

Letter n°1117 of Tuesday 24th June 2025

Ukraine's Path to the EU: Reform, Resilience, and the Politics of Enlargement

Oleksandra Bulana, Mariia Holubytska - 24 Jun 2025

Three years ago, Ukraine was granted EU candidate status – a historic step in its rapprochement with the Union. Since then, despite the war, the country has embarked on far-reaching reforms in areas such as justice, the fight against corruption and public administration. The European Union, as a strategic partner, is playing a central role in this transformation. This analysis takes stock of the progress made, the remaining challenges and the conditions necessary for Ukraine to fully realise its European choice.



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■ Foundation :



The Schuman Report in ebook form

The Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2025 is now available as an e-book! This digital version provides quick and easy access to the challenges facing a Europe in transition. You can also find the report in print on the Foundation's website and in bookshops. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Accelerating investment and production in the defence sector

On 17 June, the European Commission presented measures to accelerate investment and production in the defence sector to strengthen the EU's response to growing security threats. These measures, set out in the White Paper on European Defence Preparedness 2030, include reducing authorisation times to 60 days, simplifying access to the European Defence Fund, supporting joint procurement and improving access to financing. [Read more](#)



Simplification of securitisation

On 19 June, the European Commission proposed measures to simplify and strengthen the European framework for securitisation. The aim is to boost this financial mechanism, which allows banks to transfer part of their risks and free up capital to grant more loans. These reforms aim to remove regulatory barriers, reduce operational costs and introduce a more refined approach to risk. This initiative is part of the Savings and Investment Union strategy and could support growth, innovation and employment in the European Union. [Read more](#)



Phasing out Russian energy imports by 2027

On 17 June, the European Commission proposed a plan to eliminate all imports of Russian gas, oil and nuclear energy by the end of 2027, as part of the REPowerEU strategy. New Russian gas contracts will be banned from January 2026 and short-term contracts will end by June 2026, with exceptions for certain landlocked countries. All remaining contracts, including long-term ones, will end by 2027. This plan aims to strengthen the European Union's energy independence while supporting its transition to clean energy. [Read more](#)



Exclusion of Chinese companies from European public health contracts

On 20 June, the European Commission decided to exclude Chinese companies from public tenders for medical equipment worth more than €5 million. This decision is in response to restrictions imposed by China on European companies. It covers a wide range of medical supplies, from masks to medical robots, in a market worth €150 billion. The aim is to encourage China to lift discrimination against medical devices from the European Union. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Electoral rights of mobile European citizens: new rules adopted

On 17 June, MEPs adopted a legislative resolution that aims to ensure that EU citizens residing in a Member State other than their own can fully exercise their right to vote and stand as candidates in European elections. This directive provides for harmonised procedures to facilitate their registration on electoral rolls, improve access to information and ensure democratic participation, regardless of their mobility within the European Union. [Read more](#)



Reports on Moldova and Montenegro

On 18 June, MEPs welcomed the progress made by Montenegro and Moldova in their accession processes to the European Union. They noted that Montenegro, the most advanced candidate, was aiming for accession in 2028 but needed to strengthen its electoral and judicial reforms and its fight against corruption, while dealing with foreign interference. Moldova is continuing its reforms despite internal difficulties and pressure from Russia. MEPs highlighted the popular support for European integration and called for stronger EU support ahead of the 2025 parliamentary elections in Moldova, which are considered crucial. [Read more](#)



Abuse of the rule of law

On 18 June, MEPs assessed the Commission's 2024 report on the rule of law. It highlights threats to EU values in Member States. They express serious concerns about persistent breaches of the rule of law in several Member States, citing examples of political interference in the judiciary, attacks on press freedom and civic space. They call for stronger monitoring mechanisms, better conditions for EU funding linked to respect for fundamental values, and once again condemn the situation in Hungary. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Environment Ministers

On 17 June, Environment Ministers adopted a position on a regulation aimed at improving the recycling and circularity of end-of-life vehicles. They also discussed the European Union's priorities for COP30, scheduled to take place in Brazil in November. A review was conducted of the results of the triple COP (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm) held from 28 April to 9 May. In addition, the future Danish Presidency of the Council presented its environmental priorities. The discussions highlighted the importance of ambitious and coordinated climate action. [Read more](#)



