

# LA LETTRE SCHUMAN

This week's European news

## Letter n°1100 of Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025

The Russian war of aggression in Ukraine is entering its fourth year. The surprising new directions in American foreign policy are overturning traditional alliances, jeopardising NATO, the survival and independence of Ukraine, European security as a whole and American interests beyond. Although announced as a compromise, the US President's new position is more destructive than it appears. Negotiating support for Ukraine in exchange for access to minerals is an unprecedented act between Allies. America is turning in on itself. Europe has the military, financial, economic and cultural resources to respond. Its GDP is nine times that of Russia. It spends twice as much as the Russian army. Europe must turn its will and its deterrent capacity into a force to bring peace and stability to a continent left out in the cold by the United States of America.

### **The Italian Economy and its European Outlook**

Edoardo Secchi - 25 Feb 2025

'As soon as she came to power on 22 October 2022, Giorgia Meloni promised a major change in politics and Italy's return to an important role in Europe and on the international stage.'  
This study assesses the two years of the Meloni government in Italy and looks at the country's relations with its French neighbour as well as its place within the European Union.



[Elections](#) | [Foundation](#) | [Ukraine](#) | [Commission](#) | [Parliament](#) | [Council](#) |

[ECB](#) | [European Agencies](#) | [Austria](#) | [Denmark](#) | [France](#) | [Moldova](#) |

[Norway](#) | [UN](#) | [NATO](#) | [Eurostat](#) | [Eurobarometer](#) | [Studies/Reports](#) |

[Culture](#) |

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

## ■ Elections :



### **Victory for the Christian Democratic Union and a breakthrough for the far right in the German federal elections**

"The Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the main opposition party led by Friedrich Merz, won the federal elections in Germany on 23 February. Allied with the Christian Social Union (CSU), led by Bavaria's Minister-President Markus Söder, the party won 28.52% of the vote (the result of proportional representation) and took 208 of the 630 seats in the Bundestag, the lower house of the German parliament (11 more than in the last federal election on 26 September 2021)." Alice Weidel and Tino Chrupalla's AfD achieved a historic score with 20.80% of the vote and came second. Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats came third with 16.41% of the vote. It won 120 elected seats, 44 fewer than at the last federal elections. [Read more](#)

## ■ Foundation :



## For a treaty on European defence and security

In 2016, Jean-Dominique Giuliani was already arguing for a Europe of defence. With a draft treaty for the defence and security of Europe, he proposes to strengthen solidarity between France, Germany and the United Kingdom, to increase their defence efforts and to go beyond the NATO-EU division while respecting the bilateral or European choices of each country. [Read more](#)



## NATO without the Americans

'It is rather more a period of great risk, a moment of truth for a continent that is once again confronted with war and must face up to it, including militarily.' An expansionist and dictatorial spectre hangs over Europe, faced with an unstable position from its historic American ally. There can be no negotiations on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict without the Europeans, who will dictate the outcome.' [Read more](#)



## Recovery Plan

The European Commission approved Ireland's amended plan under the Recovery and Resilience Facility on 17 February. The Council of the European Union did the same on 18 February for the Belgian and Latvian plans. Lastly, payments of €1.18 billion and €128 million are due to be made shortly under the same facility for the Netherlands and Denmark, following a positive assessment by the European Commission. To follow developments in the post-Covid recovery plan you can visit the page on the Robert Schuman Foundation website dedicated to this subject. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Ukraine :



### Second summit on Ukraine in Paris

Following on from the summit on Ukraine on 17 February, French President Emmanuel Macron organised another extraordinary conference on Ukraine on 19 February. Faced with the reversal of US foreign policy, he discussed with the leaders of the 19 countries invited the possibility of sending troops to Ukraine and Ukraine's place in the peace negotiations. Following the summit, the Head of State answered questions from the public on Ukraine and security in Europe on social networks. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



### The Union adopts its 16th package of sanctions against Russia

On 24 February, to mark the three-year anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the European Union adopted its 16<sup>e</sup> package of economic and individual sanctions against Russia. These wide-ranging restrictive measures target key sectors of the Russian economy, such as finance and banking, trade, energy and transport, in order to reduce Russia's ability to continue its illegal war in Ukraine. The new sanctions package also includes measures against Belarus, in line with those adopted against Russia. [Read more](#)



### Memorandum on cooperation in the EU accession process

On the sidelines of an informal meeting of European affairs ministers in Warsaw, Ukrainian deputy prime minister Olha Stefanishyna and Moldovan deputy prime minister Cristina Gerasimov signed a memorandum of cooperation on European integration and the EU accession process on 18 February. The aim of the agreement is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices between the two countries to accelerate their rapprochement with the European Union, through cooperation in several key areas. [Read more](#)



