

Letter n°1101 of Tuesday 4th March 2025

Technological and security issues: 2025, a pivotal year for women

Juliette Bachschmidt, Marie Cohignac - 04 Mar 2025

The participation of women in the supposedly male-dominated sectors of technology, digital technology and defence has been a key driver of progress and innovation. Yet many inequalities remain, and the glass ceiling seems very hard to break for half of humanity in many areas of private and professional life. While significant progress has been made in terms of equality, particularly in Europe where the legislative framework in favour of parity between men and women has been strengthened, making it the most advanced continent in this area, disparities persist, both in terms of representation and opportunities.



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■ Ukraine :



Support summit for Ukraine in Kyiv

On the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, more than twenty European and Western leaders gathered in Kyiv on 24 February to reassert their support for Ukraine. They emphasised the need to include all European countries as well as Ukraine in the peace negotiations with Russia. The leaders emphasised that any lifting of sanctions will depend on concrete actions on the part of Russia, adopting a 'peace through strength' approach. At the same time, French President Emmanuel Macron travelled to Washington to meet his American counterpart Donald Trump, with the aim of changing the position of the United States regarding the conflict in Ukraine, as did British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Summit for Ukraine in London

On 2 March, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer brought together 18 heads of state and government as well as the leaders of European and international institutions in London for an exceptional summit for Ukraine. This meeting allowed the participating countries to display a united position after the tense exchange between Volodymyr Zelensky and Donald Trump in Washington on 28 February. During this meeting, France and the United Kingdom proposed a partial one-month truce on air and sea strikes and energy infrastructure. In addition, the President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, announced a comprehensive plan to accelerate European rearmament. Finally, international and European leaders emphasised the need for comprehensive security guarantees for Ukraine. [Read more](#)



Increased support for Ukraine's energy security

On 24 February, the European Commission proposed a new package of measures to support Ukraine by securing its energy system and fully integrating it into the European energy market. These measures are aimed at fully linking the Ukrainian electricity market with that of the EU by 2027, including Moldova. The EU gas sector is also concerned, with the continuation of the integration that has already begun. These measures should provide security of supply and a massive acceleration of national renewable electricity production. The war has in fact caused the destruction of half of the country's civilian energy infrastructure, making the total independence of its energy system an absolute necessity. [Read more](#)



Spain announces a new military aid package for Ukraine

On the sidelines of the international summit in support of Ukraine on 24 February, the President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sánchez, announced a new €1 billion military aid programme for Ukraine. This donation is part of the bilateral security and defence agreement signed in May 2024 between the two countries, for a period of ten years, with a view to providing humanitarian aid, rebuilding Ukraine and establishing a lasting and just peace, based on international law. [Read more](#)



Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin meets Volodymyr Zelensky

Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during a stopover at Shannon Airport in Ireland on 27 February, before the latter left to meet with US President Donald Trump in Washington. The two leaders discussed the situation in Ukraine and efforts to achieve lasting peace in the face of Russian aggression. Micheál Martin reiterated Ireland's unwavering support for Ukraine, emphasising his country's willingness to provide humanitarian and financial assistance. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



The UN adopts competing resolutions for peace in Ukraine

On 24 February, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution at the initiative of the United States calling for an end to the conflict in Ukraine as soon as possible and for lasting peace. This resolution is the first to be adopted since the start of the war. Five European countries abstained: Denmark, France, Greece, the United Kingdom and Slovenia, wanting more guarantees and not wanting Ukraine to effectively capitulate. An amendment including the phrase 'which has been caused by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine' was rejected. The United Nations General Assembly adopted two resolutions on the same day, also calling for peace in Ukraine. One was sponsored by Ukraine and the Member States of the European Union and the other by the United States, with discussions focusing on the inclusion of Ukraine in the peace process. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



The Nordic countries step up their support for Ukraine

On 24 February, the third anniversary of the war in Ukraine, the Nordic countries announced substantial aid to Ukraine to support its humanitarian, reconstruction and defence efforts. Denmark announced aid of 54.6 million euros. Sweden will provide air defence systems worth 122 million euros. Finally, Norway plans to allocate 1.06 billion euros for humanitarian aid and also for energy security. In addition, Oslo has announced an additional 1.93 billion euros in aid for Ukrainian military defence. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ European Council :