Eurogroup and Finance Ministers' Meeting

At a meeting on 19 June, Eurogroup ministers formally admitted Bulgaria to the euro area as of 1 January 2026. They discussed the resilience of the euro area economies and the challenges facing the financial sector with Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the IMF. They emphasised the need for prudent fiscal policies and the continuation of the digital euro project. On 20 June, finance ministers supported a reform of the customs union, discussed the 2025 budgetary recommendations, approved the fiscal trajectories of several countries and adopted the recommendation on the enlargement of the euro area. They also welcomed progress on financial services and took note of the revised recovery plans in several Member States. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Meeting of Ministers for Social Affairs and Health

On 19 and 20 June, ministers responsible for employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs (EPSCO) adopted a position on a directive aimed at improving the conditions of traineeships, as well as measures to strengthen gender equality in the digital age and to better integrate older people into the labour market. In the area of health, ministers supported the protection of young people's mental health and discussed the future Critical Medicines Act. Finally, they discussed preventive measures against alcohol and tobacco use. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Energy Ministers' Meeting

On 16 June, ministers discussed the REPowerEU roadmap to end the European Union's energy dependence on Russia. They emphasised the importance of investing quickly in renewable energy, infrastructure and networks. The Polish Presidency adopted conclusions to strengthen the Energy Union, ensure security of supply and promote strategic autonomy. Other topics such as methane regulation and the protection of energy infrastructure were also discussed. [Read more](#)

■ Trilogues :



Simplification of the carbon border adjustment mechanism

On 19 June, the Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the simplification of the carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM). The key measure is the introduction of an exemption threshold of 50 tonnes per importer per year, reducing the obligations for SMEs and individuals. While reducing administrative burdens, 99% of emissions covered by the CBAM will remain regulated. This reform aims to strengthen the European Union's competitiveness without compromising climate objectives. The text still needs to be formally adopted before it can enter into force in 2025. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Cross-border application of data protection regulations

On 16 June, the Council and the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement to strengthen the cross-border application of the GDPR. The text harmonises the rules on the admissibility of complaints, guarantees the rights of complainants and entities subject to complaints, and introduces clear deadlines for investigations. A fast-track mechanism is provided for simple cases, aimed at speeding up processing without involving all European actors. [Read more](#)



Suspension of the visa waiver programme

On 17 June, the Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement to strengthen the mechanism to suspend the visa waiver programme for certain third countries. This measure aims to better combat abuses such as the increase in irregular entries, citizenship acquisition programmes and hybrid threats. The temporary suspension may last up to 12 months, renewable for 24 months, with the possibility of targeting only those responsible rather than the entire population. This reform aims to improve the European Union's responsiveness and effectiveness in addressing migration and security challenges. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Conclusions of the G7 Summit

The G7 summit was held from 15 to 17 June in Kananaskis, Canada, and was marked by tensions caused by the premature departure of US President Donald Trump. Despite this, leaders held several sessions on the global economic outlook, growth and security. The war in Ukraine, conflicts in the Middle East and energy security were central topics, particularly with the participation of Volodymyr Zelensky. The summit highlighted both the importance of dialogue and growing geopolitical divisions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Denmark :



Presentation of the Danish Presidency of the Council

On 19 June, Denmark presented the main lines of its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which will run from 1 July to 31 December. Under the motto 'A strong Europe in a changing world', this Presidency will focus on security, economic resilience and the green transition. Copenhagen also aims to advance accession negotiations with several countries, including Ukraine. The official opening ceremony will be held in Aarhus on 3 July, marking the start of this new European semester. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ France :



Eutelsat strengthens its space strategy with a major fundraising

On 19 June, Eutelsat announced a €1.35 billion capital increase, supported by the French government and several shareholders. The operation aims to finance its ambitions in satellite internet via OneWeb and the European Iris² programme. The French government will double its stake, thereby strengthening its strategic control. The recapitalisation will also significantly reduce the group's debt. This move is part of a broader effort to build a European space champion to rival Starlink. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ The Netherlands :



Parliament recognises the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944 as genocide

