

# LA LETTRE SCHUMAN

This week's European news

**Letter n°1075 of Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

## **A "Commissioner responsible for defence issues" (Institutional reforms and reflections based on the EDC Treaty)**

[Luigi Gianniti - 09 Jul 2024](#)

The question of European defence is more topical than ever: the crises and conflicts underway on the borders of the European Union pose geostrategic challenges that are not new however. To a certain extent, the EDC Treaty in 1952 attempted to respond to these challenges. At a time when we are (re)inventing European defence, we need to take another look at this text.



[Elections](#) | [Foundation](#) | [Commission](#) | [Parliament](#) | [Court of Justice](#) | [ECB](#) |

[European Agencies](#) | [Germany](#) | [Bulgaria](#) | [Spain](#) | [Greece](#) | [The Netherlands](#) |

[Poland](#) | [UK](#) | [Council of Europe](#) | [NATO](#) | [Studies/Reports](#) | [Culture](#) |

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

### ■ Elections :



#### **A hung Assembly**

The 577-seat National Assembly has no party with an absolute majority following the results of the legislative elections on 7 July. Emmanuel Macron's gamble on dissolution on 9 June has been lost, but by less than might have been expected on the evening of the first round on 30

June. The left-wing forces united under the banner of the New Popular Front (NFP) won 178 seats, the coalition of the presidential majority, Ensemble! 150 and the Rassemblement National 125. Turnout was particularly high at 66.63%. Head of State Emmanuel Macron will have to form a coalition, and representatives will have to find a way of working together that is unusual for them, but so common among their European partners. [Read more](#)

## ■ Foundation :



### The Schuman Network, ideas for Europe

The Schuman Network is a Foundation initiative which aims to promote the sharing of ideas at European level. With 21 members from 13 European countries, the Schuman Network is a forum for pooling research on topical European issues. Since its launch, over 110 studies have been published. [Read more](#)



### Everything you need to know about the new composition of the European Parliament

In the European elections held from 6 to 9 June, Europeans elected 720 MEPs for the next five years. The Foundation has set up a website to help you understand the role and powers of the Parliament, who is elected and the composition of the Parliament's bodies. [Read more](#)



### European recovery plans: figures and priorities

In response to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Union set up a €672.5 billion recovery fund. On 1 July, the Commission received Slovenia's third request for payment of €257.6 million. On the 2nd, it approved an assessment of Slovakia's fourth payment claim of €799 million. On the 3rd, it approved an assessment of Italy's fifth payment claim of €11 billion and an assessment of Belgium's first payment claim of €658 million. On the 4th, the Commission received Portugal's fifth payment claim of €1.65 billion and Cyprus's third payment claim of €89.2 million. The Foundation offers you an interactive map of the plans country by country, to find out the amounts and timetables. [Read more](#)



## Publication of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2024"

The Foundation has published the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2024". Eminent representatives from the worlds of politics, business, research and diplomacy paint a portrait of a Union that is tracing the contours of environmental and digital sovereignty and projecting itself into a new geopolitical era, full of new challenges, particularly for its industry and defence. The book is available in French and English, in paper and digital versions. Order your copy now! [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Commission :



### Imports of battery-powered vehicles from China

On 4 July, the Commission imposed temporary offsetting duties on imports of battery electric vehicles from China, after concluding that these imports benefited from unfair subsidies threatening European manufacturers. Consultations with the Chinese government are continuing to find a solution that complies with WTO rules and addresses European concerns. Individual duties range from 17.4% to 37.6% for major Chinese producers, with a weighted average duty of 20.8% for other cooperating producers. [Read more](#)



### Meta accused of breaching the DMA

On 1 July, the Commission informed Meta of its preliminary findings that its 'pay or consent' advertising model does not comply with the Digital Market Regulation (DMA). According to the Commission, this binary choice forces users to consent to the combination of their personal data without offering them another less personalised but equivalent version of Meta's social networks. [Read more](#)



## Investments in the Western Balkans

On 2 July, the Commission announced the adoption of new investment measures for the Western Balkans, mobilising €1.2 billion. They concern eight projects in the fields of water supply and sanitation, wastewater treatment, rail transport, and innovation and ecological transformation in small and medium-sized enterprises. [Read more](#)

