

Letter n°1118 of Tuesday 1st July 2025

A Danish Presidency that is embracing the European Union like never before

[Flemming Splidsboel Hansen - 01 Jul 2025](#)

As Denmark prepares to take over the Council Presidency on 1 July, it is showing unprecedented support for the European Union, driven by public opinion that is now in favour of a strong, protective and sovereign Europe. The presidency's programme demonstrates a clear commitment to enlargement to Ukraine, strengthening European defence and the ecological transition. Aware of the threats from Russia and transatlantic uncertainties, Denmark is focusing on 'a strong Europe in a changing world' – the slogan for its six-month presidency.



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Follow the progress of NextGenerationEU fund distribution

The NextGenerationEU recovery plan is an exceptional €750 billion instrument launched in 2020 to support the post-Covid recovery. It consists of grants (€390 billion) and loans (€360 billion) financed by joint debt. The aim is to stimulate green growth, digital transformation and the resilience of European economies. Follow the distribution of recovery plan grants in real time, country by country, on a dedicated page on the Foundation's website. [Read more](#)



Schuman Network: thinking about Europe together

A Foundation initiative, the Schuman Network is a network of 23 think-tanks from 13 European countries. It aims to promote synergies between experts in European affairs and enables the exchange of perspectives and the enrichment of analysis on a variety of topics such as social cohesion, economic dynamics, the European Union's foreign policy and its international relations. Since its creation, more than 170 contributions have been published, illustrating a strong intellectual commitment to European integration. [Read more](#)

■ European Council :



Conclusions of the European Council

At their meeting on 26th June, the 27 heads of state and government reiterated their commitment to the defence, sovereignty and competitiveness of the Union. European leaders called for the strengthening of the defence industry, in particular through the new SAFE instrument, and for the deepening of the single market. In response to the crisis in Gaza, they called for an immediate ceasefire and access to humanitarian aid. They welcomed Bulgaria's progress towards adopting the euro in 2026 and reiterated their support for Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Boosting and strengthening space security

On 25th June, the European Commission proposed groundbreaking space legislation to harmonise rules within the European Union and strengthen the competitiveness of the space sector. This framework aims to limit debris in orbit, strengthen satellite cybersecurity and promote sustainable use of space. It will reduce red tape, create a fair market and support SMEs and start-ups. This initiative is part of a comprehensive strategy to boost the European space economy in the face of international challenges. [Read more](#)



A roadmap for legal access to digital data

On 23 June, the European Commission presented a roadmap to ensure that law enforcement authorities have legal, effective and regulated access to digital data, while respecting fundamental rights. This initiative is part of the ProtectEU strategy. It provides for measures on data retention, lawful interception, digital forensics, decryption, standardisation and artificial intelligence. The aim is to better combat serious crime in the digital age, where 85% of investigations rely on electronic evidence. [Read more](#)



A new framework to support clean industry

On 25th June, the European Commission proposed a new State aid framework to support the Clean Industry Pact. Valid until 2030, it aims to facilitate investment in renewable energy, industrial decarbonisation and clean technologies. The framework provides for fast-track procedures, targeted support for large energy consumers, and tax incentives and guarantees to limit risks. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of agriculture and fisheries ministers

At their meeting on 23rd and 24th June, agriculture and fisheries ministers approved a European forest monitoring framework aimed at strengthening sustainable forest management through an approach based on national data. They discussed agricultural trade issues, calling for trade diversification while protecting European producers. The simplification of the CAP was welcomed, although some expressed reservations about data governance. Progress was noted on animal welfare and plant material, but differences remain. Finally, on fisheries, the focus was on sustainability, stability and food sovereignty. [Read more](#)



European Citizenship

On 24th June, the Council adopted a revised directive to facilitate voting and eligibility for European citizens residing in another Member State. These new rules aim to improve access to electoral information, harmonise registration procedures and prevent double voting. They also offer safeguards to prevent people from being accidentally removed from the electoral roll in their country of origin. This reform aims to strengthen democratic participation and trust in the European Union. Member States will have two years to transpose the directive into national law. [Read more](#)

