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The Letter in PDF format

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Far right: its conversion to Europe!

Author: Sylvain Kahn



The radical and far right parties are trying to get organised as they are inspired by Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini. To do this they have tried to Europeanise their discourse by relinquishing all temptation to leave the EU and the euro zone. They also intend to take advantage of a relative dynamic of the "orbanisation" of Europe. But these attempts might spur the pro-European parties in the European Parliament to develop new dimensions to European

integration which are vital to resist better to the assaults and pressure brought by external powers.

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Foundation :

The Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2019



The 10th edition of the "Schuman Report on the State of the Union", a work of reference for European decision makers is available now in digital version. This year the renewal of the European institutions provides an opportunity for deep thought about the State of the Union, its chances of gaining more independence and influence in the international arena, thanks to the interdependence its has managed to create between its Member States. It brings together articles drafted by the best experts and offers 33 original maps which summarize the main European issues and a unique series of commented statistics. Order your copy now!.. [Read more](#)

The Grand Turning Point - The European 21st Century

In the "Grand Turning Point" published by the Ecole de Guerre, Jean-Dominique Giuliani shows that the EU - contrary to popular discourse - has the means to rise to the new challenges of the 21st century. Europe has



succeeded beyond the hopes of the Foundation Fathers. It might even succeed in guaranteeing its place by the end of the century amongst the three biggest world powers... [Read more](#)

Permanent Atlas of the European Union



In view of the upcoming European elections the Foundation has published a new version of its "Permanent Atlas of the European Union" which offers a full panorama of the Union, the euro zone, of each of the Member States and its overseas territories. This work enables each reader to have the most recent and most objective information at his or her fingertips at any moment. It is available in paper version from the Foundation's site or from bookshops and in digital version... [Read more](#)

Robert Schuman's book "For Europe"



On the occasion of the European elections, the Foundation invites you to read "For Europe" by Robert Schuman, the only book written by this Father of Europe, which is devoted to this adventure, providing understanding of what was behind his action and the political issues at stake in this peaceful, voluntary construction of the unity of the continent, in virtue of this, a unique enterprise in history. His vision remains a necessity for Europe today and a requirement for us to imagine the future... [Read more](#)

European elections :

Debate between the candidates for the presidency of the European Commission



The debate between the candidates to the presidency of the European Commission took place on 15th May in the hemicycle of the European Parliament in Brussels. The candidates whose speaking order was selected at random were Nico Cué (European Left -GUE), Ska Keller (European Green Party, EGP), Jan Zahradil (Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists - AECR), Margrethe Vestager (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, ALDE), Manfred Weber (European People's Party -EPP) and Frans Timmermans (European Socialist Party, PES). They addressed issues such as employment, migration, security, populism, climate change and the role of the Union in the international arena... [Read more](#)

A site to find out everything there is to know about the European elections



From 23rd to 26th May Europeans are being invited to elect their MEPs for the next five years. The Foundation is offering its audiences a dedicated website for a greater understanding of the elections and what is at stake and to follow the campaign in the Member States with the lists of the parties running and surveys country per country... [Read more](#)

Commission :

A fine of more than 1 billion € on five banks



On 16th May the Commission adopted two settlement decisions, fining the banks Barclays, RBS, Citigroup, JPMorgan and MUFG a total of 1.07 billion €. The reason behind this is their participation in a foreign exchange spot trading cartel involving 11 currencies. The Commission's investigation revealed that some traders in charge of Forex spot trading of these currencies had exchanged sensitive information and trading plans. The UBS bank revealed the agreements to the Commission and was therefore spared of the fines... [Read more](#)

New prices for calls and SMS in the Union



As part of the digital single market and the reform of the European telecommunications rules, adopted by the Council and the Parliament in June 2018, a new minimal price will apply to all international calls and SMS in the Union as of 15th May. Consumers will pay a maximum 19 centimes (+VAT) per minute for a call to another Union country and 6 centimes (+VAT) per SMS. Telecommunications operators from across the EU will have to tell consumers what these new prices will be... [Read more](#)

Appointment of the new President of the European Research Council



On 14th May the Commission appointed Professor Mauro Ferrari, a specialist in nanomedicine, as President of the European Research Council, whose role it is to coordinate research work between the Union's Member States. Mauro Ferrari will start his term on 1st January 2020 and will replace Jean-Pierre Bourguignon... [Read more](#)

Council :

Conclusions of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council



During the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 14th May Ministers discussed the package of post-2020 reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). They addressed the Commission's communication entitled "a clean planet for all" and debated its agricultural aspects. Finally ministers discussed the agricultural trade and negotiations completed or ongoing in this area, notably with Mercosur, Australia and New Zealand... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Defence Council



