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Juncker or European added value. The positive legacy of the European Commission (2014-2019)

Authors: Ramona Bloj, Cindy Schweitzer



Five years' ago Jean-Claude Juncker referred to his Commission as the "last chance" Commission. At the end of his mandate, he had succeeded. In a particularly turbulent geopolitical environment the European Commission has been able to adapt and take its jurisdiction to the limits, making innovative proposals to take the European Union forward. Despite communication that still requires further improvement, it has shown that a strong and active Commission is essential for the correct functioning of the Union.

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Front page! :

The sea, Europe's new border



According to Jean-Dominique Giuliani, the current tensions in the Persian Gulf or the China Sea demonstrate how important it is for Europe to be in a position to guarantee the security of trade routes or to control the race for sub-marine resources. The European Union, the world's neighbour, must go to sea to defend and promote its interests, to conquer its autonomy and guarantee its independence... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Early general elections in Greece on 7th July

Following the results of the European elections, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has asked for the organisation of early general elections (3 months' early as they were to have been held in the autumn).



According to the latest opinion poll carried out by the PulseRC/Skai institute and published in mid-June, New Democracy (ND) should come top in the forthcoming general elections to be held on 7th July, with 37.9% of the vote ahead of the radical left-wing coalition (SYRIZA), which would collect 28.8% of the vote. The Movement for Change is set to come 3rd with 7.3% of the vote. The communist party (KKE) is set to obtain 6.2% of the vote and Golden Dawn (XA), the far-right party, 5.3% of the vote... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

The Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2019



In this year of renewal of European Institutions, the "Schuman Report on the State of the Union 2019" is more than ever necessary to understand the state of the Union and its chances of winning greater independence and weight on the international stage, thanks to the dependencies it will create amongst its Member States. The Report includes contributions from top experts and contains 33 original maps that summarise the main European challenges and a unique set of commented statistics. Now available to order... [Read more](#)

La grande bascule - The European 21st century



In "La grande bascule", published by Ecole de guerre publications, Jean-Dominique Giuliani shows - contrary to habitual ideas - that the European Union has the means to meet the new challenges of the 21st century. Europe has succeeded beyond the hopes of its founding fathers. It can continue to succeed and guarantee its place, at the end of the century, amongst the three biggest world powers... [Read more](#)

Permanent atlas of the European Union



After the vote, and for a better understanding of the Union and what it does, the Foundation suggests you read the "Permanent Atlas of the European Union" a book that gives a complete overview of the Union, the euro zone and each of its Members States and their overseas territories. It is available in print version from the Foundation's website, in bookshops and in digital version. It is kept permanently up-dated... [Read more](#)

European elections: a website with all the results



Between 23rd and 26th May, 427 million Europeans elected their MEPs for the next five years. Our website dedicated to the European elections provides all the results from the 28 Member States and the names of the 751 MEPs who will sit until 2024... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Communication on the 2021-2027 budget



On 13th June the European Commission called on European leaders to make progress on negotiations for the Union's 2021-2027 budget. It wants the European Council of 20th and 21st June to adopt a road map with a view to an agreement in the autumn, in order to avoid any kind of delay that could be damaging to citizens, particularly students, researchers and farmers. Progress has been made in certain areas (convergence and competitiveness budgetary instrument, modernisation of the revenue side) but many financial aspects have yet to be discussed... [Read more](#)

Report on deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union



On 12th June the Commission published a report on deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union since publication in 2015 of the so-called five presidents' report (Commission, Parliament, European Council, Eurogroup and ECB) - which outlined proposals for the euro zone. Progress has been made in several areas, notably reform of the European Stability Mechanism, the reduction of risks within the banking union and a deepening of the capital markets union. The Commission believes, however, that major measures remain to be taken and invites European leaders to agree on the

Transparency of working conditions and balance between professional and private life



Ministers for Employment, Social policy, Health and Consumer Affairs, meeting on 13th and 14th June, adopted a directive on the transparency of working conditions in the EU, setting up new minimum rights and new rules on information to be provided to workers. They also adopted the directive on professional and private life balance, which aims to increase the use of family leave, and the place of women in the world of work... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

