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## European Elections 2019: what will its new composition be?

Author: Pascale Joannin



Just as the congresses of the European political parties - the first stage in preparations for the elections of May 2019, many questions are being raised regarding the upheaval ongoing amongst the liberal democrats. The departure of the British MEPs and the weakening of the main parties will lead to a new situation in the European Parliament a crucial time for the Union.

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#### Foundation :

##### Citizens' Consultations: the EU's MEPs take the floor



Under the aegis of the President of the National Assembly and in cooperation with several partners, including the Foundation, the European Affairs Committee of the National Assembly are organising a parliamentary restitution of the Citizens' Consultations on 8th November... [Read more](#)

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##### Permanent Atlas of the European Union



In view of the upcoming European elections, the Robert Schuman Foundation has published its "Permanent Atlas of the European Union". This book, unique in its genre, drafted by the Foundation's experts offers readers a panorama of the Union, the euro zone and of each of the 28 Member States. It summarizes the main elements of history, as well as the political and statistical realities of the Union. In addition to this, there are over 50 physical and geopolitical maps of Europe... [Read more](#)

#### ECB :

## The ECB closes the Maltese Pilatus Bank



In a press release published on 5th November the Maltese Financial Services Authority (MFSA) announced that the ECB's Council of Governors (ECB) had accepted its proposal to revoke the Maltese Pilatus Bank's license as a credit establishment. Quoted in the Panama Papers and at the heart of investigations by Maltese journalist Daphné Caruana, who was murdered in 2017, Pilatus Bank is suspected of money laundering and corruption... [Read more](#)

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## Commission :

### Commitments for clean, healthy oceans



On the occasion of the 5th conference "Our Ocean" which was taking part in Bali (Indonesia) on 29th and 30th October the Union made 23 new commitments in support of clean, healthy, safe oceans. 300 millions € will be allocated to this cause, including 100 million € for research and development against plastic pollution of the oceans, 82 million € for marine and maritime research (notably the assessment of the ecosystems and cartography) and 18.4 million € for sectors that depend on the ocean and its resources... [Read more](#)

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## Council :

### Position on the directive on single use plastics



On 31st October the Council clarified the Commission's draft directive on the restrictions to be placed on single use plastics by specifying the products affected by this directive. The Council plans a more ambitious directive with extended producer responsibility schemes to all businesses selling in Europe so that they cover the clean-up costs. It insisted on the need to innovate to find alternatives and to establish harmonised standards with regard to this. The Council now has to negotiate the final text with the Commission and Parliament which adopted its position on 24th October... [Read more](#)

### Sustainable Mobility



European Transport and Environment Ministers met in Graz, Austria on 30th October - and discussed the change of hour. Most States support the Commission's proposal but Greece, the UK and Portugal are against it, whilst France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Cyprus and Denmark did not express an opinion. They also looked a Graz Declaration, drafted by the Austrian presidency of the Council which calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up their work to achieve the European climate goals, which must be formally adopted at the next Council meeting. Moreover Ministers asked the Commission to establish and implement an integrated strategy by 2021 for clean, safe, affordable, inclusive mobility in Europe... [Read more](#)

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### Conclusions of the Eurogroup



On 5th November the European Finance Ministers in a Eurogroup meeting gave their support to the Commission regarding the rejection of the Italian budget. They hope for Italy's full cooperation and a new proposal in line with the Stability and Growth Pact. They also exchanged views regarding the euro zone's financial stability, the reform of the ESM and the introduction of a backstop for the Single Resolution Fund. The ECB's bank supervisor and resolution board presented the results of the European banks' resistance tests undertaken by the European Banking Authority... [Read more](#)

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## European Agencies :

### Resistance tests of European Banks



According to the resistance tests undertaken by the European Banking Authority (EBA), published on 2nd November, the European banks are more resistant in the face of economic crises. The EBA subjected 48 establishments from the Union and Norway to a theoretic exercise to see how they would resist a sudden upheaval in the economic situation - a 2.7% collapse in the European GDP between 2018 and 2020 and an increase in unemployment. None of them fell below the ratio of own funds set at 5.5% but German and British banks showed weaknesses... [Read more](#)

[Joint declaration by 10 Finance Ministers on the reform of the ESM](#)



The Finance Ministers of 10 Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Sweden and Slovakia) signed a joint declaration on 1st November regarding their vision of the reform of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). They are advocating greater national responsibilities, re-iterate the importance of the so-called "no bailout" clause. They also reject the idea of a European Finance Ministry and recommend management by national governments... [Read more](#)

### Launch of a European research programme into quantum technologies



The Quantum Technologies Flagship, financed by the European Horizon 2020 Programme, was launched in Vienna on 29th October by the Austrian Presidency of the Council. Provided with a billion € budget the project will be financing 5,000 European researchers for the next decade in the area of quantum technologies and aims to place Europe at the forefront in this sector. Quantum technologies will enable a significant increase in the processing speed of metadata and calculations... [Read more](#)

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### Court of Auditors :

