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## The State of the Transatlantic Relationship in the Trump Era

Author: Anna Dimitrova



On February 3, the Iowa caucus opened the U.S. election year. A series of elections will run until November 3, when Americans will be called to the polls to choose the 46th president. On the eve of the Munich Security Conference (February 14-16), the Democratic primaries invite us to reflect on the relationship between Europe and the United States. 2020 will be a decisive year on both sides of the Atlantic.

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#### Foundation :

##### Meeting with Christine Lagarde



The President of the European Central Bank (ECB), Christine Lagarde, was hosted by the Foundation on 3 February. She spoke with Jean-Dominique Giuliani about European issues and the future of ECB policy... [Read more](#)

##### Competition Policy and Industrial Policy: for a reform of European law



The failures of certain merger projects of the Alstom/Siemens type call into question the inadequacy, or even obsolescence, of European competition law and its place in relation to other public policy objectives. Should a rebalancing not be carried out between competition policy and industrial policy so that the objectives of the latter can be deployed? Bruno Deffains, Olivier d'Ormesson and Thomas Perroud propose several avenues for reform... [Read more](#)

## Commission :

### Toolkit for 5G network security



On 29 January, the Commission presented the EU toolkit to reduce the risks associated with the deployment of 5G. The measures concern regulation, certification, trade defence, competition, public procurement procedures and funding programmes. The Commission calls on Member States to strengthen their security requirements by 30 April, in particular to assess profiles and restrict access to high-risk suppliers, while putting in place strategies to ensure supplier diversification... [Read more](#)

### Guidelines on the negotiations with the UK



On 3 February, Michel Barnier, the Union's chief negotiator, presented his proposed guidelines for the negotiations on the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom. The document, to be adopted by the Council, covers mainly economic and trade issues, police and judicial cooperation, foreign and security policy and the governance framework of the relationship... [Read more](#)

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### 2020 Work Programme



On 29 January the Commission adopted its work programme for 2020, reflecting the six priorities of its President, Ursula von der Leyen. It will be proposing legislation for carbon neutrality by 2050, a new European strategy for digital data, artificial intelligence and industry. It will also propose a framework to guarantee a European minimum wage and develop new strategies for cooperation with Africa and the Western Balkans. There will be new deal on migration and asylum, as well as a strategy on security union. Finally, a Conference on the Future of Europe will be launched... [Read more](#)

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### Fine of 14.3 million € for NBC Universal for anti-trust activities



On 30 January, the Commission imposed fines on several companies belonging to Comcast Corporation for anti-competitive practices, including €14.3 million on the audiovisual group NBC Universal, for restricting the sale by traders of licensed merchandising products within the European Economic Area in territories and to customers other than those allocated to them. The company was granted a 30 % reduction of its fine for co-operating with the Commission, in particular by providing additional evidence... [Read more](#)

## Parliament :

### Resolution for the adoption of a universal charger standard



MEPs called on the Commission on 30 January to present stronger measures on universal chargers, usable for all portable devices by July. MEPs underline the urgency of reducing electronic waste, which in 2016 will amount to an average of 16.6 kg per European inhabitant. They call on the Commission to consider legislative initiatives to increase the collection and recycling of chargers across the EU, as well as strategies to decouple the purchase of chargers from the purchase of new devices... [Read more](#)

### Resolution for ambitious measures in terms of wage equality



MEPs called on the Commission on 30 January to present an ambitious gender equality strategy, including binding measures on pay transparency and the pay gap, and applying to all sectors of activity. In order to address the root causes, they call on Member States to invest in early childhood education and care services and family-friendly working arrangements. They also call for the implementation of adequate measures for older women, for whom the pay gap is twice as high after retirement... [Read more](#)

### Approval of the withdrawal agreement of the UK from the EU



MEPs approved the agreement on the UK's withdrawal from the European Union on 29 January by 621 votes to 49 with 13 abstentions. The agreement was then formally adopted by the Council in a written procedure on 30 January. This was the last step before Brexit, which took place on 31 January at midnight Brussels time... [Read more](#)

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## Council :

