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## For geopolitics of the euro

Authors: Cyprien Batut, Olivier Lenoir



The euro is a world currency. It is the official currency of 19 European States, and according to the June 2018 report by the European Central Bank (ECB) on the international role of the euro, it is by far, ahead of the pound, the yen and the renminbi, the world's second most important currency. The euro turned twenty on January 1st 2019. The strengthening of the single currency will be achieved via its increased use by the EU's economic and trade partners. Promoting the internationalisation of the euro would also strengthen the influence and security of Europe. In virtue of this it must be a diplomatic goal of the institutions and the Member States.

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### Front page! :

#### Europe: is a Renaissance possible?



In his editorial the Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani reviews the recent article by the French President Emmanuel Macron. He insists on the need for Europeans to speak of common goals, based on the successes of the European Union, before discussing the means to achieve these... [Read more](#)

### Foundation :

#### European elections: a website to understand everything



From 23rd to 26th May 2019, 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 is offering its readers a dedicated website to have a better 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 the most up to date, objective political and statistical information. It is available in paper and digital version from the Foundation's site and from bookshop... [Read more](#)

### Commission :

#### 2019 Report on male/female equality



On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Commission published its 2019 report on gender equality in the EU on 7th March. Some progress has been made but is still inadequate given the great degree of inequality that women still face. Women's wages are still 16% lower on average than those of their male counterparts, their pensions 35.7% lower. Women are still under-represented in parliaments and governments: seven national MPs in 10 and 69.5% of high ranking ministers are men in the EU. In the business world, only 6.3% of CEO positions of major listed businesses are occupied by women... [Read more](#)

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#### Review of progress achieved in the EU in terms of migration



On 6th March the Commission delivered a review of progress achieved in the EU in terms of migration over the last four years. It is pleased with the reduction in 2018 of the number of illegal arrivals in Europe, which is now at its lowest level in five years. It deems however that some measures still need to be taken. The Commission has notably asked for an increase in aid for Morocco as well as to migrants in Libya and a better management of migration in Greece. It also recommends greater effort in terms of the fight to counter the causes of illegal migration, to adopt reform that aims to strengthen Frontex, revise asylum rules and develop legal migration paths... [Read more](#)

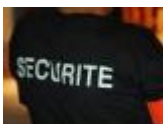
#### Report on the circular economy



On 4th March the Commission published a report on the implementation of an action plan on the circular economy originally launched in 2015. The 54 measures provided for have all be achieved and have enabled an acceleration in the transition from a linear to a circular economy in the EU. The plan includes a European strategy regarding plastic. The Commission plans to base itself on this example to improve circularity in other sectors and to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions... [Read more](#)

### Council :

#### Conclusions of the Justice/Interior Council



On 7th March the Interior Ministers discussed cooperation with several States of North Africa in terms of migration and assessed the possibility of increasing assistance provided to these States. They discussed the reform of the European asylum regime, without taking any decisions. Ministers also debate the fight to counter the terrorist threat, identified legislative loopholes and issues to address as a priority. They also adopted a decision modifying the civil protection mechanism. Justice Ministers came to an agreement on 8th March on the directive regarding the appointment of legal representatives for the collation of evidence. They debated the US agreement on access to electronic evidence and put forward guidelines to follow... [Read more](#)

#### Conclusions of the "Environment" Council



On 5th March "Environment" Ministers debated the strategy to adopt to achieve a neutral European economy for the climate by 2050, notably in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. They came to an agreement regarding an update of the drinking water directive, which provides for a stricter management of tap water. Ministers also exchanged views on the best approach to adopt in terms of endocrine disruptors... [Read more](#)

### Capital Laundering: rejection of a list of high risk countries



On 7th March the Council unanimously rejected a draft list put forward by the Commission denoting 23 third countries deemed to be high risk in terms of capital laundering and the financing of terrorism. It deemed that the procedure used by the Commission to establish the list was not sufficiently "transparent and robust". The Commission will now have to put forward a new draft list of third countries whose measures to counter capital laundering and the financing of terrorism are inadequate, thereby causing a threat to the Union's financial system... [Read more](#)

### Eurogroup Meeting



Finance Ministers of the euro area who met on 11th March discussed Latvia's budget plan and decided that it was in line with the stability and growth pact. They debated Greece, welcomed the progress achieved and if this progress continued they said they would be prepared to implement further debt relief measures. Regarding the euro zone's economic situation, they deemed that the slowing was only temporary. Finally ministers discussed the budgetary instrument for convergence and competitiveness, notably spending related aspects. From a general point of view this instrument should support structural reform and also public investments... [Read more](#)

### Modification of the civil protection mechanism



On 7th March the Council adopted a decision modifying the EU's civil protection mechanism. The aim is to improve the prevention of risks and to provide greater support to the States affected by catastrophes. The Council notably decided to introduce an additional reserve of resources, rescEU, as well as to tighten European risk prevention requirements. The Commission will have to establish a European civil protection knowledge network... [Read more](#)