On 19 June, the Dutch Parliament officially recognised the deportation of Crimean Tatars by the Soviet regime in 1944 as genocide. Approximately 190,000 people were deported to Central Asia, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians. The event, known as 'Sürgünlik', is considered an attempt at ethnic cleansing. The recognition aims to preserve historical memory and support the rights of Crimean Tatars. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Romania :



Ilie Bolojan, new Prime Minister

On 20 June, Romanian President Nicușor Dan appointed Ilie Bolojan as Prime Minister, calling for a stable and reformist government. In a formal address in Bucharest, the President stated that the government's priority must be to correct the financial deficit by reducing and rationalising spending. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Belarus :



Belarusian opposition initiative to abolish the death penalty

On 17 June, Belarusian democratic forces adopted a memorandum in favour of the total abolition of the death penalty, supported by the Coordination Council, the United Transitional Cabinet and the office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, welcomed this major step forward. The text commits democratic forces to reforming the Constitution and raising public awareness. This initiative is part of the dialogue between the Council of Europe and Belarusian civil society, at a time when Belarus remains the only country in Europe to apply this punishment. [Read more](#)



Release of political prisoners, including Sergei Tikhanovsky

Sergei Tikhanovsky, the main opponent of the Belarusian regime, was released on 21 June after more than five years in detention. His release, which took place simultaneously with that of 13 other political prisoners, comes in the wake of a visit to Minsk by a US envoy, signalling a possible diplomatic rapprochement. Looking haggard and emaciated, Sergei Tikhanovsky made his first public appearance at a conference in Vilnius, Lithuania, where he plans to continue supporting the opposition. Despite this gesture, around 1,200 political prisoners remain in detention in Belarus, highlighting the fact that the human rights situation there continues to be critical. [Read more](#)

■ Kosovo :



Extension of the EULEX mission in Kosovo

On 14 June, the Council of the European Union extended the mandate of the EULEX Kosovo civilian mission, launched in 2008, for two years. EULEX, the EU's largest civilian mission, supports the Kosovar institutions responsible for the rule of law through advisory, monitoring and executive support activities. It also assists the specialised judiciary and strengthens international law enforcement cooperation. According to Kaja Kallas, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, this mission remains essential to the stability of Kosovo and Europe. [Read more](#)

■ UK :



First woman to head MI6

On 15 June, Blaise Metreweli became the first woman to be appointed head of the British foreign intelligence service (MI6). Former director of the service's technology section, she will succeed Richard Moore in the autumn. Described as a 'historic' choice by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, her appointment comes at a time of growing threats and major technological challenges for the country's security. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Extension of road transport agreement approved by the European Parliament

On 17 June, MEPs approved the extension until the end of 2025 of the agreement facilitating the transport of essential goods to Ukraine and the export of cereals, steel and minerals to the European Union. This agreement, in force since June 2022, allows goods to continue to circulate despite the war in Ukraine. The agreement will now be submitted to the Council for final adoption. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



President's first visit to Austria

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited Vienna on 16 June for the first time since the start of the war. During this official visit, the head of state met with his Austrian counterpart, Alexander Van der Bellen, and Chancellor Christian Stocker. Christian Stocker and Volodymyr Zelensky agreed on the need to strengthen sanctions against Russia and maintain diplomatic pressure to achieve lasting peace. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Appointment of a Special Envoy for Ukrainians

On 17 June, the European Commission appointed Ylva Johansson, former Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs, as Special Envoy for Ukrainians residing in the European Union. Her mission is to coordinate the implementation of temporary protection, support the transition to long-term status or voluntary return, and oversee the creation of 'Unity Hubs', information centres for Ukrainians in Member States. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Report on the Digital Decade

On 16 June, the European Commission published its 2025 report on the Digital Decade, assessing progress towards the 2030 targets. While progress has been made in the digitisation of businesses and public services, gaps remain, particularly in 5G infrastructure, digital skills and cybersecurity. The Commission calls for increased investment and the removal of barriers to innovation. Member States are invited to engage in dialogue on the proposed recommendations. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



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Humanitarian aid management: an essential mechanism in need of improvement

