

Letter n°1106 of Tuesday 8th April 2025

The future of European influence in the Indo-Pacific

Pierrick Bouffaron, Benjamin Blandin - 08 Apr 2025

The Indo-Pacific region has established itself as the central theatre of power dynamics in the 21st century, at the intersection of increasingly assertive geopolitical ambitions and economic aspirations. Much more than the distant theatre of competition between the United States and China, the Indo-Pacific is a test for the European Union to project itself as a global power.



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■ Front page! :



Learning to use the balance of power

Faced with the disruptive brutality of the new American administration, Europe has only one choice, that of establishing a balance of power. According to Jean-Dominique Giuliani, any other attitude would lead to submission, notably to Putin and protectionism. He emphasises that 'we are no longer in the 19th century and its hackneyed recipes that have caused so many crises and fuelled so many conflicts.' Thus, Europe now embodies stability, but also reason and rights, and must be ready for a firm response. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



For a regulatory moratorium

In an article published on 4 April, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, president of the Robert Schuman Foundation, denounces the excessive proliferation of European and national regulations, which he attributes to a constant quest for precision and protection. He highlights the growing complexity of the rules, which are often perceived as punitive and restrictive, and the inability of States to control this deregulation. Faced with this situation, he calls for a normative moratorium with a view to reassessing the usefulness and impact of new legislation, and also proposes a shift towards incentives rather than constraints, to support the European economy and growth while reducing the regulatory burden. [Read more](#)



Conference on 'Reviving growth in the euro zone'

The School of Management and Impact and the Robert Schuman Foundation organised a conference on 2 April, featuring Isabel Schnabel, member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank. Entitled "Reviving growth in the euro zone", the conference presented the current economic challenges facing the European Union. Isabel Schnabel suggested, in particular, stimulating innovation, integration and investment, while strengthening European economic sovereignty to face global challenges. She also emphasised the great potential of the single European market. [Read more](#)



"EU's security defined through 3Cs: Cohesion, Competitiveness and Competences"

The European Institute of Romania, a member of the Schuman Network, is organising an online debate on 9 April. Entitled 'EU's security defined through 3Cs: Cohesion, Competitiveness and Competences', this event is part of a series of debates devoted to the major role played by the Council of the European Union in coordinating the policies of Member States in specific areas. Places are limited and prior registration is required. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Commission :



ProtectEU, the new European internal security strategy

On 1 April, the European Commission unveiled ProtectEU, which aims to strengthen the European Union's internal security in the face of an ever-changing array of threats. This initiative includes refined legal tools, better information sharing and increased cooperation between Member States. It aims to anticipate threats and to combat organised crime, terrorism and cyberattacks. By emphasising resilience and innovation, ProtectEU strengthens Europe's ability to guarantee the security of its citizens. New governance and enhanced tools for Europol and other agencies such as Frontex and Eurojust will be introduced to support this vision. [Read more](#)



Record fine for European car manufacturers

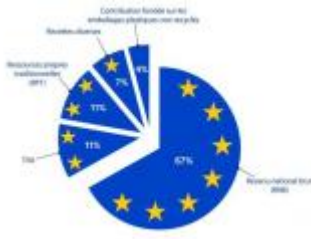
On 1 April, the European Commission imposed a €458 million fine on 15 car manufacturers and the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), following the discovery of a cartel that lasted more than 15 years. The companies were accused of colluding to avoid paying for the recycling of their vehicles and to limit competition on information relating to the recycling of materials. [Read more](#)



US customs tariffs and the European Union

On 3 April, the President of the European Commission expressed her concern at the announcement by the United States concerning the introduction of universal customs tariffs, affecting the European Union in particular. She emphasised the disastrous consequences of this decision for the global economy, threatening to disrupt supply chains and increase uncertainty. While Europe remains ready to negotiate to reduce trade barriers, it is also preparing countermeasures to protect its interests. Trade ministers will meet on 7 April to discuss the European response to this decision. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Parliament :



Budget priorities for 2026

On 2 April, MEPs adopted guidelines for the European Union budget for 2026, by 441 votes to 173, with 70 abstentions. The budget should focus on defence, security, competitiveness, sustainability, and the digital and green transitions. Cybersecurity is also to be strengthened, farmers supported and dual-use infrastructure improved. MEPs emphasise the importance of supporting Ukraine and ensuring sufficient resources to avoid cuts related to debt repayment. The 2026 budget is crucial to maintaining stability in the face of geopolitical and climate challenges. [Read more](#)