Visit of the President of the European Council to Poland and Hungary

The President of the European Council, Antonio Costa, travelled to Poland and Hungary on 25 February. In Warsaw, he met with the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, with whom he discussed the European Union's continued support for Ukraine and the strengthening of Europe's defence potential. He then travelled to Hungary to meet with Prime Minister Viktor Orban. This was an opportunity to discuss preparations for a special European Council summit scheduled for 6 March, which should focus on strengthening the Union's security and defence capabilities. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Commission :



Simplification of rules on sustainability and investment

On 26 February, the European Commission presented a set of proposals aimed at simplifying European Union rules, stimulating competitiveness and freeing up investment capacity. The quantified target of these measures (called Omnibus) is a reduction of at least 25% in red tape for businesses and at least 35% for SMEs by 2029. The European executive hopes to save €6.3 billion each year on administrative costs and mobilise €50 billion in public and private investment capacity. Several texts are concerned, including the CSRD, the CS3D, the Taxonomy Directive, and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). [Read more](#)



Presentation of the Clean Industry Pact

On 26 February, the Commission presented the Clean Industry Pact, which aims to support the competitiveness and resilience of European companies, while accelerating decarbonisation. It focuses on two sectors: energy-intensive industries, requiring urgent support for decarbonisation, and clean technologies, which are central to future competitiveness and growth. Among the main drivers of activity that this plan takes into account, the Commission cites the reduction of energy costs, the stimulation of demand for clean products, the financing of the transition to clean energy, as well as circularity and access to materials. The Commission has specified that this action plan should mobilise nearly €100 billion in the short term to support clean manufacturing processes. [Read more](#)



Consolidation of the financial risk management framework

On 25 February, the Commission announced measures aimed at improving the European Union's financial risk management and compliance framework. This decision comes at a time of increased financial operations. The role of the independent risk manager has thus been extended to include new types of operations, such as borrowing, debt management and assets under management. The Commission is pursuing the goal of sound financial governance of the European budget and a guarantee of its 'three lines of defence' model. [Read more](#)



New action plan for affordable energy

On 26 February, the European Commission presented an action plan in the field of energy, entitled 'Action Plan for Affordable Energy'. It includes short-term measures aimed at reducing energy costs, completing the Energy Union and attracting investment. This plan is a central element of the Clean Industry Pact, also presented on the same day. It anticipates overall savings estimated at 45 billion euros by 2025, gradually increasing to reach 260 billion euros in annual savings by 2040. The Commission has identified three areas on which to focus action to make electricity more affordable: network and system costs, taxes and levies, and finally supply costs. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of the Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries

The Ministers for Fisheries and Agriculture, meeting on 24 February, discussed the implementation of the rural test principle, the aim of which is to improve the integration of rural development into EU policies, without creating additional bureaucracy. The situation of the European market for agri-food products was also on the agenda. Positive signs of recovery were observed, even if prices remain at levels higher than those preceding the Covid pandemic. Poor weather conditions and the geopolitical situation also pose challenges that disrupt market stability. Finally, the Commission's vision for agriculture and food, published on 19 February, was favourably received. [Read more](#)



Recommendations on cybersecurity

On 24 February, the Council presented a draft recommendation on the EU Blueprint for Cybersecurity Crisis Management. The objective is to explain this new framework clearly and simply. This cybersecurity action plan will allow the relevant European actors to better understand how to interact and use the crisis management mechanisms as well as enabling more structured cooperation between civilian and military stakeholders, particularly with NATO. [Read more](#)



Meeting of European Affairs Ministers

The European Union ministers in charge of European affairs met on 25 February to prepare for the European Council in March. This was an opportunity to discuss the war in Ukraine, developments in the Middle East, European competitiveness, the next multiannual financial framework and the migration issue. The ministers also had the opportunity to discuss the European Commission's work programme for 2025 and the progress of the work on the future of Europe, a report on which should be published in June. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers

Europe's Foreign Affairs Ministers, meeting on 24 February, addressed the subject of the war in Ukraine, marking its third anniversary on that day, in the presence of their Ukrainian counterpart. The situation in the Middle East was part of the discussions, and more particularly Syria, Gaza and Lebanon, as well as the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The partial lifting of the restrictive measures against Syria was decided, as part of the European Union's efforts to support a political transition, as well as a rapid economic recovery of the country after the fall of the al-Assad regime in December 2024. [Read more - Other link](#)



Strengthening relations with India

The College of European Commissioners and its President Ursula von der Leyen visited India on 27 and 28 February with the aim of strengthening their relations. Discussions on an EU-India Partnership took place, as well as the formation of an EU-India Strategic Agenda. Three central themes were identified to define the future of relations between these two powers: trade and technology, security and defence, and connectivity and global partnership. Ursula von der Leyen thus mentioned an agreement with Narendra Modi on the need to advance trade negotiations and announced the study of a partnership in the field of security and defence. [Read more](#)

