

## De Gasperi-Schuman: the origins of the European Project

[Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Luigi Gianniti - 21 Jan 2025](#)

At the very origin of the European project, there were at least two men, the Italian Alcide de Gasperi and the Frenchman Robert Schuman, who had many things in common: they were both frontiersmen who shared the same political, religious and linguistic views. To mark the 70th anniversary of Alcide de Gasperi's death, the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Fondazione Alcide De Gasperi organised an event in Paris on 15 January, two of the contributions to which we are now publishing. At a time when the European project is facing major challenges at the start of this year, it is worth remembering the courage and vision of those who laid the foundations of European integration 75 years ago.



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■ **Front page! :**





## Audition of NATO's Secretary General

On 13 January, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte addressed the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and Subcommittee on Security and Defence on the need to increase the share of GDP devoted to defence beyond the 3% threshold in order to support NATO's strategic priorities, which include maintaining and increasing aid to Ukraine and unifying coherent industrial defence manufacturing in line with increased armaments budgets. Mark Rutte reiterated his willingness to cooperate fully with the European Union to enhance European resilience. [Read more - Other link](#)

## ■ Diplomacy :



### A stronger Partnership with Mexico

On 17 January, the European Union announced an agreement with Mexico to strengthen their trade relationship, particularly in agriculture. They have already been linked by a vast political and trade agreement since 2000. The strengthening of this agreement had been under negotiation since 2016. The aim of the agreement is to "deepen and broaden political dialogue, cooperation and economic relations between the European Union and Mexico". [Read more](#)



### Humanitarian Aid for Gaza and Syria

On 16 January, the European Union announced that it would provide €120 million in 2025 for Gaza, to support the Palestinians' food and health needs. On 17 January, it announced humanitarian aid for Syrians, both in Syria and in neighbouring countries, worth €235 million in 2025. [Read more - Other link](#)

## ■ Court of Justice :



## Confirmation of restrictive measures regarding the Russian operator MegaFon

On 15 January, the General Court of the European Union confirmed the restrictive measures adopted against the Russian mobile telephone operator MegaFon. The company thus remains on the lists of entities targeted by the European Union's restrictive measures against Russia. The company was placed on these lists in February 2023 because of its direct support for the Russian military and industrial complex during the war in Ukraine. The restrictions include a ban on European operators providing technical or financial assistance to MegaFon for dual-use goods. [Read more](#)

## ■ European Agencies :



### 38% reduction in irregular border crossings in the EU by 2024

A report by the Frontex agency, published on 14 January, reveals a significant 38% drop in irregular border crossings in the EU in 2024. This is the lowest level since 2021. This drop is due to a 59% fall in arrivals on the central Mediterranean route and a 78% drop in detections on the western Balkan route. However, this reduction has not been observed on all migratory routes. For example, an increase in irregular entries was observed on the West African border route (Canary Islands) as well as along the borders with Belarus and Ukraine. [Read more](#)



### End of the Gaia mission observation phase

On 15 January, the European Space Agency announced the end of the observation phase of Gaia, its mission to map the Milky Way galaxy. Launched in December 2013, this mission has accumulated more than three trillion observations of around two billion stars. The rest of the mission will consist of technological tests, culminating in the publication of two data releases by the end of the decade. In more than 11 years, Gaia has produced the largest and most accurate map of the Milky Way, enabling us to learn more about its history and our perception of it. [Read more](#)

## ■ Bulgaria :



## Rosen Zhelyazkov new Prime Minister

On 15 January, Bulgarian President Rumen Radev mandated the main centre-right party, GERB, to form a government three months after the 27 October parliamentary elections. GERB, the Socialists (BSP) and ITN, the populist party of former presenter and singer Slavi Trifonov, with the support of some of the MPs representing the country's Turkish minority, overcame their "serious political and ideological differences" and "made the necessary compromises" to reach an agreement, which led Parliament to appoint Rosen Zhelyazkov Prime Minister on 16 January by 125 votes to 114. The government comprises 21 ministers, including 1 woman. [Read more - Other link](#)

## ■ Spain :



## Conference of Ambassadors in Spain

The head of the Spanish government, Pedro Sánchez, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, José Manuel Albares, attended the annual reception for the diplomatic corps, organised by the King and Queen of Spain, in Madrid. He called for European security to be 'strengthened' so that Europe can have an impact on the new international reality and defend its interests and values. [Read more](#)