## ■ Parliament :



### Ongoing formation of groups

On 3 July, the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group elected Nicola Procaccini (Fratelli d'Italia, Italy) and Joachim Brudziński (PiS, Poland) as co-presidents. On 4 July, the Left Group (GUE/NGL) announced that it had agreed to integrate the Movimento 5 Stelle, in the form of a six-month period with observer status. It reappointed Manon Aubry (LFI, France) and Martin Schirdewan (Die Linke, Germany) as co-chairs, although the latter will be replaced by Kostas Arvanitis (SYRIZA, Greece) in 2027. On 8 July, a new group was formed, Patriots for Europe, initiated by Viktor Orban, which replaces the Identity and Democracy (ID) group. It has 84 members and is chaired by Jordan Bardella (RN, France). [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Court of Justice :



### Appointment of three new judges and an advocate-general

On 3 July, the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States appointed three Judges and an advocate-general to the Court of Justice for a six-year term beginning on 7 October. Irmantas Jarukaitis has been reappointed, Bernardus Smulders and Fredrik Schalin have been appointed Judges and Rimvydas Norkus has been appointed Advocate General. [Read more](#)

## ■ ECB :



### Sintra Forum

The European Central Bank (ECB) held its Sintra Forum from 1 to 3 July. President Christine Lagarde highlighted the challenges and progress of monetary policy in a changing economic context. She highlighted three features of the current economic cycle: the risks of persistent inflation, the path of key interest rates and the economic costs

associated with disinflation. Despite major shocks, the ECB says it has succeeded in reducing inflation from 10.6% in October 2022 to 2.6% in June 2024. Christine Lagarde stressed the need to remain vigilant and to adjust policies in line with the data, while affirming the ECB's commitment to bringing inflation down to 2% by the end of 2025. [Read more](#)

## ■ European Agencies :



### Delays and extra costs for the ITER project

On 3 July, Pietro Barabaschi, Director General of ITER (International Experimental Reactor for Nuclear Fusion), unveiled a new plan to replace that of 2016. The production of the first plasma, initially scheduled for 2025, has been delayed by 8 years, and an additional cost of €5 billion is anticipated, pending approval by the ITER Board of Directors. This announcement comes two days after the completion and delivery of nineteen toroidal coils produced by Europe and Japan, which are needed for ITER's magnet system. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



### International money laundering network dismantled in Europe

The French and Spanish police announced on 5 July that they had dismantled a Chinese money laundering network operating in Europe. The investigation, led by the French National Anti-Fraud Office and the Spanish police with the support of Europol, began in 2021 after French customs officers discovered €500,000 hidden in a vehicle. Five members of the network were arrested in Spain. The leader of the network has been arrested. [Read more](#)



### Drop in asylum applications

On 1 July, the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) published an update showing that EU countries are continuing to receive fewer asylum applications. In April 2024, the agency received 86,000 asylum applications, representing a significant decrease (-30%) compared to the 123,000 applications in October 2023. On the other hand, the number of cases pending at first instance in the EU has reached levels unseen since the migration crisis of 2015-2016. [Read more](#)

## ■ Germany :



### Draft budget for 2025

On 5 July, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Economics Minister Robert Habeck and Finance Minister Christian Lindner proposed a draft budget for 2025, which will be put to a vote in the Bundestag in early September. The three priorities of the €481 billion budget are infrastructure investment, national security and economic recovery. This announcement follows lengthy negotiations conducted by the government of the Tricolor coalition, which in particular encountered difficulties in reaching agreement on the issue of the debt brake. In the end, they decided to retain it. [Read more](#)



### Airbus signs contract with German army for military satellites

European aircraft manufacturer Airbus has announced the signature of a €2.1 billion contract with the German army for two military communications satellites. The satellites are due to be deployed at an altitude of 36,000 kilometres before the end of the decade, and will provide the German army with a secure military communications capability. The aircraft manufacturer has also announced that German satellite manufacturer OHB and a number of SMEs will be involved in the project. [Read more](#)

## ■ Bulgaria :



### Parliament rejects government proposal

On 3 July, the Bulgarian Parliament rejected the composition of a government led by the associate of Boyko Borisov, President of GERB, the main Bulgarian party which came first in the parliamentary elections of 9 June. With 98 votes in favour and 138 against, GERB's proposal failed to secure the majority needed for approval, prolonging the political instability that has gripped the country for almost four years. Parliament has little chance of electing a government to avoid holding new early elections next autumn, which would be the 7th in three and a half years. [Read more](#)



