

Letter n°1081 of Tuesday 1st October 2024

What future for European defence?

Iris Herbelot - 01 Oct 2024

On 1 October, Mark Rutte, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, begins his term as Secretary General of NATO. His appointment comes at a time when contributions and equipment are being Europeanised and European defence is being envisaged beyond NATO.



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■ Elections :



Results of the legislative elections in Austria

The Freedom Party (FPÖ), led by Herbert Kickl, came out ahead in the Austrian federal elections on 29 September. This is the first time that the far-right party has won such an election. Dominating opinion polls since the end of 2022, it won 29.1% of the vote and 58 seats (up 27 on the previous federal election on 29 September 2019). This is a higher result than that predicted by the opinion polls and the highest in its history. [Read more](#)



■ Foundation :



Reducing territorial disparities

On 2 October, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions is organising a debate in Brussels between MEPs and local elected representatives on the main challenges facing Europe's regions and municipalities. Pascale Joannin, Managing Director of the Foundation, will be taking part. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Investment of €65 million in quantum chips

As part of the Semiconductor Joint Undertaking, calls for proposals have been launched to support research and innovation initiatives, particularly in the field of quantum chips. These calls, open until 21 January 2025, amount to €65 million and are part of the EU's €200 million investment programme in this area over the next three years. These semiconductors have applications in computing, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and drug discovery. [Read more](#)



Pact on Artificial Intelligence signed by over a hundred companies

On 25 September, the European Commission announced that more than a hundred companies had signed the EU's Pact on Artificial Intelligence. The aim of the pact is to support players who commit to voluntarily applying the principles of the AI regulation before it comes into force. Three actions are required of companies under this framework: subscribing to an AI governance strategy, carrying out an inventory of high-risk AI systems and promoting staff awareness of AI and its mastery. Additional commitments have been made by half of the signatories, particularly in terms of risk mitigation and transparency of AI-generated content. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers

Meeting on 23 September, the ministers took stock of the second year of implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) strategic plans and the situation on agricultural markets, particularly the Ukrainian market. They also exchanged views on the management in 2025 of fish stocks shared with the United Kingdom and Norway. [Read more](#)



Meeting of competitiveness ministers

The ministers responsible for competitiveness met on 26 September to examine Mario Draghi's report on the future of European competitiveness, with a view to taking it into account in European projects. They discussed the framework for State aid, as well as access to the single market for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). [Read more](#)



Meeting of European Affairs Ministers

Meeting on 24 September, the ministers examined the 7 priorities of the Hungarian Presidency, including the competitiveness pact, the strengthening of defence policy, the fight against illegal immigration and the resolution of demographic challenges. A debate was held on the rule of law following the publication of the Commission's report in July, and on compliance with it by the candidate countries. [Read more](#)

■ Court of Justice :



New case law on the primacy of European law

On 26 September, the Court of Justice of the European Union responded to a question from the Brasov Court of Appeal in Romania on the compatibility between a national law, interpreted by the country's Constitutional Court, and EU law. The Court concludes that national judges may not follow a decision of their Constitutional Court if it runs counter to EU law. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Meeting with Latin American and Caribbean countries

The foreign affairs ministers of the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) exchanged views at an informal meeting in New York on 26 September. The aim of the meeting was to strengthen regional dialogue and advance common priorities. The ministers took stock of relations and updated the roadmap. [Read more](#)

■ European Agencies :



The European Space Agency inaugurates Luna

On 25 September in Cologne, the European Space Agency unveiled Luna, its new analogue simulation centre for the lunar surface. A site with few equivalents anywhere in the world, it will prepare astronauts, scientists and engineers to live and work on the Moon. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



Resignation of ecologist leaders

On 25 September, the German Green Party announced the resignation of its co-leaders, Ricarda Lang and Omid Nouripour. The party is currently in crisis, following several electoral defeats in the European elections and recent Länder elections. A new leadership is due to be appointed in mid-November. [Read more](#)

■ Cyprus :



Memorandum of Understanding between Greece and Cyprus on a submarine cable

On 21 September, the Greek and Cypriot energy ministers announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding to move the undersea electricity cable project forward. The aim of the GSI (Great Sea Interconnector) cable is to link the European transmission networks to Cyprus. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Spain :



