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Which new Europe?

Author: Jean-Dominique Giuliani



More than ever before the European Union must offer its citizens real results, reasons to be proud of belonging to a unique political entity in the world, writes the Chairman of the Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani. It has to assert itself as an autonomous strategic player and has to give value to its economic, social and legal results by providing them with a world-scale diplomacy, supported by a credible defence instrument. The renewal of the main European institutions in the 2019 is an opportunity to develop a new Union.

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Elections :

Parliamentary elections on 28th April



On 15th February last, the President of the Spanish Government (Prime Minister), Pedro Sanchez, (Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE) announced a snap election fifteen months before the planned date. This decision follows the rejection of the budget by the Congress of Deputies, the lower house of Parliament (Cortes Generales). According to the most recent poll undertaken between 24th and 27th March by Demoscopia for OK Diario, the PSOE is due to come out ahead in the election on 28th April with 27.7% of the vote. The People's Party is due to win 21% of the vote, Ciudadanos (C's), Alberto Rivera's centrist party, is due to win 16.9% of the vote; Podemos 13.4% of the vote and Vox, a populist far right party led by Santiago Abascal, 11.2%... [Read more](#)

Zuzana Caputova elected President of Slovakia

On 30th March the independent candidate Zuzana Caputova was elected President of Slovakia as she won the second round of the Presidential election with 58.4% of the vote, against Maros Sefcovic,



the candidate of the ruling party, SMER-SD, who won 41.6%. She won the first round with 40.57% of the vote on 16th March last. She will be invested on 15th June and will become the country's first female president... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

Protection of European citizens in an ultra-connected world



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On 3rd April the Foundation is organising a seminar with the Max Planck Institute Luxembourg for International European and Regulatory Procedural Law devoted to the protection of European citizens in an ultra-connected world with the aim of overcoming apparent contradictions between the imperatives of freedom and security... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Agreement on the new road safety rules



The Parliament, Commission and Council came to a provisional agreement on 26th March on the amendment of the road safety regulation. As of 2022 new safety technologies and user protection will become obligatory in European vehicles including systems to reduce dangerous blindspots or to warn drivers in the event of sleepiness. The Commission believes that these measures will help save 25,000 lives by 2038 and bring the EU closer to its goal of reducing the number of road victims ('Zero Vision')... [Read more](#)

Recommendations on 5G network security



On 26th March the Commission published recommendations on 5G network security in Europe. It encourages the Member States to undertake a study of the dangers associated with 5G infrastructures by June 2019, and to take the necessary steps to limit those risks, including those linked to third country suppliers. At European level the Commission is notably recommending the improvement of information sharing between Member States and communication with the European Agency for Cybersecurity to draft a joint study on risks in the EU... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Adoption of the Copyright Directive



On 26th March the European Parliament adopted in plenary the directive on copyright, 348 votes against 274 and 36 abstentions. The new rules notably aim to enable better remuneration agreements when works are published on on-line platforms, which will be responsible for online content. The directive aims to protect the freedom of expression by excluding certain cases from its field of application: extracts of topical articles, the use of works for criticism or parody, online non-commercial encyclopedias and free software platforms... [Read more](#)

Vote in support of a ban on single use plastic



On 27th March MEPs approved the draft directive banning single use plastic products by 2021. The Member States will have to reach a 90% collection goal on plastic bottles by 2029 and the latter will have to be made of at least 25% recycled content by 2025 and 30% by 2030. The text, which still has to be approved by the Council also provides greater implementation of the "polluter pays principle" regarding tobacco and fishing equipment... [Read more](#)

Adoption of the directive on cross-border audiovisual distribution



On 28th March MEPs approved the directive on the distribution of TV and radio programmes, which aims to simplify the distribution and cross-border broadcast of these programmes. The aim of these new rules is to enable distributors to broadcast their programmes outside of their country of origin whilst guaranteeing a fair remuneration for authors and content creators. The directive now has to be formally adopted by the Council... [Read more](#)

Adoption of project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions



MEPs adopted the draft regulation on 27th March on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions emanating from cars and vans by 2030. With 521 votes in support, 63 against and 34 abstentions - MEPs raised the reduction goal (37.5%) in comparison with that suggested by the Commission (30%). This concerns all new vehicles; manufacturers whose average emissions are above the set limits will have to pay a bonus on the excess emissions. Road transport is responsible for around 20% of total greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union... [Read more](#)

