start of the 20th century... [Read more](#)

Exhibition "Baroque Treasures from Bratislava to Krakow"



From 10th February to 23rd April an exhibition is taking place entitled "Baroque Treasures" on Slovakian baroque art at the Museum of Krakow... [Read more](#)

African Routes Exhibition in Paris



Until 12th November the Quai Branly Jacques Chirac Museum is running the exhibition "African Routes" which recalls that this continent has a history that is part of the international dynamic... [Read more](#)

Joan Miro Exposition in Stockholm



From 11th February to 4th June the Joan Miro exhibition entitled "Joan Miro - The Poetry of Everyday Life" is running at the Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde of Stockholm. This exhibition undertaken together with the Joan Miro Foundation of Barcelona and the Kristianstads Konsthall reviews the Surrealist painters' career... [Read more](#)

Gerhard Richter Exhibition in Cologne



From 9th February to 1st May an exhibition is showing the work of German painter Gerhard Richter at the Ludwig Museum of Cologne. On the occasion of the artist's 85th birthday 26 abstract paintings, all created last year will be on show for the first time... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



6th February
Brussels
Foreign Affairs Council



7th February
Brussels
General Affairs Council



13th to 16th February
Strasbourg
Session of European Parliament

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