### Volodymyr Zelensky visits Turkey

On 18 February, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky travelled to Ankara to meet his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has positioned himself as the 'ideal' host for negotiations on Ukraine. Turkey has managed to maintain ties with both belligerents, supplies combat drones and warships to the Ukrainians, but has not joined the Western sanctions against Russia. The Ukrainian head of state has called for 'fair' talks involving the European Union, the United Kingdom and Turkey. [Read more - Other link](#)



## Keith Kellogg on a diplomatic tour

On 17 February, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen met the US Special Envoy for Ukraine and Russia, General Keith Kellogg. This gave the head of the European executive the opportunity to underline the European Union's growing and ongoing financial and military support, and to reiterate Europeans' wish to cooperate with the United States in building a stable and just peace. Keith Kellogg then took part in a meeting of the NATO Council during which the Secretary General, Mark Rutte, recalled the importance of resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict to guarantee a stable future in the region. He continued his diplomatic tour in Kyiv on 20 February, when he paid an official visit to the Ukrainian President. They discussed the situation on the battlefield, the return of all Ukrainian prisoners and the implementation of effective security guarantees. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



## Ukraine's progress against corruption

On 20 February, the Group of States against Corruption (Greco), the Council of Europe's anti-corruption body, welcomed 'Ukraine's deep commitment to the fight against corruption', acknowledging progress despite the context of war with Russia. In a report, Greco considers that Ukraine has 'satisfactorily' implemented 18 of the 31 recommendations addressed to it on preventing corruption among members of parliament, judges and prosecutors. [Read more](#)



### Three years after the war in Ukraine: Europe reiterates its unwavering support

On the 3rd anniversary of the war in Ukraine, the Presidents of the European Council, the Commission and the European Parliament reiterated their unwavering support for the Ukrainian people and denounced Russia's sole responsibility for the conflict. Since the beginning of the war, the European Union has provided more than 135 billion euros in aid to Ukraine, contributing to its economic, humanitarian and military support. Finally, the European leaders stressed the need for transatlantic and international solidarity to guarantee a lasting peace. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, published a report on 21 February highlighting the actions taken by the Organisation to support Ukraine since the start of the war. The President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Marc Cools, gave a speech on the same day, reiterating the Organisation's commitment to Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity. [Read more - Other link](#)

## ■ Commission :



### Roadmap for Agriculture and Food

On 19 February, the European Commission presented its vision for agriculture and food, a strategy aimed at establishing a competitive and fair agri-food system in the long term. In addition, the Commission has allocated €99 million in exceptional aid to farmers in Croatia, Spain, Hungary, Latvia and Cyprus, due to the consequences of adverse weather events and natural disasters suffered since spring 2024. [Read more - Other link](#)



### **New Commission toolbox on good electoral practice**

The Commission published an electoral toolkit for national legislators on 20 February. The toolkit provides practical details on how the electoral guidelines in the legislation on digital services can be applied during electoral processes. This will focus in particular on reducing risks on very large online platforms and search engines, particularly on the issue of hate speech, online harassment or the manipulation of public opinion. [Read more](#)

## ■ Parliament :



### **Agreement on rules on waste**

On 18 February, the European Parliament and the Council reached agreement on new measures to prevent and reduce food and textile waste. The agreement includes the introduction of binding targets for the reduction of food waste at national level, to be achieved by 2031, as well as the need for Member States to set up producer responsibility systems for textiles. The Council's formal position still has to be adopted before it can be approved by Parliament at second reading. [Read more](#)

## ■ Council :



### **Meeting of Economics and Finance Ministers**

The Ministers for the Economy and Finance met on 18 February. They continued their discussions on the Competitiveness Compass presented by the Commission, notably on simplification and improving the business environment in Europe. They also approved the guidelines for the Union's annual budget for 2026, which the Commission will use to draw up next year's budget. The ministers carried out the biannual update of the list of non-cooperative countries and territories for tax purposes, without making any changes. [Read more](#)





### Eurogroup meeting

The Ministers for the Economy and Finance of the eurozone countries met on 17 February. They discussed Bulgaria's progress towards economic convergence with a view to joining the eurozone, in the presence of their Bulgarian counterpart, Temenuzhka Petkova. Macroeconomic forecasts were also on the agenda, particularly in the light of the analyses produced by the Commission and the Central Bank. The ministers also approved the work programme for the first half of 2025. [Read more](#)

## ■ ECB :



### ECB 2024 financial statements

On 20 February, the ECB published its financial statements for 2024. They show a loss of €7.9 billion, compared with €1.3 billion in 2023, and state that these losses will be offset by future profits. This difference can be explained by the use in 2023 of the provision for financial risks, which had reduced the loss by more than 6.6 billion euros. As this provision had a zero balance for 2024, it could not be used to mitigate the losses. The ECB justifies these losses by the fulfilment of its main task of maintaining price stability and warns that it could incur further losses in the years to come, even if they should be smaller than those of 2023 and 2024. [Read more](#)

