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What European "Power"?

Author: Pierre Hassner



A major thinker on violence and peace, Pierre Hassner has just passed away. A "European" thinker throughout his career and studies, the latter formed part of the constant movement between East and West. A thinker on freedom, his infinitely subtle contribution to the analysis of the most complex events has been significant; he was always extremely rigorous, intellectually modest and extremely humble. A thinker on the balance of international

power, he was the first to identify and analyse, with great acumen and accuracy, "the revenge of political passion" that forms the centre of the period in which we now live. Pierre Hassner was kind enough to write a text for us, "Europe and Power", in 2012. As we re-read this text at the time of his death, it seems clear to us that it is still very topical, as highlighted by the conclusion: "It will only be if in the face the impotence and danger of catastrophe, that there is a leap towards solidarity in both political, social and European terms, thereby overcoming specific egotism and the absolute power of the markets, that Europe will have an opportunity to recover the meaning of its vocation and its power." We are publishing this text in tribute to Pierre Hassner. He was one of the most brilliant European minds.

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Contents

Foundation : Defence - Publication **Commission** : European Semester - 2019 Budget - Personal Data - SMEs - Finance - Environment - Youth - VAT **Parliament** : Facebook **Council** : Defence - Education - Development - Copyright - Economy/Finances - Eurogroup **Diplomacy** : Africa - USA - Council **Germany** : China **Spain** : Corruption **France** : Russia - Elections/EU **Greece** : Growth **Hungary** : Government **Ireland** : Referendum - Risks **Italy** : Politics **UK** : EU-UK - Brexit **Ukraine** : Russia **European Agencies** : OLAF **OECD** : Growth **Eurobarometer** : Citizens/EU **Studies/Reports** : Convergence - ECB **Culture** : Exhibition/Dublin - Exhibition/Stockholm - Exhibition/Oslo - Exhibition/Paris - Exhibition/Bilbao - Exhibition/Otterlo

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

Foundation :

Defence Europe, one ambition, one requirement



The town of Saint-Malo and the House of Europe, Rennes and Haute-Bretagne are jointly organising a conference on the theme of Defence Europe on 1st June. Jean-Dominique Giuliani will be speaking on the most recent progress made in this area... [Read more](#)



The "Schuman Report 2018 on the State of the Union" is available in French and English. This edition analyses the challenges that Europe faces. An exclusive interview with French President Emmanuel Macron, commented maps and statistics, offer a full overview of the European Union. You can order it on-line from our site; it also exists in digital format or in bookshops... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Publication of the European Semester spring report



The spring package of the European Semester 2018 was published by the European Commission on 23rd May. This recommends notably that the Member States step up the process of sustained, inclusive growth over the long term. The economic guidelines described in this report will be valid for the next 12 to 18 months. It suggests ending the excessive deficit procedure launched against France in 2009... [Read more](#)

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2019 budget: a budget focused on continuity and implementation



On 23rd May the Commission presented its proposal for the Union's budget in 2019. The budget that totals 166 billion € in commitment payments, ie an increase of 3% in comparison with 2018 aims to invest in a stronger, more resilient European economy and to promote solidarity and security on either side of the Union's borders... [Read more](#)

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GDPR: new data protection rules entered into force on 25th May



The new European rules in terms of data protection, which strengthen citizens' rights and simplify the rules for businesses entered into force on 25th May. The new general regulation was adopted in April 2016 and aims to protect citizens against any infringement of their privacy and their data, in a world in which the exchange of data is constantly increasing, whilst creating a clearer, more coherent framework for businesses... [Read more](#)

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Capital Markets Union: facilitating the financing of SMEs



On 24th May the European Commission put forward new rules aiming to make it easier for SME's to get financing on the stock markets. This initiative which is part of the programme for the introduction of a capital markets union (CMU) aims to help the EU's businesses which want to develop to get cheaper financing on the markets.. [Read more](#)

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Financial Union: the Commission supports greater financial integration



