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From crisis exit to world challenges: The EU's Strategic Agenda 2019

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On 20th June, Heads and State and Government adopted the European Union Strategic Programme for the next 5 years. A comparison with the previous programme shows that the EU has moved from a post-crisis resilience policy to a policy of affirmation, promoting its values and defending its economic and geopolitical interests.

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Foundation :

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](#)

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](#)

European elections: a website to understand the new Parliament



The new European Parliament, elected on 23rd-26th May, will meet for the first time on 2nd July. Our dedicated website provides details of results from the 28 Member States, the name of the 751 MEPs who will sit until 2024, the name of all presidents and vice-presidents of the political groups, and all news on installation of the new Parliament... [Read more](#)

European Council :

Conclusions of the European Council



At the European Council held on 20th and 21st June, Heads of State and Government discussed the next multiannual financial framework and the 2019-2024 strategic programme. They declared that they wanted to ensure transition to a climate neutral Union, but did not specify the date. They underlined the importance of bringing a coordinated response to hybrid and cyber threats and to disinformation. They discussed subjects such as the Eastern Partnership, the strategic partnership with Africa, EU-Morocco relations and the situation in Ukraine. They warned Turkey against drilling off Cyprus. With regard to Brexit they declared that they are ready to discuss the Declaration on future relations but also gave an up-date on preparations in case of a no deal withdrawal. They also failed to agree on the name of the new President of the European Commission and will meet again on 30th June... [Read more](#)

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Conclusions of the euro zone summit



European leaders met on 21st June for an extended euro zone summit meeting. They praised progress made on deepening the economic and monetary Union, notably the general agreement reached on review of the treaty setting up the European Stability Mechanism. Full agreement on this review should be reached in December 2018. The leaders referred to the convergence and competitiveness budgetary instrument for the euro zone, which is a priority within the context of negotiations on the multiannual financial framework... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Assessment of Member States' climate plans



On 18th June the Commission published its assessment of Member States' draft plans for implementing the Paris climate agreement and the objectives set at European level in terms of energy. It considers that measures put forward are still insufficient with regard to renewable energies and energy efficiency and gives Member States until 31st December to provide more ambitious final plans. Since the new regulation on governance of the energy union and climate action, which came into force in 2018, Member States are required to draw up 10-year national plans for energy and the climate (2021-2030)... [Read more](#)

Study on the differing quality of foodstuffs

On 24th June the Commission published a study on the differing quality of foodstuffs in the European Union, launched after complaints from several Member States in central and eastern Europe. After analysing



almost 1 400 food products in 19 Member States, the study shows that 9% of the products compared were of a different composition whereas the packaging was identical. Also, 22% of the products had a different composition but similar packaging. The Commission issued an appeal for proposals with a budget of €1.6 million to strengthen the capabilities of consumer associations to test products and identify possible misleading practices. The cut-off date for applications has been set at 6th November 2019... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Election of the new political group presidents



Political groups at the European Parliament have chosen their presidents for the new parliament. Manfred Weber from Germany has been re-elected president of the EPP (European People's Party). The Socialists & Democrats (S&D) elected Iratxe Garcia from Spain to be their president. The liberals of Renew Europe, formerly ALDE, elected Dacian Ciolos from Romania. The Greens/EFA re-elected two co-presidents, Ska Keller from Germany and Philippe Lamberts from Belgium. The ECR group (European Conservatives and Reformists) has elected two co-presidents, Ryszard Legutko from Poland and Raffaele Fitto from Italy. Identity and Democracy, formerly ENF has chosen Marco Zanni from Italy to be their president. Only the presidency of the GUE/NGL Group (Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left) remains to be filled. News on the formation of the new Parliament can be found on our dedicated website... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Conclusions of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council



Meeting on 18th June, Agriculture and Fisheries ministers announced that they were ready to begin negotiations with Parliament on the reform of the European maritime and fisheries fund for the period 2021-2027. They decided on a position of partial negotiation, which at this stage excludes questions linked to the budget. They were informed of progress made on consultations on the possibilities of fishing for commercial fish stocks in the North Sea and the Baltic. They also referred to progress made on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy post-2020. Finally, they adopted conclusions on biosecurity and cross-border animal diseases... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the General Affairs Council



