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The Letter in PDF format

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The whole Foundation team is happy to be back and wishes you a very Happy New Year 2018!

International Trade, the conditions of an ambition



30 million jobs depend directly on external trade. However, the economic situation, fears surrounding the loss of status, the danger of a decline in its collective preferences (normative, social, environmental) are leading some to believe that the EU is globalisation's "Trojan Horse". Whilst the lack of compromise on a world scale has led to a dead end, the will to increase bilateral approaches reveals, on the contrary, a joint ambition. This file attempts to establish what the conditions for this are.

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Elections :

Presidential election in Finland 28th January



On 28th January the Finns are being called to ballot to appoint the president of the Republic. If one of the eight candidates wins more than 50% of the vote he or she will win the election directly; if this is not the case a second round will be organised on 11th February. Outgoing President Sauli Niinistö is the grand favourite. Just a few weeks before the election his lead is quite exceptional. According to a poll by Kantar TNS in

December the outgoing head of State is due to win 70% of the vote... [Read more](#)

Presidential election in Cyprus on 28th January



On 28th January next the Cypriots are being called to ballot to appoint the president of the Republic. The outgoing head of State Nicos Anastasiades is the grand favourite in the election. According to the most recent poll undertaken in December by CMRC, the outgoing head of State (Democratic Assembly DISY) is due to win the first round of the election with 29.1% of the vote. Nicolas Papadopoulos (Democratic Party DIKO) is due to win 21.1%, and Stavros Malas (Progressive Workers' Party AKEL), 18.79%. The second

round will take place on 4th February... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Entry into force of the MiFID II directive



The MiFID II (Markets in Financial Instruments Directive II) entered into force on 3rd January. This regulation aims to strengthen consumer protection. It sets the rules to follow by the financial institutions when the latter offer investment products or provide advice on the issue...

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Parliament :

Opening of a new multimedia centre



The European Parliament launched its new multimedia centre on 4th January - a platform for audiovisual products. The multimedia centre will replace the present audiovisual website... [Read more](#)

Council :

Bulgaria takes over the Presidency of the Council for the first semester



The Estonian presidency of the Council of the European Union came to an end on 31st December 2017. Bulgaria will now ensure the presidency until 30th June 2018. The Estonian presidency was notably marked by initiatives in the digital area, cybersecurity and transport.

The Bulgarian priorities are economic and social cohesion, stability and security in Europe, the European perspective of the Western Balkans and the digital economy as well as skills for the future... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Federica Mogherini travels to Cuba



The EU's High Representative for Foreign Policy, Federica Mogherini, travelled to Cuba on 5th January to "re-confirm" the agreement concluded between the island and the EU in December 2016 "for political dialogue and cooperation", which provisionally entered into force on 1st November 2017 ahead of its final ratification by all Member

States... [Read more](#)

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Germany :

A peacekeeping mission in Donbass



During a visit to Ukraine German Foreign Affairs Minister Sigmar Gabriel called on 3rd January for the introduction of a UN peacekeeping mission in the Donbass. On 23rd and 27th December the German Chancellor and the French President made a joint declaration on the situation in the east of Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Bulgaria :

The anti-corruption bill deemed inadequate



On 20th December the Bulgarian Parliament adopted an anti-corruption bill that was requested a long time ago by the European Commission. It creates a single entity to counter corruption. On 2nd January the Bulgarian President Rumen Radev vetoed the bill saying that it was inadequate... [Read more](#)

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Spain :

Election results in Catalonia on 21st December



After the Catalan regional election on 21st December 2017 Ciudadanos came out ahead with 25.37% of the vote followed by Junts per Catalunya with 21.65% and Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya-Catalunya Si with 21.39%. Together the separatist parties won a narrow absolute margin in Parliament with 70 seats of a possible 135...

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France :

European New Year's wishes from the President of the Republic



French President Emmanuel Macron presented his New Year's wishes on 31st December 2017. He notably said that "2018 will be decisive for Europe". He called on its citizens to "say what they want for Europe as the European elections draw closer," and stressed that the Franco-German relationship "was a vital condition for any progress in Europe..." [Read more](#)

Draft bill on the election of MEPs in a single constituency



In a Council of Ministers on 3rd January the French government put forward a draft bill that aims to establish a single constituency instead of the present 8 for the European elections in 2019... [Read more](#)

Ireland :

Visit by Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar to Bulgaria



Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar travelled to Bulgaria on 5th January to meet his Bulgarian counterpart Boyko Borissov. This meeting provided an opportunity to address the priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first semester of 2018... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Dissolution of the Parliament and elections on 4th March



The President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella, announced on 28th December 2017 the dissolution of Parliament and indicated that the next elections will take place on 4th March 2018 to renew both houses of Parliament, the House of Deputies, (630 members) and the Senate of the Republic, (315 members)... [Read more](#)

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Poland :

Meeting between the Polish and Hungarian Prime Ministers



On 3rd January Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki travelled to Hungary. "Whilst many various events are challenging the EU's integrity, (...) we believe in Europe, we believe in European values and we want to build together," he declared during a joint press conference with his Hungarian counterpart Viktor Orban... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Poll in support of a second referendum



A poll published on 4th January by the Mile End Institute of the Queen Mary University of London on the opinion of the members of the various British parties involved in Brexit shows dissension within the Labour Party between the base and the executive team. Indeed whilst Jeremy Corbyn has dismissed the possibility of a referendum on the agreement over the Brexit, 78% of Labour members support a second vote. Moreover 80% of Labour members, Liberal Democrats and members of the Scottish National Party (SNP) support remaining as members of the customs union and the single market... [Read more](#)