Government economic forecasts

At a Council of Ministers meeting on 24 September, the Spanish Minister for the Economy, Carlos Cuerpo, presented updated macroeconomic forecasts up to 2026. According to these forecasts, Spain will lead the major European economies in terms of growth, the number of people in work will exceed 22 million and households will gain in purchasing power. The Minister for Ecological Transition, Teresa Ribera, took the opportunity to update the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan before her departure for Brussels. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Two new government ministers

Two new ministers joined the government on 27 September. They are Jean-Louis Thieriot, Minister Delegate to the Minister for the Armed Forces and Veterans, and Charlotte Parmentier-Lecocq, Minister Delegate to the Minister for Solidarity, Autonomy and Equality between Women and Men, responsible for People with Disabilities. The government now has 41 members. [Read more](#)



Visit of President Emmanuel Macron to Canada

French President Emmanuel Macron visited Ottawa and Montreal on 26 September. Welcomed by the Prime Ministers of Canada, Justin Trudeau, and Quebec, François Legault, he met experts in artificial intelligence, a few months ahead of the Summit for Action on AI, to be held in France in early 2025, and French-speaking representatives, less than 10 days before the Francophonie Summit in Villers-Cotterêts. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Italy :



Statement by the G7 Agriculture Ministers

The G7 agriculture ministers, meeting in Syracuse on 27 and 28 September, once again condemned Russian aggression in Ukraine and called for support for the resilience and sustainability of agricultural production. An important point was also made concerning the employability of young people in the agricultural sector [Read more](#)

■ Czech Republic :



Government crisis and senatorial election results

The Czech government is in crisis following the departure of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Regional Development Ivan Bartos (Pirate Party) at the request of Prime Minister Petr Fiala on 24 September and the Pirate Party's threat to leave the government coalition. This crisis followed the regional elections on 20 and 21 September, in which the Pirate Party obtained just 3.5% of the vote, while the opposition ANO party of former Prime Minister Andrej Babis came out ahead in 10 of the 13 regions. The ANO party's victory was confirmed in the 2nd round of the senatorial by-elections on 27 and 28 September, when it came out ahead with 8 of the 27 seats up for grabs. However, the government coalition still has a majority in the Upper House. The President of the Republic, Petr Pavel, hosted the presidents of all the governing parties on 30 September. The Pirate Party has decided to leave the government coalition and its 3 ministers have resigned. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Support to the reconstruction of Ukraine

The G7 reaffirmed its support for Ukraine in a joint statement on 25 September. The 7 countries maintain their willingness to support Ukraine militarily, financially and with humanitarian aid. Russia's responsibility was once again stated, and that it will have to pay for the damage it has caused. The members of the G7 are looking to the future reconstruction of Ukraine while working to maintain its stability in the short term. This declaration has been signed by nearly 31 countries. [Read more](#)



83rd anniversary of the Babi Yar massacres

On 29 September, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky commemorated the 83rd anniversary of the Babi Yar massacres. This is a place west of the city of Kyiv where the Nazis executed more than 30,000 Jews in 1941. The site has a monument built by the Soviet authorities but dedicated to 'Soviet citizens and prisoners of war', with no mention of the Jewish victims. In 1991, the Jewish community erected an imposing menorah-shaped sculpture nearby. [Read more](#)

■ Vatican :



Pope Francis visits Luxembourg and Belgium

Pope Francis visited Luxembourg on 26 September, almost 40 years after the visit of John Paul II. He met Grand Duke Henri and the Prime Minister. He then travelled to Belgium until 29 September, where, after meeting King Philippe, he celebrated the 600th anniversary of the Catholic University of Louvain. [Read more](#)

■ UN :



79th General Assembly

The 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly was held at the organisation's headquarters in New York from 22 to 27 September. During the session, a 'Pact for the Future' was adopted. Russia opposed it, but did not block the adoption of the text. The Pact calls for the Security Council to be enlarged to ensure equitable geographical representation, and for the right of veto to be reformed to prevent it being used for political purposes by the permanent members. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Security Council meeting on Lebanon

The United Nations Security Council met on 25 September to examine the situation in Lebanon and call for an immediate 21-day ceasefire. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres concluded that the Security Council must work closely together to put an end to what could become an all-out war in the Middle East. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ WTO :



