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Challenges facing the CAP over the next decade

Author: Bernard Bourget



The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will enter the next decade relieved by Brexit of its fiercest opponent but weakened by the external pressures. It will have to take full account of the environmental and climate challenges and improve the management of climate, health and market risks, and strengthen the negotiating capacity of producer organisations with their powerful buyers in the food industry and supermarkets. It will also have to be more coordinated with other European policies, particularly trade

policy. This analysis comes ahead of the 2020 Paris Agricultural Fair that opens on 22nd February.

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Elections :

Can Robert Fico's Direction-Social Democracy stay in office?



Slovaks are being called to the polls on 29 February to renew the 150-member parliament, in an atmosphere of protest against the political class accused of corruption and threats to vote in favour of the nationalists. According to the latest survey, the Social Democracy Directorate (SMER-SD), the party of former Prime Minister Robert Fico and outgoing Prime Minister Peter Pellegrin, would come out ahead with 17% of the vote. The Party of Ordinary People and Independent Personalities-New Majority (OL'aNO-NOVA) are due to win 13.3%, the right-wing extremists of the People's Party-Our Slovakia (LSNS), 12.2%, and Progressive Slovakia/Civil Democracy Assembly, 9.3%... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

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

The failures of certain merger projects such as Alstom/Siemens 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? On behalf of the Foundation, Bruno Deffains, Olivier d'Ormesson and Thomas Perroud propose several avenues for reform... [Read more](#)

European Council :

Informal Meeting EU-Western Balkans



On 16 February in Brussels, European Council President Charles Michel, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic and High Representative Josep Borrell met representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia in Brussels to prepare for the EU-Western Balkans Summit in May in Zagreb. A few days after the publication of the Commission's proposals to reform the enlargement process, Charles Michel stressed the need to deepen strategic cooperation on issues such as climate change, multilateralism and foreign policy... [Read more](#)

Participation of Charles Michel in the African Union Summit



Present at the African Union Summit on 9 and 10 February, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, stressed the importance of rethinking relations between Europe and Africa, in particular with regard to issues such as technology, climate and digital transformations... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Low growth forecasts



On 13 February the Commission presented its winter economic forecasts for 2020 and 2021. It forecasts stable growth for the euro area, at 1.2% in 2020 and 2021, and slightly lower growth for the Union, at 1.4% in 2020 and 2021, compared with 1.5% in 2019. Trade tensions between the United States and China, unrest in Latin America, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and uncertainty about the future relationship with the United Kingdom explain the revision of the forecasts. However, the Commission notes that the European economy could benefit from more expansionary fiscal policies and the positive spill-over effects of more favourable financing conditions in the euro area... [Read more](#)

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Negotiations with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP)



On 14 February, the chief negotiators of the Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries agreed on the way forward to continue discussions on an agreement to succeed the Cotonou Agreement, which expires this year. These include general provisions, cooperation modalities, the institutional framework and final provisions... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Debate on the 2021-2027 Budget



On 12 February, during a debate in Parliament's plenary session, a few days before the Extraordinary European Council on 20 February, MEPs stressed the need to find a common position on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) with a view to better addressing challenges such as climate transition, defence or the withdrawal of the UK. Calling for a budget representing 1.3% of the Union's GNP, MEPs insisted on the need for new resources through the creation of mechanisms such as a border adjustment for carbon or a financial transaction tax... [Read more](#)

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Resolution on negotiations with the UK



In a resolution adopted on 12 February, MEPs broadly agreed with the guidelines presented by the Commission for the negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom. They stressed that the agreement should be based on an economic partnership, a partnership on foreign affairs and specific sectoral issues. They specified that their approval would

be subject to a prior agreement on fisheries by June 2020. They also insisted that the UK government should commit to ensuring "dynamic harmonisation" of EU and UK legislation... [Read more](#)

Resolution on artificial intelligence



On 12 February MEPs adopted a resolution addressing several challenges arising from the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automated Decision Making (ADM) technologies, with a focus on consumer protection. They called for a system of risk assessment and a common European approach to help ensure the benefits of these processes across the Union... [Read more](#)

Approval of agreements with Vietnam



On 12 February MEPs approved the EU-Vietnam free trade and investment protection agreements. The trade agreement provides for the elimination of virtually all tariffs between the two sides within 10 years, provided Vietnam complies with the Paris Climate Agreement, and ratifies two laws on the abolition of forced labour and freedom of association... [Read more](#)

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Political Priorities for the ECB



