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The Common Agricultural Policy and the challenge of subsidiarity

Author: Bernard Bourget



Whilst on 23rd February the international Agricultural Fair is opening, the Foundation has published a study by Bernard Bourget on the new Common Agricultural Policy with questions regarding the reduction of the budget and the application of the subsidiarity principle. Will the choices made for the common agricultural policy for the years 2021-2027 will be part of the continued dismantling of this European policy or will they provide it with in meaning again? In the negotiations that are now approaching the European Parliament will have a crucial role

to play.
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Election :

Presidential election in Slovakia on 16th and 30th March



15 candidates are running in the presidential election in Slovakia on 16th and 30th March next. According to the most recent poll undertaken between 7th and 12th February by Focus, Maros Sefcovic is due to come out ahead in the first round with 20.1% of the vote ahead of Robert Mistrik, who is due to win 17.1%. Zuzana Caputova is due to come third with 14.4%, Stefan Harabin is due to take 13.6%, Marian Kotleba 8.9%, Bela Bugar 7.4% and Milan Krajniak 6.3%. The other eight candidates are due to win fewer than 5% of the vote. In the second round opposing Maros Sefcovic and Robert Mistrik the former is due to win but by a short majority (50.8% against 49.2%). The campaign between rounds is therefore due to be extremely intense... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

100 days to go to the European elections



From 23rd to 26th May more than 300 million Europeans will be called to choose their 705 MEPs for the next five years. As in the previous elections, the Robert Schuman Foundation has published a dedicated website providing greater understanding of the election and to follow the campaign in the 27 Member States... [Read more](#)

Permanent Atlas of the European Union



In view of the upcoming European elections the Robert Schuman Foundation has published a new version of the "Permanent Atlas of the European Union" which offers readers a full panorama of the Union, the euro zone, each of its Member States and its overseas territories. This work provides up to date and the most objective political and statistical information. It is available in paper and digital version from the Foundation's site and from bookshops... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Launch of work on industrial defence projects



On 12th February the Commission launched work with the Member States in view of financing joint industrial projects in the area of defence, in virtue of the EU's budget 2019-2020. This European industrial development programme in terms of defence will help open the path to the future European Defence Fund for 2021, currently under discussion between co-legislators... [Read more](#)

Preparation of the rail sector in the event of a no deal Brexit



On 12th February the Commission made a proposal aiming to reduce the impact of a no-deal Brexit agreement on transport and rail connectivity between the Union and the UK. The proposal guarantees the validity of safety agreements for a share of the rail infrastructures, notably the Chunnel. These measures are planned for a maximum of three months and will only be applicable if the UK maintains the EU's requirements in terms of security... [Read more](#)

New blacklist of money laundering



On 13th February the Commission adopted a new list of 23 third countries whose measures to counter the laundering of capital and the financing of terrorism are inadequate in terms of protecting the European financial area. Banks and other entities that fall within the field of the Union's rules are obliged to implement enhanced supervision regarding financial operations regarding clients and financial establishments that come from third countries. On 12th February, Parliament and Council came to a temporary agreement enabling more effective, faster cross-border access by police forces and Europol to financial information, enabling the combat to counter the laundering of money and the financing of illegal activities... [Read more](#)

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Reduction of Red Tape



As of 16th February new rules entered into force that aim to reduce costs and administrative formalities for citizens living outside of their country of origin. This involves some 17 million EU citizens... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Provisional agreement on the copyright directive



On 13th February the Parliament and Council came to a provisional agreement on the copyright directive, which introduces rules as part of the digital single market. The agreement provides for certain exceptions and limitations, notably regarding online education and the dissemination of cultural heritage. It introduces new practices for the fairer payment for authors whose publications are put online. Dissemination platforms will have to have permission for the publication of copyright protected works which are downloaded by users. The directive also confirms copyright for both authors and artists adequate, proportionate

remuneration and with obligations of transparency... [Read more](#)

Green light for the EU-Singapore Agreements



MEPs approved the free-trade and investment protection agreements on 13th February between the EU and Singapore. They almost completely do away with customs tariffs between the two sides within the next five years. They will facilitate free-trade in services, the opening of Singaporean public procurement to European businesses, whilst protecting European products of controlled origin or appellation. They include enhanced rights for workers and greater environmental protection. They introduce an independent jurisdictional system to settle disputes between investors and State. They deepen cooperation beyond the economic area alone... [Read more](#)

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Framework for filtering direct foreign investments



