

Letter n°1107 of Tuesday 15th April 2025

Hybrid threats: the new horizons for a "Europe of internal security"?

Jean Mafart - 15 Apr 2025

The European internal security strategy published by the Commission on 1 April devotes a significant amount of space to hybrid threats. A sad sign of the times: it is no longer conceivable to develop an internal security policy without addressing, alongside the more 'traditional' themes, the growing threat of destabilisation operations of all kinds coming from Russia or elsewhere. Hybrid threats are multifaceted, so it is not surprising that the European Union's response is too. But hybrid threats also evolve rapidly, forcing the European Union to adapt constantly; the efforts made in recent years are therefore far from exhausting the issue. The new European internal security strategy therefore has a much wider scope than the measures it contains.



[Elections](#) | [Commission](#) | [Parliament](#) | [Council](#) | [Diplomacy](#) | [ECB](#) |

[Germany](#) | [Spain](#) | [Finland](#) | [UK](#) | [Serbia](#) | [Ukraine](#) |

[Council of Europe](#) | [UN](#) | [Studies/Reports](#) | [Culture](#) |

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

■ Elections :



First round of the presidential election in Romania on 4 May

Romania was plunged into turmoil after the Constitutional Court unanimously cancelled the second round of the presidential election on 6 December. On 16 January, the Romanian government announced that the presidential election would be postponed until 4 and 18 May. Ten candidates are in the running. According to the latest opinion poll by the Noi Cetatenii institute, far-right candidate George Simion is set to come out ahead in the first round with 30% of the vote, followed very closely by the mayor of Bucharest Dan Nicusor with 29.60%. Government candidate Crin Antonescu would take third place with 19.60% and Victor Ponta fourth with 8.30%. Liberal Elena-Valeria Lasconi, who came second on 24 November, would obtain 7.80%. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Trade retaliation against the United States

In the face of US President Donald Trump's decision to pursue a more protectionist and, above all, 'reciprocal' policy, tariffs are once again on the global trade agenda. On 9 April, the European Union introduced trade countermeasures against the United States. This decision follows the tariffs imposed by Washington on steel and aluminium in March. The new European taxes were due to come into force on 15 April. The US president did an about-turn by suspending the tariffs for 90 days, and the European Union has suspended them temporarily. [Read more - Other link](#)



Launch of the 'AI Continent' action plan

On 9 April, the European Commission launched the 'AI Continent' action plan, an initiative aimed to make Europe a world leader in artificial intelligence. This plan is based on five pillars, including the deployment of mega-factories equipped with 100,000 AI chips, the creation of Data Labs, and the massive development of technical skills in this area. A call for projects is open to consortia wishing to take part in this initiative. Two public consultations have also been launched to shape the next steps, particularly on the future law on the development of AI and the 'Apply AI' programme. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Agreement on plastic pellets

On 8 April, the Council and the Members of the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement on new rules to prevent the loss of plastic pellets, which are responsible for significant microplastic pollution. Every year, up to 184,000 tonnes of these raw materials end up in the environment within the Member States. The regulation imposes preventive measures at each stage of the logistics chain, including at sea, and will introduce certification obligations according to the size of the companies. It will come into force two years after its official publication. [Read more](#)



Agreement on the monitoring of soil

On 10 April, MEPs and the Council reached a provisional agreement on new legislation aimed at improving the quality of European soil by 2050. Without imposing new obligations on farmers, the text provides for increased support for them, particularly through advice and training. Member states will have to monitor their soil according to common criteria and draw up a public list of potentially contaminated sites. This directive is part of the European Union's zero pollution strategy and will enter into force after approval by Parliament at second reading. [Read more - Other link](#)



Revision of the rules for screening foreign investments

On 8 April, the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade adopted new rules for the screening of foreign investments in the European Union, expanding the sectors concerned, such as the media and critical infrastructure. The Member States will have to harmonise their procedures and the European Commission will be able to intervene in the event of disagreement. If an investment threatens security or public order, it may be authorised subject to conditions or prohibited. This reform aims to strengthen security while offering more predictability to investors. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Extension of European rules on gas storage