Amendment of European directives on corporate sustainability

On 3 April, MEPs adopted a resolution amending the directives on corporate sustainability obligations. These amendments postpone the dates for the publication of sustainability information for certain companies by two years, with a view to reducing the administrative burden and providing more time for adaptation. Companies generating more than €900 million in turnover will have until 26 July 2028 to comply with European legislation, and be in compliance on 1 January 2029. Member States must adopt the necessary measures by 26 July 2027. The directive must be transposed by 31 December 2025. [Read more](#)



Strengthening the security of European Union identity cards

On 2 April, MEPs adopted a legislative resolution aimed at strengthening the security of identity cards and residence documents for EU citizens and their families. This proposal includes safeguards on the management of biometric data, ensuring their secure storage and use in accordance with EU data protection law. The text also introduces training for staff collecting this information, taking into account the specific needs of children and vulnerable persons. Member States will exchange the information necessary to verify and authenticate the data. [Read more](#)



Change in customs duties on American imports

On 1 April, due to the non-compliance of American customs legislation with WTO agreements, European MPs adopted a change in the regulation concerning customs duties on certain imports from the United States. A de minimis threshold of \$30,000 has been introduced: if the payments made under the Continued Dumping and Subsidy Offset Act (CDSOA) are less than this amount, the application of the additional import duty will be suspended. This measure aims to avoid disproportionate administrative costs for the European Union. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of European Defence Ministers in Warsaw

On 3 April, the European Defence Ministers meeting in Warsaw discussed continental security, with the emphasis on continued support for Ukraine. They addressed the issue of rearmament in Europe, with €800 billion of investment, and strengthened cooperation with external partners. During the meeting, the ministers also debated the White Paper on European defence. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



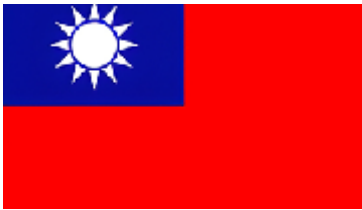
First summit with Central Asia

On 4 April, the leaders of the European Union and the countries of Central Asia met in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, for their first summit. They decided to elevate their relations to a strategic partnership and emphasised the need to strengthen cooperation on peace, security, democracy and respect for international law, particularly in Ukraine and Afghanistan. The summit also focused on the fight against terrorism, cybersecurity and transnational threats, as well as support for regional stability. The two regions agreed to strengthen their economic cooperation, in particular through the EU's 'Global Gateway' strategy, and to facilitate bilateral agreements, particularly on visas. [Read more](#)



New stage in economic cooperation with Turkey

On 3 April, the High Level Economic Dialogue (HLED) between the European Union and Turkey was held after a six-year hiatus. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss Turkey's ongoing economic reforms, competitiveness and investment, as well as concerns regarding fundamental rights and the rule of law. Both parties agreed to meet again next year in Turkey to continue this cooperation. This dialogue aims to strengthen economic, financial and investment ties. [Read more](#)



G7 statement on Chinese military exercises around Taiwan

On 6 April, the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as the High Representative of the European Union, expressed their deep concern about China's provocative actions, in particular the recent large-scale military exercises around Taiwan. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



Deployment of German troops in Lithuania

The Bundeswehr deployed a brigade in eastern Lithuania on 1 April. Germany has committed itself, as a member of the European Union and NATO, to ensuring security on the Lithuanian borders with Belarus and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. The first troops, consisting of 5,000 soldiers, have been deployed and will reach their full strength in 2027 in order to prevent possible Russian aggression in the Baltic countries. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Austria :



OSCE conference on combating child trafficking

The 25th OSCE conference on combating human trafficking was held in Vienna on 31 March. It provided an opportunity to take stock of the progress made, but above all to identify the persistent challenges in the fight against child trafficking. Indeed, since the adoption of the 2003 OSCE Action Plan for the fight against trafficking in human beings and its 2005 addendum on taking into account the special needs of child victims in terms of protection and assistance, child trafficking continues to be a major challenge. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Denmark :



Denmark strengthens its defences with French missiles

From 31 March to 2 April, the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, welcomed King Frederik X of Denmark. The day after a state dinner, the two countries signed a framework agreement on the purchase of Mistral 3 surface-to-air missiles. This visit also served to strengthen the countries' joint commitment in the fields of defence, climate and health. The two leaders also inaugurated the Franco-Danish economic forum. [Read more](#)



Visit of the Danish Prime Minister to Greenland

On 3 April, during her visit to Greenland, the Danish Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, reaffirmed Greenland's sovereignty over its territory, rejecting American attempts at annexation. Tensions increased after Donald Trump raised the idea of buying Greenland, describing the move as 'freeing the world'. Denmark and Greenland insist that the future of Greenland must be decided by its inhabitants alone. [Read more](#)

■ France :