EU-Western Balkans ministerial meeting



On 12th June, employment and social affairs ministers from the Council's presidency trio (Romania, Finland and Croatia) and Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, met with their counterparts from the Western Balkans in Luxembourg. Discussions revolved around questions of employment and social affairs, and the ministers underlined the need for the Western Balkans to develop a labour market accessible to everyone of working age in order to stimulate growth in the region... [Read more](#)

EU-Armenia Partnership Council



The EU-Armenia Partnership Council was held in Brussels on 13th June to draw up a report on relations and restate a joint will to implement reforms in Armenia in the fields of justice, human rights and the economy. The Council also underlined the importance of promoting foreign investment, jobs growth and poverty reduction... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council



European ministers for foreign affairs, meeting on 17th June, discussed global strategy and adopted conclusions with a view to reinforcing multilateralism. They also adopted conclusions on the security and defence policy. They adopted a declaration on the situation in Sudan, condemning the attacks by the military transitional council that took place on 3rd June and supporting the call by the African Union in favour of a civil transitional authority. With regard to the increasing tension in the Gulf, ministers declared that any escalation would represent extreme danger, not only for the region but also for Europe and the rest of the world. Finally, ministers referred to the situations in Syria, Venezuela and Moldova... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the EU-Jordan association council



The EU-Jordan association council, meeting on 17th June, discussed cooperation in terms of security, counter-terrorism, human rights and economic relations. The Council adopted a joint declaration referring notably to the Syrian crisis and the Union's commitment to supporting Jordan in its efforts to welcome Syrian refugees... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Bratislava to host the European Labour Authority



On 13th June the Council selected Bratislava as the seat of the future European Labour Authority. The Slovakian capital won 15 of the 28 Member States' votes. It was up against three other cities: Sofia (Bulgaria), Riga (Latvia) and Nicosia (Cyprus). The aim of the new European Labour Authority is to combat obstacles to worker movement across the European Union by improving cooperation between Member States. It will begin work at the end of 2019 and will become fully operational in 2023... [Read more](#)

Spain :

Lifting of the European procedure for excessive deficit

On 14th June the Council put an end to the procedure brought in 2009 against Spain concerning its excessive deficit. Spain has brought its deficit under the bar of 3% of GDP: it was 2.5% of GDP in 2018. The



Commission's forecasts in spring 2019 indicate a deficit of 2.3% of GDP in 2019 and 2.0% of GDP in 2020... [Read more](#)

Three Catalan independents banned from sitting in the European Parliament



On 17th June the Spanish electoral commission declared vacant the seats at the European Parliament won by Catalan independents Oriol Junqueras, Carles Puigdemont and Toni Comín, due to their failure to take the oath that is obligatory in order to be able to sit. On 14th June the Spanish supreme court had refused to release temporarily O. Junqueras, imprisoned since 2017 for his role in the Catalonia independence attempt, to allow him to take the oath. On 17th June the electoral commission stated that a document lodged by the lawyer of C. Puigdemont and T. Comin to prove that they had taken the oath in front of a notary in Belgium, where they are in exile, did not allow their election to be validated... [Read more](#)

Finland :

Nomination of the candidate for the European Commission



Jutta Urpilainen, Finnish deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister until 2014, member of the Social Democratic party of Finland, has been appointed by the government as candidate to the position of European commissioner... [Read more](#)

France :

Prime Minister's general political address



On 12th June Prime Minister Edouard Philippe gave his general political address before the National Assembly, detailing the government's new method after the European elections. He then won a vote of confidence from the Assembly by 363 to 163, with 47 absentions. He also addressed the Senate on 13th June... [Read more](#)

Meeting of the Association of European Senates



The 20th meeting of the Association of European Senates, held on 14th June, restated the importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation and valorised bicameralism as an element of greater democracy. The Association received the Presidents of delegations from the upper Chambers of Algeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Kenya, Morocco and the Republic of Congo. European and African senates discussed the strengthening of Euro-African relations and the importance of bicameralism for democracy and the rule of law... [Read more](#)

