

**Letter n°1039 of Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

## What kind of "European sovereignty" after the Versailles Declaration?

[Yves Bertoncini - 10 Oct 2023](#)

Eighteen months after European leaders made a political commitment to strengthening the European Union's military, energy and economic sovereignty, substantial progress has been made, which now needs to be taken further.



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### ■ Front page! :



#### Europe: war looms ever closer

Hamas's attack on Israel demonstrates once again that war is back, the ultimate expression of the law of force in the service of the fait accompli. To gain the respect of increasingly unbridled actors, Europeans cannot ignore the military issue, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani. The best guarantee of peace, of our interests and of our alliances, is to be prepared to use military means, while wishing we did not have to do so. [Read more](#)

### ■ Elections :



## Towards a return to office for the Christian Social Party (CSV)

The Christian Social Party (PCS/CSV), led by Luc Frieden, was the big winner in the legislative elections held in Luxembourg on 8 October. It won 29.21% of the vote and 21 seats. It beat outgoing Prime Minister Xavier Bettel's Democratic Party (PD/DP), which won 18.7% of the vote and 14 seats. It could form a coalition with this party (35 of the 60 seats in parliament) or with the Socialist Party (32 seats). [Read more](#)

## ■ European Council :



### Declaration of heads of State and Government

Meeting in Granada on 6 October, the 27 Heads of State and Government began discussions on the broad political guidelines for the European Union in the coming years, notably to strengthen strategic sovereignty, enlarge by reforming the institutions, and face up to challenges such as climate change and immigration. They pledged to strengthen European defence capabilities and deepen multilateral relations with partner states. [Read more - Other link](#)

## ■ Commission :



### Investigation into Chinese electric vehicle subsidies

On 4 October, the Commission launched an investigation to determine whether Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers may have benefited from illegal public subsidies creating unfair competition with European manufacturers. The procedure, announced by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during her State of the Union speech, is due to be completed within 13 months. [Read more](#)



## Four technologies critical to economic security

On 3 October, the Commission proposed to assess the risks associated with four areas of technological development considered to be particularly sensitive: semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and biotechnologies. The Commission will open a dialogue with the Member States to assess the security risks caused by the dual civilian and military use of these technologies, as well as to measure the risks of technology leakage and the sovereign control of European States over their development. [Read more](#)



## Vice-President and Commissioner for Climate Action

On 9 October, the Council appointed the Dutchman Wopke Hoekstra to the post of Commissioner for Climate Action, replacing Frans Timmermans. His appointment had been approved on 5 October by the Parliament, which had at the same time given its consent to the new responsibility of Maros Sefcovic, as executive vice-president in charge of the Green Deal for Europe. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Parliament :



## Revision of the multiannual financial framework

On 3 October, MEPs adopted the mid-term review regulation for the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework. The proposal adds €10 billion to the €65.8 billion already proposed by the Commission, in particular to finance the new Strategic Technology Platform for Europe (STEP) and crisis response capabilities. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Protection of journalists and the media

On 3 October, MEPs adopted the regulation on media freedom. The text stipulates that Member States must guarantee the plurality of the media and prohibit any form of interference in the editorial lines of the media, as well as limiting as far as possible the use of spyware against journalists and the forced disclosure of sources. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



### Instrument to counter economic coercion

On 3 October, MEPs adopted the draft regulation creating a European instrument for combating economic and commercial coercion. This regulation creates a European framework to deal with measures of economic coercion imposed by third countries. It will enter into force once definitively adopted by the Council. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



### Adoption of green bonds

On 5 October, MEPs adopted the Green Bonds Regulation, which establishes uniform rules for companies wishing to certify the ecological nature of their activity when issuing bonds, through European certification. The rules of this certification will be aligned with those of the European green taxonomy and will guarantee investors recognition of the ecological nature of their investment. Issuers wishing to obtain the label will be required to provide a set of information to public control bodies. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



### Protection against exposure to asbestos

On 2 October, MEPs adopted the directive on the protection of workers from exposure to asbestos. The text reduces authorised exposure levels, specifies equipment standards for workers in contact with asbestos and calls for the modernisation of detection equipment. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Council :



### Agreement on the migration crisis management mechanism

On 4 October, the Member States reached an agreement in the Council on the crisis and force majeure regulation, the part of the Pact on Asylum and Immigration dedicated to crisis situations. A State facing a migratory crisis with a large number of arrivals will be able to call on European solidarity, which could involve moving people and processing their applications in another State, or providing financial aid. [Read more](#)



## Agreement on the reduction of fluorinated gas emissions

On 5 October, the Council and Parliament reached agreement on a regulation to reduce emissions of fluorinated gases, which contribute to global warming and the depletion of the ozone layer, and which are used in everyday appliances such as refrigerators. Consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) will have to be zero by 2050, the placing on the market of products containing fluorinated gases will be restricted, and a framework will be provided for sectors where it is not technically and economically possible to do without these gases. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Diplomacy :

