

Letter n°1097 of Tuesday 4th February 2025

Greenland: a geostrategic challenge for the European Union in the age of Trump 2.0

[André Gattolin - 04 Feb 2025](#)

Donald Trump's return to the White House confirms, after a first term marked by an attempt to buy Greenland, that the Arctic island is a critical geopolitical issue for the United States - and that it should also be for the European Union. At a time when the new American President is making more and more statements about Greenland, this study looks at the geostrategic issues at stake in this autonomous Danish territory at the gateway to the Arctic.



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■ **Foundation :**



Follow developments in the European Parliament on the Foundation's website!

The European Parliament's two new committees voted in their officers on 27 and 29 January. The Committee on Security and Defence re-elected Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann (Renew, DE) as its chair on 27 January. The Health Committee re-elected Adam Jarubas (EPP, PL) as its chairman on 29 January. You can find these updates on the Robert Schuman Foundation website dedicated to the European Parliament. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Commission :



Presentation of the strategic compass for competitiveness

On 29 January, the European Commission presented its "Competitiveness Compass", a follow-up to the Draghi report submitted last September. It aims to close the innovation gap, reduce excessive dependency and boost competitiveness through simplification measures (a proposal to this effect will be detailed on 26 February), the reduction of obstacles to the single market, the financing of competitiveness, the promotion of skills, and better coordination of policies at European and national levels. Of particular note is the introduction of a 28th legal regime, the European Business Code, which the Foundation has long supported. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Strategic dialogue on the future of the automotive industry

The European Commission launched a strategic dialogue with the European automotive industry on 30 January. The aim is to safeguard the future of this vital sector for the European Union while advancing its climate and societal objectives. The dialogue will take the form of regular meetings between stakeholders and working groups tasked with putting forward detailed proposals on innovation, clean transition, decarbonisation, competitiveness and resilience, and regulatory simplification. [Read more](#)



European Defence Funds: adoption of the fifth work programme

On 30 January, the European Commission adopted the fifth annual work programme under the European Defence Fund (EDF), which allocates more than €1 billion to collaborative defence research and development projects. The work programme heralds the launch nine competitive calls for proposals covering 31 themes, with a focus on digital technologies, deep-tech innovation, clean and resource-efficient technologies and biotechnologies. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers

Meeting on 27 January, the agriculture and fisheries ministers discussed the simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy, with the aim of reducing red tape. The issue of strengthening the position of farmers in the agri-food supply chain and agri-food trade was also raised. Finally, the Polish Presidency presented its priorities, namely food security, the competitiveness of the agri-food sector and strengthening resilience to crises. [Read more](#)



Meeting of European Affairs Ministers

The ministers responsible for European affairs met on 28 January to examine the priorities of the Polish Presidency in the areas of protecting the rule of law, enlargement and developing cooperation with the United Kingdom. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Mission to Armenia (EUMA) extended by two years

On 30 January, the Council adopted a decision extending the mandate of the European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA) for a period of two years, until 19 February 2027. With a budget of €44 million, the mission is tasked with monitoring and reporting on the situation on the ground, contributing to human security in conflict-affected areas and supporting confidence-building between Armenia and Azerbaijan. [Read more](#)



Strategic partnership with Jordan

On 29 January, the European Union and Jordan signed a strategic partnership following a ceremony with King Abdullah II of Jordan and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, in Brussels. The partnership provides for financial and investment measures from 2025 to 2027, estimated at €3 billion. [Read more](#)

■ ECB :



Rates cut further and monetary policy eased

On 30 January, the European Central Bank announced a further 25 basis point cut in its key interest rates. It notes that the disinflation process is well underway. It forecasts a return to the 2% inflation target in the medium term during 2025. This cut in interest rates will reduce the cost of borrowing for businesses and households and should therefore boost economic activity, despite the unfavourable factors weighing on the economy. [Read more](#)



Competition for new tickets

On 31 January, the European Central Bank (ECB) announced the launch of a design competition for the future European banknotes. The competition will focus on emblematic European figures such as Marie Curie, Maria Callas, Leonardo da Vinci and Ludwig van Beethoven, as well as geographical and natural markers such as rivers and birds symbolising free movement. Participation will be restricted to European designers. A shortlist will be put to the public vote in early 2026 before the ECB makes its final decision. The new banknotes are not expected to enter circulation until 2028. [Read more](#)

■ Court of Justice :



