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Brexit, lessons in negotiations for the European Union

Author: Eric Maurice



The conclusion of the withdrawal agreement of the UK from the EU marks the end of a unique, perilous political phase for the Union that was launched by the referendum on 23rd June 2016. To a large extent the 27 have achieved the goals they set before the start of discussions, by maintaining their unity. They now have to learn from this negotiation, as they take into account the results and its limits.

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Front page! :

Brexit Blues



Jean-Dominique Giuliani reviews the outcome of Brexit following the end of negotiations and the withdrawal agreement that has been signed... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

Strengthening democracy in the Union's neighbourhood: integration as an effective lever?



Together with the European Commissioner, Vera Jourova, Eric Maurice, the manager of the Foundation's Brussels office, is taking part in the Vaclav Havel European Dialogues on 27th November in Brussels the theme of which is "Strengthening democracy in the EU's neighbourhood.".. [Read more](#)

Permanent Atlas of the European Union



In view of the next European elections, the Robert Schuman Foundation has published the Permanent Atlas of the European Union. Unique in its genre, written by the Foundation's experts, it offers a full, accessible panorama of the Union, the euro zone and each of its 28 Member States. It summarizes the vital elements of the Union's history and its political and statistical realities, and offers readers more than 50 physical and geopolitical maps of Europe..... [Read more](#)

European Council :

Signature of the withdrawal agreement of the UK from the EU



During an Extraordinary Council meeting on 25th November the heads of State and government approved an agreement comprising the treaty on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and the political declaration that makes up the base of negotiations for future relations. The agreement now have to be ratified by the British Parliament on December 11th and by the European Parliament... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Reports on the economic situation and opinion on national draft budgetary plans



On 21st November the Commission published three report as part of the European Semester, the Union's economic governance. In its annual assessment of growth it recalls that measures should be taken to ensure inclusive, sustainable growth. It stresses the importance of the quality of investments at national level and the deepening of the single market and of Economic and Monetary Union. In the report on the warning mechanism, which detects macro-economic imbalances, it notes that 13 Member States are due to be the focus of indepth review in 2019. The draft joint report on employment in 2019 shows that the rate of employment in the EU has never been as high but that wage inequality remain and that older people are more vulnerable to poverty than in the past... [Read more](#)

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Results of the Juncker Plan for investment



On 22nd November the Commission presented a communication on the positive results produced by the Investment Plan for Europe, or the "Juncker Plan". The Commission insisted on the sharing of benefits of the Juncker Plan between all of the Member States and to a lesser degree the Union's neighbourhood. Despite the recovery of an environment that is supportive of investment, the Commission deems that work has to continue to do away with regulatory obstacles that limit the results of the single market and to continue to efforts to make structural reforms to favour investment notably regarding the efficiency of the judicial system... [Read more](#)

The Single Market in a changing world



On 22nd November the Commission published an assessment of the Single Market. The report shows that the deepening of the Single Market means the rapid adoption of proposals that have already been put forward, such as the capital union and the Digital Single Market. The Commission is asking all Member States to take care in the implementation and monitoring of the EU's law but especially it hopes that the integration of the Single Market will continue, notably in the areas of services and taxation. At the same time the Commission presented an action plan to increase efficiency and transparency of harmonised standards that are vital to the smooth running of the Single Market... [Read more](#)

Recommendations for the euro zone



On 21st November the Commission published its recommendations regarding the economic policy of the euro zone. It has asked the Member States to commit to policies to deepen the single market, the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the European Banking System. It advises the Member States to support both public and private investments but also to lower taxation that weights on employment. The Commission insists on the importance of increasing budgetary State reserves and reducing public debt levels. It also recommends greater coordination and the adequation of European social security systems... [Read more](#)

Initiative for the outermost regions



On 23rd November the Commission presented several initiatives to help the Union's outermost regions, one year after the launch of a new strategy. These initiatives aim to promote innovation, research, the circular economic and blue growth. The Commission is committed to paying them particular attention in the establishment of the next multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027. It hopes that these regions will have greater access to the advantages of the Juncker Plan from the point of view of investment projects. It also wants to ensure that there are differentiated programmes according to the regions so that their efficiency is guaranteed... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Green tandem for the European elections



