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European Parliament: a new balance ... but not Eurosceptic

Authors: Pascale Joannin, Eric Maurice



The new European Parliament elected on 26th May with a significant increase in turnout, marks the end of bi-partism between the European People's Party and the European Socialist Party and confirms a consolidation of a pro-European bloc with the Liberals and Greens. The Eurosceptic tidal wave that some had dreamed of did not occur. The composition of groups and the appointments of those who will head the institutions will be complicated however and might lead to some surprises.

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Front page! :

In Europe the worst is never a certainty



With a turnout of over 50% and results which limit the influence of the extremes and strengthen the centre, the European elections 2019 are a message of confidence on the part of the citizens in Europe and a positive call made to their leaders and the whole world, writes the Chairman of the Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Results of the general elections in Belgium



The general elections in Belgium on 26th May led to the greater division of the country into two completely discrete landscapes. In Flanders the nationalists of the New-Flemish Alliance (N-VA) came out ahead with 25 seats, ahead of the far-right Vlaams Belang, which rose from having three to 18 seats. In Wallonia, the Socialist Party with 20 seats, came out ahead of the Reform Movement led by outgoing Prime Minister Charles Michel. The election was also marked by the rise of the Flemish and French-speaking Greens, as well as the radical left in the shape of the Belgian Workers' Party (PTB). This split will make the formation of a government very difficult... [Read more](#)

The Social Democratic left, favourite in the general elections in Denmark



The Social Democratic Party led by Mette Frederiksen is forecast to win the general elections on 5th June next in Denmark, ahead of the Liberal Party of outgoing Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and the populists of the People's Party. Questions of health, retirement pensions, global warming are the main themes in the electoral campaign whilst we note a proximity between the right and the left over immigration... [Read more](#)

Egil Levits is due to become the next president of the Republic of Latvia



On 29th May the 100 members of the Saeima, the only House in Parliament will elect the successor to Raimonds Vejonis to the presidency of the Republic of Latvia. Three candidates are officially running, including Egils Levits, a judge in the European Court of Justice... [Read more](#)

Gitanas Nauseda, elected president of the Republic of Lithuania



Economist Gitanas Nauseda won the presidential election in Lithuania with 66.72% of the vote, the second round of which took place on 26th May, at the same time as the European elections. An independent candidate Gitanas Nausedas won against Ingrida Simonyte, former Finance Minister. He will take over from Dalia Grybauskaite on 12th July next... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

European Summit in Prague



The Foundation is taking part in the "Prague European Summit", an annual conference on European issues, that is taking place from 27th to 29th May. On 28th May Pascale Joannin, the Foundation's General Manager, is taking part in a round table on "what vision of the leadership for the Union?" at the French Embassy. The manager of the Foundation's office in Brussels, Eric Maurice, is moderating a round table on the "challenge to the rule of law and the Union's fundamental values".. [Read more](#)

The Schuman Report on Europe, the State of Union 2019



The "Schuman Report on the State of the Union" 2019, a work of reference for European decision makers is available now. 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 it 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



"The Permanent Atlas of the European Union" offers a full panorama of the Union, the euro zone, of each of the Member States and its overseas territories. This work allows each reader to have at his/her fingertips the most recent and most objective political and statistical information. It is available in paper version from the Foundation's website, in bookshops and in digital version... [Read more](#)

Book by Robert Schuman "For Europe"



On the occasion of the European elections, the Foundation invites you to re-read "For Europe" by Robert Schuman, the only work that this "Father of Europe" devoted to this adventure. It is designed to understand the reasons behind his thinking and the political issues in this peaceful, voluntary construction of continental unity, which is unique in history. His vision is still vital for Europe today and a requirement to imagine its future... [Read more](#)

Commission :

RescEU: first fleet to counter fires



In the framework of the new RescEU mechanism the Commission launched the first fleet to counter fires in Europe on 21st May - in preparation for possible forest fires this summer. Seven firefighting planes and six helicopters will make this fleet up and this might be increased by the summer. The Commission also increased its monitoring and coordination capacities to prevent catastrophes and to respond. The Union's new civil protection mechanism entered into force in March 2019 and notably included the RescEU instrument, a reserve of capacities and responses to natural and man made disasters... [Read more](#)

Signature of aviation cooperation agreements with China



On 21st May the European Commission signed two agreements with China on safety in civil aviation and on aviation cooperation. These agreements follow the EU-China of 9th April 2019 and are part of the Aviation Strategy for Europe established by the Commission. The first aims to support trade between the EU and China in the civil aviation sector; whilst the second is a horizontal agreement, guaranteeing that the bilateral agreements on air services between China and the Member States comply with European law... [Read more](#)

First anniversary of the GDPR



On the occasion of the first anniversary of the entry into force of the general data protection regulation (GDPR), on 25th May the Commission published the partial results of the special Eurobarometer. Nearly 6 in ten people in Europe know the GDPR and the newly created European Data Protection Board noted more than 400 cross-border cases. The full report will be published on 10th June... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Conclusions of the "General Affairs" Council



