

Letter n°1098 of Tuesday 11th February 2025

European support to the defence industry - Mid-term review of the European Defence Fund

Nicolas-Jean Brehon - 11 Feb 2025

It is almost a year since the Commission presented its European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP), which aims to strengthen European industrial capabilities. If implemented, this programme will bolster the European Defence Fund (EDF) created in 2021. This study provides a mid-term review of the three years of operation of the European Defence Fund to inform future decisions on European defence.



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■ Foundation :



Schuman Network, sharing thoughts on Europe

An initiative of the Robert Schuman Foundation, the Schuman Network brings together groups of researchers who are experts in European issues, promoting the exchange of ideas and reflection on the future of Europe. On 6 February, a new member joined the network, bringing the Schuman Network to 22 members from 13 European countries. The network provides a privileged framework for the sharing of analyses on various European issues. Since its creation, almost 155 studies have been shared, enriching the debate and expertise on European issues. [Read more](#)



"European Defence": Jean-Dominique Giuliani appears before the National Assembly

On 5 February, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, and Steven Everts, Director of the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), met with the National Defence and Armed Forces Committee of the National Assembly. This hearing focused on European defence. More specifically, the discussions focused on the development of European defence policy in the face of new threats, possible solutions for the Union and its Member States in terms of cooperation in this area, as well as the role of the defence industry in strengthening the strategic capabilities of the European Union. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Measures to promote safe and sustainable imports in e-commerce

On 5 February, the European Commission announced measures to combat the risks arising from low-value imports in the context of e-commerce. It is thus encouraging action, particularly in the areas of customs and trade. The market for low-value products (goods worth less than €150) accounted for almost 4.6 billion shipments in 2024, double the number in 2023 and triple the number in 2022. This influx may lead to the proliferation of harmful products and unfair competition for European sellers who comply with EU standards. [Read more](#)



The Commission requests information from Shein

On 6 February, the European Commission requested that the company Shein provide it with information on the risks associated with the presence of illegal content and products, as well as its recommendation system. This request has been made within the framework of the Digital Services Act (DSA). The Commission is asking the Chinese company to provide details of the measures it has adopted to mitigate these risks. The company has until 27 February to submit this information. This request is part of a broader investigation into the company's compliance with the Digital Service Act. [Read more](#)



Two new General Management Departments

On 3 February, the European Commission announced the creation of two new directorates-general. The first is responsible for enlargement and the Eastern Partnership (ENEST), and the second is responsible for partnerships with the Mediterranean and the Gulf countries (MENA). DG ENEST will be responsible for enlargement and accession negotiations with candidate countries and countries that wish to apply for membership of the European Union, and DG MENA will be responsible for establishing partnerships with North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf countries. [Read more - Other link](#)



Trip Gdansk

The College of European Commissioners travelled to Gdansk in Poland on 6 and 7 February. This visit took place within the framework of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU. The Polish commissioners and ministers were thus able to discuss the priorities of the Polish presidency in plenary and thematic sessions. The main themes of this presidency concern concepts such as competitiveness and the defence of the European continent. The issue of European climate objectives was also raised, in particular the renewal of the commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Brainstorming session on European defence

On 3 February, the 27 heads of state and government, the NATO Secretary General and the British Prime Minister met in Brussels. An opportunity to discuss the need to find new sources of funding to rearm Europe. According to the European Commission, the Union must invest €500 billion in defence over the next decade. The reallocation of unused funds from other programmes, the broadening of the mandate of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and greater flexibility in Community budgetary rules are being considered. [Read more - Other link](#)



Conference of EU Ambassadors

The annual conference of EU ambassadors was held in Brussels from 3 to 7 February, in the presence of the President of the European Council, Antonio Costa. He recalled the unstable state of the world and the need for the Union to guarantee respect for the rules of international order, particularly in its support for Ukraine. Relations with the United Kingdom and the United States were also discussed, as was the issue of enlargement. [Read more](#)

■ Court of Justice :