SOS Ocean: a call for global mobilisation

On 30 and 31 March, SOS Ocean was held in Paris, bringing together experts and decision-makers to accelerate the response to maritime crises. The ocean is facing major threats such as pollution, rising sea levels and overexploitation. The aim is to restore the marine ecosystem and protect 30% of the oceans by 2030. This event is part of the preparations for the third United Nations Ocean Conference, scheduled for next June. [Read more](#)

■ Greece :



Greece to spend €25 billion on defence

On 2 April, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced defence investments of more than €25 billion in parliament. The Greek government thus wants address the uncertain international context by strengthening missile and anti-aircraft defence. By creating this 'Achilles shield', Greece intends to reinforce border security, particularly with Turkey, and become an 'outpost for Europe'. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ UK :



European nationals must have a travel authorisation

Since 2 April, the United Kingdom now requires European nationals without a visa to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) to enter British territory. Already required for non-European visitors, the extension of the requirement is intended, according to the British government, to strengthen border security. This authorisation allows you to stay in the United Kingdom for a maximum period of six months. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Joint G5 Declaration in Madrid

At a meeting of the G5+ (Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, United Kingdom), the governments and the High Representative of the European Union Kaja Kallas, in a joint statement on 31 March, called on Russia to agree to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire with Ukraine, without seeking to delay the deadline. After the meetings in Paris and London, they announced that all the instruments at their disposal would be used to ensure 'a comprehensive, just and lasting peace', including the adoption of new sanctions against Russia. According to this declaration, this is a matter of the security of the continent and the protection of democratic values. [Read more](#)



Bucha Summit: meeting with the parliaments and the European Parliament

On 31 March, the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, met with 17 heads and officials of parliaments from partner countries as well as the European Parliament, during the Bucha Summit. During the meeting, the Ukrainian head of state expressed his gratitude for the ongoing support of his partners in terms of defence and humanitarian aid in the face of Russian aggression. He also mentioned the importance of keeping Ukraine at the heart of international priorities and of intensifying pressure on Russia. [Read more - Other link](#)



Launch of Ukraine2EU

On 1 April, the European Union, Denmark, Lithuania and Sweden launched the 'Ukraine2EU' programme, with a fund of €16.7 million, with the aim of supporting Ukraine in its process of accession to the European Union. This programme aims to provide strategic and expert support to the Ukrainian authorities to reform their legislation and strengthen their institutions. Despite Russian aggression, Ukraine is continuing with its reforms. [Read more](#)



Sweden strengthens its support for Ukraine in 2025

On 31 March, Sweden announced new support for Ukraine, pledging 29.5 billion Swedish kronor for the year 2025. This aid is intended to support the reconstruction of Ukraine and strengthen its defence capabilities in the face of the Russian invasion. The Swedish government emphasised the importance of this support for the stability of Europe and respect for human rights. Sweden continues to position itself as a key partner in the international effort. [Read more](#)

■ Georgia :



The pro-European movement in Georgia is gaining momentum

Since Irakli Kobakhidze, the disputed Georgian Prime Minister, announced on 28 November 2024 that his government would not seek to open negotiations for accession to the European Union before 2028, the popular protest movements have not weakened. On 31 March, three to four thousand pro-European demonstrators gathered on Tbilisi's central avenue, including the main opposition figure, the President recognised by the European Union, Salomé Zourabichvili. Georgia is European and the desire for accession, enshrined in the country's constitution, is shared by more than 80% of the population according to opinion polls. [Read more](#)

■ NATO :



Meeting of the Foreign Ministers

On 3 and 4 April, the Foreign Ministers of the NATO countries met in Brussels. The Secretary General, Mark Rutte, announced that it was necessary to 'build a stronger and more formidable NATO, where everyone assumes their share' and praised the efforts of the Allies to find a just and lasting peace to the war in Ukraine. The ministers met with Indo-Pacific partners, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and the High Representative of the European Union, Kaja Kallas, at a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council. The American Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, gave his assurance that the United States would not withdraw 'suddenly' from the organisation and disengage from the European continent. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



OECD calls for enhanced cooperation for a sustainable ocean economy

On 31 March, the OECD emphasised the importance of coordinated government action to ensure the sustainability of the ocean economy, the value of which doubled between 1995 and 2020, reaching \$2.6 trillion. The report on the sea economy highlights the risks associated with climate change, demographic developments and insufficient investment in the energy transition. To ensure the growth of this sector, the OECD recommends better management of maritime areas, an accelerated phase-out of fossil fuels and enhanced cooperation with developing countries. [Read more](#)



