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Donald Trump's Trade Policy - when the hegemon ceases to be benevolent

Author: Patrick Allard



It is tempting to appeal to the irrationality, demagoguery, impulsivity or incompetence of the part of the American President. But whilst it tends neither to the establishment of pure and simple protectionism or isolationism, it is more fruitful to question the logic behind the trade policy which places Europe before a strategic dilemma.

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Foundation :

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](#)

Commission :

Strategy for a carbon neutral Union by 2050



On 28th November the Commission presented its strategy for 2050 of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in comparison with 1990 levels. It is aiming to use the areas of finance, industry and research as its support. The Commission does not define specific goals but, in line with the Paris Agreement, the strategy provides a main guideline. It is now

up to the European institutions, the States - in view of the European Council in May 2019 in Sibiu - and civil society to explore the ways that this might be achieved... [Read more](#)

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Results of progress on Capital Markets Union and EMU



On 28th November the Commission published a communication which calls to double effort to complete the Capital Markets Union before the European elections. It stresses the role of this union in the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union and in the strengthening of the role of the euro. It also published a report on non-performing loans whose ratios are tending to decline (3.4%)... [Read more](#)

2019 budget: new Commission proposal



Due to the failure to find agreement on the part of the European Parliament and the Council, the Commission presented a new draft budget for 2019 on 30th November in a bid to come to a compromise. It is putting forward 165 billion euro in commitments and 148 billion in payments. It recalls that the UK will contribute to the EU's budget until 2020... [Read more](#)

12,000 tickets to win for young people born in 2000



On 29th November the Commission launched its second competition DiscoverEU. Until 11th December anyone born in 2000 can enter the competition to try and win one of the 12,000 tickets to travel across Europe in the summer of 2019. The 12,000 tickets are distributed depending on the size of the Member State. The first year this competition was run 15,000 young people born in 1999 were able to travel around Europe... [Read more](#)

New rules to facilitate on-line purchases



As part of the digital single market, the new rules addressing unjustified on-line geoblocking started to apply as of 3rd December. Adopted by the EU last February the new regulation enables consumers to have extended cross-border access facilitating the purchase of products sold on-line. People will now be able to shop on-line in the EU without being blocked or redirected. Cross-border purchasers will be treated like local buyers, notably from the point of view of tariffs... [Read more](#)

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Parliament :

Vote on internal border controls



MEPs defined their position on 29th November on the revision of the Schengen border code, which enables Member States to raise temporary internal border controls in the event of a serious threat to public order or internal security. MEPs hope that the initial period for the temporary measures will be limited to 2 months (instead of 6 months at present) and that they will not be extended beyond a year (instead of 2 at present). They are asking for the introduction of new safeguards regarding extensions in order to guarantee citizens' constitutional freedoms... [Read more](#)

Resolution regarding the inquiry over the CumEx affair



On 29th November MEPs asked for an in-depth inquiry into the agents involved in the CumEx scandal, fraud in the purchase and re-sale of shares that cost 11 European countries 55 billion euro, and the extent of which was only recently revealed. They asked for the inquiry to bring to light the loopholes in the coordination between Member States, and invited national authorities to "bring white-collar impunity to an end." They also deem that the European legislative legal framework in this area is not adequate and have asked the Commission to put forward a European framework for cross-border tax investigations, for the creation of a financial information service cell and for an early warning system... [Read more](#)

Speech by Danish Prime Minister to Parliament

Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen debated the future of



Europe on 28th November with the European Parliament. He insisted on the fact that the Union could do more in terms of migration, climate change, the Single Market and free-trade. He said he hoped that the Union would learn from what had happened with Brexit and strengthen its cohesion. He said that "the share of citizens supporting the EU is greater in Denmark than in most other European countries..." [Read more](#)

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Council :

Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Council



The Ministers of Education, Culture, Youth, Sports met on 26th and 27th November discussed the Creative Europe draft initiative 2021-2027 which is to strengthen the competitiveness of the cultural sector and the Cultural Working Plan 2019-2022 which is to help the cultural sector to adapt to the digital world and globalisation. They also exchanged views regarding the fight to counter disinformation, the socio-economic advantages of sport, the integration of young people including refugees. They debated the European Solidarity Corps and the Erasmus+ Programme... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Cohesion Council



