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The Letter in PDF format

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## Towards a painless & frictionless Brexit

Author: Jacques Gounon



The absence of agreement over the UK's withdrawal from the EU, which would have provided for an orderly Brexit, could very well lead to some serious difficulties for the transport industry. The free flow of merchandise between the EU and the UK could be seriously affected. Whilst the negotiations between the Union and the UK enter their final phase, Jacques Gounon, CEO of Getlink, the company operating the Channel tunnel reminds us of this. More than 1.6 million lorries transit yearly via the Tunnel. The end of the simplified customs procedure would have major impact on logistics flows, which, beyond

the neighbouring countries, will affect all of the Member States and the smooth functioning of the Single Market. He hopes for a "frictionless relationship", which in the best scenario would still heavily penalise economic interaction on the continent.

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### Elections :

#### The CSV comes out ahead in the general elections in Luxembourg



The Christian-Social Party (PCS/CSV), led by Marc Spautz came out ahead in the general elections on 14th October in Luxembourg with 28.31% of the vote and 21 seats. It pulled ahead of the Socialist Workers' Party (POSL/LSAP), member of the outgoing government coalition and chaired by Claude Haagen, with 17.6% and 10 seats. The Democratic Party (PD/DP) of outgoing Prime Minister Xavier Bettel won 16.91% and 12 seats (-1), the Greens/Dei Greng (PD-DG), member of the outgoing coalition, 15.12% and 9 seats (+3). The Alternative Democratic Reformist Party (ADR) won 8.28% and 4 seats (+1), the Left/Dei Lenk (LG/DL) 5.48% and 2 seats (=). Finally, the Pirate Party (PPLU) will be making its entry into parliament with 6.45% and 2 seats. Everything now depends on knowing who will form the government: will the CSC return to office and with which partners or will the outgoing coalition make it and get back into power?.. [Read more](#)

## Foundation :

### Debate on Europe at the Primoli Foundation



On 17th October the Primoli Foundation in Rome is organising a meeting with the chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani on the theme of the European crisis. The Primoli Foundation aims to promote cultural relations between Italy and France... [Read more](#)

## Commission :

### Proposal to strengthen deep-water fish stocks



On 9th October the Commission put forward total allowable catches (TAC) for the period 2019-2020 regarding deep-water fish to gradually rebuild stocks to sustainable levels in the North Atlantic. It wants total allowable catches to be raised or abolished regarding certain species in line with the opinion of the scientific community... [Read more](#)

### Action plan for the bioeconomy



On 11th October the Commission presented an action plan to develop a sustainable, circular bioeconomy. It aims to strengthen biosectors, notably biorefineries, thanks to a package of 100 million euro and to deploy the bioeconomy by helping the Member States which are lagging behind to develop regional and national programmes in this area. The plan also provides for the collation of data and regular assessments to track progress... [Read more](#)

### Harmonised labelling for fuel in the EU



A new harmonised labelling system for fuel is now available (as of 12th October). It will provide more information via a differentiation in the types of fuels and their environmental impact... [Read more](#)

### 16th report on the Security Union

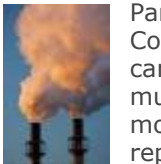


The Commission presented its report on 10th October regarding the introduction of the Security Union. It points to the progress that has already been made, but asks Parliament and the Council "to take decisive action" on priority issues, notably in terms of cyber-resilience, cooperation and the establishment of information systems, the strengthening of means granted to the Coast and Border Guards and the fight to counter cross-border crime... [Read more](#)

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## Parliament :

### Agreement on the exposure of workers to carcinogenic substances



Parliament and the Council came to agreement on 11th October over a Commission proposal regarding the scaling up of worker protection against carcinogenic chemical substances. The directive regarding carcinogenic and mutagen substances will now cover 8 more chemicals, including diesel motor exhaust fumes. The agreement still has to be validated by the representatives of the Member States then by the Parliament in plenary session... [Read more](#)

