What European "Power"?

Author: Pierre Hassner

A major thinker on violence and peace, Pierre Hassner has just passed away. A "European" thinker throughout his career and studies, the latter formed part of the constant movement between East and West. A thinker on freedom, his infinitely subtle contribution to the analysis of the most complex events has been significant; he was always extremely rigorous, intellectually modest and extremely humble. A thinker on the balance of international power, he was the first to identify and analyse, with great acumen and accuracy, "the revenge of political passion" that forms the centre of the period in which we now live. Pierre Hassner was kind enough to write a text for us, "Europe and Power", in 2012. As we re-read this text at the time of his death, it seems clear to us that it is still very topical, as highlighted by the conclusion: "It will only be if in the face the impotence and danger of catastrophe, that there is a leap towards solidarity in both political, social and European terms, thereby overcoming specific egotism and the absolute power of the markets, that Europe will have an opportunity to recover the meaning of its vocation and its power." We are publishing this text in tribute to Pierre Hassner. He was one of the most brilliant European minds.

Read more
The "Schuman Report 2018 on the State of the Union" is available in French and English. This edition analyses the challenges that Europe faces. An exclusive interview with French President Emmanuel Macron, commented maps and statistics, offer a full overview of the European Union. You can order it on-line from our site; it also exists in digital format or in bookshops... Read more

Commission:

Publication of the European Semester spring report
The spring package of the European Semester 2018 was published by the European Commission on 23rd May. This recommends notably that the Member States step up the process of sustained, inclusive growth over the long term. The economic guidelines described in this report will be valid for the next 12 to 18 months. It suggests ending the excessive deficit procedure launched against France in 2009... Read more

2019 budget: a budget focused on continuity and implementation
On 23rd May the Commission presented its proposal for the Union's budget in 2019. The budget that totals 166 billion € in commitment payments, i.e an increase of 3% in comparison with 2018 aims to invest in a stronger, more resilient European economy and to promote solidarity and security on either side of the Union's borders... Read more

GDPR: new data protection rules entered into force on 25th May
The new European rules in terms of data protection, which strengthen citizens' rights and simplify the rules for businesses entered into force on 25th May. The new general regulation was adopted in April 2016 and aims to protect citizens against any infringement of their privacy and their data, in a world in which the exchange of data is constantly increasing, whilst creating a clearer, more coherent framework for businesses... Read more

Capital Markets Union: facilitating the financing of SMEs
On 24th May the European Commission put forward new rules aiming to make it easier for SME's to get financing on the stock markets. This initiative which is part of the programme for the introduction of a capital markets union (CMU) aims to help the EU's businesses which want to develop to get cheaper financing on the markets.. Read more

Financial Union: the Commission supports greater financial integration
On 24th May the Commission proposed further rules that will allow the market to put forward solutions to help integrate and diversify the European financial sector, to build a stronger, more resilient economic and monetary union. The proposal will remove unwarranted regulatory obstacles to the market-led development of sovereign bond-backed securities (SBBS). These securities would be issued by private institutions as claims on a portfolio of euro-area government bonds... Read more

Making the financing sector a major player in the fight to counter climate change
On 24th May the Commission published the first real action that will help the European financial sector show the path towards a greener, cleaner economy. Indeed the participation of the financial sector will significantly stimulate work that aims to reduce our ecological footprint whilst strengthening the sustainability and competitiveness of the European economy... Read more

A Europe for Youth
The Commission announced the introduction a European Education Area by 2025. This initiative will help strengthen the EU's cultural aspect and youth participation through various measures such as the "youth strategy" and even an Agenda for Culture... Read more
EU Fair Taxation: towards a single, fraud-proof VAT area

On 25th May the Commission proposed technical changes to the European regulations on VAT that complete the suggested reform of the system with the aim of making it more resilient; fraud is estimated at 50 billion €. The package of measures substantially modifies the rules relating to VAT and should make life easier for companies across the EU, putting an end to 25 years of a 'transitional' VAT regime in the Single Market...

Parliament:

Mark Zuckerberg speaks to MEPs

The Founder and CEO of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg appeared before Parliament on 22nd May and met with President Tajani and the leaders of the Parliament's political groups. He had to answer some questions put by MEPs regarding the protection of data, the new GDPR rules, interference by Facebook in electoral campaigns over the last few years and the future of advertising and other targeted content...

Council:

European Defence: agreement for an industrial development programme

The Bulgarian presidency and the representatives of the European Parliament announced on 23rd May the introduction of a new industrial development programme for European Defence. After having followed the traditional legislative procedure the text will be approved in 2019 so that the first real results will emerged in 2020...

Conclusions of the "Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council

During the "Education, Youth, Culture and Sport" Council on 22nd and 23rd May ministers adopted conclusions on the creation of a European zone for Education, the promotion of an inclusive education in Europe, the role of youth in rising to the demographic challenge, and the promotion of European values via sport. They also discussed priorities for the future Youth Policy and investment in culture so that this is at the forefront of Union policies...

