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The Letter in PDF format

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'Directives' in France and economic improvements in the euro area: what is the link between these?

Author: Jean-Paul Betbèze



Jean-Paul Betbèze analyses the events to come over the next few weeks in France and after the general elections of 11th and 18th June in terms of strengthening the bill of 8th June 2016 on labour, the modernisation of social dialogue and the protection of career paths - the so-called Labour Bill whose main goal was and remains to strengthen the weight of company agreements.

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Contents

Elections : France Foundation : Europe/France - Publication/State EU - Budapest - Editorial European Council : Future/EU Commission : European Semester - Aid/State - Facebook Parliament : Refugees - Food - Hungary Council : Justice/Home Affairs - EEA - Brexit/Negotiations - Future/EU Diplomacy : Defence Court of Justice : Singapore Germany : Labour20 - IMF Austria : Elections France : Government - Germany - Defence Greece : Reform - Eurogroup/Greece Ireland : Resignation Italy : Russia/France Czech Republic : Finance Macedonia : Government? Switzerland : Energy Council of Europe : Culture UN : Europe Eurostat : Inflation - Trade - Growth Studies/Reports : Neighbourhood - Fundamental Rights Culture : Festival/Greece - Carnaval/Aalborg - Music/Barcelona

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

Elections :

General Elections on 11th and 18th June in France



The French are being called to ballot on 11th and 18th June to renew the 577 members of the Assemblée nationale, the lower house of Parliament. After having elected Emmanuel Macron as head of State by a wide majority on 7th May will the French provide him with a majority? The most recent poll by OpinionWay undertaken between 16th and 18th May credits La République en Marche (LREM) with 27% of the vote, ahead of the Républicains (LR) and the Front National (FN), each due to win 20% of the vote, France Insoumise 14% and the Socialist Party (PS) 11%... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

"For a few stars more ... which European policy for France?"

The Chairman of the Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani has published "For a few stars more ... which European policy for France?" An enlightening read whilst the appointments in the new government has illustrated the wish to



foster resolutely European action... [Read more](#)

The "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2017" available in paper and digital version



The "Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2017" published with Lignes de Repères in French and English helps towards a better understanding of the issues and challenges at stake in Europe. It is available in bookshops and on the Foundation's site and in digital format..... [Read more](#)

Lessons of the elections in France and in the Netherlands



The Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, the Foundation for Civic Hungary and the Nézőpont Intézet are organising a seminar on 29th May in Budapest on the lessons that might be drawn from the elections in France and the Netherlands together with Pascale Joannin, the Foundation General Manager... [Read more](#)

France is well and truly back in Europe



Jean-Dominique Giuliani has published an editorial on the resolutely European nature of the new French President, who is the cause of interest on the part of his partners... [Read more](#)

European Council :

Donallid Tusk at the European Parliament and on a visit to France



MEPs debated on 17th May with Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council about the direction to take in the negotiations with the UK concluded by the European Council. He also met with French President Emmanuel Macron... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

European Semester: Country by country recommendations



On 22nd May the Commission published its country per country recommendations as part of the "European Semester" of Spring 2017. The Member States should use the favourable economic situation offered by economic recovery to undertake structural reforms, stimulate investment and consolidate their public finances to achieve more inclusive, strong, sustainable growth... [Read more](#)

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The Commission simplifies the rules in terms of State Aid



On 17th May the European Commission approved new state aid rules that exempt certain public support measures for ports, airports, culture and the outermost regions from prior Commission scrutiny... [Read more](#)

110 million € fine against Facebook



On 18th May the European Commission inflicted a fine of 110 million € against Facebook. The company provided inaccurate information during the inquiry that the Commission undertook in 2014 regarding the acquisition of WhatsApp by Facebook... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Accelerating the relocation of refugees, notably unaccompanied minors



On 18th May MEPs exhorted the Member States to accelerate the relocation of refugees, particularly unaccompanied minors. They are urging the Commission to introduce infringement procedures as it threatened on 16th May... [Read more](#)

