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## An analysis of Franco-German relations in the political context following the most recent elections

Author: Cyrille Schott



Cyrille Schott analyses Franco-German relations in the political context resulting from the most recent elections. The friendship is intense and complicated with real differences. The new political situation gives us hope without completely eliminating uncertainty. [Read more](#)

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### Front page! :

#### Air transport: European Parliament with its back to the wall



In his editorial on air transport, Jean-Dominique Giuliani deems that MEPs have a good opportunity to demonstrate that the European Parliament really is relinquishing its naive position for a modern conception of European sovereignty... [Read more](#)

### Elections :

#### The populist parties take the lead in the Italian elections



Two parties won in the parliamentary elections that took place in Italy on 4th March: the 5 Stars Movement (MS5) and the League (Lega). The M5S won 32.68% of the vote. The right coalition - formed of Forza Italia (FI); the League (Lega) and the Brothers of Italy (FdI) - came out ahead but without taking the absolute majority. The League (17.37%) easily drew ahead of Forza Italia (14.01%) and the Brothers of Italy, 4.35%.

The left suffered a defeat. The Democratic Party (PD) won 18.72% of the vote. In all the left coalition won 22.85% of the vote. Free and Equal (LeU) won 3.39% of the vote. Turnout was lower than the figure recorded in the previous elections on 24th and

25th February 2013 (-2.29 points). It totalled 72.91%... [Read more](#)

## Commission :

### Brexit: publication of a draft withdrawal agreement



On 28th February the Commission published a draft withdrawal agreement that will be used to support discussions between the 27 then negotiations with the UK. In a press conference Michel Barnier highlighted the alignment of the content with the negotiation guidelines adopted by the EU to date. The issue of a "total alignment of Northern Ireland" with the Republic of Ireland is mentioned if no solution is found... [Read more](#)

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### Jean-Claude Juncker in the Balkans



After Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Jean-Claude Juncker completed his trip to the Balkans on 28th February in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. During this trip he unveiled a new enlargement strategy of the EU to the Western Balkans reasserting that they were candidates to integrate the Union, whilst recalling that this membership was a demanding choice and that it would involve a long process... [Read more](#)

### Stepping up action to counter illegal online content



In September 2017 the European Commission committed to follow progress in the fight to counter illegal online content and to assess whether more measures were necessary to guarantee their detection and rapid deletion. On 1st March it recommended operational measures that are to be taken by businesses and Member States alike... [Read more](#)

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### Trade negotiations between the EU and ASEAN



On 2nd March the Economy Ministers of the ASEAN countries and the European Commissioner for Trade welcomed the strong relationship between the two entities and noted the progress made in the implementation of the "ASEAN-EU Trade and Investment Work Programme for 2017-2018". The latter comprises measures to facilitate trade, as well as achievements in terms of customs integration and the harmonisation of standards... [Read more](#)

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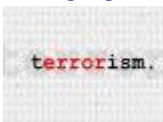
### The EU prepared to respond to the US



The President of the European Commission announced on 2nd March that he was going to suggest the introduction of "counter-measures" in response to those announced by the American President. Donald Trump indeed intends to tax steel imports by 25% and aluminium by 10%... [Read more](#)

## Parliament :

### Acting against the financing of terrorism



MEPs called on March 1st to eliminate the sources of the financing of terrorism. They notably demanded the introduction of a European counter-terrorism financial intelligence platform... [Read more](#)

### Outlook and stakes of the apiculture sector in the EU



"The Union needs a large scale, long term strategy to improve the health of bees and to guarantee re-population," maintained MEPs on 1st March in a resolution adopted by 560 votes. MEPs call on the Union and its Member States to invest more in the protection of bees' health, the fight to counter adulterated honey and support to bee-keepers... [Read more](#)

### Creation of a special committee against tax evasion



MEPs voted on 1st March in support of the creation of a new special committee (TAXE3) on financial crime and tax evasion. It will support the work of other special committees and comprise 45 members with a