■ Trilogues :



New legislation on medium-sized banks

An agreement reached on 25 June between the Council and MEPs strengthens the resolution framework for small and medium-sized banks. It will require resolution authorities to assess economic disruption at both national and regional levels. The text harmonises the use of the "least cost test", limiting the use of the deposit guarantee fund to the value of covered deposits. Finally, it confirms the hierarchy of claims, giving priority to the repayment of protected depositors, followed by unprotected households and SMEs, in order to strengthen confidence in the banking system. [Read more](#)



Consumer Protection

On 26th June, the Council and the European Parliament agreed to modernise the rules on alternative dispute resolution. The aim is to simplify these procedures, adapt them to the digital age and make them more accessible, particularly for cross-border disputes. The agreement introduces response deadlines for businesses, promotes the regulated use of automated systems such as AI, and encourages cooperation with consumer protection authorities. A free digital tool will facilitate access to these procedures across the EU. [Read more](#)



Agreement on gas storage

On 24 June, MEPs and the Council reached an agreement to extend the gas storage regulation until 2027 to ensure energy security in winter. The mandatory 90% fill threshold can now be reached between 1 October and 1 December, and relaxed in the event of difficult market conditions. This flexibility aims to limit summer speculation. Greater transparency on the Russian origin of stored gas is also provided for. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



EU-Canada Summit

At a summit in Brussels on 23rd June, the European Union and Canada signed a Security and Defence Partnership and launched new initiatives on industrial policy and digital trade. Canada will now be able to participate in joint defence procurement by the European Union. The two sides also confirmed their support for Ukraine and Moldova, and called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Plus, they praised the success of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which has led to a 65% increase in trade. Negotiations will start on a digital trade agreement and artificial intelligence. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting

On 23rd June, Foreign Affairs Ministers reaffirmed their support for Ukraine in the face of escalating Russian attacks, announcing that 80% of the military aid target had already been met. They discussed an 18th package of sanctions against Russia and its hybrid actions in Europe. Relations with China were deemed increasingly worrying due to its support for Moscow and digital interference. On the Middle East, the European Union called for a ceasefire in Gaza and the entry of humanitarian aid. Ministers expressed concern about repression in Georgia and adopted measures against Syrian officials. [Read more](#)



Six-month extension of sanctions against Russia

On 30 June, the Council decided to extend the economic sanctions against Russia until 31 January 2026 in response to its military aggression against Ukraine. In place since 2014 and strengthened since 2022, these measures cover the trade, finance, energy, technology, transport and luxury goods sectors. In particular, the European Union is maintaining the embargo on Russian oil, the exclusion of banks from the SWIFT system and the suspension of pro-Kremlin media. It remains determined to combat any circumvention of the sanctions. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



2025 budget and budgetary trajectory for 2029

At the cabinet meeting on 24th June, the German government adopted its budget for 2025 and presented its budgetary trajectory until 2029. The strategy is organised around investment, modernisation, competitiveness and security. In particular, the government adopted a €500 billion investment package for infrastructure and climate. The new budget responds in particular to defence spending requirements and the targets set by the country at the NATO summit to spend 3.5% of GDP on defence by 2029. [Read more](#)

■ Spain :



Constitutionality of the Catalan amnesty law

On 26 June, the Spanish Constitutional Court upheld the amnesty law for Catalan independence activists, adopted on 30 May 2024. This law lifted charges against certain leaders accused of terrorism for their actions during the illegal referendum in October 2017. It was supported by Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and Junts, the Catalan secessionist party. The appeal, filed by MPs and senators from the right-wing People's Party on the grounds of unconstitutionality, was partially rejected by the Court, which ruled that the amnesty law was in line with the Constitution. This partial validation does not imply the return of Carlos Puigdemont, who was president of Catalonia at the time, due to the Supreme Court's decision on 10 April that it could not be applied to him. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ France :



