

Letter n°1087 of Tuesday 12th November 2024

Ukraine's accession negotiations with the European Union: reforms undertaken in ten years and the challenges ahead

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Ten years ago, the European Union signed an association agreement with Ukraine. The process of rapprochement was launched. This study shows the reforms that have been introduced or undertaken within this framework, the obstacles to this process created by the Russian aggression of February 2022 and the road still to be travelled to meet the challenges ahead in finalising the terms of the agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, which gives concrete expression to the will of the Ukrainian people as expressed during the EuroMaidan revolution.



[Front Page](#) | [Elections](#) | [Foundation](#) | [European Council](#) | [Parliament](#) | [Council](#) |
[Diplomacy](#) | [Court of Justice](#) | [ECB](#) | [European Agencies](#) | [Germany](#) | [Estonia](#) |
[France](#) | [Ireland](#) | [Italy](#) | [Georgia](#) | [UK](#) | [Moldova](#) |
[Ukraine](#) | [Studies/Reports](#) | [Culture](#) |

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

■ Front Page :



Europe: What needs to be done?

'It's not just the American presidential election that is prompting Europe to take action. On the international stage, everything demands a response, a strategy and concrete measures. For Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Europe needs to establish a common capital market to boost European productivity, while at the same time stepping up its diplomacy, to defend its interests and assert its power on the international stage, particularly against a backdrop of ever-growing conflicts. [Read more](#)

■ Elections :



Presidential and parliamentary elections in Romania

Romanians are due to go to the polls to elect the President of the Republic on 24 November (1st round) and 8 December (2nd round). The outgoing President, Klaus Iohannis, having served two terms, is not eligible for re-election. 14 candidates are standing in this presidential election. In addition, on 1 December, a bank holiday in Romania, the members of the two chambers of parliament (330 deputies and 126 senators) will be renewed. 31 political parties are in the running for these parliamentary elections. Prime Minister Ion Marcel Ciolacu is expected to come ahead in the 1st round of the presidential election, and his party, the PSD, will lead over its rivals in the parliamentary elections. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



Follow the Commissioners' hearings

The Foundation has created a website dedicated to the European Parliament, to give our readers a better understanding of how this European institution works and what is at stake. From 4 to 12 November, the hearings of the European Commissioners-designate will take place. You can find the latest developments relating to these hearings in the 'News' section of our site. [Read more](#)

■ European Council :



Budapest Declaration on European Competitiveness

Meeting in Budapest on 8 November, Europe's heads of state and government adopted the Budapest Declaration, which commits the European Union to strengthening its competitiveness, sovereignty and resilience in the face of today's challenges. Priorities include the deepening of the single market, ecological and industrial transition, the creation of a Savings and Investment Union, and the reduction of administrative burdens for businesses. The Declaration also stresses the importance of strengthening the European Union's energy sovereignty and becoming a leader in global innovation. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Hearings of Commissioners designate

The first hearings of the Commissioners-designate took place at the European Parliament from 4 to 7 November. 20 Commissioners were subjected to questions from MEPs. None of the parliamentary committees rejected a commissioner-designate, but the Hungarian still has to convince them by answering written questions. The final day of hearings takes place on 12 November and concerns the 6 vice-presidents-designate. The College of the Commission must obtain the approval of the Parliament (by a majority of votes cast by roll-call vote) at the plenary session from 25 to 28 November in Strasbourg. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Economics and Finance Ministers

The Ministers for the Economy and Finance meeting on 5 November discussed the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility initiated after the Covid pandemic. 70 payment requests have been received and more than €268 billion has been disbursed. They reached agreement on new measures that will adapt value-added tax (VAT) rules to the digital age. [Read more](#)



Eurogroup Meeting

The finance ministers of the eurozone countries met on 4 November to discuss the macroeconomic situation, the resilience of the banking system and the union of capital markets. A formal declaration on European economic competitiveness was adopted, calling for structural reforms and investment. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :

EUROPEAN POLITICAL COMMUNITY

European Political Community in Budapest

The 5th meeting of the European Political Community was held in Budapest on 7 November. The meeting was attended by 42 heads of state and government. The consequences of Donald Trump's election were central to the discussions, along with future trade conflicts, the future of the Atlantic Alliance and the war in Ukraine. Other topics included the continent's electricity interconnection and the peace process between Azerbaijan and Armenia. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Court of Justice :



Fines for banks involved in bond cartel

On 6 November, the General Court of the European Union upheld the Commission's decision in 2021 to impose fines on the banks Crédit Agricole and Crédit Suisse. These banks, along with Bank of America and Deutsche Bank, were found guilty of participating in a cartel, thereby infringing competition rules. [Read more](#)