Vote in support of the end of the hour change



On 26th March the European Parliament voted in support of a draft directive doing away with the change of hour between winter and summer as of 2021. It encouraged the Commission and the Member States to coordinate so that the functioning of the single market will not be disrupted by the application of the summer time in some States and the winter time in others. The Commission will be able to make a proposal aiming to delay the application of the directive by twelve months maximum if it deems that disruption is too great. The final drafting of the rules will depend on the negotiations with the Council and the EU... [Read more](#)

Vote on the future financing of regions and cohesion



On 27th March MEPs adopted new rules regarding funds that aim to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion policy covering the period 2021-2027. These rules will apply everywhere, notably in the less developed communities, urban and outermost regions. MEPs decided to use a major share of the European Regional Development Fund (FEDER) for smart growth and the green economy. The next Parliament and Council should see the start of negotiations over the financing of the future regional and cohesion policy this autumn... [Read more](#)

Vote to increase the Erasmus+ budget



On 28th March MEPs voted in support of a regulation to triple the Erasmus+ budget for the period 2021-2027 (45 billion € against 15 billion from 2014 to 2020). This increase aims to raise the number of participants and to adapt the programme to the underprivileged. MEPs also hope to diversify Erasmus+ activities to extend these to vocational training. In May 2018 the Commission had suggested doubling the budget. The final text is due to be the focus of negotiations and an agreement with the Council during the next legislature... [Read more](#)

New rules regarding the European electricity market



MEPs adopted four directives and regulations on 26th March aiming to create a European market for cleaner, cheaper electricity. One of the main goals is to increase the cross-border trade of electricity, notably for energy produced from renewable sources. New, stricter limits will also apply to the Member States who subsidise coal-fired power stations, to prevent the most pollutant of them from receiving State aid. The Member States will be obliged to protect European citizens in the event of a blackout, via the elaboration of national risk assessment plans... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Informal Transport Ministers Meeting



During an informal meeting on 26th and 27th March in Bucharest Transport Ministers stressed the importance of developing a global approach to multi-modal transport and the integration of the reduction of emissions into European and international policies. They suggested several measures to decarbonise transport, such as the promotion of alternative fuel and digitisation. Questions related to road safety, notably the quality of infrastructures and material and technical conditions of vehicles were also addressed... [Read more](#)

Extension of the operation Sophia mandate



On 29th March the Council extended the EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia mandate until 30th September, whose mission it is to dismantle the economic model of smugglers and human traffickers in the southern part of the Central Mediterranean. The Council suspended the operation's maritime chapter for the duration of the extension. The mission will continue to undertake its mandate by stepping up surveillance of the Mediterranean by air and by strengthening the training and support given to the Libyan navy and coastguards during operations at sea... [Read more](#)

Confirmation of the agreement on InvestEU



The representatives of the Member States confirmed on 27th March the agreement found on 20th March between the Council and Parliament on InvestEU, a programme that provides for the regrouping of all financial instruments aiming to support investment in the EU. InvestEU copies the Juncker Plan model for investment and will use the European Investment Bank for its main partner. Negotiations with Parliament are now going to start to finalise the agreement. The InvestEU will for its part be assessed separately, as part of the next EU multi-annual financial framework... [Read more](#)

Modernisation of the consumer protection legislation



On 29th March the Member States' representatives approved the agreement between the Council and the European Parliament on the draft directive modifying four existing directives on consumer protection. This agreement is part of the "New Deal for Consumers" launched by the Commission in 2017. The agreement focuses, amongst other things, on class action, the strengthening of on-line transaction transparency and individual consumers' rights in the face of unfair commercial practices. The text is to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council then the Member States will have 24 months to transpose the directive into their national legislation... [Read more](#)

Provisional Agreement on the Strengthening of Frontex



Parliament and the Council came to a provisional agreement on 28th March on the strengthening of the European Border and Coast Guard (Frontex). They agreed on the creation of a new permanent corps which will support the Member States in terms of border control. After a first deployment of 5000 agents in 2021, the new corps would become fully operational by 2027, with 10,000 agents. The cooperation of the Agency with third countries would also be stepped up to support return procedures. This provisional agreement now has to be approved by all of the MEPs and the Council before entering into force... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Meeting between Emmanuel Macron, Xi Jinping, Angela Merkel and Jean-Claude Juncker



French President Emmanuel Macron organised a meeting in Paris on 26th March with the Chinese President Xi Jinping, who was visiting France, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker. The four leaders came to agreement on the importance of multilateralism and the need to reform the WTO, but also on the implementation of the climate agreements... [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