On 18th June, European Affairs ministers discussed the Union's enlargement policy and postponed the decision concerning the membership of North Macedonia and Albania to October 2019 at the latest. With a view to the European Council of 20th-21st June, ministers addressed the question of the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027 and discussed the negotiations document prepared by the Council's Romanian presidency... [Read more](#)

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Annexation of Crimea - Extension of sanctions



On 20th June the Council announced a one-year extension, until 23rd June 2020, of the sanctions implemented in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sebastopol by Russia in 2014. The sanctions apply to EU people and businesses involved in the following activities: the import of products from Crimea or Sebastopol, investments or tourist activities in these territories and the export of goods and technologies intended for use in Crimea, particularly in oil, gas and mineral exploration and production... [Read more](#)

7 Member States for greater transparency



In a document made public on 18th June, Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden called for greater transparency in the way the Union operates. These 7 Member States ask specifically for more coordinated and transparent organisation of trilogues - negotiations between the Council, Parliament and the Commission to bring text and laws into being. They ask the European Council to integrate greater transparency into the strategic agenda... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

EU-USA meeting on justice and security



After a meeting on justice and security issues held in Bucharest on 19th June, in a joint statement the European Union and the United States restated their commitment to fight together against terrorism. They discussed air security, chemical and biological threats and announced an assessment of application of the PNR, the air passengers name record. The meeting also addressed the need to combat cyber threats and develop a secure 5G network as well as the combat against disinformation, the management of migration and progress made with a reciprocal visa system... [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

The German road tax vignette judged contrary to Union law



On 18th June the EU Court of Justice (CJEU) held that the tax that Germany wanted to implement for the use of roads and motorways by private vehicles was contrary to Union law. Owners and drivers of vehicles registered in Germany would have paid for the vignette but would have benefitted from exoneration of at least an equal amount on another vehicle tax. The CJEU judged that the economic burden of the tax would have been felt only by owners and drivers of vehicles registered in other States and that this would constitute indirect discrimination due to nationality and a violation of the principles of freedom of movements of goods and services. Germany must comply with this order, on penalty of financial sanctions... [Read more](#)

Polish Supreme Court reform held to be contrary to European law



The European Court of Justice (EUCJ) found in a ruling of 24th June that the Polish law lowering retirement age for Supreme Court judges was contrary to Union law, violating the principles of irremovability of judges and judicial independence. The law, which came into force in April 2018 pushed several judges into retirement and is considered to be a means of taking over the Polish justice system by the government run by the Law & Justice party. The European Commission had referred the case to the Court. On 20th June the EUCJ Advocate General had submitted his conclusions on the whole of the Polish judicial reform, which also concerns the judges in common law jurisdictions, and had considered that it was contrary to Union law... [Read more](#)

ECB :

Annual forum



The ECB's annual forum was held in Sintra, Portugal, from 17th to 19th June, attended by governors from central banks, academics, policymakers and financial market participants. The conference theme was "20 years of European Economic and Monetary Union" addressing macroeconomic convergence, monetary policy and the means by which to meet the forthcoming challenges in terms of economic growth within the euro zone. Mario Draghi took the opportunity to announce that the ECB could lower base rates still further and purchase assets to ensure that inflation reaches 2%. This declaration was followed by a fall in the rate of the euro against the dollar, a reduction in States' borrowing rates and improvement on European stock markets... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Ariane 5 successfully launches two satellites



An Ariane 5 rocket was launched on 20th June from the Kourou space centre in Guyana, before releasing two geostationary satellites, one owned by the American telecoms giant AT&T and the other by the European operator Eutelsat... [Read more](#)

Ariane rocket to send the Juice probe to Jupiter



The European Space Agency (ESA) confirmed on 17th June that the European probe Juice, set to study Jupiter and its icy moons, will be launched in 2022 by an Ariane launch vehicle, possibly an Ariane 6. This will be the first European mission to Jupiter, the largest planet in the solar system. On the first day of the International Air Show in Le Bourget, ESA signed a contract with Arianespace to launch this ambitious exploratory mission... [Read](#)

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European Inventor of the Year award



On 20th June, the European Patent Office (EPO) awarded its prizes for the Inventor of the Year 2019 to professionals from four Member States of the Union (France, Austria, the Netherlands and Spain) for their innovations: a cancer diagnostic tool, a machine to recycle plastic better, an alternative to the toxic paints used on boats and a quick way of duplicating DNA samples. Akira Yoshino from Japan, inventor of the lithium-ion battery, also received an award due to the importance of his technology... [Read more](#)