## ■ European Agencies :



## Kata Tütto elected President of the European Committee of the Regions

On 19 February, Hungary's Kata Tütto was elected President of the European Committee of the Regions for a two-and-a-half-year term. The Spaniard and President of the Andalusia region, Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla, was elected First Vice-President and is therefore set to succeed Kata Tütto halfway through her term of office. The latter has announced her intention to focus on strengthening local democracy, the fight against climate change, and cohesion and housing policy. [Read more](#)

## ■ Austria :



## Negotiations on a coalition government in Austria

On 20 February, Austria's two centrist political parties announced that they had entered into negotiations with a view to forming a coalition that would exclude the far-right FPÖ party. Negotiations between the conservative ÖVP and the FPÖ failed last week. As a result, Austria is experiencing its longest period without a government since the Second World War. If the negotiations fail, the possibility of a snap general election could emerge, giving the FPÖ an opportunity to improve on its 29% share of the vote in the September elections and consolidate its position as the country's largest party. [Read more](#)

## ■ Denmark :



### Increased defence spending

On 19 February, the Danish government announced its intention to strengthen its armed forces by creating a fund of around €6.8 billion, which will increase the country's defence spending to more than 3% of gross domestic product in 2025 and 2026. In order to 'avoid war', the government will examine the need for additional defence funding after receiving NATO's new capability targets and during negotiations on another agreement on the Arctic and the North Atlantic. [Read more](#)

## ■ France :



### New record broken by the French nuclear industry

On 18 February, the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) in Cadarache announced that it had maintained plasma for 22 minutes in the Tokamak WEST nuclear reactor, setting a new world record. This plasma comes from nuclear fusion, a process that consumes less material and fuel than fission, which is already extremely concentrated, and produces no long-lived radioactive waste, making it a clean and inexpensive source of energy. This test is part of the ITER project, an international thermonuclear experimental reactor launched by the European Union, China, South Korea, the United States, India, Japan and Russia. [Read more](#)

## ■ Moldova :



### Agreement on €1.9 billion in aid from the European Union

On 19 February, the European Parliament and the Council agreed on a new €1.9 billion support plan for Moldova, aimed at speeding up the country's socio-economic reforms and strengthening its resilience. This aid comes particularly as the country is suffering as a result of the war in Ukraine. The agreement will be voted on at the March plenary session and will then have to be approved by the Council. [Read more](#)

### ■ Norway :



### Enhanced defence cooperation with the UK

On 20 February, UK Defence Secretary John Healey travelled to northern Norway, close to the border with Russia, to meet his Norwegian counterpart Bjørn Arild Gram and strengthen defence cooperation between the two countries. The objectives of this new partnership include the consolidation of the armed forces, industrial cooperation and the reinforcement of the protection of critical underwater infrastructures. This initiative is part of the UK's increased commitment to European security and to NATO, particularly in the face of Russia's militarisation of the Arctic and threats of US military disengagement from Europe. [Read more - Other link](#)

### ■ UN :



### 19th session of the Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean

On 20 February, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean opened its 19th plenary session in Rome. Participants stressed the importance of the region's stability for traditional trade and cultural exchanges, in the light of globalised issues such as artificial intelligence and conflict. [Read more](#)

## ■ NATO :



### NATO visits Slovakia and Poland

NATO Deputy Secretary General Radmila Shekerinska visited Bydgoszcz, Poland, on 17 February for the inauguration of the NATO-Ukraine Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC). She pointed out that JATEC was the first civil-military organisation to be jointly managed by the Atlantic Alliance and a partner country. She also held talks with the Polish Defence Minister, Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, and Olha Stefanichyna, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte visited Slovakia on 20 February. This meeting took place against a backdrop of political crisis in Slovakia, with a new government agreement between the partners in the ruling coalition. [Read more](#)

## ■ Eurostat :



### Surplus in international trade in goods

According to Eurostat estimates published on 17 February, the European Union will have a surplus of €16.3 billion in its trade in goods with the rest of the world in December 2024. The eurozone had a surplus of €15.5 billion. [Read more](#)

## ■ Eurobarometer :



### Survey on the concerns and information habits of young Europeans

A Eurobarometer survey on youth was published on 17 February. It reveals that the fight against rising prices and the cost of living is the number one concern of 16-30 year-olds (40%), followed by the environment and climate change (33%). The survey also shows that social media is the main source of political and social information for this age group (42%), followed by television (39%). Nevertheless, over three quarters of those surveyed are aware of the risks of misinformation. Nearly half of them consider that they have been exposed to misinformation often or very often. [Read more - Other link](#)

