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JEAN MONNET MODULE:
MANAGING THE EU: TAXATION, ECONOMICS
AND GOVERNANCE



Newsletter

4th issue, Spring 2016 - Summer 2016

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What's on the EU's Agenda

Become familiar with some of the most significant topics on the agenda of the European Union, explored from the standpoint of its most prominent news portal, Euractiv. Multimedia features are available, with the possibility to opt for English, French and German, or, in some cases, one of the 24 official languages of the EU.

Brussels terrorist attacks

The 22nd of March 2016 brought a series of attacks in Brussels, with three suicide bombers targeting Zaventem Airport and Maalbeek metro station, in the European quarter. 36 victims have been announced to date and more than 300 people have been injured in the attacks claimed by the Islamic State terrorist group. Investigations are still carried out so to identify at least one more suspect appearing on CCTV cameras at Zaventem, while the terror alert in the Belgian capital remains at its highest. The international community has expressed outrage at the attacks and security has been boosted throughout the world. Meanwhile, Brussels is striving to recover and resume the use of its largest international airport. Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/brussels-attacks>





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Brexit

Brexit - the EU-UK Agreement in a nutshell

The potential departure of the UK from the European Union has prompted substantial negotiations between David Cameron's conservative government and Brussels, yielding a framework agreement meant to be implemented if Britain informs the EU that its decision is to stay within the European family. The deal struck unanimously by the European Council on 19th February 2016 is explained by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker with optimism: "The deal we have agreed now is a fair one, a fair one for Britain, a fair one for the other Member States, a fair one for the European Union. It is fair, it is also legally sound. The deal responds to all the concerns of the United Kingdom, and respects the basic principles of our Union. At the same time it safeguards the integrity of the single market and the cohesion of the Eurozone. This deal does not deepen cracks in our Union but builds bridges." Four major areas are covered by the agreement, i.e. economic governance, competitiveness, subsidiarity and social benefits & free movement.

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/news/2016/02/20160219_en.htm





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Brexit - the points of the EU-UK Agreement



The agreement concluded between the UK and the European Union, meant to enable British Prime Minister David Cameron to adopt a pro-membership stance, unlike some of his senior party members, contains several points of interest, whose impact is worthy of our analysis. With regard to economic governance, the British position has been to acknowledge a clear-cut distinction between member states of the Eurozone and those opting out of it, in the light of the special interests of the City of London. In the area of competitiveness, the amount of regulations on businesses on the part of the Commission is meant to be reduced, while fostering enhanced competitiveness on the Single Market. Furthermore, the matter of subsidiarity, sovereignty, or better yet, of “more Europe” is clarified in the case of Britain, whose commitment to this endeavour is therefore denied. Last but not least, the reduction of social benefits of EU workers in Britain is agreed upon amid reluctance on the part of newer member states and with an eye on the challenge this poses on free movement. Such have been the results of the tense negotiations conducted between the two parties, endowed with an irreversible juridical nature.

Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/feb/02/eu-deal-key-points-what-cameron-wanted-and-what-he-got>

Brexit - the referendum

The date of the Brexit referendum has been announced for the 23rd of June, with the UK electorate deciding on the crucial matter of British membership. The question approved by Parliament will be as such: ‘Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?’ This differs from the usual approach in referenda, where the words ‘yes’ and ‘no’ are most commonly found as options for citizens; instead, the ballots will read ‘Remain a member of the European Union’ and ‘Leave the European Union’, in an attempt to render the approach as unbiased as possible. UK and Gibraltar citizens will be eligible to cast their votes, in what is known as the second British referendum pertaining to EC/EU membership, with the first supporting the latter in the consultation of 1975, i.e. two years after Britain joined the Community. The campaign period, in official terms, will span from the 15th of April to the 23rd of June.

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>





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Brexit - where key actors stand

With Brexit looming on the horizon, the major political parties in the UK have made a point of taking a stand, or quite the contrary. Hence, on the pro-membership side we find PM David Cameron, with some support from his cabinet, amid the neutrality adopted by the Conservative Party per se. The Labour Party, the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru and the Liberal-Democrats have pledged their support for EU membership. Big business representatives, as well as the British Chambers of Commerce, have mostly spoken in favour of staying in the EU. The 'Britain Stronger in Europe' group is responsible for most campaigning in this respect, with former Marks and Spencer chairman Lord Rose leading the team. On the other hand, the against side has such prominent voices as London mayor Boris Johnson and the ever-vocal UKIP leader Nigel Farage. Five cabinet members and about half of the conservative MPs have also expressed their intent to vote against UK membership. With polls showing no clear tendency at this time, the debate is more heated than ever.

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>



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