Fine of €320 million imposed on Poland

On 5 February, the General Court of the European Union confirmed the penalty payment of €320 million imposed on Poland for the period from 15 July 2022 to 4 June 2023. On 1 April 2021, the European Commission had brought an action before the Court of Justice against Poland for failure to fulfil obligations, seeking a declaration that certain legislative amendments to the organisation of the Polish judicial system were in breach of European law. [Read more](#)

■ France :



French Parliament adopts the budget

On 31 January, 14 deputies and senators, meeting in a joint committee, reached an agreement on the finance bill for 2025. On 3 February, Prime Minister François Bayrou applied Article 49, paragraph 3 of the Constitution to have the text of the joint committee adopted without a vote by the deputies. The motion of censure having been rejected on 5 February, the senators approved the text on 6 February and the 2025 budget was adopted. [Read more - Other link](#)



A week of action for Artificial Intelligence in Paris

From 6 to 11 February, the French capital is hosting a number of events (scientific days, International Summit at the Grand Palais, etc.) to strengthen international action in favour of artificial intelligence (AI) in the service of general interest. Many leading political figures such as the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz are in attendance. With this event, France is seeking to mobilise investment in the field, obtain commitments in support of global governance of AI and promote sustainable and environmentally friendly artificial intelligence. On 9 February, Emmanuel Macron announced that AI in France would benefit from 109 billion euros of investment from private companies, while the French firm specialising in artificial intelligence, Mistral AI, announced the opening of the first data centre in France. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Greece :



State of emergency in Santorini

On 6 February, the Greek civil defence service declared a state of emergency in Santorini until 3 March, due to the intense seismic activity that has hit the Aegean island in recent days. Faced with violent winds and earthquakes, more than 11,000 residents have been forced to leave Santorini and ferries have been prohibited from sailing to and from the island. [Read more](#)



Third round of Greek Presidential election

The Greek Parliament was still unable to elect the President of the Republic after the third round of voting on 6 February. Konstantinos Tasoulas, nominated by the ruling New Democracy party, once again received 160 votes, narrowly missing the 180 required to be elected President at the end of the third round. A simple majority will be required in the fourth round of voting, scheduled for 12 February, in accordance with the Greek Constitution. [Read more](#)

■ Italy :



Sergio Mattarella at the University of Aix-Marseille

The University of Aix-Marseille awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa to Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic, in recognition of his career, characterised by a commitment to democracy and justice. Through his various roles (lawyer, MP, minister, constitutional judge, then President), the Italian Head of State has always defended the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and Italy's European commitment. During his speech, Sergio Mattarella referred to bilateral relations between France and Italy and called for peace in the world. [Read more](#)

■ Lithuania :



The Baltic States join the European electricity network

The three Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, disconnected from the Russian and Belarussian electricity network (BRELL) on 8 February at 9am local time, thus definitively severing their energy links with Moscow that date back to the Soviet era. A giant digital clock installed in Vilnius counted down the hours until the Baltic states were fully integrated into the European electricity grid. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, attended a ceremony there on 9 February, along with the leaders of these countries and Polish President Andrzej Duda. The Baltic states are now connected to the Finnish, Swedish and Polish grids. [Read more](#)

■ Georgia :



Speech by the High Representative and the Enlargement Commissioner on Georgia

On 7 February, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, and the European Commissioner for Enlargement, Marta Kos, made a statement on the situation in Georgia. They mentioned the country's violations of democratic standards, particularly with regard to hasty amendments to fundamental legal codes. They denounce the practices of the Georgian authorities, who use intimidation and violence to silence the opposition, and deplore the attacks on fundamental freedoms such as freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of the media. This situation is worrying and distances the country from the prospect of EU membership. [Read more](#)

■ Kosovo :



Legislative elections

On 9 February, the left-wing nationalist movement *Vatëvendosje* (VV) of outgoing Prime Minister Albin Kurti, came out well ahead in the legislative elections in Kosovo. With a score of around 40% of the vote, the party could secure 43 to 47 of the 120 seats in Parliament according to various projections, far from the absolute majority targeted. The outgoing prime minister has ruled out any post-election alliance with any of the opposition forces. The Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) came second with around 22% of the votes cast, closely followed by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), which is thought to have won 17% of the vote. The Nisma Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) came fourth with around 7% of the vote. A large PDK-LDK-AAK coalition is a possibility, but will depend on the result of the minority vote. [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