■ ECB :



Tenth anniversary of the single banking supervision mechanism

On 6 November, the European Central Bank celebrated the 10th anniversary of the single banking supervision mechanism, which has helped to anchor confidence in the banking system and increase the effectiveness of monetary policy. Nevertheless, Christine Lagarde points out that these advances are only the foundations of the banks' main objective: to finance innovation, investment and growth. She acknowledges that the EU is not yet meeting this objective, and has called for action. This is all the more necessary in view of the four challenges she mentioned: decarbonisation, deglobalisation, digitalisation and decoupling. [Read more](#)

■ European Agencies :



European Research Council awards prizes to 57 teams

On 5 November, the European Research Council awarded €571 million to 57 research groups working on complex scientific problems. These funds encourage researchers to work together to make new advances. These 57 projects involve almost 201 researchers working in 184 universities and research centres in 24 countries. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



Collapse of the government coalition

On 6 November, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz dismissed his Finance Minister Christian Lindner, signalling the end of the government coalition between the SPD, the FDP and the Greens. German President Frank Walter Steinmeier formally announced this departure and that of two FDP ministers. Transport Minister Volker Wissing has decided to leave the FDP and has also become Minister of Justice, while the new Finance Minister is Jörg Kukies. Acknowledging the situation, Olaf Scholz announced on 10 November that he was prepared, subject to certain conditions, to seek a vote of confidence from MPs before the end of the year with a view to organising early general elections, which could take place on 23 February 2025. [Read more](#)

■ Estonia :



Speech on European policy by Kristen Michal

On 5 November, Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal delivered the government's annual European policy address to Parliament (Riigikogu), in which he stressed the need to decisively increase Europe's defence capabilities and competitiveness, and to support Ukraine's path to victory and membership of the European Union. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Meeting with the British Prime Minister

French President Emmanuel Macron commemorated the 106th anniversary of the 1918 Armistice on 11 November in the presence of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, as this year marks the 120th anniversary of the Entente Cordiale between France and the UK. Keir Starmer is the first British leader to attend the ceremony since the end of the Second World War. Alongside the commemoration, the two leaders also discussed major international issues. [Read more](#)



Strengthening the strategic partnership with Kazakhstan

On 5 November, President Emmanuel Macron hosted his Kazakh counterpart, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in Paris. Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine, the Central Asian republic has been trying to forge closer ties with European countries, and France in particular, in an attempt to diversify its diplomatic and economic relations. During this State visit, it was decided to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries, against a backdrop of cooperation in the transport and energy sectors. Kazakhstan remains the world's leading producer of uranium. [Read more](#)

■ Ireland :



Snap general election on 29 November

On 8 November, Irish President Michael Higgins dissolved the lower house of parliament at the request of Prime Minister Simon Harris. This decision marks the official launch of a three-week election blitz ahead of an early general election scheduled for 29 November. Simon Harris, leader of Fine Gael, governs in a coalition with Fianna Fáil and the Green Party. He believes that the opposition party, Sinn Féin, is weakened and that this will enable him to strengthen his majority. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Italy :



Visit by the NATO Secretary General

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte visited Rome on 5 November, where he met Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Council President Giorgia Meloni. They discussed support for Ukraine, the development of an innovative and competitive defence industry, and the strengthening of the organisation's European pillar. [Read more](#)



The courts question the government's immigration policy

On 11 November, a court in Rome asked the European Court of Justice to rule on the detention of seven migrants transferred to Albania. The matter will now be referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) to ensure that Italian legislation complies with European law. And because of the legal deadline, the migrants concerned - of Egyptian and Bangladeshi nationality - "will return to Italy within the next few hours". On 4 November, the court in Catania, Sicily, also ruled that Egypt could not be considered a "safe" country because of constant human rights violations. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Georgia :



The Weimar Triangle Declaration on Georgia

In a joint statement, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk called for a swift investigation into the "irregularities" that occurred during the last parliamentary elections in Georgia on 26 October and for a review of legislation that contravenes European values and principles. [Read more](#)



President calls for new elections after disputed general elections

Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili, who condemned the widespread electoral fraud during the parliamentary elections on 26 October, called on 11 November for a new election "so that Georgia can have a legitimate parliament and a legitimate government". This announcement was made while a group of MEPs from eight European countries were in Georgia to help 'find ways out of this crisis'. [Read more](#)

■ UK :



Further sanctions against the Russian war machine

On 7 November, the UK announced new sanctions against the Russian military-industrial complex and Russian-backed mercenary groups. The 56 new sanctions are designed to disrupt the supply of vital equipment to the Russian war machine and tackle Russia's malign operations around the world, exposing the corrupt activities of Russian military proxy groups in Africa. [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