1,769 cases closed



On 25th March the EU's Court of Justice and the General Court published their statistics for 2018. The number of cases closed in 2018 totalled 1,769 in comparison with around 1,600 in 2016 and 2017. The number of cases brought before the ECJ increased by 15% (110 cases more than in 2017) whilst the average duration of procedures decreased (decreasing from 13.8 months to 13.4 months for the processing of appeals). The General Court reached the record number of 1009 settled cases (increase of 13% in comparison with 2017). The rise in productivity of both jurisdictions led to a decrease in the number of pending cases (2334 in 2018 against 1420 and 2358 in 2017 and 2016)... [Read more](#)

Spain :

Transfer of command of Operation Atalante



On 29th March the Command of the maritime operation Atalante, which counters piracy off the coasts of Somalia was transferred from Northwood (UK) to Rota (Spain), due to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The operation's maritime security centre was transferred to Brest (France). Although the number of pirate attacks off the coasts of Somalia only totalled two in 2018 (in comparison with 176 in 2011), the Union decided to extension the mission until 2020 and to provide it with nearly 12 million € in 2019 and 2020... [Read more](#)

France :

The Chinese President in France



Chinese President Xi Jinping was hosted by Emmanuel Macron, the President of the French Republic on 25th March. Apart from trade agreements such as the order of 300 Airbus by the Chinese State, the lifting of the embargo on French poultry and the construction of 10 container ships by CMA-CGM in China, the French and Chinese Presidents published a joint declaration in which they commit to "strengthening multilateral cooperation" and to the respect of international climate law... [Read more](#)

Government reshuffle



On 31st March three new members of government were appointed: Amélie de Montchalin, MP will replace Nathalie Loiseau as Secretary of State to Minister of Europe, and Foreign Affairs, responsible for European Affairs; Sibeth Ndiaye will now be Secretary of State to the Prime Minister and the government's spokesperson; Cédric O, Secretary of State to the Economy and Finance Minister for public accounts and the digital economy... [Read more](#)

Luxembourg :

Europe Day becomes a holiday



On 27th March the House of Deputies adopted a draft bill creating a legal holiday on 9th May, Europe Day and a 26th paid holiday. This vote follows the government coalition agreement including the Democratic Party (DP), Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party (LSAP) and the Greens... [Read more](#)

Romania :

Referendum on the future of Justice



On 28th March Romanian President Klaus Iohannis announced that a referendum would take place on 26th May on the reforms undertaken by the government to the judicial system, which are undermining the system's independence, notably via the lightening of the criminal record of certain MPs in the Social Democratic Party (PSD) in office at present. In order for the referendum result to be valid, participation will have to total 30% of the electoral body... [Read more](#)

Indictment of the former anti-corruption Prosecutor



On 28th March the former head of the anti-corruption court, Laura Codruta Kovesi, one of the favourites to lead the future European Prosecutor's Court has been indicted in Bucharest on corruption charges in two cases. The indictment has gone together with a ban on her working and a ban on leaving Romania. Negotiations for the position of the head of the future European Prosecutor's Court are ongoing between the European Parliament and the Council... [Read more](#)

UK :

Brexit: British MPs reject the withdrawal agreement again



On 29th March 344 MPs against 286 again rejected the UK's withdrawal agreement from the EU for the third time. The political declaration regarding future relations between the UK and the EU was separated from the treaty and was not submitted to the vote. Ms May also

tendered her resignation but this was not enough. Brexit is due to take place on 12th April if there is no agreement except if the UK offers a new solution and asks for a postponement. The President of the European Council Donald Tusk announced a European Council on 10th April... [Read more](#)

Brexit: British MPs reject four alternatives



On 1st April British MPs rejected four alternative withdrawal agreement motions of the UK from the EU negotiated by British Prime Minister Theresa May. Three votes were missing from the motion suggesting the upkeep of the country in the European customs union (273 MPs voted in support, 276 against). The rejected proposals might be merged to be submitted again on 3rd April. On 2nd April the Union's negotiator in chief, Michel Barnier warned that a no-deal withdrawal was "becoming increasingly likely day by day"... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Results of the first round of the Presidential election



Volodymyr Zelensky, 41-year-old comedian came out ahead in the first round of the Ukrainian presidential election on 31st March with 30.4% of the vote. It will run in the second round on 21st April next against outgoing President Petro Poroshenko credited with 17.8% of the vote. Former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko came third with 14.2% of the vote... [Read more](#)

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Turkey :

Local election results



During the local elections in Turkey on 31st March the Party for Justice and Development (AKP) led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lost the capital Ankara to the opposition candidate Mansur Yavas. In Istanbul the opposition candidate Ekrem Imamoglu claimed victory against the AKP candidate. In other towns like Adana, Antalya and Mersin the AKP also lost their seat... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Adoption of an international definition of sexism