On 24th May the Commission proposed further rules that will allow the market to put forward solutions to help integrate and diversify the European financial sector, to build a stronger, more resilient economic and monetary union. The proposal will remove unwarranted regulatory obstacles to the market-led development of sovereign bond-backed securities (SBBS). These securities would be issued by private institutions as claims on a portfolio of euro-area government bonds... [Read more](#)

Making the financing sector a major player in the fight to counter climate change



On 24th May the Commission published the first real action that will help the European financial sector show the path towards a greener, cleaner economy. Indeed the participation of the financial sector will significantly stimulate work that aims to reduce our ecological footprint whilst strengthening the sustainability and competitiveness of the European economy... [Read more](#)

A Europe for Youth



The Commission announced the introduction a European Education Area by 2025. This initiative will help strengthen the EU's cultural aspect and youth participation through various measures such as the "youth strategy" and even an Agenda for Culture... [Read more](#)

EU Fair Taxation : towards a single, fraud-proof VAT area



On 25th May the Commission proposed technical changes to the European regulations on VAT that complete the suggested reform of the system with the aim of making it more resilient; fraud is estimated at 50 billion €. The package of measures substantially modifies the rules relating to VAT and should make life easier for companies across the

EU, putting an end to 25 years of a 'transitional' VAT regime in the Single Market...
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Parliament :

Mark Zuckerberg speaks to MEPs



The Founder and CEO of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg appeared before Parliament on 22nd May and met with President Tajani and the leaders of the Parliament's political groups. He had to answer some questions put by MEPs regarding the protection of data, the new GDPR rules, interference by Facebook in electoral campaigns over the last few years and the future of advertising and other targeted content... [Read more](#)

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Council :

European Defence: agreement for an industrial development programme



The Bulgarian presidency and the representatives of the European Parliament announced on 23rd May the introduction of a new industrial development programme for European Defence. After having followed the traditional legislative procedure the text will be approved in 2019 so that the first real results will emerge in 2020... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the "Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council



During the "Education, Youth, Culture and Sport" Council on 22nd and 23rd May ministers adopted conclusions on the creation of a European zone for Education, the promotion of an inclusive education in Europe, the role of youth in rising to the demographic challenge, and the promotion of European values via sport. They also discussed priorities

for the future Youth Policy and investment in culture so that this is at the forefront of Union policies... [Read more](#)

Development Council Meeting



On 22nd May Ministers addressed relations between the EU and the countries of the ACP (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) after 2020, the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the international aid budget 2021-2027 as well as cooperation in terms of energy and sustainable development... [Read more](#)

Agreement on on-line copyright



On 25th May the Council met to assert its position on the directive regarding a strengthening and the management of European on-line copyright standards. This joint position will be used as a mandate by

the Presidency of the Council to start negotiations with the European Parliament...
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Banking Union on the agenda of the "Economic and Financial Ministers" Meeting



The 28 Economic and Financial Affairs Ministers met on 25th May to confirm their position on Banking Union. They suggested the reduction of risks in the banking sector, strengthening rules on capital requirements and the introduction of new directives to rescue banks in the event of a major problem, they also adopted conclusions to counter tax fraud... [Read more](#)

Eurogroup Meeting



On 24th May Eurogroup met, firstly convening the 19 euro zone ministers, then those of the 27 Union Member States. The main themes discussed were Greece's economic adjustment plan, the euro zone's economic situation and the "2018 Spring Forecasts" issued by the Commission and an overview of growth and employment in Europe. The 27 also

discussed the future role of Banking Union... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

EU-AU cooperation for youth, employment and peace



The European Union and the African Union jointly adopted new concrete measures on 24th May to respond together to world challenges and to strengthen their cooperation in terms of peace and security, migration, employment and agriculture. In the context of this partnership the EU will give extra aid totalling 400 million euro to finance continental and regional projects in Africa...

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Europe-USA Joint Declaration



On 22nd and 23rd May the EU-USA ministerial council addressed internal affairs and justice in Sofia. This meeting led to the confirmation of total cooperation between the two entities in terms of justice, likewise the importance of responding jointly to security threats...