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Preventing food waste



MEPs suggested on 16th May to introduce measures that would reduce food waste by half by 2030, notably by lifting restrictions on food donations and clarifying consumer information... [Read more](#)

MEPs want to trigger article 7 against Hungary



MEPs approved a resolution on 17th May to trigger article 7 that might lead to sanctions against Hungary. The resolution calls for the repeal of the laws restricting the fundamental rights of asylum seekers and an agreement regarding the Free University of Budapest... [Read more](#)

Council :

Conclusions in terms of asylum and the fight to counter crime



On 19th May the 28 Justice and Home Affairs Ministers discussed political asylum and immigration, the fight to counter organised crime, aviation security and the fight to counter terrorism... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

European Economic Area Council



The Council of the European Economic Area (EEA) gave its conclusions on 16th May. They focus on political cooperation and dialogue with the European institutions and their partners... [Read more](#)

Brexit: the EU officially authorises Michel Barnier to launch negotiations



On 22nd May the EU adopted Michel Barnier's mandate as chief negotiator in the Brexit, thereby officially authorising the launch of negotiations. The settlement of the sums that the EU is asking of the UK, European and British citizens' rights and the Irish border are some of the most important points in these negotiations... [Read more](#)

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Conclusions on financial services and the future of the Union



On 16th May the 28 European Affairs Ministers adopted a regulation that aims to ensure the smooth running of the short-term financial market and new rules regarding the prospectus for the emission and offer of real estate... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Global Security, Defence and Development Strategy



On 18th and 19th May the 28 European Foreign Affairs Ministers debated the EU's strategy in terms of security and defence, cooperation with NATO, then of development notably in Africa... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

ECJ decision on the free-trade agreement between the EU and Singapore

On 16th May the EU's Court of Justice delivered a decision establishing that the free-trade agreement with Singapore cannot be concluded by the Union alone but jointly with the Member States. Indeed some



measures in the agreement are not part of the Union's exclusive competence, but those which are shared with the States... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Labour20 Meeting



German Chancellor met the union organisations of the G20 Dialogue Forum (L20) on 17th May to discuss the new rules of a more balanced, fairer globalisation and the digitisation of the economy... [Read more](#)

The IMF asks Berlin to invest



Germany has to use its increasing tax revenues to invest in infrastructure projects that strengthen its growth potential and encourage employers to increase wages to support inflation in the euro zone declared the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on 15th May... [Read more](#)

Austria :

Snap election in Austria on 15th October



Austrian political parties announced on 16th May that a snap election will take place on 15th October. On 14th May the ÖVP elected a new leader, Sebastian Kurz... [Read more](#)

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France :

Composition of the new government



The government of the new French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, was announced on 17th May. Following the principle of parity it comprises 11 women and 11 men. The new ministers and secretaries of State are from the left, right and centre as well as from civil society... [Read more](#)

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Meeting between Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel



On 15th May the French President Emmanuel Macron held a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on his first trip abroad; the aim was to re-iterate the driving role played by the Franco-German couple in Europe... [Read more](#)

Trip by President Macron to the French troops in Sahel



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One of the first trips to be made by French President Emmanuel Macron was to the French soldiers stationed in Mali on 19th May. The President maintained that he wanted to continue the anti-terrorist operations in the Sahel and to strengthening European defence cooperation... [Read more](#)

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Greece :

Adoption of new measures in exchange for the payment of further aid



On 18th May the Greek Parliament adopted new measures worth nearly 5 billion €, that should enable the payment of a further tranche of international loans to the country. The main articles of the bill, which include further cuts in retirement pensions and tax increases, were approved by 153 MPs against 128... [Read more](#)

Eurogroup happy with the preliminary agreement signed between Greece and the institutions

On 22nd May Eurogroup debated the new reforms provided for in Greece on retirement pensions, income tax, the labour market and the energy sector. They also exchanged views on the economic forecasts



for Europe and the seventh surveillance mission for Spain... [Read more](#)

