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The Letter in PDF format

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European Union, Brexit, USA: The strategic dimension of the new trade issues

Author: Karine Lisbonne-de Vergeron



Brexit is the source of a great deal of uncertainty as far as the exit agreement is concerned. The British government has announced that it will trigger the procedure provided for by article 50 TEU on 29th March, but the commercial aspect of the negotiations is still subject to several strategic factors. At the same time Theresa May's visit to the Trump administration at the end of January confirmed London's wish to position itself in a dynamic that is moving towards closer cooperation with the USA via a free-trade agreement that it would

like to see implemented in the spring 2019, the planned date of the UK's exit from the European Union. At the same time the Trump government's attacks against the solidity of European economic fundamentals, particularly Germany and the single currency, raise a number of questions regarding the future development of trade relations between Europe and the USA. What are the issues at stake and the challenges in this new state of affairs and strategic reshuffle? What answers can Europe give to this?

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Elections :

Presidential election in France



On 23rd April next the French are being called to vote in the first round of the presidential election. The two candidates who come out ahead will face each other in a second round of voting on 7th May. According to a poll undertaken by IFOP between 21st and 24th March last Emmanuel Macron is due to come out ahead in the first round with 26% of the vote ahead of Marine Le Pen who is due to win 25%. One third of those interviewed (35%) say they will not go to vote... [Read more](#)

The GERB wins the general elections in Bulgaria



The Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), party of the former Prime Minister (2009-2013 and 2014-2016) Boyko Borissov came out ahead in the snap election organised on 26th March in Bulgaria. The GERB won 32.64% of the vote ahead of the Socialist

Party (BSP) which won 27.12%... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

"The Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union" has been published



The 2017 edition of the "Schuman Report on the State of the Union" has just been published by Lignes de Repères in French and in English. Find this vital work to understand everything you need to know about Europe in bookshops or on the Foundation's website... [Read more](#)

Poll: the French against leaving the euro



According to a poll published on 25th March by Ifop, for the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Figaro, one French person in two (46%) deem European integration to be a positive thing and 72% are against a return to the franc... [Read more](#)

The Foundation's Atlas is available in English



The Atlas of the European Union is available in English! It is a work of reference which presents the Union, its institutions, each of the 28 Member States and a novelty - their overseas territories, via their history, culture and their reality. With 50 maps, history cards and the most recent statistics, as well the political situation of the Member States, this informative book is a practical and unique tool... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

The economic growth of the euro zone reaches its highest level in six years



According to the PMI Flash on 24th March the strengthening of economic growth in the euro zone continued in March to reach its highest level in 6 years... [Read more](#)

European Council :

Rome Declaration



27 leaders of the European Union renewed their commitment to Europe on 25th March in Rome in a solemn declaration 60 years after the signature of the Rome Treaties... [Read more](#)

EU Summit on 29th April in preparation for Brexit negotiations



The leaders of the countries of Europe will meet on 29th April without the UK to define their position as 27 in the negotiation of Brexit announced the President of the European Council Donald Tusk on 21st March... [Read more](#)

Commission :

"The conditions for a successful negotiation with the UK"



On 22nd March in Brussels during a speech by Michel Barnier, the negotiator in chief for the preparation and conduct of the negotiations with the UK laid out the necessary conditions for the very success of these negotiations... [Read more](#)

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Investments for infrastructures to foster growth in Greece

On 24th March the European Commission announced that more than 1300 million € from the funds in the Cohesion Policy would be invested



in Greece in broad band, transport and the environment... [Read more](#)

Public Digital Services and financial services to consumers



On 23rd March the Commission lay out a plan to offer consumers a wider choice of cheaper financial services. On the occasion of the Digital Day the European Commission published a new European interoperability framework which should benefit public authorities that are undergoing total digital transformation... [Read more](#)

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Anti-trust - new rules for national authorities



On 22nd March the European Commission put forward new rules to enable national authorities to implement rules regarding anti-trust practices more effectively... [Read more](#)

Citizens' initiatives and rights in the Union after the Brexit



On 22nd March the European Commission registered two European citizens' initiatives devoted to Union citizens' rights in the context of the withdrawal of a Member State from the EU and rejected a third proposal entitled "Stop Brexit"... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

An independent Erasmus + budget for the European Solidarity Corps



On 22nd March MEPs of the Culture and Education Committee adopted a resolution defending an autonomous financing of the European Solidarity Corps. 58 million€ initially devoted to Erasmus + and "Europe for the Citizens" programmes are to be allocated to this project of social integration and solidarity... [Read more](#)

Council :

Eurogroup Meeting



During the Eurogroup meeting on 20th March ministers deemed that discussions between Greece and its creditors were going to gather pace over the next few days for an agreement to be reached ahead of an aid plan... [Read more](#)

Parliament and Council agree on a stricter energy scale



On 21st March negotiators from the Parliament and the Council put forward a new stricter scale for the assessment of the energy efficiency of household appliances to take on board technological progress better... [Read more](#)

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The EU steps up the digitisation of passenger data



On 21st March the Council took its stance on new requirements for the registration of passengers and crew on board European vessels. At present the data should be directly made available to the authority involved and not just kept by the maritime company... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Finance Ministers



The 28 Economy and Finance Ministers assessed the implementation of the country by country recommendations for the "European Semester" on 21st March. They also spoke of the reduced VAT rate on digital publications in the EU and the G20 Finance Meeting... [Read more](#)

The EU establishes sanctions against four high-ranking Syrian military



On 20th March the Council added four high-ranking military to the list of people targeted by restrictive measures introduced by the EU against the Syrian regime... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Internal Affairs Council