Energy strategy between the European Commission and Moldova

On 4 February, the European Commission and Moldova adopted a two-year comprehensive strategy for the country's energy independence and resilience. The announcement was made at a press conference between Moldovan President Maia Sandu and Enlargement Commissioner Marta Kos in Chisinau. For 2025, €250 million will be paid to the country, including €100 million to be granted by mid-April. In addition, €60 million is being offered to the inhabitants of the (separatist) Moldovan region of Transnistria, due to the interruption of the gas supply by Gazprom since 1 January. [Read more](#)

■ UK :



Keir Starmer hosts Olaf Scholz in London

The British Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, received German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in London on 2 February. During their meeting, the two leaders discussed the situation in Ukraine and the strengthening of the European defence industry. They also discussed the evolution of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union. Keir Starmer announced that he wanted closer collaboration with the EU in certain strategic areas, particularly defence, trade and energy, while ruling out a return of the UK to the European community. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Progress in the creation of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine

On 4 February, legal experts from the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the European External Action Service, Ukraine and 37 other states defined the legal basis for the creation of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression committed by Russia against Ukraine. This special tribunal will be governed by the 'draft Schuman Statute' and will aim to hold accountable before the courts the Russian political and military leaders who bear the greatest responsibility for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Council of Europe Special Envoy on the situation of children in Ukraine

On 5 February, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, appointed Icelandic politician Thórdís Kolbrún Reykjadóttir as special envoy on the situation of children in Ukraine. The former Icelandic Minister for Foreign Affairs will be responsible for raising awareness of the difficulties faced by Ukrainian children since the start of the war. She will coordinate international cooperation and promote Council of Europe standards and initiatives aimed at helping them. Her action is part of the Reykjavik Declaration and includes regular monitoring by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. [Read more](#)



France delivers its first fighter aircraft to Ukraine

The French Minister of the Armed Forces, Sébastien Lecornu, announced on 6 February that France would send the first Mirage 2000 fighter planes to Ukraine. This delivery follows the announcement by French President Emmanuel Macron, who had announced the transfer of these military aircraft to Ukraine in June 2024. Ukrainian pilots have been trained on these aircraft for several months in France. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council of Europe :



Bosnia and Herzegovina must step up its efforts against money laundering and the financing of terrorism

MONEYVAL, the Council of Europe's anti-money laundering body, published a report on 5 February calling on Bosnia and Herzegovina to step up its efforts to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. The report reveals moderate effectiveness in many areas, but major shortcomings remain, particularly in the application of UN financial sanctions and the management of risks related to non-profit organisations. MONEYVAL has placed Bosnia and Herzegovina under enhanced monitoring and is expecting a report in December 2026. [Read more](#)

■ Eurobarometer :



Survey of European support for science

A Eurobarometer survey published on 3 February presents the results on citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology. Thus, 83% of those questioned consider that science and technology have a positive influence and 67% that they make our life easier, healthier and more enjoyable. Numerous subjects were broached, such as the desire for free distribution of the results of public research, perceptions of research in the field of AI and the desire to be better informed about scientific developments. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Publication of the MICA Center's annual report

On 4 February, the Maritime Information Cooperation & Awareness Center (MICA) published its annual review, which lists and characterises the events affecting maritime security around the world in 2024. According to the report, land-based armed conflicts are spilling over more into maritime areas and acts of piracy have increased by 110% compared to 2023, while attacks by Houthi rebels in Yemen and drug trafficking continue to disrupt global maritime traffic. In this context of heightened international tensions, the MICA Centre continues to fulfil its mission of surveillance, alert and assistance to players in the maritime industry, in cooperation with the French military authorities and its international partners. [Read more](#)



