

Letter n°1127 of Tuesday 14th October 2025

Can official development assistance be saved? The general reduction in funding means that we need to redefine our objectives

Louis Caudron - 14 Oct 2025

Official development assistance (ODA) is in crisis, marked by an overall decline in funding and questions about its effectiveness, particularly in Africa. Long perceived as a duty of solidarity, it has now been relegated behind other priorities such as defence and climate change. To regain its legitimacy and impact, ODA must be redirected towards concrete objectives, in particular training young people and supporting agriculture, which are essential for creating jobs in Africa. This would help to respond to the continent's population explosion and strengthen Euro-African relations. ODA must thus become a genuine aid to employment development.



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■ **Front page! :**



Complexity runs counter to democracy

In democracies, the accumulation of complex rules is one of the sources of citizen discontent. However, laws, political language and rules for living together must be understood by all. Keeping things simple certainly requires more work, but first and foremost it requires common sense. National governments and European institutions would be well advised to declare a 'regulatory moratorium' to examine the merits and scope of the rules they adopt. 'Why make things simple when you can make them complicated!' [Read more](#)

■ Elections :



Ireland: the next President of the Republic will be a woman

On 24 October, the Irish will elect their next president from among two candidates. Catherine Connolly, an independent candidate, will face Heather Humphreys, representing Fine Gael. According to the latest polls – conducted before the debate on 12 October – Catherine Connolly is in the lead with 49.3% against 34.2% for her rival. Jim Gavin (Fianna Fail) withdrew his candidacy on 5 October, but his name will appear on the ballot and his votes could influence the final result (they will be split equally between the two candidates). She will therefore be the country's third female President of the Republic after Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



Get the Schuman Report now!

The 2025 edition of the 'Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union' addresses the challenges facing the European Union: defence, prospects for enlargement, European competitiveness and the need for investment in the space sector. It is available in bookshops, on the Foundation's website, and in digital format in French and English. As every year, it brings together leading contributions, original maps and annotated statistical studies. Order your copy now! [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Accelerating the adoption of AI in European industry and science

On 8 October, the European Commission presented two strategies to make Europe a leader in artificial intelligence (AI). The strategy in science aims to place the European Union at the forefront of AI-based industry and science. The 'Applying AI' strategy defines ways to accelerate its use in key European industries, particularly in strategic and public sectors such as healthcare, pharmaceuticals, energy, mobility, etc. These strategies will enable more companies to consider AI as part of the solution to challenges, while taking into account the benefits and risks of the technology. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Regulation on transparency of political advertising

On 8 October, the European Commission published guidelines to support the implementation of the Regulation on transparency and targeting of political advertising, which came into force on 10 October. It complements the GDPR and aims to regulate the growing use of digital tools in the political sphere. It seeks to restore democratic trust in a digital environment that has become a battlefield where anything goes: manipulation of opinion, fake news, foreign interference, data capture, etc. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Inclusion of Western Sahara in trade agreement with Morocco

On 6 October, the European Union announced the extension of the trade agreement with Morocco to Western Sahara in response to the European Court of Justice ruling in October 2024. Provisionally applied since 3 October, this agreement extends the customs preferences granted to Morocco to Western Sahara. It ensures that proofs of origin and product labelling clearly indicate that the products originate from production regions located in Western Sahara. This agreement must now be approved by the Council and the European Parliament. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Protecting the steel industry

On 7 October, the European Commission presented a proposal to protect the European steel sector from the unfair effects of global overcapacity. The proposal sets customs duties on steel at between 25% and 50%, while halving the quotas of foreign steel that can be imported into the EU without surcharges. The European steel industry has been struggling for years with high energy prices and has to contend with low-cost exports from China and India in particular. These problems have been exacerbated by Donald Trump's imposition of a 50% blanket tariff on steel imports earlier this year. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Agreement with Mercosur: strengthening protection for European farmers

On 8 October, the European Commission proposed a regulation aimed at strengthening protection for European farmers under the partnership agreement with Mercosur. It establishes procedures to ensure the rapid and effective implementation of bilateral safeguard measures for agricultural products. It also contains specific provisions concerning certain sensitive agricultural products such as beef, poultry, rice, honey, eggs, garlic, ethanol and sugar. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Parliament :



New rules in the agri-food supply chain

On 8 October, MEPs adopted a mandate to open discussions on new rules to restore balanced power relations in the agri-food supply chain. They supported the establishment of mandatory written contracts for agricultural deliveries, called for greater clarity on the use of the terms 'fair' or 'equitable' for agricultural products, and argued that food and feed of plant and animal origin could only be imported from third countries if their pesticide residue levels were below the maximum levels authorised for those produced in the European Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



