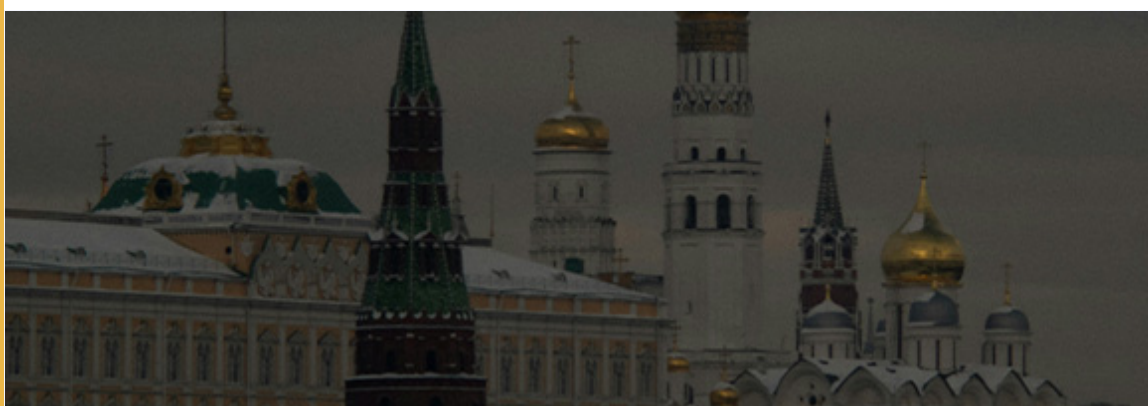


Letter n°1120 of Tuesday 15th July 2025

Ukraine: behind the Kremlin's ill will lies the risk of eternal war

[Paul Gogo - 16 Jul 2025](#)

As hopes for peace in Ukraine seem to fade, the Kremlin is pursuing a strategy in which war is becoming a central tool of its power. Behind Vladimir Putin's statements and the ideological framework he has put forward lies a desire to strengthen internal control, reshape the historical narrative and free himself from any external pressure. The conflict is no longer being fought solely on the military front, but also in the court of public opinion, fuelled by constant propaganda and assertive nationalism. Driven by political calculations, a determination to leave a mark on history and tight control of public opinion, the Russian leadership is embarking on a dangerous course, making any resolution to the conflict increasingly uncertain.



[Foundation](#) | [Commission](#) | [Parliament](#) | [Council](#) | [Diplomacy](#) | [Germany](#) |

[Croatia](#) | [Spain](#) | [France](#) | [Greece](#) | [Lithuania](#) | [Armenia](#) |

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■ **Foundation :**



The Schuman Report is available in French and English

The Schuman Report on Europe, the state of the Union in 2025, is available in bookshops and on the Foundation's website in French and in digital format. The English version is only available as an e-book. This new edition features 21 leading contributions and is illustrated with previously unpublished maps and statistical studies that analyse the European Union's strategic acceleration in the face of global geopolitical upheavals and its projection into a new phase of its history. Order your copy now! [Read more](#)



In memory of Paul Collowald

Paul Collowald passed away on 8 July at the age of 102. Europe has lost a passionate activist and the Foundation has lost a friend. Born in Wissembourg, he was a man of borders like Robert Schuman, whom he met, an encounter that changed the course of his life and strengthened his belief in Europe. He was constantly driven by a desire to bring European citizens closer together and to communicate the European message clearly, and was motivated by a genuine passion for education. He gave his last interview to the Foundation in 2021 for Europe Day. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Strengthening the chemical industry

On 8 July, the European Commission unveiled an action plan to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of the chemical sector. Faced with challenges related to energy, global competition and demand, the plan encourages innovation, decarbonisation and investment. It proposes the creation of an alliance for critical chemicals, better governance of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), and a new regulatory simplification package. [Read more](#)



Protecting children online

On 14 July, the European Commission presented guidelines to strengthen the protection of minors online, accompanied by a prototype age verification app. These measures aim to limit the risks of children being exposed to harmful content or behaviour, while respecting their privacy. The recommendations focus in particular on combating cyberbullying, addictive practices and unwanted contact. The prototype application, which is being tested in five Member States (Denmark, Spain, France, Greece and Italy), should ensure reliable verification that respects personal data. [Read more](#)