On 14th February MEPs adopted the directive on the European filtering framework for foreign investments in the Union. It involves the coordination of monitoring third country investments in strategic sectors and to ensure that they do not threaten security or public order. The new regulation protects strategic sectors such as energy or telecommunications. The Council is due to adopt the agreement on 5th March... [Read more](#)

Enhancing the Union's ability to respond in the event of a natural catastrophe



On 12th February MEPs voted in support of the updating of the EU's civil protection mechanism. The legislation also creates a resource reserve "RescEU", comprising fighter planes against forest fires that will intervene when the resources deployed by the Member States are not enough in response to a catastrophe... [Read more](#)

Enhanced cooperation and tribute to Alain Lamassoure



On 13th February at the end of a 23 year mandate Alain Lamassoure (EPP, FR) presented his last report in plenary session on enhanced cooperation. The text, "regarding the implementation of measures in the treaty on enhanced cooperation" was adopted 457 votes in support, 154 against. In a speech that was given a standing ovation by his colleagues, he said he was glad that since his first election that the Parliament had become "a true European Parliament with legislative capacity", in which "listening, dialogue, mutual respect, the quest for compromise, the obsession with the common interest, were more effective than systematic partisan confrontation that typified national politics." The first Vice-President of the Commission Franz Timmermans also paid tribute to "his integrity and his truly European attitude.".. [Read more](#)

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Debate over the future of the Union with the Italian Prime Minister



Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte debated the future of Europe before the European Parliament, in Strasbourg on 12th February. He maintained that Europe "should listen to its citizens" and that the revival of the European project had to involve "solidarity and cohesion between Member States." He defended idea of a common seat for the EU in the UN Security Council and a truly common European defence system. He stressed the need for a stable, sustainable solution based on solidarity for migratory flows. He asked for a new approach to problems in Africa, via an equal to equal partnership. He also supported Parliament's increased powers to restore its credibility in the eyes of the citizens of Europe... [Read more](#)

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First forecasts for seats in the May election



On 18th February the European Parliament published a first series of seat forecasts in the next hemicycle based on national surveys undertaken at the beginning of February. The two main groups, the European People's Party (EPP) and the group (Socialists and Democrats - S&D) are due to lose seats, with respectively 183 and 135 seats. The ALDE (Liberals) are due to win 75 and the Greens 45. The nationalist parties are due to win some seats but would not all be able to form a group... [Read more](#)

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Financial and Budget Supervision 2020



On 12th February Finance Ministers discussed the Commission's proposal to progress towards a qualified majority vote and an ordinary legislative procedure regarding certain fiscal issues. Most of the Member States have demanded the upkeep of the present rules. Ministers supported the candidacy of the governor of the Central Bank of Ireland, Philip Lane, for the vacant post on the board of the European Central Bank. They adopted the guidelines for the 2020 budget and conclusions regarding the latest Commission report on budgetary stability. They confirmed the general guideline regarding the revision of the functioning of the present European financial supervisory system... [Read more](#)

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Agreement on measures for the conservation of fish stocks



On 13th February the Parliament and the Council came to a provisional agreement regarding new techniques to gauge the protection of fish stocks. They comprise measures to protect the marine ecosystem as well as measures that aim to prevent accessory capture of non-commercial, sensitive species. The agreement provides for the ban on pulse gear as of 1st July 2021, but they allow the Member States to do this immediately. The provisional agreement must now be formally adopted by Parliament and Council... [Read more](#)

Provisional agreement against unfair practices on the digital market



The Parliament and the Council came to a provision agreement on 14th February regarding measures that aim to end unfair practices on the Single Market. Online marketplaces (online commerce, app shops, search engines, social networks, price comparers) will have to guarantee transparency and loyalty in their contractual relations with businesses (online retail, hotels, restaurants, app developers). They will have to introduce an internal system to process complaints and facilitate the settlement of extrajudicial disputes. The agreement now has to be approved by the Council and the Parliament... [Read more](#)

Provision agreement on the gas directive



On 13th February the Council and Parliament came to a provisional agreement on a modification of the gas directive so that European gas pipelines towards and from third countries will be subject to European law. Exemptions for existing gas pipelines are provided for... [Read more](#)

Provision agreement creating a European Labour Authority



On 14th February the Council and the European Parliament came to a provisional agreement on the regulation establishing a European Labour Authority. This new body aims to help Member States implement the Union's legal acts in areas of worker mobility and the coordination of social security. It will also provide information to workers and employers regarding cross-border mobility. It will also provide support to counter undeclared work and in the settlement of disputes between Member States. It will also bring together under one roof technical and operational missions of several existing Union bodies. The text now has to be formally approved... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Sahel: further measures to strengthen the region's security