Emmanuel Macron visits Norway

During an official visit to Oslo, French President Emmanuel Macron and Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre signed a strategic partnership aimed at strengthening cooperation on defence, ecological transition, innovation and support for Ukraine. Agreements were reached on health, climate and carbon capture, as well as education and digital security. This visit, the first by a French president to Norway in more than 40 years, marks a strategic rapprochement in the face of current security and environmental challenges. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Romania :



New government

The government of Romanian Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan took office on 23rd June after winning a vote of confidence in Parliament by 301 votes to 9. Formed from a coalition of the country's four pro-European parties – the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the National Liberal Party (PNL), the Save Romania Union (USR) and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) – it has 20 ministers, including two women. [Read more](#)

■ Georgia :



Georgian opposition figures sentenced to prison

Four Georgian opposition figures, including Giorgi Vashadze and Badri Japaridze, were sentenced to prison terms on 24th June for refusing to cooperate with a controversial parliamentary commission of the Georgian Dream party. These arrests are part of a crackdown that has been ongoing since the disputed elections of October 2024, which many claim were rigged in favour of the Georgian Dream party. Opposition member Elene Khoshtaria has called on the international community to respond firmly to what she describes as authoritarian excesses. [Read more](#)

■ Montenegro :



23rd accession conference

The 23rd Accession Conference between the European Union and Montenegro was held on 27 June in Brussels. It closed Chapter 5 on public procurement, bringing to seven the number of chapters now closed in the accession negotiations. Polish Minister for European Affairs Adam Słapka welcomed this development, describing it as 'significant progress' in Montenegro's European integration process. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Visit to the UK and the Netherlands

On 23rd and 24th June, during official visits to the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was received by King Charles III and King Willem-Alexander. He thanked both monarchs and their people for their solidarity and the welcome given to Ukrainians. In London, he met with Prime Minister Keir Starmer to strengthen military cooperation, including joint drone production, and call for increased sanctions against Russia. In The Hague, he praised the Dutch commitment to international justice and called for coordinated pressure on Moscow. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council of Europe :



Creation of a Special Tribunal for the Aggression against Ukraine

On 24 June, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Council of Europe Secretary General Alain Berset signed an agreement establishing a Special Tribunal to try crimes of aggression against Ukraine. This tribunal fills a gap left by the International Criminal Court, which lacks jurisdiction over this matter due to legal constraints. Supported by the 46 member states of the Council of Europe, it aims to prosecute the main political and military leaders responsible for the Russian invasion. This historic step, hailed as a symbol of justice and international responsibility, now paves the way for other states to participate in an expanded partial agreement. [Read more](#)



Parliamentary Assembly session

The summer session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was held in Strasbourg from 23rd to 27th June. Several highlights marked the event, including speeches by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Maltese Prime Minister Robert Abela, as well as the presentation of the Vigdís Prize to the organisation Women of the Sun. Debates focused on the war in Ukraine and prisoners of war, while urgent discussions addressed women's rights in Europe and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Other topics included migration, energy transition and citizen participation. PACE also adopted an opinion on the fight against terrorism and debated election monitoring in Albania. [Read more](#)



Hungary condemned by the ECHR for illegal expulsions of migrants

On 24 June, the ECHR condemned Hungary for collectively expelling three young migrants, two Afghans and one Syrian, in 2021 and 2022. The country will have to pay them €23,000 in moral damages and €8,000 in legal costs. These expulsions violate European law and asylum rules. Brussels criticises a systematic policy that runs counter to the values of the European Union. Hungary justifies its actions on the grounds of the need to protect its borders. [Read more](#)

■ World Bank :



Partnership with the IAEA on nuclear energy

On 26 June, the World Bank and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) signed an agreement aimed at supporting the safe, secure and responsible use of nuclear energy in developing countries. The agreement aims to strengthen collaboration in three areas: enhancing knowledge of nuclear technology and safety, extending the life of existing power plants, and supporting the development of small modular reactors (SMRs). [Read more](#)

■ NATO :