Health and logistics strategy

On 9 July, the European Commission launched two joint strategies to improve the EU's resilience to crises: a stockpiling strategy to ensure access to essential goods (food, water, medicines, etc.) and a strategy for medical countermeasures against emerging health threats. These initiatives aim to better anticipate supply disruptions, develop innovative vaccines and treatments, strengthen cooperation between Member States and mobilise public and private resources. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Presentation of the priorities of the Danish Presidency

On 8 July, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen presented the priorities of the Danish Presidency of the Council to MEPs under the slogan 'A strong Europe in a changing world'. She emphasised the strengthening of European defence, support for Ukraine, migration management and green competitiveness. MEPs welcomed these priorities, calling for a fairer budget and concrete action on the green transition and security. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Ursula von der Leyen survives no-confidence vote

On 10 July, by 175 votes to 360, with 18 abstentions, MEPs rejected a motion of no confidence in the Commission, following a plenary debate with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on 7 July. The vote on the motion was taken by roll call. To be adopted, a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast, representing a majority of the Members of the Parliament, would have been required. [Read more](#)



Gas storage regulation

On 8 July, MEPs adopted a regulation strengthening the role of gas storage in security of supply ahead of winter. In light of ongoing geopolitical tensions and the desire to reduce dependence on Russian gas, Member States will have to fill their storage facilities to 90% by 1 November. The text provides for flexibility in the event of economic or technical difficulties and extends these measures until the end of 2027. [Read more](#)



Agreement on sustainable fishing

On 8 July, MEPs approved the conclusion of the protocol implementing the sustainable fisheries partnership agreement between the European Union, Greenland and Denmark for the period 2025-2030. This agreement aims to ensure responsible exploitation of fishery resources in Greenlandic waters. It is part of a process of enhanced cooperation, environmental sustainability and support for local development. MEPs also amended the regulation on certain measures for the conservation of fish stocks in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Trade Ministers

Trade ministers meeting on 14 July took stock of the tense trade relations between the European Union and the United States, condemning the 30% tariffs announced. While supporting negotiations for a balanced agreement by 1 August, the ministers prepared new retaliatory measures worth nearly €72 billion, while announcing the temporary suspension of the first European countermeasures that were to take effect on 15 July. They also emphasised the need to diversify trade partnerships, welcoming the agreement reached with Indonesia. Finally, they discussed relations with China, calling for a reduction in trade risks and a better balance in terms of this.. [Read more](#)



Meeting of economy and finance ministers

At the Economic and Financial Affairs Council meeting on 8 July, ministers gave their final approval for Bulgaria to adopt the euro. The country will become the 21st member of the euro area on 1 January 2026. They activated the national derogation clause for 15 Member States so that they can increase their national defence spending, opened a new excessive deficit procedure for Austria and revised the one for Romania. They adopted the recommendations of the Member States under the European Semester and approved the Commission's positive assessment of the recovery and resilience plans. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



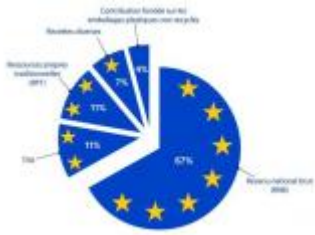
Meeting of Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries

On 14 July, the Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries discussed the launch of the Danish Presidency, which has placed simplification, innovation and competitiveness at the heart of its priorities. The Presidency intends to reduce administrative burdens and support the green transition of the agricultural and fisheries sectors. Ministers discussed trade tensions, the post-crisis agricultural market in Ukraine, and the need to strengthen the European Union's protein self-sufficiency. Finally, they discussed progress on the CAP post-2027 and new genomic techniques. [Read more](#)



Eurogroup Meeting

At their meeting on 7 July, the Eurogroup ministers adopted a statement setting out a broadly neutral fiscal stance for 2026, while maintaining fiscal discipline outside defence spending. The ministers discussed the international role of the euro and progress on the digital euro project. Paschal Donohoe was re-elected president for a third term. The enlargement of the euro area is taking shape with the future accession of Bulgaria in January 2026. Finally, the EIB presented the progress made towards a savings and investment union. [Read more](#)



