

Letter n°1080 of Tuesday 24th September 2024

Europe in a fragmented global economy: making the most of the single market and competition policy

[Benoit Coeuré - 24 Sep 2024](#)

Global value chains and cross-border financial links have been severely tested in recent years. How can Europe navigate these troubled waters? Benoît Coeuré suggests a number of avenues to explore. Europe can capitalise on its main asset, the Single Market, and create a new toolbox for industrial policy. Mario Draghi's report on competitiveness and Enrico Letta's report on the future of the single market are available to European politicians to help them rise to the challenge.



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■ Commission :



10 billion € in aid for countries hit by storm Boris

On 19 September, a summit was held in Wroclaw, Poland, between the President of the European Commission and the leaders of four central European countries: Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic and Romania, to discuss the consequences of storm Boris, which caused major flooding and the death of more than 20 people. Ursula von der Leyen announced the mobilisation of €10 billion in aid from the Cohesion Fund. [Read more](#)



Restrictions on the use of certain chemicals

On 19 September, the Commission adopted measures restricting the use of certain acids and related substances known as PFAS under its chemicals legislation. As these products are both persistent and mobile in water, the Commission considers that they pose too great a risk to human health and the environment. [Read more](#)



AI: around thirty companies call for clarification of European rules

On 19 September, around thirty researchers and companies, including the American company Meta, called on the European Union to clarify its regulations on artificial intelligence. These companies are responding to the Draghi report and are concerned about Europe's loss of competitiveness, particularly in the digital sector, compounded by uncertainties arising from its sometimes obscure regulations. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Presentation of the new College of Commissioners

The long-awaited presentation of the composition of the new European Commission took place on 17 September. Parity was not respected however, with 40% of the Commissioners being women. Ursula von der Leyen appointed 6 executive vice-presidents, including 4 women. The 26 candidates must now appear before Parliament for their hearings. The Council formally adopted the list of nominees on 19 September. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Mario Draghi outlines his plan to MEPs

On 17 September, following the publication of his report, Mario Draghi, former President of the European Central Bank and former Italian Prime Minister, presented his plan to improve European competitiveness to the European Parliament. He highlighted three crucial areas: the gap with China and the United States in terms of innovation, the need for a joint plan to link the objectives of decarbonisation and competitiveness, and finally the need to strengthen Europe's security by reducing its dependence on external powers. He proposed a competitiveness programme of between €750 and €800 billion. Everything remains to be done to implement this ambitious project. [Read more](#)



Opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez recognised as the legitimate and elected President of Venezuela

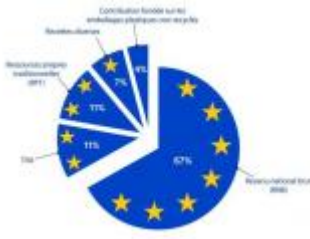
On 19 September, MEPs adopted a resolution condemning electoral fraud in Venezuela and the failure to comply with international standards of electoral integrity. The resolution recognises Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia as the legitimate and democratically elected President of Venezuela. They therefore condemn the arrest warrant issued against him by the Venezuelan government and urge regional players to exert maximum pressure to ensure that the results of the elections are respected. [Read more](#)



Line-up of interparliamentary delegations

The line-up of the various European Parliament delegations was announced on 19 September. There will be 48 delegations, 4 more than during the previous legislature. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of these delegations will be elected between 30 September and 3 October. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Council :



Approval of simplified rules for the implementation of the EU budget

On 19 September, the Council adopted a review of the financial regulation of the European budget, bringing it into line with the multi-annual financial framework (currently for the period 2021-2027). The rules and procedures have been simplified to improve legal predictability and clarity. Among other things, this measure aims to limit additional administrative burdens for national administrations and to ensure more efficient crisis management. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Support for women's rights in Iran

From now on, 16 September will commemorate the death of Mahsa Amini, a date chosen by the High Representative of the Union to pay tribute to her and to the 'Women, Life, Freedom' movement in Iran. The High Representative recalls the situation in Iran, where unjust detentions take place, and reiterates the Union's firm opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances and to torture, as well as its support for fundamental rights such as freedom of expression. It also calls on Iran to eliminate the forms of systemic discrimination still present in the country, and to respect the international agreements that the country has signed. [Read more](#)

■ Court of Justice :



US company Qualcomm condemned for abuse of dominant position

The Court of Justice of the European Union has fined the US company Qualcomm nearly €239 million for abuse of a dominant position. This largely confirms the European Commission's 2019 decision, which imposed a fine of €242 million. Qualcomm abused its dominant position by selling chips at prices below production costs with the aim of eliminating its main competitor at the time. [Read more](#)