The European Committee of the Regions presents its vision of Union reform



The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) presented a report on 13th June entitled "Working together to bring the EU closer to its citizens" in which it sets out its point of view on the future of Europe... [Read more](#)

Numbers of asylum applications in the Union



On 24th June, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a study on asylum applications in the Union. The number of applications fell for the third consecutive year in 2018, to reach the pre-migrant crisis level. In 2018, 664 480 asylum applications were recorded in the EU. This fall in the number of asylum applications has continued in 2019, despite a slight increase over the first five months of the year... [Read more](#)

France :

Russian Prime Minister's visit to France



French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe received his Russia counterpart Dmitri Medvedev in Le Havre on 24th June. The two heads of government discussed the crises in Ukraine and Syria, as well as trade and cooperation between their two countries. This is the first high level Franco-Russian meeting since Russian President Vladimir Poutine's visit to Versailles in 2017... [Read more](#)

The Netherlands :

MH-17: 3 Russians and 1 Ukrainian charged with murder



Dutch prosecutors announced on 19th June that three Russians and one Ukrainian would be charged with murder for their presumed responsibility in firing the missile that destroyed flight MH-17 on 17th July 2014, causing the death of 298 passengers and crew members. The Malaysia Airlines Boeing was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. The case should open on 9th March 2020, probably in the absence of the four accused. On 20th June, the European Council again called on Russia to "cooperate fully with the enquiry"... [Read more](#)

Czech Republic :

Another demonstration against the Prime Minister



On 23rd June, almost 250 000 people gathered in Prague to demand the resignation of Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis, suspected of European subsidy fraud. The NGO "1 Million moments for democracy" organised the gathering, which was the biggest in Prague since the demonstrations against communism in 1989. According to several draft European Commission audit reports, A. Babis is still profiting from his Agrofert company which has received over €17 million in subsidies since 2017, and he is therefore in a position of conflict of interests. For the past few weeks demonstrators have been demanding the resignation of A. Babis and that of Justice Minister Marie Benesova, who is suspected of protecting him... [Read more](#)

UK :

No deal Brexit: the Bank of England's fears

On 20th June the Bank of England (BoE) expressed its fears in terms of



a no deal Brexit for the UK at a time when economic activity is stagnating. After +0.5% growth in the first quarter, the BoE now expects no growth over the second quarter. This situation has caused the BoE to maintain its bank rate at 0.75% and to continue with its bonds purchase programme... [Read more](#)

Leader of the Conservative Party



After the fifth vote on 20th June to elect the leader of the British Conservative Party, who will also become Prime Minister, the 313 Conservative MPs named the two finalists: former Foreign Minister Boris Johnson (160 votes) and the current holder of that position, Jeremy Hunt (77 votes). These candidates will be put to the vote by the party's 160 000 members in the week of 22nd July... [Read more](#)

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Turkey :

The party in power loses Istanbul city hall



On 23rd June Ekrem Imamoglu, candidate for the People's Republican Party, won the Istanbul city elections with 54% of the vote, against Binali Yildirim, the candidate for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP). An initial win by E. Imamoglu on 31st March, was invalidated. The AKP loses the richest and most populous city in Turkey... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Volodymyr Zelensky's visits to Paris and Berlin



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on 17th June and then German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on the 18th. The leaders expressed their support for sanctions against Russia as long as no progress has been made in respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and their will to continue with peace negotiations within the context of the Normandy format because, as V. Zelensky said, "for a war to end, the two parties, Russia and Ukraine must want to do it ... Ukraine cannot be the only one to want peace".. [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Call to halt cooperation with Libyan coastguards



In a report published on 18th June, the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, Duja Mijatovic, called on European countries to suspend their cooperation with Libyan coastguards until guarantees are provided with regard to the respect of human rights. In the report she refers to serious violations of human rights in the treatment of people brought back to Libya by the coastguards, placed in arbitrary detention and victims of violence. No official data is available but the number of migrants present in Libya is estimated to be several hundreds of thousands... [Read more](#)

The Council of Europe Assembly reintegrates Russia



The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) voted on 24th June in favour of Russia's return by 118 votes to 62. The PACE had deprived the Russian delegation of its voting rights in 2014 as a sanction against the annexation of Crimea. Russia then suspended its participation in the Assembly and had ceased to pay its contribution. It was threatening to leave the Council of Europe definitely, which would have deprived Russian citizens of any possibility of recourse to the European Court of Human Rights. On 25th June Ukraine announced its intention to suspend its participation in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) after the latter's decision to authorise the return of the Russian delegation, putting an end to five years of institutional crisis with Moscow... [Read more](#)