■ Austria :



Tripartite coalition government agreement

On 27 February, the centre-right ÖVP party announced an agreement with the Social Democrats SPÖ and the Liberals to establish a government, after the longest negotiations since the post-war period. This agreement comes after the failure of negotiations with the far-right FPÖ party, which won the elections on 29 September. The ÖVP and the SPÖ will each have six ministries, the liberals two. This government represents the first tripartite coalition since 1949. [Read more](#)

■ Estonia :



Estonia to integrate AI into its education system

In a world first, Estonia will integrate ChatGPT Edu (a university-focused version of ChatGPT) and other Artificial Intelligence tools into its school curriculum, the Estonian government, OpenAI and Anthropic announced on 24 February. According to a government press release, 20,000 second and first year secondary school pupils and their 3,000 teachers will have free access to OpenAI's ChatGPT Edu and other AI tools from September 2025. The programme is expected to be extended to vocational schools next year, reaching an additional 38,000 pupils and 2,000 teachers. [Read more](#)



Strengthening of Franco-Estonian cooperation in defence and their support for Ukraine

On 24 February, the Estonian Defence Minister, Hanno Pevkur, welcomed his French counterpart, Sébastien Lecornu, to Tallinn, to discuss cooperation between the two countries in the field of defence, as well as the security situation in Europe and Ukraine and the upcoming NATO summit. In addition, the Estonian and French ministers chaired a meeting with the defence ministers of the Quint European format and the Nordic-Baltic countries concerning support for Ukraine and European security. Following this exchange, Pevkur announced an increase in Estonian military assistance, including the delivery of 10,000 artillery shells and an investment of 100 million euros in the Ukrainian defence industry. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Emmanuel Macron in Washington

On 24 February, the third anniversary of the start of the war in Ukraine, the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, travelled to Washington to meet his American counterpart, Donald Trump. They discussed the war in Ukraine, strategic cooperation between the two countries and international crises. [Read more](#)



Friedrich Merz at the Elysée

On 26 February, three days after his victory in the German elections, the leader of the CDU, Friedrich Merz, travelled to Paris for a working dinner with the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron. This informal meeting focused on the revival of Europe and the Franco-German partnership, against a backdrop of international crises and tensions, in the light of the negotiations relating to the war in Ukraine. [Read more](#)

■ Italy :



Swedish Prime Minister in Rome

On 26 February, the Swedish Prime Minister, Ulf Kristersson, travelled to Rome to meet the President of the Council, Giorgia Meloni. The two leaders discussed the war in Ukraine, transatlantic security and defence, competitiveness and the fight against illegal immigration, with a view to strengthening bilateral cooperation between Sweden and Italy. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Portugal :



Emmanuel Macron on a state visit to Portugal

On 27 and 28 February, the French President Emmanuel Macron travelled to Portugal for an official visit. He first went to Lisbon to meet with his Portuguese counterpart Rebelo de Sousa and the Prime Minister Luis Montenegro, with whom he signed the Franco-Portuguese Declaration on the Ocean. He then met with the President of the Assembly of the Republic, José Pedro Aguiar-Branco. On 28 February, the French Head of State travelled to Porto, where he met with representatives of Franco-Portuguese tech and ratified the signing of nine bilateral political, economic and cultural agreements with the Prime Minister. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ UK :



New sanctions against Russia and its foreign supporters

New sanctions against Russia and its foreign supporters
On 24 February, the third anniversary of the start of the war in Ukraine, the British government announced the adoption of its most significant sanctions package, including around 100 new measures targeting individuals and entities in Russia. These sanctions target not only the 'Russian military machine' but also, for the first time, entities located in several third countries supporting the invasion. Companies based in Turkey, Thailand, India and China are affected, as well as the Minister of Defence and some North Korean generals. [Read more](#)



The United Kingdom increases its defence spending

On 25 February, the British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced to Parliament that he wanted to increase the UK's defence budget to 2.5% of GDP by 2027, up from the current 2.3%. This announcement comes ahead of his meeting with Donald Trump, at a time when the United States is pushing European countries to increase their commitment to NATO. [Read more](#)

■ Armenia :