On 11 April, the Council adopted its negotiating mandate to extend the current rules on gas storage by two years, in a context of market volatility and geopolitical instability. Member States will have to maintain their stocks at 90% before winter, while benefiting from new flexibility measures, such as extended deadlines and deviation margins in the event of unfavourable conditions. This mandate will enable the presidency to begin discussions with the European Parliament on the final version of the text around May. [Read more](#)



New toy safety rules

On 11 April, a political agreement was reached between the Council and the European Parliament on the new regulation concerning toy safety. This text prohibits the use of harmful substances such as PFAS, endocrine disruptors and bisphenols. All toys will have to have a digital product passport to strengthen controls, particularly at borders. The regulation also aims to better regulate online sales and give inspectors more power to remove dangerous toys from the market. It thus guarantees safer toys, whether they are manufactured in the European Union or imported. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Meeting of the Eurogroup and the finance and economy ministers

On 11 April, the president of the Eurogroup, Paschal Donohoe, emphasised the unity of the ministers in the face of developments in the global economy, ahead of the spring meetings of the IMF and the World Bank. On 11 and 12 April, the finance and economy ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a rules-based trading system, the single market, and key projects such as the digital euro and the savings and investment union. They discussed defence funding. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Regulation on combating unfair trading practices

On 7 April, the representatives of the Member States within the Special Committee on Agriculture adopted a Council negotiating mandate on a new regulation aimed at strengthening the fight against unfair trading practices in the agri-food supply chain, particularly in a cross-border context. The proposal provides for increased cooperation between Member States, a mutual assistance mechanism and coordinated action at European level. The text also includes measures against buyers located outside the European Union and specifies the rules on cost sharing and confidentiality. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



10th Association Council with Ukraine

On 9 April, in Brussels, the European Union and Ukraine held their 10th Association Council, reaffirming their joint commitment in the face of Russian aggression and their determination to build a just and lasting peace. The European Union welcomed Ukraine's progress on reforms and its path towards accession. The Union's financial, military and political support, exceeding €144 billion, was renewed. Both parties also emphasised their strengthened cooperation in the fields of trade, defence, space and health. [Read more](#)



The High Representative in the Western Balkans

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, visited several countries in the Western Balkans from 7 to 9 April. She emphasised that fresh impetus was needed to normalise relations between Kosovo and Serbia, as a prerequisite for integration into the European Union. She took part in the first meeting of the dialogue with Albania on security and defence. Finally, she warned that the European Union 'will not accept any threat to the territorial integrity, sovereignty and constitutional order in Bosnia and Herzegovina'. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ ECB :



The digital euro at the service of European strategic autonomy

During a speech at the European Parliament on 8 April, Piero Cipollone, member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank, emphasised the importance of the digital euro project in strengthening Europe's strategic autonomy. While payments are largely dependent on non-European players, the digital euro would offer a sovereign, secure and accessible alternative to cash that would complement it. It would allow consumers to pay anywhere in the euro area, including offline, while protecting their privacy. The project is progressing according to schedule, with legislation and innovative partnerships in the pipeline. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Germany :



Coalition agreement regarding the distribution of ministerial portfolio

Friedrich Merz, leader of the German Christian Democrats, who won the elections on 23 February, negotiated a coalition agreement with the Social Democrats which was made public on 9 April. According to this distribution, the CDU and the SPD will each have 7 portfolios and the CSU 3. This coalition agreement must still be put to the vote of SPD and CDU-CSU activists with a view to Friedrich Merz's appointment as chancellor in May. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Spain :



Carles Puigdemont will not benefit from the amnesty law

On 10 April, the Court of Appeal of the Spanish Supreme Court confirmed the decision of the investigating judge Pablo Llarena not to apply the amnesty law relating to the 'Catalan independence trials' to the former president of the Generalitat of Catalonia Carles Puigdemont and two regional ministers. The Court of Appeal confirmed that this law, which allows for the cancellation of ongoing proceedings relating to Catalan separatist activities that took place between 1 November 2011 and 13 December 2023, does not apply to embezzlement offences. [Read more](#)

■ Finland :



Material aid to Moldova

On 10 April, Finland provided material aid to Moldova via the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism. This assistance includes essential equipment to support Moldovan public services and responds to an official request for assistance from Moldova. The objective is to strengthen the country's resilience to crises. This action is part of European solidarity. [Read more](#)

■ UK :