Google avoids €1.5 billion fine

On 18 September, the Court of Justice annulled a Commission decision of March 2019, in which it found that Google was committing an infringement due to the existence of contentious clauses in service agreements. In particular, these agreements allowed website publishers to display targeted advertising using Google's AdSense for Search service. The Court considered that the Commission's assessment was insufficient, particularly in that it had not established that the disputed clauses constituted an abuse of a dominant position. It therefore annulled the fine imposed on the American company. [Read more](#)

■ European Agencies :



European anti-missile system

The European anti-missile system, EUROSAM, is entering mass production. It has received an order for 18 SAMP/T systems, with performance equivalent to that of the American Patriot. Its radar has a range of 350 km. It can destroy targets up to 150 km away. Already in operation during the Paris Olympics and in Romania, one of these systems has been donated to Kyiv, which is waiting for a second one. It should enable the 22 countries involved in the European Sky Shield Initiative to acquire totally European equipment. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



Elections in the Land of Brandenburg

Regional elections were held in Brandenburg on 22 September. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) narrowly came out on top, with 31% of the vote, ahead of the German far-right (AfD), which took 29%. Despite an improved score, the far right came second and was unable to confirm its success in Thuringia on 1 September. [Read more](#)



Friedrich Merz announces his candidacy for the Chancellorship

Friedrich Merz will be the candidate for the chancellorship of the CDU and CSU parties. Markus Söder, leader of the CSU, gave his support to the CDU President's candidacy at a joint press conference on 17 September. The steering committees of the two parties have yet to give their formal approval. Friedrich Merz will be Chancellor Olaf Scholz's potential opponent at the next general election in September 2025. [Read more](#)

■ Austria :



Polls just a week before the legislative election

Shortly before the general elections in Austria on 29 September, the far-right ÖVP party is still leading the polls, with almost 29% of voting intentions. However, Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer's party has seen a significant rise of almost 4 points, taking it to 23% of voting intentions and keeping alive hopes of victory. The Chancellor is also the most popular candidate for re-election. [Read more](#)

■ France :



New government

Michel Barnier, appointed Prime Minister on 5 September, now has a government, the composition of which was announced on 21 September. It comprises 19 ministers, 15 deputy ministers and 5 secretaries of state. 8 of the 19 ministers are women. [Read more](#)

■ Italy :



Measures to reduce the public deficit

The Italian government intends to reduce the public deficit from 2026 below the ceiling of 3% of GDP set by the Stability and Growth Pact, announced the Ministry of the Economy in a press release dated 17 September. This rate is more ambitious than the 4.3% envisaged in the government's April 2024 forecasts. Italy, like six other Member States, is subject to a European procedure for excessive deficit. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Meeting of G7 Culture Ministers

The G7 culture ministers met in Naples from 19 to 21 September. Chaired by the Minister for Culture, Alessandro Giuli, the discussions focused on establishing a strategy to promote joint action to enhance and safeguard culture as a global public good. The final declaration gives priority to building partnerships with Africa and preserving cultural assets in areas of armed crisis. [Read more](#)

■ The Netherlands :

DROIT D'ASILE

Request for a waiver of European asylum rules

On 18 September, the Netherlands applied to the Commission for a waiver from European asylum rules. This is part of the presentation of strict new immigration measures introduced by the government that has been in office since 2 July. This measure requires the agreement of the other 26 Member States. [Read more](#)

■ Romania :



Meeting of B9 Defence Ministers

The defence ministers of 9 NATO countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland) met in the Bucharest Nine (B9) format in the Romanian capital on 18 September. They called for a 'joint air defence' system in response to Russian 'flying objects' that are increasingly violating allied airspace in attacks on Ukraine. [Read more](#)

■ Sweden :



Enhanced cooperation between Sweden and Finland

The two Scandinavian countries, both new members of NATO, decided to strengthen their cooperation in a joint declaration on 16 September. The declaration, signed by Prime Ministers Ulf Kristersson and Petteri Orpo, sets out the various points on which they will focus their efforts: freedom of movement, protection of infrastructure, protection of the EU's external borders and support for nuclear energy in the green transition. [Read more](#)



Overhaul of migration policy in the 2025 budget

On 19 September, the government announced an overhaul of its migration policy. In the 2025 budget bill, the government proposes to allocate 513 million Swedish crowns (SEK) for migration-related expenditure, which should rise to 2,559 million in 2026 and 1,357 million in 2027. This budget accompanies reforms to improve the efficiency of reception and return, combat fraud and abuse, increase voluntary repatriation, develop internal controls on foreign nationals and strengthen the principle of the personal link in terms of sickness and employment benefits. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Moldova :



5th Ministerial Conference of the Support Platform

On 17 September, at the fifth summit of the Moldova Support Platform, the foreign ministers of France, Germany, Poland and Romania awarded €80 million in grants and €305 million in loans. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Ursula von der Leyen in Kyiv