The European Affairs Ministers met on 21st May to start preparations for the European Council that will take place on 20th and 21st June and during which Europe's leaders are to adopt the EU's strategic programme for the period 2019-2024. Ministers firstly discussed the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027, notably the Commission's proposal to integrate the European Development Funds into the EU's budget. It adopted two decisions modifying the composition of the Committee of Regions and the European Economic Committee, as well as the directive banning single use plastic products and a new regulation harmonising requirements applicable to fertilisers... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the "Education, Youth, Culture and Sports" Council



The "Education, Youth, Culture and Sports" Council took place in Brussels on 22nd and 23rd May. The Ministers put forward measures to counter insecurity, precarious working conditions and youth unemployment. They also adopted a recommendation on the quality of pre-school education and access to healthcare. Regarding culture, ministers discussed the means to foster access to culture for the young generations. Finally from the point of view of sports, ministers adopted a resolution on the representation and coordination of Member States in the WADA Foundation Board (World Anti-Doping Agency)... [Read more](#)

Meeting of the Union's Military Committee

The European Union's Military Committee, which brings together the Member States' Chiefs of Staff met on 21st May. It assessed EU-NATO



cooperation and the means to strengthen it and discussed military mobility. It reviewed the present missions, security and defence operations undertaken by the Union, including training missions, and reviewed the military dimension of the European Single Sky. The military leaders also discussed capabilities and financial instruments and were informed of the latest developments regarding the implementation of the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO)... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Conclusions of the Council of Ministers with the ACP countries



The Council of Ministers of the group of the States of Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) met on 23rd and 24th May and devoted discussions to the renewal of the EU-ACP partnership agreement. Amongst other themes they discussed global warming, the governance of the seas and migration. The European Commissioner responsible for international cooperation and development, Neven Mimica, and the Togolese Minister for Foreign Affairs, Robert Dussey, assessed the progress made in negotiations for a new partnership designed to replace the Cotonou agreement which will come to an end in 2020... [Read more](#)

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Report on the implementation of the EU-Armenia Partnership



On 21st May the Commission published a report on the development of relations between the EU and Armenia over the past year - June 2018 to May 2019, ahead of the EU-Armenia Association Council that will take place on 13th June. The report maintains that Armenia is working in support of the partnership with the EU and is aware of the EU's potential role in the reform programmes in Armenia. The Union provided major support to the Armenian general elections of December 2018, and launched strategic dialogue regarding the judicial sector. Trade between the EU and Armenia also has increased by 15% over the last year and cooperation in the education sector has been stepped up... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council



On 27th May the "Foreign Affairs" Ministers met to discuss questions linked to international trade. They adopted an additional mandate for negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to enable the Commission to take part in multi-lateral negotiations on electronic trade. The ministers also discussed trade relations between the Union and the USA as well as the free-trade agreement with Vietnam... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Dismantling of a vast criminal group



A vast European network of organised crime has been dismantled thanks to a joint operation between several European police forces, with the arrest of around 20 suspects said Europol on 22nd May. This international criminal group qualified as being "highly professional and dangerous" is said to have collated 680 million € between 2017 and 2019 indicated the Joint Operational Task Force, based in the Hague... [Read more](#)

Frontex: First joint operation in the Balkans



The European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, launched its first joint operation on 21st May in a neighbouring third country, Albania. As of 22nd May Frontex teams and Albanian coastguards are being deployed on the border between Greece and Albania to improve its security. This first joint operation follows an agreement signed with Albania in October 2018 and aims to strengthen border cooperation between the EU and the Western Balkans. Similar agreements have been signed with North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. These might take effect within the next few months... [Read more](#)

Austria :

Austria: vote of no confidence against S. Kurz's government

On 27th May Sebastian Kurz, the Austrian Chancellor of the European



People's Party (ÖVP) and his government were ousted following a vote of no confidence by the Austrian Parliament supported by the Austrian Socialist Party (SPÖ), the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the Jetzt List. This vote of no confidence is a further consequence to the "Ibiza Scandal" involving the former Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache, in a corruption affair... [Read more](#)

Spain :

Results of the regional and local elections



Local and regional elections took place at the same time as the European election on 26th May. In Madrid, the left party Mas Madrid came out ahead with 30% of the vote, but the right might take the townhall with the People's Party (24%) and Ciudadanos (19%). In Barcelona, the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) came out ahead with 21% of the vote, against the Barcelona en comu party (20%), the Socialist Party of Catalonia (18%), Ciudadanos (18%) and the People's Party (5%). In the regional elections 12 regions out of 17 elected new MPs, like for example in Madrid where the PSOE won with 27% of the vote, against the People's Party (22%), Ciudadanos (19%) and Mas Madrid (14%)... [Read more](#)

Romania :

A three and a half year prison sentence for the head of the Romanian Social Democratic Party