In view of the European Elections in May 2019 the European Green Party chose two lead candidates for their list during the congress that took place in Berlin on 23rd and 24th November. The party elected Ska Keller from the German Alliance 90/The Greens and Bas Eickhout from the Dutch Green Left. They are putting forward greater social justice and balanced transition to a zero emissions economy... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Conclusions of the Defence Ministers' Meeting



Europe's Defence Ministers met on 19th November and 20th November and adopted 17 new projects in addition to the existing 17 underway as part of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) one year after its launch. They also adopted a pact that aims to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) which includes some strategic guidelines and 22 political commitments to improve the civilian CSDP response capabilities. Ministers also discussed defence cooperation and planning tools, such as the European Defence Fund and the European Peace Facility... [Read more](#)

Coordinating the screening of investments from third countries in strategic sectors



On 20th November the Council and the Parliament concluded a provisional agreement on the European screening framework on foreign investments in the Union. The aim is to coordinate the monitoring of third country investments in strategic sectors to ensure that they do not threaten security or public order. The agreement now has to be approved by the Council and the Parliament... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Development Council



European Foreign Affairs and Development Ministers adopted conclusions on the implementation of the Union's action plan II on gender equality on 26th November. They discussed this theme with the two 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winners, Nadia Murad and Dr Denis Mukwege. They also exchanged views on the Europe-Africa Alliance for sustainable investments and employment, and notably regarding the way to improve coordination and coherence of action in the field. They debated the place given to development in the upcoming multiannual financial framework and also discussed world food security and access to education in times of war and political crisis... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

EU-Central Asia Summit



During the EU-Central Asia Summit on 23rd November, the High Representative Federica Mogherini recalled the Union's strong commitment to the region and announced the opening of a Union embassy in Turkmenistan in 2019. On the day before the Cooperation Council with Uzbekistan positively assessed the country's reform programme and welcomed its commitment to making a bid to join the WTO. During the Cooperation Council with Tadjikistan the Union reviewed relations positively notably in the area of economic, judicial and political reform. The Union also stressed its work in terms of regional cooperation notably with Afghanistan and insisted on the country's stabilising role in the region... [Read more](#)

The EU redefines its strategy for India



The Commission and the Union's High Representative, Federica Mogherini adopted a joint communication on 20th November aiming to strengthen the Union's cooperation with India. The EU is promising to strengthen coordination and cooperation with India and to help it rise to the challenges of the moment like climate change for example or the circular economy and digitisation. The strategy which replaces that of 2004 also suggests an update of the EU-India Cooperation Agreement of 1994... [Read more](#)

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European Economic Area Council



The Council of the European Economic Area (EEA) met on 20th November in Brussels to discuss the implications of Brexit. Those taking part (EU, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein) recalled the importance of the coordination and integrity of the Single Market. They re-iterated their total cooperation in the financial and research areas and in the fight to counter climate change and also new technologies.. [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

Rejection of appeal against the Brexit procedure



On 26th November the Union's Court of Justice deemed invalid the request made by 13 British citizens living in the Member States other than the UK, to cancel the Council's decision to launch Brexit negotiations. They argued that the Council's decision was going to impact them directly, whilst they had not been able to vote. For its part the Council stated that its decision was simply a preparatory act in view negotiations. The Court decreed that the Council was correct and explained that the lack of constitutional authorisation in terms of the British referendum was not an argument... [Read more](#)

Court of Auditors :

The EU can do better to counter fraud



In two opinions published on 22nd November the Court of Auditors deemed that the changes proposed by the Commission regarding the European Anti-Fraud Office -OLAF- are not enough to ensure that its investigations gain in terms of efficiency. Even though the principles of cooperation between OLADF and the European Prosecutor's Office have been set, auditors believe that there are still a certain number of obstacles preventing their work together... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Franco-German Defence Projects