In a resolution adopted on 12 February, Parliament called on the European Central Bank to step up its ecological ambitions and to meet growing financial technological challenges. MEPs, who debated the ECB's priorities with its President Christine Lagarde, called on the institution to continue to increase the overall money supply and to pursue its preparatory efforts to ensure the stability of the Union's financial markets following the UK's withdrawal from the EU... [Read more](#)

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Resolution on gender equality



On 13 February MEPs adopted a resolution setting out its priorities ahead of the next UN Commission on the Status of Women, which will take place 9-20 March in New York, by 463 votes in favour, 108 against and 50 abstentions. They call for greater inclusion of women in the labour market, a reduction in the pay and pension gaps between women and men and more gender-balanced representation at all levels of decision-making. They call on the Council to present a unified Union position on gender equality and to counter all measures that undermine women's rights... [Read more](#)

Council :

Conclusions of the Council on the Coronavirus



The Health Ministers meeting on 13 February called on all Member States to step up their coordination and exchange of information, in cooperation with the Commission and specialised European agencies, so that all necessary measures can be taken to limit the epidemic of the coronavirus, known as COVID-19. They called for cooperation in research to develop a vaccine against the disease... [Read more](#)

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Eurogroup Meeting



On 17 February, the 19 ministers of the Eurogroup discussed the Commission's priorities for economic and monetary union and the Commission's report on its review of the 'six-pack' ('economic governance') and the 'two-pack' ('budgetary surveillance'), as well as the economic forecasts and recommendations for the euro area for 2020. In a meeting of 27, they discussed the draft report on a possible intergovernmental agreement on the financing of the budgetary instrument for convergence and competitiveness... [Read more](#)

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Diplomacy :

Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council



Foreign ministers decided on 17 February to launch a naval, air and satellite operation in the Mediterranean to enforce the arms embargo on Libya and continue to combat the smuggling of migrants, and to train the Libyan coastguard. They discussed strategic priorities in

relations with Africa, examined the situation in the Middle East, Venezuela and the Sahel, and were briefed on the informal EU-Western Balkans meeting held on 16 February. They also received the Indian Foreign Minister to prepare for the EU-India Summit scheduled for 13 March in Brussels... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

New President of the Committee of Regions



The Governor of Central Macedonia in Greece, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, was elected on 12 February as President of the European Committee of the Regions for a two-and-a-half year term. The members of the Committee of the Regions also elected the President of the Regional Government of the Azores in Portugal, Vasco Ilídio Alves Cordeiro, as First Vice-President... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Bundestag vote in favour of Franco-German fighter jet programme



On 12 February, the Bundestag, the lower house of the German Parliament, approved the first research and technology contract of the SCAF (Future Air Combat System) programme for a period of 18 months (Phase 1A). The contract, awarded to Dassault Aviation, is worth €155 million and will be financed equally by France and Germany. The next major stage of the programme will be the integration of Spain. This first contract should lead the manufacturers to a second, even more ambitious contract... [Read more](#)

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Munich Conference on Security



At the Munich Security Conference from 14 to 16 February, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier regretted that the United States rejected "the very idea of an international community" and said that his country "must make a greater contribution to Europe's security, including financially". French President Emmanuel Macron insisted on the need for Europe to build up its own defence capability so as to give itself "credibility vis-à-vis its American partner and therefore the possibility of having freedom of action". He also called for "clear answers" from Germany with a view to "giving a new dynamic to the European adventure"... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Government reshuffle



On 13 February, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson reshuffled his government. The portfolios of Northern Ireland, the Environment and the Economy changed hands, while the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Justice remain in office. Finance Minister Sajid Javid surprised everyone by resigning, and was replaced by Budget Minister Rishi Sunak... [Read more](#)

North Macedonia :

Ratification of NATO membership



The Parliament of Northern Macedonia ratified the NATO accession protocol on 11 February. The 114 parliamentarians present voted in favour, none voted against or abstained. So far, all NATO members have ratified the accession of Northern Macedonia with the exception of Spain... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Report on human trafficking in the Czech Republic



The Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) published a report on 11 February assessing the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, ratified by the Czech Republic in 2017. The report highlights the initiatives taken by the country in this area but calls on the authorities not to make the identification of victims of trafficking and the assistance provided to victims conditional to the opening of criminal proceedings. It calls for greater efforts to identify victims of trafficking for labour exploitation at an early stage, as well as victims among asylum-seekers and persons in administrative detention... [Read more](#)

ECHR :