## ■ Studies/Reports :



### European Space Agency study on the melting of glaciers

In a study published on 19 February, the European Space Agency (ESA) reports an acceleration in the melting of the world's glaciers. Between 2000 and 2023, 6,542 billion tonnes of ice were lost, leading to an 18 mm rise in sea levels. The rate of melting has increased by 36% over the last ten years to 314 billion tonnes per year. [Read more](#)

## The European Environment Agency calls for more decisive action

According to a report by the European Environment Agency published on 19 February, the European Union is only partially meeting its objectives for the 2030 target despite the progress that has been made. The agency is therefore calling for more decisive action to boost the circular economy, reverse the negative trend in biodiversity and reduce the EU's carbon footprint. Despite certain factors showing convincing progress, the majority of indicators are not following a trend that would allow them to reach the targets set for 2030 in time. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

### ■ Culture :



## EMOP Berlin, European Month of Photography

EMOP Berlin is the largest biennial festival of photographic images in Germany. Museums, exhibition institutions, libraries, cultural institutes, universities, art academies and other educational establishments in Berlin and Potsdam are the key players in this open festival format. The 2025 edition will be held from 27 February to 30 March, on the theme of 'What separates us'. With its selection of works, EMOP Berlin proposes a dialogue to counter the mechanisms of polarisation underway in our democratic societies. [Read more](#)

## Fundació Joan Miró



### 50 years of the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona

To introduce the exhibition commemorating its fiftieth anniversary, the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona is presenting a reconstruction of three exhibitions by painters and sculptors from the 1970s and 1980s, from 28 February to 18 May. Three representative projects have been selected in chronological order: the exhibitions of Fina Miralles (1979), Susana Solano (1980) and Eva Lootz (1986), to highlight the talent and creativity of artists committed to feminism. [Read more](#)



### Bonnard and the Nordics in Stockholm

Until 18 May, the National Museum in Stockholm is presenting the exhibition 'Bonnard and the Nordics', devoted to the life and work of Pierre Bonnard, the 20th-century French artist who influenced several artistic movements in Scandinavia. The museum is offering the general public the chance to discover more than a hundred of the painter's works, including emblematic paintings on loan from institutions such as the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in order to present unexpected aspects of Scandinavian art and rediscover Pierre Bonnard in a new light. [Read more](#)



### Rodin / Bourdelle. Corps à corps

From 1 March to 1 June, La Piscine de Roubaix is bringing together two of the greatest sculptors of the modern era: Antoine Bourdelle and Auguste Rodin. Bringing together more than 170 works (sculptures, drawings, as well as photographs and archives), this face-to-face encounter between two great masters is a unique opportunity to explore almost fifty years of shared or cross-fertilisation in their creative work. [Read more](#)





### Modern Gothic in Oslo

From 28 February to 15 June, the National Museum of Oslo is staging the exhibition 'From Darkness to Light', featuring works of art from 1875 to 1925, as well as European medieval and Renaissance creations from Northern Europe. Through this selection, the exhibition explores themes such as faith and doubt, love and sexuality, as well as identity and social roles. [Read more](#)



### Wartime exile at Les Invalides

From 26 February to 22 June 2025, the Musée de l'Armée presents the exhibition 'Un exil combattant. Artists and France 1939-1945'. As part of the national commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Liberation, the Musée des Invalides is inviting the general public to share in the destinies, emotions, struggles and hopes of the artists, intellectuals and combatants who left their country for various exiles at the beginning of the Second World War, through the reconstruction of emblematic French and American locations. [Read more](#)

# MUZEUM museum of modern art in warsaw

## The "Impermanent" exhibition in Warsaw

The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw is presenting the exhibition 'The Impermanent' until 5 October. The first part of the exhibition presents works linked to political commitment and a belief in the power of art to make a difference, while the second brings together works expressing consumerist desires, a fascination with pop culture, advertising and the mass media, in societies that experienced the economic boom and the onslaught of consumerism after the Second World War, but also in the poorest 'peripheral' countries of Eastern Europe and the Global South. [Read more](#)



## Bowery in London

From 27 February to 31 August 2025, the Tate Modern Museum presents an exhibition devoted to Leigh Bowery, the unclassifiable Australian artist who left his mark on fashion and underground culture in the 1980s and 1990s. Through a selection of his most daring looks, this retrospective explores his impact on contemporary aesthetics and his influence, which can still be seen in today's top designers. A chance to discover Bowery's subversive genius and vibrant legacy. [Read more](#)

## ■ Agenda :

 24/02/2025


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

 24 February

**EU-Israel Association Council** (Brussels)

 25/02/25

**General Affairs Council**



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