The head of the Romanian Social Democratic Party (in office) Liviu Dragnea was sentenced by Supreme Court on 27th May, to three and a half years in prison for the embezzlement of public funds. Some hours later he was imprisoned in Rahova. Dragnea was condemned in 2016 to a two and a half year suspended prison sentence for electoral fraud, and since 2017 had the focus of an investigation by OLAF - the European Office Anti-Fraud Office - for the supposed embezzlement of 21 million €, he was considered to be the country's strong man. The condemnation comes after the Social Democratic Party's defeat in the European elections and the double referendum on the reform of the judicial reform... [Read more](#)

Result of the referendum on Justice



On 26th May more than 40% of the Romanian electorate took part in the referendum convened by President Klaus Iohannis on the future of Romanian judicial system, thereby validating the required 30% turnout threshold. More than 80% answered "yes" to two questions that aimed to ban amnesties and pardons in corruption affairs, and to ban the adoption of emergency directives by the government in terms of offences and judicial organisation. The day after the referendum the head of the Social Democratic Party in office, Liviu Dragnea deemed to be the one behind the reform that Klaus Iohannis wants to ban, was finally sentenced to three and a half years in prison in a scandal of fictitious jobs... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Resignation of Theresa May



Prime Minister Theresa May announced on 24th May that she would resign on 7th June because she had found it impossible to achieve the ratification of the UK's withdrawal agreement from the European Union. To replace her the Conservative Party in office has to hold a congress. Seven candidates are now running, including the former Foreign Affairs Minister Boris Johnson, the former Brexit Minister Dominic Raab and the Environment Minister, Michael Gove... [Read more](#)

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OECD :

Economic Outlook



In its most recent Economic Outlook, published on 21st May the OECD stresses the slowing in world trade and an "escalation in trade wars". According to forecasts world growth is due to remain moderate and extremely fragile over the next two years. Forecasts for the euro zone have been revised upwards, but with weaker growth than in 2018 (respectively 1.2% and 1.4% in 2019 and 2020, against 1.8% in 2018)... [Read more](#)

Adoption of principles on artificial intelligence



The 42 OECD country members and partners officially adopted the first series of intergovernmental principles governing artificial intelligence (AI) on 22nd May. By doing this they pledge to respect international standards that aim to ensure the design of robust, safe, fair and trustworthy AI system... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

Winners of the European Union Literature Prize 2019



On 22nd May the 14 winners of the European Union's 2019 Literature Prize were announced: Laura Fredenthaler (Austria), Piia Leino (Finland), Sophie Daull (France), Réka Mán-Várhegyi (Hungary), Beqa Adamashvili (Georgia), Nikos Chryssos (Greece), Jan Carson (Ireland), Giovanni Dozzini (Italy), Daina Opolskaite (Lithuania), Marta Dzido (Poland), Tatiana Țibuleac (Romania), Ivana Dobráková (Slovakia), Halya Shyyan (Ukraine) and Melissa Harrison (UK). This prize is given yearly to authors of talent from across all of Europe and highlights the wealth of European cultural and linguistic heritage. The award of the prize will take place in Brussels on 2nd October... [Read more](#)

Baltica Festival in Estonia



The Baltica Festival is taking place from 29th May to 2nd June in Tallinn. This is the biggest cultural festival devoted to the region's folklore. The event that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have organised yearly in alternate order since 1987 puts on concerts, parades, meetings and workshops to promote the cultural identity of the Baltic countries... [Read more](#)

Playground Bay, Athens



Until 8th June, the Zoumboulakis Galleries in Athens is running an exhibition "Playground Bay", a series of works by the Cypriot painter Philippos Theodorides. Each of his works represents a free, abstract experiment... [Read more](#)

The Stockholm Years



From 30th May to 29th September Sven-Harry Museum of Art in Stockholm is running an exhibition of the Swedish painter Gösta Adrian-Nilsson. The exhibition stages the "Stockholm Years" from 1917 to 1919... [Read more](#)

Anselm Kiefer in Oslo



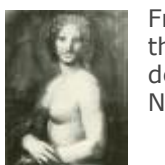
From 30th May to 15th October the Astrup Fearnley Museum in Oslo is presenting the dialogue between the books and woodcuts in the work of the German contemporary artist Anselm Kiefer... [Read more](#)

Exhibition Lee Krasner



The Barbican Gallery is showing the work of Lee Krasner from 30th May to 1st September in London. Krasner was an American pioneer of abstract Expressionism. Entitled "Lee Krasner: Living Colors" this exhibition celebrates an artist who was eclipsed for a long time by her husband Jackson Pollock and whose work was not very well known in Europe until now... [Read more](#)

Nude Mona Lisa



From 1st June to 6th October on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci, Chantilly museum is running an exhibition devoted to one of his most enigmatic works: Monna Vanna, the so-called Nude Mona Lisa... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



May 27, 2019
Brussels
« Foreign Affairs » Council (trade)



27-28th May 2019
Brussels
"Competitiveness" Council



28th May 2019
Brussels
Informal meetin of heads of State and government

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