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EU integration process in CEE countries	<p>WESTERN BALKANS: MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION</p> <p>Western Balkan countries hoping to join the EU in the medium term still have a number of obstacles to overcome, such as the economic crisis, corruption and the need to guarantee media freedom. On 10 March MEPs debate annual reports outlining the progress of Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia towards EU accession and the integration of Kosovo. Check out our infocharts for economic and social data on current and potential candidate countries from the region.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150309STO32486/html/Western-Balkans-measuring-progress-towards-European-integration</p>
Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership	<p>Juncker's investment plan – What think tanks are thinking</p> <p>The European Union is moving closer to creating a new investment fund, a flagship idea of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker aimed at bolstering economic growth and creating jobs. On 10 March, EU finance ministers gave an initial go-ahead for the planned financial facility, called the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), by agreeing their position for negotiations on the proposal with the European Parliament (EP).</p> <p>http://epthinktank.eu/2015/03/14/junckers-investment-plan-what-think-tanks-are-thinking/</p>
General development of the EU	<p>Community-led local development</p> <p>Recent briefing of the European Parliament provides clarifications regarding Community-led local development (CLLD).</p> <p>http://insideurope.eu/node/545#sthash.DyTi9LyC.dpuf</p> <p>STUDY: Strategic coherence of Cohesion Policy - Comparison of the 2007-13 and 2014-20 Programming Periods</p> <p>This Executive Summary has been taken from a recent study of the European Parliament's Directorate General for Internal Policies on Strategic coherence of Cohesion Policy - Comparison of the 2007-13 and 2014-20 Programming Periods.</p> <p>http://insideurope.eu/node/544#sthash.lodN2eLh.dpuf</p> <p>EU still not using its full potential to shape international politics</p> <p>The EU has yet to exploit its full potential to shape the international and security environment, says Parliament in a resolution passed on Thursday.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150306IPR31833/html/EU-still-not-using-its-full-potential-to-shape-international-politics-MEPs-say</p> <p>Commission calls for determined action ahead of the European Council</p> <p>President Juncker and First Vice-President Timmermans presented the Commission's views on Energy Union, economic governance, investment, TTIP and the situation in Ukraine and Libya ahead of the March European Council in the European Parliament.</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/news/2015/03/20150311_en.htm</p> <p>Investment Plan for Europe: Italy to contribute €8 billion</p>

	<p>Italy announced that it would contribute €8 billion to projects benefiting from finance by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), which is the core element of the €315 billion Investment Plan for Europe. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4588_en.htm</p> <p>Europe 2020 Strategy - How is the European Union progressing towards its Europe 2020 targets? The Europe 2020 strategy, adopted by the European Council in June 2010, aims at establishing a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy with high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-15-4525_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to EU institutions and their Functioning</p>	<p>Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of automotive components manufacturer TRW by rival ZF, subject to conditions The European Commission has approved the acquisition of the global automotive component manufacturer TRW of the US by its rival ZF Friedrichshafen of Germany under the EU Merger Regulation. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4600_en.htm?locale=en</p> <p>EU Trade Policy Committee Experts on Services and Investments meet in Riga On 13 March, the Informal Meeting of the Trade Policy Committee Experts on Services and Investments took place in Riga. The participants discussed one of the priorities of the Latvian Presidency – Digital Europe, the importance of digital economy, and how it influences international trade flows. https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/927-eu-trade-policy-committee-experts-on-services-and-investments-meet-in-riga</p> <p>Ministers discuss the role of transport sector in the competitiveness of the EU During the meeting, the EU Member States expressed their views on railway market, transport policy, aviation and other issues. https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/924-ministers-discuss-the-role-of-transport-sector-in-the-competitiveness-of-the-eu</p> <p>THINGS WE LEARNT IN PLENARY: CAPPING PAYMENT CARD FEES, ASSESSING CANDIDATE COUNTRIES, DEBATING NEMTSOV During the plenary session that took place from 9 to 12 March in Strasbourg, MEPs supported the legislation on capping credit card fees and warned candidate countries to get their act together if they want to progress on their path towards the EU. Parliament also debated the murder of Russian opposition politician Boris Nemtsov and called for greater efforts to abolish the gender pay gap. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150310STO33152/html/Things-we-learnt-in-plenary-capping-card-fees-candidate-countries-Nemtsov</p> <p>EP THIS WEEK: €315 BLN INVESTMENT PLAN, REFUGEES AND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY MEPs will this week focus on the €315 billion investment plan to boost growth in Europe, discussing with experts its three pillars: an investment fund, an advisory hub and a project pipeline. The foreign affairs committee will discuss the refugee situation in the Middle East with UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl, while the EP will also prepare for International Women's Day on Sunday and for next week's plenary session. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150227STO28201/html/EP-this-week-%E2%82%AC315-bln-investment-plan-refugees-and-International-Women%E2%80%99s-Day</p>
<p>Introduction to EU law</p>	<p>Ministers for Justice agree on next steps for the data protection regulation</p>

	<p>The Council reached a partial general approach on the data protection regulation. Ministers agreed that the "one stop shop" mechanism should only play a role in important cross-border cases and will provide for cooperation and joint-decision making between several data protection authorities concerned. https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/925-ministers-for-justice-agree-on-next-steps-for-the-data-protection-regulation</p> <p>Insolvency proceedings: new rules to promote economic recovery The new regulation improves the procedural framework for determining jurisdiction. The concept of centre of main interest is further clarified to provide useful guidance to all those concerned and increase legal certainty. Moreover, the new rules contain a set of safeguards aimed at preventing abusive forum shopping. The Council will enable the European Parliament to adopt the text at second reading at its session of May or June 2015. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/03/12-insolvency-proceedings-new-rules-to-promote-economic-recovery/</p> <p>New EU rules for safer and more eco-friendly lorries European Parliament gave its final approval to new EU rules for safer and more eco-friendly lorries (Directive 2013/0195), put forward by the Commission. These rules will allow manufacturers to develop more aerodynamic lorries which will reduce fuel consumption by 7-10%, cut emissions of greenhouse gases, and also enhance road safety. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-15-4586_en.htm</p>
<p>Decentralised management of EU funds</p>	<p>Operational Programmes - State of Play The European Commission is continuing its analysis of draft Cohesion Policy Operational Programmes (OPs) from the 7 remaining countries who have not yet completed their investment plans for EU Structural and Investment Funds for the 2014-2020 programming period. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/newsroom/news/2015/03/operational-programmes</p> <p>Budgets Committee approves EU aid for redundant workers in Greece and Ireland Almost 1,500 workers made redundant in Greece and Ireland in 2014 should receive EU aid worth €11.3 million to help them find jobs, the Budgets Committee recommended on Monday. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) aid still has to be approved by Parliament as a whole. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/newsroom/content/20150316IPR34701/html/Budgets-Committee-approves-EU-aid-for-redundant-workers-in-Greece-and-Ireland</p> <p>Eurogroup statement on follow-up to the 8 December Eurogroup statement on Draft Budgetary Plans The Eurogroup assessed progress made with respect to the implementation of draft budgetary plans (DBPs) of all euro area Member States as well as the additional budgetary and structural reform commitments made by certain Member States. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/03/150309-eurogroup-press-statement/</p> <p>Breakdown of Structural and Cohesion Funds by Thematic Objective In 2014-2020 Structural and Cohesion Funds are to be disbursed according to thematic concentration in individual programmes on a limited number of priorities. Eleven Thematic Objectives (TOs), covering Europe 2020 priorities for</p>