On 14th May the Defence Ministers discussed the situation in the Sahel with their counterparts from the countries of the Sahel G5. They debated the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) after its first year of existence and adopted a recommendation assessing the progress made by the participating Member States. They stressed that the latter had made progress by increasing the aggregated defence budgets by 3.3% in 2018 and by 4.6% in 2019. Finally they encouraged the Member States to take binding steps regarding the rapprochement of their respective defence systems... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council



The Economy and Finance Ministers of the EU who met on 17th May addressed the issue of digital taxation in preparation for debate at the G20 which will take place in Osaka (Japan) on 28th and 29th June. Ministers also discuss possible measures to guarantee fair competition and reduce the red tape that businesses face. They did not come to an agreement however. For the very first time the Council established a series of sanctions that will enable the Union to impose restrictive, targeted measures that aim to discourage and counter cyberattacks, including those undertaken against third countries and international organisations. Finally they decided to withdraw Aruba, Barbados and Bermuda from the list of non-cooperative countries and territories in terms of taxation. 12 non-cooperative countries and territories remain on the list... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Development Council



European Development Ministers who met on 16th May adopted conclusions on the development aid goals in the shape of an annual report at the European Council. It notes that the Union and its Member States have retained their leading place as the first provider of funds in the world in terms of public development aid : 74.4% million € and 0.47% of the Union's GDP, ie 57% of all aid provided to developing countries. The Council also published its conclusions on the coherence of development policies... [Read more](#)

Eurogroup meeting



On 16th May the 19 Finance Ministers of the euro zone discussed the Union's economic situation and the future euro zone budget, called the budgetary tool for competitiveness and convergence. Addressing the issue of financing this instrument, they decided that the euro zone Member States will define its strategic orientation and will be involved in the monitoring of its implementation by the European Commission... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the European Economic Area



The 55th conference of the European Economic Area Council (EEA) took place on 20th May in Brussels together with representatives of the Union's Member States and Foreign Affairs Ministers from Liechtenstein,

Iceland and Norway. The Council stressed the need to protect the EEA agreement in the context of Brexit and debated issues regarding energy security and climate change in terms of the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Finally it stressed the importance of the digital single market... [Read more](#)

Regulations on the interoperability of information systems



On 14th May the Council finally adopted two regulations establishing a framework for the interoperability of information systems in the Union to enable more effective controls on the external borders. The two regulations introduce a European research portal so that the competent authorities can undertake research in the multiple information systems, a service to pool links between biometric data, a common identity data directory and a multiple identity detector... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

EU-Tunisia Association Council



The EU-Tunisia Association Council met on 17th May and signed a common declaration in which it welcomed the excellence of the privileged partnership. The Council signed an agreement for the "EU4Youth" programme in support of the economic, social and political inclusion of young Tunisians... [Read more](#)

Extension of sanctions against Syria



On 17th May the Council extended the restrictive measures against the Syrian regime and those who support it until 1st June 2020, given the continued repression exercised against the civilian population. The sanctions that are in force at present against Syria include an oil embargo, with restrictions hitting certain types of investment, a freeze of assets held by the Syrian Central Bank in the Union and restrictions on the export of equipment and technology that might be used for internal repressive measures, as well as equipment and technologies designed for surveillance or the interception of internet communications and telephone communications... [Read more](#)

EU-Central Asia Cooperation Strategy



On 15th May the Commission and the Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy published a joint communication updating the Union's cooperation strategy with five countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kirghizistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), which dates back to 2017. The Communication focuses on two priorities: developing the resilience of the States of Central Asia regarding both internal and external crises and supporting their economic modernisation... [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

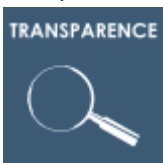
Decision on the measurement of daily work time



The EUCJ delivered a decision on 14th May whereby the Member States must oblige employers to introduce a system to measure the length of daily working hours. The case opposed the Spanish Union Federación de Servicios de Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) against the Deutsche Bank. The Court deemed that it had to guarantee the useful effect of the rights given by the directive on working hours and the directive on safety and health of workers in the workplace. To do this it is up to the Member States to impose on employers the introduction of a reliable, objective system to measure the daily working hours of each worker... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

European Ombudsman Inquiries into the decision making process



European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, published her annual report on 2018 in which she notes that complaints about transparency in the administration of the EU are the main type of case processed by her office (24.6%). Ms O'Reilly is undertaking three separate inquiries at present into the lack of transparency in the decision making process of national governments at Union level; the way the Union processes and makes public or not Eurogroup documents; and into the lack of transparency regarding annual decisions made about fishing quotas; the refusal of the Commission

to provide access to public documents regarding the positions adopted by the national authorities about the risk of pesticides on bees... [Read more](#)

