

Letter n°1124 of Tuesday 23rd September 2025

Moldova: the parliamentary elections of 28 September 2025, a litmus test for Maia Sandu's European agenda

[Florent Parmentier - 23 Sep 2025](#)

Moldova is heading into a decisive election, with the country's European ambitions at central to the issues at stake. Building on a reform programme launched in 2020, President Maia Sandu is presenting integration with the European Union as a necessity in the face of Russian pressure. The war in Ukraine has strengthened this stance, while exposing Moldova to greater instability. The pro-Russian opposition is exploiting the social and economic weariness of a population now faced with stringent reforms. The vote on 28 September will therefore be a moment of truth for the country's political future and its accession to the European project. Care must be taken to ensure that the election is not marred by foreign interference.



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■ **Foundation :**



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■ Commission :



Draghi: 'Our growth model is faltering. Vulnerabilities are mounting.'

One year after the publication of his report, Mario Draghi, former President of the ECB and former Prime Minister of Italy, spoke on 16 September in Brussels before the President of the European Commission. He began his speech by calling on European leaders to take a new direction so that the European Union ceases to be a regulatory power and adapts to a rapidly changing technological landscape. He also called for joint debt to stimulate the European Union's productivity. Finally, he criticised the customs agreement of 21 August 2025, which he said was 'largely dictated by US conditions'. While approximately 14% of the Draghi report has been implemented, the former Italian Prime Minister once again advocated strengthening European competitiveness. [Read more](#)



Strategic roadmap with India

On 17 September, the European Commission presented a new strategic roadmap to strengthen the EU-India partnership. The new strategy is based on five pillars: prosperity and sustainability (free trade agreement, investment, resilient supply chains and green transition); technology and innovation (cooperation on AI, semiconductors, digital technology and research); security and defence (strategic partnership, maritime security, cybersecurity and industrial defence); connectivity and global issues (economic and digital corridors, cooperation in Africa and South Asia, joint action in international forums); and cross-cutting factors (talent mobility, academic exchanges). [Read more](#)



Strengthening research and technology infrastructure

On 15 September, the European Commission launched the European Strategy for Research and Technology Infrastructure to strengthen Europe's leadership in scientific excellence and technological innovation. The aim is to ensure that scientists, researchers and industrial players have easy access to state-of-the-art facilities, high-quality data and customised services. The importance of research and technology infrastructure was highlighted in 2024 in both the Draghi report and the 'Align, Act, Accelerate' report by the Commission's expert group responsible for the mid-term evaluation of Horizon Europe. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meetings of the Ministers of Economy and Finance

On 19 and 20 September, the Ministers of Economy and Finance met in Copenhagen to discuss Europe's economic challenges, the need to strengthen competitiveness, simplify European Union legislation and reduce the red tape affecting businesses. At the same time, Eurogroup ministers discussed the governance of the future digital euro, the Eurogroup's work programme until June 2026, and economic and macroeconomic developments. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Adoption of a minimal compromise on greenhouse gas emissions

On 18 September, environment ministers approved a declaration of intent with a view to the European Union submitting a contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The declaration states the European Union's intention to submit its contribution before COP30, in accordance with the obligations of the 2015 Paris Agreement. The Union confirms its objective of limiting global temperature increases and emphasises that it is on track to achieve the 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions set for 2030. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Mid-term review of the Cohesion Policy

On 18 September, as part of the mid-term review of the European Union's cohesion policy, ministers adopted amendments to better address the strategic challenges related to economic, social and territorial cohesion. The amendments make changes to the regulations governing the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund (JTF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Negotiations opened with the United Kingdom and Canada on SAFE

On 18 September, ministers authorised negotiations with the United Kingdom and Canada on their participation in the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) defence lending facility. The negotiations will be conducted by the European Commission and will focus in particular on the conditions under which British and Canadian companies and products can be involved in public procurement. The SAFE instrument, which enables investment in defence and participation in joint acquisitions, is open to third countries, acceding countries, candidate countries, potential candidates and countries that have signed security and defence partnerships with the European Union, such as the United Kingdom and Canada. [Read more](#)