Solemn undertaking by the Commissioners before the Court

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and her college of European Commissioners gave the solemn undertaking provided for in the Treaties before the Court of Justice of the European Union on 27 January, in accordance with tradition. These undertakings include respect for the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the performance of their duties, and full independence in their actions. [Read more](#)

■ EIB :



New investments in 2025

On 30 January, the President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), Nadia Calviño, announced that she was raising her overall financing target to €95 billion by 2025. Flagship initiatives include support for European technology champions, a programme for European technologies 'TechEU', critical raw materials, water management, SME investment in energy efficiency and a platform dedicated to promoting sustainable and affordable housing. The EIB is committed to increasing its investment in defence projects to €2 billion by 2025. [Read more](#)

■ European Agencies :



The first lunar lander

The European Space Agency (ESA) announced on 30 January that it had signed a contract with Thales Alenia Space (France/Italy) to lead a European consortium of aerospace companies in the construction of the Argonaut Lunar Descent Device (LDE), ESA's first lunar lander. The Argonaut represents Europe's autonomous and versatile access to the Moon. From the beginning of the next decade, the spacecraft will carry out regular missions to the Moon and could be used to deliver infrastructure, scientific instruments and vital resources to astronauts on the lunar surface. [Read more](#)



17th European Space Conference

The 17th European Space Conference was held from 28 to 29 January in Brussels. A number of agreements were signed, including a new launch contract between the Commission, Arianespace and the European Union Space Programme Agency (EUSPA), to send second-generation Galileo satellites into orbit. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Protection against interference during elections

On 30 January, France, Germany and ten other EU Member States asked the European Commission to use its powers under the Digital Services Act (DSA) to protect the integrity of elections against manipulation of information and interference by foreign powers. Signed by the European Affairs Ministers of these countries, the letter of request makes specific reference to the Chinese and Russian threats that could ultimately influence the forthcoming elections in Europe. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



Law to limit immigration rejected by a narrow majority

On 29 January, the German CDU put forward a motion on immigration with the support of the far right (AfD), thus breaking the "cordon sanitaire" that advocates a strict ban on any cooperation with this party. The motion, which provides for permanent border controls and the refoulement of asylum seekers, was narrowly adopted (348 votes to 344), leading to major demonstrations across the country. Former CDU Chancellor Angela Merkel reacted by criticising Friedrich Merz, calling the alliance "an unforgivable mistake". On 31 January, MEPs narrowly rejected the bill to restrict immigration by 349 votes to 338. [Read more](#)

■ Belgium :



Appointment of the government led by Bart de Wever

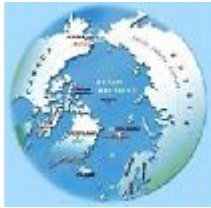
Eight months after the legislative elections of 9 June 2024, the new Belgian federal government was announced on 2 February. The government will be led by Bart De Wever, leader of the Flemish N-VA party, who will officially become Prime Minister after being sworn in by King Philippe with the fourteen members of his government. In addition to the NVA, the coalition includes the CD&V, Vooruit, the Reform Movement (MR) and Les Engagés. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Denmark :



Prime Minister's European tour for Greenland

On 28 January, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen met three European leaders in one day. She first met German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Berlin before travelling to Paris to meet French President Emmanuel Macron. She ended her European tour in Brussels with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte. The aim was to secure the support of these partners for Greenland, following US President Donald Trump's statements on the autonomous Danish territory. [Read more](#)



Investing in Arctic security

On 27 January, the Danish government announced a plan worth more than €2 billion to strengthen security in the Arctic and North Atlantic. According to Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen, this initiative is justified by the increasing threats in these regions. The programme includes the deployment of several ships and drones equipped with advanced technologies. This decision comes against the backdrop of US President Donald Trump's stated ambitions with regard to Greenland, an autonomous Danish territory. [Read more](#)

■ Finland :



Meeting of Nordic Defence Ministers in Helsinki

The defence ministers of the Nordic countries met in Helsinki on 30 January. The meeting provided an opportunity for them to underline their commitment to enhanced military cooperation as part of the Vision 2030 programme, adopted in April 2024, which aims to step up the strengthening of NATO's defence and deterrence. To this end, the ministers stressed the importance of joint military operations and cooperation between the Allies, notably through Joint Force Command Norfolk. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Business leaders concerned about the future of industry in Europe