### Conclusions of the General Affairs Council



Ministers meeting on 28 January discussed the Commission's proposals for the organisation of the Conference on the Future of Europe to be launched this year and concluded in 2022. They stressed the importance of putting citizens and the issues affecting them at the heart of the work, while ensuring a balanced representation of the three European institutions and involving national parliaments. They recalled that the implementation of the Strategic Programme 2019-2024 should be a priority. In addition, the Croatian Presidency of the Council presented its priorities for the coming months... [Read more](#)

### Ukraine: European sanctions extended to 7 other people



On 28 January, the Council added 7 persons to the list of persons subject to restrictive measures because of the threat they pose to the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. These additions follow the organisation last September of Russian local elections in Ukraine, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the illegally annexed city of Sevastopol. 177 individuals are now on the list, and 44 entities have had their assets frozen by the Union as part of this sanctions regime... [Read more](#)

## Diplomacy :

### Increase in European exports to Japan



1 February marks the first anniversary of the entry into force of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement. European exports to Japan increased by 6.6% in the first 10 months after its implementation, compared to 2018. Japanese exports to the EU increased by 6.3% between 2018 and 2019... [Read more](#)

### EU-Ukraine Council Association



The EU-Ukraine Association Council meeting on 28 January reviewed the implementation of the Association Agreement, reiterating the shared desire to strengthen political and economic cooperation and welcoming the positive impact of the visa-free regime for Ukrainians. Particular attention was paid to political reform and rule of law issues. In addition, the Council took stock of the situation in Eastern Ukraine and the implementation of the Minsk Agreement, also discussing the non-recognition of Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimea and the city of Sevastopol... [Read more](#)

### European Mission in the Hormuz Strait



The European surveillance mission in the Strait of Hormuz (Emasoh) has been operational since 30 January. The French frigate Courbet has been deployed to the area and will be joined in mid-February by the Dutch frigate De Ruyter, followed by a Danish frigate in September. The tactical staff, composed of French, Belgian, Danish and Dutch officers, is based at the French base in Abu Dhabi... [Read more](#)

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## Court of Justice :

### The Court declares itself incompetent regarding the border dispute between Croatia and Slovenia



The Union's Court of Justice declared itself incompetent on 31 January to rule on the border dispute between Croatia and Slovenia. The judges explain that the delimitation of the border between the two former States of the former Yugoslavia has already been the subject of international arbitration and that it is not an integral part of Union law. They call on both countries to work loyally towards a final legal solution. Croatia refuses to recognise the arbitration because of irregularities in the procedure... [Read more](#)

## EIB :

### Record number of operations in 2019



Financing provided by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund increased by 13% in 2019 compared to 2018 to reach €72.22 billion. The number of financing operations was

the highest ever in one year: 1,095, an increase of 28%. 31% of the financing was devoted to the climate, noted its Chairman Werner Hoyer during the submission of the annual report on 30 January... [Read more](#)

## European Agencies :

### Airbus concludes an agreement with the authorities of three countries



The European aircraft manufacturer Airbus announced on 28 January that it had reached an agreement in principle with the US, UK and French authorities, which were conducting anti-corruption investigations against the company. In practice, these agreements with the National Financial Prosecutor's Office (PNF) in France, the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) in the United Kingdom, and the Department of Justice (DoJ) in the United States put an end to the proceedings. Airbus disbursed €3.6 billion on 31 January to complete these three anti-corruption investigations... [Read more](#)

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## Germany :

### Mario Draghi decorated with the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany



Former European Central Bank President Mario Draghi was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on 31 January. This is the country's highest distinction. He stressed that his monetary policy from 2012 to 2019 was based on "a deeply rooted respect for the law, the rules and his mandate"... [Read more](#)

## Austria :

### Visit by Sebastian Kurz to Germany



Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz was hosted by his German counterpart Angela Merkel in Berlin on 3 February. Among other things, they discussed climate protection, the EU's next multiannual budget and a possible tax reform at European level... [Read more](#)

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## France :

### Letter from Emmanuel Macron to the British



On 1 February, French President Emmanuel Macron published a letter to "British friends", underlining his sadness at Brexit, as well as his hope to strengthen the friendship between France and the United Kingdom. The awarding of the Legion of Honour to the City of London was also announced for June, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of General de Gaulle's Appeal of 18 June... [Read more](#)