On 30th November ministers examined the legislative package on the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027. On the basis of a working document drafted by the Austrian Presidency of the Council ministers gave some political guidelines regarding territorial cooperation and the mid-term programme review. They also discussed the progress achieved in terms of European territorial cohesion. The Cohesion Policy, with a third of the Union's budget, helps investments to reduce socio-economic gaps between European regions... [Read more](#)

The Council adopts a position on covered bonds



On 28th November the Council adopted a common position on the Capital Market Union and access to long term financing. It came to agreement over a common harmonised framework for covered bonds comprising a regulation and a directive. Covered bonds will have to correspond with harmonised standards across the entire EU which will help make safe investments. The final text will be negotiated as soon as Parliament has confirmed its position in the plenary session in December... [Read more](#)

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Conclusions of the Competitiveness Council



On 29th and 30th November the ministers responsible for Competitiveness exchanged views on the proposed regulation regarding the Union's space programme, on the governance of the European research area and on the strategy for the EU's future industrial policy. They concluded a partial agreement regarding the implementation of the Horizon Europe programme. They also defined their position regarding regulations governing platforms between businesses and general regulations on vehicle safety... [Read more](#)

Eurogroup Conclusions



On 3rd December the Eurogroup said it was pleased with the Commission's budgetary forecasts which provide that no State will have a government deficit over 3% of its GDP in 2019, but it reminds Belgium, France, Portugal and Spain about their draft budgetary plans (DBP) for 2019. Eurogroup supported the Commission's opinion noting a "particularly serious non-compliance" regarding the Council's recommendations about Italy's DBP. Eurogroup noted the positive developments taking place in Greece, Spain and Cyprus. European ministers also discussed at length the reform of the Economic and Monetary Union, notably the Single Resolution Fund backstop, the reform of the European Stability Mechanism and its cooperation with the Commission... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

G20 Summit



From 30th November to 1st December the G20 met in Buenos Aires. In their final declaration the 20 wealthiest States said they supported the "necessary reform" of the WTO. Except for the USA they repeated their

commitment to work "for the full implementation" of the Paris Agreement of 2015 and notably to maintain the average warming of the planet below 2°C. Questions of terrorism, world taxation, migration, employment, education and gender equality also feature in the declaration. On the side-lines of the summit American President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping concluded a 90 day truce in their trade war - accepting to reduce and not to increase their respective customs duties... [Read more](#)

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ECB :

The ECB warns against a generalised trade war



In an article published on 27th November experts from the ECB stress that the trade war between Washington and Beijing is not an imminent risk for the euro zone's financial markets and its assets. However they studied scenarios of more or less serious trade war and they warn against a generalised conflict with the entry of many other countries into the protectionist spiral, or the imposition of customs duties on a greater number of products which might push back the prices of the world assets including those of euro zone... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Report on the condition of the black population



According to the report "Being Black in the EU" by the Agency for Fundamental Rights published on 28th November the black population encounters greater difficulty due to skin colour. 30% of those interviewed declare that they have been the focus of racial harassment over the last five years; 25% of the black population has been the victim of racial discrimination in the workplace or as they look for work and 14% as they have looked for housing. This discrimination results in higher unemployment rates, the occupation of insalubrious housing and greater financial precarity... [Read more](#)

Declaration on the regulation of drones



On 28th November the Commission, the European and national authorities, as well as the drone industry adopted the "Amsterdam Declaration on Drones" which sets the foundations of European coordination on the regulation of drones. The Declaration sets priorities: supporting Member States in implementing the European regulation on drones, developing an institutional for the use of drones, investing in research and also in information campaigns... [Read more](#)

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Spain :

Visit by the Chinese President



Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is on his way to the G20 in Buenos Aires, has been in Spain on an official visit (27th to 29th November). China, which is engaged in a trade war with the USA is trying to strengthen its links with Europe's economies. 18 trade and cooperation agreements are to signed during this visit... [Read more](#)

