

Letter n°1110 of Tuesday 6th May 2025

The European Union and national sovereignty: a new democratic challenge?

[Blandine Chelini-Pont - 06 May 2025](#)

Democracy as a political system has a long intellectual and institutional history, characterised by profound differences of interpretation and therefore of form, as to what is meant by 'power of the people'. A fundamental pillar of the European Union, democracy is under attack in many countries that have long since adopted it. While support for democracy has never been stronger, as evidenced by the latest Eurobarometer, it is incumbent upon the European community to consolidate the objectives of its international action in favour of democracy in order to (re)become a reservoir and laboratory for democratic experimentation.



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■ **Front page! :**



Ukraine: Europe is key

'Europe is more than ever central to resolving the conflict in Ukraine, and nothing will happen without it,' Jean-Dominique Giuliani reminds us. The determination of European leaders such as Emmanuel Macron, Keir Starmer and Friedrich Merz has led to a change in US plans; the mining agreement signed between the United States and Ukraine is a genuine promise of US investment in the reconstruction of Ukraine, respecting Ukrainian independence and European law. European unity has led to a strong response against Russia in terms of defence and sanctions. Many Western countries, such as Canada, Japan and South Korea, support the Europeans, aware that this is a matter of rejecting imperialism and revisionism. [Read more](#)

■ Europe Day :



75 years since Robert Schuman's declaration

9 May marks the 75th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, the founding act of European integration. Delivered by Robert Schuman, then French Minister for Foreign Affairs, this declaration proposed the establishment of a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC was the first supranational European institution and the precursor to what would later become the European Union. This day embodies the European Union's commitment to peace, solidarity, democracy and diversity. Numerous events are being organised across Europe to mark the occasion. They will be announced on the foundation's website on 7 May. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Book and biography of Robert Schuman, father of Europe

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, the Robert Schuman Foundation invites you to rediscover 'Pour l'Europe' (For Europe), which sets out Robert Schuman's vision for a political and voluntary Europe, rich in diversity but strong in unity. The book 'Robert Schuman, Père de l'Europe' (Robert Schuman, Father of Europe) by Jean-Marie Pelt, professor and writer, is also available. This document provides an insight into an extraordinary political figure who played a key role in all the decisive international events of the post-war period and helps readers to better understand the foundations and importance of Europe. The books are available in English and French, and 'Pour l'Europe' is also available in German on the Robert Schuman Foundation's website. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Elections :



George Simion and Nicusor Dan will face off in the second round on 18 May

The candidate has changed... but not the result. The far right came out ahead in the first round of the presidential election on 4 May in Romania. With 40.96% of the vote, George Simion (Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, AUR) consolidated the result obtained by Calin Georgescu on 24 November 2024. Budapest Mayor Nicusor Dan qualified for the second round with 20.99% of the vote. He is ahead of the candidate of the current ruling coalition in Romania, Crin Antonescu, who obtained 20.07% of the vote. The second round will take place on 18 May. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



27 million doses of flu vaccine

On 29 April, the European Commission signed a new joint procurement contract enabling 17 EU countries to purchase up to 27.4 million doses of flu vaccine. This contract is part of European efforts to prepare for a possible flu pandemic. It guarantees rapid access to the vaccine in the event of an official pandemic declaration by the WHO or the European Union, thereby strengthening collective health security. [Read more](#)



€300 million for ocean protection

At the 'Our Ocean' conference in Busan on 29 April, the European Union announced funding of over €301 million to support ocean conservation. The funds will be divided between six areas: the sustainable blue economy, the fight against marine pollution, the creation of protected marine areas, the digital ocean, sustainable fishing and adaptation to climate change. This initiative is part of the European Union's commitment to promoting clean, safe and sustainably managed oceans worldwide. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



EPP Congress in Valencia

The European People's Party (EPP) Congress was held in Valencia on 29 and 30 April. Delegates re-elected Germany's Manfred Weber as party leader and appointed Spain's Dolors Montserrat as its first female secretary-general. Ten vice-presidents and a treasurer were elected, but only two of them were women. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Activation of the derogation clause to strengthen European defence

In response to threats to European security, particularly Russia's war against Ukraine, sixteen Member States announced on 30 April that they had activated the national derogation clause provided for in the new economic governance framework. This clause, which is valid for four years and represents up to 1.5% of GDP, allows for budgetary flexibility to strengthen defence capabilities while maintaining debt sustainability. The measure aims to reduce strategic dependencies, fill capability gaps and support the European defence industry. [Read more](#)



Informal meeting of environment ministers in Warsaw

On 28 and 29 April, European environment ministers met in Warsaw to discuss the fight against climate misinformation and adaptation to climate change. The Polish GreenEvo programme was presented as an example of green innovation. The Polish Presidency emphasised the need to strengthen environmental resilience. The discussions helped to advance the European Climate Adaptation Plan. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Restrictive measures extended due to actions destabilising Moldova

On 28 April, the Council decided to extend until 29 April 2026 the restrictive measures imposed by the European Union against those responsible for actions aimed at destabilising, undermining or threatening the sovereignty and independence of Moldova. First introduced in April 2023 at the request of Moldova to protect democracy, the rule of law, stability and security in the country, the Council noted an intensification of destabilisation attempts since the start of Russia's war against Ukraine. [Read more](#)



Meeting on the United Kingdom's withdrawal agreement

The United Kingdom and the European Union held a meeting on the withdrawal agreement in force since 2020 on 29 April in London. Representatives from both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to implementing all provisions of the agreement. They noted the considerable work done so far in implementing the Windsor Framework, which settles the issue of Northern Ireland's status and has led to progress in several areas, including agri-food products, trade, VAT and excise duties. Finally, they promised to stay in close contact and strengthen their bilateral relations ahead of the summit on 19 May. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Court of Justice :



Condemnation of Malta's citizenship-by-investment programme

In a ruling on 29 April, the Court of Justice of the European Union stated that Malta's programme for granting citizenship in exchange for predetermined payments or investments was contrary to European law. The judges reiterated that EU citizenship cannot be acquired through a commercial transaction. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ European Agencies :



Successful launch of Vega-C and orbiting of the Biomass satellite

The European Vega-C rocket lifted off successfully from the Guiana Space Centre in Kourou on 29 April, placing the ESA-developed Biomass satellite into orbit. This satellite will measure forest biomass and carbon stored in trees using long-range radar. The mission aims to improve our understanding of the carbon cycle and map various geological and climatic aspects. [Read more](#)



Eight countries unite to combat the recruitment of young people by organised crime

On 29 April, Europol launched OTF GRIMM, an operational task force led by Sweden that brings together eight European countries to combat violence involving the strategic recruitment of young people to commit violent acts at the behest of criminal organisations. These organisations exploit social media to lure vulnerable minors with promises of money or status. OTF GRIMM will coordinate investigations, information sharing and cooperation with digital platforms to dismantle these networks. [Read more](#)

■ **Denmark :**



Greenland reasserts its independence

On 27 April, Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen travelled to Denmark to meet with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. During the meeting, he rejected the idea of selling the territory, following statements made by US President Donald Trump. He insisted that Greenland was 'not for sale' and that it belonged entirely to the Greenlandic people. The following day, the King of Denmark, Frederik X, began an official visit to Greenland, emphasising the unity of the kingdom in the face of growing geopolitical tensions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ **Estonia :**



Estonia ready to participate in European deterrent force in Ukraine

Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal said on 30 April that his country was ready to contribute to the deterrence force in support of Ukraine. This assistance could include a combat unit, military trainers and staff officers. Estonia promises to continue its military support until Ukraine's victory. [Read more](#)

■ **France :**



Choose Europe for Science

On 5 May, French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen launched the 'Choose Europe for Science' initiative at the Sorbonne with the aim of attracting international researchers to Europe. They emphasised Europe's openness in the face of the scientific retreat observed in the United States. The event aims to enhance the attractiveness of European research. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ireland :



€530 million fine for TikTok

On 2 May, the Irish Data Protection Authority imposed a €530 million fine on Chinese company TikTok for failing to comply with the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Irish data protection commissioners have ordered TikTok to bring its processing of European Economic Area users' data into compliance and to stop transferring it to China. [Read more](#)

■ Poland :



10th Three Seas Summit

The 10th summit of the Three Seas Initiative opened in Warsaw on 29 April with a speech by Polish President Andrzej Duda. The summit brings together the presidents of the 13 member countries, 120 million citizens and 140 priority projects. The event focuses on strengthening regional cooperation on infrastructure, particularly in the energy, transport and digital sectors. A joint declaration was adopted, but Hungary expressed some reservations. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Luxembourg's support for the reconstruction of Ukraine

On 30 April, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met with Luxembourg's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and Foreign Trade, Xavier Bettel, and Luxembourg's Minister for Defence, Yuriko Backes. Luxembourg has taken in more than 4,500 Ukrainian refugees since the start of the war. The two sides discussed Luxembourg's involvement in rebuilding Ukraine. During the visit, the Luxembourg delegation announced an extra €21 million in support for Ukraine. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Visit to the Czech Republic

On 4 May, Czech President Petr Pavel welcomed his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky to Prague Castle. On this occasion, he announced that Ukraine could receive up to 1.8 million rounds of large-calibre ammunition by the end of the year, as part of an initiative led by Prague and financially supported by eleven countries. [Read more](#)

■ Council of Europe :



New President of the European Court of Human Rights

On 28 April, Mattias Guyomar of France was elected President of the European Court of Human Rights. He will succeed Marko Bošnjak of Slovenia on 30 May. He is the third French judge to become President of the Court, following René Cassin, who served from 1965 to 1968, and Jean-Paul Costa, who served from 2007 to 2011. [Read more](#)



Council of Europe report on human trafficking in Cyprus

On 28 April, the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) published its evaluation report on Cyprus. Progress has been recognised in this area, particularly with the adoption of the National Strategy to Combat Trafficking. It drew attention to the situation of migrant workers, including domestic workers, as well as access to healthcare and education for unaccompanied children who are most vulnerable to exploitation. [Read more](#)

■ NATO :



NATO Symposium on Nuclear Deterrence

Senior officials from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, along with officials from member countries and experts, took part in discussions on nuclear deterrence in Helsinki on 29 April. They reported on the rapid and complex evolution of nuclear security challenges facing the Alliance. Finnish Defence Minister Antti Häkkinen emphasised the commitment of NATO and its member countries to credible and effective deterrence and defence. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Report on competition policy

According to the annual report on competition policy published on 25 April, in 2024 the European Commission stepped up its competition policy to support the competitiveness of the European Union, the green and digital transitions and the smooth functioning of the single market. It revised several key regulations, pursued cases of abuse of dominant positions, notably against Apple and Meta, and approved major projects of common European interest (IPCEIs), particularly in the hydrogen and health sectors. The authority also modernised state aid rules, simplifying the 'de minimis' schemes and stimulating innovation. The rigorous enforcement of competition law remains at the heart of the EU's economic and environmental ambitions. [Read more](#)



Report on Europe's strategy for microprocessors

According to a report by the European Court of Auditors published on 28 April 2025, the European Union is well short of its target of securing 20% of the global market for microprocessors by 2030. Despite the launch of the Chips Act in 2022, investment remains insufficient in the face of international competition. The European Commission manages only a small share of the necessary funds and does not have a clear mandate to coordinate national efforts. Other obstacles, such as energy costs and dependence on raw materials, are also hampering the sector's progress. [Read more](#)



World Press Freedom Index

On 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, Reporters Without Borders published its World Press Freedom Index, which shows that press freedom has reached an unprecedented critical level. For the first time, the situation of press freedom has been classified as 'difficult' due to economic pressures. The European Union condemned attacks on journalists and defended free and independent journalism, highlighting EU initiatives such as the adoption of the European Media Act. It also stepped up its fight against disinformation with tools such as EUvsDisinfo and against abusive prosecutions and disinformation. It called for global mobilisation to protect freedom of expression. [Read more - Other link](#)



Gerhard Richter in Munich

Until 8 June, the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich is exploring the role of drawing in the 21st century as a catalyst among the fine arts and as an art form in its own right, through the work of Gerhard Richter. The German painter creates some of his drawings in his studio with the following maxim in mind: 'The most fundamental, the most difficult thing is to do something that is good.' The Munich exhibition focuses on three series of his most recent drawings. [Read more](#)



Christian Krohg at the Musée d'Orsay

The Musée d'Orsay is hosting an exhibition devoted to Norwegian artist Christian Krohg until 27 July, the first to be held outside Scandinavia. It highlights the artist's social and political commitment through naturalistic scenes that address themes such as the condition of the people, poverty and injustice towards women. [Read more](#)



Rubens exhibition in Antwerp

The 'Studio Rubens' exhibition at the KMSKA in Antwerp immerses visitors in the creative process of painter Peter Paul Rubens. Until 29 June, it presents sketches and a late copy of Rubens' masterpiece, The Virgin Enthroned. Visitors can follow the public restoration of the work. This initiative provides an opportunity to observe the meticulous stages of cleaning and conservation. [Read more](#)



Vertigo in Porquerolles

Until 2 November, the Carmignac Foundation is presenting Vertigo, an exhibition that explores the links between artistic abstraction and the perception of natural phenomena, particularly through the Mediterranean landscape, since 1950. Through some fifty works by artists such as Yves Klein, Olafur Eliasson and James Turrell, it invites visitors to immerse themselves in a variety of visual registers. [Read more](#)



Exhibition 'In the Troubled Air' in Barcelona

The Barcelona Contemporary Cultural Centre is hosting the exhibition 'In the Troubled Air...' until 28 September. This exhibition by philosopher and historian Georges Didi-Huberman invites visitors to explore more than 300 major works of European culture. Works by artists such as Dali, Giacometti, Brecht, Goethe, Goya, Hugo, Rodin, Miro and Jahnsen allow the public to question the transmission of emotions. The event pays tribute to Federico Garcia Lorca and his notion of duende: a state of heightened emotion. [Read more](#)



Giacometti in London

The Barbican Centre in London is showcasing the work of Alberto Giacometti until 24 May 2026. The exhibition combines his historic sculptures with new works by contemporary artists such as Huma Bhabha, Mona Hatoum and Lynda Benglis. The event establishes a dialogue on the timeless themes of death, fragmentation, domesticity, memory, trauma, eroticism, horror and humour. [Read more](#)



Destination Paris: Polish artists from Bourdelle's studio in Warsaw

Until 26 October, the National Museum in Warsaw is highlighting the careers of several Polish artists who trained in the studio of sculptor Antoine Bourdelle in Paris, emphasising the role of women in modern art. The exhibition features a variety of works, including paintings, sculptures and drawings. Their time in Paris marked a turning point in their artistic careers. The collection illustrates the cultural exchanges between Poland and France. [Read more](#)

Venice Architecture Biennale

The 19th International Architecture Exhibition is being held in Venice until 23 November. This year's show is being organised under the direction of architect and engineer Carlo Ratti, who said: 'To face a burning world, architecture must harness all the intelligence around us.' The aim is to create a cross-disciplinary exhibition covering all the themes of our circular economy, such as sustainability, waste reduction and the regeneration of our natural systems. [Read more](#)



The film Flow wins the LUX Prize

The film Flow by Latvian director Gints Zilbalodis has won the 2025 LUX Prize, awarded by the European Parliament in Brussels on 29 April. The film is co-produced by Latvia, France and Belgium. The LUX Prize celebrates socially committed European cinema, combining votes from citizens and parliamentarians to reflect current societal concerns. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 5-8 May

European Parliament Plenary Session (Strasbourg)

 7 May 2025

Opening of the Conclave to designate the Pope (Vatican)

 7-8 May 2025

Informal meeting of foreign affairs ministers (Gymnich) (Warsaw)

 9 May 2025

Europe Day, 75th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration

 12 May 2025

Eurogroup

 12 May 2025

"Education, Youth, Culture and Sports" Council



The Letter n°1110

PDF

in English -- Edition of Tuesday 6th May 2025

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N° ISSN: **2729-6482**

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