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Conclusions on Syria, elections in Venezuela and EU-Asia



On 28th May the Council of the European Union extended the EU's restrictive measures against the Syrian regime until 1st June 2019 and adopted conclusions on Venezuela and the undemocratic nature of the most recent elections there. They also adopted conclusions on strengthened EU-Asia cooperation in terms of security. They debated the Iranian nuclear agreement after the USA's withdrawal, recent developments in Gaza and the need to find a two State solution, the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the EU-ACP partnership...

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Germany :

Angela Merkel travels to China



German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to China on 24th May for her 12th visit since she entered office. She said she had found points of convergence on protecting the Iranian agreement, the promotion of multilateralism and free-trade...

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Spain :

Motion of no confidence introduced against the People's Party, found guilty of corruption



On 24th May the People's Party (PP) in office in Spain was sentenced to reimburse 245, 492 euros for its profit-seeking participation in a complex system of bribes in exchange for public contracts. More than 29 people were sentenced to a total of 351 years in prison for crimes of corruption. On 25th May the Socialist Party (PSOE), supported by Podemos (radical left), introduced a motion of no confidence and is seeking the 176 votes necessary to do this. Ciudadanos (centre-right) is defending the idea of an immediate snap election...

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France :

Emmanuel Macron in Russia



On 24th and 25th May the French President Emmanuel Macron travelled to Russia to meet his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. The two leaders addressed topical issues like their differences over Syria and the Iranian nuclear issue. On 25th May Emmanuel Macron was guest of honour at the Economic Forum of St Petersburg...

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Final greenlight for single constituency in the European elections



On 23rd May the French Parliament gave its final greenlight to the re-introduction of a single constituency in the European elections, which, according to the government, will be a means to attract the French population's interest in the election. Senators gave their agreement to the version of the bill drafted with MPs during the mixed parity committee...

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Greece :

The Prime Minister presents his growth plan



On 23rd May Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras presented his "plan for Greek economic growth and the country's development" to Parliament, stressing that "memorandums were now a part of the past". In view of Athens' emerging from the financial aid programme on 20th August next this text highlights the fight to counter unemployment, the return to a normal situation in the banking sector, the reform of the energy sector, the revalorisation of the minimum wage and the fight to counter illegal work... [Read more](#)

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Hungary :

Government sworn in



Hungarian President Janos Ader accepted the government format put forward by Prime Minister Victor Orban on 18th May which comprises 13 ministers of whom only one is a woman. Sworn in before Parliament V. Orban recalled the priorities of his mandate: the protection of the borders and the fight to counter immigration... [Read more](#)

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Ireland :

Legalisation of the right to abortion



On 25th May the Republic of Ireland legalised abortion via referendum with a victory for the "yes" at 66.4% for the repeal of the 8th amendment of the Constitution which banned this medical act. The Irish Prime Minister qualified the result as a "quiet revolution"... [Read more](#)

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The government is trying to assess the risks of Brexit



On 23rd May the Irish government published its "national risk assessment project" and invited the public to give its opinion of what they believe to be the biggest dangers that Ireland will have to face. The government mentions in particular the risks linked to Brexit which "have developed significantly and will remain very serious"... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

Towards a technical government and further elections in Italy



On 27th May Giuseppe Conte who had been asked to form a government in Italy resigned after a meeting with the Italian President Sergio Mattarella who notably opposed the appointment of eurosceptic Paolo Savona as Finance Minister. On 28th the Italian President asked Carlo Cottarelli, a former IMF executive to form an interim government... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Brexit: British priorities for the UK-EU economic partnership



On Thursday 24th May the British government published its vision of the future economic partnership linking the UK and the EU. This will take the shape of a free-trade agreement including goods and services. On the same day Michel Barnier criticised this option deeming that the EEA was a better cooperation framework for the British whilst for its part the British parliament voted in support of Customs Union... [Read more](#)

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Brexit has already cost British households 1000€ each



The governor of the Bank of England estimated, as he spoke to the committee of the Treasury of the House of Commons on 22nd May, that Brexit has cost each British household £900 each, or 1000€. This estimate is based on the income differential in comparison with 2016 or on the hypothesis of the UK remaining in the Union... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine :

Ukraine: the flight MH17 shot down by a missile launched by a Russian military unit