For an urgent modernisation of the European electricity grid

In a document published on 1 April, the European Court of Auditors warned of the need for massive investment in the electricity grid to meet growing demand and support the energy transition. Currently, the investments planned between 2024 and 2050 are insufficient to meet the climate objectives. Technological solutions, such as smart meters and interconnections between countries, could reduce costs, but obstacles, such as slow authorisations and a lack of resources, are holding back modernisation. A delicate balance between investment and affordable tariffs remains to be found. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Easter Festival

The Easter Festival, celebrating classical music, is being held in several European cities from 11 April, including Salzburg, Baden-Baden and Aix-en-Provence. These festivals are major international cultural events, attracting renowned artists and orchestras. The city of Baden-Baden will be hosting the Berliner Philharmoniker, Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In Aix-en-Provence, audiences will be able to enjoy 'La Danse mystique', a symphonic poem written in 1922 by the French composer Charlotte Sohy, and Dvorak's Symphony No. 8. Finally, in Salzburg, the festival will present three top-level orchestras under the title 'Wunden und Wunder': the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and the Mozarteum Orchestra. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



"Latina : Mujer, música y glamour" in Madrid

In Madrid, until 5 July, the exhibition 'Latina: Mujer, música y glamour' traces the history of the resistance, transformation and cultural affirmation of Latin women in the entertainment industry from the 1920s to the 1980s. With more than five hundred exhibits, the Gladys Palmera Foundation and the Casa de America are showcasing these artists who contributed to the women's liberation movement. Organised into five chronological chapters, the event offers a unique experience through the evolution of the public image of these icons. [Read more](#)



Photographic icons in Brussels

Steve McCurry's 'Icons' exhibition opened on 3 April on the Grand-Place in Brussels, offering a retrospective of his 40-year career. More than a hundred iconic photographs are on display. Visitors can discover his most significant works as well as his recent projects, along with immersive videos and an audio guide with 41 commentaries by McCurry. The exhibition, open to the public until 1 September, invites you on a visual and intimate journey through the cultures and stories captured by the photographer. [Read more](#)



Giovani Fattori in Piacenza

Until 29 June the city of Piacenza in Italy is organising an exhibition for the bicentenary of the birth of Giovanni Fattori, an artist of the 19th-century Macchiaioli movement. The exhibition is presenting previously unseen drawings and engravings that bear witness to the stylistic development of the artist and his impact on 20th-century Italian graphic design. The event ends with a space dedicated to contemporary art, where the work of Elger Esser offers a unique visual reflection that complements Fattori's work. [Read more](#)



José María Velasco in London

The National Gallery is hosting the works of Mexican artist José María Velasco until 17 August. The exhibition, entitled 'A View of Mexico', offers visitors the chance to discover the landscapes of Mexico as depicted by Velasco in the 19th century. It celebrates the landscape artist's favourite themes: geology, archaeology, local flora and the birth of industrialisation in Mexico. [Read more](#)



Exhibition 'Echi del '900' in Alba

The collections of the artist Mario Lattes are on display until 11 May in Monforte d'Alba. The exhibition, entitled 'Echoes of the 20th Century', presents the public with works by artists such as George Braque, Amedeo Modigliani, Sergio Saron and Giacomo Soffiantino. It honours Lattes's work as a collector, bringing together numerous important works from the realms of surrealism and symbolism. [Read more](#)



David Hockney in Paris

The Fondation Louis Vuitton is presenting the exhibition 'David Hockney' until 31 August. This retrospective, the largest ever dedicated to the artist, brings together more than 400 works spanning seven decades of creation, from 1955 to 2025. The exhibition includes oil paintings, ink drawings, video installations and digital works. It highlights Hockney's artistic evolution, from his beginnings in Bradford to his recent explorations of nature and landscapes. The artist himself considers this exhibition to be the most important of his career, including some of his very latest paintings. [Read more](#)



The exhibition 'Roads to Jerusalem' in Warsaw

Until 20 July, the Warsaw museum is presenting the exhibition 'The Roads to Jerusalem', which explores the holy city from the perspectives of Jewish, Christian and Muslim cultures. The city of Jerusalem is thus represented not only as a geographical location, but also as a spiritual destination. The exhibition highlights the complex relationship between spirituality and political conflicts. [Read more](#)




Paris Book Festival

The Book Festival is being held from 11 to 13 April at the Grand Palais, with Morocco as guest of honour. More than 450 publishing houses and 1,000 authors are taking part in this event. The festival, which welcomes more than 10 countries, offers new features such as Cabaret Extra!, with the Pompidou Centre, film previews, series, etc. A total of 330 events are organised on 11 stages. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 7 April 2025

Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) (Luxembourg)

 7-11 April

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg)

 9 April

Association Council with Ukraine (Brussels)

 11 April

Eurogroup Meeting (Warsaw)

 14 April

Foreign Affairs Council (Luxembourg)



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