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### Preliminary agreement on sustainable finance



The Council and the Parliament came to agreement on 7th March on sustainable finance after having agreed on 25th February on new "low carbon" benchmarks. The agreement aims to oblige financial companies to be more transparent in the way they consider environmental factors in their investment decisions. Companies will now have to explain the procedures used when they consider these factors, how environmental risks may influence the profitability of investments, as well as the sustainability and incidence on the climate of their products and portfolio... [Read more](#)

### Agreement over the protection of whistle-blowers



Negotiators at the Parliament and the Council came to agreement on 11th March over a temporary measures regarding the directive to protect whistle-blowers. The latter will be able to use internal and external reporting channels and will be protected if a lack of adequate response justifies public disclosure. The text explicitly bans retaliation against whistle-blowers as well as against people who come to their aid. The temporary agreement must now be confirmed by the Council and the Parliament... [Read more](#)

### Diplomacy :

#### Fifth meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Council



On 5th March the EU and Georgia held the fifth meeting of the Council established in 2014 to supervise their association agreement. The Council said it was pleased with the excellent relations between the EU and Georgia. The EU welcomed the entry into force of the new Georgian Constitution which completes the transition towards a parliamentary regime, as well as the implementation of reform to protect the rule of law and justice. It also insisted on the importance of cooperation in the areas of energy and foreign policy. The Council expressed its concern regarding Russia's activities in several regions of Georgia which are threatening the country's sovereignty and territory... [Read more](#)

## Court of Justice :

### Decision by the EU's Court on glyphosate



In a decision published on 7th March, the EU's Court cancelled two decisions by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) which denied access to studies regarding the toxicity and carcinogenic nature of glyphosate. Several MEPs notably lodged a complaint with the Court against the EFSA's decisions, which were motivated according to the agency by a lack of "public higher public interest justifying the publication of the studies." The ECJ however deems that these studies do contain information on emissions into the environment and the way they impact the environment and that their publication is of a higher public interest, beyond the "protection of the commercial interests of any specific physical or moral person.".. [Read more](#)

## ECB :

### The ECB launches a new bank lending programme



On 7th March the Council of Governors of the European Central Bank (ECB) announced the launch of a new series of loans with preferential rates for banks, so-called (TLTRO-III), from September 2019 to March 2021, to protect favourable bank loan terms. The ECB also intends to continue reinvesting maturing securities purchased under the asset purchase programme - also called quantitative easing - for an extended period of time past the date when it starts raising the key ECB interest rates. It decided to maintain interest rates to guarantee continued sustainable convergence of inflation towards lower levels close to 2% mid-term... [Read more](#)

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## European Agencies :

### Signature of the agreement on the HQ of the European Banking Authority



On 6th March the Minister responsible for European Affairs, Nathalie Loiseau and the President of the European Banking Authority (EBA), Jo Swyngedouw, signed an agreement on the HQ of the EBA. The move of the EBA from London to Paris, in the business quarter of La Défense, is a consequence of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The transfer is planned for the beginning of August... [Read more](#)

## Germany :

### Let's make Europe as we should



In an open letter on 9th March, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the President German Christian Democratic Union (CDU), declared how "our Europe must be stronger". In view of the volatility of the economies, of a Russian neighbour who is not very friendly, and climate and migration risks, she hopes for a more inclusive, more prosperous Europe. The Union faces difficulties of its time and she can count on the Franco-German motor to "make Europe as we should now"... [Read more](#)

## Cyprus :

### Meeting with the British Prime Minister



British Prime Minister Theresa May hosted Cypriot President Nikos Anastasiades on 5th March. They discussed Brexit. She said she was happy with the Cypriot promise to protect Britons' rights in the event of no-deal with the Union. She repeated the commitment of the British government to protect the rights of European citizens. Finally they said they wanted to develop a close bilateral relationship and spoke of a draft agreement regarding Cypriots living on British military bases in Cyprus (Sovereign Base Areas)... [Read more](#)

## Spain :

### Meeting between the French and Spanish Agriculture Ministers



The French Agriculture Minister Didier Guillaume and his Spanish counterpart, Luis Planas met on 5th March in Madrid. They addressed various issues, such as Brexit and its impact on the fishing industry; they also discussed the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)... [Read more](#)

## Finland :

## Resignation of the government



On 8th March Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä presented the resignation of his government coalition to President Sauli Niinistö who accepted it. The government failed to complete the social reform programme along with that of the healthcare system. It will continue to manage current affairs until the formation of a new government after the general elections planned for 14th April... [Read more](#)

## France :

### Inauguration of the European Intelligence Services College



On 5th March the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron delivered a speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the European Intelligence Services College in Paris. He stressed the importance of establishing a common intelligence services culture via the sharing of experience and know-how. This event brought the heads of the secret services of the 28 EU countries together including Switzerland and Norway, to discuss Europe's influence in this sector in the face of powers like China, Russia and the USA... [Read more](#)

