

Letter n°1121 of Tuesday 22nd July 2025

The Foundation team wishes you a wonderful summer and looks forward to seeing you on 8 September 2025.

The European Union and its islands as they face today's challenges

[Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis - 22 Jul 2025](#)

Faced with multiple challenges – climate change, economic pressures, migration – Europe's many islands are also driving innovation, resilience and transition. Reconsidering them as driving forces rather than peripheral areas would be a lever for rethinking the future of the European project.



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■ **Front page! :**



Indeed it is Culture that we are talking about

'Europeans are proud of their cultural heritage' which shapes their identity and way of life. This rich diversity, the result of thousands of years of artistic creation, unites the peoples of the continent despite their differences. Art occupies a central place in their societies, reflecting a universal and timeless quest. In the face of global challenges, this cultural identity remains a major asset and a source of strength. Recognising and defending this unique characteristic is essential for the future of Europe. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



The Schuman Report 2025 is now available!

The new edition of the 'Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union' 2025 is now available in bookshops and on the Foundation's website, as well as in digital format. The English version is only available as an e-book. Published by the Foundation, this reference work brings together 21 leading contributions, unpublished maps and annotated statistical studies, which analyse the strategic acceleration of the European Union in the face of global geopolitical upheavals and its projection into a new phase of its history. [Read more](#)



Schuman Network: thinking about the Europe of tomorrow

Launched on the initiative of the Foundation, the Schuman Network brings together 23 think tanks from 13 European countries. This network of experts aims to promote collective reflection on major European issues by bringing together specialists in European affairs for structured dialogue. A genuine platform for exchange, it enables the pooling of analyses and the enrichment of perspectives on topics as varied as social cohesion, the economy, the European Union's foreign policy and its international relations. With more than 180 contributions published to date, the Schuman Network has established itself as a committed player in the European intellectual debate. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Proposals for the next multiannual budget for 2028-2034

On 16th July, the European Commission proposed an ambitious budget for 2028-2034 of nearly €2 trillion to strengthen the Union's security, competitiveness, cohesion and resilience. This framework aims for greater flexibility, simplified programmes and strategic investments, particularly in defence, innovation, and the green and digital transitions. New own resources will modernise the European Union's financing and limit pressure on national budgets. Support for regions, agriculture, Ukraine and crisis management remains central, affirming Europe's role in the face of geopolitical challenges. Negotiations, which could be tense, will now begin with the Council and the Parliament. [Read more](#)



Plan to overhaul anti-fraud measures

On 16th July, the European Commission launched a review of the EU's anti-fraud architecture with a view to better protecting the European budget. In response to growing threats, particularly cross-border fraud and the use of advanced technologies, this review aims to strengthen prevention, detection and prosecution. It plans to improve data sharing, exploit AI and promote cooperation between the relevant actors. This initiative is part of the work related to the multiannual financial framework (MFF). [Read more](#)



Fisheries agreement with Iceland

On 15 July, the European Union and Iceland signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen cooperation in fisheries and maritime affairs. It sets out a framework for closer cooperation on sustainable fishing, scientific research and marine conservation. The agreement also reinforces joint efforts to protect marine biodiversity and support the energy transition of the fisheries and aquaculture sector. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



18th package of sanctions against Russia

On 18 July, the European Union adopted its 18th package of sanctions against Russia after Slovakia lifted its veto, targeting the energy, finance and military industries. This package of measures includes a reduction in the oil price cap, increased sanctions against Russia's ghost fleet, expanded banking restrictions, and export bans to curb Russia's military capabilities. Specific sanctions also target companies linked to Belarus' military-industrial complex. The European Union is thus stepping up pressure to support Ukraine and limit Russia's access to financial and technological resources. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Meeting of ministers responsible for European affairs