## ■ Estonia :



## Expansion of funding for security and defence

On 16 January, the Estonian government announced its decision to allocate an additional €219 million to national defence in anticipation of crises that could threaten security. A reserve corps of around 1,000 police officers is already being prepared for combat duty. Funding for customs training and capacity will be increased, as will funding for hospital trauma services. Finally, investments will be made to strengthen border and counter-intrusion infrastructures, including drone detection systems. [Read more](#)

## ■ Finland :



## Entry into force of the police cooperation agreement with Sweden

On 16 January, a government decree formalised the entry into force of the police cooperation agreement between Sweden and Finland, which will take effect on 1 February. The agreement aims to strengthen security in the north of the two countries by allowing the authorities to cross the border, under certain conditions, in urgent situations involving serious offences. [Read more](#)



## Helsinki Summit on Security in the Baltic

On 14 January, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, Finnish President Alexander Stubb and Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal convened a summit of the Baltic Sea Allies in Helsinki. In response to the growing threat to critical underwater infrastructure in the Baltic Sea, Mark Rutte has announced the launch of a new military operation, 'Baltic Sentry', to protect this strategic infrastructure from sabotage. The operation will mobilise frigates, maritime patrol aircraft and cutting-edge technology, including naval drones. [Read more](#)

## ■ France :



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**RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE**

## General policy statement: government not censured

On 14 January, French Prime Minister François Bayrou delivered his general policy speech to the National Assembly. In addition to pension reform, the budget and New Caledonia, the Prime Minister spoke about Europe. In his view, in a fragmented world marked by violence, particularly with the war in Ukraine so close at hand, Europe must become a political and defence power, despite its internal divisions. The motion of censure tabled by the far left (LFI) was rejected on 16 January: only 131 MPs voted in favour, so the government was not overthrown. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Greece :



## Candidates for the presidential election on 25 January

On 16 January, the Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, proposed the nomination of the President of the Vouli (Parliament), Konstantinos Tassoulas, from his New Democracy party, for the post of President of the Republic. If his nomination is confirmed by Parliament, he will succeed the current President, Katerina Sakellaropoulou, the first woman appointed to the post and whose five-year term expires by mid-March. The vote will take place in Parliament on 25 January. The left-wing SYRIZA party has proposed Louka Katseli as its candidate, while PASOK may put forward Tasos Giannitsis. The President is elected by Parliament. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Rafale reception

The Greek Air Force has announced that it has received its latest Rafale F3Rs, designed by Dassault Aviation and ordered from France under the 2021 agreement, extended by the signing of a second contract in 2022, providing for the acquisition of a total of 24 Rafales and an arsenal of advanced missiles. The reinforcement of the Greek air fleet, with bilateral cooperation from France, is part of Greece's ongoing project to ensure its air sovereignty in a geostrategic region beset by recurring tensions. [Read more](#)

## ■ Ireland :



## Agreement reached on a centre-right coalition government

Following the general election on 29 November, the centre-right parties Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael entered into a coalition government with a group of independent MPs. As with the 2020 coalition agreement, this alliance will see Micheál Martin (Fianna Fáil) and Simon Harris (Fine Gael) take turns in the role of Taoiseach (Prime Minister). The government is due to take office on 22 January. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Italy :



## Kaja Kallas and Benjamin Haddad in Rome

Following the meeting between the High Representative, Kaja Kallas, and the President of the Italian Council of Ministers, Giorgia Meloni, on 10 January, to discuss the role of the European Union in foreign policy (Ukraine, Middle East, Syria), the French Minister for European Affairs, Benjamin Haddad, travelled to Rome on 16 January, where he met his counterpart, Tommaso Foti, to consolidate the alliance and cooperation relations between the two countries in several areas (immigration, agriculture, cross-border cooperation and defence). [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Poland :



## Defence Ministers Summit in Warsaw

The Polish, French, Italian, German and British defence ministers met in Warsaw on 13 January to discuss military aid to Ukraine and European security in the face of the Russian threat. Sébastien Lecornu, Minister for the Armed Forces, worked with his Polish counterpart Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz to build a cooperation and security agreement between France and Poland. Poland is expected to approach 5% defence spending by 2025. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Visit of Volodymyr Zelensky