Position on the 2026 budget

On 9 July, the Council highlighted the importance of providing sufficient resources in the 2026 budget to honour the commitments made in all areas, some of which extend over several years. In total, the Council's position on the budget for the next financial year provides for €186.24 billion in commitment appropriations and €186.49 billion in payment appropriations, excluding appropriations for special instruments outside the multiannual financial framework (MFF). [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Partnership with Indonesia

On 13 July, the European Union and Indonesia reached a political agreement on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), marking a key step towards its finalisation by September. The agreement aims to strengthen trade, secure supply chains for critical raw materials and support the sustainable energy transition. Both sides have emphasised their shared commitment to building an open partnership based on shared rules and values. Visa facilitation will also promote exchanges between European and Indonesian citizens. [Read more](#)



Association Council with Central American countries

On 14 July, representatives of the European Union and six Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) met in Brussels for the first EU-Central America Association Council. They discussed regional cooperation, investment and trade, and global challenges of mutual interest such as migration, security and illicit trafficking, the environment and climate change, as well as the governance of artificial intelligence. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



Increased spending on defence

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz welcomed NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte to Berlin on 9 July. The meeting took place against the backdrop of the 70th anniversary of Germany's accession to NATO. The Chancellor emphasised his country's commitment to strengthening its defence, in particular by reaching the target of 2% of GDP. Mark Rutte welcomed this effort and stressed the importance of a strong Europe within the Alliance. Both reiterated their support for Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Croatia :



Strengthening relations with Estonia

On 8 July, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković welcomed his Estonian counterpart Kristen Michal to Zagreb. The two countries shared common positions on European issues, security and support for Ukraine. The two heads of government consolidated economic cooperation between their countries, particularly in the areas of defence, energy and digital technology. On this occasion, a Croatian-Estonian business forum was held to stimulate economic exchanges between the two countries. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Spain :



National Anti-Corruption Plan

During an extraordinary session of the Congress of Deputies on 9 July in Madrid, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez presented his National Anti-Corruption Plan, developed in collaboration with the OECD. The plan is structured around five pillars and includes the creation of an independent public integrity agency and the strengthening of anti-corruption obligations for businesses and political parties. Described as 'ambitious, realistic and honest', the plan includes new protections for whistleblowers, faster legal proceedings and tougher penalties. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ France :



State visit to the United Kingdom and Franco-British defence summit

On 8 July, French President Emmanuel Macron began a three-day state visit to the United Kingdom, the first by a European leader since Brexit. After a reception by King Charles and a speech to Parliament, the French head of state met with Prime Minister Keir Starmer on 10 July. During a bilateral summit, Paris and London reached an agreement that strengthens Franco-British military cooperation, particularly in the areas of deterrence and support for Ukraine. In addition, a compromise provides for the return to France of migrants who arrived illegally in the United Kingdom, in exchange for the UK taking in registered asylum seekers. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Speech to the armed forces and national strategic review

In his speech to the armed forces on 13 July, French President Emmanuel Macron emphasised the need for Europe to become a fully-fledged strategic player. Faced with global threats and the erosion of the international order, he defended the construction of a strong and autonomous European defence, complementary to but not dependent on NATO. He also called for a sovereign European defence industry and greater military solidarity between Member States. He announced a budgetary effort of €3.5 billion in 2026 and €3 billion in 2027 for defence. The new national strategic review was published on 14 July. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Defence strategy for the Arctic

In response to geopolitical changes in the Arctic, France is adapting its defence strategy to protect its interests and, on 10 July, adopted an 'Arctic Defence Strategy'. It aims to strengthen its presence, develop military capabilities suited to the polar climate and affirm its commitment to international bodies. This approach is part of a cooperative effort with its allies, while preserving freedom of navigation and the security of strategic maritime areas. French nuclear deterrence also remains a key issue in this region that is now transforming. [Read more](#)

■ Greece :



Temporary suspension of asylum in response to new migratory pressure

Faced with an increase in migrant arrivals from Libya, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced on 13 July that he intended to suspend asylum for all refugees arriving in Crete from Libya for three months. He cited growing migratory pressure and promised strict measures to protect the country's borders. He emphasised cooperation with the Libyan authorities and Greece's responsibility as the European Union's external border. The government intends to guarantee security without compromising respect for international law. [Read more](#)