EU-Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee

On 25 February, the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee, welcoming the adoption at first reading by the National Assembly of Armenia of the bill on the launch of the process of Armenia's accession to the European Union, invited the Armenian government and the European institutions to discuss a realistic work plan with a view to this 'strategic objective' for the future of the country. The delegation was received by the Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, and had the opportunity to discuss the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan with the launch of the 'Crossroads of Peace' project, which aims to unblock regional communications and provide a response to issues related to the border demarcation process. [Read more](#)

■ Montenegro :



Peace Facility

On 28 February, the European Council adopted a measure to provide assistance of up to 6 million euros under the European Peace Facility, to strengthen the armed forces of Montenegro (equipment, operational assistance, etc.). With this decision, the European Council wishes to strengthen the security and defence of the country and, more broadly, of the Western Balkans. [Read more](#)

■ Turkey :



Historic change in Turkey

On 27 February, after months of negotiations, Abdullah Öcalan, founder of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), called for an end to the armed struggle from the prison where he has been held since 1999 in Istanbul. The leader of the movement, long involved in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, has officially called for the dissolution of his political organisation, while inviting his supporters to lay down their arms. A statement was read by Kurdish deputies of the DEM party who visited him. An opening that may allow for a political resolution of the conflict that has been tearing the country apart since the 1980s. [Read more](#)

■ Eurostat :



Slight increase in nuclear electricity production in 2023

In 2023, 13 European Union member countries with nuclear electricity production generated 619,601 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity, an increase of 1.7% compared to 2022, 'largely due to France completing maintenance on its nuclear reactors', Eurostat said on 26 February in a new publication. The nuclear power stations of these 13 countries accounted for 22.8% of the European Union's total electricity production. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Annual report of the European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality published its Gender Equality Index 2024 on 25 February. The report concludes that gender-based violence remains widespread, severe and under-documented in the European Union, despite strong legislative action. Among the data in this report, 31% of women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 and despite the impact of the MeToo movement, 31% of victims have never revealed their suffering. The Institute also recognises the significant progress made in Europe in the fight against violence against women. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Culture :



Anselm Kiefer exhibition - "Tell me where the flowers are in Amsterdam"

For the first time in their history, the Van Gogh Museum and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam are joining forces for an exhibition of the work of Anselm Kiefer. For the occasion, the artist has created new works, to be discovered for the first time. His admiration for Van Gogh is clearly visible in his current work. The exhibition will be held from 7 March to 9 June. [Read more](#)

THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA MUSEO NACIONAL

Proust in Madrid

Until 8 June, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid is presenting an exhibition devoted to the importance of art in the work of one of the most eminent writers of the 20th century, Marcel Proust. The presentation is structured around the elements that influenced the French author, such as his environment (natural and architectural landscapes) and artistic movements, both contemporary and ancient. [Read more](#)



Siena: the rise of painting, 1300-1350 in London

The exhibition 'Siena: the rise of painting, 1300-1350' is on until 22 June at the National Gallery in London, offering an opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in the artistic world of central 14th-century Italy. With over a hundred artists and creators represented, working in Siena, Naples, Avignon and beyond, discover some of the oldest, most exquisite and most important works of art in Europe. [Read more](#)



Body and Soul in Paris

Until 25 August, the Bourse de Commerce in Paris is presenting the exhibition 'Body and Soul', which explores the representation of the body in contemporary art. Thanks to the support of around a hundred works from the Pinault Collection (paintings, sculptures, photographs, videos and drawings), the Bourse de Commerce explores the way in which art captures energies, vital flows of thought and inner life, and invites us to engage in a committed and humanist experience of otherness. [Read more](#)



Infininitely blue. Decorative arts, painting and fashion in Marseille

The 'Infininitely Blue' exhibition will be held at the Museum of Decorative Arts, Faïence and Fashion at Château Borély in Marseille from 7 March 2025 to 15 February 2026. The exhibition highlights the importance of blue, from the 18th century to the present day, in many fields where this colour and its shades are inescapable: earthenware, graphic arts, jewellery and fashion. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 05/03/2025

"Justice and Home Affairs" Council

 05/03/2025

ECB Council of Governors: Monetary Policy Meeting

 06/03/2025

Extraordinary European Council

 07/03/2025

"Justice and Home Affairs" Council

 01/03/2025

Eurogroup

 01/03/2025

"Employment, social policy, health and consumers" Council



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The Letter's Editorial Team :
**Helen Levy, Juliette Bachschmidt ;
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Cohignac**

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A question, a suggestion ?

Editors-in-chief :
Elise Bernard
Publishing Director :
Pascale Joannin

Contact us!
info@robert-schuman.eu

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