More flexible visa suspension mechanism

On 7 October, MEPs voted in favour of legislation making it easier to revoke the right to visa-free travel to the European Union for nationals of countries who pose a security risk or fail to respect human rights. The reform adds new grounds to trigger a suspension, including hybrid threats such as state-sponsored exploitation of migrants, citizenship-by-investment programmes (golden passports), failure to align with EU visa policy, and violations of the UN Charter. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Changes to financial services and investment support

On 7 October, MEPs approved the Council's position to amend several framework regulations in the European financial sector. The overall aim is to simplify and streamline the reporting requirements imposed on national authorities, financial institutions and supervisory bodies. It aims to eliminate administrative duplication, reduce the reporting burden and improve the consistency of the EU's financial governance framework. In particular, the frequency of reporting under the InvestEU Regulation will be reduced from twice a year to once a year. [Read more](#)



Motions of censure against the European Commission rejected

Two motions of censure against European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, tabled on 16 September by Manon Aubry (LFI) for La Gauche and Jordan Bardella (RN) for the Patriotes pour l'Europe (PfE) group, were debated on 6 October and put to the vote in plenary on 9 October. The motion proposed by the PfE group was rejected by 378 votes, with 179 in favour and 37 abstentions. The motion proposed by La Gauche was rejected by 383 votes, with 133 in favour and 78 abstentions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Ministers for the Economy and Finance

On 10 October, ministers adopted a recommendation endorsing the maximum net expenditure path for Germany over the next five years and updated protocols in the agreements between the European Union and Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino on the automatic exchange of financial account information, with a view to improving international tax compliance. Finally, ministers approved targeted amendments to Spain's recovery and resilience plan. [Read more](#)



Eurogroup meeting

On 9 October, Eurogroup ministers exchanged views on exchange rate developments and prepared for the upcoming annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington from 13 to 18 October. They discussed national and regional initiatives to promote capital market union and the implications of recent developments in stablecoins for the European Union. [Read more](#)



Implementing the ReArm Europe plan

On 8 October, the Council approved a position to encourage defence-related investments in the European Union budget, with a view to implementing the ReArm Europe plan. This position aims to amend five European Union regulations: the Digital Europe Programme, the Horizon Europe programme, the European Defence Fund, the Connecting Europe Facility and the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP). [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



29th meeting with the Gulf Cooperation Council

On 6 October, the Foreign Ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union held their 29th Council meeting, which welcomed the tangible progress made within the framework of the strategic partnership. The Joint Council emphasised the particular importance of this partnership in view of the serious threats to regional and international peace, security and stability, as well as the challenges facing the global economy. The next summit will take place in Saudi Arabia in 2026. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



2nd Global Gateway Forum

The 2nd Global Gateway Forum was held on 9 and 10 October. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen reiterated the ambition of the European strategy: to mobilise more than €400 billion by 2027, exceeding the initial target of €300 billion, to build lasting partnerships based on respect and common interests. On 10 October, the European Union announced three guarantees totalling €742 million to support value chains, renewable energy and private financing in partner countries through the EFSD+ fund, a key instrument of Global Gateway. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ European Agencies :



Guidelines on digital markets and the GDPR

On 9 October, the European Data Protection Board and the European Commission presented joint guidelines on the interaction between digital market legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). A public consultation on this first version of the guidelines is open until 4 December. The aim is to strengthen the consistent application of the Digital Markets Regulation and increase legal certainty for gatekeepers, user companies, beneficiaries and individuals. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



New work programme for 2026-2027

On 7 October, the European Patent Office (EPO) presented its new work programme for 2026-2027 for the Patent and Technology Observatory. This plan, which builds on the previous one, focuses on three areas: strengthening Europe's competitiveness by removing barriers to the innovation ecosystem, building a sustainable technological future and supporting innovation stakeholders. [Read more](#)



Automated border control

On 12 October, the Entry/Exit System (EES), an automated border control system, came into force. This system allows for the electronic monitoring of entries, exits, refusals of entry and lengths of stay for nationals of non-European Union countries travelling within the Schengen area for a short stay of less than three months. It aims to make border checks more reliable, while strengthening the fight against irregular immigration and improving the level of internal security for European Union citizens. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Denmark :



