

**Letter n°1115 of Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

## **The sea as a strategic interest for Europe. A European perspective on the ocean and its challenges**

[Didier Piaton - 11 Jun 2025](#)

As the United Nations Ocean Conference gets underway, it is important to remember that the sea is central to Europe's strategic challenges. In a world marked by the resurgence of conflict, the European Union must reaffirm the importance of its maritime dimension, both for its security and its strategic autonomy. With the world's longest maritime border, it must strengthen its naval power, industrial sovereignty and command capacity. In the face of global challenges, control of the oceans is becoming a central pillar of its strategic identity and international influence.



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■ **Foundation :**



## 7th edition of the VGE Prize open until 25 June

The 7th edition of the Valéry Giscard d'Estaing Prize, in partnership with the Robert Schuman Foundation, rewards a student and one or more finalists for their commitment and European achievements. The theme for the 2025 edition is 'The best way to strengthen the defence of the European continent and move towards a European defence'. Candidates have until 25 June to submit their work. [Read more](#)

## ■ Commission :



### European Semester: increased surveillance for certain countries

On 4 June, the European Commission published its assessments of the EU's public finances. While the situation is stable for Hungary, Malta, Poland and Slovakia, Romania is causing concern due to persistent deficits. Austria could be subject to an excessive deficit procedure. Twelve countries are complying with spending limits, while Cyprus and the Netherlands are at risk of deviating from them. With regard to macroeconomic imbalances, Germany and Cyprus have been reclassified as stable, but Romania remains on alert. Updated guidelines aim to strengthen employment and inclusion. [Read more](#)



### Digital strategy to strengthen international partnerships

On 5 June, the European Commission and the High Representative presented an international digital strategy aimed at making the European Union a reliable player in global technological cooperation. In a tense geopolitical context, this strategy aims to support the digital transition of partner countries, promote a rules-based digital order and strengthen the Union's competitiveness. It is based on strengthened partnerships, a technology offer combining public and private investment, and the defence of European values in key areas such as AI, cybersecurity and digital governance. [Read more](#)



## Raw materials: 13 strategic projects with non-EU countries

On 4 June, the European Commission selected 13 strategic projects outside the European Union to secure the supply of critical raw materials and support local value creation. These projects, spread across countries such as Canada, Serbia, Ukraine and Zambia, focus on lithium, cobalt, rare earths and copper. They aim to strengthen the competitiveness of European sectors such as renewable energy, automotive and defence. A total investment of €5.5 billion is estimated for their implementation. [Read more](#)



## European Ocean Pact

On 5 June, the European Commission adopted a European Ocean Pact, aimed at protecting the oceans, boosting the blue economy and strengthening coastal, island and outermost regions. The pact is structured around six priorities: restoring marine ecosystems, ensuring the sustainable competitiveness of maritime sectors, supporting coastal areas, promoting scientific innovation, ensuring maritime safety and security, and strengthening international governance. It also provides for a future 'Ocean Act' by 2027 and a public monitoring dashboard to ensure coordinated and effective implementation. [Read more](#)

## ■ Council :



## Meeting of transport and telecommunications ministers

On 5 June, ministers adopted a position on the revision of air passenger rights. This text, which has been under discussion for 12 years, introduces more than 30 new rights, from ticket purchase to arrival at the destination. Ministers also discussed the update of the roadworthiness package and climate challenges related to transport. On 6 June, they adopted a roadmap for better management of cybersecurity crises and incidents in Europe. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ ECB :



## ECB cuts key interest rates

On 5 June, the European Central Bank cut its three key interest rates by 25 basis points, bringing the deposit facility rate down to 2%. This decision is based on inflation close to the 2% medium-term target, wage moderation and GDP growth estimated at 0.9% in 2025. The institution confirms its commitment to adjust its instruments in line with the data, while standing ready to respond to any threats to price stability. [Read more](#)

## ■ Trilogue :



## Fight against unsustainable fishing: stricter European rules

The Council has reached a provisional agreement with the European Parliament to improve rules aimed at combating unsustainable fishing practices authorised by third countries. The new regulation provides for measures in the event of discriminatory quotas or practices that threaten the sustainability of stocks. Countries concerned will now have 90 days to respond to notifications from the European Union. [Read more](#)