The Chairman of the Michelin Group, Florent Menegaux, appeared before the French Senate's Economic Affairs Committee on 22 January. Faced with increased competition from China and soaring production costs in Europe (electricity prices, taxes), Michelin's Chairman called for greater regulatory stability and support for innovation, to boost his company's business in France, Europe and worldwide. This position is shared by other French company directors, such as Eric Trappier, head of Dassault Aviation, but also at European level, notably by the chairman of Bosch, Stefan Hartung, according to whom the loss of 24% in profit for the German company over 2024 was inevitable in the face of China's competitive pressure in the automotive industry. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Greece :



No president elected in the 2nd round in Greece, a 3rd round will be necessary

On 31 January, the Greek Parliament was unable to elect the President of the Republic in the second round of voting. Konstantinos Tasoulas, nominated by the ruling New Democracy party, received 160 of the 200 votes required to be elected. A third round of voting, in accordance with the Greek Constitution, will take place on 6 February, with the threshold lowered to 180 votes. [Read more](#)

■ Ireland :



Appointment of government

Less than a week after the appointment of Micheál Martin as Prime Minister, the Irish government was named on 29 January. It comprises 23 ministers, including 6 women. The political breakdown includes ten members from Fianna Fáil, eight from Fine Gael and five independents. [Read more](#)

■ Italy :



Court again suspends transfers of migrants to Albania

In January, Italy resumed transfers of migrants to Albania, as part of an agreement signed in January 2024 to relocate the asylum claims of people intercepted at sea. On 31 January, the Court of Appeal in Rome again suspended its decision concerning their continued imprisonment in a detention centre in Albania. The judges have referred the matter to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), which will give its ruling on 25 February. In the meantime, the migrants have been repatriated to Italy. [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



European aid in support of energy

On 27 January, the European Commission announced emergency aid to tackle the energy crisis in Moldova. The aid, totalling €30 million, is intended to finance the purchase and transport of natural gas to the country until 10 February, including to the Transnistria region. This crisis arose after gas supplier Gazprom stopped deliveries on 1 January. [Read more](#)

■ Norway :



Government Crisis

Norway's coalition government of Labour and the Centre Party, led by Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, imploded on 30 January. After refusing to implement several European directives on energy, which were supposed to strengthen Norway's integration into the European market, the Senterpartiet (Centre Party) decided to leave the government. Since the Norwegian system does not allow parliament to be dissolved, the centre-left government will govern on its own until the next general election on 8 September. [Read more](#)

■ Serbia :



Resignation of Prime Minister Miloš Vučević

On 28 January, Serbia's Prime Minister, Miloš Vučević, resigned after three months of mass protests triggered by the collapse of a station canopy in Novi Sad in November. The accident, which killed 15 people, sparked accusations of government corruption and negligence. Protests have spread to Belgrade, where citizens are demanding transparency and accountability over the causes of the accident. A weakened President Aleksandar Vučić has raised the possibility of early elections in April following the resignation of the prime minister, who will remain in office until his successor is appointed. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Meeting of NATO-Ukraine Council

At the NATO-Ukraine Council on 29 January, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte met with Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Ohla Stefanichyna to discuss the situation on the battlefield and continued assistance to Ukraine. The Allies discussed efforts to bring Ukraine closer to NATO, including the creation of the NSATU command centre in Wiesbaden and the NATO-Ukraine Centre (JATEC). [Read more](#)



Sweden announces new military support for Ukraine

On 30 January, the Swedish Ministry of Defence announced its largest ever military aid package to Ukraine, worth SEK 13.5 billion, or almost €1.18 billion. The programme aims to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities through the supply of military equipment, financial support, training and support for the defence industry. [Read more](#)



Ukrainian Prime Minister visits Zagreb

The Ukrainian Prime Minister, Denys Shmyhal, travelled to Zagreb in Croatia to meet his Croatian counterpart, Andrej Plenković, on 29 January. Discussions focused on strengthening the economic, political, energy and security partnership between the two countries. The Ukrainian Prime Minister visited the Sabor, the Croatian Parliament, where he gave a speech in which he thanked Croatia for its defence aid. [Read more](#)

■ Georgia :



Withdrawal of Georgia from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

On 29 January, Georgia announced the suspension of its work within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The Chair of the Georgian delegation, Tea Tsouloukiani, explained that this decision followed the adoption of a resolution on 27 January making the ratification of the Georgian delegation's credentials conditional on progress by the authorities to reverse the country's democratic decline, including the release of political prisoners and the organisation of new democratic elections. Describing these demands as "unacceptable" and a violation of the country's sovereignty, Tea Tsouloukiani pointed out that Georgia remained a member of the Council of Europe. [Read more](#)

■ Council of Europe :