A special report published by the European Court of Auditors on 18 June assesses the effectiveness of the Commission's remote management of humanitarian aid delivery in hard-to-reach areas. While this approach saves lives in high-risk situations, the audit reveals shortcomings in its design, implementation and monitoring. The Court recommends, in particular, improving strategic guidance, strengthening the certification of humanitarian partners and ensuring better traceability of funded actions. For example, in 2024, the European Union allocated €2.5 billion to humanitarian aid, of which €918 million was for remotely managed operations. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

Agence européenne pour l'environnement



Safe bathing waters in Europe

On 20 June, the European Environment Agency presented its report on bathing water quality in Europe. 96% of bathing waters meet minimum quality standards, with 85% rated as 'excellent' and only 1.5% as 'poor', levels that have remained stable over the past year. Monitoring is based on more than 22,000 sites in 2024, ranked according to bacteria levels. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Marcus Aurelius in Trier

Until 23 November, the Rheinisches Landesmuseum and the Stadtmuseum Simeonstift in Trier are hosting the first major national exhibition dedicated to Marcus Aurelius. Featuring over 300 exceptional objects from numerous international museums, this exhibition is a unique event celebrating Marcus Aurelius, a major figure in history, emperor and Stoic philosopher. [Read more](#)

GUGGENHEIM BILBAO

Barbara Kruger in Bilbao

The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is hosting Barbara Kruger's first exhibition in Spain, which will run until 9 November. The American artist is known for using powerful slogans and the visual language of advertising to challenge viewers and provoke critical reflection on gender, consumption and power. This exhibition brings together works from throughout her career in a variety of media, some of which have been created especially for the museum. [Read more](#)



Niki de Saint Phalle in Paris

The Grand Palais in Paris is hosting an exhibition dedicated to the artistic duo Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely, as well as their collaborator Pontus Hulten, until 10 January 2026. Hulten, the first director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne at the Centre Pompidou, supported their disruptive and participatory approach to art. The exhibition showcases iconic works by both artists. [Read more](#)



Cézanne in Aix-en-Provence

The exhibition 'Cézanne au Jas de Bouffan' is being held at the Granet Museum in Aix-en-Provence until 12 October. Around a hundred of the artist's major works are on display, including paintings, drawings and watercolours, which explore the deep connection between the artist and the family home where he painted for forty years. Visitors can also discover his restored murals, his park and his studio. [Read more](#)



Van Gogh and Kiefer in London

In London, the Royal Academy is exploring Vincent Van Gogh's major influence on Anselm Kiefer in a unique exhibition running until 26 October, bringing together works by both artists, including some new pieces by Kiefer. In 1890, Van Gogh was painting his last canvases; in 1962, Kiefer set off in his footsteps on a journey that would shape his career. The exhibition highlights this profound artistic exchange. [Read more](#)



Pierre Soulages in Montpellier

Until 4 January 2026, the Musée Fabre in Montpellier is presenting a retrospective of Pierre Soulages entitled 'La Rencontre' (The Encounter), celebrating the 20th anniversary of his donation to the city. The exhibition brings together around 120 works, including paintings, papers, copper works, bronzes and stained glass. The exhibition is divided into six thematic sections exploring concepts such as matter, writing, light and chiaroscuro. Links with artists admired by Soulages are showcased, such as Rembrandt, Cézanne, Van Gogh and Mondrian. [Read more](#)



West Cork Chamber Music Festival

The 30th edition of the West Cork Chamber Music Festival is taking place until 6 July in Bantry, County Cork, in a spectacular seaside setting. Over ten days, renowned international artists and young Irish talent will perform in three daily concerts, accompanied by masterclasses and other events. [Read more](#)



150th Munich Opera Festival

Celebrating a summer tradition that began in 1875, the 150th summer opera festival is being held in Munich until 31 July. The programme includes a mythological theme, a contemporary ballet, a variety of concerts and a line-up of prestigious artists. Mozart's Don Giovanni and Fauré's Pénélope will be performed for the first time. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :



23 & 24 June 2025

"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council (Luxembourg)



23/06/2025

EU-Southern Neighbourhood Ministerial Meeting



23/06/2025

"Foreign Affairs" Council (Brussels)



24-25 June

NATO Summit (The Hague)



26-27 June

European Council (Brussels)



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Editors-in-chief :

Juliette Bachschmidt

Publishing Director :

Pascale Joannin

Contact us!
info@robert-schuman.eu

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