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European Union-Russia: after three lost decades, are we moving towards new cohabitation?

Author: Pierre Mirel



To date relations between the European Union and Russia have been based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed in 1994 and entering into force in 1997 after ratification by the Member States and European Parliament. It established a political framework similar to the association agreements with the countries of Central Europe except that it did not include the establishment of an area of free-trade. Concluded for a period of ten years and

renewed automatically yearly the PCA has been suspended for the main part. Has the time not come to think of relations with Russia differently? and on which terms?

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Elections :

Sweden: right and left running neck and neck and the populist breakthrough not as big as forecast



After the release of the first results in the Swedish general election on 9th September the blocks on the left and right are running neck and neck: 144 MPs for the left and 143 for the right. The Social Democrats of the outgoing Prime Minister came out ahead but with the worst score in their history - 28.4% of the vote and 101 seats. The Moderates Party (M), led by Ulf Kristersson won 19.8% of the vote and 70 seats. The populist party, the Democrats of Sweden achieved a lower score than forecast, with 17.6% and 62 seats. Hence votes of Swedes living abroad still have to be counted (250,000, 4% of the electorate), on 12th September to see who the real winner is. The two political blocks are almost on a level and so the formation of the next government will be difficult... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Data Protection EU-Japan: procedure to adopt the adequacy decision



On 5th September the Commission triggered the adoption of its adequacy decision between Japan and the European Union regarding personal data protection... [Read more](#)

Distribution of milk, fruit and vegetables to schoolchildren



The EU's programme to distribution fruit, vegetables and milk to schools is starting again this year. It aims to encourage healthy food habits amongst children, hence to explain to them the importance of good nutrition and the way that food products are made... [Read more](#)

Council :

Position adoption on the EU's draft budget for 2019



On 4th September the Council settled its position regarding the new draft EU budget for 2019. Austrian Finance Minister, Hartwig Löger, will present the Council's position to the European Parliament during the September plenary session. MEPs will have until 24th October to amend it... [Read more](#)

Informal meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers



During an informal meeting in Vienna on 7th and 8th September the EU's Economy and Finance Ministers expressed their commitment to a fair taxation of the digital economy and a plan to strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union. According to the European Commission's proposal the tax on digital services in the Member States will be applied to business activities with a minimum global revenue of

over 750 million €, as well as revenues in the Union of a minimum of 50 million €... [Read more](#)

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Adoption of the European travel information and authorization system (ETIAS)



On 5th September 2018 the Council adopted the regulation establishing a European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS). This system allows prior checks and if necessary the rejection of travel in the Schengen area on the part of third country citizens, who are exempted of visa requirements. They will have to obtain the authorization to travel prior to travel and a request on-line. This new system is due to be operational by 2021... [Read more](#)

Eurogroup Meeting



On 7th September, the Finance Ministers of the euro zone discussed the economic perspectives and challenges facing the euro zone, as well as the allocative efficiency of resources to the labour and product markets; they assessed the 8th Post-Programme Surveillance (PPS) mission to Portugal. Then the 27 Finance Ministers exchanged views on the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union and on the common safety net for the Single Resolution Fund... [Read more](#)

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Parliament :

Manfred Weber bids to be lead candidate of his party and to stand for the post of President of the Commission



On 5th September in view of the next European elections, the leader of the European People's Party (EPP) in the European Parliament, Manfred Weber officially said he would be running as the lead candidate for his political family and therefore as candidate to the Presidency of the

European Commission... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Difficult dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia

On 7th September in Brussels the Serb President Aleksander Vucic and his Kosovar counterpart Hashim Thaçi held talks and met separately with Federica Mogherini, to discuss a possible exchange of land that is



intended to foster the accession of their countries to the EU. Fifteen days ago in Vienna they agreed to do everything they could to finalise a peace agreement by the spring of 2019... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

Report on Erasmus+



The European Court of Auditors assessed the European student mobility programme Erasmus+. The opinion it gave on 6th September points to the added value gained for the participants countries. The Court deplors however that the application procedures and the establishment of the reports are still too complex. The report goes together with general proposals that target the improvement of the programme... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Preparation of the UK's exit from the EU



The German Council of Ministers adopted a draft bill on 5th September which governs the period of transition (29th March 2019 to the end of 2020) after the UK's exit from the European Union. During this period the UK and its inhabitants will be treated in the same way as a member of an EU country according to German federal law... [Read more](#)

Austria :

Meeting between the Austrian Chancellor and Ukrainian President



Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz met Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on 4th September. The two leaders discussed bilateral relations between their two countries, as well as the political situation in Ukraine. Sebastian Kurz also called on Russia to come back to the negotiating table... [Read more](#)

Spain :

Meeting with the Swedish Prime Minister



Swedish Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven hosted his Spanish counterpart Pedro Sanchez on 5th September notably to discuss social cohesion, Brexit and migratory issues... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers of France and Spain



In view of the upcoming euro zone summit in December French Economy and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire and his Spanish counterpart Nadia Calvino met on Tuesday 4th September in Paris. They agreed on real proposals to reform the euro zone: the creation of a common unemployment insurance fund, a euro zone budget etc... The exchange of views also focused on present common challenges: digital taxation, harmonisation of the corporate tax base in Europe... [Read more](#)

France :

Meeting of the French President with the leaders of Benelux



The French President Emmanuel Macron met the Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, his Dutch counterpart Mark Rutte and Belgian Charles Michel. Discussions mainly focused on the migratory policy, the Brexit negotiations and the upcoming European agenda... [Read more](#)