Ireland :

Resignation of Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny



On 17th May Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny announced that he would be resigning as had of his party, Fine Gael. He will remain Prime Minister until the election of his successor on 2nd June... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Paolo Gentiloni meets Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron



After meeting Russian President Putin on 17th May in Sochi, Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni visited French President Macron on 21st May. The two men re-iterated their will to work together to revive Europe, notably promoting the idea of fiscal and banking union... [Read more](#)

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Czech Republic :

New Finance Minister



On 17th May Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka announced the replacement Andrej Babis at the Finance Ministry by Ivan Pilny, from the same party, ANO in order to bring tension within the government coalition to an end... [Read more](#)

Macedonia :

Working towards a government in Macedonia



On 17th May after several months of stalemate Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov finally asked opposition leader Zoran Zaev, Social Democratic Union (SDSM) to form a new coalition government... [Read more](#)

Switzerland :

The Swiss approve the progressive abandonment of nuclear energy



On 21st May 58.2% of the electorate approved a new bill on energy which aims to replace progressively nuclear power by renewable energies... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Council of Europe Foreign Affairs Ministers' meeting



On 19th May the Council of Europe's Foreign Affairs Ministers met in Nicosia (Cyprus). The Convention of the Council of Europe on infringements targeting cultural goods had been opened for signature and signed by six countries... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

UN :

Speech by the UN Secretary General to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe



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On 17th May the UN's Secretary General Antonio Guterres addressed the European Parliament speaking of the rise in conflict in the world, Human Rights as well as globalisation and to recall that a "united Europe was an absolutely vital pillar of a strong, effective UN"... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :**Inflation at 2% in the EU and at 1.9% in the euro zone**

Inflation in the EU lay at 2% against 1.6% in April. In the euro zone it gathered pace to lie at 1.9%, coming close to the ECB goal said Eurostat on 17th May against 1.5% in March... [Read more](#)

Trade surplus

According to a Eurostat study dated 16th May the EU's trade surplus lies at 10.5 billion € and that of the euro zone 30.9 billion € in March 2017... [Read more](#)

GDP up by 0.5% in the first quarter of 2017

According to a Eurostat study on 16th May the euro zone's GDP, likewise that of the EU increased by 0.5% in the first quarter of 2017... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :**Report on the European Neighbourhood Policy**

On 18th May the Commission and the High Representative published a report that illustrated the results of the new European neighbourhood policy revised in 2015. The report notes the new method that is based on shared commitment, flexibility and differentiation in order to make safe the neighbourhood... [Read more](#)

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Report on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in 2016

On 18th May the European Commission published its annual report on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights which highlights the initiatives taken in 2016 by the EU to strengthen fundamental rights... [Read more](#)

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Culture :**Athens and Epidaurus Festival**

The Hellenic Festival created in 1955, whose 2017 edition is taking place from 22nd May to 19th August is bringing Athens and Epidaurus to life with theatre and dance shows as well as other artistic performances... [Read more](#)

Carnaval d'Aalborg

Until 27th May Aalborg in Denmark is hosting its carnival. Fancy dress parades and outdoor concerts are on the programme. The theme this year entitled "The world is full of..." invites participants to interpret this phrase via their costumes... [Read more](#)

"Primevera Sound" Festival in Barcelona

From 31st May to 4th June Barcelona is hosting the 16th "Primavera Sound" Festival in which artists and international pop and rock groups perform... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



22nd May 2017
Brussels
General Affairs Council (Article 50)
Brussels
Eurogroup



22nd & 23rd May 2017
Brussels
Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council



23rd May 2017
Brussels
Cooperation Council EU-Armenia
Brussels
"Economic and Financial Affairs" Council



25th May 2017
Brussels
NATO Summit



26th & 27th May 2017
Taormina, Italy
G7 Summit



29th & 30th May 2017
Brussels
"Competitiveness" Council

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