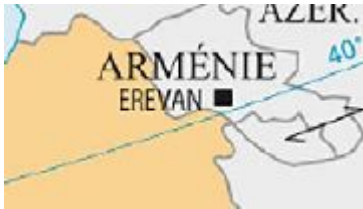
■ Lithuania :



Strengthening Lithuanian-German partnership on security

On 7 July, Lithuanian Prime Minister Gintautas Paluckas welcomed German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier to Vilnius. They welcomed the deployment of a German brigade in Lithuania as a symbol of a strengthened strategic partnership. Discussions focused on defence, economic relations and regional cooperation in the face of Russian threats. Lithuania plans to increase its defence budget to 5.25% of GDP in 2026 and is focusing on industry, particularly through its cooperation with Rheinmetall. A Lithuanian-German cultural season is also planned for 2026. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Armenia :



Strategic partnership with Armenia

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President Antonio Costa and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met in Brussels on 14 July to confirm their strategic partnership focused on sovereignty, territorial integrity and democratic reforms. They committed to strengthening regional security, particularly in the face of challenges in the South Caucasus, requiring continued engagement in the peace talks with Azerbaijan and steps towards normalisation of relations with Turkey. The Union reiterated its strong commitment to supporting Armenia's resilience and long-term development through substantial financial and technical assistance. Under the Global Gateway strategy, investments in Armenia are now expected to reach €2.5 billion. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Coalition of the Willing

On 10 July, representatives from the United Kingdom, France, Ukraine and, for the first time, the United States re-asserted their support for Kyiv in the face of Russian aggression. They welcomed Ukraine's peace efforts and called on Russia to respect a full ceasefire. A commitment of €40 billion in military aid for 2025 was confirmed. Strengthened sanctions against the Russian energy and financial sectors are being considered. Leaders support the creation of a post-conflict Multinational Force for Ukraine. A joint economic support plan for 2026 and options for using frozen Russian assets are being explored. [Read more](#)



Rome hosts international conference for the reconstruction of Ukraine

On 10 and 11 July, Rome hosted the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC2025), the fourth edition of an annual cycle launched after the start of Russia's war of aggression. Discussions focused on four areas: economic recovery, structural reforms, European integration and civil society participation. More than €10 billion was pledged through some 200 agreements ready to be signed, including €2.3 billion committed by the European Union to support investment projects in energy, infrastructure and health. [Read more](#)



Volodymyr Zelenskyy received by the Pope and the Italian President

On 9 July, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with Pope Francis at Castel Gandolfo. He praised the Holy See's commitment to peace and the return of deported Ukrainian children. He was then received by Italian President Sergio Mattarella, and the two heads of state discussed military support, sanctions against Russia, Ukraine's accession to the European Union and the reconstruction of his country. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Volodymyr Zelenskyy meets with the President of the Swiss National Council

On 10 July, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with Maja Riniker, President of the Swiss National Council, in Kyiv. The Ukrainian head of state thanked Bern for its financial assistance, including CHF 5 billion allocated for reconstruction, as well as for its support for humanitarian demining. They discussed the need to strengthen sanctions against Russia, in particular to stop exports of components used in weapons. Maja Riniker reiterated her commitment to a 'just and lasting' peace based on the UN Charter. Volodymyr Zelenskyy also called on Switzerland to join the international coalition for the return of deported Ukrainian children. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



US arms deliveries including Patriot missiles via NATO

On 14 July, during a meeting in Washington with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, US President Donald Trump announced the imminent delivery of 17 Patriot missile batteries to Ukraine at no cost to the United States. The equipment would be supplied by European countries, including Germany and Norway, which would purchase new stocks from the United States to transfer their own to Kyiv. At the same time, the US head of state gave his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin 50 days to reach an agreement, failing which Moscow's trading partners would face customs duties of up to 100%. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ ECHR :



Russia condemned by the ECHR

On 9 July, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights condemned Russia in the inter-state case Ukraine and Netherlands v. Russia. It found Russia responsible for serious and systematic human rights violations since 2014, including summary executions, torture, war crimes and the deportation of children. The Court also found Russia guilty of shooting down flight MH17 and obstructing the investigation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ OECD :