NATO Summit

The 32 NATO heads of state and government, meeting in The Hague on 24th and 25th June, reiterated their commitment to collective defence and transatlantic unity. In response to the threats posed by Russia and terrorism, the Allies plan to increase their defence and security spending to 5% of GDP by 2035. This commitment has two components: 3.5% for defence capabilities and 1.5% for resilience, innovation and infrastructure protection. Aid to Ukraine is included in this effort. The Allies are also strengthening industrial and technological cooperation in the field of defence. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Anna-Eva Bergman and Hans Hartung in Prague

The Prague Kunsthalle is hosting an exhibition until 13th October that will explore the work and unique relationship of one of the most discreet and radical artist couples of the 20th century. Anna-Eva Bergman and Hans Hartung, united by a life marked by separation, war and shared creativity, are brought together through more than 300 pieces of work including paintings, rare sketches, photographs, studio objects, correspondence and intimate gifts. Despite their distinct styles, their artistic approaches converge in a common inspiration where dialogue and tension fuel their respective evolution. [Read more](#)



Miriam Cahn in Lisbon

The MAAT, Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology in Lisbon is hosting the exhibition 'Miriam Cahn – What looks at us' until 27th October, dedicated to the work of this major European contemporary artist. Painting and drawing occupy a central place in her artistic practice, but the exhibition also includes sculptures, videos, photographs and installations. [Read more](#)



Exhibition 'Land in Motion' in Luxembourg

The exhibition "Land in Motion. Transforming People and Nature", on display until 11th January 2026 at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Luxembourg, explores the changing relationship between humans and the landscape through archaeology, history and art. It offers a European perspective with a particular focus on Luxembourg. The exhibition invites visitors to reflect on the dynamics between nature and society. [Read more](#)

National Portrait Gallery

Jenny Saville in London

The largest exhibition ever devoted to Jenny Saville in the United Kingdom traces three decades of the contemporary painter's career at the National Portrait Gallery until 7 September. From charcoal drawings to monumental canvases, "The Anatomy of Painting" unveils 45 major works from public and private collections, questioning beauty, the body and art history. [Read more](#)



Paul Poiret in Paris

The exhibition 'Paul Poiret, Fashion is a Celebration' is being held at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris until 11th January 2026. Paul Poiret revolutionised fashion by liberating women from corsets and creating flowing, colourful silhouettes inspired by the Orient. 550 works showcase his festive and multidisciplinary world, including clothing, perfumes and decorative arts. The artist is also famous for his lavish parties and collaboration with artists such as Matisse and Dufy. [Read more](#)



Ancient theatre festival of Ostia

Until 26 July, the Theatre of Rome is taking over the ancient site of Ostia for the first edition of the 'Il senso del passato' festival. The programme features five shows combining the great classics with contemporary interpretations, from Antigone to Iphigenia and Oedipus Rex. [Read more](#)



Jazz in Montreux

The Montreux Jazz Festival will take place from 4th to 19th July, between the Scène du Lac and the Scène du Casino. The line-up includes music legends such as Neil Young, Santana, Diana Ross and Chaka Khan. Over 600 free events are planned on 13 stages around the lake. [Read more](#)



Savonlinna Opera Festival

The Savonlinna Opera Festival is held from 4th July to 2nd August at the medieval castle of Olavinlinna in Finland. This spectacular setting welcomes some 70,000 spectators. The 2025 edition features works such as Macbeth, Turandot and Boris Godunov, and is one of the most prestigious festivals in Europe. It is renowned for its international co-productions and high artistic standards, which were rewarded in 2024 with an International Opera Award. [Read more](#)



Aix-en-Provence Festival

The Aix-en-Provence Festival will take place from 4 to 21 July. Founded in 1948, it is a major international opera event. It offers a varied programme combining classical works, contemporary creations and concerts. The 2025 festival will celebrate Bizet's 150th anniversary with a special programme. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 1st July - 31st December

Danish Presidency of the Council

 4th July

EU-Moldova Summit (Chisinau)

 7th July

Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)



The Letter n°1118

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