Meeting of European Affairs Ministers

On 16 September, European Affairs Ministers exchanged views on the Commission's letter of intent of 10 September, published following the State of the Union address and relating to its work programme for 2026. Finally, they held a discussion on the general development of the rule of law in the European Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Trade agreement between Mercosur and EFTA

On 16 September, Mercosur and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) signed a trade agreement targeting a market of 300 million people, seen by Brazil as a 'clear signal' in response to Washington's protectionist measures. The treaty includes Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein for EFTA, and Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia for Mercosur. The trade agreement eliminates or reduces customs duties on almost all trade flows between the two parties. This applies to major agricultural products such as Brazilian poultry and Argentine beef, as well as Norwegian salmon. The agreement's entry into force is still subject to ratification by the parliaments of each member country. [Read more](#)



Proposal for a 19th package of sanctions against Russia

On 19 September, the European Commission announced a 19th package of sanctions against Russia, targeting Russian hydrocarbons in particular. The sanctions package includes a ban on imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and the extension of sanctions to 118 additional vessels in Russia's ghost fleet. Russian banks and those in third countries are also being targeted and, for the first time, the cryptocurrency platforms that Moscow uses to launder transactions on the global financial market. [Read more](#)



Proposal for sanctions against Israel

On 17 September, the European Commission presented to the Council its proposal to suspend certain provisions of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Israel relating to trade, as well as its proposals for sanctions against Hamas, extremist ministers and Israeli settlers. Imports from Israel would be subject to customs duties at the official rate applied to any other third country with which the European Union has not concluded a free trade agreement. This proposal comes in the context of Israel's blockade of humanitarian aid to Gaza, the intensification and violence of military operations, and the Israeli authorities' decision to press ahead with settlement activity in the West Bank. [Read more](#)

■ Court of Justice :



Partial renewal of the Tribunal

On 16 September, Marc van der Woude of the Netherlands and Savvas Pappas of Cyprus were re-elected as President and Vice-President of the General Court of the European Union, respectively, alongside ten new Presidents of Chambers. These elections were held following the partial renewal of the Tribunal's membership. Their term of office will end on 31 August 2028. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Germany :



Reforms underway in Germany

During the general debate in the Bundestag, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz praised the efforts made on budgetary decisions, but called for greater resilience in order to meet economic, social and security challenges. He presented four major areas of focus: strengthening Germany's military capabilities, announcing a shift in migration policy with a 60% reduction in access to the asylum procedure, reforming unemployment benefits, and launching the first major corporate tax reform in 15 years with more than €600 billion in private investment announced. [Read more](#)

■ Austria :



Inauguration of the Brenner Base Tunnel on the Austrian-Italian border

On 18 September, the breakthrough of the last 'diaphragm' of the Brenner Tunnel marked a symbolic milestone in the future rail link between Italy and Austria. The official ceremony was attended by several political leaders, including Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. The first high-speed train connecting Italy and Austria is expected to enter service by 2032. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Denmark :



Investments and military exercises in Greenland

On 16 September, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Greenlandic Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen signed an agreement for investments of 1.6 billion Danish kroner (€214 million) in Greenland for health and public infrastructure. The day before, Danish Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen recalled that the 'Arctic Light 2025' military exercise had involved more than 550 European soldiers up to 19 September. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Estonia :



Three Russian fighter jets fly over Estonia

On 19 September, ten days after the drone incursion into Poland, three Russian Mig-31 fighter jets flew over Estonian airspace without authorisation for 12 minutes. They were escorted out of the border by Italian Air Force F-35 fighter jets. Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal requested consultations with his NATO allies in accordance with Article 4 of the organisation's founding treaty. [Read more](#)

■ France :



The towers of Notre Dame reopen to the public

On 20 September, more than six years after the fire, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris reopened its towers, which rise to a height of 69 metres and offer a magical view over the rooftops of Paris. The cathedral reopened its doors to the general public in December 2024. [Read more](#)

■ Sweden :



Increase in military spending

On 15 September, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson announced that Sweden would increase its defence spending by SEK 26.6 billion (€2.45 billion) in 2026. The Swedish defence budget will reach a total of SEK 175 billion (€16 billion). This new increase brings Swedish military spending to 2.8% of the country's GDP. [Read more](#)