Reports on the state of water

The European Commission published its reports on the state of water on 4 February. These reports provide an account of the progress made in improving the state of water bodies over the last six years. The first report, on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, shows positive trends but emphasises the need for significant work to achieve the objectives in terms of the quality and quantity of fresh water. The report on the 'Floods' directive notes significant improvements in risk management, but regrets the absence of quantitative objectives in most plans. Finally, the last report, which dealt with the programmes of measures under the 'Marine Strategy' framework directive, notes limited progress. [Read more](#)



European
Environment
Agency

Carbon footprint of maritime transport in the European Union

On 3 February, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) published a report on the impact of European maritime transport on air pollution. Maritime transport accounts for 14.2% of CO2 emissions from European transport, and the sector as a whole represents 3 to 4% of the European Union's total CO2 emissions. However, the report emphasises the progress made by the European maritime sector in this area, but stresses the need to step up efforts. [Read more](#)



Military mobility action plan

On 5 February, the European Court of Auditors published a report in which it stated that the European Union's action plan on military mobility, published in November 2022, 'was not based on a sufficiently solid foundation'. The armed forces of the Member States are not yet able to move quickly within its territory, concludes the Court's report, which highlights the obstacles that still exist. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Koen Taselaar in Tours

Until 21 September, the Olivier Debré Centre for Contemporary Art in Tours is hosting the first exhibition in France by the Dutch artist Koen Taselaar. Drawing his references from multiple fields of pop culture, the artist immerses us in his visual universe through a collection of sculptures, drawings, furniture and tapestries, one of which is 19 metres long. [Read more](#)

The Courtauld

The Oskar Reinhart Collection on show in London

The Courtauld Gallery in London is hosting the exhibition 'Goya to Impressionism. Masterpieces from the Oskar Reinhart Collection' until 26 May. For the first time, the collection of the Swiss Oskar Reinhart, 'Am Römerholz', is being shown abroad. The event highlights works by artists who influenced the Impressionist movement, such as Goya and Courbet, and unveils works by the masters of Impressionism. [Read more](#)



75th Berlin Film Festival

The Berlin International Film Festival, the Berlinale, will be held from 13 to 23 February. For this 75th edition, nearly 200 films will be shown to 300,000 spectators from all over the world. The Golden Bear is awarded to the best film in the international competition. [Read more](#)



Venice Carnival

From 14 February to 4 March, the Serenissima will be hosting its famous carnival. This year, the Venice Carnival will be honouring the Venetian writer and diplomat Giacomo Casanova, on the 300th anniversary of his birth. With mask and costume exhibitions, street performances and a water parade, the Venice Carnival is a cultural and traditional event not to be missed. [Read more](#)



Kandinsky in Potsdam

From 15 February to 18 May, the Barberini Museum in Potsdam is presenting the exhibition 'Kandinsky's Universe: Geometric Abstraction in the 20th Century'. Works by Wassily Kandinsky, a key artist of geometric abstraction, an artistic movement of the early 20th century, are on display. The exhibition features nearly 125 works by more than 70 artists, including Sonia Delaunay and Victor Vasarely. [Read more](#)

KUNSTMUSEUM
DEN HAAG

"New Paris: from Monet to Morisot" exhibition in The Hague

The Hague Museum of Art is presenting an exhibition entitled 'New Paris: From Monet to Morisot' from 15 February to 9 June. This event invites visitors to discover the evolution of Paris, from the 19th century to the present day, through the works of the greatest Impressionist artists. [Read more](#)

{ BnF | Bibliothèque
nationale de France

The Apocalypse in Paris

The Bibliothèque nationale de France is hosting an exhibition dedicated to the Apocalypse until 8 June 2025. Through numerous masterpieces, paintings, sculptures, photographs, installations, rare books and film extracts from the Library's collections and the greatest French and European collections, the exhibition covers a period from the Middle Ages to the present day, in order to present the different imaginations induced by this word of biblical origin, dark and associated with the end of the world. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Agenda :

 10-13 February

Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)

 13 February

Meeting of NATO countries Defence Ministers (Brussels)

 14-16 February

Conference on Security (Munich)

 17/02/2025

Eurogroup



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