Cybercrime: dismantling of a world network



The European and American police forces announced on 16th May that they had dismantled a world network of cybercriminals who have stolen 100 million \$ from more than 41,000 victims in the world by using a Russian malware. Legal proceedings have been launched against suspects in Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and in the USA, whilst five Russian citizens are on the run, declared the European cooperation agency with Europol during a press conference in the Hague... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Trip by the Chancellor to Croatia



German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to Croatia on 18th May. During a press conference in Zagreb, together with Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, she called on Europe's political leaders to face up to "the trends that want to destroy Europe".. [Read more](#)

Austria :

Resignation of the Vice-Chancellor and snap election



The Austrian Vice-Chancellor and Chairman of the far right party (FPÖ), Heinz-Christian Strache resigned on 18th May after revelations made by the German newspapers, Der Spiegel and the Süddeutsche Zeitung. He was filmed offering public contracts to a woman who was posing as the niece of a Russian oligarch, in exchange for political support via the purchase of the newspaper Kronen, a popular Austrian media outlet. Following the scandal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz announced that a snap election would be organised possibly in September... [Read more](#)

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France :

"Christchurch Call" on terrorism



On 15th May the President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Adern presented the "Christchurch Call" regarding the terrorist attack of 15th March last that struck two mosques in Christchurch, filmed and broadcast live on the social network Facebook. This appeal is a document that includes the governments' and major digital companies' pledges (Twitter, Facebook and Google) to counter on-line terrorist content. It suggests for example to enforce the law regarding the withdrawal of terrorist content or to develop new technological tools to delete messages that are hateful... [Read more](#)

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Netherlands :

Meeting between Angela Merkel and Mark Rutte



On 16th May German Chancellor A.Merkel hosted Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte. Discussions focused on three main issues. The first was "the great similitude in economic and trade terms" vital for the prosperity of both States. The second focussed on the climate for which "each State has to find its own way". Finally despite differences between the EPP and the Liberals which Merkel and Rutte respectively represent, both indicated that they want to "cooperate together and responsibly"... [Read more](#)

Poland :

March in support of Europe



More than 20,000 Poles marched in the streets of Warsaw on 18th May in expression of their support to the European Union. Leading the march was the President of the European Council Donald Tusk, former Prime Minister and co-founder of the Civic Platform that belongs to the European Coalition for the European election on 25th May... [Read more](#)

UK :

Brexit: new vote planned for the beginning of June by Parliament



Whilst the negotiations between the Prime Minister Theresa May and the head of the opposition, Labour's Jeremy Corbyn, to find an agreement over the ratification of the agreement on the withdrawal from the EU failed on 17th May, the British government intends to present a draft bill to the House of Commons in the week beginning 3rd June for a vote in the days that follow. Theresa May declared that she would announce the date of her departure after the vote. A new leader of the Conservative Party will be elected to become Prime Minister... [Read more](#)

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Switzerland :

Adoption via referendum of a European directive on arms



On 19th May the Swiss approved by 63.7% of the vote during a referendum a bill that tightens the conditions for the acquisition of arms, designed to bring the Confederation in line with the EU's anti-terrorist measures. Turnout was 43.34%. A rejection of the measure would have challenged the country's membership of Schengen... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Investiture of the President Volodymyr Zelenski



On 20th May Volodymyr Zelenski, elected with 73% of the vote on 21st April was invested as President of Ukraine. He immediately announced the dissolution of Parliament to organise a snap election that will probably take place in October. He said he wanted to "achieve a ceasefire in the Donbass", a secessionist region occupied by Russian troops... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

France takes over the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers



On 17th May France succeeded Finland in the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The outgoing President, Finnish Foreign Affairs Minister Timo Soini, presented the results of his country's presidency. The French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Amélie de Montchalin presented the priorities of the French Presidency for the next sixth months: protecting and strengthening the European system of the protection of human rights, promoting equality and living together, providing answers to the new challenges brought against the rule of law (notably digital issues and artificial intelligence)... [Read more](#)

Declaration on the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe



On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers - the decision making body at the Council - adopted a declaration. The Foreign Ministers of the Member States praised the active role played by the Council of Europe in defending Human Rights via tools such as the European Convention of Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights and the European Social Charter. They recall that all of the Member States must respect the commitments made and the Council's standards. Ministers also discussed several areas of priority action: a free, pluralist public debate, the fight to counter discrimination, equal opportunities and gender equality... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Surplus in international good trade