■ Albania :



New chapters of negotiations opened

On 16 September, the sixth meeting of the conference on Albania's accession to the European Union was held in Brussels. This conference notably opened discussions on Chapter 4, which deals with transport policy, energy, trans-European networks and the environment. [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



The European Union supports sustainable deregulation of agricultural exports

On 18 September, the Council decided to support greater access to the European market for certain Moldovan agricultural exports that are not yet deregulated, such as plums, apples and tomatoes. Until now, these products were covered by temporary unilateral trade deregulation measures introduced after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The European Union now wishes to establish a permanent, stable and balanced framework that will strengthen trade while protecting sensitive agricultural sectors in the Union. This new agreement will include safeguards against market distortions and require Moldova to gradually align itself with European agri-food standards by 2027. [Read more](#)



Polls one week before the parliamentary elections

With just a few days to go before Moldova's parliamentary elections on 28 September, the latest polls show that the Patriotic Electoral Bloc (BEP), a pro-Russian left-wing alliance, is running neck and neck in voting intentions with President Maia Sandu's Action and Solidarity Party (PAS). According to several studies, the number of undecided voters stands at nearly 27%. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



President of the European Parliament visits Kyiv

On 17 September, the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, met with senior Ukrainian officials in Kyiv, including President Volodymyr Zelensky, Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko and Rada President Ruslan Stefanychuk. Roberta Metsola presented the demands of MEPs for lasting peace, additional sanctions against Russia, enhanced parliamentary cooperation and progress on Ukraine's application to join the European Union. The President of the European Parliament inaugurated a permanent representative office of the European Parliament in the Ukrainian capital. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



New Yale University report: Russia is organising a vast system of indoctrination and detention of Ukrainian children

Since February 2022, more than 210 sites in Russia and the occupied territories have been used to detain abducted Ukrainian children, according to a Yale University report published on 16 September. These children are subjected to ideological indoctrination and forced military training. The locations include holiday camps, medical facilities and even a military base. The report refers to a massive re-education system set up by Russia, capable of holding tens of thousands of children for long periods of time. [Read more](#)



Council Recommendation on sustainable reintegration in Ukraine

On 16 September, the Council adopted a recommendation on a common framework for displaced Ukrainians to ensure their sustainable return and reintegration in Ukraine, when conditions allow. With this recommendation, the European Union is preparing for a coordinated approach to determine, when conditions in Ukraine are favourable, the phasing out of temporary protection status. Since March 2022, the European Union has provided safety and shelter to more than 4 million displaced Ukrainians. Displaced persons from Ukraine who cannot return home due to Russia's war of aggression will enjoy temporary protection in the European Union until 4 March 2027. [Read more](#)

■ WTO :



Entry into force of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

On 15 September, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies entered into force. This represents a significant step forward in global efforts to protect the oceans, as it aims to eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies. This agreement is one of the main priorities of the European Pact for the Oceans, adopted on 5 June 2025, which underlines the European Union's commitment to protecting the oceans. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Strong growth in digital agriculture technologies

On 18 September, the European Patent Office published a report on digital agriculture technologies. It highlights how these technologies can contribute to sufficient food production, given that the world's population is expected to exceed 10 billion by 2050. The report notes a global transition towards data-driven precision agriculture, which aims to boost productivity and reduce environmental impact. Europe remains at the forefront of patenting digital agriculture technologies. The European Patent Office has launched an online platform where users can discover the latest technologies available in the field of digital agriculture. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Risks to the stability of the European Union's financial system

On 19 September, the European supervisory authorities published a report on the risks and vulnerabilities of the European Union's financial system. They warn that sudden structural changes in global trade and security have led to a deterioration in the economic outlook for the first half of 2025. Despite the initially moderate impact of the customs agreement between the United States and the European Union, risks remain for financial stability, as well as for further corrections. In this context, they call for increased vigilance and urge financial entities to maintain adequate provisions in a tense and unpredictable environment. [Read more](#)