The European Union challenges China's investigation into its dairy products

On 23 September, the European Commission challenged China's launch of an investigation at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The Chinese investigation concerns subsidies granted under the Common Agricultural Policy for dairy products, in particular liquid milk and cream with a fat content of more than 10%. The Commission considers this trade defence practice to be abusive and asserts that these subsidies comply with international rules and do not harm the Chinese dairy industry. This is the first time that the EU has challenged an investigation on its launch. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ OECD :



The world economy is at a major turning point, according to the OECD

In its Economic Outlook of 25 September, the OECD considers that the economy is at a turning point. It notes resilient growth and falling inflation, but stresses the existence of major risks, such as high levels of public debt. The organisation recommends structural reforms to encourage competition. [Read more](#)

■ Eurobarometer :



Europeans want more support for the energy transition

A Eurobarometer survey published on 24 September shows that the European public supports the EU's energy policy. Europeans see climate objectives as potentially beneficial to the economy. Many believe that the EU should play a greater coordinating role in the field of energy. An important point in the eyes of the public is the affordability of energy prices. They are therefore calling for more support to enable them to make an individual energy transition. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



500,000 jobs saved according to trade defence report

The report on the EU's trade defence activities for 2023 was published on 24 September. The report is encouraging, and highlights the importance of these measures: almost 500,000 direct jobs were protected in 2023, compared with 365,000 in 2018, through the use of more than 180 trade defence measures. These measures include anti-dumping measures. The report also stresses the need to protect SMEs and green technology sectors, particularly against unfair trade practices. [Read more](#)



Strengthening the organic farming market

A report published by the European Court of Auditors on 23 September calls on the European Union to be more ambitious in its support for organic farming. Nearly €12 billion has been invested in organic farming under the Common Agricultural Policy since 2014, but the results are mixed. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Mediterranean Film Festival in Bastia

The 42nd Arte Mare Mediterranean Film Festival is being held in Bastia until 12 October. More than 70 films are being shown at 5 venues. "What's new, Doctor?" is the question posed this year by the festival, which aims to act as a "link between a reaffirmed Corsican culture and neighbouring Mediterranean cultures". [Read more](#)



Ensor in Antwerp

Until 19 January 2025, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp is unveiling the exhibition 'Ensor, Whimsical Dreams. Beyond Impressionism'. It offers a comprehensive overview of the artist James Ensor, as part of the Ensor Year 2024, which focuses on the relevance of the artist through cross-fertilisation with contemporary art, fashion and photography. [Read more](#)



Treasures from the Perez Simon collection in Madrid

The exhibition "Seventy Great Masters from the Pérez Simón Collection" is being held at Madrid's CentroCentro until 12 January 2025. The exhibition is divided into three sections, divided into three different periods, and features 70 works, most of which have never been seen in Madrid before. [Read more](#)



The Heinz Berggruen Collection in Paris

The Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris is presenting part of the collection of the art dealer Heinz Berggruen until 27 January 2025. The exhibition explores the gallerist's relationship with his artists and his post-war art market network in Paris. [Read more](#)

Sarah Morris exhibition in Stuttgart

The Kunstmuseum Stuttgart is devoting a comprehensive retrospective to the artist Sarah Morris until 9 February 2025. The exhibition features over a hundred works, including paintings, drawings, film posters, immersive film installations and a new site-specific mural, all of which highlight thirty years of work. [Read more](#)



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Helen Frankenthaler in Florence

Florence's Palazzo Strozzi is paying tribute to the American painter Helen Frankenthaler, until 26 January 2025. The exhibition, entitled "Painting without rules", presents her works and places them in dialogue with those of contemporary artists. Canvases, drawings on paper and sculptures are on show to the public. [Read more](#)



Asian bronze in Amsterdam

Until 12 January 2025, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam is hosting an exhibition celebrating Asian bronze. The exhibition, curated by Dutch designer Aldo Bakker, highlights almost 4,000 years of Asian bronze history, with pieces from India, China, Indonesia and many other countries. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 30 September-4 October

Autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg)

 2-4 October

Meeting of G7 interior ministers (Mirabella Eclano)



The Letter n°1081

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