### Resolution on an audit of Facebook



The European Parliament's Committee for Civil Liberties asked on 10th October for a "complete and independent" audit of Facebook by the EU regarding data protection. MEPs stressed the progress made since the "Cambridge Analytica" scandal but regret that Facebook had not yet made the internal audit it had promised. They also put forward resolutions to prevent digital electoral interference and to enable the transparency of advertising algorithms on the social networks. These resolutions will be voted on at the next plenary session on 22nd-25th October... [Read more](#)

## Frans Timmermans, candidate as lead candidate of the European S&D



The European Socialist Party has a second candidate (after Slovakian Maroš Šefčovič) since 10th October to run to become its Spitzenkandidate at the party's Congress that will take place in December. Dutchman Frans Timmermans, the First Vice-President of the European Commission wants to lead the Labour Party's list in the European elections in the Netherlands and then become President of the Commission... [Read more](#)

## Council :

### More biodiversity and ecological cars by 2030



The 28 Environment Ministers suggested a 35% reduction of CO2 emissions on new cars by 2030. They agreed that low emission cars should represent 35% of the new car market by 2030. Ministers agreed on the EU's position for the COP24 which will take place in Poland in December, ie. maintaining the 20% reduction goal on greenhouse gases by 2030... [Read more](#)

### Agreement on Insolvency but no consensus on fundamental rights



The 28 Justice Ministers did not reach agreement on 11th October on the text regarding the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights due to the veto set by the Polish Minister. Other discussions focused on cybercrime and the importance of having the means to collate and use electronic evidence. They also adopted stricter rules concerning money laundering... [Read more](#)

### Declaration for gender equality



During an informal meeting organised by the Austrian Presidency of the Council on 12th October European Ministers for Gender Equality signed a joint declaration in which they call for a strategy to achieve "equal opportunities". They want to make this a priority on the Union's agenda, and not neglect the potential that lies in digital tools in the implementation of this strategy... [Read more](#)

### Discussion on fishing in the Baltic Sea and the CAP post 2020



On 15th October European Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers adopted the total allowable catches -TACs- in the Baltic Sea for 2019 and discussed the bilateral fisheries agreement with Norway. They exchanged views regarding the Commission's proposal for the future of the CAP after 2020 and notably the flexibility given to Member States as to its implementation... [Read more](#)

## Diplomacy :

### "Foreign Affairs" Council Meeting



On 15th October the European Foreign Affairs Ministers adopted a new sanctions regime against the use and proliferation of chemical weapons. They extended the EUAM Iraq mandate for civilian security until April 2020. They discussed the situation in Central African Republic, Venezuela and Libya insisting on the importance of a transparent, democratic political process... [Read more](#)

## Court of Justice :

### Google appeals against the fine on Android



Google appealed on 9th October against the record fine of 4.34 billion € set in July by the Commission. The EU condemned the American company for abuse of dominant position of its smartphone operating system, Android; the company stands accused of using it to strengthen the supremacy of its search engine. The appeal procedure might take several years... [Read more](#)

### Part renewal of the Union's Court of Justice

On 8th October the Union's Court of Justice announced the appointment



of four new judges and two Advocates General, as well as the renewal of eight judges and one Advocate General. The ECJ comprises 28 judges, one per Member State and eight Advocate Generals appointed by a consensus between the Member States... [Read more](#)

## Germany :

### State visit by the German President to Greece



On a state visit to Greece on 11th October, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier spoke with Greek President Prokopios Pavlopoulos and Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. The leaders welcomed the "new start" to Greco-German relations, acknowledging the work undertaken by Greece to emerge from eight years of crisis. They also shared their concern about the future of Europe calling for a revival of European integration in the face of rising populism and euroscepticism... [Read more](#)

### The CSU loses its absolute majority in Bavaria



On 14th October the regional elections in Bavaria took place with the election of the representatives of the Landtag. Winning only 37.2% of the vote (-10.4 points in comparison with the elections of 2013), the CSU has lost its absolute majority and will be obliged to form a coalition to govern. The Greens came second with 17.5% of the vote (+8.9), the Free Voters (FW, independent) came third with 11.6% (-2.6), the far right part AfD came fourth with 10.2%. The SPD fell below the 10%, with 9.7% of the vote (-10.9) and the FDP (Liberals) only just over the 5% mark... [Read more](#)