### EUROPEAN POLITICAL COMMUNITY

## Meeting of the European Political Community

The leaders of 44 countries and European institutions meeting in Granada on 5 October for the third meeting of the European Political Community discussed the consequences of the war in Ukraine, energy sovereignty and technological developments. The Ukrainian President called for unity among Europeans in support of his country. On the sidelines of the summit, the President of the European Council, the French President and the German Chancellor met the Armenian Prime Minister and insisted on a peaceful resolution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, proposing that the two leaders meet in Brussels at the end of October. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Germany :



## Defeat for the government parties in Bavaria and Hesse

Elections were held in Bavaria and Hesse on 8 October to renew the Landtag. In Bavaria, the CSU came out ahead with 37% of the vote, enabling Minister-President Markus Söder to remain Minister-President. In Hesse, the CDU secured 35% of the vote, up 8 points on the 2018 elections, allowing Boris Rhein to retain his position as Minister-President. Chancellor Olaf Scholz's SPD lost 2 points in Bavaria and 5 points in Hesse. The far-right AfD achieved its best ever result for an election in the West, with 18% in Hesse and almost 15% in Bavaria. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Bulgaria :



## Meeting between Olaf Scholz and Nikolai Denkov

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz hosted Bulgarian Prime Minister Nikolai Denkov on 4 October. They discussed potential enlargement to the Western Balkans and the European Political Community summit. Olaf Scholz spoke out in favour of Bulgaria and Romania joining the Schengen area. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Spain :



## Launch of the private Miura 1 rocket

Spain's private aerospace company, PLD Space, successfully completed its first mission on 7 October when it launched MIURA 1, Europe's first private, reusable rocket, from the El Arenosillo test centre of the National Space Technology Institute in Huelva, Spain. Spain thus becomes the tenth country in the world to have access to space. [Read more](#)

## ■ Finland :



## Meeting with Emmanuel Macron

French President Emmanuel Macron hosted Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo on 4 October. The two leaders exchanged views on the European Union's priorities and bilateral cooperation in the fields of civil nuclear energy and defence. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Poland :



## Polls with one week to go

A week ahead of the parliamentary elections on 15 October, a poll published by the daily Gazeta Wyborcza puts the current governing Law and Justice party (PiS) in the lead in terms of voting intentions, with 30%, ahead of the Civic Coalition (25%). 22% of those questioned said they were still undecided. [Read more](#)

## ■ Czech Republic :



## Petr Pavel's speech to the European Parliament

On 4 October, Czech President Petr Pavel addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg. He stressed the importance of European support for Ukraine and the need to be prepared for attempts to destabilise European democracy in the run-up to the elections, urging us not to turn to simplistic solutions but to resolve political problems in all their complexity. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Romania :



### IMF report on the economy

The IMF said on 4 October that the Romanian economy had held up well against the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects of the Russian war in Ukraine, but that there was still room for improvement. Romania is currently experiencing economic growth, but a number of risks could undermine this. The IMF supports changes in fiscal policy and tax reform to better ensure the stability of the Romanian economy. [Read more](#)

## ■ Armenai :



### European Parliament resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh

In a resolution adopted on 5 October, MEPs considered that the situation of Armenians fleeing Nagorno-Karabakh constituted ethnic cleansing, and called on the European Union to take measures against Azerbaijan and to rethink its relationship with the country's authorities. On the same day, the Commission announced a doubling of humanitarian aid to Armenia and investment plans for the country's development. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



### Visit from the French Minister of Foreign Affairs

French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna visited Armenia on 3 October, where she met Prime Minister Nikol Pachinian and his counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan. She agreed to future contracts for the delivery of military equipment to Yerevan, and reasserted France's commitment to Armenia. The minister held talks with Armenian refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh. [Read more](#)



## Ratification of accession to the International Criminal Court

On 3 October, the Armenian parliament ratified the Rome Statute, thereby confirming the country's membership of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The arrest warrant issued by the ICC against Russian President Vladimir Putin has thus become applicable in the country traditionally allied with Russia. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## UN humanitarian aid

On 3 October, the UN stepped up its humanitarian aid efforts in Armenia to deal with the exodus in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. More than 100,000 refugees have fled to Armenia. In addition, the UN is having to treat more Armenians after an explosion at a fuel depot in Nagorno-Karabakh on 25 September killed more than 170 people and injured more than 200 others. [Read more](#)

## ■ Moldova :



## European Parliament calls for the opening of accession negotiations

On 5 October, MEPs called for the opening of accession negotiations for Moldova before the end of the year. They believe that the country has demonstrated its ability to meet the Commission's requirements, and that the European Union should respond favourably to these efforts and determination by stepping up its financial and technical assistance to the country. Moldova was granted candidate country status in June 2022. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Ukraine :