## ■ Diplomacy :



## Ministerial meeting on justice with the United States

Warsaw hosted the European Union-United States Ministerial Meeting on Justice and Home Affairs on 2 and 3 June. The meeting was organised by the Polish Presidency of the Council. Discussions focused on strengthening transatlantic cooperation on security, the fight against organised crime, cybersecurity and support for Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression. Participants stressed the importance of increased collaboration to address common challenges in these areas. [Read more](#)

## ■ Court of Justice :



## A parent cannot be penalised for accompanying their child in Europe

On 3 June, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that a parent who is a third-country national cannot be penalised for aiding illegal entry solely on the grounds that they are accompanying their minor child in whose custody they have been granted rights. This decision follows a case involving a woman who arrived in Italy with her daughter and niece, both minors. The Court considers that this is an exercise of parental responsibility and not an offence. It points out that punishing such behaviour would undermine the right to family life and the fundamental rights of children. [Read more](#)

## ■ Germany :



### First meeting at the White House

On 5 June, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz met with US President Donald Trump at the White House. Discussions focused on bilateral economic relations, international security and the war in Ukraine. During the meeting, the German chancellor emphasised the importance of stronger transatlantic cooperation and increased pressure on Russia. The US president praised Germany's efforts on defence spending, while expressing reservations about the effectiveness of sanctions against Moscow. [Read more](#)



### Judicial rejection of the new chancellor's migration policy

On 2 June, at the request of three Somali refugees, the Berlin Administrative Court ruled that the return of asylum seekers at the border, implemented by Friedrich Merz's government, was illegal. The return of asylum seekers to the border was widely criticised by European states, which considered this practice to be contrary to the Dublin Regulation on which EU asylum policy is based, and penalises Member States bordering Germany. Federal Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt considered that this ruling would not set a legal precedent. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Bulgaria :



## Bulgaria ready to adopt the euro by 1 January 2026

On 4 June, the European Commission announced that Bulgaria now meets all the criteria to join the euro area on 1 January 2026. This conclusion is set out in the 2025 Convergence Report, which confirms that Sofia has fulfilled the necessary economic, legislative and integration requirements. The adoption of the euro should strengthen the Bulgarian economy by facilitating trade, investment and access to finance. The final decision will be taken by the Council, after consulting the European Parliament and the ECB. [Read more](#)

## ■ Denmark :



### Preparations for the Danish Presidency of the Council

On 3 June, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen met with European Parliament President Roberta Metsola to discuss the Danish Presidency of the Council, which begins on 1 July. She announced a major change in her country's budget policy. Traditionally a member of the 'Frugal Four' alongside Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden, Denmark had opposed increasing the European budget. Mette Frederiksen now considers this position inadequate in the face of geopolitical threats, particularly the war in Ukraine. She is calling for a stronger European defence, stating that 'a Europe that cannot protect itself is doomed'. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ France :



### Visit by Brazilian President Lula

During his visit to Paris on 5 and 6 June, Brazilian President Lula da Silva called on French President Emmanuel Macron to ratify the trade agreement between the European Union and Mercosur. He stressed the importance of finalising this agreement during Brazil's presidency of Mercosur in the second half of the year. He also expressed his wish to sign the agreement by the end of the year and stressed the need for enhanced cooperation between the two parties. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Italy :





## Meeting between Giorgia Meloni and Emmanuel Macron

On 3 June, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni welcomed French President Emmanuel Macron to Rome. The meeting aimed to strengthen cooperation between Italy and France on issues such as European security, migration management and economic relations. This meeting marks an important step in the revival of Franco-Italian dialogue, with a mutual commitment to strengthen the Quirinal Treaty. A further meeting is scheduled to take place in France in early 2026. [Read more](#)

## ■ Lithuania :



### Summit of the Group of Nine (B9)

On 2 June, the summit of the Bucharest Nine, bringing together the heads of state and government of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, as well as the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), was held in Vilnius. On this occasion, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met with the new Romanian President, Nicușor Dan. The meeting aimed to strengthen bilateral relations, particularly in the areas of security, diplomatic cooperation and support for Ukraine's integration into the European Union and NATO. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ The Netherlands :



### Geert Wilders brings down Dutch coalition

On 3 June, Geert Wilders, leader of the Party for Freedom (PVV), announced that his party was withdrawing from the Dutch coalition government, thereby bringing down the government. This decision was made after his partners refused to support his ten-point plan to tighten asylum policies, including closing borders and deporting Syrian refugees. The coalition, formed in July 2024, is now weakened. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Poland :