Development Council Meeting

On 22nd May Ministers addressed relations between the EU and the countries of the ACP (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) after 2020, the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the international aid budget 2021-2027 as well as cooperation in terms of energy and sustainable development...

Agreement on on-line copyright

On 25th May the Council met to assert its position on the directive regarding a strengthening and the management of European on-line copyright standards. This joint position will be used as a mandate by the Presidency of the Council to start negotiations with the European Parliament...

Banking Union on the agenda of the "Economic and Financial Ministers'' Meeting

The 28 Economic and Financial Affairs Ministers met on 25th May to confirm their position on Banking Union. They suggested the reduction of risks in the banking sector, strengthening rules on capital requirements and the introduction of new directives to rescue banks in the event of a major problem, they also adopted conclusions to counter tax fraud...

Eurogroup Meeting

On 24th May Eurogroup met, firstly convening the 19 euro zone ministers, then those of the 27 Union Member States. The main themes discussed were Greece's economic adjustment plan, the euro zone's economic situation and the "2018 Spring Forecasts'' issued by the Commission and an overview of growth and employment in Europe. The 27 also
discussed the future role of Banking Union... Read more

Diplomacy:

**EU-AU cooperation for youth, employment and peace**

The European Union and the African Union jointly adopted new concrete measures on 24th May to respond together to world challenges and to strengthen their cooperation in terms of peace and security, migration, employment and agriculture. In the context of this partnership the EU will give extra aid totalling 400 million euro to finance continental and regional projects in Africa... Read more

**Europe-USA Joint Declaration**

On 22nd and 23rd May the EU-USA ministerial council addressed internal affairs and justice in Sofia. This meeting led to the confirmation of total cooperation between the two entities in terms of justice, likewise the importance of responding jointly to security threats... Read more

**Conclusions on Syria, elections in Venezuela and EU-Asia**

On 28th May the Council of the European Union extended the EU's restrictive measures against the Syrian regime until 1st June 2019 and adopted conclusions on Venezuela and the undemocratic nature of the most recent elections there. They also adopted conclusions on strengthened EU-Asia cooperation in terms of security. They debated the Iranian nuclear agreement after the USA's withdrawal, recent developments in Gaza and the need to find a two State solution, the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the EU-ACP partnership... Read more

**Germany:**

**Angela Merkel travels to China**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to China on 24th May for her 12th visit since she entered office. She said she had found points of convergence on protecting the Iranian agreement, the promotion of multilateralism and free-trade... Read more

**Spain:**

**Motion of no confidence introduced against the People's Party, found guilty of corruption**

On 24th May the People's Party (PP) in office in Spain was sentenced to reimburse 245, 492 euros for its profit-seeking participation in a complex system of bribes in exchange for public contracts. More than 29 people were sentenced to a total of 351 years in prison for crimes of corruption. On 25th May the Socialist Party (PSOE), supported by Podemos (radical left), introduced a motion of no confidence and is seeking the 176 votes necessary to do this. Ciudadanos (centre-right) is defending the idea of an immediate snap election... Read more

**France:**

**Emmanuel Macron in Russia**

On 24th and 25th May the French President Emmanuel Macron travelled to Russia to meet his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. The two leaders addressed topical issues like their differences over Syria and the Iranian nuclear issue. On 25th May Emmanuel Macron was guest of honour at the Economic Forum of St Petersburg... Read more

**Final greenlight for single constituency in the European elections**

On 23rd May the French Parliament gave its final greenlight to the re-introduction of a single constituency in the European elections, which, according to the government, will be a means to attract the French population's interest in the election. Senators gave their agreement to the version of the bill drafted with MPs during the mixed parity committee... Read more
Greece:
The Prime Minister presents his growth plan
On 23rd May Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras presented his "plan for Greek economic growth and the country's development" to Parliament, stressing that "memorandums were now a part of the past". In view of Athens' emerging from the financial aid programme on 20th August next this text highlights the fight to counter unemployment, the return to a normal situation in the banking sector, the reform of the energy sector, the revalorisation of the minimum wage and the fight to counter illegal work... Read more

Hungary:
Government sworn in
Hungarian President Janos Ader accepted the government format put forward by Prime Minister Victor Orban on 18th May which comprises 13 ministers of whom only one is a woman. Sworn in before Parliament V. Orban recalled the priorities of his mandate: the protection of the borders and the fight to counter immigration... Read more

Ireland:
Legalisation of the right to abortion
On 25th May the Republic of Ireland legalised abortion via referendum with a victory for the "yes" at 66.4% for the repeal of the 8th amendment of the Constitution which banned this medical act. The Irish Prime Minister qualified the result as a "quiet revolution"... Read more

The government is trying to assess the risks of Brexit
On 23rd May the Irish government published its "national risk assessment project" and invited the public to give its opinion of what they believe to be the biggest dangers that Ireland will have to face. The government mentions in particular the risks linked to Brexit which "have developed significantly and will remain very serious"... Read more