	<p>Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth have been established. TO 1 covers R&D target of Europe 2020. TO 4 - TO7 cover climate change/energy target. TO 8 covers employment target, TO 9 covers poverty target and TO 10 covers education target of Europe 2020.</p> <p>http://insideeurope.eu/node/541</p>
<p>Multi-level governance</p>	<p>EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION JOIN FORCES TO ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH & INNOVATION STRATEGIES FOR SMART SPECIALISATION IN EU REGIONS</p> <p>At a conference organised in Seville on the challenges and implementation of RIS3, the President underlined that stimulating the development of "Smart specialisation strategies" at regional level will be instrumental to ensuring a territorial approach when narrowing the "Innovation Divide" between and within the EU Member States.</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/pages/research-and-innovation-strategies-for-smart-specialisation-in-eu-regions.aspx</p> <p>BRAND MILANO: HOW TO DEVELOP THE BRAND OF A CITY FROM ITS SYMBOLS.</p> <p>Does a city that is already well renowned around the globe need to work hard to develop a distinctive identity? It does if it wants to adapt to the social, economic, cultural and technological transformations that are changing our cities. In the wake of the city of Milan has been working towards the definition of its new branding strategy.</p> <p>http://www.eukn.eu/news/detail/brand-milano-how-to-develop-the-brand-of-a-city-from-its-symbols/</p>
<p>Introduction to different negotiation chapters</p> <p><i>Chapter 1: Free movement of goods</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 2: Freedom of movement for workers</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 3: Right of establishment and freedom to provide services</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 4: Free movement of capital</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 5: Public procurement</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 6: Company Law</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 7: Intellectual property law</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 8: Competition</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 9: Financial services</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 10: Information society and media</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 11: Agriculture and rural development</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 12: Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 13: Fisheries</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 14: Transport policy</i></p>	<p>PARLIAMENT DEMANDS BINDING HUMAN RIGHTS CLAUSES IN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS</p> <p>MEPs called for binding human rights clauses in all EU international agreements in a vote on Thursday on the EU's report on human rights and democracy in 2013. Guaranteeing common standards for the reception of refugees, tackling Russia's "continuing slide towards authoritarian rule" and adopting a coherent approach to human rights in China were among the issues included in the resolution.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150306IPR32083/html/Parliament-demands-binding-human-rights-clauses-in-international-agreements</p> <p>COUNTER-TERRORISM COOPERATION WITH ARAB LEAGUE MUST RESPECT FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS</p> <p>Parliament hailed counter-terrorism cooperation between the EU and the League of Arab States in a vote on Thursday, but stressed it must not compromise the rule of law, human and fundamental rights. The recently-signed memorandum of understanding between the two organisations must be made public, it added.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150306IPR31838/html/Counter-terrorism-cooperation-with-Arab-League-must-respect-fundamental-rights</p> <p>ENERGY UNION AND FOREIGN POLICY: EP PRIORITIES AHEAD OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL</p> <p>MEPs gave their input to the upcoming summit in Wednesday's debate with Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, and Latvian Secretary of State for European Affairs Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150306IPR31853/html/Energy-Union-and-foreign-policy-EP-</p>