## Speech by Prime Minister Donald Tusk to the Polish Parliament

On 2 June, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said in a televised address that he was committed to working for a free and sovereign Poland. He also expressed his readiness to cooperate with the newly elected president, while reiterating his government's priorities in terms of security and foreign policy. The following day, 3 June, he announced his intention to seek a vote of confidence from the Polish Parliament on 11 June. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Portugal :



### New government

The outgoing President of the Assembly, José Aguiar-Branco (PSD), was re-elected by 202 votes on 3 June. On 4 June, Prime Minister Luís Montenegro unveiled the composition of his government, which was sworn in by President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa. The government has sixteen ministers, six of whom are women. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Moldova :



### Solidarity reaffirmed and support for accession to the European Union

The 9th meeting of the EU-Moldova Association Council was held in Brussels on 4 June, attended by Moldovan Prime Minister Dorin Recean. The meeting focused on bilateral relations between Moldova and the European Union, political dialogue and reforms, cooperation and convergence in the field of foreign and security policy, and economic and sectoral cooperation, particularly in the areas of energy, trade and trade-related issues. [Read more](#)

## ■ Monaco :





## State visit by French President Emmanuel Macron

Emmanuel Macron paid a state visit to Monaco on 7 and 8 June – the first by a French president since 1984. He was welcomed by Prince Albert II. Discussions focused on the customs agreement aimed at strengthening customs cooperation between the two countries, particularly with a view to improving the tracking of cash flows. The signed amendment renews the Customs Convention signed in 1963. They discussed ocean protection ahead of the United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice. A forum on the blue economy was organised, highlighting the two nations' commitment to sustainable cooperation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ UK :



### New defence strategy

On 2 June, the British government announced the launch of a 'Strategic Defence Review', a defence plan for the United Kingdom. Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced that peace was no longer a certainty and that deterrence was now imperative. The plan involves the construction of twelve nuclear submarines in partnership with the United States and Australia by 2030. An investment of £15 billion is planned to modernise the UK's nuclear arsenal and build new munitions factories. Finally, the British government has announced spending of £350 million to deliver more than 100,000 drones to Ukraine by 2025. [Read more](#)

## ■ Ukraine :



### Coordinated European approach to the reception of Ukrainian refugees

On 4 June, the European Commission presented a common strategy for the future of Ukrainian refugees in the European Union, which provides for the extension of temporary protection until March 2027. This measure provides stability and legal certainty for displaced persons and the Member States hosting them. It is accompanied by a recommendation for a gradual exit from this regime, facilitating access to other residence statuses or voluntary return to Ukraine. The Commission also plans to set up information centres and appoint a special envoy to ensure closer coordination with the Ukrainian authorities. [Read more](#)



## FAO calls for urgent support for rural farmers

On 2 June, the FAO warned of the critical situation facing rural communities in Ukraine, which have been severely affected by the war. Farmers are struggling to plant and produce crops due to mines, shortages of inputs and destroyed infrastructure. More than 250,000 families have already received aid, but needs remain immense. The FAO is calling for immediate support in the form of seeds, fertilisers and equipment to avert a food crisis. It stresses the need for coordinated international aid to preserve livelihoods in rural areas. [Read more](#)

## ■ UN :



### Third Ocean Conference

On 9 June in Nice, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres opened the third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), co-chaired by France and Costa Rica and attended by more than 60 heads of state and government. The aim is to preserve the oceans and address threats to the marine environment, including seabed exploitation, overfishing, global warming, plastic pollution and ocean acidification. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ NATO :



### Boosting capabilities and support for Ukraine

On 5 June, NATO Defence Ministers agreed on new capability goals to strengthen the Alliance and make sure it is ready to fight for years to come. At the NATO-Ukraine Council, held with Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, Alliance countries committed to providing additional security assistance to Ukraine worth more than €20 billion. Finally, General Alexis G. Grynkewich was appointed Supreme Allied Commander Europe. [Read more](#)

## ■ Studies/Reports :



## Annual report on judicial independence, political integrity and transparency

On 5 June, the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) published its annual report for 2024. The report expresses serious concerns about persistent threats to judicial independence and political financing transparency in some member states. While welcoming the positive reforms undertaken in some countries, it urges states to strengthen the structures ensuring the separation of powers. [Read more](#)



