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The Letter in PDF format

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1st November: Christine Lagarde presides over the ECB and faces a great deal of resistance

Author: Jean-Paul Betbeze



Frenchwoman, Christine Lagarde will be succeeding Mario Draghi to the issues surrounding the ECB's strategy. But the difficulties experienced by the Euro Zone's Monetary Policy to achieve a 2% rate are not a result of mistakes made by Mr Draghi. They are the result of the very structure of the euro zone's economy, caught in the web of global slowing and a monetary policy left alone at the helm without any budgetary support.

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Contents

Foundation : Big Shift - Open Horizons **Commission** : Investment - Data/Protection - Fishing - Oceans - Bulgaria/Romania - Schengen/Croatia - Parity
Parliament : Prize/Sakharov - Budget - Juncker/Results - Pesticides
Council : Employment/Social Affairs - Maritime Transport **Diplomacy** : Climate
ECB : Draghi/Farewell **European Agencies** : Ombudsman - Waste handling
Germany : Thuringen **Belgium** : Prime Minister **Finland** : Future/EU **France** : Overseas - Commissioner/Candidate - Copyright **Romania** : Government **UK** : Elections? - Delay/Brexit **NATO** : Syria **Eurostat** : Debt **Eurobarometer** : Aid/Development
Culture : Film/Vienna - Exhibition/Berlin - Exhibition/Paris - Exhibition/London

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

Foundation :

The Big Shift-the European 21st Century



Contrary to popular discourse, Jean-Dominique Giuliani shows that the European Union has the means to address the new challenges of the 21st century. Europe has succeeded beyond the expectations of its founding fathers. It can still succeed in guaranteeing its place among the three greatest powers in the world by the end of the century... [Read more](#)

A Blueprint for Tomorrow's Europe



The Foundation has published "A Blueprint for Tomorrow's Europe", a first paper in a new series entitled Open Horizons, which provides a new venue for young European authors who want to express new ideas in support of European integration. In "A Blueprint for Tomorrow's Europe" Jérôme Gazzano and Andi Mustafaj believe that the present crises are an opportunity to rethink the European Union so that it can face the challenges of this century head on... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Review of the Juncker Investment Plan



The Investment Plan for Europe, the so-called Juncker Plan has enabled the EU to increase its GDP by 0.9% and has created 1.1 million new jobs since its launch in 2015 deemed the Commission in its assessment published on 22nd October. By 2022 under the Juncker Plan, the Union's GDP will have risen by 1.8% and 1.7 million jobs will have been created... [Read more](#)

Personal data: positive assessment of the agreement with the USA



The US continues to guarantee an adequate level of protection of the personal data transferred from the EU, deemed the Commission in its report on the third annual assessment of the functioning of the Privacy Shield introduced in 2016. It does recommend several measures however, particularly the strengthening and acceleration of the corporate certification process which wants to participate in the system... [Read more](#)

Fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and North Sea



On 24th October the Commission suggested fishing quotas for the 72 fish stocks in the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. Quotas would be the same or increased for 32 of them, in particular, whiting in the Irish Sea and reduced for 40, notably hake. Ministers will assess these proposals during their December meeting... [Read more](#)

New European commitments for the oceans



On 23rd and 24th October the EU took 22 new commitments in support of clean, healthy, safe oceans during the conference "Our Ocean" which took place in Oslo. Commitments include measures in support of research into oceans, the fight to counter marine pollution and the encouragement of the blue economy and innovation. It also launched Ocean Tracker, a monitoring system for the 77 commitments made since 2014... [Read more](#)

Reports on Bulgaria and Romania



On 22nd October the Commission published its annual reports on the cooperation and verification mechanism regarding Bulgaria and Romania. It deemed that Bulgaria had made sufficient progress to satisfy the commitments taken when it joined the European Union but that it will have to "work unrelentingly" to make them effective. Regarding Romania it said it was concerned about the "regression" that has occurred in terms of the legal system and the fight to counter corruption... [Read more](#)

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Positive report regarding Croatia's membership of the Schengen Area



Croatia has taken the required steps so that the conditions necessary for the total implementation of the Schengen rules and standards can be fulfilled, deemed the Commission in a report published on 22nd October. The Commission has asked the Council to assess the report in view of integrating Croatia into the Schengen area... [Read more](#)

New stage in terms of parity for the European Commission



The Commission has reached the goal of 40% of women in managerial posts that it had set itself at the beginning of the mandate in 2014. 41% of the managerial posts at all levels are occupied by women, in contrast with 30% at the beginning of the term in office, it announced on 22nd October. These achievements place the Commission amongst the public administrations around the world with the highest share of women in leadership positions... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