<p>Chapter 15: Energy</p> <p>Chapter 16: Taxation</p> <p>Chapter 17: Economic and monetary policy</p> <p>Chapter 18: Statistics</p> <p>Chapter 19: Social policy and employment</p> <p>Chapter 20: Enterprise and industrial policy</p> <p>Chapter 21: Trans-European networks</p> <p>Chapter 22: Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments</p> <p>Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights</p> <p>Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security</p> <p>Chapter 25: Research and development</p> <p>Chapter 26: Education and culture</p> <p>Chapter 27: Environment</p> <p>Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection</p> <p>Chapter 29: Customs union</p> <p>Chapter 30: External relations</p> <p>Chapter 31: Foreign, security and defence policy</p> <p>Chapter 32: Financial control</p> <p>Chapter 33: Financial and budgetary provisions</p>	<p>priorities-ahead-of-the-European-Council</p> <p>EU SEMESTER 2015: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>Parliament voted on Wednesday to back the European Commission's approach to stimulating growth and job creation, following a debate on "European Semester" coordination of EU countries' economic policies in 2015, with Commission Vice-president Valdis Dombrovskis and Commissioners Marianne Thyssen (social affairs) and Elzbieta Bieńkowska (single market and SMEs). http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150306IPR31721/html/EU-semester-2015-recommendations-for-economic-and-social-improvement</p> <p>EBOLA CRISIS: "WE REALLY NEED TO LEARN OUR LESSONS"</p> <p>The Ebola outbreak wreaking havoc in a number of West African countries since last year has been the most lethal one since the disease was discovered in 1976. On 4 March, the EP's Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) unit organised a hearing with experts to talk about how Ebola should be tackled, the need for research and what lessons should be drawn from the current crisis. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150304STO31006/html/Ebola-crisis-We-really-need-to-learn-our-lessons</p> <p>BROWSE, READ, EXPLORE: 100 BOOKS ON EUROPE</p> <p>Thought you knew everything about Europe? Think again! The Parliament has selected 100 books, studies and academic works that offer insight in the philosophy behind the European project. The aim of the list featuring authors from all over Europe is to present the ideas and people behind European integration, which may also help to find solutions to the challenges Europe is facing now. The list is available on a dedicated website which can be searched in various ways. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150303STO29113/html/Browse-read-explore-100-books-on-Europe</p> <p>Over 97% of foods in EU contain pesticide residues within legal limits</p> <p>More than 97% of food samples evaluated by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) contain pesticide residue levels that fall within legal limits, with just under 55% of samples free of detectable traces of these chemicals. The findings are part of EFSA's 2013 annual report on pesticide residues in food, which includes the results for almost 81,000 food samples from 27 EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/150312.htm</p> <p>New EU rules for safer and more eco-friendly lorries</p> <p>The European Parliament gave its final approval to new EU rules for safer and more eco-friendly lorries (Directive 2013/0195), put forward by the Commission. These rules will allow manufacturers to develop more aerodynamic lorries which will reduce fuel consumption by 7-10%, cut emissions of greenhouse gases, and also enhance road safety. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-15-4586_en.htm?locale=en</p>
<p>Specific issues relating to the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European arrest warrant, • Stockholm programme: Europe of rights, Europe of justice, Europe that protects, Access to Europe, 	<p>WORK HARDER FOR GENDER EQUALITY, SAY MEPS</p> <p>Policies must change to achieve equality between women and men, says Parliament in a non-legislative resolution passed by 441 votes to 205 with 52 abstentions on Tuesday. Despite progress on some gender inequality issues, much remains to be done to reduce pay gaps, remove "glass ceilings" on women's</p>

<p>Europe of solidarity, Europe in a globalised world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third pillar: the pillar devoted to police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, which came under Title VI of the Treaty on European Union • Recognition of professional qualifications 	<p>careers, remedy their lack of economic independence, improve their work/life balance, including parental leave, and protect their rights and access to contraception and abortion.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150306IPR31740/html/Work-harder-for-gender-equality-say-MEPs</p>
<p>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy).</p>	<p>STUDY: Strategic coherence of Cohesion Policy - Comparison of the 2007-13 and 2014-20 Programming Periods</p> <p>This Executive Summary has been taken from a recent study of the European Parliament's Directorate General for Internal Policies on Strategic coherence of Cohesion Policy - Comparison of the 2007-13 and 2014-20 Programming Periods. The study was prepared by Stefan Kah (EPRC), Carlos Mendez (EPRC), John Bachtler (EPRC), and Stephen Miller (EPRC). - See more at: http://insideurope.eu/node/544#sthash.sbaAWy0d.dpuf http://insideurope.eu/node/544</p> <p>UKIP CLAIMS EU CARBON CUTTING PLANS ARE A MADNESS THAT WILL STOP CROPS GROWING</p> <p>The attack was the latest from Ukip on EU-wide plans to tackle climate change by cutting greenhouse gas emissions, which scientists say are the primary driver for rising global temperatures. A major report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last year indicated crop levels would likely fall if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, which could lead to more floods, droughts and other extreme weather events.