Sanctions against senior Georgian officials for human rights violations

On 10 April, the United Kingdom sanctioned four senior Georgian officials for serious human rights violations. The sanctions target the Prosecutor General, the Head of the Special Investigative Service, the First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and the Deputy Head of the Georgian Department of Special Assignments. This is in addition to the sanctions imposed on five other Georgian officials in 2024. The United Kingdom intends to prosecute these individuals for their role in the violent attacks on protesters, the media and opposition figures, following the government's decision to suspend the country's progress towards a European future, a key element of Georgia's constitution, in December 2024. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Serbia :



Appointment of the new Prime Minister

On 6 April, the Serbian president, Aleksandar Vučić, appointed the university professor Đuro Macut as prime minister. The government has been managing current affairs since 19 March, when the members of the Assembly dismissed Miloš Vučević from the post of prime minister, marking the start of a 30-day period to form a new government. Aleksandar Vučić announced that the new government would be appointed by 18 April, otherwise early elections would have to be organised. At the same time, he emphasised the difficult situation in the region, particularly with regard to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Serbian entity, the Republika Srpska. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Belgium provides €1 billion in military aid to Ukraine

On 8 April, Belgium announced total military support of €1 billion to Ukraine, including the delivery of 30 F-16 fighter jets by 2028. The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, has expressed his gratitude to the Belgian prime minister, Bart De Wever, for this aid. This support aims to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities in the face of persistent tensions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



European Free Trade Association: support for Ukraine

On 8 April, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland signed a modernised free trade agreement with Ukraine, which aims to strengthen the country's political and economic integration with Europe, as well as to stimulate its economic development. The agreement is a valuable support and a way of encouraging investment in the country in the context of the war in Ukraine. [Read more](#)



Meeting of the Coalition of the Willing in Brussels

Meeting in Brussels on 10 April, the defence ministers of some thirty countries allied with Kyiv launched discussions on a future 'reassurance force' to prevent any further Russian attack after a possible ceasefire. Spearheaded by France and the United Kingdom, this coalition excludes a traditional peacekeeping force and emphasises the strengthening of Ukrainian capabilities. The key role of the United States is considered indispensable, but the mission, its size and its deployment remain unclear. Several countries, including the Netherlands and the Baltic States, have expressed their wish to participate. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council of Europe :



Session of the Parliamentary Assembly

The spring session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) was held from 7 to 11 April in Strasbourg. Emergency debates were held on the situations in Georgia, Turkey, Ukraine and the Gaza Strip. The PACE called for closer co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Political Community (EPC) in the face of threats to democratic security in Europe and the risk of foreign interference. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Turkey called upon to respect fundamental rights

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, has expressed his deep concern regarding the arrest of the mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem İmamoğlu, and other elected representatives in Turkey. He reiterated that fundamental rights – freedom of expression, the right to demonstrate, a fair trial – must be fully respected by member states. He emphasised the need for independent investigations in the event of excessive use of force. During his next visit to Ankara, he will stress the importance for Turkey to comply with its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. [Read more](#)

■ UN :



IMO: 'net zero emissions' regulation for global shipping

On 11 April, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) approved a legal framework aimed at making shipping carbon neutral by 2050. This framework introduces mandatory standards for marine fuels as well as a global pricing mechanism for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Ships over 5,000 tonnes will have to reduce the intensity of their emissions or offset them through a system of credits. The rules will be adopted in 2025 and will come into force in 2027. [Read more](#)



Call for normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo

The United Nations Security Council held a meeting on the situation in Kosovo on 8 April. The European Union representative, Stavros Lambrinidis, called on Serbia and Kosovo to maintain a constructive dialogue and to contribute actively to the process of normalising their relations, while emphasising that the European Union and the Balkans share a common future. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



COUR DES
COMPTES
EUROPÉENNE

The European Court of Auditors criticises the lack of transparency in NGO funding

In a report published on 7 April, the European Court of Auditors criticised the transparency of European Union funding granted to NGOs, which received €7.4 billion between 2021 and 2023. The information is fragmented and unreliable, particularly with regard to the activities funded. According to the Court of Auditors, the European Commission does not sufficiently verify these organisations' compliance with values. Although progress has been made, the situation nevertheless remains unclear, hindering a precise analysis of the funds and their impact. The report highlights the need to improve transparency in the management of this funding. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



