

— I support the Robert Schuman Foundation —

What European response to American extra-territoriality?

Author: Philippe Bonnecarrère



The creation of INSTEX, a financial platform to continue trade with Iran, by several European countries, brings to the fore once more American extraterritorial sanctions. Given this political and legal challenge, the European Union is capable of providing for its sovereignty, writes Philippe Bonnecarrère, Deputy-Chair of the European Affairs Committee at the French Senate.

[Read more](#)

Contents

Foundation : Site/Elections - Atlas/EU **Commission** : Brexit - Steel - Sustainable Europe - Disinformation - Trade/USA **Parliament** : Transparency - Future/EU - Left/Candidates - Venezuela **Council** : Ireland - Brexit/Visas - Defence - Iran - Arab League - Brexit/Aviation **Diplomacy** : EU-Japan - Georgia - EU/World - Trade/Iran **Court of Justice** : Canada - Appointments **European Agencies** : Microplastics **Germany** : Armenia - Prize/Charlemagne **Cyprus** : Summit/South **Italy** : Recession **UK** : Brexit - Brexit/Nissan **NATO** : Treaty/INF **OECD** : Taxation **Eurostat** : Unemployment - Growth **Studies/Reports** : EIB **Culture** : Film/Berlin - Light/Reykjavik - Exhibition/Vienna - Exhibition/Paris - Exhibition/Brussels

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

Foundation :

European elections: a site to understand everything



From 23rd to 26th May 2019 more than 300 million Europeans are being called to choose their 705 MEPs who will serve them for the next five years. As in the previous elections the Robert Schuman Foundation has developed a web site to provide a better understanding of the election and for its audience to be able to follow the campaign in 27 Member States...

[Read more](#)

Permanent Atlas on the European Union



In view of the upcoming European elections, the Robert Schuman Foundation has published a new version of the "Permanent Atlas of the European Union" which offers a full overview of the Union, the euro zone, of each of the Member States and its overseas territories. This work allows each reader to consult the most recent and most objective political and statistical information at any time. It is available in digital and paper version from the Foundation's website and in a bookshop... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Last package of emergency measures in the event of a no deal Brexit



On 30th January in the hypothesis of a no deal Brexit the Commission adopted a final series of emergency measures, regarding the Erasmus+ programme, the coordination of social security and the Union's budget. These measures aim to ensure continuity in the event of a "no deal" for social security, notably regarding the calculation of social services and for participants in the Erasmus+ programme in the UK. Also British beneficiaries of European financing will continue to receive payments as part of their ongoing contracts, on condition that the UK would continue to respect its financial obligations as part of the 2019 Union budget... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#) | [Other link](#) | [Other link](#)

Final safeguard measures on steel product imports



On February 1st the Commission imposed definitive safeguard measures on steel product imports which entered into force on 2nd February. They replace the temporary measures adopted in July 2018 after an investigation that revealed an increase in steel imports in Europe following the increase in customs duties imposed by American President Donald Trump since March 2018 on the same products. A 25% tax will be applied beyond a certain threshold of imports whatever the country of origin, in order to support the European steel industry. These measures will apply for three years but will be revised if circumstances change... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Reflection Paper for a Sustainable Europe



As part of the debate on the future of Europe, the Commission published a reflection paper on 30th January on a sustainable Europe by 2030. It aims to orient discussions on the way to achieve the UN's sustainable development goals. It stresses the main strategic axes of a fair and sustainable transition, such as the circular economy and food safety, and the horizontal instruments enabling this such as technologies, innovation and taxation... [Read more](#)

First reports on action against disinformation



On 29th January the Commission published the first reports established by the signatories of the good practice code against disinformation. The Commission noted progress especially in the deletion of fake accounts from social networks, but it is asking for further measures to guarantee the total transparency of political adverts and to ensure good cooperation between these platforms and the Member States. The Commission stressed that action by internet companies was the most advanced and complete in comparison with the sector of advertising... [Read more](#)

Report on trade negotiations with the USA



On 30th January the Commission published a report on the implementation of a joint declaration adopted on 25th July by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker and American President Donald Trump. The report provides details of the state of progress in negotiations and was communicated to the Parliament and the Member States... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Parliament :