On 28th March, the Committee of Ministers at the Council of Europe adopted a first international definition of sexism in a recommendation addressed to 47 Member States. Sexism is defined as "a manifestation of historically unequal power relations" between men and women "which leads to discrimination and prevents the full advancement of women in society." The recommendation insists on the link between sexism and violence between women and girls. The text establishes a list of situations and measures in which sexism is expressed and offers various real means to identify and counter it... [Read more](#)

The Cultural Routes Programme receives the European Carlos V Prize



The Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Programme is the 2019 winner of the European Carlos V Prize, which rewards contributions that enhance Europe's cultural and historical values. It is the first time that a European programme has won this prize awarded each year on the 9th May on the occasion of Europe Day. The Cultural Routes Programme, launched by the Council of Europe 1987, uses paths or cultural entities to illustrate European cultural heritage, in areas ranging from art to architecture, via music, literature and landscape... [Read more](#)

NATO :

Extension of the Secretary General's Mandate



The North Atlantic Council, NATO's supreme political body decided on 28th March to extend the Secretary General, Norwegian Jens Stoltenberg's mandate until 30th September 2022. It will be Mr Stoltenberg's second mandate... [Read more](#)

WTO :

The EU wins against Boeing



The WTO Appellate Body gave its decision on 29th March in favour of the EU in a case in which the latter contested the American State's subsidies granted to the aircraft manufacturer. The WTO deemed that the USA had given Boeing massive subsidies thereby distorting trade and causing major damage to Airbus in breach of the WTO's rules. This decision finally closes the compliance procedure started in 2012, which focused on subsidies granted since 1989... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

Report on European legal migration rules



On 29th March the Commission presented an assessment of European legal migration legislation as part of the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT). It deems that European rules are adapted to their goals and that citizens of third countries benefit from harmonised procedures and laws in the European Union. Communication and information work regarding legal migration procedures are still necessary however, notably to attract qualified workers... [Read more](#)

Report on Trade Defence



On 27th March the Commission published a report on the defence of trade which indicates that between November 2014 and December 2018, the Commission introduced 95 measures for European businesses and workers might enjoy fair competition conditions. Amongst all of the measures in force, 68% target products imported from China. The Commission deems that 320,000 European jobs have been protected by unfair foreign competition... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Leonardo da Vinci, science before science



On the occasion of the 500 anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci, the Scuderie del Quirinale in Rome are running an exhibition "Leonardo da Vinci. Science before Science" until 30th June. It focuses on Leonardo da Vinci's scientific work and his links with his peers... [Read more](#)

The black model from Géricault to Matisse at the Orsay Museum



Until 21st July the Orsay Museum in Paris is running an exhibition "the Black Model from Géricault to Matisse" which focuses on aesthetic, political and social problems revealed by the representation of black figures in visual arts, from the abolition of slavery to modern times... [Read more](#)

Kokoschka, Expressionist, Migrant, European



From 6th April to 8th July the Léopold Museum in Vienna is dedicating a retrospective to the Expressionist painter and playwright Oskar Kokoschka. The exhibition brings together more than 250 works of art covering the artist's life "reflecting the 20th century" between his extravagant painting, his humanism and Europe... [Read more](#)

Maria Lassnig Exhibition



From 6th April to 11th August the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam is showing the work of Maria Lassnig (1919-2014) in the exhibition "Ways of Being". The 200 works on show describe the feelings of the Austrian artists in her relations with the world... [Read more](#)

Lotte Laserstein at the Berlinische Galerie

From 5th April to 12th August the Berlinische Galerie in Berlin together with the Städel Museum is hosting 58 works of art by German Lotte Laserstein. The exhibition covers the artists Berlin and Swedish period,



between Impressionism and Expressionism, in which we find many portraits and urban landscapes dating from the 1920's and 30's.. [Read more](#)

Wim Delvoye at Museum of Fine Arts Brussels



Until 21st July the Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium is dedicating an exhibition to Belgian artist Wim Delvoye, known for his taste in technological experimentation and his variety of productions. The exhibition is offering visitors a retrospective and new works that have not as yet been seen by the public... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



2nd April
Bucharest
Informal Meeting of Energy Ministers



3rd April
Bucharest
Informal meeting of Research Ministers



3rd-4th April
Washington
70th anniversary of NATO-Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting



4th April
Brussels
EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council



5th April
Bucharest
Eurogroup Meeting



5th-6th April
Bucharest
Informal meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers



8th April
Luxembourg
"Foreign Affairs" Council

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