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## Spain :

### Government agreement with Podemos on an anti-austerity budget



The Spanish minority government reached an agreement of principle on 11th October with its main ally, Podemos, regarding a 2019 anti-austerity budget. The budgetary agreement provides for 22.3% increase in the monthly minimum wage, bringing it up to 900€, ie 164€ more per month. This measure will cost the State 340 million €. The agreement will be presented to Brussels next week but to be adopted in Parliament the budget will also require the approval of some other parties... [Read more](#)

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## France :

### Meeting of the G6 interior ministers



A G6 meeting bringing together the Ministers of the Interior of the EU's biggest countries (France, Germany, UK, Spain, Italy, Poland) took place in Lyon on 8th and 9th October on the theme of "Migratory Issues/Security and the fight to counter terrorism". They attended a simulation of a terrorist attack at the stadium of the Olympique Lyonnais football team... [Read more](#)

## Ireland :

### Ireland: 2019 budget influenced by Brexit



The Irish government presented its draft budget for 2019, the "first balanced budget since 2007", said Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe. The draft provides the financing of several measures to protect Ireland from any possible negative effects of Brexit, including the creation of a 1.5 billion € fund for infrastructures and customs, SMEs and the Peace Programme that fosters economic and social progress around the border with Northern Ireland. The fund will be provided with 500 million additional euro per year as of 2019... [Read more](#)

## Italy :

### Italian parliament approves the revised finance bill

On 11th October the Italian Parliament approved the 2018 finance bill put forward by the government which also includes the extremely controversial 2019 budgetary goals. The text was validated by the Senate, 165 votes in support, 107 against and 5 abstentions, before



being adopted by the house of deputies, 331 votes in support, 191 against. This draft budget that was amended last week and that is yet to be communicated to Brussels now provides for a deficit of 2.4% in 2019. It is planned to lie at 2.1% in 2020 and 1.8% in 2021... [Read more](#)

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#### Portugal :

##### Government reshuffle after the resignation of the Defence Minister



The Portuguese Prime Minister reshuffled his government on 14th October after the resignation of the Defence Minister, José Azeredo Lopes and the finalisation of the 2019 budget, making changes to four Ministries. Pedro Siza Vieira is now Economy Minister, Joao Gomes Cravinho, presently the EU's Ambassador to Brazil, will be come Defence Minister, Grace Maria da Fonseca, Minister of Culture, and Marta Temido, Healthcare Minister...

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#### UK :

##### Brexit negotiations falter over the Irish question



As the European Council approaches on 17th and 18th October, the EU's negotiator-in- chief for Brexit, Michel Barnier, and the British Minister responsible for Brexit, Dominique Raab, who met in Brussels on 14th October confirmed their disagreement over the "backstop" regarding the question of the Northern Irish border. After this stumbling block, negotiations with the UK will resume again during the European Council on 17th October... [Read more](#)

#### Slovenia :

##### Visit by Slovenian Prime Minister to Germany



During his first visit abroad Slovenian Prime Minister Marjan Sarec met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on 12th October. The two leaders discussed topical European issues and the Western Balkans. The Prime Minister declared that Slovenia would continue to work for a stable, connected, unified European Union and stressed the importance of the respect of the rule of law and the decisions of the arbitration courts... [Read more](#)

#### IMF :

##### World growth forecasts revised downwards



In its report, the "World Economic Outlook" published on 9th October, the International Monetary Fund revised its world growth forecasts downwards in 2018 and 2019, from 3.9% to 3.7%. Although these rates are over those recorded in 2012 and 2016, the IMF is calling for caution and is advising governments to increase the resilience of their economies and to introduce reforms that encourage growth. The IMF is forecasting a decline in growth in the euro zone at 2% in 2018 and 1.9% in 2019... [Read more](#)