On 15 January, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Warsaw. At a press conference, Donald Tusk, who holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, reiterated Poland's support for Ukraine and expressed his determination to intensify their cooperation to speed up the process of Ukraine's accession to the European Union. Volodymyr Zelensky also announced the forthcoming exhumations of Polish victims of the Volhynia massacre during the Second World War. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Armenia :





## Armenia approves a draft law regarding membership of the European Union

The Armenian government approved the draft law on the launch of the country's accession process to the European Union on 9 January. During his meeting on 10 January with Magdalena Grono, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and Georgia, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said that this decision was 'in line with the dynamics of deepening Armenia's cooperation with the European Union, and with the European aspirations of Armenian citizens'. Prime Minister Nikol Pachinian is considering organising a referendum on the subject. [Read more](#)

## ■ Montenegro :



### Visit by the Enlargement Commissioner

Visiting Podgorica on 16 and 17 January, the European Commissioner for Enlargement, Marta Kos, held talks with Prime Minister Milojko Spajić and President Jakov Milatović, before addressing Parliament. She praised Montenegro's cooperation with Europol and Eurojust in the fight against organised crime and its accession to the SEPA area. Milojko Spajić stated that his country was ready to close the remaining 25 chapters "by the end of 2026". [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Ukraine :



### Historic partnership between Ukraine and the United Kingdom

On 16 January, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer travelled to Kyiv to sign a historic partnership agreement with Ukraine. The aim of the treaty is to strengthen military cooperation, particularly in maritime security, as well as scientific and technological cooperation in areas such as health, space and agriculture. Keir Starmer also announced that the UK would provide Ukraine with 150 artillery guns and a new mobile air defence system, developed by the UK and co-financed by Denmark. The UK will continue to train Ukrainian soldiers. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



## Boris Pistorius visits Kyiv

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius visited Kyiv on 14 January. The aim was to restate Germany's support for Ukraine, just a few days before Donald Trump takes office. The main topics were military assistance to Ukraine, the strengthening of its air defence, the supply of munitions, and the acquisition of Ukrainian arms and equipment based on the Danish model. Germany alone provided 16% of all the aid received by Ukraine from its partners. [Read more - Other link](#)



## New European Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine and Moldova

On 13 January, the European Commission announced a further €140 million in humanitarian aid for Ukraine and €8 million for Moldova. The Commission points out that almost 12.7 million people are in need of emergency aid as a result of the conflict started by Russia in February 2022. [Read more](#)

## ■ Studies/Reports :



## Discrimination against European medical products in Chinese public procurement markets

On 14 January, the European Commission published a report highlighting persistent discrimination against European medical devices in Chinese public procurement markets. The results of the study reveal that China unfairly restricts access to its public procurement markets for EU producers of medical devices. The report serves as a guide for the Commission in deciding what measures to adopt to re-establish fair conditions of competition on these markets. These measures could include restrictions or even the exclusion of Chinese access to EU public procurement markets in the absence of an acceptable solution. [Read more](#)



## Report by the European Court of Auditors regarding urban pollution

In a report published on 15 January, the European Court of Auditors points out that urban pollution remains a major environmental threat to health. European cities are still too noisy, with air that is too polluted despite improvements. The Court points out that air pollution is responsible for the deaths of 250,000 Europeans every year and that noise pollution causes thousands of premature deaths. The auditors recognise an overall improvement in air quality, but the fight against air and noise pollution remains insufficient. The Court urges us not to rest on our laurels and to realise that major efforts still need to be made. [Read more](#)



## IMF World Outlook updated

World growth is set to reach 3.3% in both 2025 and 2026, according to forecasts updated by the IMF on 17 January. In the United States, growth is expected to be 2.7%, while in the eurozone it will be just 1%. Globally, headline inflation is set to slow to 4.2% in 2025 and 3.5% in 2026, and is expected to converge faster towards its target in advanced countries than in emerging and developing countries. [Read more](#)

## ■ Culture :



CITÉ DE LA MUSIQUE  
PHILHARMONIE  
DE PARIS

## The Philharmonie de Paris celebrates Pierre Boulez

To mark the centenary of Pierre Boulez's birth, the Philharmonie de Paris is paying tribute to the composer and conductor with a series of cultural events. Concerts, exhibitions and lectures will highlight the work and legacy of this visionary artist and emblematic figure of contemporary creation. While some of the events will be held at the Philharmonie, a large part of the celebrations will take place in prestigious venues around the world. These events will continue until 31 May. [Read more](#)