Employment Outlook

On 9 July, the OECD published its Employment Outlook for 2025. The report confirms that labour markets remain resilient, with employment rates expected to rise by 1.1% in 2025 and 0.7% in 2026. Gender gaps are narrowing, with the employment rate for women rising faster than that for men. However, demographic ageing poses a threat to employment in OECD countries, with the working-age population set to decline by 8% by 2060, while public spending on pensions and healthcare could increase by 3 percentage points of GDP. The OECD recommends ambitious policies to extend the working lives of older people, mobilise women and young people, and strengthen skills in the face of AI. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ UN :



30th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide

11 July 2025 marked the 30th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, in which more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were massacred by Bosnian Serb forces. UN Secretary-General António Guterres recalled that this act was the worst massacre in Europe since the Second World War. He emphasised international responsibility and the importance of combating denial and hatred. He also stressed the need to preserve the truth and bring the perpetrators to justice, and called for the strengthening of peace, reconciliation and respect for human rights. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Report on the rule of law

The report on the rule of law, published on 8 July by the European Commission, highlights the central role played by the European Union in strengthening democracy, security and the economy. It highlights progress in the areas of justice, the fight against corruption, media freedom and institutional checks and balances, while noting persistent challenges. The report stresses the importance of a stable legal environment for the competitiveness of the single market. It also covers progress in the candidate countries. The rule of law is seen as an essential condition for the confidence of citizens and businesses. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Culture :



Vitoria Gasteiz Jazz Festival

The Vitoria Gasteiz Jazz Festival is being held until 19 July in Vitoria. This festival offers a varied programme for jazz lovers, bringing together leading artists and young musicians. At the same time, the Jazz Seminar is taking place, an educational project open to music students and professional musicians organised in collaboration with the Juilliard School in New York. [Read more](#)



London Art Biennale

Until 20 July, London's Chelsea Old Town Hall is hosting the 7th London Art Biennale. Bringing together 330 artists from 60 countries, this free event presents a wide variety of works, including paintings, sculptures, digital art and works on paper, with no restrictions on theme. The Biennale aims to strengthen ties between artists, collectors and the general public. [Read more](#)



Pärnu Festival

Until 25 July, the Pärnu Music Festival is celebrating its 15th edition and paying tribute to Estonian composer Arvo Pärt on his 90th birthday. Founded by Paavo Järvi, the festival brings together the Estonian Festival Orchestra, the Järvi Academy and numerous artists in a programme combining classical masterpieces, contemporary creations and iconic concerts. Events are also taking place in Tallinn, notably at the Arvo Pärt Centre. An intimate atmosphere and musical excellence are the hallmarks of this summer event, which has become unmissable in Estonia. [Read more](#)



Verbier Festival

The 32nd Verbier Festival will run until 3 August, with a programme combining classical concerts, jazz, opera and masterclasses. Leading artists such as Martha Argerich will perform alongside young talents from the Academy. Concerts for children and interactive workshops enrich the experience for all audiences. [Read more](#)



Jarocin Festival

The Jarocin Festival, one of Poland's oldest rock festivals, is to be held from 17 to 20 July. It brings together legends of Polish rock alongside international guests. Entertainment and open-air concerts enliven the iconic town of Jarocin, a mecca for alternative culture. [Read more](#)



La Roque d'Anthéron Piano Festival

Until 17 August, the La Roque d'Anthéron International Piano Festival offers four weeks of outdoor music in the grounds of the Château de Florans and other Provençal venues. Founded in 1981, every summer it brings together the world's greatest pianists, young talents and a variety of styles: classical, contemporary, jazz and more. The concerts take place in unique settings: clearings, cloisters, quarries and museums. The programme includes recitals, chamber concerts and new works, accompanied by cultural events, master classes and eco-friendly initiatives. [Read more](#)



Salzburg Festival

The Salzburg Festival is being held until 31 August in the Austrian city, with a rich programme of opera, theatre and concerts. This year's edition focuses on classical and contemporary works, including iconic pieces such as *Jedermann*. Several prestigious venues across the city will host the performances. A youth section also offers a wide range of activities for children and schools. [Read more](#)



Patrimonio Guitar Nights

The Patrimonio Guitar Nights are on until 26 July at the Théâtre de Verdure in Patrimonio, Corsica. This year's festival has a varied programme featuring some big names. Set in a captivating location, the festival has a unique atmosphere where music and fun come together in perfect harmony. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :



15th July 2025

Foreign Affairs Council



18th July 2025

General Affairs Council



The Letter n°1120

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