OECD :

Survey on teaching and learning

In its latest international survey published on 21st June, entitled "Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners", the OECD indicates



that countries must make the teaching career more financially and intellectually attractive. EU countries are mostly beneath the average of OECD countries in terms of training and the use of IT and communication technologies... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

International trade in goods surplus



According to figures published by Eurostat on 18th June, euro zone exports of goods to the rest of the world came to €192.9 billion in April 2019, i.e. a 5.2% increase compared to April 2018. Imports increased by 6.6%, up to €177.2 billion in April 2019. The euro zone therefore recorded a €15.7 billion surplus in its international trade in goods in April 2019 with the rest of the world. Exports of goods outside the EU amounted to €171.1 billion in April 2019, i.e. a 10.2% increase compared to April 2018. Imports increased by 5.6% to €169.7 billion in April 2019. The EU therefore recorded a surplus of €1.4 billion in its international trade in goods with the rest of the world (compared to a deficit of €0.9 billion in April 2018)... [Read more](#)

Inflation rate down



According to figures published by Eurostat on 18th June, the annual inflation rate in the European Union was 1.6% in May 2019, down compared to April (1.9%). In the euro zone the inflation rate was at 1.2% in May 2019, down compared to April 2019 (1.7%). The lowest annual rates were recorded in Cyprus (0.2%), Portugal (0.3%) and Greece (0.6%) whilst the highest were in Romania (4.4%), Hungary (4%) and Latvia (3.5%)... [Read more](#)

Structure of the public debt in 2018



According to an article published on 21st June by Eurostat, the public debt of Member States is mainly held by non-residents in half of EU Member States. This is particularly the case in Cyprus, Latvia and Lithuania. Conversely, the largest share of debt held by resident financial companies was registered in Denmark, Sweden and Italy. The public debt of Member States is mainly comprised of debt securities, notably in Czechia (90% of total debt) and in Hungary... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Malta Arts Festival



The Valletta International Arts Festival will be held from 28th June to 14th July. Music, theatre, dance, sculpture and photography events are organised at several venues in the Maltese capital... [Read more](#)

Montreux Jazz Festival



The 53rd Montreux Jazz Festival will be held from 28th June to 13th July on the banks of Lake Geneva. The festival, enjoyed by jazz fans as well as pop and rock enthusiasts, boasts prestigious headliners such as Elton John and Janet Jackson... [Read more](#)

Art and looking in Copenhagen



The "What are you looking at?" exhibition at the Louisiana museum in Copenhagen until 18th August underlines the importance of looking in art: the artist looking at the world or the spectator looking at art. This is one of the six themes around which the museum has organised the display of its collection this summer... [Read more](#)

Picasso, Matisse, Dali, Klimt in Sibiu

Until 30th August, the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu presents "The Art of Giving", an exhibition of the works of artists such as Picasso, Matisse, Dali and Klimt, organised during the Sibiu



International Theatre Festival... [Read more](#)

"Die Brücke" in Frankfurt



From 26th June to 13th October, the Städel museum in Frankfurt presents the "Mysteries of matter" exhibition dedicated to the works of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Erich Heckel and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, founders of the German expressionist group "Die Brücke" ("The Bridge")... [Read more](#)

Jazz Festival in Vienne



The town of Vienne, in Isère, hosts the Vienne Jazz Festival from 28th June to 13th July. Numerous activities are organised with, amongst other headliners, Thomas Dutronc and Parovoz Stelar... [Read more](#)

Music Film Festival in Vienna



From 29th June to 1st September, the park next to the Austrian capital's city hall turns into an open-air cinema for the Music Film Festival, showing music, opera and dance films... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



25th June 2019

Luxembourg

"Transport, telecommunications and energy" Council (Energy)

Luxembourg

"General Affairs" Council (Cohesion)



26th June 2019

Luxembourg

"Environment" Council



27th June 2019

Brussels

EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Council

Brussels

EU-Morocco Association Council

Frankfurt

Meeting of the ECB General Council



28th-29th June 2019

Osaka

G20 summit



30th June 2019

Brussels

Extraordinary meeting of the European Council

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