Ministers decided on 18th February to increase the regional effectiveness of the action of the EU's missions that are part of the Common Security and Defence Policy in the Sahel: EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger and the EUTM Mali. It approved an idea for a joint civilian military operation regarding the regionalisation of the CSDP's action in the Sahel, which means that the process will now enter its second phase... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council

18th February Foreign Affairs Ministers adopted conclusions on the situation in Yemen and climate governance. They reasserted their support to the independence, integrity and territorial sovereignty of



Ukraine and stressed the importance of the implementation of reform. Regarding Syria they stressed the need for peaceful transition, before the conference planned for 12th to 14th March. In Venezuela, a technical mission to open the way for a democratic, peaceful end to the crisis will be deployed in Caracas. Ministers also discussed the security situation in Sahel and in the Horn of Africa... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

634,700 asylum requests in Europe in 2018



The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published its first statistics for 2018 on 13th February. 634,700 people claimed international protection in the Union, in Norway and Switzerland, a number that was down by 10% in comparison with 2017 and a similar level to that of 2014. Syria remains the lead country of candidates' origin, followed by Afghanistan and Iraq. The number of Georgian, Turkish and Venezuelan candidates increased for the second year running? Of the 593,500 first-instance decisions that were made, one in three were positive... [Read more](#)

End of the A380 in 2021



On 14th February Airbus announced the end of production of its A380 carrier in 2021, due to a lack of orders on the part of airlines. The European aircraft producer did however conclude an agreement with the UAE airline for the delivery of 14 additional A380's over the next two years as well as 40 A330-900's and 30 A350-900's... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Munich Security Conference



In a speech given at the Munich Security Conference on 16th February, German Chancellor Angela Merkel advocated multilateralism, the only means to respond to challenges like global warming, the arms race, terrorism, cyber-war, the battle to combat poverty. She maintained the importance of NATO as a pillar for stability. She regrets the American unilateral decisions, like withdrawals from the agreements on the Iranian nuclear issue and the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The Chancellor recalled that Europe had to decide to assume or not its responsibilities in the present crises which are leading to millions of refugees... [Read more](#)

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Spain :

Elections on 28th April after the rejection of the budget



On 13th February the Spanish Parliament rejected the draft budget 2019 presented by Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, whose government does not hold a majority, during a vote in which the Catalan nationalists joined forces with the People's Party (centre-right) and the Ciudadanos (liberals). This rejection forced Mr Sanchez to announce a snap election on 15th February which is to take place on 28th April... [Read more](#)

Lithuania :

European Commissioner, Vytenis Andriukaitis, candidate for the presidential election



European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis announced on 15th February that he was running for the presidential election in Lithuania on 12th May next. He will campaign under the Social Democratic Party label, taking unpaid leave from the Commission. The Vice-President of the Commission, Jyrki Katainen will take over the work included in his portfolio... [Read more](#)

Portugal :

Government reshuffle

On 17th February Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa appointed Pedro Nuno Santos as Infrastructure and Housing Minister. To date he was Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs. This appointment was announced after Pedro Marques, outgoing Minister for Planning and



Infrastructure, was presented as the main candidate for the Socialist Party in the European Parliamentary elections. Angelo de Sousa will be Planning Minister and Mariana Vieira da Silva, previously Secretary of State, will be Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Trade Continuity Treaty with Switzerland in view of Brexit



On 11th February the British Trade Minister Liam Fox and the Swiss Federal Counsellor Guy Parmelin signed a treaty for trade continuity that is due to replace the European treaties and minimise customs duties between the two countries after the British withdrawal from the EU. Trade relations between Switzerland and the UK are important, lying at more than £32.1 billion in 2017. It is especially concerns the British car and metal industries and the Swiss clock and pharmaceutical sectors who will be spared major increases in customs duties... [Read more](#)

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Further confusion in Parliament over the Brexit procedure



British Prime Minister Theresa May informed MPs on 12th February of the development of her discussions with European leaders on the UK's withdrawal from the EU. She stressed that she "needed time" to complete the additional discussions. During a vote on 14th February MPs rejected 303 votes against 258 the government's strategy regarding Brexit. MPs also rejected an amendment by the Scottish National Party to revoke article 50. The next parliamentary debate and the vote on the Brexit strategy is planned for 27th February... [Read more](#)

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North Macedonia :

Entry into force of the agreement with Greece

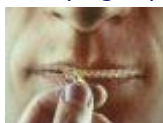


The agreement signed in June last between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Greece entered into force on 12th February, thereby making official the name, North Macedonia. On 13th February the Macedonian government notified the UN of its change of name. The agreement ends a long conflict between the two countries and enables the lifting of the vetos set by Athens regarding North Macedonia's future accession to NATO and the EU... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Worrying report on the freedom of the press