## ■ Spain :



### The Spanish Supreme Court refuses to pardon Carles Puigdemont

The Spanish Supreme Court has refused to apply the amnesty law, which provided for the annulment of legal proceedings against Catalan separatists for acts committed between 2011 and 2023, to the former president of the Catalan region Carles Puigdemont and two of his former "ministers". The High Court ruled that the embezzlement of public funds of which the three men are accused cannot be pardoned, on the grounds that amnesty does not apply to those who have committed wrongdoing with the intention of enriching themselves personally or if they have harmed the financial interests of the European Union. On 5 July, the Spanish public prosecutor's office appealed against the court's decision not to grant amnesty to Carles Puigdemont, who is the subject of an arrest warrant for embezzlement, disobedience and terrorism. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Greece :



### Diplomatic meetings of the Greek Prime Minister

On 2 July, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis welcomed his Moldovan counterpart Dorin Recean to discuss negotiations on Moldova's accession to the European Union and to sign a memorandum on the mutual recognition of driving licences. The same day, he met Bulgarian President Rumen Radev to reaffirm the importance of their strategic partnership for regional stability. On the 3rd, he met Latvian President Edgars Rinkēvičs to address common challenges related to the instrumentalisation and management of migration, and to discuss an EU-funded air defence shield initiative. On the 4th, he met with Eurogroup President Paschal Donohoe to discuss Greece's economic performance, including the budget surplus and efforts to maintain fiscal stability and reduce the cost of living. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ The Netherlands :



### Investiture of the new government

The new Dutch government was sworn in on 2 July. The former head of intelligence, Dick Schoof, was appointed Prime Minister and heads a coalition government



comprising four right-wing and far-right parties (VVD, PVV, BBB and NSC). Of the 15 ministerial posts, 5 went to Geert Wilder's party (PVV), 4 to the VVD, 4 to the NSC and 2 to the BBB. The new government includes 7 women. [Read more - Other link](#)

## ■ Poland :



### Olaf Scholz in Warsaw

On 2 July, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited Warsaw for the 16th intergovernmental consultations with Poland. The two countries drew up an action plan to intensify their bilateral cooperation. They reiterated the inseparability of their security, particularly in protecting NATO's eastern flank and the Baltic Sea, as well as in supporting Ukraine's accession to the European Union, its reconstruction and its defence against Russia. At their press conference, Olaf Scholz and Donald Tusk welcomed the creation of a German-Polish centre in Berlin, which serves as a place of remembrance and intercultural encounter, to mark the 85th anniversary of the German invasion of Poland. [Read more](#)

## ■ UK :



### Keir Starmer, new Prime Minister

On 4 July, Keir Starmer's Labour Party won a landslide victory in the UK general election, its biggest since 1997, taking 412 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons and 34% of the vote. The Conservative party suffered heavy losses, winning just 121 seats and 24% of the vote. However, one of the main lessons of the election was the ground gained by Nigel Farage's Reform Party against the Conservatives, despite winning only 4 seats. King Charles III appointed Keir Starmer as Prime Minister on 5 July. He then formed a government of 26 ministers, including 12 women. [Read more - Other link - Other link](#)

## ■ Council of Europe :



### European Social Charter

The high-level conference on the European Social Charter took place on 3 and 4 July in Vilnius. Organised under the auspices of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Member States reiterated their commitment to social justice and the protection of social rights. They adopted a political declaration to this effect. [Read more](#)





## Report on corruption in Serbia

On 4 July, the Council of Europe's anti-corruption body GRECO published its report on Serbia on the prevention of corruption. The report assesses the measures taken by the Serbian authorities following the recommendations made in 2022. It concludes that Serbia has satisfactorily implemented only one of the twenty-four recommendations, ten partially and thirteen not at all. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ NATO :



### TQC: Inaugural meeting of the Transatlantic Quantum Community

The inaugural meeting of the Transatlantic Quantum Community (TQC) was held in Brussels on 2 July. The TQC is a NATO initiative, chaired and led by Denmark, aimed at creating a network that will help the Allies to step up their cooperation in the field of quantum technologies. More than half of NATO's members are taking part, including France, Italy, the Czech Republic and the United States. [Read more](#)