#### Council of Europe :

##### Oyub Titiev, winner of the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize 2018



The 6th Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize awarded by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and which pays tribute to exceptional work achieved by civil society in the defence of human rights - has been awarded to the head of the Grozny office of the Memorial Human Rights Centre of Chechnya, Oyub Titiev. The prize was given to him on 8th October, during a special ceremony at the Palace of Europe in Strasbourg, the day of the opening of PACE's autumn plenary session... [Read more](#)

##### Preventing radicalisation

On 10th October the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution to regulate the foreign financing of Islam in Europe to prevent radicalisation and Islamophobia. After reasserting that all foreign financing of a religion is not a problem in itself, and can on the





contrary help towards inter-religious dialogue and the exercise of an open faith, the resolution suggests that an end has to be brought to all foreign financing of Islam when it is proven, via objective criteria, that it is being used in view of expanding national policy towards other States in the shape of Islam... [Read more](#)

## Studies/Reports :

### IPCC report on the climate



To limit global warming to 1.5°C we must rapidly and radically modify all aspects of society declared the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on 8th October as part of a new assessment. Apart from the evident advantages for populations and natural ecosystems the fact of limiting warming to 1.5°C and not 2°C would also help society to be more sustainable and fairer said the IPCC... [Read more](#)

### Uncertainty linked to the country's exit from the EU is damaging business confidence



Brexit is weighing on the labour market in the UK. "Uncertainty over Brexit and the lack of any audacious political measures to stimulate business is starting to make itself felt," warned the British Chamber of Commerce. According to a report published on 8th October, more and more businesses in the services sector are shying away from recruiting new employees. The percentage of businesses taking people on has fallen from 60 to 47%, one of the lowest figures since 1993. The services sector is the main employer in the UK... [Read more](#)

### Too tolerant regarding exceptions made to budgetary rules



In its second annual report published on 11th October the European Fiscal Board deemed that the Member States should have taken advantage of the favourable economic context to reduce their debt more. It has asked for a more flexible Stability and Growth Pact in order to adapt to economic cycles. It also deems that the Commission was too "tolerant" towards the Member States in terms of implementing the budgetary rules. This Board is responsible for evaluating the implementation of the Union's budgetary policy... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

### Berlin's Golden Twenties in Brussels



The Royal Fine Arts Museums of Belgium are running an exhibition devoted to Berlin's Golden Twenties (1912-1932). Until January 27th 2019 visitors can explore the bubbly, cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city via the works of the most important artists of the time: Otto Dix, Max Beckmann, Georg Grosz ..... [Read more](#)

### Giacometti Retrospective in Bilbao



Together with the Giacometti Foundation of Paris, the Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao is running a major retrospective of the sculptures, paintings and drawings of Alberto Giacometti from 19th October 2018 to 24th February 2019... [Read more](#)

### Exhibition on Cubism at the Pompidou Centre in Paris



A first exhibition in France since 1953 devoted to the wealth, inventiveness and the proliferous nature of Cubism between 1907 and 1917 will be open in Paris from 17th October 2018 to 25th February 2019... [Read more](#)

### Trine Søndergaard Exhibition at the Malraux Museum of the Havre

The exhibition "Still" by the Danish contemporary painter Trine Søndergaard which brings together two series of photographs "Interior" and "Guldnakke" is running at the André Malraux Museum of Modern



Art, until 27th January 2019... [Read more](#)

### Jazz Festival of Stockholm



The Jazz Festival of Stockholm is taking place between 12th and 21st October, mainly on the island of Skeppsholmen... [Read more](#)

### The School of London on show in Budapest



Together with the Tate Britain of London, the National Gallery of Hungary is devoting an exhibition to the figurative painters of the School of London. The work of Francis Bacon, Lucien Freud, Frank Auerbach and even Leon Kossoff are on show until 13th January 2019... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



15th October

Luxembourg

"Foreign Affairs Council" "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council



16th October

Luxembourg

"General Affairs" Council



17th and 18th October

Brussels

European Council



18th and 19th October

Brussels

Europe-Asia Dialogue Summit (ASEM)



19th October

Brussels

EU-Republic of South Korea Summit Meeting of EU-ASEAN leaders

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