Speech by the Prime Minister of Greenland to the European Parliament

On 8 October, the Prime Minister of Greenland, Jens-Frederik Nielsen, emphasised the great potential for strengthening cooperation between Greenland and the European Union to MEPs. He discussed mining, with Greenland possessing 24 of the 34 critical minerals identified by the European Union, renewable energy, the digital divide, youth education and sustainable tourism. He also emphasised the importance of trade relations, particularly with regard to fishery resources. [Read more](#)

■ France :



New French government led by Sébastien Lecornu

On 10 October, Sébastien Lecornu was reappointed as Prime Minister, four days after resigning. The new government, announced on 12 October, comprises 19 ministers, including 10 men and 9 women, and 15 deputy ministers. The Council of Ministers will meet on 14 October with the draft budget as its priority agenda item. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Luxembourg :



Speech by Luc Frieden to the European Parliament

On 7 October, Luxembourg Prime Minister Luc Frieden told MEPs that Europe must reassert its fundamental values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law. He stressed the need to 'revive hope and show that membership of the European Union is realistic and achievable' and called for a faster and clearer timetable for countries wishing to join. He expressed his support for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Finally, he welcomed the European Commission's proposals to raise more funds, step up joint defence procurement and develop Europe's industrial base. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Portugal :



Budget: surplus and debt reduction

On 9 October, the Portuguese government presented its 2026 budget, described as 'reformist and pioneering' by Portuguese Finance Minister Joaquim Miranda Sarmento. It introduces a new method of accounting analysis and, for the first time, adopts programme-based budgeting covering the entire central administration and social security. Clear objectives and performance indicators aim to enhance transparency, efficiency and accountability. The document forecasts economic growth of over 2% in 2026, while maintaining a budget surplus and reducing public debt to less than 90% of GDP, a first in 16 years. [Read more](#)

■ Kosovo :



Procedure to establish Parliament finalised

On 10 October, the President of the Kosovo Parliament, Dimal Basha, declared that the Parliament could finally begin functioning following the election of the last Vice-President, Nenad Rasic, from the Serbian community in Kosovo. This election brings an end to nearly nine months of deadlock and paves the way for the formation of a new government. The Kosovo Parliament has thus emerged from its impasse, although the balance remains fragile. [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



Moldova is connected to the Single Euro Payments Area

On 6 October, Moldova became an operational member of the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), the system that allows euro transfers between participating countries at the same cost and with the same security. It brings together the European Union Member States, the United Kingdom and the countries of the European Economic Area. According to Anca Dragu, Governor of the National Bank of Moldova: 'Moldova's integration into SEPA is a historic moment for the national financial system and confirms the country's European path.' [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Reducing and eliminating customs duties for several agri-food products

On 13 October, the Council adopted a decision on the reduction or elimination of customs duties for various agri-food products from Ukraine, such as dairy products, fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and meat preparations. This decision follows the preliminary agreement on the revision of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) between the EU and Ukraine, concluded by the European Commission and Ukraine on 30 June 2025 with the aim of establishing a long-term, predictable and reciprocal trade framework in the broader context of Ukraine's accession process. [Read more](#)

■ IMF :



Opportunities in times of change

On 8 October, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva called on governments to focus their efforts on three priorities: reviving sustainable growth through reforms and an investment-friendly environment; consolidating public finances while maintaining crisis response capacity; and correcting economic imbalances to prevent instability. She tailored these recommendations to specific regional circumstances: strengthening economic integration in Asia, accelerating reforms in sub-Saharan Africa, and making concrete progress on the single market in Europe. Addressing the latter, Kristalina Georgieva made a direct appeal: 'Build a single European financial system. Build an energy union.' [Read more](#)

■ Prize :



Nobel Prize 2025

This year, several Europeans have been awarded Nobel Prizes. On 7 October, Frenchman Michel Devoret received the Nobel Prize in Physics. He was honoured alongside Briton John Clarke and American John M. Martinis for their work on macroscopic quantum mechanics. On 9 October, Hungarian writer László Krasznahorkai received the Nobel Prize in Literature. Finally, on 13 October, the Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded to three economists, including Frenchman Philippe Aghion. The winners argue that growth cannot be taken for granted. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Annual report of the European Court of Auditors

On 9 October, the European Court of Auditors published its annual report on the budget and expenditure of the European Union. The report concludes that the European Union's accounts for 2024 present a true and fair view of the financial situation and that the revenue-related transactions are free from error. However, it highlights problems with customs duties, which are at risk of being undeclared or incorrectly declared by importers. The level of error in European Union expenditure, which was 5.6% in 2023, stood at 3.6% in 2024. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Progress in the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism

On 8 October, the European Banking Authority (EBA) published a study on improving the supervision of banks in the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism in the European Union and the European Economic Area (EEA). The results show significant progress. It concludes that the creation of the European Anti-Money Laundering Authority (AMLA) will further strengthen the effectiveness of supervision in the Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Culture :



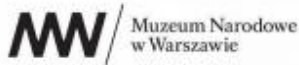
Guido Reni in Turin

Until 18 January 2026, the exhibition 'The Divine Guido Reni in the Savoy Collections and on the Altars of Piedmont' is on display at the Espace Découvertes of the Galleria Sabauda in Turin, marking the 450th anniversary of the painter's birth. This is an opportunity to discover the appreciation of the Court of Savoy, from the birth of the ducal collections through the works of the Royal Museums and loans from the Musée des Augustins in Toulouse. [Read more](#)



Lumière Festival in Lyon

Until 19 October, Lyon is hosting the Lumière film festival. Every year, the birthplace of the Lumière cinematograph celebrates its memory and vitality through a contemporary look at works from the past (restored films, retrospectives, guests, tributes, film concerts, etc.). Thanks to all the cinemas in Lyon and its metropolitan area, the festival shines throughout the city and reaches a wide audience. [Read more](#)



James Ensor/Witold Wojtkiewicz in Warsaw

The National Museum in Warsaw is hosting an exhibition until 11 January 2026 that compares the works of two artists from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Belgian James Ensor and Polish Witold Wojtkiewicz. It explores themes such as masquerade, theatre, circus, dreams, eroticism and death. Known for their taste for the fantastic, irony and the grotesque, these two artists were deeply rooted in their respective cultures and artistic circles: the modernist circles of La Jeune Belgique and Young Poland. [Read more](#)



Frankfurt Book Fair

From 15 to 19 October, the Frankfurt Book Fair brings together publishing professionals, authors, journalists and culture enthusiasts from around the world. A global benchmark for the print and digital book industry, this event is also a major international showcase for literary and artistic creation. This year, the Philippines is the guest of honour, offering a window onto the wealth of its literature and contemporary arts scene. [Read more](#)



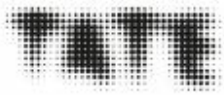
Maria Helena Vieira da Silva in Bilbao

Until 22 February 2026, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is hosting the exhibition 'Maria Helena Vieira da Silva. Anatomy of Space'. This exhibition looks back at the artist's work from the 1930s to the 1980s, exploring her relationship with urban architectural landscapes and the importance of memory in her work. The exhibition is based on a selection of paintings that reveal the constant and iterative deployment of abstract forms and optical illusions throughout her career. Another key aspect addressed here is the relationship between abstraction and figuration in her work. [Read more](#)



Surrealism in Berlin

Until 1 March 2026, Berlin's Neue Nationalgalerie is hosting the exhibition: 'From Max Ernst to Dorothea Tanning. Networks of Surrealism. Provenances from the Ulla and Heiner Pietzsch Collection'. In collaboration with the State of Berlin, this exhibition highlights the many paths taken by Surrealist artworks, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, and also illustrates how historical circumstances, personal relationships and networks contributed to the movement's international spread. [Read more](#)



Nigerian Modernism in London

The Tate Modern in London is hosting an exhibition that traces the development of modern art in Nigeria, from the colonial period to the decades following independence after 1960. Running until 10 May 2026, it features more than 50 artists, painters, sculptors, ceramists and photographers, with some 250 works on display. [Read more](#)



LUX Audience Award 2026

On 7 October, the titles of the five films competing for the LUX Audience Award 2026 were announced. The LUX Prize, awarded by the European Parliament and the European Film Academy, aims to encourage European creativity in all its diversity. The winner will be announced in April 2026. [Read more](#)



PHILHARMONIE
DE PARIS

Kandinsky in Paris

Until 1 February 2026, the Philharmonic Music Museum in Paris, in partnership with the National Museum of Modern Art - Centre Georges Pompidou, are joining forces to unveil the exhibition 'The Music of Colours'. This collaboration aims to showcase the fundamental role music played in Kandinsky's daily life, in his vocation as an artist and in the evolution of his practice towards abstraction. His love of music led him to question the principle of imitating nature, to the point of dissolving it altogether. [Read more](#)

Agenda :

 13-17 October 2025

2025 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (Washington DC)

 13-14 October

"Home Affairs" Council (Luxembourg)

 15 October 2025

Foreign Affairs (Defence) Council (Luxembourg)

 17 October 2025

"Employment, Social Policy" Council (Luxembourg)

 20 October 2025

"Foreign Affairs" Council "Energy" Council (Luxembourg)



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