

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018

issue 819

The Letter in PDF format

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## Social Europe: from slogan to reality

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After the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in Göteborg in 2017, the Union was supposed to establish three priorities, for functional reasons but also on the grounds of political legitimacy: promoting upward convergence in social standards and performance; guaranteeing fair mobility for its citizens and investing in European Human Capital.

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**Foundation :**

### Radical Movements in Europe



Jean-Dominique Giuliani is taking part in the Licra's Autumn University in Le Havre on 12th October on the theme of European radical movements... [Read more](#)

### Europe, an inestimable treasure



Le Figaro published an article by Jean-Dominique Giuliani in which he suggests that Europeans have every reason to be proud of the European Union... [Read more](#)

## Elections :

### Alexander Stubb is to bid to be the EPP's lead candidate



Finn Alexander Stubb announced on 2nd October in Strasbourg that he would be bidding to be the European People's Party's lead candidate in the European elections in 2019. Stubb, who was an MEP and several times a minister and also Prime Minister is the second candidate to announce that he would be running, after Manfred Weber, the leader of the EPP group in the European Parliament. He is standing as the candidate of the "new generation". The party will choose its candidate during a congress in Helsinki on 7th and 8th November... [Read more](#)

### Harmony leads in Latvia but not guaranteed to be in government



Following the general elections in Latvia on 6th October, 7 parties will be represented in the Saeima. Harmony (left, close to Russia), won 19.9% of the vote KPV LV (populist) 14.06%, the New Conservative Party 13.6%, For Development 12%, National Alliance 11%, the Greens and Farmers 10% and New Unity (centre right), 6.7%. Everything hinges on the question of the next government coalition... [Read more](#)

## European Council :

### Meeting between Donald Tusk and Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar



"The EU wants a relation as close and as special as possible with the UK", declared the President of the European Council Donald Tusk after a meeting with Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar on 4th October in Brussels. Two weeks prior to the next summit, vital in terms of coming to agreement over Brexit, Tusk repeated that the Union was supporting Ireland in the negotiations with the UK to come to a solution that respects the peace process in Northern Ireland, as well as the integrity of the Single Market and Customs Union... [Read more](#)

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## Commission :

### The EU condemns a Russian cyberattack



The British government revealed on 4th October that the Russian military intelligence service was behind the attack in The Hague in April against the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The attack was thwarted by the cooperation of the Dutch and British intelligence services. The President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker and the High Representative, Federica Mogherini "deplored" the act that "undermines international law and institutions".. [Read more](#)

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### European Solidarity Corps enters into force



The European Solidarity Corps entered into force on 5th October. Many projects supporting private and public organisations in terms of strengthening cohesion, solidarity and democracy have been launched. This programme, inspired by Erasmus+ is addressed to Young people aged 18 to 30, European citizens and those from its neighbourhood who want to volunteer for projects across Europe. The Commission put forward a budget of 340 million euro until 2020... [Read more](#)

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## Parliament :

### The European Parliament approves a quota of European creations



On 2nd October MEPs approved the imposition of 30% of European programmes on the audiovisual media 452 votes in support, 132 against; this includes video on-demand platforms; MEPs also strengthened the rules surrounding the protection of children. This legislation will apply to all media distribution services, including those like Netflix, YouTube and Facebook, as well as live-streaming on video sharing platforms... [Read more](#)

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### Parliament pushes for cleaner cars

On 3rd October MEPs approved a Commission proposal, 389 votes in support, 239 against and 41 abstentions, that aims to reduce vehicle CO2 emissions by 40% by 2030 and to step up the insertion of low-



carbon cars into the market so that they represent 35% by 2030. Parliament also asked the Commission to table, within two years, plans for a real-world CO2 emissions test using a portable device... [Read more](#)

### Reform of Eurojust



MEPs adopted a reform of Eurojust (the European agency for judicial cooperation) on 4th October, 515 votes in support, 64 against and 26 abstentions. The new governance system takes on board the creation of the European Prosecutor's Office by 2021 and the European Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Council has to validate formally these new rules... [Read more](#)

### Parliament adopts the free-flow of non-personal data



On 4th October Parliament adopted a regulation on the free-flow of non-personal data, 520 votes in support, 81 against and 6 abstentions. The text relates to commercial data or that generated by machines. Parliament provides for possible restrictions in the event of a public security threat and a code of practice to facilitate the transfer of this data within the Single Market. Personal data is still protected by the regulation regarding data protection. (GDPR)... [Read more](#)

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### The European Parliament cancels aid of 70 million € to Turkey



