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## Defence: Europe's Awakening

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"We have moved more in the last two years than over the last 60," wrote the European Commission in June 2017 in a paper devoted to the future of European defence. This file reviews recent developments in terms of "Defence Europe" between real progress and persistent challenges and suggests a direction to follow in order not to allow this dynamic to die.

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### Foundation :

#### Schuman Report 2018 on the State of the Union 2018



The "Schuman Report 2018 on the State of the Union" is now available in French and English. In this edition analysis focuses on the challenges that Europe faces, notably from the point of view of defence, with the best specialist expertise, an exclusive interview with French President Emmanuel Macron, commented maps and statistics, offering an complete overview of the European Union. You can order it on line from our site, find it digital format or buy it from a bookshop... [Read more](#)

#### European feeling in France



As part of the campaign "IdentifyEUrope", the European Student Think Tank is organising a debate at the French National Assembly on 24th May. Debate led by the Young Europeans will focus on the theme of "European feeling in France" and will be moderated by MP Constance Le Grip. Thierry Chopin, the Foundation's Research Director will be taking part... [Read more](#)

## European Council :

### EU-Western Balkans Summit: Joint Declaration



On 17th May the 28 heads of State and government came to agreement on the Sofia Declaration which insists on "European values and principles", the respect of "democracy and the rule of law", unequivocal support to the "Western Balkans European perspective", but also on the importance of "good neighbourly relations" and regional connectedness. A "priority action plan" was also drafted covering for example a doubling in payments allocated to the region as part of the Erasmus+ programme... [Read more](#)

## Commission :

### Iran: the EU launches a process to block American sanctions



On 18th May the Commission announced that it was launching the process that will enable it to prevent the extra-territorial effects of the American sanctions regarding European businesses that want to invest in Iran... [Read more](#)

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### Europe's research, innovation and competitiveness



On 15th May the Commission presented its conclusions on research and innovation, as well as, on the measures to take to guarantee Europe's competitiveness at world level... [Read more](#)

### Sustainable air quality and mobility for Europe



On 17th May the Commission announced the introduced of real aid for national, regional and local stakeholders for the improvement of air quality in Europe. It unveiled its proposals to make roads safer and cleaner, and by introducing for example a limit to CO2 emissions by lorries and by making certain technologies for driverless vehicles obligatory. This is the third and last "mobility package" by the European executive... [Read more](#)

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### European Agenda on Migration and Visa Policy



On 16th May the Commission presented a report on the progress made as part of the European migration agenda and the Commission's roadmap of December 2017. It also proposed the completion of the visa information system, the database containing information about people asking for "Schengen" visas, in order to respond better to changing challenges set by security and migration and to improve the management of the European Union's external borders... [Read more](#)

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## Parliament :

### Towards fair financing and a true common agricultural policy



On 16th May MEPs of the Agriculture Committee at the European Parliament adopted proposals on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020, in support of a CAP that is better designed, fairer and funded adequately and really in common. Amongst the proposals features making agricultural establishments more sustainable and fully integrated into the circular economy... [Read more](#)

## Council :

### Trade Council Decisions



The Trade Ministers gave the European Commission the greenlight on 22nd May to open negotiations in view of concluding free-trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand. They also adopted a new approach for the negotiation and conclusion of the Union's trade agreements..... [Read more](#)

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## Diplomacy :

### Agreement of Principle EU-Iran to save that on nuclear issues

In Brussels Iran and the European signatories of the text on the country's nuclear programme concluded an agreement of principle on



15th May in a bid to save this agreement after the USA's withdrawal. On 16th 28 leaders agreed on a "united approach" to save the Iranian nuclear agreement. They agreed to continue supporting the agreement "as long as Iran respected it" and "to start work to protect European businesses affected by the American decision.".. [Read more](#)

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#### EU-Tunisia Association Council



The 14th session of the EU-Tunisia Association Council took place on 15th May in Brussels. The areas of enhanced cooperation are mainly the employability of young people and reform, the consolidation of democracy and the promotion of good governance, the response to common security challenges and the management of migration... [Read more](#)

#### Joint EU-Cuba Council Meeting



On 15th May during the joint EU-Cuba Council the EU strengthened the partnership concluded with Cuba in November with the signature of an agreement totalling 18 million € with regard to renewable energies... [Read more](#)