European Court of Auditors report on aid for trade

On 16 September, the European Court of Auditors published a report on European Union aid for trade to least developed countries. The report highlights that the European strategy in this area lacks operational objectives and that the 25% funding target for 2030 is unlikely to be met. However, the projects have helped to meet needs, but reports on the overall impact of European support are incomplete. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



OECD report: governing with artificial intelligence

On 18 September, the OECD published a report on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) by public administrations. According to the report, AI is mainly used in the public sphere in areas such as public services, citizen participation and justice. However, its adoption remains more limited in areas such as public policy evaluation, tax administration and civil service management. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :

MATTATOIO

Space of Resistance in Rome

The exhibition Space of Resistance (Spazi di resistenza) is being held until 12 October at the Mattatoio in Rome. It is part of the commemorations of the 30th anniversary of the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the siege of Sarajevo (14 December 1995) and the Srebrenica genocide (11 July 1995). Through the works of six female artists, the exhibition explores the themes of trauma, memory and post-war healing. It offers a contemporary reflection, combining art and memory, which goes beyond a simple historical reading of events. [Read more](#)

MUSEUM PLANTIN MORETUS



Women's Business/Businesswomen in Antwerp

The exhibition 'Women's Business/Businesswomen' is being held at the Plantin Moretus Museum in Antwerp until 11 January 2026. The exhibition shows that women did not occupy a secondary position to their husbands, but were at their side. The museum reveals 300 years of women's history. Meet the women who improved processes and concluded commercial agreements from a young age, and who became business leaders. [Read more](#)

Pierre Soulages in Paris and Montpellier

Until 11 January 2026, the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris is exploring Pierre Soulages' paintings on paper through 130 works, a quarter of which have never been seen before. By highlighting this collection of paintings on paper, the exhibition invites you to rediscover the artist in a practice that is both intimate and decisive, at the heart of his visual language. The Musée Fabre in Montpellier is also hosting an exhibition dedicated to Pierre Soulages until 4 January 2026. Spread over more than 1,000 m², the exhibition brings together around a hundred canvases and works on paper, copper and glass. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

Fundación **MAPFRE**

Helen Levitt in Barcelona

Until 1 February 2026, the Mapfre Centre in Barcelona is hosting an exhibition showcasing the work of Helen Levitt through nine sections and 220 photographs. The artist became known for her photographs of children in the street, which convey all the emotion, joy and mystery of everyday life. [Read more](#)

Gallen-Kallela, Klimt & Wien exhibition in Helsinki

Until 1 February 2026, the Finnish art museum Ateneum in Helsinki is exhibiting the work of three modernist artists. The Gallen-Kallela, Klimt & Wien exhibition shows how Akseli Gallen-Kallela's work developed in relation to international artists such as Gustav Klimt and Koloman Moser. [Read more](#)

Dublin Theatre Festival

Dublin is hosting its theatre festival until 12 October. This is an opportunity to see performances from the classical repertoire, such as Hamlet, alongside works that push the boundaries of what theatre can represent, including Adam Rapp's The Sound Inside, which won six Tony Awards in 2020. There will be opera, contemporary performances, dance and circus acts to enjoy. [Read more](#)

Cézanne, Monet, Renoir in Vienna

Until 8 February 2026, the Belvedere Museum in Vienna is presenting a selection of Impressionist paintings from the Langmatt Museum collection, one of the oldest private collections in Switzerland. Assembled in 1907 by Jenny and Sidney Brown, it includes major works by Cézanne, Monet, Pissarro and Renoir. [Read more](#)



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Fra Angelico in Florence

Until 25 January 2026, Palazzo Strozzi and the Museo di San Marco are hosting an exhibition dedicated to Fra Angelico in Florence. This artist symbolises 15th-century Florentine art and stands out as one of the greatest masters of Italian art of all time. The exhibition explores Fra Angelico's art, development and influence on his contemporaries. It also highlights the painter's artistic parable, from his beginnings in late Gothic art to his gradual acquisition of the language of the Renaissance. [Read more](#)

Agenda :

 22-23 September 2025

"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council (Brussels)

 23-29 September 2025

United National General Assembly (New York)

 28 September 2025

Legislative Elections (Moldova)

 29-30 September 2025

"Competitiveness" Council (Brussels)



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