Italy:
Towards a technical government and further elections in Italy
On 27th May Giuseppe Conte who had been asked to form a government in Italy resigned after a meeting with the Italian President Sergio Mattarella who notably opposed the appointment of eurosceptic Paolo Savona as Finance Minister. On 28th the Italian President asked Carlo Cottarelli, a former IMF executive to form an interim government... Read more

UK:
Brexit: British priorities for the UK-EU economic partnership
On Thursday 24th May the British government published its vision of the future economic partnership linking the UK and the EU. This will take the shape of a free-trade agreement including goods and services. On the same day Michel Barnier criticised this option deeming that the EEA was a better cooperation framework for the British whilst for its part the British parliament voted in support of Customs Union... Read more

Brexit has already cost British households 1000€ each
The governor of the Bank of England estimated, as he spoke to the committee of the Treasury of the House of Commons on 22nd May, that Brexit has cost each British household £900 each, or 1000€. This estimate is based on the income differential in comparison with 2016 or on the hypothesis of the UK remaining in the Union... Read more

Ukraine:
Ukraine: the flight MH17 shot down by a missile launched by a Russian military unit
On 24th May the Joint Investigation Team that brings together the best
international experts revealed that the Bouk-Telar missile (of Russian design) which brought down the MH17 flight on 17th July 2014 came from the 53rd Anti Aircraft Missile brigade based in Kursk, Russia. 298 people, mainly Dutch nationals, died in the incident... Read more

European Agencies :
Towards close collaboration between OLAF and the European Public Prosecutor's Office
On 23rd May the European Commission suggested the modification of regulation governing the investigations undertaken by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). This measure aims to give OLAF the necessary means to work closely together with the European Public Prosecutor's Office on the detection of fraud in the Union and any connected investigations. OLAF will retain its central role in the protection of the Union's financial interests... Read more

OECD :
The OECD's growth figures for the first quarter of 2018
On 22nd May the OECD published its growth figures for the first quarter of 2018. According to the latter growth slowed to 0.4% in the EU and in the euro zone in the first quarter of 2018 (against 0.6% and 0.7% respectively in the previous quarter)... Read more

Eurobarometer :
Record support to the European Union
A Eurobarometer survey undertaken in April 2018 amongst 27,601 citizens from 28 Member States that was presented on 23rd May reveals that just one year before the European elections, 60% of Europe's citizens believe that their country's membership of the EU is positive, and two-thirds of those interviewed are convinced that their country has benefited from belonging to the EU. This is the highest result recorded since 1983 despite the context of Brexit... Read more

Studies/Reports :
Convergence report 2018: assessment of progress made by the Member States
According to the 2018 Convergence Report by the Commission, published on 23rd May the 7 Member States that do not yet belong to the euro zone and which are legally bound to adopt the single currency (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Sweden) generally illustrate significant nominal convergence, but none of them totally fulfils all of the formal conditions required to join the euro zone... Read more

Report on Financial Stability
According to the most recent six-monthly report on financial stability by the European Central Bank published on 24th May systemic risk in the euro zone has remained low over the last six months thanks to better internal and external growth prospects. However the study shows that although European banks' profitability has improved, structural weaknesses persist. The downturn in growth and the easing of the budgetary policy in high-debt countries might also affect the fiscal outlook... Read more

Culture :
Drawing Dublin
Until 26th August the National Gallery of Ireland is offering an exhibition of drawings on paper including a great number of pictures linked to the history of the city of Dublin. Landscapes, figure studies and portraits will be presented, describing how the capital was interpreted by the artists over the centuries... Read more

Hokusai in Stockholm
Until 3rd June the Millesgården Museum of Stockholm is running an unique exhibition of various works by the Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai, known across the world for his woodblock print "The Great
Andy Warhol Exhibition "After Munch"

Until 26th August the Munch Museum on the Move-Kunsthall in Oslo is running an exhibition, including three of the 15 originals that Andy Warhol created with motifs taken directly from Edvard Munch's most well known lithographs. Screenprints from a unique series of the same motifs are also on show and Warhol's film "Kiss" (1963) is being screened...

The Small Explorers Shop on Quai Branly

Until 7th October the Museum on the Quai Branly is hosting a unique exhibition which reviews the way popular culture in France presented "countries from afar" to young people in 19th century literature to the modern day...

Chagall exhibition at the Guggenheim of Bilbao

From 1st June to 2nd September the Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao is hosting an exhibition on Marc Chagall. Set up on the initiative of the Kunstmuseum of Basel it is showing a selection of works created during a decisive period 1911-1919...

Odilon Redon exhibition at the Kröller-Müller

From 2nd June to 9th September the Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands will be throwing new light on French painter Odilon Redon (1840-1916) with the exhibition "Odilon Redon. Literature and Music". Via a great number of paintings, lithographies, pastels and drawings, the exhibition unveils the key role played by literature and music in the artist's life and works...

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The Robert Schuman Foundation, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France, Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani.