

Letter n°1108 of Tuesday 22nd April 2025

The end of the energy price crisis must not mean the end of the energy transition

Valérie Plagnol - 23 Apr 2025

'In many respects, Europe has recently experienced a rude awakening, albeit a salutary one.' Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Europe has experienced its most serious energy supply crisis since the oil shocks of the 1970s. Electricity prices have been extremely volatile, further eroding household purchasing power and business competitiveness. However, there can be no question of abandoning the path to energy transition, as the current tensions confirm the necessity and legitimacy of this approach.



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■ Vatican :



Death of Pope Francis

Pope Francis died on 21 April in Rome at the age of 88. He was the first bishop of Rome from Argentina and the first member of the Society of Jesus to become head of the Catholic Church. His twelve-year pontificate was marked by a commitment to social justice, ecology and interfaith dialogue. His funeral will be held on 26 April at 10 a.m. in Rome. The traditional 'Urbi et Orbi' celebration took place the day before, on Easter Sunday. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Commission :



Implementation of the Migration Pact and first list of safe countries

On 16 April, the European Commission proposed bringing forward the implementation of two elements of the Migration and Asylum Pact, scheduled for June 2026. It wants to speed up asylum procedures for applicants from countries with low recognition rates ($\leq 20\%$) and introduce a first common list of safe countries of origin: Kosovo, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, India, Morocco and Tunisia. The aim is to harmonise procedures and deal more efficiently with applications that are unlikely to be successful. MEPs and the Council must now vote on this proposal. [Read more](#)



Strengthening eco-design for more sustainable products by 2030

On 16 April, the European Commission adopted the 2025-2030 roadmap for the regulation on eco-design of sustainable products and energy labelling. This plan identifies priority products – such as steel, textiles, furniture and tyres – for the introduction of sustainability, reparability and energy efficiency requirements. Horizontal measures will also target consumer electronics and small appliances. All of this is part of the European strategy for a competitive and resilient circular economy. [Read more](#)



Strengthening climate resilience and water security

On 15 April, the European Commission announced that it would invest €86 million in five strategic integrated projects to improve water quality, prevent floods and fires, restore ecosystems and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These projects, located in Denmark, Estonia, Poland, Slovenia and Iceland, are in line with the European Union's climate objectives for 2050. They will also mobilise additional national and European funding. The LIFE programme, with a total budget of €2.3 billion for 2025-2027, will support these initiatives for a sustainable and resilient economy. [Read more](#)



Consultation on the Emissions Trading System

On 14 April, the European Commission launched a 12-week public consultation on the Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and the Market Stability Reserve (MSR), ahead of their scheduled review in 2026. This assessment aims to ensure that these mechanisms effectively support the goal of climate neutrality by 2050 and will focus in particular on the aviation, maritime and stationary sectors. Interested parties can submit their views via the Have Your Say portal until 8 July. [Read more](#)



Leqembi: European green light for a new Alzheimer's treatment

On 15 April, the European Commission authorised the marketing of Leqembi (lecanemab), marking a turning point in the fight against Alzheimer's disease. This drug, already approved in several countries, is the first available in Europe since 2002 to specifically target the disease. Developed by Eisai, Leqembi acts on the beta-amyloid plaques responsible for cognitive decline. It is intended for patients in the early stages of the disease and, in clinical trials, has been shown to slow cognitive decline by 27% after 18 months. [Read more](#)



Egypt joins the Horizon Europe programme

On 14 April, the European Union and Egypt finalised an association agreement for the Horizon Europe programme, the EU's largest research and innovation funding programme. From now on, Egyptian researchers will be able to participate fully in calls for projects, gaining access to cutting-edge European infrastructure. This agreement, which is expected to be formally signed in November 2025, strengthens 20 years of cooperation between the European Union and Egypt. It paves the way for increased collaboration in areas such as energy, climate, artificial intelligence and food security. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Simplification of the Invest EU Regulation to boost European competitiveness

On 16 April, the Council adopted its position on the simplification of the Invest EU Regulation. The aim is to mobilise around €50 billion in public and private investment for major policies, including the Competitiveness Compass, the Green Industrial Deal, defence and military mobility. This reform aims to strengthen the European Union's investment capacity, reduce administrative burdens and facilitate Member States' participation. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Meeting of Foreign Ministers

Foreign ministers met on 14 April to discuss Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including strengthening support for Ukraine and advancing sanctions against Russia. The situation in the Middle East, in particular the possibility of easing sanctions against Syria, was discussed. At the same time, the ministers held discussions on relations between the European Union and the African Union, on the humanitarian crisis in Sudan and on relations with the countries of the Western Balkans. They decided to impose restrictive measures against seven additional individuals and two entities responsible for serious human rights violations in Iran. [Read more](#)



First high-level political dialogue with Palestine

The European Union and the Palestinian Authority held their first high-level political dialogue in Luxembourg on 14 April. Discussions focused on the conflict in Gaza, the situation in the West Bank, Israeli-Palestinian relations and the prospects for a two-state solution. Both sides discussed the reforms undertaken by the Palestinian Authority and ways in which the European Union could support them. [Read more](#)