European leaders reassert their support for Moldova

The heads of state and government (France, Germany, Italy, Romania, the United Kingdom and Poland), joined by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel, jointly declared their unwavering support for Moldova. This declaration follows a meeting with Moldovan President Maia Sandu on the sidelines of the European Political Community summit in Budapest. They congratulated the Moldovan President, as well as the results of the referendum enshrining Moldova's objective of joining the European Union in its Constitution. Finally, this declaration once again condemns the foreign interference operations carried out by Russia during this electoral period. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Visit by the head of German diplomacy

Annalena Baerbock, Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs, travelled to Kyiv on 4 November to reiterate her country's support for Ukraine. She met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to discuss Ukraine's Victory Plan, the soldiers' priority needs and the implementation of the peace formula. At a joint press conference with her Ukrainian counterpart Andriy Sybiha, the German minister said that Germany would release €200 million in humanitarian aid to support Ukrainians as winter approaches. [Read more - Other link](#)



EUMAM Ukraine mission extended by two years

On 8 November, the Council adopted a decision extending the mandate of the European Union Military Assistance Mission to Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) for a further two years, until 15 November 2026. The aim remains to offer individual, collective and specialised training to the Ukrainian armed forces on European Union territory. Most of this training will take place in Poland. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Report on financial support for agriculture

In a report published on 6 November, the OECD encourages countries to support innovation in the agricultural sector and to reorientate their subsidies. The level of subsidies is high, but they are not sufficiently used to serve critical objectives (innovation, productivity, sustainability). Less than 13% of financial support is dedicated to services of general interest (innovation, biosecurity). To remedy this situation, the OECD has drawn up an action programme to reform agricultural support. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Report on the European video game industry

On 8 November, the Council of Europe's European Audiovisual Observatory published a report on the video game industry, highlighting the rapid development of the sector and its technological and regulatory advances. The video game industry represents global sales of nearly \$187 billion. From the definition of a video game and its meteoric growth to European legislation, data protection and the protection of minors, this report provides a comprehensive overview. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Culture :



The Masters of the Italian Renaissance in London

The Royal Academy of Arts is presenting the "Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael" exhibition in London until 16 February 2025. This artistic event pays tribute to three major figures of the Italian Renaissance: Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael. The exhibition explores the rivalry between Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, and demonstrates their influence on Raphael's work. [Read more](#)



Gabriele Münter in Madrid

Until 9 February 2025, the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid is presenting the exhibition 'Gabriele Münter: The Great Expressionist Woman Painter', featuring around a hundred varied works (paintings, drawings, engravings and photographs) by one of the leading figures of twentieth-century German Expressionism, a member of the Expressionist group Der blaue Reiter (Blue Rider Movement). [Read more](#)



Nadia Léger in Paris

The Musée Maillol in Paris is presenting the exhibition "Nadia Léger. Une femme d'avant-garde" (Nadia Léger. An avant-garde woman), an exhibition of 150 works tracing the career of this artist, prolific painter, magazine publisher and wife of Fernand Léger. [Read more](#)



"The School of Paris" in Prague

The National Gallery in Prague is presenting an exhibition entitled "École de Paris: Czech artists in Paris between the wars" until 2 March 2025. It features works by artists Jiří Kars, Otakar Kubín and František Zdeněk Eberl alongside better-known artists from the inter-war artistic movement known as the School of Paris. [Read more](#)



Mannheim-Heidelberg Film Festival

The Mannheim-Heidelberg International Film Festival will be running until 17 November. Known as the 'festival for newcomers', the big names in cinema rub shoulders with budding filmmakers and up-and-coming talents who have come to make a name for themselves on the world stage. The films presented must never have competed elsewhere. [Read more](#)



Jazz Festival in Strasbourg

The 39th edition of the Jazzdor festival in Strasbourg will run until 22 November. Bringing together artists from the regional, national and international scenes, the event aims to encourage interaction and collaboration between musicians so as to offer a large audience a variety of ways of interpreting and perceiving this musical style. [Read more](#)



Art Fair in Dublin

The art fair, Art source, is being held in Dublin from 15 to 17 November. Ireland's largest art fair showcases the work of 175 artists in a wide range of galleries. It is also the venue for events, workshops and conferences, as well as activities for children. [Read more](#)


■ Agenda :

 12 November 2024

Hearings of the 6 Vice-Presidents-designate of the Commission (Brussels)

 15 November 2024

Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Budget) (Brussels)

 18 November 2024

Foreign Affairs Council Agriculture and Fisheries Council (Brussels)

 18 November 2024

G20 Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)



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