Ministers responsible for European affairs, meeting in Brussels on 18th July, held an initial exchange on the Commission's proposal for the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework, estimated at nearly €2 trillion. They also gave the green light to the gradual roll-out of the Entry/Exit System, adopted a two-year postponement of the application of due diligence rules for batteries, and approved a two-year extension of the rules on filling reserves to ensure gas supply and storage. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Foreign ministers' meeting

On 15th July, Europe's foreign ministers reaffirmed their support for Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression, drawing up a 18th package of sanctions and stepping up military aid. They also called on Israel to take concrete steps to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The situation in Georgia, Iran, Haiti and Moldova led to targeted sanctions against those responsible for human rights violations or threats to stability. Finally, they discussed the renewal of European engagement in the Mediterranean. [Read more](#)



Korea joins Horizon Europe

On 17th July, the Republic of Korea officially became the first Asian country to join Horizon Europe, the European Union's multi-billion-euro research and innovation programme. Korean researchers and organisations can now participate in several areas of the programme on an equal footing with Member States. This association agreement strengthens the Union's geopolitical alliance with countries that share the same values. [Read more](#)



Ministerial meeting with the Southern Neighbourhood countries

At the 5th ministerial meeting between the European Union and the Southern Neighbourhood countries on 14th July, participants discussed the future Mediterranean Pact, a new instrument designed to strengthen all European Union programmes and lines of action with its Mediterranean partners, which is expected to be presented by the Commission in the autumn. [Read more](#)

■ ECB :



The ECB launches a design competition for future banknotes

On 15th July, the ECB launched a design competition to redraw the future euro banknotes. Designers living in the European Union can submit their entries until 18th August. Two themes have been chosen: European culture and rivers & birds, symbolising the continent's identity and ecosystems. After selection by an independent jury, the general public will be able to vote, before a final decision is expected at the end of 2026. This initiative aims to renew the banknotes to reflect Europe's cultural and natural values, while integrating a broad participatory process. [Read more](#)

■ Trilogues :



Cohesion policy

On 15th July, the Council and the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement on the mid-term review of cohesion policy, with a view to adapting European funds to current challenges such as defence, competitiveness and energy transition. The agreement introduces greater flexibility for Member States, financial incentives and enhanced support for eastern border regions. In particular, it allows cohesion funds to be mobilised for projects related to security or crisis resilience. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



London and Berlin strengthen their alliance

On 17th July, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed German Chancellor Friedrich Merz to London. The two leaders signed an unprecedented bilateral cooperation treaty aimed at strengthening ties in security, trade and defence. The German head of government notably pledged to criminalise aid for illegal migration to the United Kingdom by the end of 2025. The treaty also provides for increased cooperation to dismantle smuggling networks. [Read more - Other link](#)



Meeting of ministers to reduce illegal immigration

On 18th July, the Zugspitz Summit on illegal immigration took place. Convened by Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt, it was attended by his French, Polish, Austrian, Danish and Czech counterparts, as well as European Commissioner for Home Affairs Magnus Brunner. In their joint statement, they called for the rapid implementation of a stricter migration policy in Europe, a strengthened European migration and asylum system, effective economic models to combat people smugglers, a safer return policy and better protection of the European Union's external borders. [Read more](#)

■ Spain :



Agreement to strengthen cooperation with Montenegro

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, José Manuel Albares, hosted the Montenegrin Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Filip Ivanović, on 17 July, with whom he signed an agreement aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two countries in the context of Montenegro's accession process to the European Union. This agreement aims to support Montenegro's efforts to align itself with the acquis of the Union and move towards full European integration. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Prime Minister's budget plan

On 15th July, French Prime Minister François Bayrou presented a multi-year plan aimed at saving €43.8 billion to reduce the public deficit to 4.6% of GDP in 2026 and 2.8% in 2029. Key measures include the elimination of two public holidays, a freeze on social benefits and pensions, and the elimination of 3,000 civil service jobs. National defence will receive an additional €3.5 billion in funding. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Romania :