Review of the winter session

The winter session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was held from 27 to 31 January. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the issue of human rights, particularly within a rules-based international order, were the main themes of the session. There was also a debate on the Georgian parliamentary elections. On 30 January, the Parliamentary Assembly recalled the lack of legitimacy of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko following the "ballot" on 26 January, which did not meet the minimum international standards for a democratic election. [Read more - Other link](#)



The ECHR condemns Italy for dumping of waste

On 30 January, the European Court of Human Rights ruled on the "Land of Fires", an Italian region covering the provinces of Naples and Caserta, affected by a deterioration in health conditions. As a result, the ECHR condemned Italy for violating article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights guaranteeing the right to life, on the grounds that the Italian government had failed to address the problem of large-scale dumping, burying and incineration of waste on private land, often the result of the activities of organised criminal groups. The Court gave Italy two years to draw up a strategy to combat pollution in these provinces. [Read more](#)

■ Eurostat :



Growth, unemployment and inflation figures

Eurostat published its growth figures on 30 January. The annual growth rate for 2024 is forecast to be 0.8% in the European Union and 0.7% in the eurozone. The unemployment rate for December was up on November 2024: 5.9% instead of 5.8% in the European Union; 6.3% compared with 6.2% in the eurozone. On 3 February, Eurostat reported that the annual inflation rate in the eurozone had risen to 2.5%. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Culture :

**THYSSEN-
BORNEMISZA
MUSEO NACIONAL**

Guardi and Venice in Madrid

For the first time in Madrid, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum is presenting the entire collection of works by Francesco Guardi belonging to the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, under a collaboration agreement between the two institutions. Until 11 May 2025, 18 oil paintings and one drawing produced by the artist between 1765 and 1791 will be on show at the Madrid museum. [Read more](#)



Renovation of the Louvre Museum

The President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, visited the Louvre Museum in Paris on 28 January to announce the renovation strategy for the institution. As part of France's cultural heritage and influence around the world, the museum has new needs, both in terms of preserving its palace and in terms of the experience it offers its visitors. To adapt the Louvre, the most visited museum in the world, to the massive numbers of visitors, a new entrance will be created and the Mona Lisa will be transferred to a dedicated area by 2031. [Read more](#)



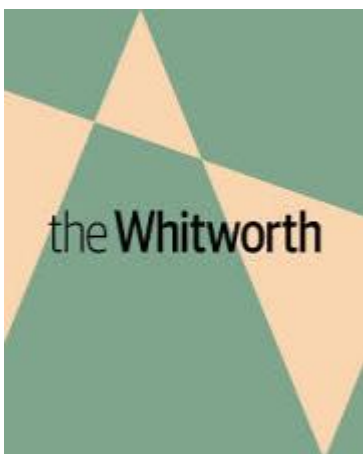
Marisa Merz in Bern

Until 1 June, the Kunstmuseum in Bern is devoting a retrospective to Marisa Merz (1926-2019), the only female member of the Arte Povera movement. Her poetic work explores the fragility of art and life through modest materials such as aluminium, wax and fabric. The exhibition, in collaboration with several European institutions, highlights her singular approach to time and space. Through drawings, sculptures and installations, the artist blurs the boundaries between art and everyday life. The exhibition offers a fresh look at this major figure in Italian art. [Read more](#)



Monet in Les Baux-de-Provence

Until 4 January 2026, the Carrières des Lumières in Les Baux de Provence are presenting an immersive exhibition devoted to Claude Monet, the master of Impressionism. Echoing the 150th anniversary of this artistic movement, this monograph offers a complete reading of Claude Monet's work, including his travels, his now-famous creative locations and his emblematic series, all brought to life through the prism of digital art. [Read more](#)



Turner in Manchester

To mark the 250th anniversary of his birth, the "Turner In Light and Shade" exhibition in Manchester explores the work and technique of the legendary British landscape painter. Turner remains one of the most renowned landscape painters. This exhibition presents his most remarkable yet little-known series of landscape prints, the Liber Studiorum, from 7 February to 2 November 2025. [Read more](#)

Bozar

African figurative painting in Brussels

The "When We See Us" exhibition is being held at Bozar in Brussels from 7 February to 10 August. Some 150 works by around 120 African or Afro-descendant artists are on show. The exhibition explores pan-African intellectual movements, experiences in Africa and the African diaspora, particularly in relation to art history. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 3 February 2025

EU leaders informal brainstorming session



The Letter n°1097

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N° ISSN: **2729-6482**

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