### Trip to Poland



On a state visit to Poland on 3 and 4 February, French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed in Warsaw a "turning point" in relations with Poland. "I hope that this visit, our exchanges, will mark a real turning point in the role we can play together for the Europe of tomorrow", he told the press alongside his Polish counterpart Andrzej Duda. They discussed defence issues in particular... [Read more](#)

## Ireland :

### Pre-electoral poll



According to two polls published on 2 and 3 February, less than a week before the snap election on 8 February, the Fine Gael of outgoing Prime Minister Leo Varadkar is due to come in third place with 20-21% of the vote. He is expected to be edged out by the Fianna Fail led by Michael Martin, with 23-24% of the vote, and by the left-wing Sinn Fein nationalists led by Mary Lou McDonald, with 24-25% of the vote... [Read more](#)

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## Portugal :

### Meeting of the Friends of Cohesion

On 1 February, Friends of Cohesion, an informal group of 17 Member States (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Portugal,



Spain, Italy and Romania) wishing to maintain the current shape of cohesion policy, met in Beja, Portugal. In particular, they discussed key issues concerning the Union's next multi-annual budget, including its size and each country's priorities... [Read more](#)

## UK :

### Official withdrawal of the UK



The United Kingdom officially left the Union on 31 January. The country is no longer represented in the European institutions but will continue to follow EU rules for a transitional period until 31 December, during which time London and the EU will negotiate the terms of their future relationship. Prime Minister Boris Johnson called on his compatriots to seize an "opportunity" and "unleash the potential" of their country. On 3 February, he assured that the UK would not compete "unfairly" with the European Union, but rejected the idea of aligning with European rules... [Read more](#)

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### Letter from the Scottish First Minister



As the United Kingdom exited the European Union on 31 January, Scottish Prime Minister Nicola Sturgeon, published a "Letter for Europe" in 10 languages. She says that the Scots want to remain at the heart of Europe and that "the best option for Scotland is to be an independent country, within the Union". It calls on European citizens to remain in solidarity with the people of Scotland... [Read more](#)

## Kosovo :

### Albin Kurti is Kosovo's new Prime Minister



Albin Kurti, founder of the left-wing nationalist party Vetevendosje (Self-Determination), became Prime Minister of Kosovo on 3 February. He was sworn in as Prime Minister after a coalition agreement with the Democratic League of Kosovo, ending four months of negotiations following the October 2019 parliamentary elections... [Read more](#)

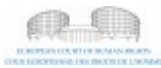
## ECHR :

### France condemned for the over population of its prisons



In a judgment delivered on 30 January, the ECHR condemned France for violating the right to an effective remedy for detainees and the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment. It calls on the authorities to put an end to the problem of overcrowding in prisons and degrading conditions of detention. It also notes that the occupancy rates in the prisons concerned reveal the existence of a structural problem and recommends that France adopt general measures to remedy this... [Read more](#)

### Annual activity report by the ECHR 2019



A quarter of the applications currently pending before the European Court of Human Rights have been filed by Russians, the President of the ECHR, Linos-Alexandre Sicilianos, announced in his annual report published on 29 January. Of the nearly 60,000 cases pending before the ECHR, 25% concern Russia, far ahead of Turkey (15.5%), Ukraine (14.8%) and Romania (13.2%). The ECHR can, however, be seized by some 820 million citizens of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe... [Read more](#)

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## IMF :

### Future budgetary rules of the euro zone



In a speech in Brussels on 28 January, the Director of the Public Finance Department of the International Monetary Fund, Vitor Gaspar, spoke about the future of fiscal rules in the euro area. He stressed the three fundamental priorities to be considered in the architecture of the euro area: the completion of the banking union, the single European integrated capital market and central fiscal capacity... [Read more](#)

## Eurostat :

### Increase in GDP in the fourth quarter 2019



According to a preliminary flash estimate from Eurostat published on 31 January, GDP rose by 0.1% in the fourth quarter of 2019 in both the European Union and the euro area. According to a first estimate of the annual growth rate for 2019, based on quarterly data, GDP grew by 1.4% in the EU and by 1.2% in the euro area... [Read more](#)