#### Court of Justice :

##### Justice confirms the restrictions on the use of three neonicotinoids



The EU Court of Justice confirmed on 17th May the restrictions of the use of three neonicotinoids decided in 2013. The latter are insecticides considered dangerous for bees, a fact that has been challenged by manufacturers Bayer and Syngenta... [Read more](#)

#### Germany :

##### Meeting between Angela Merkel and Vladimir Putin



On 18th May the German Chancellor and the Russian President met in Sochi. It is Ms Merkel's first visit since 2015. They defended their submarine gas pipeline project "Nord Stream 2" that is threatened by American sanctions. The two leaders also spoke of the Iranian nuclear agreement which the Russians, Chinese and Europeans are trying to save after D. Trump's decision to withdraw from the text and to re-introduce sanctions against Iran... [Read more](#)

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##### Joint Franco-German position on cross-border cooperation



French and German MPs adopted joint positions on 17th May that aimed to deepen cross-border cooperation to eliminate obstacles, build bridges, facilitate daily life and therefore bring people living in border regions together... [Read more](#)

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#### Spain :

##### Quim Torra sworn in as President of Catalonia



On 14th May the Parliament of Catalonia swore in Quim Torra, a radical supporter of independence close to Carles Puigdemont, 66 votes in support 65 against. During his investiture ceremony on 17th May he refused to swear loyalty to the Spanish Constitution as custom requires it... [Read more](#)

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#### Greece :

##### Agreement with the creditors on reforms in the 3rd rescue plan



Greece and its international creditors concluded an agreement of principle on the fourth assessment of progress in terms of reform undertaken as part of the 3rd and last rescue plan. The Greek Minister for Finance Euclide Tsakalotos stressed that the agreement would be ratified during the next Eurogroup meeting on 24th May. The 3rd rescue plan is to come to an end for Greece in August... [Read more](#)

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## Hungary :

### The Open Society Foundation leaves the country



The Open Society Foundation that finances many NGO's in Hungary and across the world announced on 15th May that it was leaving Hungary with very strong words regarding the increasing hostility which it has been facing over the last year in this country. The First Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans qualified the foundation's departure from Hungary as "regrettable", deeming that "democracy was suffering" if an NGO had to relinquish its activities due to its threats... [Read more](#)

## Ireland :

### IMF and ECB report on Ireland



According to an IMF report on Ireland published on 14th May the country has made significant progress in recovering from the crisis and economic expansion now ongoing has been fast. On 18th May the European Central Bank also published its conclusions... [Read more](#)

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## Italy :

### Joint government agreement M5S-Lega



On 18th May the Five Stars Movement and the Lega unveiled a joint government programme to lead Italy. This agreement no longer explicitly speaks of leaving the euro zone and the name of Giuseppe Conte, a lawyer, has been suggested to President Sergio Mattarella for the position of President of the Council... [Read more](#)

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## UK :

### The Lords inflict yet another defeat on the government



The House of Lords inflicted yet another defeat on the British government on 16th May as it voted an amendment supporting the maintenance of European environmental rules in the UK after Brexit. The text was approved 294 votes against 244 when the draft government bill on Brexit was assessed by the Lords... [Read more](#)

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### Scotland rejects the Brexit withdrawal bill



On 15th May the Scottish parliament rejected the so-called "EU withdrawal bill" presented by the British government, 93 votes to 30. This non-binding vote illustrates the stand-off between the British government which is refusing to grant more competences to the Scottish government after Brexit... [Read more](#)

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## Ukraine :

### Inauguration of the bridge linking Russia to the Crimea



The bridge linking the Crimea to Russia, inaugurated on 15th May by the Russian President Vladimir Putin, four years after the Ukrainian peninsula's annexation by Moscow, is a further "infringement of Kyiv's sovereignty" deplored the Union. Russia has built this infrastructure "without the consent of Ukraine". "It is a further violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and its territorial integrity by Russia"... [Read more](#)

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## Council of Europe :

### 2018 Report by the General Secretary



The fifth report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, on the situation of democracy, Human Rights and the rule of law in Europe was published on 14th May and points to the role of the institutions in Europe and on the attempts made to discredit them both at European and Member State level... [Read more](#)

## OECD :

### The rate of unemployment rate in the OECD zone stable at 5.4%

On 15th May the OECD published the unemployment rate for the zone. The latter remains stable at 5.4% in March 2018. According to the publication 34 million people were unemployed in the OECD zone...