The Sakharov Prize 2019 awarded to Ilham Tohti

On 24th October the European Parliament awarded the Sakharov Prize 2019 for the freedom of thought to Ilham Tohti, a Uyghur economist



and human rights activist, at present serving a life sentence in China for separatism. The ceremony will take place on 18th December in Strasbourg... [Read more](#)

Position on the 2020 budget



On 23rd October MEPs adopted a position on the Union's 2020 budget. They asked for a total increase of 2 billion € to protect the climate, as well as additional financing for Erasmus+, SMEs, research, digital, migratory issues and external policy. The Council immediately said that it "cannot accept" the amendments. The two institutions have until 18th November to come to an agreement... [Read more](#)

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Jean-Claude Juncker's Farewell



On 22nd October the outgoing President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker said his farewells to Parliament and debated his results with MEPs who met in plenary session. He stressed the positive results of his term in office like the "Juncker Plan" on investment, relations with Africa and the 15 new trade agreements. He expressed his disappointment about not having succeeded in completing Banking Union... [Read more](#)

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A block made to a project regarding the regulation of pesticides



On 23rd October MEPs asked the Commission to review its draft regulation for pesticide authorisation procedures. They deemed that the amended proposal put forward by the Member States will weaken protection for bees. They asked the Commission to take on board the most recent developments in scientific knowledge and techniques... [Read more](#)

Council :

Conclusions of the Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer Council



Ministers responsible for employment and social affairs adopted the conclusions on the economy of wellbeing on 24th October; this calls for the Commission and the Member States to place workers' wellbeing in policy design. They discussed the fight to counter discrimination, as well as the way to improve their decision-making by the qualified majority procedure or the ordinary legislative procedure. They also adopted conclusions aiming to promote the declaration of the International Labour Organisation on the future of work... [Read more](#)

Position on CO2 emissions in maritime transport



On 25th October the Council adopted its position on a revision of the CO2 emissions rules in the maritime transport sector. The rules would be aligned with those of the International Maritime Organisation... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Climate cooperation with Iceland and Norway



The EU, Iceland and Norway announced on 25th October increased cooperation to reach the goal of at least 40% reduction in CO2 emissions in 2030 in comparison with 1990. Iceland and Norway committed to implementing two Union legislations: namely agriculture, transport, waste management and buildings; and to enhance benefits of carbon removals from land use and forestry... [Read more](#)

ECB :

Last press conference by Mario Draghi



The President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi gave his last press conference on 24th October before Christine Lagarde takes over on 1st November. Facing growing criticism regarding his unconventional policy he defended the work he has undertaken over the last 8 years. On 28th October, several European leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel took part in the ECB President's

departure ceremony and the transfer of office with Ms Lagarde... [Read more](#)

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European Agencies :

Candidates for the post of European Ombudsman



On 23rd October Parliament announced the name of the five candidates for the position of European Ombudsman: outgoing Ombudsman, Emillie O'Reilly, the ombudsman for the region of Camania, Giuseppe Fortunato, Estonian judge at the European Court of Human Rights, Julia Laffranque, former Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, Nils Muiziekis and MEP Cecilia Wikström. Parliament will hold auditions with the candidates on 3rd December and will vote during the plenary session in December... [Read more](#)

Europe must improve the management of its waste



In two reports published on 28th October the European Agency for the Environment deems that the EU must increase the re-use and recycling of its plastics, batteries, electronic goods and textiles in order to reduce waste. The agency notes that 30,000 tonnes of plastic waste were created in 2015, stresses that the EU is losing reusable resources... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Rise of the far-right in Thuringen



The radical left party Die Linke came out ahead in the regional elections in Thuringen on 27th October, with 31% of the vote, 3 points more in comparison with the previous election in 2014. The election marked a breakthrough by the far right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which on 23.4% against 10.6% in 2014. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) dropped from 31% to 21.8%, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) from 12.4% to 8.2% and the Greens from 5.7% to 5.2%. The outgoing coalition Linke-SPD-Greens lost its majority in the regional parliament... [Read more](#)

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Belgium :

Sophie Wilmès, interim Prime Minister



Sophie Wilmès, of the Reform Movement (liberal), was appointed Prime Minister by the king of the Belgians Philippe on 27th October in replacement of Charles Michel, who will become President of the European Council on 1st December. Sophie Wilmès who is 44, previously the Budget Minister is the first woman to lead a federal government in Belgium. She is taking the leadership of a current affairs government in expectation of the formation of a coalition after the general elections on 26th May last... [Read more](#)

Finland :

Visit by Ursula von der Leyen



On 24th October the President elect of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen was hosted in Helsinki by Finnish Prime Minister, Antti Rinne, whose country is presiding over the Council of the Union until 31st December. They discussed the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 and the priorities of the Finnish Presidency of the Council. Antti Rinne declared that he wanted to devote at least 25% of the European budget to the fight to counter climate change and received the support of Ursula von der Leyen... [Read more](#)