On 27th March the Council adopted conclusions regarding the action plan that aims to strengthen the EU's response to travel document fraud. The Council stresses that the checking of basic documents is vital for internal security. Their standardisation as well as data exchange (fingerprints and facial images) should help towards a more effective system... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Japanese Prime Minister in Brussels



On 21st March as he visited Brussels Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe invited the EU to "cooperate with the USA" to defend, alongside his country, "free-trade" in the world... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of the international coalition against Islamic State



On 22nd March in Washington the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the countries in the coalition against Islamic State met on the invitation of the American Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson... [Read more](#)

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ECB :

Current account surplus down in the euro zone



According to European Central Bank statistics (ECB) released on 22nd March in January 2017 the euro zone registered a current account surplus of 24.1 billion €, the lowest since January 2016... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Rosetta has made a breakthrough in terms of the mystery of the Comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko



Scientists guessed it and the probe Rosetta has demonstrated it. According to a study published on 21st March, the jets of dust that are escaping the comets are notably caused by the collapse of earth on the surface of these small heavenly bodies... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Elections on Saarland



On 26th March an election took place in Saarland. The Chancellor's party, the CDU won 40.7% of the vote whilst Martin Schulz's party, the SPD, her main opponent in the upcoming general elections won 29.6%... [Read more](#)

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Croatia :

Croatian Prime Minister sceptical about several tiered Europe



On 22nd March the Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic declared that "extreme care" had to be taken regarding a two-tiered Europe "not to fall into a trap". He fears that the EU will "become an exclusive board of the most influential members who would take all of the decisions for everyone else".. [Read more](#)

Spain :

Mariano Rajoy's declaration on ETA



On 22nd March Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy declared that the disarmament of the Basque independence movement ETA should be "unconditional" and "immediate". He added that ETA would gain no political advantage following disarmament since there could be no "negotiation with terrorists"... [Read more](#)

France :

France fails to achieve its public deficit goal in 2016



According to the national accounts published on 24th March by INSEE, the public deficit which covers that of the State, local communities and the Social Security lay at 3.4% in 2016 of the GDP instead of 3.3% promised by the government... [Read more](#)

The "Molière Clause", contrary to European legislation



Marianne Thyssen, the European Commissioner for Employment declared during a meeting on 19th March that the "Molière Clause", reflected in the imposition of a clause that obliges the use of French in public work sites is discriminatory and contrary to European legislation... [Read more](#)

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UK :

London affected by a terrorist attack



On 22nd March a terrorist killed four people and injured 29 in London just next to the Houses of Parliament before being shot by the police. Responsibility for the attack was claimed by Daesh... [Read more](#)

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Brexit challenges the UK's domestic balance



After Scotland, which wants a new referendum on independence in 2018, the Welsh have raised the tone about Brexit. The First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones spoke of the need to review radically the organisation and relations between London and autonomous government under the Brexit process... [Read more](#)

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Inflation up



On 21st March the Office for National Statistics in the UK announced that consumer prices had risen by 2.3% in February including on food for the first time in three years. This is beyond the forecast of 2% that the Bank of England... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Support to the special observation in Ukraine



On 24th March the European Commission renewed its firm support to the OSCE's special observation mission in Ukraine as part of its recently extended mandate for the purpose of the total implementation of the Minsk Agreements... [Read more](#)

Migration :

Migratory Route of the Central Mediterranean



The Home Affairs Ministers of the Contact Group on the Central Mediterranean met in Rome on 20th March to discuss a plan that will stop the migratory flows from Libya... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

World Happiness Report 2017

The report ordered by the UN to rank countries according to the happiness of their citizens was published on 21st March. It emerges



that of the first 10 countries, 7 are European... [Read more](#)

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OECD Report on corruption in the UK



On 23rd March the OECD published its report on corruption in the UK. The report shows that the country has made a great deal of progress in the fight to counter corruption but uncertainty remains regarding the role of the Serious Fraud Office... [Read more](#)

Culture :

International Film Festival in Prague



From 23rd to 31st March Prague is hosting the "Febiofest" an international film festival. Full feature films, retrospectives and even experimental films are being screened... [Read more](#)

Inauguration of the Camille Claudel Museum at Nogent-sur-Seine



The Camille Claudel Museum at Nogent-sur-Seine opened its doors on 26th March. It brings to the fore the sculptor's work just as the world is celebrating that of Rodin... [Read more](#)

Jean-Michel Basquiat at the Bramante Cloister in Rome



The Bramante Cloister in Rome is showing works by artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, an iconic and controversial figure of the 1980's art scene... [Read more](#)

Auguste Rodin, at the Grand Palais, Paris



One hundred years after the death of the famous sculptor Auguste Rodin, the Grand Palais has organised an exhibition that is open to the public until 31st July... [Read more](#)

Film Festival in Belfast



From 30th March to 8th April the city of Belfast is hosting its film festival. Documentaries, fiction, films and first screenings on the programme as well as two competitions (for documentaries and short films)... [Read more](#)

Art Fair Paris



From 30th March to 2nd April the Art Fair of Paris is bringing together 139 galleries from 29 countries at the Grand Palais, showing European post-war art to the present as well as hosting emerging international talent... [Read more](#)

Budapest Spring Festival



From 31st March to 23rd April Budapest is hosting its Spring Festival which pays tribute to art and music with a programme that includes classical music, opera, jazz, music of the world, dance, contemporary circus acts, theatre..... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



27th and 28th March
Brussels
Justice and Internal Affairs Council



3rd April
Luxembourg
Foreign Affairs Council
Luxembourg
Agriculture and Fisheries Council

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