Vote on new rules of procedure



MEPs changed the rules of procedure on 31st January 496 votes in support (114 against and 33 abstentions), during a secret ballot. The main modifications focus on MEPs standards of conduct, notably transparency and the prevention of moral and sexual harassment and on parliamentary issues at the Council and the Commission. Rapporteurs, shadow rapporteurs and Committee Chairs will have to publish on-line all meetings that have been planned with interest representatives who have signed up on the Transparency Register. Other MEPs are also invited to do the same. MEPs must refrain from any "inappropriate behaviour", "offensive language" and psychological and sexual harassment... [Read more](#)

Debate on the future of the EU with the Finnish Prime Minister



On 31st January just six months prior to beginning of the Finnish presidency of the Council, Prime Minister, Juha Sipilä delivered his vision of Europe to MEPs. He presented the issues that will be this presidency's priority: the multi-annual financial framework, a concerted policy on migration, defence cooperation, improving the single market, an eminent role of Europe in terms of fighting climate change and the adoption of new technologies... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

The European Left Party chooses two lead candidates



On 26th January the European Left Party (ELP) chose Slovenian Violeta Tomić, a member of the party, Levica, and Belgian Nico Cué, former secretary general of the Belgian Metalworkers Union of Wallonia-Brussels, as their lead candidates for the European elections in May. The ELP deems that both candidates offer a different Europe which will be "on the side of those who do not accept the growing contradiction between wealth and poverty".. [Read more](#)

European response to the situation in Venezuela



After the refusal of the contested Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to organise a new presidential election as demanded by 7 European countries on 26th January, several Member States recognised Juan Guaido, the leader of the National Assembly as the legitimate interim President on 4th February. These were Germany, Austria, Denmark, France, Spain, UK and Sweden. On 31st January MEPs already symbolically recognised Guaido in a resolution adopted by 439 votes (against 104 and 88 abstentions). On 1st February after an informal meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers, a contact group between the EU and several Latin-American countries was created to help the organisation of free, transparent and credible elections... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Council :

Agreement on the continuation of the PEACE programme in Ireland after BREXIT



On 30th January the Council approved the draft regulation that will facilitate the continuation of two cooperation programmes between the UK and Ireland, in all possible Brexit scenarios. These are the PEACE programme, which supports peace and reconciliation between Ireland and Northern Ireland and the INTERREG programme, which promotes economic and social cohesion. They will continue to be financed to the same amount until 2020, by the Union's budget on the basis of the present management. The act is due to be formally adopted mid-March by the Council and the Parliament... [Read more](#)

Visa exemptions for Britons



On 1st February, the Council adopted its position on the visa rules granted to Britons entering the Schengen Area after Brexit. The Member States' representatives decided that Britons would not need visas for short stays (90 days over a period of 180 days). This rule will only be applied if the UK grants the same regime to citizens of the European Union. The Parliament and the Council are now going to negotiate the final text... [Read more](#)

Informal meeting of Defence Ministers



During an informal meeting on 30th and 31st January Defence Ministers exchanged views on the coordination and coherence of various defence initiatives. They discussed the role of innovation in the development of military capacities, mobility and transatlantic relations. A working meeting on the achievement of gender equality in the area of security and defence was held with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the UN's Deputy Secretary General for peace operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix... [Read more](#)

Conclusions on Iran



On 4th February the Council approved the body created by France, Germany and UK to trade with Teheran despite the American sanctions, but denounced the long-range missile programme developed by Iran and its military commitment in Syria and Yemen... [Read more](#)

EU-Arab League



The EU-Arab League ministerial meeting took place in Brussels on 4th February. Ministers prepared the summit of 24th and 25th February next in Egypt. They exchanged views on migration, terrorism, climate change, but they also discussed regional conflicts, human rights and multi-lateralism. They reasserted their wish to step up their cooperation... [Read more](#)

Certifications for air transport in the event of a "no deal"



On 1st February the Council defined the validity of certain certificates regarding air safety for moral or physical people with their HQ's in the UK in the event of a no deal Brexit. This additional delay should leave time for the European Air Safety Agency to deliver new certificates taking into account the UK's new status as a third country. The Council and the Parliament are now going to negotiate the final text... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Entry into force of the economic partnership with Japan



The EU-Japan economic partnership agreement entered into force on February 1st. It abolishes most customs duties and non-tariff barriers. It protects certain geographic indications. It also liberalises Japanese calls for tender in certain areas such as on-line trade, postal or rail services. It integrates measures to protect workers and the environment with a special measure regarding the Paris Agreement. With this agreement the EU hopes to increase its trade with Japan by 36 billion € per year... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Results of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement