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### Family favourable policies are one of the main drivers of economic growth



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It emerges in a new OECD report published on 14th May that policies that support the family introduced in the countries of the north over the last fifty years and the rise in women's employment, which resulted from this, has increased GDP growth per capita from 10% to 20%...

### IMF :

#### IMF report on Germany



In its annual report on Germany, that was published on 14th May the IMF invited the country, Europe's leading economic power, to increase public spending... [Read more](#)

#### The IMF calls for an rapid agreement on Greece



In an interview dated on 15th May the director for Europe at the IMF Poul Thomsen called for an immediate agreement with the Europeans regarding the restructuring of the Greek debt without which it might lack time to be able to take part in the most recent aid programme to Athens... [Read more](#)

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#### IMF European Economic Outlook



According to a report published on 15th May the IMF believes that Europe continues to record vigorous growth. Activity has grown firmer in many countries and this trend is due to continue. The real GDP rose by 2.8% in 2017, after having increased by 1.8% in 2016. The IMF forecasts that growth will reach 2.6% in 2018 before dropping to 2.2% in 2019... [Read more](#)

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### Eurostat :

#### Rise in GDP of 0.4% in the first quarter



During the first quarter of 2018 the GDP increased by 0.4% in the European Union and in the euro zone in comparison with the previous quarter, according to an estimate published by Eurostat on 15th May. In the fourth quarter of 2017 the GDP had increased by 0.6% in the Union and by 0.7% in the euro zone... [Read more](#)

#### More than 31,000 unaccompanied minors asked for asylum in the Union in 2017



According to a Eurostat press release published on 16th May in 2017 31,400 asylum seekers who asked for international protection in the EU, were considered to be unaccompanied minors... [Read more](#)

### European Agencies :

#### Opening of Galileo Reference Centre



On 16th May the Dutch Minister Cora van Nieuwenhuizen opened the Galileo Reference Centre in Noordwijk, the Netherlands. The centre will monitor the quality of data generated by the European satellite navigation system, Galileo. The centre will also coordinate with the American GPS and Russian GLONASS systems... [Read more](#)

### Studies/Reports :

#### Young Europeans in the East attached to the EU

According to the report published on 17th May by Globsec for the





Bratislava forum, the pro-European feeling amongst the young people in Eastern Europe has increased significantly. 69% of Hungarians aged 18 to 24 believe that the country is "part of the West" just like 57% of the Czechs and 34% of the Slovaks. Most of those interviewed believe that the EU is a "good thing" and would vote, if it was requested, for their upkeep within the latter... [Read more](#)

**Culture :**

**Chantiers d'Europe: European artists on stage**



The Théâtre de la Ville Paris is organising the "Chantiers de l'Europe" until 30th May. Dozens of European artists are performing in various Parisian theatres with the aim of showing the unity of Europe and its people... [Read more](#)

**Picasso's Kitchen in Barcelona**



From 25th May to 30th September the Picasso Museum of Barcelona is proposing an exhibition on the theme of food and cooking, extremely present in Picasso's work. The exhibition will bring together nearly 200 works of art from museums, private institutions and collections from the world over... [Read more](#)

**Canaletto Exhibition in Edinburgh**



The Queen's Gallery at the Holyroodhouse Palace is showing one of the most beautiful collections by the Venetian painter Antonio Canal, or Canaletto (1697-1768), alongside his contemporaries Sebastiano, Marco Ricci, Francesco Zuccarelli, Giovanni Battista Piazzetta and Pietro Longhi in an exhibition entitled "Canaletto and the Art of Venice" until 21st October in Edinburgh... [Read more](#)

**Agenda :**



22nd May  
Brussels  
"Foreign Affairs" Council (Trade and Development)



22nd May  
Brussels  
"Education, Youth, Culture and Sport" Council



24th May  
Brussels  
Eurogroup



25th May  
Brussels  
"Economic and Financial Affairs" Council  
Ireland  
Referendum on Abortion



28th May  
Brussels  
"Foreign Affairs" Council  
"Competitiveness" Council (Internal Market and Industry)



28th to 31st May  
Strasbourg

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