"Matisse and Marguerite" in Paris

Until 24 August, the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris is presenting the exhibition 'Matisse et Marguerite', which highlights the unique relationship between Henri Matisse and his daughter Marguerite Duthuit. Featuring more than 110 works, the exhibition shows how Marguerite was his muse, inspiring numerous portraits, drawings, sculptures and ceramics. It also reveals the bond and trust between the artist and his daughter, which was essential to his creativity. [Read more](#)



Caravaggio in Rome

Until 6 July, the Palazzo Barberini in Rome is hosting one of the largest exhibitions ever devoted to the career of Michelangelo Merisi, known as Caravaggio. By bringing together some of his most famous works and others that are less well known but equally significant, this exhibition offers a new and in-depth reflection on the artistic and cultural revolution of this master of painting. The Palazzo Barberini offers the opportunity to explore the innovations brought by Caravaggio to the artistic, religious and social landscape of the time. [Read more](#)

Pintura liberada in Malaga

Until 14 September, the Museo Carmen Thyssen in Málaga is hosting the exhibition 'Joven figuración española de los 80', bringing together some thirty contemporary paintings by more than 20 artists. These works are all part of a freedom movement representative of the early years of democracy after the fall of the Franco dictatorship. Despite their different origins, these artists are united by the same objective: to create a new type of painting full of optimism and enthusiasm. [Read more](#)



Paula Rego and Adriana Varejão in Lisbon

Until 22 September, the Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian in Lisbon is hosting the exhibition 'Paula Rego and Adriana Varejão, Between Your Teeth' in reference to Hilda Hilst's poem 'Poems for the men of our time'. The two artists, Paula Rego and Adriana Varejão, from different generations and continents, explore the humanity that is the subject of the poem, the poetess, her story and the stories of all the violence and injustices. Each room is an opportunity to discover the different worlds of each of the artists. [Read more](#)



Five friends in Munich

Until 17 August, the Brandhorst Museum in Munich is hosting the exhibition 'Five Friends', named after the artists John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly. This exhibition traces the influence of these five friends on post-war art, combining art, friendship and love that united them around conceptual art from the 1940s to the 1970s. [Read more](#)



Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone in Dublin

The National Gallery of Ireland presents the exhibition 'The Art of Friendship' around the works of Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone, until 10 August. Bringing together more than 90 pieces of work, it explores the friendship of the two artists and their shared experiences during their studies in Paris in the early 1920s, and then their careers in Ireland. The event highlights the convergences and divergences in style of these two women, pioneers in modern Irish art. [Read more](#)



75th anniversary of the Céret Museum of Modern Art

Until 16 November, the Céret Museum of Modern Art is celebrating its 75th anniversary with a major exhibition retracing its links with major artists such as Picasso, Chagall, Miró and Boumeester. A special programme and a new publication will accompany this exceptional retrospective. [Read more](#)



Martha Jungwirth in Salzburg

Villa Kast in Salzburg is presenting the exhibition 'Der letzte Tag ist der schlimmste' by Martha Jungwirth, until 31 May. The works on display were created after the retrospective of her career at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao in 2024. The exhibition highlights her unique approach to abstraction, rooted in the body and emotions. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 14 April 2025

1st EU-Palestine high-level political dialogue

 14 April 2025

Foreign Affairs Council (Luxembourg)

 14 April 2025

ECB Governing Council: monetary policy meeting (Frankfurt)



The Letter n°1107

PDF

[in English](#) -- Edition of Tuesday 15th April 2025

 **I download**

The Letter is also available in:



 I love the Robert Schuman Foundation's Letter

The Letter's Editorial Team :

**Helen Levy, Stefanie Buzmaniuk ;
Catherine d'Angelo, Florine Chabat-
Courede, Louise Rousseau, Sophie
Riondet**

N° ISSN: **2729-6482**

A question, a suggestion ?

Contact us!

info@robert-schuman.eu

Editors-in-chief :

Juliette Bachschmidt

Publishing Director :

Pascale Joannin

[Click here if this email is not displayed correctly.](#)

**FONDATION ROBERT
SCHUMAN**

You no longer wish to receive our letters. {LINK}