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The Letter in PDF format

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European issues at stake in 2019

Author: Pascale Joannin



2019 will witness the renewal of the Union's main institutions. From 23rd to 26th May the elections will take place whereby Europeans will be invited to elect their 751 representatives to Parliament. Then the new Commission will be appointed, along with the President of the European Council and the European Central Bank. Beyond that this opportunity of this date and renewal has to be seized to draw up and build the Europe of the 21st century.

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Foundation :

The Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2019 in digital version



The 13th edition of the "Schuman Report on the State of the Union", a reference work for European decision makers, is available in bookshops, from the Foundation's website and in digital version. This year is one of renewal for the European institutions and the occasion for deep thought about the State of the Union, its chances of gaining greater independence and influence in the international arena, thanks to the interdependency it has managed to create between the Member States. It brings together contributions penned by the best experts and offers 33 original maps that summarise the main European issues and a unique series of commented statistics. Order your copy now!.. [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 full view of the Union, the euro zone, of each of the Member States and its overseas territories. This book



provides the reader with the most recent political and statistical as well as the most objective information at any moment. It is available in papier/digital version from the Foundation's website or from bookshops... [Read more](#)

What Franco-German cooperation?



Eric Maurice, manager of the Foundation's Brussels' office is taking part on 8th May in Helsinki at a conference entitled "What role for Franco-German cooperation in a changing Union?" organised by the Finnish Institute for International Relations... [Read more](#)

Brexit Explained?



To celebrate Europe Day on 9th May the Robert Schuman House at Scy-Chazelles is organising a conference on 7th May with Pascale Joannin, the Foundation's General Manager to address issues regarding the UK's exit of the EU... [Read more](#)

The Grand Turning Point - The European 21st Century



In the "Grand Turning Point" published by the Ecole de Guerre, contrary to the usual discourse Jean-Dominique Giuliani shows that the European Union has the means to rise to the new challenges of the 21st century. The has succeeded beyond the hopes of the Founding Fathers. It can still succeed and guarantee its place amongst the three greatest world powers by the end of the century... [Read more](#)

Europe Day



9th May is Europe Day, the day on which Robert Schuman, the then Foreign Affairs Minister laid the foundations of European integration in a declaration delivered on 9th May 1950. Everywhere across Europe, and in the world, we shall be celebrating Europe Day. On this occasion the Foundation will be publishing an 8 page special on its site to discover everything you need to know about how the Union started... [Read more](#)

European elections :

A site to learn everything there is to know about the European elections



In three weeks' time Europeans are being invited to elect their MEPs for the next five years. The Foundation is offering its audience a dedicated website designed to encourage greater understanding of the election and what is at stake, and also to be able to follow the campaign in the Member States with the lists and polls country per country... [Read more](#)

European Elections: debate between lead candidates



A debate between the lead candidates in the European elections (Spitzenkandidaten) of four of the main parties took place in Florence on 2nd May. It brought together Manfred Weber -(European People's Party) - Frans Timmermans (European Socialist Party), Guy Verhofstadt (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) and Ska Keller (Greens). The candidates to the Presidency of the European Commission debated issues such as migration, the economy, the climate issue, democratisation of the functioning of the EU, two-tiered Europe, security, external policy and Brexit... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Recommendations for the strategic programme 2019-2024

On 30th April the Commission published its recommendations for the Union's strategic programme 2019-2024 which will be discussed at the extraordinary European Council in Sibiu on 9th May and adopted during the European Council of June. The Commission has pinpointed five



areas of priority action: security, competitiveness of the single market, social Europe, sustainable development and the role of Europe in the international arena... [Read more](#)

Work to counter fraud of the Union's budget



On 29th April the Commission adopted a new anti-fraud strategy which aims to improve and strengthen the detection, the introduction of sanctions and the prevention of fraud that damages the Union's budget. The implementation of the strategy will be based on the use of all data available to the Commission thanks to greater coordination between its departments and a strengthening of the Council's roles, liaison and supervision by the European Anti-Fraud Office - OLAF... [Read more](#)