## A European label to direct savings towards local businesses

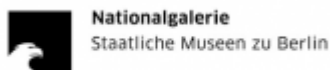
To better finance growth in Europe, France, Spain, Germany, Estonia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal launched the Finance Europe label on 5 June. The aim is to channel long-term savings into European companies. The label will be based on a minimum holding period of five years, with no public capital guarantee. It will be self-declared by financial players and monitored at national level. Expected in 2026, it aims to strengthen the European Union's economic autonomy. [Read more](#)



## European report on drugs

According to the annual report of the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) published on 5 June, drugs are wreaking havoc across the continent due to addiction, increased gang violence and the burden on health systems. It estimates that synthetic cannabis products, opioids and cathinones – which have similar effects to amphetamines – are 'gaining ground' and constitute an 'emerging threat'. [Read more](#)

## ■ Culture :



## Camille Claudel and Bernhard Hoetger in Berlin

The Staatliche Museen in Berlin is hosting the exhibition 'Camille Claudel and Bernhard Hoetger Emancipation from Rodin' until 28 September. The two sculptors, Camille Claudel and Bernhard Hoetger, were united by their quest for recognition and their decision to break with the master of French sculpture, Auguste Rodin. This exhibition, comprising 140 objects, including 67 works of art, is an opportunity to discover or rediscover the works of these two artists of the Parisian avant-garde. [Read more](#)



### Corto Maltese in Arc-et-Senans

The Saline Royale d'Arc-et-Senans, a historic site celebrating its 250th anniversary this year and listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1982, is hosting an exhibition dedicated to the marine world of Corto Maltese until 9 November. Hugo Pratt's hero is in the spotlight with the exhibition 'Corto Maltese, a world of adventure'. [Read more](#)

## THYSSEN- BORNEMISZA MUSEO NACIONAL

### Isabel Coixet in Madrid

As part of the PhotoEspaña 2025 programme, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid is hosting an exhibition until 14 September featuring collages by director and screenwriter Isabel Coixet. The exhibition highlights the continuity between the artist's film work and her collages. Among the works on display are preparatory shots used by certain directors. [Read more](#)



### Yoshitomo Nara in London

Until 31 August, the Hayward Gallery in London is hosting an exhibition by Yoshitomo Nara, one of Japan's most iconic contemporary artists. His works span a wide range of media, from painting and drawing to sculpture and large-scale installations. This is Nara's first ever exhibition at a public institution in the United Kingdom. [Read more](#)



### Ravenna Festival

The Ravenna Festival is being held until 13 July. Created in 1990, this multidisciplinary event features a programme including music, opera, theatre and dance. Ravenna, with its eight UNESCO World Heritage sites, is transformed into a magnificent open-air stage [Read more](#)



## 36th Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts

Until 12 October, the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts presents an ambitious and poetic edition entitled 'The Oracle: On Fantasy and Freedom'. Organised by the International Centre for Graphic Arts (MGLC), this 36th edition turns art into a space for imagination, reinvention and transformation. The Biennial poses a central question: how can art be seen as an allied force capable of changing the world? [Read more](#)



## Bach Festival in Leipzig

The Bachfest is being held in Leipzig from 12 to 22 June. This festival, which began in 1904, celebrates the German composer Johann Sebastian Bach. The programme includes classical music concerts, as well as a virtual reality experience to discover Bach in concert and other activities to bring visitors closer to the famous artist. [Read more](#)



## O/Modernt Festival in Stockholm

From 13 to 15 June, the city of Stockholm will host the O/Modernt Festival. With eclectic performances, contemporary creations and educational projects, O/Modernt develops a lively, playful and human vision of music. The festival combines baroque and rock music, creating a dialogue between the classical and the contemporary. [Read more](#)



## Cleopatra exhibition in Paris

Until 11 January 2026, the Arab World Institute in Paris is hosting an exhibition dedicated to Cleopatra. The event traces her historical journey and explores her transformation into a cultural icon. Artworks, documents and recent excavations reveal her many faces: queen, strategist, myth. The exhibition also examines how her image has been constructed over the centuries. [Read more](#)

## Agenda :

 9-13 June

**UN Conference on the Ocean** (Nice)

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 12 & 13 June

**"Justice and Home Affairs" Council** (Luxembourg)

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 12 June

**Publication of the Schuman Report** (France)

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 16 & 17 June

**G7 Summit** (Canada)

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 16 June

**"Transport, Telecommunications and Energy" Council** (Luxembourg)



### The Letter n°1115

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