### Banking Union, audition of the ECB President and the future Vice-President



MEPs adopted a report on Banking Union on 1st March. On 26th February the members of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee received Mario Draghi, President of the ECB, and then Luis de Guindos, candidate for the Vice-Presidency of the ECB... [Read more](#)

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### Rule of law in Poland



On 1st March MEPs supported 422 votes in favour, 147 against and 48 abstentions, the European Commission's proposal to trigger article 7.1 of the Treaty on European Union (clear risk of breach of the Union's values) against Poland... [Read more](#)

## Council :

### Joint declaration on posted workers



Negotiators working on behalf of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the issue of posted-workers announced on 1st March that they had come to a balanced common agreement that included issues of "equal pay for equal work", as well as a "legal framework for workers and employers.".. [Read more](#)

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### Conclusions of the General Affairs Council



The European Affairs Ministers discussed the issue of the rule of law in Poland on 27th February. They adopted a regulation aiming to ban unjustified geo-blocking within the internal market and the reform of the emissions trading system... [Read more](#)

### Environment Council: the EU ministers approve the package on the circular economy



The Union's Environment Ministers, who met in Brussels on 5th March, approved the package on the circular economy put forward by the Commission on 16th January. Supportive of a new strategy to manage plastic waste in the EU they called for the introduction of real measures as a matter of urgency to improve recycling... [Read more](#)

## Diplomacy :

### EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council Meeting



On 26th February the EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council said it was happy with the implementation of the partnership and cooperation agreement between the two partners and debated political, judicial and economic reform. Federica Mogherini chaired a bilateral meeting with the Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov... [Read more](#)

## Court of Justice :

### EU-Morocco Fisheries Agreement not applicable in the Western Sahara



The fisheries agreement concluded between the EU and Morocco is not applicable to the waters adjacent to the disputed waters of the Western Sahara, because it does not respect the right to self-rule, deemed the ECJ on 27th February... [Read more](#)

### Nine judges appointed



On 28th February nine judges and the Advocates General at the ECJ (European Court of Justice) were appointed for a mandate of six years as of 7th October 2018... [Read more](#)

## Germany :

### SPD approves the coalition agreement



On 4th March the SPD approved the coalition agreement with the CDU following a vote by the party's members. With a turnout rate of 78.4% i.e. 363,494 voters, the "yes" won with 66.02% of the vote i.e. 239,604 votes. Angela Merkel will therefore form a fourth government... [Read more](#)

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## Spain :

### Catalonia: Puigdemont gives up presidency



On March 1st Carles Puigdemont said that he was withdrawing as candidate for the presidency of Catalonia. However, the crisis is not over since he is suggesting that Jordi Sanchez, who is in prison, take his place. The Spanish government's spokesperson Íñigo Méndez de Vigo and Justice Minister Rafael Catalá qualified this move as a "farce"... [Read more](#)

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## Greece :

### Creditors' greenlight on the payment of 5.7 billion €



On 2nd March Greece indicated that it had received the greenlight from its European creditors for the disbursement of a further tranche of aid totalling 5.7 billion € in its loans programme that is due to end in August. The payment of 5.7 billion will be made "mid-March", once it has been approved by the national parliaments of the countries in which this procedure is required... [Read more](#)

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### Ministerial reshuffle



The Greek government undertook a ministerial reshuffle on 28th February following the resignation of an Economy Minister. The latter was replaced by the present Deputy Prime Minister Yannis Dragasakis. Five others were concerned by this including the Immigration Minister who is in hospital, replaced by former Deputy Defence Minister Dimitris Vitsas... [Read more](#)

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## The Netherlands :

### MPs vote for the end of the consultative referendum



Dutch MPs have voted to repeal the bill on consultative referendums, a type of election that placed the government in a difficult position when the citizens rejected the association agreement between the EU and Ukraine in 2016... [Read more](#)

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## UK :

### Brexit: Theresa May support as "wide" a free-trade agreement as possible



On 2nd March Theresa May gave her fourth speech on Brexit. She acknowledged that her country would not get everything that it wants in the negotiations to leave the EU, whilst advocating as "wide" a free-trade agreement as possible... [Read more](#)

