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A new European pact on immigration and asylum in response to the "migration challenge"

Author: Catherine Wihtol de Wenden



Europe is one of the leading destinations in the world in terms of migratory flows, but Europeans find it difficult to acknowledge that Europe is a land of immigration. Whilst the phenomenon is structural, the European Union must relinquish unanimity and establish a global policy including, amongst others, a harmonised asylum system and support to towns offering hospitality, the opening up of labour immigration and an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of external border control policies in the Mediterranean.

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Front page! :

A new European Commission - to what purpose?



If the European Parliament approves the new Commission on 27th November, the latter chaired by Ursula von der Leyen, will enter into office on 1st December. It must not content itself with managing the acquis, but conversely imagine the future and make this possible by striking out on into new innovative areas, writes Jean-Dominique

Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Boris Johnson's Conservatives running favourite in the 12th December snap election



The UK's outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson hopes that the general election on 12th December - taking place two years ahead of time - will help close the Brexit serial drama. His Conservative Party is due to win 42% of the vote ahead of Labour (28%) and the LibDems (13%). Nigel Farage's Brexit Party is due to win 5% of the vote just like the Scottish National Party

(SNP)... [Read more](#)

Klaus Iohannis, re-elected President of the Republic of Romania



Klaus Iohannis was re-elected President of the Republic of Romania on 24th November. He won 65.88% of the vote against Viorica Dancila in the second round of voting. Turnout totalled 54.46%... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Opinion on euro zone draft budgets



On 20th November the Commission presented its opinions of the draft 2020 budgets of the countries in the euro zone. It warned Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland against the risk of non-alignment with the Stability and Growth Pact. For the first time since 2002 no member of the zone has been the subject of an excessive deficit procedure. The Commission also published Greece's fourth post-programme monitoring report, in which it notes that the draft 2020 budget fulfils the agreed goal of a primary surplus of 3.5% of the GDP with damaging the country's growth... [Read more](#)

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200 million € to promote European agri-food products



On 19th November the Commission announced plans to devote 200.9 million € in 2020 for the promotion of European agri-food products in and outside of the EU. This decision is part of the framework to promote the EU which aims to open up new outlets for European farmers and more widely the agri-food industry, as well as the development of their existing activities. 118 million € will be used in campaigns that target certain external markets, such as Canada, China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico and the USA... [Read more](#)

Draft agreement on the assessment of conformity with the USA



On 22nd November the Commission published a draft EU-USA agreement on the conformity assessment of industrial goods. The proposal aims to facilitate trade and reduce costs, by enabling export companies to take advantage of the certification of their product by their country of origin only. It focuses in particular on machinery and electric and electronic equipment. The discussion for an agreement is one of the decisions taken by the President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and American President D. Trump in July 2018... [Read more](#)

Council :

Trade Council Conclusions



On 21st November the Council met to discuss the progress made in negotiations within the WTO, as well as progress made in its reform process. The Commission laid out its most recent initiatives regarding the Organisation's modernisation and noted the preparations made in view of the 12th ministerial WTO conference that will take place in June 2020 in Kazakhstan. Moreover the Council reviewed EU-US trade relations as well as recent developments in US trade relations with Japan and China, given their impact on European and world economic interests. Finally, the Council debated the implementation of trade agreements and assessed EU-China trade relations... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council



Youth and culture ministers, who met on 21st and 22nd November said they wanted to overcome the digital gap among young Europeans, and adapt the education and training of youth workers, according to the specific conditions and requirements of each Member State. They debated the climate and how it might be integrated into youth work. They took resolutions regarding the cultural dimension of sustainable development and adopted conclusions to counter corruption in sport... [Read more](#)

General Affairs Council Conclusions



The General Affairs Council met on 19th November and made its annual assessment of the rule of law. In a text that was rejected by Hungary and Poland it encouraged wider debate in the Union and suggests that new annual reports by the Commission on the rule of law be used in the Council's observations. Ministers also discussed enlargement, the next multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027, the final stage of negotiations of which are to start at the end of November, the next European Council and the protection of the oceans and the seas... [Read more](#)

Agreement for a civilian mission in Central African Republic



On 21st November the Council came to agreement for a new civilian mission in Central African Republic as part of the CSDP. The mission plans to support the Central African security forces in their reforms, and to provide strategic advice to the authorities. It will coordinate closely with the EU's military training mission (EUTM RCA), the UN mission (MINUSCA) as well as the international community. Central African Republic is to become the third country after Mali and Somalia to enjoy the support of the EU's CSDP missions, both military and civilian... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the EU Military Committee