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Meeting with Angela Merkel

Emmanuel Macron hosted Angela Merkel in Marseilles on 7th September. They addressed issues regarding immigration, Brexit, the development of the euro zone. In terms of foreign policy, they focused on the Defence Union and on common interests beyond the borders. The Chancellor



declared that she wanted to move forward together for an independent Europe that can settle its problems itself... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Matteo Salvini and his party under the scrutiny of the legal system



The court of Palermo confirmed on 7th September that an investigation involving Matteo Salvini was underway for the sequestration of nearly 140 migrants whom he refused disembarkation in Italy for over 10 days. At the same time the Italian judiciary allowed the seizure of more than 49 million € belonging to the Liga after the conviction of Mr Salvini's party for fraud by some of its former leaders... [Read more](#)

Lithuania :

Visit by the Prime Minister in Poland



On 5th September the Lithuanian Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis and his Polish counterpart, Mateusz Morawiecki met in Krynica, Poland to discuss issues related to transport and energy, the importance of geopolitical security and enhanced cooperation... [Read more](#)

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Czech Republic :

Meeting between Angela Merkel and Andrej Babis



German Chancellor Angela Merkel hosted Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis in Berlin on 5th September. Talks focused on economic issues, Brexit and migration. On the latter point the two countries disagree over the distribution of refugees, but agree on the question of preventing illegal migration and the establishment of legal paths for this... [Read more](#)

Romania :

Visit by the Prime Minister to Spain



Pedro Sanchez, the President of the Spanish government hosted his Romanian counterpart Viorica Dancila on 6th September. Two Memorandums of Understanding were signed on this occasion: one provides for an exchange of knowledge in the area of defence and the training of civil servants, the other encourages the development of investments and trade between the two countries... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Michel Barnier speaks to British parliamentarians



During hearing with the Committee responsible for Brexit at the House of Commons, Michel Barnier spoke out against some positions provided for in the British Whitepaper deeming that key elements on post-Brexit trade relations were "unacceptable"... [Read more](#)

Macedonia :

High level visits before the referendum on 30th September



Three weeks before the referendum on the agreement of the name of its country with Greece, planned for 30th September, Skopje hosted NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg on 5th and 6th September as he came to give his support to Macedonia's membership of NATO. On 6th, 7th and 8th September Luxembourg Foreign Affairs Minister, Jean Asselborn, then Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and finally German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited in that order and spoke in support of the agreement with Greece... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Cyprus takes promising step in the fight to counter corruption



According to a report published on 6th September by the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the Cypriot authorities have only partly succeeded in complying with the recommendations regarding the prevention of corruption of members of Parliament, judges and prosecutors. Although some positive legislative procedures have been started such as the Code of Conduct for MPs and the creation of the Judicial Training Office, their implementation still has made effective... [Read more](#)

Report by the anti-torture committee on Ukraine



The Council of Europe's Anti-Torture Committee (CPT) published a report on 6th September on the situation in Ukraine's prisons and detention centres. The latter notes that in spite of progress made due work on the part of the Ukrainian authorities to improve prisoners' conditions and to reduce the seriousness of the poor treatment inflicted by the police force, prison conditions are still deplorable... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

GDP up



According to an estimate published on 7th September by Eurostat, the GDP is up by 0.4% in the second quarter 2018 in comparison with the previous quarter, both in the EU and in the euro zone. This is 2.1% more in comparison with second quarter 2017... [Read more](#)

Culture :

European Heritage Days



The European Heritage Days will be taking place everywhere in Europe in September. These days provide an opportunity to discover and re-discover the leading venues of European, national and regional culture but also places that are rarely open to the public. This 35th edition is part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage and the theme is "The Art of Sharing".. [Read more](#)

Inauguration of the Congress Hall Metz-Robert Schuman



The region, Grand Est and the city of Metz inaugurated their new Congress hall on 7th September which has been named after Robert Schuman, the father of Europe and an emblematic figure of the Moselle... [Read more](#)

"Pure Rubens" at the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum of Rotterdam



The Boijmans van Beuningen Museum of Rotterdam is running an exhibition until 13th January 2019 devoted Rubens' oil sketches. The museum which already has a great wealth of these works has joined forces with the Prado of Madrid and is bringing masterpieces from the world over. Drawn by Rubens the sketches on show were used as models for assistants or studies for clients; the exhibition bears excellent witness to the work of the Flemish master... [Read more](#)

Biennale of Paris



Professional collectors and amateurs are gathering on 16th September under the glass dome of the Grand Palais for the 30th Biennale of Paris. Around 60 French and international antique galleries are represented and aim to improve the cohabitation of contemporary and ancient art, design, primary and decorative arts... [Read more](#)

Flamenco Biennale Sevilla



The Biennale of Sevilla is the biggest event in the world devoted to flamenco. It has hosted thousands of aficionados and professionals since 1979. Until 30th September, Sevilla will become a theatre of diversity, tradition and the contemporary creation of flamenco... [Read more](#)

Galleries Festival in Vienna



The festival of the gallery "curated by" of Vienna is hosting international curators for the organisation of exhibitions, allowing the various actors to exchange their ideas. This year the festival focuses on the city of Vienna, a major centre for contemporary art from 14th September to 13th October... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



10th and 11th September
Vienna
Informal meeting of Healthcare Ministers



10th to 13th September
Strasbourg
Plenary session at the European Parliament



12th September
Strasbourg
Speech on the State of the Union by Jean-Claude Juncker



13th September
Frankfurt
ECB Council of Governors



17th and 18th September
Linz
Informal meeting of Energy Ministers

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The Letter's Editorial Team :

Thomas de Robiano, Helen Levy ;
Victoire Bortoli, Natasha Hroneska, Sophie van der Heijden
Editor-in-chief: Thomas de Robiano
Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin

Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

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