The Court validates the immediate return of illegal migrants



The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled on 13 February that Spain had not violated the European Convention on Human Rights when it sent back to Morocco two Malian and Ivorian nationals who were trying to cross the fences of Melilla, a Spanish enclave in Morocco. The Court found that the two men had placed themselves in a situation of illegality by deciding not to use existing legal channels for regular access to Spanish territory... [Read more](#)

NATO :

Defence Ministers' Meeting



Meeting on 12 and 13 February, NATO Defence Ministers agreed in principle to an enhanced NATO training mission in Iraq. As a first step, some of the training activities currently being conducted by the global coalition against Daesh will be resumed. They have also begun to reflect on a possible expansion of the Alliance's missions in the Middle East. In addition, they discussed the challenge linked to the development of new Russian missiles and noted the progress made towards fairer burden-sharing within the Alliance... [Read more](#)

OECD :

Analysis of international tax reforms



In a study published on 13 February, the OECD estimates that the proposed taxation of digital activities would have a positive impact on global tax revenues. It noted that the combined effect of the two pillars of the solution under consideration could account for 4% of global corporate tax revenues, or \$100 billion per year. The ongoing work will be presented to the G20 at the next meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors on 22-23 February... [Read more](#)

Ireland has to prepare for economic challenges



In a report published on 13 February, the OECD notes that Ireland needs to be prepared to face pressure on its budget and external risks against the backdrop of Brexit. Despite a growth forecast above 3% for 2020 and 2021, the country faces an ageing population, which could increase public spending. The OECD is advising the country to find new sources of income and to address the shortage of skilled labour. Another important change for the Irish economy might come from the introduction of new international tax rules... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

International Goods Trade Surplus



The European Union recorded a surplus of €23.4 billion in December 2019, compared with +€14.8 billion in December 2018, Eurostat estimates on 14 February. The euro area recorded a surplus of €23.1 billion in trade in goods with the rest of the world in December 2019, compared with +€16.3 billion in December 2018... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Sharp rise in world military spending



According to the annual report of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) published on 14 February, global military spending in 2019 rose by 4% overall, the highest increase in ten years. The two biggest military budgets are the United States (\$685 billion) and China (\$181 billion). US spending increased by \$53.4 billion, representing one seventh of the world defence budget. The United Kingdom is sixth, France seventh and Germany ninth... [Read more](#)

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European Environmental Economic Accounts

On 14 February the Commission published its triennial report on the



implementation of the Regulation on European Environmental Economic Accounts. Environmental accounting, which deals with aspects related to the sustainability of our economic behaviour, helps integrate economic and environmental aspects into the statistics used on production, consumption, investment or financing. In its report, the Commission notes that the majority of Member States systematically provide data on time, but that some countries have difficulties in providing quality data... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Caravaggio and Bernini in Amsterdam



The exhibition "Caravaggio - Bernini, the Baroque in Rome" is on display at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, until 7 June. Nearly 80 masterpieces by the two artists are on show. Paintings by Nicolas Poussin, Ludovico Carrache, Annibale Carrache, Guido Reni and Giovanni Baglione can also be seen... [Read more](#)

The future of Ukrainian Art



On the occasion of the 6th edition of the prize awarded by the PinchukArtCentre in Kyiv, the gallery is presenting until May 1st an exhibition of 24 Ukrainian artists or groups of artists, including those living abroad. The theme is the history of Ukraine and its social and political problems... [Read more](#)

Free women, change the world



From 20 February to 24 May, the BELvue Museum in Brussels is devoting an exhibition to the feminist movement of the 1970s in Belgium and explores their demands and analyses... [Read more](#)

"The Environment is Blue" at the Palais de Tokyo



From 21 February to 17 May, the Palais de Tokyo is devoting an exhibition to German artist Ulla von Brandenburg, entitled "Le Milieu est bleu" (The Environment is Blue). A unique immersive and theatrical experience bringing together sculptures, films and reflections on the notion of ritual... [Read more](#)

Tomas Saraceno at the Palazzo Strozzi



From 22 February to 19 July, the Palazzo Strozzi Foundation in Florence is presenting an exhibition by Tomas Saraceno, a contemporary Argentinian artist who combines art with natural and social sciences... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



18th February 2020
Brussels
Economic and Financial Affairs Council



20th February 2020
Brussels
Extraordinary European Council

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Zélie Barbet, Camille Boulat, Myriam Benallaoua
Editor-in-chief: Eric Maurice
Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin

Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

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