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### Scotland and Wales present their own draft bills



On 27th February the Scottish and Welsh governments presented their draft bills on Brexit, designed to repatriate into their regions certain competences, notably in terms of fishing and agriculture at the risk of causing a constitutional crisis. In real terms these two texts aim to enable the governments in Edinburgh and Cardiff to recover competences devolved to the EU once Brexit has occurred... [Read more](#)

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## Serbia :

### Meeting between Angela Merkel and the Serb President

Angela Merkel met Serb President Aleksander Vucic in Berlin on 27th February. During their press conference the Chancellor recalled Germany's support to Serbia's possible entry into the EU... [Read more](#)

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## Norway :

### Meeting between Emmanuel Macron and Erna Solberg



French President E. Macron met the Norwegian Prime Minister, Erna Solberg on 27th February at the Elysée Palace. Together they discussed the importance of their bilateral relation and especially the different trade agreements that link Norway to the EU... [Read more](#)

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## Migration :

### Africa: new programmes to protect migrants



On 26th February the European Union adopted three new programmes, totalling more than 150 million euros, in virtue of a emergency trust fund for Africa, thereby following up directly on commitments made by the joint EU-African Union-UN working group in view of remedying the situation of migrants in Libya... [Read more](#)

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### The EIB releases 3.7 billion € for migratory issues



On 27th February the Council gave the greenlight to an increase in loans granted by the European Investment Bank to projects that aim to settle the migratory issue... [Read more](#)

## Eurostat :

### Unemployment at its lowest in Europe



Unemployment in the EU and the euro zone remained stable in January at 7.3% and 8.6% i.e. the same level as in December but down in comparison with January 2017 (8.1% and 9.6%) announced Eurostat on March 1st... [Read more](#)

### Inflation rate in the euro zone down to 1.2%



According to figures published by Eurostat on 28th February the euro zone's annual inflation rate is estimated at 1.2% in February 2018, against 1.3% in January 2018... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

### European Art Fair TEFAF Maastricht



The European Fair of Fine Arts (TEFAF) that covers more than 7000 years of the history of art, will bring together the biggest international art galleries from 10th to 18th March... [Read more](#)

### Paul Klee Exhibition in Munich



The Pinakothek Modern Munich is running an exhibition until 10th June on the works of Paul Klee called "Construction of Mystery". The exhibition highlights the 1920's, the years in which Klee rises to the challenges of the new technological world... [Read more](#)

### Joan Miro Exhibition in Valencia

The Valencia Institute for Modern Art is running an exhibition until 17th June on Joan Miro entitled "Order and Disorder". It explores the signs of



indiscipline left behind by the artist during his career... [Read more](#)

### "Free Culture" Festival in Brussels



Until 30th March the "Free Culture" Festival is taking place at the Solbosh Campus in Brussels. Devoted to cultural diversity it pays tribute to cinema, architecture, street-art, music, dance and also photography... [Read more](#)

### Poets' Spring Paris



From 7th to 11th March the 20th Poets' Spring will be taking place at the Galerie de Génie at the Bastille. On this occasion the latter will be hosting a collective exhibition of its artists mixing amongst others painting, poetry and photography... [Read more](#)

### Exhibition "High Society, Four Centuries of Glamour" at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam



The Rijksmuseum Amsterdam is running an exhibition from 8th March to 3rd June "High Society, Four Centuries of Glamour". It offers visitors the works of the grand masters, notably including Cranach, Veronese, Velazquez, Reynolds, Munch and Manet... [Read more](#)

### Egon Schiele Exhibition - Brus and Palme at the Leopold Museum



The Leopold Museum brings together three artists and their generation, Egon Schiele (1890-1918), Gunter Brus (1938), and Thomas Palme (1967) in an exhibition that is running until 11th June in Vienna... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



5th March  
Brussels  
'Environment" Council



6th March  
Brussels  
"Foreign Affairs" Council



From 8th to 9th March  
Brussels  
"Justice and Internal Affairs" Council



12th to 15th March  
Strasbourg  
Plenary session of the European Parliament

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