On 20th and 21st November the chiefs of defence of Europe's armies met as part of the EU Military Committee (EUMC). They debated military operations and missions in the Union - i.e. EUNAVFOR, Sophia and Atalanta, which are part of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). They also discussed battle groups and the EU military capabilities with a review of EU-NATO cooperation as well as the security situation in Ukraine. Finally they discussed the most recent developments in terms of digitisation and artificial intelligence and their potential impact on military operations... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Development Council



Ministers responsible for development met on 25th November to discuss the upcoming World Refugee Forum that will take place on 17th and 18th December in Geneva and were informed of the state of progress in negotiations over the future EU-ACP partnership, in view in the long term of a Cotonou Agreement in 2020. They also exchanged views regarding the future financial architecture for sustainable development following the publication of the report by the Wise Persons Group which aims to put forward measures to maximise the added value of the European financial architecture for development. The EIB and EBRD Presidents also expressed their opinions. Finally the Finnish Presidency said it hoped to adopt the Council's final conclusions on the report by December 2019... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

European Economic Area Council



The Council of the European Economic Area (EEA) which met on 19th November, stressed the links created between the societies and the economies of the Member States - the 28, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein - and insisted on the importance of EU-EFTA relations - European Free-Trade Association - Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. The Council also stressed the importance of protecting the EEA agreement, as well as the functioning of the Single Market post-Brexit. Discussions focused on the development of the Single Market, the environment and the climate, energy, agriculture and finance, as well as the European programmes in the EEA-EFTA countries... [Read more](#)

EU-Western Balkan Forum on Justice and Security



The annual EU-Western Balkan ministerial forum on justice and internal affairs took place in Skopje on 18th and 19th November. The ministers of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia re-iterated their commitment to continue reforms in terms of the rule of law and the fight to counter corruption; they stepped up cooperation with European agencies. Cooperation in terms of migration, the fight to counter trafficking and terrorism were also central to discussions... [Read more](#)

Involvement of women in security operations



EU and UN representatives took part on 21st November in Brussels in a workshop on the role of women in peace and crisis management operations. Work highlighted the need to improve certain aspects such as recruitment policies and the organisational culture of missions... [Read more](#)

ECB :

Future of the euro zone



In a speech delivered to the European Banking Congress in Frankfurt on 22nd November the President of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde confirmed that the ECB would continue its quantitative easing policy to support economic activity. She insisted on the need to support this action via a budgetary and investment policy in the Member States. It also called for an agreement on the deepening of the euro zone finding a balance between the risk sharing and prevention.

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Germany :

Meeting between Angela Merkel and Andrej Plenkovic



During a visit to Zagreb on 20th November German Chancellor Angela Merkel met Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic. The two leaders discussed European issues, notably Brexit, migration, the European budget, the EU-Turkey agreement and the Western Balkan countries' EU membership outlook. Croatia, then Germany will ensure the six-monthly presidency of the Council in 2020. The Chancellor stressed the importance of close collaboration between the two countries... [Read more](#)

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Greece :

Closure of three centres on Samos, Lesbos and Chios announced



On 20th November the Greek government announced the closure of the overcrowded camps on Lesbos, Samos and Chios. A plan to relocate more than 20,000 migrants was announced for the end of the year... [Read more](#)

Poland :

Visit by the Polish President



On 21st November the Polish President Andrzej Duda travelled to Vilnius on a two day visit on the invitation of his Lithuanian counterpart Gitanas Nauseda. Their meeting mainly focused on regional security and defence issues. They discussed the upkeep of sanctions against Russia, joint investments in infrastructures, energy cooperation and the next EU budget. On 22nd November they took part in the burial ceremony of the participants in the 1863-1864 anti-Russian rebellion in the kingdom of Poland and present day Lithuania, which was then part of the Russian Empire... [Read more](#)

UK :

Electoral Manifestos



As the British snap election draws closer on 12th December, Conservative, Labour and LibDems have published their manifestos. The Conservatives want to take the country out of the Union in January and launch an investment policy. Labour is putting forward a renegotiation of Brexit and a referendum, as well as an investment and redistribution policy. The LibDems want to stop Brexit and "build a fairer economy". The three parties are promising an ambitious programme for the environment and the climate... [Read more](#)

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Serbia :

Agreement on Border Management

The EU and Serbia signed an agreement on 19th November on cooperation with the European border and coast guard agency, which



enables Frontex to provide assistance to Serbia in terms of managing its borders, undertake joint operations, deploy teams to the border regions of Serbia with the EU. Parliament still has to approve this agreement... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Council of Europe report on violence against women in France