Visit by the Romanian President to Germany

Romanian President Nicușor Dan was hosted in Berlin on 18th July by his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Friedrich Merz. They discussed a joint action plan to strengthen cooperation, particularly in the areas of security and economic policy. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ UK :



Plan to lower voting age to 16

On 17th July, the British government announced its intention to lower the legal voting age from 18 to 16 for all elections, in line with a campaign promise made by Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Presented as a modernisation of democracy, this reform aims to enable young people, who are already active in society, to participate in political decisions. The proposal still needs to be approved by Parliament. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



New government led by Yuliia Svrydenko

On 17th July, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy presented his new government to the Rada, marked by the appointment of Yuliia Svrydenko as Prime Minister, succeeding Denys Shmyhal, who will become Minister of Defence. This reshuffle aims to strengthen governance at a time of war and send a signal to Western partners. He set three priorities: increasing the share of Ukrainian-made weapons in the armed forces to 50% within six months, strengthening the country's economic autonomy and developing enhanced security cooperation with allies, particularly the United States. He also emphasised the importance of continuing Euro-Atlantic integration. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Strengthening the partnership with Latvia

On 15 July, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hosted Latvian Prime Minister Evika Siliņa in Kyiv. The two leaders welcomed the ongoing delivery of 42 Patria armoured vehicles and a new €70 million military aid package, as part of Latvia's commitment to allocate 0.25% of its GDP to the Ukrainian war effort. Latvia, co-leader of the drone coalition, said it was determined to keep up the pressure on Moscow. They also discussed Ukraine's European integration, with the aim of opening six negotiation clusters this year. [Read more](#)

■ NATO :



NATO adopts its resource plan for 2026-2030

On 16th July, the North Atlantic Council adopted the Common Fiscal Resources Plan (CFRP) for 2026-2030, setting the planned funding for 2026 at €5.3 billion. This funding is intended to strengthen NATO's deterrence, military capabilities and command, as well as to support priority activities in support of Ukraine. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



European innovation performance

Innovation is progressing in Europe, with an overall improvement in performance. The latest European Innovation Scoreboard, published on 15th July, shows that 13 Member States have strengthened their performance, notably Malta and Luxembourg. Sweden has regained its position as the most innovative country, while Ireland and Croatia have made significant progress. Despite a slight decline between 2024 and 2025, regional performance remains on the rise overall, although disparities between the north and south of the continent persist. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Overcrowding in European prisons

On 18th July, the Council of Europe published a report containing annual prison statistics (SPACE I). It reveals that overcrowding remains a critical challenge in one third of European prison administrations. These data highlight worrying conditions of detention, which impact fundamental rights and the regularity of care. It calls on member states to step up their efforts in the areas of penal reform, sentence reduction and alternatives to detention in order to comply with its standards on human dignity and justice. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Nowe Horyzonty Film Festival in Wrocław

For its 25th season, the Nowe Horyzonty Festival in Wrocław is honouring Norwegian and Icelandic cinema with a section entitled 'Oslo/Reykjavik'. Five films will be screened in cinemas until 27 July and online until 3 August. This festival is one of the most important film events in Poland. The initiative encourages cultural exchanges between European countries and promotes the richness of Northern cinema. [Read more](#)



Gstaad Festival

The Gstaad Menuhin Festival & Academy will run until 6 September, with a rich programme centred on the theme of 'Change: Humility – Transformation – Migration'. This 69th edition, marking Christoph Müller's last as artistic director, offers a varied series of concerts including chamber, symphonic and vocal music. The concerts are being held in churches in the Saanenland and in the Gstaad festival tent. [Read more](#)



Festival de Bayreuth

Le Festival de Bayreuth se déroule du 24 juillet au 26 août, dans le mythique Festspielhaus de Bayreuth, consacré entièrement à l'œuvre de Richard Wagner. Le programme comprend les dix opéras wagnériens classiques. Le festival préserve les traditions historiques, telles que la fanfare de mi-entracte jouée depuis la galerie. [Read more](#)