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The UK plans its trade future



Following the publication of a White Paper on trade in October the British government called for a contribution by civil society stakeholders in the drafting of the future trade policy. On 5th January the government published a report following the different contributions that had been received, defining its position on the different issues such as unilateral trade preferences or the way to plan trade remedies... [Read more](#)

Slovenia :

Borut Pahor sworn in on 22nd December for his second term as President

Slovenian President Borut Pahor was re-elected on 12th November



2017 for a second term in office. He entered office on 22nd December on the occasion of Independence and Unity Day... [Read more](#)

Sweden :

Entry into force of the new law on climate



On January 1st a law on the climate entered into force that now obliges all Swedish governments to continue the work in energy transition according to criteria set by the Riksdag (Parliament). The presentation of a report on the climate is now obligatory at every annual government budget assessment... [Read more](#)

Iceland :

Entry into force of the law obliging wage equality between men and women



Under the term of Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir, Iceland has become the first country to include the ban on wage discrimination between men and women in its legislation. Hence a new law entered into force on January 1st enabling the sanction of any business that does not pay equal wages to men and women for the same job... [Read more](#)

Moldova :

The Moldovan President suspended from office



The President of Moldova, Igor Dodon, was suspended from office by the Constitutional Court on 2nd January. The President is accused of systematically preventing the appointment of ministers by the Prime Minister Pavel Filip, a pro-European and against the President's pro-Russian stance... [Read more](#)

Norway :

Signature of a memorandum of understanding between Norway and Poland



Norway and Poland signed a memorandum on 20th December 2017 leading to an increase in Norwegian subsidies for Poland, bringing them to a total 809.3 million €. A member of the European Economic Area, Norway participates in providing subsidies that aim to reduce economic disparities between the Member States (known as Norway Grants)... [Read more](#)

Turkey :

Emmanuel Macron hosts Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Paris



French President Emmanuel Macron hosted his Turkish counterpart, Recep Erdogan on 5th January to discuss Syria, Europe and also the sensitive issue of human rights in Turkey. The French president offered Turkey a "partnership with the EU, since membership was not on the agenda", to protect the country's "establishment" in Europe. On the side-lines of this meeting a contract was signed by the consortium Eurosam that brings together MBDA and Thales and the Turkish companies Aselsan and Rokestan for a future anti-missile system for Turkey... [Read more](#)

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Meeting between the German and Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministers



The Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Mevlüt Cavusoglu and his German counterpart Sigmar Gabriel met on 6th January to make a new start in their diplomatic relations that were shaken in 2017 by several conflictual issues... [Read more](#)

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Vatican :

The Pope asks Europeans to integrate refugees with their religious identity

Pope Francis made an appeal on 8th January for Europeans to integrate refugees with their religious identity in a long speech to diplomats



approved by the Holy See. The arrival of migrants should encourage "Europe to rediscover its own cultural and religious heritage, so that by becoming aware of the values on which it has been built, it can keep its traditions alive and continue to be a welcoming place, the herald of peace and development.".. [Read more](#)



IMF :

IMF report on the British economy



The Managing Director of the IMF Christine Lagarde deemed on 20th December that Brexit was already weighing on the UK and that growth "would be higher if the country remained open to international trade, including with the EU.".. [Read more](#)



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Eurostat :

Euro zone annual inflation down to 1.4%



Eurostat published figures on 5th January on euro zone inflation for December 2017. Hence the euro zone's annual inflation rate was estimated at 1.4% in December 2017, against 1.5% in November 2017... [Read more](#)



Studies/Reports :

The European Economy has recovered its strength



With a final Eurozone Composite Output Index of 58.1 and a final Eurozone Services Business Activity Index of 56.6 the euro zone is showing its highest economic growth since 2011 according to the economic intelligence business IHS Markit on 4th January... [Read more](#)



Migration in the Mediterranean in 2017



The International Organisation for Migration reported migration figures in Europe in 2017. According to this organisation 171,635 migrants and refugees entered Europe last year, of whom more than 70% via Italy. 3,316 refugees did not survive the Mediterranean crossing. These figures are half of what they were in 2016, during which time 363,504 refugees entered Europe... [Read more](#)



Culture :

Leeuwarden and Valletta, European capitals of culture 2018



On January 1st Leeuwarden (Netherlands) and Valletta (Malta) were appointed European capitals of culture 2018. The towns were selected on the basis of a cultural programme that is due to have high European content, promote the participation and commitment of their inhabitants and foster the long term development of the latter and the outlying regions... [Read more](#)



Rodin and photography



Under the title "Rodin in the eye of the photographer Emmanuel Berry" the Fine Arts Museum of Orleans is running an exhibition from 13th January to 15th April together with the Rodin Museum, in which the sculptor's work is seen from the angle of some 60 black and white silver prints... [Read more](#)



Paintings and representations of the Orient



The Lilian Thuram Foundation and the National Museum Eugène Delacroix have joined forces to present the exhibition "Imagination and representations of the Orient" which will run from 11th January to 2nd April in Paris. Via paintings of the Orient from the museum's permanent collection the aim is to identify "the strong ties between art representations and our modern history, between works of art and our world's issues"...

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Agenda :



12th and 13th January
Czech Republic
Presidential Election (1st round)

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