Commission proposals for new international e-commerce rules



On 3rd May the Commission published its proposals to establish new international e-commerce rules. In January 2019 76 member of the WTO, including the European Union, launched negotiations to establish a new legislative multilateral framework in this area. The rules put forward by the Commission in this context notably aim to protect consumers better, to facilitate cross-border sales and to make safe online contracts. The proposals made by the WTO's members, including those of the Commission will be discussed on 13th to 15th May in Geneva... [Read more](#)

Visa and Mastercard forced to reduce card payment costs in Europe



Visa and Mastercard are now obliged to reduce card payment costs significantly which are issued outside of the region, in the USA or Asia, for example said the European Commission on 29th April. Both companies who have come under the European executive's scrutiny over the last few years "pledged to reduce significantly the interchange commission applied to payments undertaken by card outside of Europe," writes the Commission in a press release... [Read more](#)

Win DiscoverEU tickets



On 2nd May the Commission called for candidates to win DiscoverEU tickets. All young people aged 18 (born between 2nd July 2000 and 1st July 2001) have until 16th May to put their name forward, via the European Youth Portal. They should also be prepared to travel between 1st August 2019 and 31st January 2020. The DiscoverEU programme was created by the Commission in 2018 and aims to help young Europeans travel across the continent and to discover its cultural heritage as well as create links between them... [Read more](#)

New anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures against China



On 3rd May the Commission published its anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures based on new trade defence rules regarding imports from countries with significant market distortions caused by State intervention. The measures adopted will guarantee fair market conditions for organics coated steel manufacturers and the measures introduced regarding Chinese imports in 2013 will be extended for a further five year period... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Informal meeting of ministers responsible for competitiveness



During an informal meeting in Bucharest on 3rd May, the Ministers responsible for competitiveness discussed the contribution of entrepreneurship, of SMEs and start-ups to the Union's economy and competitiveness, then the Single Market and industry. Ministers called for the rapid implementation of initiatives in support of the digitisation of industry. They also addressed the question of clean energies and stressed the need to introduce government policies to encourage the industrial sector to invest in this area... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Meeting of Western Balkans in Berlin



On 29th April the representatives of the Western Balkans - Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania as well as Croatia and Slovenia met in Berlin under the aegis of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron. Ms Merkel indicated that the meeting was not the launch of "negotiations to join the EU" but were rather in response to the need to "continue positive development in the region". Hence as Mr Macron indicated the central point of the summit was the need to "re-establish dialogue" between Serbia and Kosovo" to undertaken a "stability policy" in the Balkans.

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Forum on the New Silk Road



In Beijing on 25th to 27th April, more than 150 State representatives met during a summit on the Silk Road and signed more than 64 billion \$ in investment agreements for the "introduction of highly quality, sustainable, economic infrastructures" linking 65 countries together, indicated Chinese President Xi Jinping... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

EU-Canada: validation of the dispute resolution mechanism



On 30th April the European Court of Justice (ECJ) deemed that the dispute resolution mechanism between investors and States provided in the free-trade agreement between the EU and Canada (CETA) is compatible with EU law. This mechanism provides for the creation of a tribunal, an Appellate Court and a multilateral investment tribunal. Referred to by Belgium the Court deems that the CETA does not grant the foreseen tribunals any competence of interpretation of Union law other than that focusing on the measures in this agreement and therefore do not impinge on the Union's legal autonomy... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Extraordinary Summit of the G5 Sahel



On 1st May the German Chancellor Angela Merkel started her tour of Africa in Burkina Faso during an extraordinary summit with the members of the G5 Sahel (Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Tchad). In a joint declaration with the President of Burkina Faso, Roch Marc Kaboré, the Chancellor asked for greater efficacy and speed in work to counter terrorism both on the side of the States of Africa and also by European States, because it is a matter of "shared responsibility". Angela Merkel also recalled the vital issue of having a united Europe in terms of Libya in order to counter terrorism effectively... [Read more](#)

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France :

G7 Environment Meeting in Metz



On 5th and 6th May the Environment Ministers of the G7 countries, as well as the European Commissioner responsible for the Environment met in Metz. After this meeting the (non-binding) Metz Charter for biodiversity was signed, stipulating for example "the strengthening and improvement of the present biodiversity strategies, policies, action plans and programmes." Other measures will be put forward by 2020... [Read more](#)