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France :

Trip to the overseas territories in the Indian Ocean



From 22nd to 25th October Emmanuel Macron travelled to the French overseas territories in the Indian Ocean. In Mayotte he addressed the issue of the fight to counter illegal immigration particular via the deployment of maritime missions and cooperation with Comoros. On the Glorios Islands he recalled France's commitment to biodiversity, at both national and international level. During an economic forum in Réunion he insisted on the importance of the Indo-Pacific area in terms of security, ecology and the economy... [Read more](#)

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Thierry Breton, the new French candidate for the post of Commissioner



On 24th October following the rejection of Sylvie Goulard's candidature by the European Parliament, French President Emmanuel Macron put forward Thierry Breton, a company executive and former minister as candidate for the position of Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Defence, Space and Digital Affairs... [Read more](#)

Entry into force of the related right directive



The European directive on copyright and related rights entered into force in France on 24th October. Adopted in the spring of 2019, it provides creators and publishers with the right to ask for remuneration for the use of their work and content used by the digital platforms. France transposed the directive into its legislation on 23rd July. Its implementation is being challenged by Google, which press editors are going to sue in court. The EU's Member States have until June 2021 to transpose the directive... [Read more](#)

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Romania :

Presentation of Ludovic Orban's government



On 24th October the new Romanian Prime Minister, Ludovic Orban of the Romanian National Party (PNL) presented the list of his government as well as his programme. The proposal will be submitted to a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate on 4th November... [Read more](#)

UK :

Towards new elections?



On 22nd October the House of Commons approved the Brexit agreement concluded with the EU on 17th October, but it rejected its accelerated assessment desired by Boris Johnson's government, which forced the latter to ask for the postponement of Brexit. The Prime Minister withdrew his draft bill and asked for the organisation of a snap election. A first motion on this was rejected on 28th October by the House of Commons. Another is being submitted to vote on 29th for an election on 9th or 12th of December... [Read more](#)

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Brexit delayed until 31st January



On 28th October the Council decided to delay the UK's exit from the Union until 31st January 2020, or earlier if the British Parliament ratifies the withdrawal agreement. The request for a delay was sent on 19th October by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was forced to do this in virtue of the Benn Act dated September 2019 passed to avoid a no-deal Brexit. In a letter addressed in return to the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, Mr Johnson accepted the delay but expressed his disagreement and asked the EU to rule out any further extension after 31st January... [Read more](#)

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NATO :

Minister prepare the December summit



NATO member Defence Ministers, who met in Brussels on 24th and 25th October prepared the meeting of the heads of State and government which will take place in London on 3rd and 4th December for the 70 year anniversary of the Atlantic Alliance. They discussed the situation in Syria after the invasion by Turkey, a member, burden sharing within the Alliance, as well as its missions and its commitment to Afghanistan... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Reduction in public debt



On 22nd October Eurostat published its most recent public debt figures. According to the Union's statistics office, the public debt/GDP ratio lay at 86.4% in the euro zone at the end of the second quarter 2019,

against 86.5% at the end of the first quarter. In the EU the ratio declined from 81.1% to 80.5%... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

European support to the development policy



Cooperation and development is one of the best respected European policies says the Commission after the publication on 23rd October of a Eurobarometer survey on the issue. 86% of those interviewed deemed it is important to help developing countries and 70% think that the fight to counter poverty in developing countries should be an EU priority... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Viennale 2019



The oldest and most famous film event in the German speaking world, the international film festival of Vienna is offering the screening of a selection of Austrian and international films in the cinemas of the historic centre of the Austrian capital until 6th November... [Read more](#)

Women artists in Berlin



The old National Gallery Berlin is celebrating the centenary of women's entry into the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin, a major stage in the history of women's rights in Germany. The exhibition will be celebrating this anniversary until 8th March 2020 presenting more than 60 pre-1919 paintings and sculptures... [Read more](#)

Exhibition El Greco at the Grand Palace



The Grand Palais in Paris is running a retrospective of El Greco for the first time in France until 10th February. El Greco was the last Renaissance Grand Master and the first of the Golden Age... [Read more](#)

Self-portraits by Lucian Freud in London



The Royal Academy of Arts in London is showing Lucian Freud's self-portraits for the very first time until 26th January 2020. Freud is considered to be one of the greatest British painters of the 20th century. Bringing together 50 works painted over a period of 70 years, this exhibition provides an opportunity to discover this facet of the artist's work as he confronts the issue of his own image and that of ageing...

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Agenda :



1st November

Frankfurt/Main

Entry into office of new ECB president, Christine Lagarde

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