On 24th May the Joint Investigation Team that brings together the best



international experts revealed that the Bouk-Telar missile (of Russian design) which brought down the MH17 flight on 17th July 2014 came from the 53rd Anti Aircraft Missile brigade based in Kursk, Russia. 298 people, mainly Dutch nationals, died in the incident... [Read more](#)

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European Agencies :

Towards close collaboration between OLAF and the European Public Prosecutor's Office
On 23rd May the European Commission suggested the modification of regulation governing the investigations undertaken by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). This measure aims to give OLAF the necessary means to work closely together with the European Public Prosecutor's Office on the detection of fraud in the Union and any connected investigations. OLAF will retain its central role in the protection of the Union's financial interests... [Read more](#)



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OECD :

The OECD's growth figures for the first quarter of 2018



On 22nd May the OECD published its growth figures for the first quarter of 2018. According to the latter growth slowed to 0.4% in the EU and in the euro zone in the first quarter of 2018 (against 0.6% and 0.7% respectively in the previous quarter)... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Record support to the European Union



A Eurobarometer survey undertaken in April 2018 amongst 27,601 citizens from 28 Member States that was presented on 23rd May reveals that just one year before the European elections, 60% of Europe's citizens believe that their country's membership of the EU is positive, and two-thirds of those interviewed are convinced that their country has benefited from belonging to the EU. This is the highest result recorded since 1983 despite the context of Brexit... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

Convergence report 2018: assessment of progress made by the Member States



According to the 2018 Convergence Report by the Commission, published on 23rd May the 7 Member States that do not yet belong to the euro zone and which are legally bound to adopt the single currency (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Sweden) generally illustrate significant nominal convergence, but none of them totally fulfils all of the formal conditions required to join the euro zone... [Read more](#)

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Report on Financial Stability



According to the most recent six-monthly report on financial stability by the European Central Bank published on 24th May systemic risk in the euro zone has remained low over the last six months thanks to better internal and external growth prospects. However the study shows that although European banks' profitability has improved, structural weaknesses persist. The downturn in growth and the easing of the budgetary policy in high-debt countries might also affect the fiscal outlook... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Drawing Dublin



Until 26th August the National Gallery of Ireland is offering an exhibition of drawings on paper including a great number of pictures linked to the history of the city of Dublin. Landscapes, figure studies and portraits will be presented, describing how the capital was interpreted by the artists over the centuries... [Read more](#)

Hokusai in Stockholm

Until 3rd June the Millesgården Museum of Stockholm is running an unique exhibition of various works by the Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai, known across the world for his woodblock print "The Great



Wave off Kanagawa"... [Read more](#)

Andy Warhol Exhibition "After Munch"



Until 26th August the Munch Museum on the Move-Kunsthall in Oslo is running an exhibition, including three of the 15 originals that Andy Warhol created with motifs taken directly from Edvard Munch's most well known lithographies. Screenprints from a unique series of the same motifs are also on show and Warhol's film "Kiss" (1963) is being screened... [Read more](#)

The Small Explorers Shop on Quai Branly



Until 7th October the Museum on the Quai Branly is hosting a unique exhibition which reviews the way popular culture in France presented "countries from afar" to young people in 19th century literature to the modern day... [Read more](#)

Chagall exhibition at the Guggenheim of Bilbao



From 1st June to 2nd September the Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao is hosting an exhibition on Marc Chagall. Set up on the initiative of the Kunstmuseum of Basel it is showing a selection of works created during a decisive period 1911-1919... [Read more](#)

Odilon Redon exhibition at the Kröller-Müller



From 2nd June to 9th September the Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands will be throwing new light on French painter Odilon Redon (1840-1916) with the exhibition "Odilon Redon. Literature and Music". Via a great number of paintings, lithographies, pastels and drawings, the exhibition unveils the key role played by literature and music in the artist's life and works... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



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



28th and 29th May
Brussels
Competitiveness Council



28th to 31st May
Strasbourg
Plenary Session at the European Parliament



3rd June
Slovenia
General Elections



4th and 5th June
Luxembourg
"Justice and Internal Affairs" Council

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