#### Opinion on the Cohesion Policy



In an opinion delivered on 31st October the Union's Court of Auditors deemed that the new rules put forward by the Commission as part of the multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027, regarding the Cohesion Policy funds post-2020 are simpler and more flexible. But the auditors suggest the introduction of additional safeguard measures to ensure the funds' use is compliant with the Union's rules and that they have real effect... [Read more](#)

### Germany :

#### Angela Merkel in Ukraine and Poland



German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to Ukraine on November 1st to meet Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. Regretting that the Minsk Agreements have not been respected, she declared that she would advocate the upkeep of sanctions against Russia. On 2nd November, just before the centenary of the return of independence to Poland, on 11th November 1918, the Chancellor met her Polish counterpart Mateusz Morawiecki in Warsaw. They stressed the importance of their relations from the economic point of view and also the border regions... [Read more](#)

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### Bulgaria :

#### Greece-Bulgaria-Romania-Serbia Summit



The strengthening of regional cooperation and the intensification of connectivity in areas such as energy, transport, security and the digital economy were the main issues under discussion at the 5th quadrilateral summit between Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Serbia which took place in Varna on 2nd November. The four countries announced that they intended to organise the World Football Cup in 2030... [Read more](#)

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### France :

#### New Caledonia chooses France



During a referendum organised on 4th November 56.4% of voters in New Caledonia chose to remain in the French Republic by rejecting the question "Do you want New Caledonia to be fully sovereign and become independent?" Turnout totalled 80.63%. The vote was organised as part of the Matignon Agreements and the Nouméa Agreements of 1998, which brought several years of violence to an end and established a process of wide autonomy to balance relations between the Kanaks, the main indigeneous people and the minority of European origin... [Read more](#)

#### Centenary of the end of the First World War



Events across Europe will commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War, on 11th November 1918. In France events started on 4th November with a concert for Peace in Strasbourg with the French and German Presidents, Emmanuel Macron and Frank-Walter Steinmeier in attendance. From 5th to 9th November the French

President will undertake a "memorial route" from Morhange to Rethondes, where he will meet up with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. British Prime Minister Theresa May will also travel to the Somme on the same days as Emmanuel Macron. On 11th November tribute will be paid to the fallen soldiers at the Arc de Triomphe together with heads of State including Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. On the same day Angela Merkel, Emmanuel Macron and UN Secretary Antonio Guterres, will inaugurate a Forum for Peace in Paris that will be devoted to world governance until 13th November... [Read more](#)

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#### Greece :

##### EU-Arab World Summit Athens



The strengthening of synergies in economic relations and political dialogue were the dominant issues in the third high-level EU-Arab summit organised in Athens on 29th and 30th October under the aegis of the Commission and in cooperation with the Arab League. The summit brought together the representatives of more than 30 countries for debate over issues such as the migratory crisis, European and Arab policy in the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East, as well as environmental and energy issues... [Read more](#)

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#### Poland :

##### Results of the second round of local elections on Poland



On 4th November the second round of local elections took place in Poland. According to still partial results the opposition won the major towns such as Gdansk and Krakow in addition to those already won in the first round (Warsaw, Lodz, Poznan, Lublin and Wroclaw) on 21st October... [Read more](#)

#### Sweden :

##### Failure of the second bid to form a government



After the head of the Conservative Party, Ulf Kristersson, outgoing Prime Minister, Social Democrat, Stefan Lofven admitted on 29th October to having failed to form a government. The leader of Parliament will therefore have to appoint another party leader for a third bid since the elections on 9th September to form a coalition. After four attempts new elections must be organised... [Read more](#)

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#### Macedonia :

##### Ratification process of the agreement with Greece



On 2nd November, the Macedonian government triggered the second of three phases in the ratification process of the agreement with Greece, thereby settling the issue of the country's name, as it submitted to Parliament a project of four amendments to the Constitution. Ratification, by a two-third majority, might occur before the end of the year. On 1st November, in the spirit of the agreement signed in June, Macedonia and Greece resumed direct flights between their capitals, Skopje and Athens after a 12-year break... [Read more](#)

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#### Norway :

##### Nordic countries Council and the Forum on the future of the North



The prime ministers of the Nordic and Baltic countries and the UK attended the 70th session of the Nordic Council from 30th October to 1st November in Oslo and also the Forum on the Future of the North. The Council meeting focused on present pressure that is weighing on democracy and the freedom of movement in the region, as well as judicial cooperation. Discussions also focused on the Finnish programme for the presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2019. The Forum was devoted to technologies implemented in the healthcare sector... [Read more](#)

#### NATO :

##### NATO-Russia Council

During the NATO-Russia Council meeting, the dialogue forum that brings together the ambassadors of the 29 allies and Russia, which took place in Brussels on 31st October, several security issues were



addressed, including the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), from which the USA has announced its withdrawal, the situation in Ukraine and Afghanistan, issues regarding military exercises on in 2018, mutual transparency and the reduction of risks as well as hybrid threats... [Read more](#)