Meeting European Ministers responsible for Cultural and European Affairs



On 3rd May the Minister for Culture, Franck Riester and the Secretary of State for European Affairs Amélie de Montchalin chaired a meeting with their European counterparts. The meeting organised at the Louvre museum following the fire at Notre-Dame in Paris, aimed to provide greater protection to Europe's heritage via new proposals such as the mobilisation of a network of experts and even the involvement of young people... [Read more](#)

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Launch of a Franco-German project in the European batteries branch

On 2nd May the French and German Economy Ministers Bruno le Maire and Peter Altmaier formally launched the introduction of a European



battery branch for electric cars, together with Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič. The project will help both countries pay out public aid to a total of 1.2 billion €. Italy, Belgium, Poland, Austria and Finland hope to joint the project... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Meeting with Emmanuel Macron pays tribute to Leonardo da Vinci



On 2nd May the French President Emmanuel Macron hosted his Italian counterpart, Sergio Mattarella on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci. The two presidents travelled to the château Clos Lucé and to the royal palace of Amboise. The meeting ended at the castle of Chambord together with 500 young Italian and French people to celebrate the Renaissance, European culture and Franco-Italian friendship... [Read more](#)

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Poland :

Warsaw Declaration on the reunification of Europe



During a meeting in Warsaw on May 1st, on the 15th anniversary of the 2004 enlargement, the leaders of the 13 countries which joined the Union in that year and since then, signed a Declaration on the Reunification of Europe. They stressed the importance of completing the single market, supporting the countries of the Western Balkans in their efforts to join the Union, to protect and deepen the Eastern and Euromed Partnerships and to strengthen both the Union's internal and external security. The question of European Defence was also addressed, along with the need to include it in the cooperation framework with NATO... [Read more](#)

UK :

UK: Defence Minister sacked



On May 1st British Prime Minister Theresa May dismissed Defence Minister Gavin Williamson. She accused him of having leaked classified information from the National Security Council (NSC), regarding the decision to allow the Chinese company Huawei to take part in the future construction of the British 5G mobile telephone network. Williamson is to be replaced by Penny Mordaunt, who was International Aid Minister to date and who is the first woman to become Defence Minister of the UK... [Read more](#)

Local elections in England and Northern Ireland



On 2nd May England and Northern Ireland voted in local elections for the 8,400 town council seats. The Conservative Party was severely sanctioned with a loss of 1,330 seats. Labour lost 84. The Lib-Dems won 704 and the Greens 194... [Read more](#)

North Macedonia :

Stevo Pendarovski wins the presidential election



On 5th May Stevo Pendarovski won the presidential election with 51.66% of the vote against Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova (44.73%). Turnout rose to 46.7%... [Read more](#)

Vatican :

Pope visits Bulgaria



Pope Francis arrived in Bulgaria on 5h May for a two day visit, followed by one day in Macedonia. He called on the country, whose population is waning, to be "welcoming" to "those who are fleeing war and misery".. [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

70th anniversary



On 5th May the Council of Europe celebrated its 70th anniversary. The Council of Europe is the main defence organisation of human rights on our continent. 47 Member States come together in a bid to agree on the common standards to apply in terms of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. 830 million people who live in this common judicial area have the right to refer to the European Court of Human Rights as a last resort... [Read more](#)

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NATO :

New Supreme Allied Commander Europe



General Tod Wolters took office as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) on 3rd May at the Grand HQ of the allied powers in Europe (SHAPE), in Mons, Belgium, with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in attendance. The appointment of General Wolters as a successor to General Curtis M. Scaparrotti was approved on 15th March by the North Atlantic Council and confirmed on 29th April by the American Senate... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Euro-American Energy Forum



On 2nd May American Secretary State for Energy, Rick Perry attended a business to business energy forum organised jointly by the EU and the USA in Brussels. The President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker and American President Donald Trump agreed in July 2018 to step up cooperation in area of energy and more particularly liquified national gas. Since this meeting US imports of LNG in the EU have increased by 272%... [Read more](#)

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World Military Spending up in 2018