■ ECB :



Key interest rates cut in response to falling inflation

On 17 April, the ECB's Governing Council decided to reduce the three key interest rates by 25 basis points. The deposit facility rate will now stand at 2.25%, the main refinancing rate at 2.40% and the marginal lending facility rate at 2.65%, with effect from 23 April. This decision reflects an updated assessment of disinflationary dynamics and the transmission of monetary policy. The ECB is maintaining a cautious and data-dependent approach in an economic environment marked by increasing trade tensions and high uncertainty. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ European Agencies :



Operation BULUT: major police cooperation between Europe and Turkey

On 15 April, Operation BULUT led to the arrest of 232 suspects across Europe and Turkey, following coordinated raids supported by Europol. The authorities dismantled four major criminal networks involved in drug trafficking, money laundering and violent activities. The investigation relied on data extracted from the encrypted platforms Sky ECC and ANOM, which helped identify the ringleaders and their logistical infrastructure. More than €300 million in assets were seized, including 681 properties and 127 vehicles. The operation highlights Europol's central role in the fight against transnational organised crime. [Read more](#)

■ Finland :



Finnish borders will remain closed to the east

On 16 April, the Finnish government renewed its decision taken on 4 April 2024 to close its border with Russia. This decision follows Russia's orchestration of an influx of migrants with the aim of affecting security and stability in Finland and the European Union. Applications for international protection will remain centralised at other border crossing points in the country until further notice. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Macron attempts to restore Europe to the 'centre of discussions'

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On 17 April, French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff, Volodymyr Zelensky's right-hand man Andriy Yermak, as well as the Ukrainian ministers of defence and foreign affairs, and the two national security advisers of the United Kingdom and Germany to the Élysée Palace. Following the meeting, Paris hailed an 'excellent exchange' that 'allowed for convergence' in favour of a 'solid peace,' and Moscow was informed by Washington of the progress made in the talks. A new meeting is scheduled for 23 April in London. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Greece :



Strengthening the strategic defence partnership with France

Greek Defence Minister Nikos Dendias and his French counterpart Sébastien Lecornu announced on 14 April the signing of an agreement for the supply of 16 Exocet missiles produced by MBDA. The two ministers expressed their willingness to continue working closely on ammunition and missiles, within the framework of the strategic partnership signed between France and Greece in 2021. This agreement is part of the overhaul of the Greek army and the massive investments announced two weeks ago. [Read more](#)

■ Latvia :



Latvia withdraws from the Ottawa Convention

On 16 April, Latvian MPs approved the country's withdrawal from the treaty banning anti-personnel mines. This move comes in response to the growing threat from Russia and, with the support of its Baltic neighbours and Poland, aims to strengthen the country's defence capabilities. [Read more](#)

■ Albania :



Conference on accession in Luxembourg

The fourth meeting of the accession conference with Albania was held in Luxembourg on 14 April. The meeting opened negotiations with Albania on the second group of chapters concerning the internal market, after concluding negotiations on the 'fundamentals'. The transposition of the European acquis, divided into six thematic groups, is a prerequisite for accession to the European Union, for which Albania has been a candidate since 2014. [Read more](#)

■ Serbia :



New government

A new government was appointed in Serbia on 16 April. Following the resignation of Prime Minister Milorad Vučević, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić chose Đuro Macut as head of government. On 15 April, Macut presented his programme and the composition of his government to the Assembly, which voted in favour by 153 votes of the 199 present. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Moldova :



General Elections 28 September

Moldova will hold parliamentary elections on 28 September, following a decision adopted by MPs on 17 April. The outcome of the vote will determine Moldova's path towards EU membership, after the two previous elections, the presidential election and a referendum on the European Union, were hotly contested due to suspicions of Russian interference. President Maia Sandu said Moldova must 'preserve its stability and join the European Union over the next four years'. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Martial law extended for three months

On 16 April, Ukrainian MPs in the Verkhovna Rada voted in favour of two bills extending martial law and the general mobilisation until 6 August. This is the 14th time that the state of war has been extended since the Russian invasion began in February 2022. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Norway supports the reconstruction of Ukraine

Norway granted a contribution of 35 million Norwegian kroner (around €3 million) to the international fund "The Partnership Fund for a Resilient Ukraine" to support and rebuild Ukraine, on 15 April. The aim of the fund is to provide a rapid response to local challenges, complementing the actions taken by the central authorities and multilateral and international organisations. In addition to Norway, the United Kingdom, Canada, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden and the United States are participating in this aid fund for the future of Ukraine. [Read more](#)

■ NATO :



Sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 15 April, NATO reaffirmed its commitment to the stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the Dayton-Paris Peace Accords. NATO representatives had an opportunity to exchange views with the tripartite presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, comprising Željka Cvijanović, Željko Komšić and Denis Bećirović. The latter expressed their deep concern about recent developments, highlighting their negative impact on the constitutional order and the functioning of Bosnia and Herzegovina's central institutions. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Safety Gate: record number of alerts to strengthen consumer safety

On 16 April, the European Commission published its annual report on the Safety Gate system, revealing a record 4,137 alerts in 2024 concerning dangerous non-food products. Cosmetics (36%), toys (15%) and electrical appliances (10%) were the most frequently reported products, often due to banned chemicals such as BMHCA, an allergen used to flavour certain products. This increase reflects greater and more effective use of the system by national authorities. More than 4,200 measures were taken to remove these products from the market. The Commission is planning an initial 'clean-up' to check products sold online under the new safety rules. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



The European Research Area is progressing, but further investment is needed

According to the European Research Area (ERA) Scoreboard and Dashboard 2024 published on 15 April, significant progress has been made between 2010 and 2022 in areas such as open science, gender equality and global engagement. The share of open access publications reached 77.7% and the share of women among tenured professors rose to 27.3%. However, further efforts are needed, particularly to strengthen links between research and industry, improve researcher mobility and increase long-term investment. Countries lagging behind in R&I are showing improvements, but disparities remain. [Read more](#)



Europe faces climate emergency

In 2024, Europe became the fastest warming continent, according to the European State of the Climate report published on 15 April. While the east suffered from extreme heat and drought, the west experienced intense heat and humidity, as well as the worst flooding since 2013. The report also highlights worrying records, including sea surface temperatures and increased glacier melt in Scandinavia and the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard. Despite this, progress has been made: 45% of electricity was generated from renewable sources. The European Union plans to strengthen its climate adaptation plan and European civil defence. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Culture :



Eugène Boudin in Paris

Until 31 August, the Marmottan Monet Museum is hosting an exhibition entitled 'Eugène Boudin, the father of Impressionism: a private collection'. Eight sections trace the artist's career, showcasing nearly 80 of his works, including landscapes of Normandy and seascapes of the South of France and Venice. [Read more](#)



Modern Croatian art in Zagreb

The Klovićevi Dvori Gallery in Zagreb is exhibiting more than sixty works of modern Croatian painting until 29 June. The Boris and Jelva Kviz collection is one of the most respected yet least known collections of modern Croatian art. The event gives the public access to works by Croatian artists such as Vlaho Bukovac, Bela Csikos Sesia and Ferdo Kovačević, created between the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century. [Read more](#)



Carlo Levi and Piero Martina in Rome

Until 14 September, the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Rome is hosting its first exhibition bringing together works by painters Carlo Levi and Piero Martina. The exhibition compares paintings by the two artists created between the 1920s and 1960s, focusing on the post-war decade, a lively and intense period of social commitment and expressive research that the two friends shared during a long stay in Rome. [Read more](#)



Photo by Alberto García-Alix in Menorca

The Mahón Gallery in Menorca is hosting an exhibition until 31 May featuring images taken over the last 40 years by Alberto Garcia-Alix. The artist is known for his varied photographs, ranging from the rebellion in Madrid in the 1980s to an imaginary world created from the works of the Prado Museum in the same city. He was awarded the National Photography Prize in 1999 by the Spanish Ministry of Culture and is one of the most important names in contemporary European photography. [Read more](#)



Ocean liners, transatlantic aesthetics in Le Havre

Until 21 September, the exhibition 'Paquebots 1913-1942, une esthétique transatlantique' (Ocean liners 1913-1942, transatlantic aesthetics), exploring the cultural and artistic impact of transatlantic liners during the interwar period, is on display at the MuMa in Le Havre. Through works by painters, photographers and designers, the exhibition highlights the elegance and modernism of these ships, symbols of travel and exchange. The ocean liners are presented as icons of society, reflecting the ambitions of their era. [Read more](#)



Tribute to Čiurlionis in Klaipėda

On 26 April, the Klaipėda Music Theatre (KVMТ) will present a contemporary dance performance entitled 'Tribute to Čiurlionis' to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. A painter and composer, he is considered the founder of modern Lithuanian art and a cultural icon of independent Lithuania (1918-1940). [Read more](#)



Museum Night in Hamburg

The 22nd Hamburg Museum Night will take place on 26 April. On this occasion, more than 50 cultural institutions in the city will be open from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. The programme includes guided tours, concerts and dance performances for children and adults. Some activities are available in several languages. [Read more](#)



Art Brussels

The Art Brussels fair returns for its 41st edition, from 24 to 27 April at Brussels Expo, with 165 galleries from 35 countries in five sections: Prime, Solo, '68 Forward, Discovery and Invited. In addition to presenting more than 800 artists, Art Brussels is introducing a selection of artistic projects, enriching its programme and highlighting all forms of contemporary art. This year, two new initiatives are being presented: The Screen, a video art programme, and Monumental Artworks, an exhibition of large-scale installations. [Read more](#)



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