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, visited Kyiv on 20 September. She presented the latest financial assistance measures to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, including a cooperation mechanism in the form of loans for Ukraine of up to €45 billion and an exceptional loan under macro-financial assistance (MFA) of up to €35 billion. It also presented a 'winter preparedness' plan. This involves an additional €160 million in humanitarian aid and energy infrastructure to deal with chronic power cuts. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



European Parliament resolution on continued support

At their plenary session on 19 September, the Members of the European Parliament adopted a resolution assuring Ukraine of their continued financial and military support. This resolution is the first official position of the new Parliament on the situation in Ukraine. [Read more](#)

■ Council of Europe :



Alain Berset, new Secretary General

Switzerland's Alain Berset was elected Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 18 September. In his inaugural speech, the former President of the Swiss Confederation reiterated the need for the work of this organisation and his attachment to the democratic security in which every European must be able to live. He also took the opportunity to confirm the Council of Europe's support for Ukraine. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Disappointing initial results for the tax on plastic packaging waste

On 16 September, the European Court of Auditors published the first assessment of the tax on plastic packaging waste. This own resource of the Union, created in 2021, represented 4% of the Union's total revenue in 2023. Unfortunately, the results are disappointing, as only 5 Member States have implemented the directive on time, and the methods used to calculate non-recycled plastics have led to errors and poor estimates. A great deal of progress still needs to be made to ensure that the directive is properly incorporated into national legislation. [Read more](#)



European carmakers sound the alarm over the schedule governing CO2 standards

On 19 September, Luca de Meo, Chairman of the European Automobile Manufacturers Association and CEO of Renault, called for greater flexibility in Europe's schedule to reduce CO2 emissions. Manufacturers fear that they could face fines of up to €15 billion if they fail to comply with the new standards as early as next year. The justification put forward is the sale of new electric vehicles, which is insufficient to reduce their average emission levels. They are therefore calling on the European Union to propose emergency measures before the new targets come into force. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Munch in Milan

The Palazzo Reale in Milan is devoting an exhibition to the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch, in collaboration with the Munch Museum in Oslo, until 26 January 2025. To mark the 80th anniversary of his death, around a hundred of his works, including paintings, drawings and engravings, are on show. [Read more](#)



Harriet Backer at the Musée d'Orsay

The Musée d'Orsay in Paris is paying tribute to the Norwegian painter Harriet Backer, until 12 January 2025. Although little known outside her country, she was the most famous female painter in Norway at the end of the 19th century. Her works play on light and rich colours and depict indoor scenes, particularly church interiors, but also outdoor settings and the rural world. [Read more](#)



Monet and the Impressionist Cityscape in Berlin

The Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin is presenting Claude Monet's first three views of Paris from 27 September to 26 January 2025. This series of paintings, produced in 1867, depicts modern Parisian life, Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, the Jardin de l'Infante and the Quai du Louvre, thus turning away from historical tradition. [Read more](#)

ALBERTINA

Marc Chagall in Vienna

The Albertina in Vienna is devoting an exhibition to the painter Marc Chagall, from 28 September to 9 February 2025. The artist's work focuses on maternity and birth, death and love. Nearly 90 works will be on show. [Read more](#)

The Courtauld

Monet in London

The Courtauld Gallery in London is devoting an exhibition to the leading figure of French Impressionism, Claude Monet, from 27 September to 19 January 2025. Entitled 'Monet and London', the exhibition presents Monet's views of London, from which he drew inspiration during three visits to the British capital between 1899 and 1901. [Read more](#)

Peggy Guggenheim in Madrid

The '31 Women' exhibition aims to pay tribute to Peggy Guggenheim's important role as one of the 20th century's greatest patrons and collectors of Surrealist and abstract art. The aim is also to change the discourse by no longer considering women in the art world exclusively through their links with male artists. The event is being held at the Mapfre Foundation in Madrid from 29 September to 5 January 2025. [Read more](#)



Detchko Ouzounov exhibition at the Bulgarian Cultural Institute

The exhibition 'Detchko Ouzounov: Carnets de voyage' is on until 18 October at the Bulgarian Cultural Institute in Paris. This is the first time this painter has been shown in France. The exhibition comprises 75 watercolours, drawings and sketches created during the artist's travels. [Read more](#)



189th Munich Oktoberfest

Oktoberfest is the world's biggest beer fair and celebration. The 189th Oktoberfest is taking place on Munich's Theresienwiese until 6 October. The city's mayor, Dieter Reiter, inaugurated the event on 21 September with the opening of the first keg. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 23 September 2023

Agriculture and Fisheries Council (Brussels)

 24th September

"General Affairs" Council (Brussels)

 24th-30th September

 26th September

"Competitiveness" Council (Brussels)

 29th September

Legislative Elections (Austria)



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