According to new data published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) published on 29th April, total world military spending rose to 1,822 billion \$ in 2018, ie an increase of 2.6% in comparison with 2017. The five biggest States in terms of expenditure in 2018 were the USA, China, Saudi Arabia, India and France - which alone totalled 60% of all world military expenditure. The USA increased its spending for the first time since 2010, whilst those of China rose for the 24th consecutive year... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

GDP increase in the EU and the euro zone



According to figures published on 30th April by Eurostat, the GDP increased over the first quarter of 2019 by 0.5% in the EU in comparison with the previous quarter and by 0.4% in the euro zone. In comparison with the first quarter of 2018 the GDP increased by 1.5% in the EU and by 1.2% in the euro zone. This was the 24th consecutive quarter of growth... [Read more](#)

Unemployment at 6.4% in the EU and 7.7% in the euro zone



According to Eurostat figures published on 30th April the unemployment rate in the EU lay at 6.4%, the lowest it has been since the monthly measurements of unemployment in January 2000. In the euro zone it lay at 7.7% in March 2019. This is a decrease in comparison with February 2019 and the lowest rate recorded in the euro zone since 2008. Amongst the Member States, the lowest unemployment rates in March 2019 were recorded in the Czech Republic (1.9%), Germany (3.2%) and the Netherlands (3.3%). Conversely the highest rates were noted in Greece (18.5%), Spain (14%) and Italy (10.2%)... [Read more](#)

Revenue and household consumption



According to Eurostat's figures published on 29th April the real per capita household revenue increased by 0.3% in the fourth quarter of 2018 in the euro zone after a rise of 0.2% in the previous quarter. In the European Union it increased by 0.3% in the fourth quarter 2018, after an increase of 0.6% in the previous quarter... [Read more](#)

Euro zone annual inflation rate up



According to an estimate published on 3rd May by Eurostat, the euro zone's annual inflation rate lay at 1.7% in April. This is up in comparison with March 2019 (1.4%). Amongst the main components of inflation in the euro zone, it is energy which experienced the highest annual rate in April (5.4%), followed by services (1.9%), food, alcohol and tobacco (1.5%) and industrial goods (energy aside) 0.2%)... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Leonardo in Vinci



On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's death, the Leonardiano Museum in Vinci is running the exhibition "Leonardo in Vinci" until 15th October. The first works created by the artist are on show... [Read more](#)

Vienna Festival Weeks



From 10th May to 16th June the streets of Vienna will be hosting the Wiener Festwochen, which is an art festival with many events in "response to the world governed by antagonistic populism". Artistic projects form part of an urban atmosphere rallying international participants from modern to classical art. There will be concerts, theatre play and dances organised in the streets and concert halls of the Austrian capital... [Read more](#)

Mallorca Live Festival



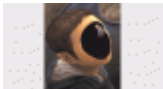
The Mallorca Live Festival will be taking place in Mallorca on 10th and 11th May with the Two Door Cinema Club and Jamiroquai at the top of the line-up. Around 40 artists from pop to electro, rock and funk are going to perform in this festival... [Read more](#)

Exhibition on Bauhaus in Oldenburg



The Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte in Oldenburg Germany is hosting an exhibition entitled "Between Utopia and Adaptation - Bauhaus in Oldenburg" until 4th August. Via biographies of four Bauhaus students who came from Oldenburg, the exhibition aims to illustrate the influences of utopia, adaptation and emigration in Bauhaus which is celebrating its 100th anniversary... [Read more](#)

"Self-portrait of the other" in Madrid



Until 8th September the Reina Sofia Museum is running an exhibition of Tetsuya Ishida's works at the Velazquez Palace in the Retiro Park, Madrid. The Japanese artist explores, via his works, the uncertainty and desolation of Japanese society that has been changed by new technologies and the successive economic and political crises that have affected the world... [Read more](#)

Prehistory and modern art at Beaubourg



From 8th May to 16th September the Pompidou Centre of Paris is running an exhibition "Prehistory, a modern enigma". The exhibition reflects the fascination modern artists, like Klee, Giacometti and Louise Bourgeois held for traditional African art and prehistoric sculptures... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



9th May
Sibiu
Informal Meeting of Heads of State and Government



9th May
Europe Day



12th May
Lithuania
Presidential Election (1st round)



13th May
Brussels
"Foreign Affairs" Council

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