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Europe and Defence: the vital yet fragile Franco-German Couple

Author: Thierry Tardy



The Franco-German rapprochement regarding defence issues is the result of mid-term trends and more economic factors. In addition to the opportunities that Brexit provides, the election of Emmanuel Macron in France has led to a strengthening of the Franco-German relation and a clearer inclusion of it in the European framework than was previously possible. And the German openness to these issues will not be challenged by the new coalition. Mid-term the analysis of limited threats means that both countries agree on the need for a more coherent and better coordinated security response at multilateral level. In this context however France and Germany are

also to be distinguished because of their differences.

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Front page! :

Europe - stronger than it thinks



Jean-Dominique Giuliani believes that Europe has more assets than it believes in the international arena as long as it remains united and defends its interests firmly and convincingly... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Roadmap to deepen Economic and Monetary Union

On 6th December the European Commission put forward a series of proposals to reform the euro zone and notably to create a European Monetary Fund in 2019 that might substitute the IMF in terms of



providing aid to euro zone countries in difficulty. The European Parliament and the Council have now been invited to adopt this proposal mid 2019... [Read more](#)

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For the long term management of migration



On 7th December the Commission put forward a political roadmap in view of coming to an overall agreement by June 2018 on a sustainable migratory policy... [Read more](#)

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Brexit: the UK and the Commission come to a compromise



On 8th December the European Commission recommended the European Council (Article 50) conclude that sufficient progress had been made in the first phase of negotiations in virtue of article 50 with the UK. The agreement concluded focuses on European citizens' rights living in the UK and those of British citizens established in the EU; the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland; the financial conditions of the divorce... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Defence of Trade: new anti-dumping rules



On 5th December the Council concluded an agreement with Ministers for stronger defence tools to counter unfair imports. New rules aiming to take social and environmental dumping on board better and to authorise higher customs duties on imports that are the focus of dumping or subsidies. An assistance service to SMEs will also look after complaints and investigations that are due to take less time to finalise... [Read more](#)

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Agreement on new rules for safer, cleaner cars



On 7th December the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission reached a political agreement to significantly raise the quality level and independence of vehicle type-approval and testing, increase checks of cars that are already on the EU market and strengthen the overall system with European oversight... [Read more](#)

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List of tax havens and digital taxation



On 5th December the Finance Ministers adopted a blacklist of 17 countries that have not respected the agreed standards in terms of good tax practice. Moreover 47 countries committed to remedying the shortfalls in their tax systems and to respect the criteria demanded by the EU. In addition to the blacklist they also agreed on the question of "digital taxation"... [Read more](#)

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Conclusions of the "Justice and Home Affairs" Council



On 7th December the Ministers for Home Affairs and Justice decided to deepen the work of the European Agency for the Operational Management of Large Scale IT Systems within the Area of freedom, security and justice (eu-LISA). The future regulations aim to strengthen the cross-border management and community in terms of justice and security as well as providing better management of migratory flows in the Schengen Area... [Read more](#)

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EU-Canada: a strategic, progressive, dynamic partnership



The first meeting of the EU-Canada ministerial committee took place on 4th December as part of the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) that temporarily entered into force on 1st April 2017. The EU and Canada aim to strengthen their bilateral cooperation in the areas of security and defence as well as gender equality... [Read more](#)

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Conclusions of the "Employment, Healthcare" Council

The "Employment and Healthcare" Council of 7th and 8th December



came to a common position on the accessibility directive. A partial agreement was also found regarding the regulation for the improved coordination of the social security systems. Finally the Council adopted conclusions regarding its pharmaceutical policy and regarding alcohol... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council



The "Agriculture and Fisheries Council" took place on 11th December 2017 in Brussels. A regulation establishing the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks in 2018 was adopted... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

EU-Japan: economic partnership finalised



On 8th December the EU and Japan finalised an economic partnership agreement. The Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia Malmström and the Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Taro Kono announced the news which follows the political agreement that was found on 6th July last during the EU-Japan Summit... [Read more](#)

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Meeting between European Foreign Affairs Ministers with their American counterpart



American Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson travelled to Brussels on 5th December where he notably met the Union's High Representative, Federica Mogherini. The meeting between the two heads of diplomacy provided an opportunity for discussion of four issues: the peace process in the Middle East, the Iranian nuclear agreement, Syria and the Western Balkans... [Read more](#)

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Personal data: European regulators demand guarantees



European regulators meeting with in the G29 announced on 5th December that they had noted a number of issues to settle as part of the negotiations between Europe and the USA. This involves the protection of data prior to May 2018 otherwise they would act at national level... [Read more](#)

Permanent Structured Cooperation with 25 Member States



On 11th December the Council adopted a decision establishing the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), less than a month after having received a joint notification from the Member States regarding their intention to participate. 25 Member States will take part out of the 27. Ministers also re-iterated their support to a two-State solution with Jerusalem the capital of an Israeli State and of a Palestinian State... [Read more](#)

Germany :

French President winner of the Charlemagne Prize 2018



French President Emmanuel Macron was awarded the Charlemagne Prize 2018 on 8th December. The jury welcomed his vision of a new Europe and the revision of the European project, of new European sovereignty and the restructuring of cooperation between people and nations... [Read more](#)

Finland :

Finland celebrates the centenary of its independence



On 6th December the Republic of Finland celebrated the centenary of its independence, which was acquired during the Russian revolution. Celebrations were organised across the country to mark the event... [Read more](#)

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France :

National Assembly report on "democratic conventions"



Local debates based on common questions in countries which want to take part from May to October 2018 followed by "European restitution" - this is how MEPs imagine the "democratic conventions for the redesign of the Union" called for by Emmanuel Macron. In this report presented on 7th December by Michel Herbillion (LR) and Valérie Gomez-Bassac (LREM) deemed the "time is right for citizens' thoughts on the future of Europe." The Chairman of the Foundation contributed his opinion to this report... [Read more](#)

Greece :

Visit by the Turkish President to Greece



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made a historic visit on 7th and 8th December to Greece, the first in 65 years. Above all it was symbolic, given that disagreement between the two countries is of consequence. The interviews with the Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos and Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras focused on the Cypriot issue and the migratory crisis. The two men asked Mr Erdogan for the absolute respect of the Lausanne Treaty which comprises the "exclusive, non-negotiable cornerstone on which sincere cooperation between the two countries can be built... [Read more](#)

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Hungary :

The Commission launches several actions with the European Court of Justice



On 7th December the Commission decided to refer Hungary to the European Court of Justice for the non-respect of its legal obligations in terms of asylum and for its laws regarding NGOs and higher education... [Read more](#)

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Ireland :

Ireland is to collect tax arrears demanded of Apple by Brussels



On 4th December the Irish government said it had come to an agreement with Apple to start collecting 13 billion € at the beginning of 2018. This sum corresponds to the tax advantages that were deemed undue by Brussels. "We have now come to an agreement with Apple on the principles and the functioning of the frozen account," declared Finance Minister Paschal Donohue... [Read more](#)

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Parliament votes in support of European cooperation in the area of defence



The lower house of the Irish parliament adopted the country's membership of the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), 75 votes against 42... [Read more](#)

The Netherlands :

Additional funds for the evacuation of refugees from Libya



The Dutch government decided to allocate 10 million € to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to enable migrants to be repatriated to the countries of origin and to counter human trafficking. Since the beginning of 2017 the IOM has succeeded in saving 13,000 migrants out of Libya taking them back to their home countries... [Read more](#)

Poland :

Poland: Mateusz Morawiecki appointed Prime Minister



On 7th December Mateusz Morawiecki was appointed Prime Minister by President Andrzej Duda in replacement of Beata Szydło. Mateusz Morawiecki, who was Finance Minister (PiS) to date, says that he wants to soften Warsaw's image in the international arena, whilst Poland is threatened procedures that are part of the article 7 TEU for the State's repeated breaches of the rule of law in the country... [Read more](#)

Czech Republic :

Andrej Babis named Prime Minister



President of the Czech Republic, Miloš Zeman named Andrej Babiš, leader of the ANO movement and winner in the general elections organised in October as Prime Minister on 6th December. The government he is to lead is due to be announced on 13th December... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Conclusions of the EU-Ukraine Association Council