Presentation of the future Franco-German combat aircraft



At the inauguration of the Air Show in Le Bourget on 17th June, Dassault Aviation and Airbus SE submitted a joint industrial offer to the French and German governments for the initial demonstration phase of the future combat air system programme. This major new step in the programme took the shape of public presentation of the model of the new generation fighter plane and support drones... [Read more](#)

Luxembourg :

Luxembourg receives the first European supercomputer



The first supercomputer in the European EuroHPC network will be operational in Luxembourg by the end of 2020, announced Etienne Schneider, Luxembourg's Economy Minister, on 14th June. The EuroHPC initiative (European High Performance Computing) launched in 2017 should enable the European Union to obtain world class supercomputers thanks to a pooling of the resources of the 16 participant countries. The Luxembourg site will be dedicated to applications in the field of research and personalised medicine. Seven other locations have been selected by the European Commission... [Read more](#)

Malta :

Sixth summit of Southern European countries



The sixth summit of Southern European countries was held in Malta on 14th June and brought together leaders from Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Malta and Portugal. They offered their support for the 2050 zero carbon objective and approved the principle of a European minimum wage and social protection. They came out in favour of a budget for the euro zone. Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat called for European solidarity with regard to migration. The leaders asked for boats in the Mediterranean to respect international law and not hinder operations by Libyan coastguards... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Nicola Sturgeon's visit to Brussels



On 11th June Scottish Prime Minister and leader of the Scottish National Party Nicola Sturgeon met the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the chief negotiator on Brexit, Michel Barnier, in Brussels. She also made a speech in which she restated Scotland's attachment to the European Union and her desire to organise another independence referendum before 2021. She pointed out the economic benefits that Scotland enjoys due to its membership of the Union and recalled the importance of values such as democracy and human rights which are shared by all Member States... [Read more](#)

First round in the Conservative party's leadership contest



In the first round of the vote held on 13th June to elect the head of the British Conservative party, who will also become Prime minister, Boris Johnson came well out ahead with 114 votes out of 313. Conservative MPs will vote again on 18th June to reduce the number of candidates in play. They will meet until there remain only two candidates who will then be put to the vote by party members. The remaining candidates are, in addition to Boris Johnson, Jeremy Hunt, Michael Gove, Dominic Raab, Sajid Javid and Rory Stewart. A televised debate was held on Channel 4 on 16th June, including all candidates with the exception of Boris Johnson who did not wish to participate... [Read more](#)

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Slovakia :

Zuzana Caputova takes the presidential oath



The investiture of Zuzana Caputova took place in Bratislava on 15th June, making her the first female president of the Slovakian Republic. As deputy president of the social-liberal and pro-European "Progressive Slovakia" party she won the second round of the presidential elections on 31st March, with 58.40% of the vote, winning against the candidate of the social-democratic party in power, Maros Sefcovic. In her investiture speech, Zuzana Caputova declared that she wanted to "serve the citizens and inhabitants of Slovakia" and restated her commitment to the combat against global warming... [Read more](#)

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North Macedonia :

President's visit to Brussels



On 12th June the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, met the President of North Macedonia, Stevo Pendarovski, in Brussels. The opening of negotiations for the membership of North Macedonia and Albania could be discussed by European leaders at the end of June, but no final decision will be taken in the near future due to reluctance on the part of certain Member States. Foreign Affairs ministers will discuss the matter at a meeting on 17th June... [Read more](#)

Zoran Zaev's visit to Berlin



On 13th June German Chancellor Angela Merkel received the Prime Minister of North Macedonia, Zoran Zaev. The aim of their meeting was the country's progress towards entering NATO and the opening up of negotiations with the European Union. At the end of May 2019, the Commission had recommended that negotiations for North Macedonia and Albania to join should be opened. However, the choice of a date for starting negotiations will have to be postponed insofar as several Member States are reluctant to see North Macedonia and Albania join the Union together... [Read more](#)

UN :

Centenary of the International Labour Conference



Numerous leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Italian President Sergio Mattarella, met in Geneva on 11th June for the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Conference to reaffirm their commitment to social justice in view specifically of globalisation and the digitalisation of economies... [Read more](#)