In a report published on 19th November regarding the implementation of the Council of Europe's Convention on the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the Council of Europe welcomes the work undertaken by the French authorities. But it stresses that there are "some major lacuna" notably in the French criminal legislation. It recommends measures to strengthen the protection of victims, for example by increasing the number of specialised refuges... [Read more](#)

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NATO :

Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting



NATO's Foreign Affairs Ministers met on 20th November in Brussels, to discuss the various challenges being made to security in view of the NATO heads of State and government meeting on 3rd and 4th December in London. They decided to make space an operational domain. They also discussed energy security, NATO's role in the anti-terrorist fight, and adopted a policy that sets standards in the prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse. After French President, Emmanuel Macron's observation regarding the Alliance's lack of strategy, German Minister Heiko Maas suggested the constitution of an experts' group to reflect on this issue... [Read more](#)

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OECD :

World economic forecasts down



The OECD's economic outlook published on 21st November forecasts the weakest world growth since the financial crisis, at 2.9% this year and 2.9%-3% in 2020, against 3.5% in 2018. The organisation stresses that weak trade and investment are threatening long term growth... [Read more](#)

IMF :

Assessment of the profitability of euro zone banks



In a study on the profitability of euro zone banks published on 22nd November the IMF deemed that even in a period of strong economic recovery some euro zone banks would continue to struggle. It therefore advises a strategy to reduce non-performant loans together with a specific review of the banks' economic model to increase their profitability long term... [Read more](#)

Reports on the financial sector in Malta



The IMF analysed the situation of the financial sector in Malta in reports published on 21st and 22nd November. They notably assessed the risk of money laundering and the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), the banks' capacity for recovery and the mitigation of failure, as well as banking supervision. In three cases the IMF stresses the progress made since Malta joined the EU but encourages the local authorities to introduce more measures to reduce risks. It submitted recommendations for an improved functioning of the financial services... [Read more](#)

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Eurobarometer :

Europeans deem that they benefit from international trade

According to a Eurobarometer survey published on 20th November 60% of Europe's citizens deem that they benefit personally from international trade, ie 16 points more than ten years ago. 71% of those interviewed believe that the EU defends their country's best trade



interests rather than if the latter acted alone... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Opening of Christmas Markets



After Strasbourg and Krakow on 22nd November, Cologne inaugurated its Christmas Market on 25th November. This winter tradition has been taken up in many towns of Europe, for example in Brussels and Valencia as of 29th November and Prague as of the 30th... [Read more](#)

Leonardo and the Litta Madonna



more

The exhibition "Leonardo and the Litta Madonna" is running until 20th February 2020 at the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan. The latter notably marks the return to Italy for the first time in 30 years of one of the most famous pieces of work of the State Hermitage Museum... [Read more](#)

Antigone and Oedipus in a new light



Contemporary British artist Tacita Dean looks at the Sophocles' myths of Antigone and Oedipus in a new light until 23rd February 2020 at the Glyptotek in Copenhagen, via cinematographic installations... [Read more](#)

Troy: myth and reality



Until 8th March 2020 the exhibition "Troy: myth and reality" at the British Museum of London is showing ancient objects found in the legendary city of Troy... [Read more](#)

Christian Boltanski: faire son temps



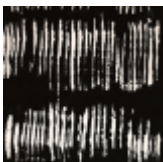
Until 16th March 2020 the exhibition "Faire son Temps" by Christian Boltanski is running at the Pompidou Centre in Paris. It is an occasion to rediscover the career path of the French artist since his last exhibition 35 years ago... [Read more](#)

Carlos Amoraes at the Stedelijk Museum



Until 17th May 2020 the exhibition "The Factory" by contemporary Mexican artist Carlos Amoraes is running at the Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam. It is the first retrospective of the artist in Europe who has been presenting his work since 1990... [Read more](#)

Soulages in Montpellier



The Fabre Museum of Montpellier is celebrating the 100 years of Pierre Soulages from 27th November to 19th January 2020 with an exhibition that shows his work in a more "intimate, subjective" light... [Read more](#)

Agenda :

25 25th-28th November 2019
Strasbourg

Nov

Plenary Session European Parliament

27

Nov

27th and 28th November 2019

Sevilla

Ministerial Conference of the European Space Agency

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Nov

28th-29th November 2019

Brussels

Competitiveness Council

1

Dec

1st December 2019

Brussels

Entry into office of the new President of the European Council, Charles Michel

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Dec

2nd-3rd December 2019

Brussels

Justice and Internal Affairs Council

Brussels

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

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Zélie Barbet, Camille Boulat, Myriam Benallaoua
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Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin

Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

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