On 2nd October MEPs approved the cancellation of 70 million € in aid to Turkey, 544 in support, 28 against and 74 abstentions, as a sanction for the regime's infringements of human rights and the freedom of the press. The proposal which focuses on Turkey's so-called "pre-accession" funds was approved during a vote organised in the Parliament's plenary session in Strasbourg... [Read more](#)

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### Debate over the state of the rule of law in Romania



Together with the Romanian Prime Minister, Viorica Dăncilă on 3rd October Parliament held a debate regarding the situation of the rule of law in Romania. Members of the Civil Liberties Committee and the Commission's Vice-President Frans Timmermans, called on the Prime Minister to overthrow a controversial reform of the legal system and support the fight to counter corruption. The latter defended her government's actions and maintained that it had never deviated from the values of Europe. A resolution on the issue will be voted on in the next plenary session in November... [Read more](#)

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### Estonian Prime Minister speaks to MEPs



Estonian Prime Minister Jüri Ratas spoke to Parliament in Strasbourg on 3rd October. He defended the Union's unity as it faces migratory pressure and the importance of open borders within the Union. He defended the role of small countries, "the Union's mortar" and insisted on the need for an ambitious multi-annual budget and greater defence cooperation in terms of the Atlantic Alliance... [Read more](#)

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## Council :

### Discussion regarding the reform of the WTO



During an informal trade Council that took place in Innsbruck on 5th October, Minister re-iterated the wish to modernise the WTO. They also prepared the signature of the free-trade agreement and investment protection with Singapore, which is to take place during the Europe-Asia Summit on 18th and 19th October... [Read more](#)

### Meeting between Kurz and Putin in St Petersburg

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, whose country is currently presiding of the Council of the European Union met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg on 3rd October. Discussions focused on economic relations between the two countries, notably in terms of energy cooperation, as well as the future of the gas pipeline



project Nord Stream 2. Other international and regional issues such as the situation in Syria and Ukraine were also discussed... [Read more](#)

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#### VAT: reduced rates for electronic publications and anti-fraud measures



The Economy and Finance Minister approved the introduction of three proposals in the area of VAT: VAT rates applicable to electronic publications, a generalised temporary reversal of liability mechanism and a series of measures for faster "solution" in terms of VAT. MEPs also voted and approved several resolutions regarding VAT... [Read more](#)

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#### Court of Justice :

##### Parliament can adopt budgetary acts outside of Strasbourg



The Union's Court of Justice deemed on 2nd October that the European Parliament can exercise its budgetary powers in Brussels and not just in Strasbourg, its seat, if the good functioning of the procedure depends on it. France asked for the cancellation of several budgetary acts since the Parliament finally adopted the Union's budget for 2017 during a session in Brussels and not in Strasbourg... [Read more](#)

#### Court of Auditors :

##### Validation of the EU 2017 budget



On 4th October the Union's Court of Auditors validated the EU's 2017 budget, observing a 2.4% error margin in terms of payments, which is down in comparison with the previous years. Auditors did however recall that the Union has to make "realistic" commitments given that its budget represents 1% of the Union's GNI and that it should not "make promises that it cannot deliver"... [Read more](#)

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#### Germany :

##### The CSU will probably lose its absolute majority in Bavaria



On 14th October the CSU will probably lose its absolute majority in Bavaria and will therefore be forced to form a coalition. Surveys are predicting that it will only win around 33% of the vote - the Greens are due to come second with 18%, then the SPD with 11% and the AfD with 10%, which would be the first time this party would enter the regional parliament of Bavaria... [Read more](#)

##### Chancellor travels to Israel



As part of the 7th German-Israeli intergovernmental consultations on 3rd and 4th October, German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to Israel to speak of innovation and technology. She also travelled to the Yad Vashem Memorial... [Read more](#)

#### Finland :

##### Declaration on the bioeconomy



In view of the Finnish Presidency of the Council in the second half of 2019 Prime Minister Juha Sipilä started a tour of Europe's capitals with a meeting on 2nd October with Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa, then Spaniard, Pedro Sanchez. Whilst strengthening their trade cooperation - in terms of telecoms and forestry - they reviewed various issues that will be on the agenda of the Finnish Presidency - post-Brexit negotiations, migration, multi-annual financial framework... [Read more](#)

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#### France :

##### Draft bill in preparation for a no-deal over Brexit

The French government is to present a draft bill to Parliament at the beginning of November that is designed to prepare for the hypothesis of



a no-deal between the EU and London over Brexit, in order to counter a number of legal loopholes. This draft bill was presented on 3rd October. It will enable the executive to take directives to settle the difficulties that Brexit will cause in many areas of Franco-British cooperation... [Read more](#)