OECD :

Quarterly growth in the GDP of G20 countries



On 12th June the OECD indicated that the gross domestic product (GDP) of G20 countries grew by 0.8% over the first quarter of 2019, slightly higher than the 0.7% recorded over the preceding quarter. In the European Union and the euro zone, growth of GDP is respectively 0.5% and 0.4%. Growth increased slightly in Germany and Italy, and fell slightly in France... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Europeans and data protection



On 13th June the Commission published the results of a special Eurobarometer survey on data protection, a year after the general data protection regulation came into force (GDPR). These results show that, in general, Europeans are well informed as to their rights and the rules that apply in this area. 73% of them have heard about at least one of the six rights guaranteed by the GDPR, first and foremost their right of access to data concerning them. 67% of people asked knew the GDPR and 62% of Europeans are concerned about the fact that they do not have complete control over their personal data... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on the combat against disinformation



On 14th June the Commission published a report on progress made in the combat against disinformation. It considers that measures taken have helped to prevent attacks and to show up attempts to interfere in the electoral process of 23rd-25th May. Specifically, it denounced "continuous, sustained misinformation on the part of Russian sources". Amongst the measures stand out the rapid alert system which has strengthened cooperation between Member States and the code of good practice signed by on-line platforms - notably Google, Facebook and Twitter. The Commission has published the latest monthly reports drawn up by these three platforms on their application of the code of good practice. The issue of the combat against disinformation will be examined by the European Council in June... [Read more](#)

The Digital Economy and Society Index



On 11th June the Commission published its Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2019 which evaluates the Union's overall digital performance and tracks progress made by Member States in terms of digital competitiveness. States that had shown ambitious objectives in this regard, and had associated them to relevant investments, have achieved good results within a relatively short time. However, the DESI underlines the fact that the largest economies in the Union cannot be qualified as digital pioneers and that consequently the digital transformation process must be accelerated to ensure that the Union remains competitive at world level... [Read more](#)

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Report on obstacles to trade and investment



On 17th June the Commission published a report on obstacles to trade and the opening of export markets for European businesses. It confirms the increase in obstacles met by European companies working on third country markets. Although 123 of these obstacles have been removed since 2014, they remain in record numbers: 425 in 59 countries. China and Russia are the top countries concerned, with respectively 37 and 34 problematic measures. Measures with the greatest impact on European exports are those introduced by

China, the United States, India and Algeria... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

Pierre Bonnard in Copenhagen



Until 22nd September, the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen presents the "Pierre Bonnard exhibition "The colours of memory". It highlights the French Nabi artist's work on colour... [Read more](#)

Les nuits de Fourvière 2019



The Lyon Cultural Festival, Les Nuits de Fourvière, offers a varied programme including plays, circus, dance and concerts. In all over 60 shows will be held, through until 30th July... [Read more](#)

Arnold Peter Weisz-Kubincan's heavy luggage



From 20th June to 10th November, the National Gallery of Slovakia presents "Artist's(heavy) luggage", an exhibitions of paintings, drawings and sketches by the Polish artist Arnold Peter Weisz-Kubincan, as well as press cuttings dated from the 1920s to the 1940s reflecting his memories and the context of the Second World War... [Read more](#)

Sommerszene festival in Salzburg



The "Sommerszene" festival of theatre and dance will be held in Salzburg until 29th June. Dedicated to contemporary artistic performances, the various events include the presence of international and European artists from the world of theatre, dance, film and photography... [Read more](#)

Olympia Art Fair in London



The 47th Olympia Art Fair, an international art and antiques fair, will be held in London from 19th to 28th June. This is the largest, most well-known fair in the United Kingdom with over 30,000 visitors expected... [Read more](#)

Make Music Day with a European theme



For Make Music Day celebrated on 21st June in 120 countries, the French Culture Minister suggests playing Ode to Joy at 8pm in every European country and on all digital channels. This extract from Beethoven's 9th symphony has been the European Union's anthem since 1986... [Read more](#)

Agenda :

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