Alcántara Classical Theatre Festival

The 39th Alcántara Classical Theatre Festival will take place from 26 July to 3 August. The programme, based on the theme 'El espíritu de la música' (The Spirit of Music), focuses on the link between classical theatre and music. The main performances will take place in the unique setting of the Conventual de San Benito. The festival also offers artistic activities in the streets of the city, including shows, workshops, walks, music, magic and dance. This year's edition also highlights local companies and encourages citizen participation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Rosendal Chamber Music Festival

From 6 to 10 August, the historic Rosendal Manor in Norway will host the latest edition of the Rosendal Chamber Music Festival, directed by pianist Leif Ove Andsnes. This year's festival pays tribute to Grieg with several world premieres. Set in an exceptional natural environment, the festival offers a dozen concerts, lectures and meetings with the artists. [Read more](#)



Kilkenny Arts Festival

From 7 to 17 August, the Kilkenny Arts Festival will take over the city's historic sites with concerts, theatre, opera, poetry and visual arts. Highlights include a mixed reality opera, We Who Live Under Heaven, world premieres and concerts dedicated to Arvo Pärt. The festival combines heritage, innovation and accessibility. [Read more](#)

FESTIVAL PABLO CASALS PRADES

Pablo Casals Festival in Prades

The Pablo Casals Festival will take place from 27 July to 8 August with a programme focused on chamber music. It will showcase some of the biggest names in classical music. Concerts will take place in iconic heritage sites such as the Abbey of Saint-Michel de Cuxa. The festival also offers a Tour of Refuges in the heart of nature and a series of 'Young Talents & Friends' events. [Read more](#)

THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Millet in London

From 7th August to 19th October, the National Gallery in London is presenting Millet: Life on the Land, the first major exhibition devoted to Jean-François Millet in the United Kingdom in nearly 50 years. The centrepiece is The Angelus, on exceptional loan from the Musée d'Orsay, accompanied by around fifteen other paintings and drawings from British public collections. The exhibition explores the themes of harvesting, wood and women at work in a realistic and empathetic style representative of the Barbizon School. [Read more](#)

SZIGET THE ISLAND OF FREEDOM

Sziget Festival

The Sziget Festival will take place from 6 to 11 August on Óbuda Island in Budapest, bringing together festival-goers from all over the world. For six days, more than 1,000 shows combining music, street art, theatre and visual performances enliven the site. The event celebrates diversity, inclusion and freedom. [Read more](#)

ROSSINI OPERA FESTIVAL

Rossini Festival in Pesaro

The 46th Rossini Festival will take place from 10th to 22nd August in Pesaro. The programme includes three operas, two of which are new productions, three cantatas and the Messa per Rossini, written to mark the first anniversary of the composer's death. This will be the closing event of the festival on 22nd August. [Read more](#)



George Enescu International Festival

The 27th George Enescu International Festival will take place in Bucharest from 24 August to 21 September. The programme includes more than 95 concerts in six permanent venues. The Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir will open the festival at the Palace Hall, alongside the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra. The festival also includes orchestral and choral recitals at the Romanian Athenaeum and other iconic venues. The events will bring together nearly 4,000 internationally renowned artists. [Read more - Other link](#)



La Chaise-Dieu Festival

The 59th edition of the La Chaise-Dieu Festival will take place from 20 to 30 August in the Abbey Church of Saint Robert and other venues in the Massif Central. The programme showcases sacred, symphonic and lyrical music, with major international ensembles and soloists. The festival also offers free concerts and activities for all audiences. Opera, baroque music and young talent are central to the programme. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :



23rd July 2025

EU-Japan Summit (Tokyo)



23rd July 2025

ECB Governors Council (Frankfurt/Main)



24th July 2025

EU-China Summit (Beijing)



8th July 2025

Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)



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