The French and German Defence Ministers, Florence Parly and Ursula von der Leyen lay out the first steps of their projects for a common defence system on 22nd November - with the future fighter plane (SCAF) and the tank. They welcomed a "decisive stage for European defence.".. [Read more](#)

France :

State visit by Emmanuel Macron to Belgium



On 19th November the French President was hosted by the Belgian King Philippe. The next day at the University of Louvain Emmanuel Macron advocated a two or three tiered Europe since all decisions should not always require the approval of all of the Member States. By his side Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel defended the proposal for a common foreign policy... [Read more](#)

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Greece :

Publication of the first post-programme report



On 21st November the Commission published the first report on Greece as part of the enhanced surveillance framework, introduced in August 2018 at the end of the third financial aid programme. The report concludes that the Greek 2019 budget respects the pledge of a primary

surplus of 3.5% of the GDP but that the progress of reforms in other areas is still questionable. The triggering of measures to alleviate the burden of the Greek debt will depend on a positive assessment of the second report published at the beginning of 2019... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Opinion on Italy's revised draft budgetary plan



On 21st November the Commission published a report on Italy's draft budgetary plan in virtue of article 126 TFEU. The report concluded that the macro-economic conditions could not justify the planned borrowing. It stresses that back-peddling in terms of necessary structural reforms, notably regarding pensions, is not positive. It deems that there is "a particularly serious non-compliance" in 2019 in terms of the Council's recommendation of July 2018. In view of these conclusions it guarantees that there will be an excessive deficit procedure. On 25th November the Vice-Presidents of the Italian Council, Luigi di Maio and Matteo Salvini indicated that they were not against slight modifications to avoid a stand-off with the Commission... [Read more](#)

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Poland :

Amendment to the justice reform



The Polish Diet adopted an amendment to the justice reform on 21st November thereby cancelling the chapter on the age of retirement of the judges at the Supreme Court. This initiative on the part of the party Law and Justice PiS in office follows a decision delivered by the EU's Court of Justice (ECJ) on 19th October which asked the government to suspend the reform "immediately, since it was deemed to be an infringement of the independence of judicial power. The judges who had been forcibly retired will now be re-instated... [Read more](#)

UK :

The government defends the agreement on Brexit



After the signature of the agreement on the UK's exit of the EU, on 25th November in Brussels and before the British Parliament's vote on December 11th to ratify it the British government published a list of 40 reasons why the text should be supported. In a "letter to the nation" published on 24th November Prime Minister Theresa May asked the British to come together as one and support the agreement... [Read more](#)

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Sweden :

Stefan Löfven again asked to form a government



Annie Lööf, of the Centre Party gave up her bid to form a government on 22nd November. The leader of Parliament, Andreas Norlen is due to put his choice of head of government to the vote of the MPs on 3rd December: outgoing Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. The latter was selected after the elections on 9th September but failed to form a coalition. If the majority does not reject him a government might be formed. If this is not the case the last bid will be organised before new elections are convened... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Turkey condemned for having imprisoned a Kurdish opponent



The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) condemned Turkey on 20th November for the wrongful imprisonment of a Kurdish opponent Selahattin Demirtas. It deemed that the reasons for his arrest in November 2016 on the grounds of terrorist propaganda were "plausible", but that the extension of his imprisonment, whilst he was running in the presidential election in June last year aimed to suffocate "political pluralism" in the country. Whilst Mr Demirtas risks up to 42 years in prison the ECHR ordered Turkey to release him "as quickly as possible" and to pay him compensation of 25,000€... [Read more](#)

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Finland takes over the presidency of the Committee of Ministers

Until the end of May 2019 the presidency of the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg will be in the hands of Finland, which is taking over from Croatia. The government intends to work for six



months to guarantee Human Rights, the rule of law in the face of present challenges - notably technological - gender equality and the prevention of the radicalisation of young people. It is due to address the future of Russia within the organisation and the reform of the latter... [Read more](#)