## ■ Studies/Reports :



### The Digital Decade

On 2 July, the Commission published the second progress report on the Digital Decade, aimed at providing a comprehensive overview of progress towards the digital goals set for 2030. The Commission notes that the Member States' current efforts are not enough to achieve the EU's objectives, which require more investment in digital skills, connectivity, AI, data analysis, semiconductors and start-ups. [Read more](#)

## ■ Culture :



### Frans Hals in Berlin

The exhibition "Frans Hals - Master of the Moment" is on until 3 November at the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin. The

museum is presenting 75 works by the Dutch painter. Known for his portraits painted with a free and relaxed brush, he is one of the most remarkable artists of the 17th century. [Read more](#)



### Bonnard-Matisse in Saint Paul de Vence

The Fondation Maeght, France's leading foundation for modern and contemporary art, is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary with an exhibition entitled "Amitiés, Bonnard-Matisse", on view until 6 October. The exhibition features many rare works and documents, exploring the specificities of the two artists. By mirror effect, the particularities of each in their approach to the same subjects are highlighted. [Read more](#)



### Kandinsky in Amsterdam

The "Kandinsky" exhibition will run until 10 November at the H'ART museum in Amsterdam. Visitors will be able to admire 60 works by the artist, on loan from the Centre Pompidou. Wassily Kandinsky is known for his figurative art as well as more abstract pieces in bright colours. [Read more](#)



### Mohammed Sami at Blenheim

The "After the Storm" exhibition is on until 6 October at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire. The exhibition features works by Mohammed Sami, an Iraqi-born painter living in London. His art features landscapes, interiors and more abstract paintings. [Read more](#)



### Azra Akšamija in Graz

Azra Akšamija's exhibition 'Sanctuary', which will run until 6 October at Kunsthau Graz, explores the concepts of the 'safe harbour' and social, ethical and environmental sustainability. The Bosnian-Hungarian artist and architect presents works ranging from identity clothing to

## Kunsthhaus Graz

customisable tents for refugees, inviting the public to reflect on the conditions of human coexistence and the consumer economy. [Read more](#)

## ARoS

### "World in Focus" in Aarhus

Until 8 December, the ARoS museum in Denmark is exhibiting "World in Focus". Visitors will be able to explore a collection of photographs and visual images manipulated by AI, exploring how we use photography as a means of examining the world around us, challenging our perceptions and sense of objectivity. [Read more](#)



### The Summer Voyage à Nantes

The Summer Voyage à Nantes is back for its 13th season, running until 8 September. The event focuses on trees, the emblematic features of cities. Contemporary artists have been invited to create works in the city around trees, evoking journeys into a fantastic world through temporary installations that enhance the permanent collection. [Read more](#)



### Vieilles Charrues Festival in Carhaix

The 32nd edition of the Vieilles Charrues festival is being held from 11 to 14 July in Carhaix, Finistère, featuring both French and international stars. This festival, still run by non-profit organisations, is the biggest outdoor music event in France, welcoming 350,000 people in 2023. [Read more](#)



## Pärnu Music Festival

The Pärnu Music Festival is currently on in Estonia until 19 July. This internationally renowned event offers a varied programme of classical music concerts, as well as workshops for young musicians. [Read more](#)



## Dubrovnik Summer Festival

The 75th Dubrovnik Summer Festival is being held from 10 July to 25 August. The eclectic programme features performances by a wide range of artists. [Read more](#)



## Puccini Festival in Viareggio

The 70th edition of the Festival Puccini is being held from 12 July to 7 September in Viareggio to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Giacomo Puccini. Puccini's artistic career is retraced through 18 evenings of opera at the Gran Teatro all'Aperto. [Read more](#)

MUSEU  
BELLES ARTS  
VALÈNCIA

## Antonio Muñoz Degraín in Valencia

Valencia's Museum of Fine Arts is devoting an exhibition to the painter Antonio Muñoz Degraín. On show until 13 October are 52 works from four institutions. Considered to be the representative of modernism and symbolism in Spanish landscape painting, the exhibition aims to situate the work of this artist in the context of Spanish painting at the turn of the 20th century. [Read more](#)

## ■ Agenda :

 9-11 July 2024

**NATO Summit** (Washington DC)

 15 July 2024

**"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council** (Brussels)

 15 July 2024

**Eurogroup** (Brussels)

 16-19 July 2024

**First plenary session of the 10th legislature of the European Parliament** (Brussels)



### The Letter n°1075

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