#### Greece :

##### Two scenarios for the Greek budget in 2019



On 1st October the Greek government presented its 2019 budget. Based on the good results of its public finances, the government hopes that its creditors will allow it not to reduce retirement pensions, as provided for as part of the commitments taken to end the aid plans. In this case the primary budgetary surplus would be 3.56% of the GDP, just above the minimum set by the country's creditors. In the event of a reduction in pensions, the primary budgetary surplus would be 4.14%. The draft budget provides for growth of 2.5% and a reduction of employment down to 18.2%... [Read more](#)

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#### Sweden :

##### Two Europeans win the Nobel Prize



On 2nd October Frenchman Gérard Mourou and Canadian Donna Strickland, who are laser specialists were awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics for the development of a method to generate high-intensity, ultra-short optical pulses. British biochemist Sir Gregory P Winter was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry on 3rd October. They won due to their work on the "phage display in peptides and anti-bodies." This technique have given rise to phage therapy, an alternative to antibiotics... [Read more](#)

#### Bosnia-Herzegovina :

##### A new collegiale presidency in Bosnia-Herzegovina



The electorate of Bosnia-Herzegovina elected a new collegial presidency on 7th October. Nationalist Milorad Dodik won the seat reserved for the Serbs with 53.79% of the vote, the Croatian community voted for the social-democratic Zeljko Komsic, 52.83% and the Bosniaks elected a conservative candidate, Sefik Dzaferovic of the SDA party with 36.89% of the vote... [Read more](#)

#### Sciences :

##### The robot Mascot successfully lands on the asteroid Ryugu



The Franco-German space robot, Mascot landed on 3rd October on the asteroid Ryugu 300 million kilometres from Earth. It was released by the Japanese probe Hayabusa-2 and its mission is to transmit data to the probe so that better knowledge of the Solar System's birth can be gleaned. This is a world first for this type of mission... [Read more](#)

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#### Studies/Reports :

##### Report on World Trade 2018



In its annual report on world trade published on 3rd October the WTO lays out the future landscape of trade linked to technological developments now ongoing. The internet of things, artificial intelligence, 3D printing and blockchains will have deep effect on world trade and could add about 34 percentage points to the growth of trade by 2030... [Read more](#)

##### Gender equality: Europe in the lead



On 4th October Equileap published a study on gender equality in some 3000 businesses in 23 countries which had over 2 billion dollars in market capitalisation. It emerges that out of 20 world businesses the most respectful of equality between men and women, 12 are European... [Read more](#)



### The role of trade integration for shared prosperity



In a report published on 1st October with the IMF and the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation defends the idea of re-invigorated trade to foster more inclusive growth and to increase productivity world wide. The report stresses that to achieve these goals, reform is necessary in many areas, particularly the trade of services, digital technologies and foreign direct investments, as well as access to goods markets and regulation cooperation... [Read more](#)

### Culture :

#### "Inside Bruegel" in Vienna



On the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the death of the master of Flemish Renaissance, the Museum of Fine Arts in Vienna is devoting an exhibition to Bruegel until 13th January... [Read more](#)

#### "Autumn Chamber Music Festival" in Latvia



"Autumn Chamber Music Festival" is a time for concerts ranging from classical to jazz. Created in 1993, it is the biggest and oldest music festival in Latvia. Concerts are taking place everywhere in Latvia from 9th to 20th October... [Read more](#)

#### Jazz Festival in Vilnius



This festival brings together world and contemporary jazz artists. The styles are very diverse: classical, modern, improvisation, experimental. The 31st festival is taking place from 11th to 14th October... [Read more](#)

#### Contemporary Art Festival in Budapest



The contemporary art festival at the CAFe Budapest is taking place until 21st October. This year the festival focuses on artists from the Baltic States and the work of Béla Bartók, the famous Hungarian composer and pianist... [Read more](#)

#### International Film Festival in Warsaw



The International Film Festival of Warsaw is focusing on directors of Central and Eastern Europe this year and will be taking place from 12th to 21st October for the 34th year running... [Read more](#)

#### Miro Exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris



More than 150 pieces of work covering 70 years of creation, including some which are unique in France by the famous painter Joan Miro have been brought together at the Grand Palais in Paris until February 4th 2019... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



9th October  
Luxembourg  
"Environment Council"



11th and 12th October  
Luxembourg  
"Justice-Interior" Council



14th October  
Luxembourg  
General elections



15th October  
Luxembourg  
"Foreign Affairs Council" "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council

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