The fourth EU-Ukraine Association Council took place on 8th December, the first since the exemption of visas granted to Ukraine on 11th June last and that the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement entered into force on 1st September. The EU repeated its support to the reforms undertaken by Ukraine in the areas of economy, justice, education, research and even healthcare. It also called for the application of the Minsk Agreements... [Read more](#)

Switzerland :

Alain Berset elected president of the Helvetic Confederation



On 6th December the Federal Assembly elected Alain Berset as President of the Helvetic Confederation for 2018 by 190 votes. The head of the Federal Department for the Interior will take over from Doris Leuthard... [Read more](#)

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NATO :

Meeting of the NATO Council



The Foreign Affairs Ministers of the NATO member countries, as well as the High Representative Federica Mogherini officially met in Brussels on 5th and 6th December 2017 and agreed on a sharp increase in cooperation in areas of shared information in the fight to counter terrorism, military mobility, inter-operability and the promotion of the role of women regarding questions of peace and security... [Read more](#)

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WTO :

Launch of 11th WTO ministerial conference



On 10th December the Council adopted conclusions whilst the 11th WTO ministerial conference was launched in Buenos Aires. It recalled its attachment to the multilateral system and declared that it was prepared to explore ways to strengthen the WTO, notably its negotiation, monitoring and dispute settlement capacities,.. [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

GDP up by 0.6% in the third quarter 2017



On 7th December Eurostat published the results of the GDP growth rate for the third quarter of 2017 that lay at +0.6% in comparison with the previous quarter both in the EU and the euro zone... [Read more](#)

France has the highest tax rates in the EU



France is the country in which taxation was the highest in the EU in 2016, ahead of Denmark and Belgium said a study published on 7th December by the European Office for Statistics, Eurostat. The tax/GDP ratio, ie the sum of taxes and net social contributions in percentage of the GDP totalled 47.6% in France, in contrast to 47.3% in Denmark and 46.8% in Belgium... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

2017 Industrial Investment Scoreboard in R&D

The Commission's Joint Research Centre published the 2017 industrial scoreboard in R&D on 4th December. European businesses their investments in R&D last year by 7% in contrast to 5.8% worldwide...



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Report on links between drug trafficking and organised crime in the EU



On 6th December Europol unveiled a report establishing the links between drug trafficking and organised crime in the EU. 35% of the criminal groups are involved in trafficking which generates 24 million € yearly. And the European fight to counter capital laundering remains ineffectual, with only 1% of the profit being seized by the competent authority... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Aesthetics of Change



For the 150th anniversary of the University of Applied Arts Vienna, the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry "MAK" is hosting the exhibition "The Aesthetics of Change" from 15th December 2017 to 15th April 2018 reviewing the history of this art school, whilst projecting itself into the future... [Read more](#)

Sankta Lucia, Festival of Light in Sweden



On 13th December Sweden will be celebrating the Festival of Light in honour of Saint Lucy of Syracuse deemed to be the "Queen of Light". On this occasion several processions are organised in which young girls dressed in white and wearing crowns of candles walk through the streets of Stockholm singing the traditional Saint Lucia song... [Read more](#)

Masterworks of architectural drawing



The Albertina Museum of Vienna is running an exhibition from 15th December 2017 to 11th March 2018, presenting the most remarkable architectural drawings which document the past and provide a vision for the future. Covering trends from late Gothic to Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism, Art Nouveau to modern architecture, over 120 drawings illustrate the history of Europe's cities... [Read more](#)

Launch of the "2018, European Year of Cultural Heritage"



Celebrations marking the launch of "2018 the European Year of Cultural Heritage" started on 7th December on the occasion of the European Culture Forum in Milan. The Commission will notably organised the "Assises du Patrimoine" with the Member States. The aim is to reach out to young people and those who rarely come into contact with culture, to promote a shared sense of identity... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



10th to 13th December
Buenos Aires
11th WTO Ministerial Conference



11th December
Brussels
"Development" Council



11th & 12th December
Brussels
"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council



11th to 14th December
Strasbourg
Plenary Session of the European Parliament



12th December
Brussels
"General Affairs" Council



14th to 15th December
Brussels
European Council



18th December
Brussels
"Energy" Council

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