</p> <p>http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/13/ukip-claims-eu-carbon-cutting-plans-are-a-madness-that-will-stop-crops-growing</p> <p>NATO, UKRAINE AND THE EU ARMY PLAN</p> <p>The EU was founded to bring peace and prosperity to the peoples of western Europe after a century of catastrophic wars, by co-operation, pooling of sovereignty and free trade. Its first objective, as stated in the Lisbon treaty, is "to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples". On the global stage its role should be to promote those same principles, not revert to militaristic tub-thumping. Jean-Claude Juncker's demand for a European army flies in the face of those principles.</p> <p>http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/09/nato-ukraine-and-the-eu-army-plan</p> <p>EUROZONE CALLS ON GREECE TO COME UP WITH CREDIBLE REFORMS</p> <p>Greece's eurozone creditors have stepped up the pressure on Athens over reforms that might unleash billions more in bailout loans and save the country from bankruptcy over the next three months. Finance ministers from the single currency area broke off a discussion about Greece on Monday after little more than one hour in Brussels. The Greek finance minister, Yannis Varoufakis, was told to come up with what the creditors view as a realistic programme of economic and fiscal reforms.</p> <p>http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/09/eurozone-greece-credible-economic-reforms-brussels-eu</p> <p>EURO SLIDES ON EVE OF ECB STIMULUS PROGRAMME</p> <p>The pound has hit a seven-year high against the euro, bringing cheer for British holidaymakers but underscoring fears about the fragile European single currency as markets prepare for a flood of emergency electronic cash. The euro sank to</p>

	<p>€1.387 against the pound and also sold off sharply against the dollar before next week's launch of a €1.1tn stimulus programme in the Eurozone. The European Central Bank is to start pumping €60bn a month into the euro economy as the first phase in its quantitative easing programme. The scheme is intended to help get the Eurozone back on the path to sustained growth.</p> <p>http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/mar/06/euro-slides-on-eve-of-ecb-stimulus-programme</p>
<p>Promotion of EU upcoming events and news</p>	<p>GROW YOUR REGION: DELIVERING SMART SPECIALISATION AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CLUSTERS</p> <p>Using interactive formats, this conference will provide a unique opportunity for regional policy makers and cluster actors to share experiences on how smart specialisation strategies and clusters can help transform your region and drive growth.</p> <p>http://insideurope.eu/node/538</p> <p>Mar 22ND 5th European Summit of Regions and Cities</p> <p>The 5th European Summit of Regions and Cities was organised by the Committee of the Regions in partnership with the City of Copenhagen and the Capital Region of Denmark. It brought together about 700 participants, half of which elected regional or local representatives, with a view to ensuring that sustainable urban development features more prominently on the political agenda.</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/summits/Pages/copenhagen-2012.aspx</p> <p>Mar 22ND 3rd European Summit of Regions and Cities</p> <p>The Committee of the Regions (CoR) set out its vision for a the future of Europe today with a clarion call for a new bond of trust between the EU and its citizens, more investment in policies crucial to future generations, such as environmental protection and global warming, more decentralisation and more respect for local and regional diversity, identity and autonomy.</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/summits/Pages/cor-in-rome.aspx</p> <p>10TH EUROPEAN ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM EU FUNDS 2015</p> <p>Date 23 to 25 March 2015</p> <p>Location Berlin, Germany</p> <p>The European Academy for Taxes, Economics & Law organizes its 10th European annual symposium on EU Funds on delivering smart performance and results through ESI Funds 2014-2020. This annual forum brings together around 500 EU Funds experts from all over Europe and promotes an exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice between EU Institutions and Member States with regard to the correct management and control of EU Funds.</p> <p>http://www.euroacad.eu/events/event/10th-european-annual-symposium-eu-funds-2015-delivering-results-and-achieving-growth-through-europe.html</p>