Regional elections in Andalusia



On 2nd December, regional elections took place in Andalusia that had been held by the PSOE for the last 37 years. Whilst remaining ahead in terms of votes the PSOE experienced its sharpest ever decline (from 47 to 33 seats), especially to the benefit of a new far right party, Vox, which had made its entry into parliament with 12 seats. The People's Party (PP) and Ciudadanos might take the governance of the province but it will have to form a majority by joining forces with Vox (55/109)... [Read more](#)

France :

Ten years of Strategic Partnership with Romania



The French and Romanian Presidents, Emmanuel Macron and Klaus Iohannis celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Strategic Partnership between their two countries. During the meeting in Paris on 27th November they committed to making "common initiatives in view of strengthening the European project, convergence and socio-economic

cohesion as well as the deepening of integration in the European Union.".. [Read more](#)

Latvia :

New candidate for the post of Prime Minister



On 26th November Latvian President Raimonds Vejonis appointed Aldis Gobzems of the KPV LV, a populist party that is critical of the elites and which came second in the general elections on 6th October last, to become Prime Minister if he can form a government within the next two weeks. It is the second bid after that of Jānis Bordāns (of the New Conservative Party) to form a new government with the 7 parties which won seats in the Saeima (parliament)... [Read more](#)

Luxembourg :

Government coalition returns to office



A month and a half after the election on 14th October the coalition between the Socialist Workers' Party (POSL), the Democratic Party (PD, liberal), and the Greens, led by Xavier Bettel (PD) was announced on 29th November. The People's Social Christian Party which came out ahead in the election is not joining the government. The official list of government members will only be presented on 5th December... [Read more](#)

The Netherlands :

New legislation against tax rulings



On 22nd November the Dutch Secretary of State for Finance Menno Snel announced that the requirements governing tax rulings for foreign companies established in the Netherlands were to be tightened to discourage the opportunistic establishment of shell companies. Moreover each tax ruling concluded between the administration and a foreign business will be the focus of an anonymised publication and an annual follow-up report for greater transparency. The new rules will enter into force as of July 2019... [Read more](#)

UK :

A no-deal Brexit would amputate 9.3% from the British GDP



A no-deal Brexit would cut the British GDP by 9.3% over 15 years warned a report published on 28th November by the British government which is trying to convince MPs to adopt the agreement made with Brussels. This agreement criticised by both the Conservative majority of Prime Minister Theresa May will cost the country's GDP 3.9%... [Read more](#)

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Slovakia :

Slovakia: resignation of Foreign and European Affairs Minister



The Slovakian Foreign and European Affairs Minister, Miroslav Lajcak decided to resign after the rejection by the Slovakian Parliament of the UN's Global Compact for safe, orderly, regular migration on 29th November. Mr Lajcak ensured the presidency of the UN's General Assembly when the pact was approved by all the Member States except for the USA... [Read more](#)

Georgia :

Salomé Zourabichvili, elected President of Georgia



Supported by the party in office, Georgian Dream, Salomé Zourabichvili was elected president of Georgia according to results published on 29th November by the Central Electoral Committee. The former French Ambassador won 59.52% of vote against 40.48% for the opposition candidate, Grigol Vashadzé... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine :

The European Union calls for de-escalation in tension in the Azov Sea

After tension between Russian and Ukrainian naval forces in the Azov Sea on 25th November the EU and the UN have expressed their concern in view of the "increasing militarisation" in the region and called on Russia to "restore the freedom of passage" for ships in the



Kerch Strait, in the respect of international law and to release unconditionally and immediately, the Ukrainian ships which have been captured there along with their crews. The EU also recalled that the building of the bridge over the strait by Russia is a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity... [Read more](#)

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UN :

Inauguration of the 24th COP in Poland



On 2nd December the 24th COP (Conference of Parties) started in Katowice in Poland, as part of the Framework Convention of the UN on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The inauguration ceremony took place on 3rd December together with 40 heads of State and Government. For two weeks of negotiations participants will have to come an agreement regarding the action to follow to respect the commitments taken during the COP21 in Paris in 2015, notably maintaining the average level of global warming at 2°C. COP24 will end on 14th December... [Read more](#)