On 31st January the Commission published the third report on the implementation of the Association Agreement with Georgia in 2018. The report stresses the implementation of a deep and comprehensive free-trade zone and its advantages for the Georgian population. It notes the progress made in terms of strengthening democratic institutions, notably during the presidential election. It stresses the modest, yet still limited progress made towards to the reform of the legal system. In 2018, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Russo-Georgian conflict, the EU repeated its support to Georgia's sovereignty and its territorial integrity... [Read more](#)

Informal meeting



Foreign Affairs Ministers who met in Bucharest on 1st February exchanged views on the situation in Syria and on Sino-European relations. They debated the most recent developments in Venezuela and decided to form a contact group between the EU and several other Latino-American countries to support Venezuela in the organisation of new free, transparent, credible elections. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership ministers discussed with their counterparts from the candidate countries... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Creation of a financial channel to trade with Iran



On 31st January France, Germany and the UK created of a system enabling trade with Iran, without suffering the USA's sanctions which would deprive European businesses of access to the American market. The mechanism, named INSTEX, "an instrument to support trade exchange" will be based in Paris, registered in France and led by a German banker. Its structure is intergovernmental but it is supported by the EU. The mechanism should be open to third countries in theory... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Court of Justice :

Opinion on the CETA's dispute settlement mechanism



The Advocate General of the Court of Justice, Yves Bot, gave his opinion on 29th January regarding Belgium's doubts about the dispute settlement mechanism between investors and the States provided by the EU-Canada free-trade agreement (CETA). The Advocate General concluded that this mechanism was compatible with Union law, that it did not damage the autonomy of the Union's law and that it did not affect the Court's exclusive

jurisdiction in the final interpretation of the Union's law. In his opinion the agreement does not disregard the general principle of equal treatment with regard to the access to the dispute settlement mechanism and provides adequate procedural guarantees...
[Read more](#)

Appointment of 10 judges and an Advocate General



On 30th January the representatives of the Member States appointed 8 judges to the General Court, as well as two judges and an Advocate General to the European Court of Justice. An Austrian judge still has to be appointed in order to complete the 2018 part renewal of the Court of Justice's composition... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Proposal to restrict microplastics



The European Chemicals Agency suggested an almost total restriction on the intentional use of microplastics in daily products on 30th January - these include cosmetics and fertilisers. This report is the first stage towards legislation that might be put forward in 2020. The restrictions mentioned by the Agency would lead to the reduction in the volume of microplastics that enter the environment by about 400,000 tonnes over the next 20 years... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Germany :

Visit by Armenian Prime Minister



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan travelled to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel on 1st February in Berlin. They expressed their satisfaction with their relations. From an economic point of view Germany is Armenia's leading European partner. The two leaders also said they wanted to continue encouraging democracy in Armenia. Finally, Chancellor Merkel lauded the "courageous work undertaken" by Mr Pashinyan in support of a settlement to the conflict in the Nagorny Karabakh and hopes that Azerbaijan will respond positively... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Antonio Guterres, Charlemagne Prize Winner 2019



The Charlemagne Prize 2019 was awarded on 29th January to the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres for his work based on common values and beliefs as defined by the EU, his defence of pluralism, tolerance, dialogue and more than anything else, peace, freedom and democracy. The prize giving ceremony which rewards "exceptional contribution to European unification," will take place in Aachen on 30th May... [Read more](#)

Cyprus :

Summit of the Southern European Union Countries



The heads of State and government of seven Member States (France, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Portugal and Spain) met in Nicosia on 29th January for the 5th Summit of the Southern European Union countries, the MED 7. In a joint declaration they reasserted their commitment to a strong and prosperous Europe, whilst respecting common values. Emphasis was placed on greater cooperation in the quest to counter illegal migration, as well as on security, climate change and energy, reform and the strategic programme for 2019-2024. Leaders expressed their support to the UN's efforts to find a comprehensive, viable solution to the Cypriot problem... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Decline of the GDP in the fourth quarter of 2018



After a slight deceleration in the third quarter of 2018, the Italian economy witnessed a slide in its GDP of 0.2% in the fourth quarter, according to figures published on 31st January. The President of the Council, Giuseppe Conte blamed this result on the world trend towards deceleration and to poorer results recorded in industrial and agricultural sectors... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

UK :

Parliament votes to renegotiate the agreement on Brexit



By approving an amendment, 317 votes in support, 301 against, on 29th January British MPs gave the Prime Minister, Theresa May a mandate to renegotiate the UK's withdrawal from the EU by replacing the "backstop" on the Irish border with an unspecified "alternative measure". MPs also voted against an exit from the EU without a deal and for the upkeep of the protection of workers rights after Brexit... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Nissan to transfer a share of its production



The Chairman of Nissan Europe, Gianluca de Ficchy announced on 3rd February that for "economic reasons" and due to the "persistent uncertainty surrounding future relations between the UK and the EU", Nissan is to repatriate its main European factory from Sunderland to Japan together with the production of its new X-Trail model. In 2016 the manufacturer said that it would remain in the UK despite Brexit... [Read more](#)

NATO :

End of the intermediate-range nuclear forces treaty (INF)



The NATO Council declared on 1st February that Russia was not respecting the intermediate-range nuclear force treaty (INF) as it has been developing and fielding a missile system, the 9M729. NATO has asked Russia to eliminate "in a verifiable way all of its 9M729 systems" within the next 6 months, and to return to total and verifiable compliance of the treaty. On 2nd February the USA announced their withdrawal from the treaty and Russia the suspension of its participation... [Read more](#)

OECD :

New international tax rules against GAFA optimisation



Following a meeting on the ways to respond to tax optimisation strategies which took place on 23rd and 24th January the OECD announced on 29th January an agreement of principle between 127 countries to draft new international tax rules by 2020 which would comprise the taxation of profits where they are made rather than in the countries where the HQ of the business is established... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Unemployment Rate



According to data published by Eurostat on 31st January unemployment rates in the EU and the euro zone lay at 6.6% and 7.9% respectively in December 2018, stable in comparison with November 2018... [Read more](#)

Growth 2018



According to a Eurostat estimate published on 31st January the EU's GDP increased by 0.3% and that of the euro zone by 0.2% in the fourth quarter 2018. According to a first estimate the annual growth rate 2018 totalled 1.9% and 1.8% respectively in the EU and in the euro zone... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

2018 EIB Results



The European Investment Bank (EIB) rounded up the year 2018 on 29th January. It allocated more than 64 billion € to investments, totalling 230 billion € achieving its goal as part of the Juncker Plan. Nearly one third of these investments were destined for regions which were part of the cohesion and convergence goal. In all, the Juncker Plan was due to generate 375.5 billion € at the end of 2018. The EIB increased financing granted to counter global warming in 2018, bringing it up to around 30% of its volume of loans. It also invested as much as last year in innovation, i.e. 13.52 billion €. Loans to the exterior increased to reach 8.1 billion € in 2018, 1.6 billion € of which went to projects in Sub-Saharan Africa... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Berlinale 2019



The 69th edition of the international cinema festival in Berlin, the Berlinale is taking place in the Germany capital from 7th to 17th February with French actor Juliette Binoche as Chair of the Jury... [Read more](#)

Festival of Light in Reykjavik



From 7th to 10th February the Winter Lights Festival will be taking place in the Icelandic capital Reykjavik. With lighting installations, exhibitions, and sporting events the festival celebrates both the winter world and the return of light after a long period of obscurity... [Read more](#)

Women artists in Vienna



Until 19th May the Belvedere Palace in Vienna is running a retrospective on Viennese modernism and other artistic movements at the start of the 20th century, such as Expressionism. By showing the works by women artists who contributed to the movement but who were then forgotten, the museum aims to refresh the way Viennese modernism is viewed and to tell how these women organised to become educated and to win renown, whilst the education and artists' associations were not open to them... [Read more](#)

Vasarely at the Pompidou Centre



The first biggest French retrospective devoted to Victor Vasarely, the father of optic art is running at the Pompidou Centre from 6th February to 6th May with 300 works, objects and documents... [Read more](#)

The Golden Dutch Century



On the occasion of the permanent collection of the "Dutch School" and as part of the Rembrandt year, and until 19th May, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium is devoting two temporary exhibitions to the portraits of the Van Campen family by Frans Hals and drawings and prints from the XVIIth Dutch century... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



4th February
Brussels
EU-Arab League Ministerial Meeting



7th February
Bucharest
Informal meeting of Interior Ministers



8th February
Bucharest
Informal meeting of Justice Ministers



11
Feb

11th February
Brussels
Eurogroup Meeting

11
Feb

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

The Letter is also available in:



 I love the Robert Schuman Foundation's Letter

The Letter's Editorial Team :

Thomas de Robiano, Helen Levy ;
Victoire Bortoli, Chloé Hellot, Natasha Hroneska, Sophie van der Heijden
Editor-in-chief: Eric Maurice
Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin

Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

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.

You no longer wish to receive our letters. [{LINK}](#)