## Eurostat :

### Unemployment at its lowest level



According to Eurostat's most recent estimates published on 31st October the unemployment rate lay at 6.7% in the Union in September 2018 and at 8.1% in the euro zone. This is the lowest rate recorded in the Union since the start of the monthly series of figures on unemployment in January 2000 and for the euro zone since November 2008... [Read more](#)

### Annual inflation reaches 2.2% in October



The euro zone annual inflation lay at 2.2% in October 2018, higher than the 2.1% recorded in September, according to the most recent Eurostat published on 31st October. Price increases since October 2017 mainly affected energy (10.6%), alcohol, food and tobacco (2.2%) and services (1.5%), non-energy industrial goods increasing by 0.4% over one year... [Read more](#)

### Growth up in the 3rd quarter by 0.3% in the EU and by 0.2% in the euro zone



According to Eurostat estimates published on 30th October, the euro zone GDP increased by 0.2% in the third quarter of 2018 in comparison with the previous quarter and by 1.7% in comparison with the third quarter of 2017. The trend is similar for the entire EU since during the first quarter of 2018 the GDP increased by 0.3% in comparison with the previous quarter and by 1.9% in comparison with the third quarter of 2017... [Read more](#)

## Studies/Reports :

### Positive contribution by the EU's trade agreements



The Commission's second annual report on the implementation of trade agreements in 2017 published on 31st October show that these agreements are effective in eliminating trade barriers and in promoting high standards in terms of protecting the environment and workers. The report stresses that the Union's external trade is rising, notably towards the countries for which the Union has abolished customs duties on certain products. Parliament and European trade ministers will soon hold talks about the conclusions of this report... [Read more](#)

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### Air pollution still too high across Europe



Air pollution is still over the limits set by the Union and the World Health Organisation, despite a slight reduction says a report published by the European Environment Agency on 29th October. Air pollution mainly comes from road transport emissions, the production and consumption of energy and agriculture. Its impact is bad for the health but also the environment and the economy. In 2015 according to the report, 391,000 people died because of the concentration of fine particle dust across the 28 Member States... [Read more](#)

## Parliament :

### Frans Timmermans will head the PES list in the European elections



Dutchman Frans Timmermans, the Commission's First Vice-President will head the European list for the PES (Party of European Socialists) in the European elections of 2019, after the withdrawal of the other candidate, Slovakian Maroš Šefčovič. In a letter addressed to the Chair of the PES Serguei Stanishev Mr Šefčovič explained his choice, saying that he wanted to increase the party's unity and cohesion and announced his support to Mr Timmermans, who will run for the Presidency of the European Commission. The PES will launch its campaign during its congress on 7th and 8th December... [Read more](#)

## Publications :

### Italian Debt: Europe is making its own subprime crisis



Emmanuel Sales, Chair of the Financière de la Cité, has published a paper on what he thinks of the present Italian and European economic situation... [Read more](#)

### Secret Letter from Emmanuel Macron to Angela Merkel



Under the pen-name Gérard de la Malice, a former French diplomat offers the draft of a letter to revive Franco-German relations... [Read more](#)

## Culture :

### Renoir, Father and Son at the Orsay Museum



An exhibition on the painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir and his son, filmmaker Jean Renoir is taking place at the Orsay Museum in Paris from 6th November to 27th January 2019. Pictures, film excerpts, photographs, costumes, posters, drawings and documents bear witness to a fruitful dialogue between the two men and their attachment to freedom and humanism... [Read more](#)

### Film Festival Stockholm



The Stockholm Film Festival is taking place in the Swedish capital from 7th to 18th November. It is screening the premiers of more than a hundred films from the world over. Since 1990 a "Bronze Horse" has been awarded to the best film in the selection... [Read more](#)

### Brive Book Fair



The 37th Brive Book Fair will be taking place from 9th to 11th November chaired by French novelist and film director, Delphine de Vigan who works on the programming this event by offering her finds to the public... [Read more](#)

### Scanorama, European film forum



The European film forum SCANORAMA is screening a sample of European films, both classical and modern, to illustrate the genre's diversity. It is the biggest and most important international cultural event devoted to European film... [Read more](#)

### Modern painting in Vaduz



The Kunstmuseum of Liechtenstein is running an exhibition from 9th November 2018 to 17th March 2019 of the major artists of the 19th and 20th centuries: Medardo Rosso, Paul Klee, Keith Sonnier, Alexej Jawlensky, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Alexander Archipenko, Imi Knoebel and Klaus Staudt. The main artistic movements of these periods are represented - from Expressionism to Concreta Art and Cubism... [Read more](#)

### Perspective on Art and Calvinism



As of 11th November and until 26th May 2019, the Museum of Dordrecht is running an exhibition "Werk, bid en bewonder, a new perspective on art and Calvinism ("work, pray and admire). It aims to explore the link between art and Calvinism by showing music, literature and architecture from the 17th to the 20th century... [Read more](#)

## Agenda :



5th November  
Brussels  
Eurogroup Meeting



6th November  
Brussels  
"Economy-Finances" Council



9th November  
Brussels  
"Trade" Council



12th November  
Brussels  
"General Affairs" Council



12th to 15th November  
Strasbourg  
Plenary Session at the European Parliament

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