CO2 emissions have started rising again



World CO2 levels increased in 2017 after having remained stable over the last three years said a report published on 27th November by the UN Environment Programme... [Read more](#)

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Eurostat :

Drop in inflation to 2%



The euro zone's inflation rate is estimated at 2% in November 2018, against 2.2% in October according to a rapid estimate by Eurostat, the European Union's statistical office... [Read more](#)

Eurostat: unemployment stable in Europe



According to the most recent data published by Eurostat on 30th November the unemployment rate lay at 8.1% in October 2018 in the euro zone and at 6.7% in the EU, stable in comparison with September 2018. The lowest unemployment rates were seen in the Czech Republic (2.2%), Germany (3.3%) and the highest are in Greece (18.9%) and Spain (14.8%). In October 2018, the unemployment rate of young people (15-24 year olds) lay at 15.3% in the EU and 17.3% in the euro zone, against 16.3% and 18.1% in October 2017... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

European elections: voters concerned about foreign interference and cyber attacks



On 26th November during its annual seminar on fundamental rights the Commission published a new Eurobarometer survey on the expectations and concerns of Europeans regarding the European elections in 2019. It reveals that people are concerned about foreign political interference (59%), the misuse of private data (67%) and cyberattacks (61%) during these elections. But three quarters of the people interviewed think that it might be better managed by greater transparency and a period of silence on the social networks and by the equal treatment of European political parties on the internet... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

Report on Better Law-Making



As part of the inter-institutional agreement "Better Law-Making" the Commission presented a report on 26th November that highlights the work undertaken by the EU to simplify European law making and to reduce excessive regulations. The report stresses the continued integration of REFIT (Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme) and the importance of its 31 recommendations formulated during the past year. It insists on the implementation of 150 initiatives and on the particular attention paid to this issue

in the next multi-annual financial framework. The report shows that each legislative revision has a quantified goal of simplification and burden reduction... [Read more](#)

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Reports: EU exports support 36 million jobs



On 27th November the Commission presented two new studies showing the importance of exports in terms of employment prospects. Hence the EU's exports help support 36 million jobs in Europe, 14 million of which are occupied by women. This is two-thirds more than in 2000. The highest increases in comparison with 2000 have been noted in Bulgaria (+312%), in Slovakia (+213%) and Portugal (+172%). Both studies show that exports from one member country impact significantly the employment market of the other Member States... [Read more](#)

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OECD report on measuring economic and social results



In a report "Beyond the GDP, measuring that counts for economic and social results" published on 27th November, the OECD calls for authorities to look beyond measuring the GDP to define the economic policy to follow. It deems that the answer to the crisis would have been stronger if better metrics had been available... [Read more](#)

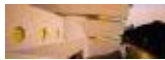
Culture :

Videoart Berlin



The Berlinische Galerie will be hosting the exhibition "Son of a witch" which will be showing videos by German artist Raphaela Vogen until 11th March 2019. The exhibition is part of the "Videoart at Midnight" organised in Berlin in four different places with the aim of including different aspects of video art outside of the field of cinema... [Read more](#)

Diana Thater exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao



Half documentary, half art, the installations by American artist Diana Thater, especially devoted to two endangered species in Kenya - the elephant and the rhinoceros - are the main theme of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao until 18th March 2019... [Read more](#)

"Private Rembrandt" exhibition in Amsterdam



From 7th December to 7th April 2019, on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the death of Rembrandt, the archives of the city of Amsterdam are showing original documents from the time of the artist. The personal history of the painter is told via these papers, illustrated by works of the collections in the Rijksmuseum and the House of Rembrandt Museum... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



3rd December
Brussels
Eurogroup Meeting



3rd and 4th December
Brussels
"Transport, Telecommunications and Energy" Council



4th December
Brussels
"Economic and Financial Affairs" Council



6th and 7th December

Brussels

"Justice and Internal Affairs" Council

"Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer" Council



10th December

Brussels

"Foreign Affairs" Council



10th and 13th December

Strasbourg

Plenary Session of the European Parliament

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