OECD :

World economic outlook



World economic growth remains high but it has reached a peak and is facing a risk in risks notably linked to the exacerbation of trade tension and the toughening of financial conditions, says the OECD's Economic Outlook published on 21st November. Growth prospects have been revised downwards in the most of the world's major economies. Now it is estimated that the world's GDP will lie at around 3.5% in 2019 and 2020... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Record support to the euro



On 20th November the most recent Eurobarometer survey revealed that 74% and 64% of the euro zone citizens believe that the euro is good thing for the EU and then for their country. 69% of citizens believe that greater economic political coordination between euro zone member States is necessary, which is two points more in comparison with 2017 whilst 78% of those interviewed believe that major reform is necessary to improve the euro zone's economic results... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Review of the healthcare situation in Europe



A joint report by the European Commission and the OECD was published on 22nd November on the state of health in Europe in 2018. It shows that increasing life expectancy, which normally increases has slowed and that major inequalities persist, notably amongst populations with low levels of education. The report advocates greater attention and prevention of mental illness, for universal access to care and an optimisation of spending on healthcare. It has asked for more to be done to counter dangers such as dependency on tobacco, alcohol and obesity.. [Read more](#)

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Record concentrations of greenhouse gases in 2017



According to the report by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) on greenhouse gases published on 20th November, 2017 experienced a record peak in concentrations of greenhouse gases, which are responsible for global warming. This publication has taken place just days before the start of COP24 in December in Katowice, Poland... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Christmas Markets across all of Europe



The season of Christmas Markets has started and will last for more than one month across Europe and in many cities: Fauquemont in the Netherlands (16/11), Strasbourg in France (23/11), Vienna in Austria (16/11), Florence in Italy (28/11), Stockholm in Sweden (21/11), Tallinn in Estonia (24/11), Copenhagen in Denmark (17/11) and everywhere across Germany... [Read more](#)

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Tribute to Leonardo da Vinci



From 30th November 2018 to 30th March 2019 three exceptional exhibitions illustrating the life and work of Leonardo da Vinci have been gathered together in a major event that will pay tribute to the greatest spirit of all time, 500 years after his death... [Read more](#)

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Exhibition "foreign artists in Paris 1944-1968"



Until 22nd April 2019 the Reine Sophie Museum in Madrid is running an exhibition devoted to foreign artists in Paris between 1944 and 1968. It establishes a panorama of artistic and political life in the capital through the work of painters, sculptors, musicians, film-makers and writers who often came from the USA and South America... [Read more](#)

Banksy at the MUDEC, Milan



The Museum of Culture in Milan - the MUDEC - is running an exhibition until 14th April 2019 devoted to Banksy. The artist who cultivates an aura of mystery around his identity and who enjoys making fun of objects in the consumer society is on show for the first time in a public museum... [Read more](#)

Duchamp. 100 questions. 100 answers in Stuttgart



The Staatsgalerie of Stuttgart is running an exhibition until 10th March 2019 "Duchamp. 100 questions. 100 answers", in reference to the exchange of views on this theme between the French painter Serge Stauffer, artist and art teacher in 1960... [Read more](#)

Objects inspired by Japan - Paris



The exhibition "Japon-Japonismes. Objets inspirés 1867-2018" is open at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris until 3rd March 2019. It highlights the exceptional foundations of ancient Japanese art as part of the celebrations of the 160 years of diplomatic relations between France and Japan... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



26th November
Brussels
"Development" Council



26th and 27th November
Brussels
"Education, Youth, Culture and Sport" Council



29th and 30th November
Brussels
"Competitiveness" Council



30th November
Brussels
"Cohesion" Council



30th November and 1st December
Buenos Aires
G20 Summit



3rd December
Brussels
"Transport" Council

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The Letter's Editorial Team :

Thomas de Robiano, Helen Levy ;
Victoire Bortoli, Chloé Hellot, Natasha Hroneska, Sophie van der Heijden

Editor-in-chief: Eric Maurice
Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin

Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

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