## Visit to Kyiv by the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement

On 3 October, Ihor Zhovkva, Deputy Head of the Cabinet of the Ukrainian President, met the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Oliver Varhelyi. They discussed Ukraine's progress in implementing the European Commission's recommendations on its status as a candidate country. [Read more](#)

## ■ OECD :



## Finalisation of the Agreement on the Taxation of Multinationals

On 5 October, the OECD finalised the agreement on the sharing of profits by multinationals. The instrument, which is now open to ratification by the organisation's member states, is designed to ensure that multinational companies pay a minimum level of income tax in each jurisdiction of the countries in which they operate. [Read more](#)

## ■ Studies/Reports :



### Report on the Union's 2022 budget

On 5 October, the European Court of Auditors published its report on the EU budget for 2022. Expenditure amounted to €243.3 billion. According to the auditors, 4.2% of this should not have been financed, mainly due to reimbursements made for cohesion policy. The report notes that a record level of expenditure committed in 2022 remains to be settled, notably due to the recovery and resilience plans. [Read more](#)



### World trade forecast

On 5 October, the World Trade Organisation lowered its forecast for growth in world merchandise trade in 2023 from 1.7% to 0.8%, due to a combination of inflation, restrictive monetary policy and the war in Ukraine. For 2024, the growth projection remains virtually unchanged at 3.3%. [Read more](#)

## ■ Nobel Prize :



### Nobel Prizes go to Europeans

The 2023 Nobel Prizes honoured a number of Europeans, among others. In medicine, the Hungarian Katalin Kariko; in physics, the French-Swedish Anne L'Huillier, the French Pierre Agostini and the Austrian Ferenc Krausz; in chemistry, the Franco-Tunisian-American Mounji Bawendi. The Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Jon Fosse from Norway. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Eurostat :



## Decline in Unemployment

On 2 October, Eurostat published its unemployment figures for August 2023. The unemployment rate in the European Union was 5.9%, compared with 6% in July. It was 6.4%, compared with 6.5% in July in the eurozone. [Read more](#)

## ■ Culture :



### Van Gogh at the Musée d'Orsay

The Musée d'Orsay in Paris is devoting an exhibition to Van Gogh until 4 February 2024. The exhibition highlights the works produced by the artist in Auvers-sur-Oise during the last two months of his life. This short period was a turning point for Van Gogh, who developed a new artistic style. [Read more](#)



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PALAZZO  
STROZZI

### Anish Kapoor in Florence

Until 4 February, Palazzo Strozzi is hosting an exhibition entitled "Untrue Unreal" featuring works by Anish Kapoor, an artist specialising in installation and conceptual art. The exhibition features monumental works, including one designed specifically for the palace's Renaissance courtyard. [Read more](#)



### John Lavery in Dublin

Until 14 January, the National Gallery in Dublin is showing the works of Sir John Lavery, an Irish painter at the turn of the 20th century and the only Irishman to be granted freedom in Dublin and Belfast between the wars. The exhibition retraces his impressions and encounters during a life full of travel. [Read more](#)



## Max Oppenheimer à Vienne

The Leopold Museum in Vienna is devoting an exhibition to the artist Max Oppenheimer until 25 February 2024. The exhibition explores the artist's artistic universe and his close links with members of the Viennese Expressionist circle, including Kokoschka and Schiele. [Read more](#)

## ***U-jazdowski***

### Malgorzata Turewicz Lafranchi in Warsaw

Until 14 January 2024, Polish artist Malgorzata Turewicz Lafranchi is presenting her works on the theme of 'entanglement' at the contemporary art centre at Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw. Using a minimalist, geometric style, the artist explores the entanglement of individuals and elements of a larger whole, playing with scale. [Read more](#)



### "The Lost Mirror" at the Prado

The exhibition "El espejo perdido. Judíos y Conversos en la España Medieval" at the Prado Museum in Madrid. The works depict portraits of Jews and "conversos" (Jews who converted to Catholicism) painted by Spanish Christians between 1285 and 1492. The exhibition highlights the relationship between Christians and Jews in the Middle Ages. [Read more](#)



### Festival Lumière in Lyon

The city of Lyon is organising its annual film festival, the Festival Lumière, from 14 to 22 October. As it does every year, the Festival Lumière celebrates cinematic masterpieces through film screenings, retrospectives and other events. The Festival will also be the occasion for the Lumière Prize to be awarded to an influential figure in the world of cinema. [Read more](#)

 10-11 October 2023

**EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Meeting** (Oman)

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 10 October 2023

**Foreign Affairs Meeting**

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 15 October 2023

**Parliamentary Elections** (Poland)

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 16 October 2023

**Eurogroup Meeting** (Luxembourg)

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 16 October 2023

**Meeting of Environment Ministers** (Luxembourg)



## The Letter n°1039

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