According to a report published on 12th February by the partner organisations of the Council of Europe's for the Platform for Journalists' Safety, the protection of journalism, the freedom of the press significantly worsened in 2018. The number of attacks or threats made against journalists have constantly increased. Some journalists continue to be held arbitrarily, and new legislation has weakened the freedom of the press. This report points in particular to Italy and Turkey, but also the lack of action on the part of the authorities... [Read more](#)

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The risk of manipulation of behaviour by algorithms



The Committee of Ministers, representing the Member States of the Council of Europe adopted conclusions on 13th February regarding the manipulation of algorithms. It is concerned about the organisation of individuals into categories which strengthen segregation and discrimination, and the sometimes unfair distribution of benefits that result from this organisation. It is also concerned about the significant effects on citizens' cognitive autonomy and their free-will and more generally their individual rights, democracy and the rule of law. It encourages the Member States to recognise their responsibility and their request to examine the industry. It insisted on the fundamental role of academics and media in the design of research... [Read more](#)

OECD :

Developing adult education in the face of changes in working conditions



In a report published on 13th February the OECD reviewed life-long education in the Member States. Whilst only 2 adults in five had followed complementary training this year - and often they were already qualified - and that 30% of jobs might be affected by automatisisation, the organisation is recommending the modernisation of technologies, globalisation and ageing which is reshaping the labour market, widening it to low-skilled workers, the unemployed, the elderly and immigrants and to support by public financing... [Read more](#)

NATO :

Defence Ministers Meeting



The Defence Ministers of the NATO member states, who met in Brussels on 13th and 14th February reasserted Russia's violation of the treaty on intermediate range nuclear forces (INF) are a major threat for transatlantic security. They discussed the sharing burdens, whether this means appropriations, capabilities and contributions. They reviewed ongoing missions, notably in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. On the meetings sidelines Estonia, Latvia and Denmark signed a memorandum on the creation of NATO's seat of the Multinational North Division (MND-N), to be situated in Adazi (Latvia) and Karup (Denmark)... [Read more](#)

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Eurostat :

Goods trade surplus 2018



According to the most recent data published by Eurostat on 15th February the euro zone in 2018 was in surplus by 17 billion € in the international trade of goods, and the EU had a surplus of 0.7 billion... [Read more](#)

Growth in 2018 less than 2017



According to data published by Eurostat on 14th February the GDP rose by 0.2% in the fourth quarter of 2018 in the EU and the euro zone. Over the entire year 2018 the GDP increased by 1.9% in the EU and 1.8% in the euro zone - against +2.4% in 2017... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

2018 Report on EU activities



On 15th February the Commission adopted the 2018 general report on the EU's activities. The report shows how the Union is respecting its commitments to the citizens of Europe. It will be available on 13th March in all of the Union's official languages as well as in paper version... [Read more](#)

Culture :

International Film Festival in Porto



From 22nd February to 2nd March Fantasporto, Porto's international film festival is taking place. Hundreds of short and full-feature films from 54 countries will be screened on the theme of the challenges of modernity... [Read more](#)

Book Fair in Vilnius



From 21st to 24th February the Exhibition and Congress Centre is hosting the Vilnius International Book Fair. Exhibitors and visitors are invited to investigate developments that have taken place in literature... [Read more](#)

Titian and the Venetian Renaissance in Frankfurt



The Städel Museum in Frankfurt-am-Main is running an exhibition until 26th May providing visitors with a panorama of paintings by Venetian artists of the Renaissance and of Titian in particular... [Read more](#)

"Calder-Picasso" Paris



From 19th February to 25th August the Picasso Museum in Paris is running an exhibition of 120 works by the two innovative personalities in the art world of the 20th century, Alexander Calder and Pablo Picasso. The exhibition illustrates how the two artists explored the issue of the void and defied the movement of the masses... [Read more](#)

Balthus at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum



From 19th February to 26th May the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid is running an exhibition by the artist Balthasar Klossowski de Rola, better known as Balthus. The exhibition is co-organised with the Beyeler Foundation and reviews the artist's work as of 1920... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



18th February
Brussels
Foreign Affairs Council



18th and 19th February
Brussels
Competitiveness Council



19th February
Brussels
General Affairs Council



21st-22nd February
Bucharest
Informal Trade Ministers' Meeting



24th-25th February
Charm-el-Cheikh
EU-Arab League Summit

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