### International Services Trade Surplus



According to a Eurostat report published on 28 January, the EU's surplus in international trade in services, which had fallen between 2013 and 2016, is set to rise to more than €186 billion in 2018. This can be explained by a 3% increase in exports of services to the rest of the world between 2017 and 2018 and a 0.6% drop in imports over the same period. With exports to the United States worth €257.4 billion in 2018, the US remains the EU's main partner and accounts for 27% of total EU exports... [Read more](#)

### Increase in inflation in January in the euro zone



Euro-zone annual inflation is estimated at 1.4% in January, down from 1.3% in December according to a flash estimate issued by Eurostat on 31 January. Food, alcohol & tobacco and energy are the sectors with the highest rates.. [Read more](#)

### Reduction in unemployment



The unemployment rate in the European Union stood at 6.2% in December 2019 compared with 6.6%, the previous year, i.e. the lowest rate in the Union since January 2000. The euro-zone unemployment rate was 7.4% in December 2019 compared to 7.8% in December 2018, according to figures published by Eurostat on 30 January... [Read more](#)

## Eurobarometer :

### Europeans and Cybersecurity



According to a Eurobarometer report published on 29 January, Europeans are more aware of cybercrime issues, with 52% of respondents feeling fairly or very well informed, compared to 46% in 2017. However, more and more Europeans no longer feel safe on the web and are concerned about the misuse of their personal data. In 2018, 59% considered that they could protect themselves from cybercrime, compared to 71% in 2017. More than 1/3 of respondents have received fraudulent emails or calls asking for their personal information in the last 3 years... [Read more](#)

## Studies/Reports :

### 2018 Annual Report on the Erasmus+ programme



More than 850,000 students, apprentices, teachers and youth workers will have benefited from the Erasmus+ programme in 2018, according to the annual report on the exchange programme published by the Commission on 28 January. This brings the total since 1987 to more than 10 million people. While €14.7 billion is dedicated to Erasmus+ for the period 2014-2020, the Commission proposes to increase the funding to €30 billion to continue to make it more inclusive and international, in the framework of the next multi-annual budget (2021-2027)... [Read more](#)

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### Report on tax policies in the EU 2020



In its Report on Tax Policies in the European Union 2020, published on 31 January, the Commission sets out how Member States' tax systems contribute to promoting investment and employment, combating tax fraud and evasion and reducing income inequalities for greater social equity. The report also includes an overview of recent tax reforms at EU level and in the Member States... [Read more](#)

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### More Europeans living and working in another Member State

According to the Commission's 2019 annual report on worker mobility



in the EU published on 30 January, 17.6 million EU citizens were living outside their country of origin in 2018, including 12.9 million of working age, or 4.2% of the EU population. This is an increase of 3.6% compared to the previous year. Half of the individuals who took part in intra-EU mobility resided in Germany or the United Kingdom in 2018. Lithuania, Romania, Croatia, Latvia and Estonia were proportionally the main countries of departure... [Read more](#)

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**Culture :**

**Claudia Andujar, the Yanomami Struggle**



The Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art in Paris is showing the largest exhibition ever devoted to the work of Brazilian photographer Claudia Andujar until May 10. Since the 1970s, the artist has dedicated her life to photography and to the defense of the Yanomami, one of the most important Amerindian people in the Brazilian Amazon... [Read more](#)

**International Air Fair in Rotterdam**



The former workshops of the Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam, a UNESCO World Heritage site, are hosting the international art fair "Art Rotterdam" from 6 to 9 February. It presents the work of young international galleries, vectors of innovation in the field of contemporary art... [Read more](#)

**Peter Lindbergh in Düsseldorf**



From 5 February to 1 June, the Kunstpalast Museum in Düsseldorf is paying tribute to the photographer Peter Lindbergh, who died in September 2019. With more than 140 of Lindbergh's works, the exhibition presents many unusual stories about the artist's career... [Read more](#)

**Wolfgang Tillmans in Brussels**



The WIELS centre for contemporary art in Brussels is hosting the first monographic exhibition in Belgium of the German artist Wolfgang Tillmans until 24 May. Installed on two floors, the exhibition "Today Is the First Day" presents a selective overview of the artist's work over the past 30 years and reveals the latest developments in his practice through new photographs, video and sound works... [Read more](#)

**Agenda :**



**3rd and 4th February 2020**  
Zagreb  
Informal Meeting of Competition Ministers (Research)



**8th February 2020**  
Ireland  
General Elections

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