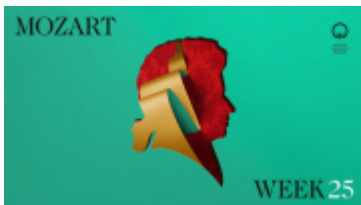
## 80th anniversary of the Liberation - Milan

Until 31 December, the Museo del Risorgimento in Milan, together with the Civiche Raccolte Storiche, Milan's civic historical collections, is presenting a series of exhibitions to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the liberation from fascism. The exhibits include material conserved in archives, bibliographic collections and eyewitness accounts of the period, paying tribute to the victims and resisters of the regime. [Read more](#)



## Modern and Contemporary Art Fair in London

The 37th edition of the London Art Fair, dedicated to modern and contemporary art, will run until 26 January at the Business Design Centre in the British capital. The event brings together more than 120 modern and contemporary galleries from around the world, offering collectors and art lovers alike the opportunity to discover exceptional works. As well as exhibitions, the fair features shows, lectures, studio visits and immersive installations. [Read more](#)



## Mozart Week in Salzburg

Mozart Week is being held in Salzburg, the birthplace of the famous composer, until 2 February. Enjoy the symphonies, minuets and other masterpieces performed in the famous Viennese hall of the baroque Danube city, and immerse yourself in the world of one of the greatest musicians of all time! [Read more](#)



## Reading Nights

The 9th Reading Nights, organised by the Centre National du Livre and the Ministry of Culture, is being held from 23 to 26 January in a number of countries in Europe and around the world, via French cultural institutes and alliances. The public is invited to come together for thousands of physical and digital events. [Read more](#)



## 48th Göteborg Film Festival

From now until 2 February, the Great North Film Festival in Göteborg will be showcasing the very best of Swedish cinema. On the programme are a host of biopics and films, including a fascinating, multi-award-winning European selection. [Read more](#)



## Portraits in Bath

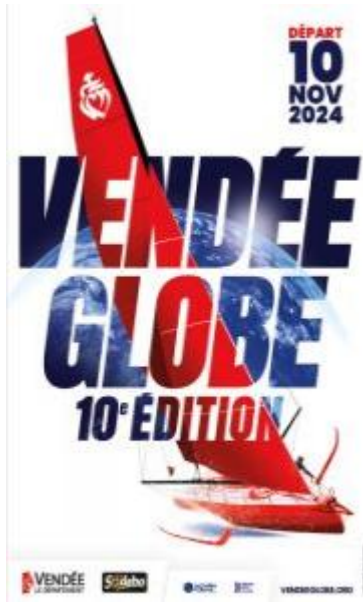
The Holburne Museum in Bath is presenting the exhibition "Iconic: Portraiture from Francis Bacon to Andy Warhol" until 5 May. Bringing together a collection of often little-known paintings and photographs, the museum is exhibiting work by renowned mid-twentieth-century artists such as Francis Bacon, Peter Blake, Pauline Boty, Richard Hamilton, Gerhard Richter and Andy Warhol, with a view to questioning the power of the media and the construction of celebrity. [Read more](#)



## Northern Lights at the Beyeler Foundation in Basel

Until 25 May, the Fondation Beyeler is inviting visitors to discover a series of over 70 Canadian and Scandinavian masterpieces from the period 1880 to 1930, including the finest signatures of Edvard Munch and Hilma af Klint. In this exhibition, the great Nordic masters introduce you to the universe of the infinite expanses of the 'Northern Lights', combining classical and contemporary schools, unfathomable forests, eternal summer days and permanent winter nights. [Read more](#)

## ■ Sports :



## Around the world in 64 days

A new round-the-world record has been broken by ten days and a historic victory in this 10th edition of the Vendée Globe. Charlie Dalin came out ahead on the morning of 14th January in Les Sables d'Olonne. He was ahead of Yoann Richomme, who arrived the following day. Sébastien Simon took 3rd place on 17th January to complete the podium in this edition of the race. [Read more](#)

## ■ Agenda :

 20-23 January

**Plenary Session of the European Parliament** (Brussels)

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 21 January

**Economic and Financial Affairs Council** (Brussels)

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 25 January

**Presidential Election** (Greece)

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 27 January

**Foreign Affairs Council Agriculture and Fisheries Council** (Brussels)



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