### Project to tax large digital businesses



On 6th March Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire presented a draft bill on the taxation of the major digital companies. The tax involves the digital activities such as targeted on-line advertising or the sale of user data for advertising purposes, to total of 3% of the digital turnover of these businesses in France. Following the refusal of some European countries to tax these businesses B. Le Maire called on the OECD to support this draft bill which is due to bring in 1.7 billion € in 2019... [Read more](#)

## Ireland :

### Ratification of the Istanbul Convention



On 8th March Ireland ratified the Convention of the Council of Europe on the prevention and fight to counter violence against women and domestic violence, also called the Istanbul Convention. The latter establishes a legal framework to protect women against all types of violence. The Istanbul Convention will enter into force in Ireland on 1st July 2019... [Read more](#)

## Italy :

### Prime Minister's Letter on the Lyons-Turin Line



On 9th March in a letter addressed to the company TELT, which is responsible for building the high-speed rail line Lyons-Turin, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte asked the company not to continue work. On 7th March he declared that the costs would not be covered before 2059 and he wanted to review the project's financing between France and Italy. The Foundation has published a study on this issue... [Read more](#)

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## UK :

### Brexit: agreement on guarantees for the backstop



During a meeting in Strasbourg on 11th March the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker and British Prime Minister Theresa May came to an agreement over the legally binding guarantees regarding the backstop on the Irish border in the event of a withdrawal agreement between the UK and the EU. It notably involves ensuring that the "backstop" on the Irish border would not be designed to last long-term. The agreement came on the eve of the vote by British MPs over the withdrawal agreement on 12th March... [Read more](#)

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## OECD :

### Growth forecasts down for the euro zone



The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published its economic outlook on 6th March in a slowing international context. The world economy will progress at a pace of 3.3% in 2019 and 3.4% in 2020. The downward revision has been made since the



previous Economic Outlook of November 2018 and is particularly significant for the euro zone, notably Germany and Italy, but it is also the case for the UK... [Read more](#)

### Progress toward gender parity too slow



On 8th March on the occasion of the International Day of Women's Rights, the OECD published a report on the implementation of measures taken by the States towards gender parity. According to the OECD and despite major progress, the male/female wage gap totals 13.6% on average in the member countries. This means evident discrimination in socio-cultural norms which are preventing significant technical and economic progress... [Read more](#)

### Eurostat :

#### The GDP and employment up in the euro area



According to an estimate published on 7th March by Eurostat over the fourth quarter of 2018 the GDP rose by 0.2% in the euro zone and by 0.3% in the EU28 in comparison with the previous quarter. Estonia recorded the highest growth rate (+2.2%) whilst Greece and Italy recorded negative growth (0.1%). As for employment it increased by 0.3% in the euro zone and by 0.2% in the EU28 in comparison with the previous quarter. Again it is Estonia that has the highest employment rate growth (+1.7%), followed by Finland and Sweden... [Read more](#)

### Culture :

#### European Cinema Festival in Lille



Until 15th March Lille is running the 35th European Film Festival. It screens around 60 short European films for a week... [Read more](#)

#### Heidelberg Spring



From 16th March to 14th April the Heidelberg Spring is taking place in Heidelberg - this is an annual classical music festival established in 1997. From street stages to philharmonic orchestras and variety concerts, the festival addresses a wide public... [Read more](#)

#### Performatik Brussels



From 13th to 23rd March Performatik 19 , the Brussels biennale of the performing arts. For the sixth festival the Kaaaitheater and 11 partners in the Belgian capital are hosting many artists inspired amongst others by the Bauhaus movement and the theme of mourning associated with "performance". Many artists will be showing their art in the town together with their creative processes... [Read more](#)

#### Mark Rothko in Vienna



From 12th March to 30th June, American artist Mark Rothko can be viewed for the first time in Austria at the Kunst Historisches Museum of Vienna. The exhibition helps visitors discover his life's work via things which influenced him, from the Italian Renaissance to Flemish Baroque art... [Read more](#)

#### Tribute paid to Europe at the Paris Book Fair



From 15th to 18th March the 39th Book Fair is taking place in Paris with Europe as the guest of honour. Writers and authors will be discussing the diversity of European literary heritage and the issues at stake in the European elections... [Read more](#)

## Picasso Exhibition at the Barberini Museum of Potsdam



Until 16th June via the Picasso exhibition "The Late Work", the Barberini Museum is presenting the last works completed by Picasso who innovated until the end of her artistic production. All loans come from the Jacqueline Picasso Museum (1927-1986). Many pieces have never been on show in Germany, some are being presented for the first time to the public... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



11th March  
Brussels  
Eurogroup Meeting



11th to 14th March  
Strasbourg  
Plenary Session of the European Parliament



12th March  
Brussels  
"Economic and Financial" Affairs Council



14th March  
Brussels  
Conference on the help to give for the future of Syria



15th March  
Brussels  
"Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer" Council  
Brussels  
EU-Turkey Association Council



16th March  
Slovakia  
Presidential Election (1st round)



18th March  
Brussels  
"Foreign Affairs" Council "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council

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