According to figures published by Eurostat on 16th May exports of euro zone goods towards the rest of the world increased by 3.1% in comparison with March 2018 and imports from the rest of the world rose by 6%. In March 2019 the euro zone recorded a surplus of 22.5 billion € in its international goods trade with the rest of the world (in comparison with 26.9 billion € in March 2018). Exports of goods from the EU towards the rest of the world rose by 1.2% in comparison with March 2018 and imports from the rest of the world increased by 6.4% in comparison with March 2018. The Union recorded a surplus of 2.9 billion € in its international goods trade in March 2019 with the rest of the world (in comparison with 11.2 billion € in March 2018)... [Read more](#)

The GDP up in the euro zone and the EU



According to an estimate published on 15th May the GDP rose by 0.4% in the euro zone and by 0.5% in the European Union over the first quarter of 2019, in comparison with the previous quarter. In comparison with the first quarter of 2018 the GDP grew by 1.2% in the euro zone and by 1.5% in the EU. The number of people with a job also increase by 0.3% both in the euro zone and in the EU in the first quarter of 2019 in comparison with the previous quarter... [Read more](#)

Inflation at 1.7% in the euro zone and at 1.9% in the European Union



According to figures published by Eurostat on 17th May the euro zone's annual inflation rate lay at 1.7% in April 2019, against 1.4% in March 2019 and 1.2% in April 2018. Annual inflation in the EU28 lay at 1.9% in April 2019 against 1.6% in March 2019 and 1.5% in April 2018. The lowest annual rates were recorded in Croatia (0.8%) and Denmark (0.9%) and the highest were in Romania (4.4%) and Hungary (3.9%)... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on the Code of Good Practice against Disinformation



On 17th May the Commission published the most recent reports by Facebook, Google and Twitter on the progress made since April 2019 to counter disinformation. The three platforms signed the Code of Good Practice against Disinformation and pledged to make a monthly report of the measures taken in view of the European elections in May. The Commission welcomed the progress made, notably in terms of transparency and the fight to counter disinformation, but deemed that improvements could still be made, particularly regarding targeted advertising and the means of identification used to attribute these to users... [Read more](#)

Studies on the positive effects of the Erasmus+ programme



On 20th May the Commission published two independent studies assessing the effects of the Erasmus+ programme and its beneficiaries - students, teachers and universities. 9 students out of 10 believe that the skills and experiences they acquired during their Erasmus period are useful to them in their daily working life. Their feeling of belonging to Europe is also strengthened. The participating universities are for their part better prepared for digital transformation, international cooperation and the development of the labour market. Between 2014 and 2018 more than 2 million students and teachers benefited from the Erasmus+ programme... [Read more](#)

Report on the EU's measures in support of refugees in Turkey



On 17th May the Commission published a report on the progress achieved in the implementation of EU aid in support of refugees in Turkey. 84 humanitarian aid projects have been implemented, notably in the area of education and healthcare: the building of schools and healthcare centres and a aid programme of the integration of Syrian children into the Turkish education system. All of these measures have been allocated a budget of 6 billion €, 4.2 of which have already been allocated... [Read more](#)

Annual Report on the Blue Economy



On the occasion of the European Maritime Day on 16th May the Commission published the 2019 report on the blue economy in the Union. The idea of the blue economy refers to all economic activities linked to the oceans, seas and coastal areas. According to the 2019 report the gross added value of the blue economy's sectors is said to have totalled 180 billion € in 2017. The Member States who play a preponderant role in this economy are the UK, Spain, Germany, France and Italy. The report also includes an analysis of the effects of the blue economy on ecosystems... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Romantic Paris

From 22nd May to 15th September the Museum of Romantic Life in Paris is offering visitors an exhibition "Romantic Paris 1815-1848, the Literary Salons". This exhibition reflects the city of Paris between 1815



and 1848 via the ambiance of the literary salons where intellectuals like Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset used to meet...

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Louise Bourgeois in the gardens of Rijksmuseum Amsterdam



From 25th May to 3rd November the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam is hosting the structures created by Louise Bourgeois. 12 sculptures ranging from colossal spiders' webs, giant eyes and even immense spirals of aluminium will be set up on the museum's gardens... [Read more](#)

International Literature Festival in Dublin



Until 26th May the international literature festival of Dublin is taking place. Around 40 Irish and foreign literary experts will be meeting for readings, discussions, and debate... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



21st May 2019
Brussels
"General Affairs" Council



22nd-23rd May 2019
Brussels
"Education, Youth, Culture and Sport" Council



23rd-26th May 2019
European Union
European Elections



26th May 2019
Romania
Referendum on the reform of the judicial system
Belgium
Parliamentary and Regional Elections
Lithuania
Presidential Election (second round)

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