

Letter n°1129 of Tuesday 28th October 2025

The Georgian challenge, a challenge for Europe

Salomé Zourabichvili - 28 Oct 2025

Georgia, long committed to European integration, is undergoing a major political crisis: the current government, under Russian influence, has halted the process of European Union accession and dismantled democratic institutions. This authoritarian drift threatens the country's sovereignty and illustrates Moscow's hybrid strategy of extending its influence without resorting to military force. For Europe, the Georgian case represents a crucial test of its ability to defend democracy, respond to Russian interference and assert its geopolitical role in the South Caucasus and Black Sea region.



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■ Front page! :



Ukraine: When Europe sets the tone

The European Union is taking a firm stance against Russia in Ukraine, in contrast to American diplomacy, which is seen as fluctuating. With more than €180 billion in total aid, it far exceeds the United States and provides more military equipment. Its support is based on the rejection of any change in borders by force and on the defence of international law. United, Europe is showing that it can make its own long-term decisions for its own security and that of Ukraine by imposing its position: a ceasefire without territorial concessions and 19 sanctions against Moscow. [Read more](#)

■ Elections :



Catherine Connolly wins Irish presidential election

Catherine Connolly, an independent candidate supported by the left, won the Irish presidential election on 24 October with 63.36% of the vote, ahead of Heather Humphreys (Fine Gael, 29.46%). Jim Gavin (Fianna Fail), who withdrew his candidacy in early October but whose name remained on the ballot, obtained 7.18% of the vote. Turnout stood at 45.83%, while a record 12.89% of ballots were spoiled, revealing a high level of disaffection with the political class. Catherine Connolly is the third woman to become head of the Irish state. She will succeed Michael D. Higgins on 11 November. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



The Schuman Report 2025 is now available!

As every year, the 'Schuman Report 2025' brings together leading contributions, such as that of Georgia's 5th President Salome Zurbashvili, original maps and statistical studies with commentary on major themes for the European Union this year: the 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. Order your copy now! [Read more](#)

■ European Council :



European Council conclusions

On 23 October, the 27 Heads of State and Government called on Russia to engage in meaningful peace negotiations and to agree to an immediate ceasefire. They stressed the importance of strengthening training for the Ukrainian armed forces and deliveries of air defence systems and large-calibre ammunition. They discussed how to increase Europe's defence preparedness by 2030. On the Middle East, they welcomed the agreement reached on the first phase of US President Donald Trump's peace proposal for Gaza and called for the immediate and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid. Finally, European leaders held a discussion on how to strengthen the Union's competitiveness, with a focus on simplification and the green and digital transitions. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Strategy for generational renewal in agriculture

On 21 October, the European Commission presented a strategy for generational renewal in agriculture, which sets out a clear roadmap for supporting young farmers and attracting more people to agriculture. It aims to double the proportion of young farmers in the European Union by 2040, so that young and new farmers will eventually represent around 24% of European farmers. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Anti-dumping measures against China

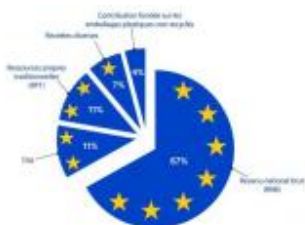
On 23 October, the European Commission imposed anti-dumping measures on imports into the European Union of stud bolts originating in China. The definitive anti-dumping duties imposed range from 54.7% to 72.3%. The imposition of duties follows an investigation that revealed unfair trade practices. [Read more](#)



Work programme for 2026

On 21 October, the European Commission unveiled its work programme for 2026. Entitled 'Europe's moment of independence', it advocates administrative and legislative simplification, a more sovereign and independent Europe in the areas of defence and energy, and the management of the affordability and cost-of-living crisis. It supports European farmers in becoming more resilient to climate change and protects democratic institutions against extremism and disinformation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Parliament :



2026 budget: priority given to competitiveness and defence

On 22 October, MEPs set out the broad guidelines for the EU's 2026 budget. They are proposing a budget of €193.9 billion, an increase of €597.8 million compared to the Commission's proposal. They want to increase the funds allocated to Horizon Europe and to transport and energy networks for research and infrastructure. They have requested more funding for the EU's neighbourhood policies, as well as additional funding for military mobility, i.e. the capacity of transport infrastructure to handle the weight, size and scale of military movements. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Revision of European driving licence rules

On 22 October, MEPs voted in support of a revision of European driving licence rules, particularly with regard to young drivers, digital licences and licence withdrawals. The aim is to improve road safety and reduce the number of accidents, with nearly 20,000 people losing their lives on European roads every year. Driving licences will be valid for 15 years for motorcycles and cars, with the possibility for Member States to reduce the validity period to 10 years if a driving licence is used as a national identity document. Finally, for the first time, European regulations establish a probationary period of at least two years for novice drivers. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Reform of chemical substance regulations

On 21 October, MEPs adopted three texts forming a reform of European regulations on chemical substances. The first strengthens cooperation between European agencies by transferring several scientific tasks to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). The second entrusts this agency with the assessment of exemptions and the revision of lists of banned substances. The third creates a common data platform on chemicals, centralising information to make it accessible, interoperable and reusable. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Solidarity with Belarusian democratic movements

On 22 October, MEPs approved a resolution condemning the Lukashenko government's crackdown on democratic movements in Belarus. They also called for the immediate release of political prisoners and the restoration of their rights. Finally, they called for free and democratic elections to be held under the supervision of international observers. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Foreign Ministers' Meeting

On 20 October, Foreign Ministers held a discussion on how to increase pressure on Russia through the 19th package of sanctions. They adopted conclusions on relations between the European Union and the Indo-Pacific region and approved conclusions strongly condemning the ongoing conflict in Sudan. They discussed the first phase of the comprehensive plan to end the conflict in Gaza. [Read more](#)



Meeting of Environment Ministers

On 21 October, Environment Ministers approved conclusions on preparations for the Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém from 10 to 21 November. They adopted conclusions on the European strategy to combat water scarcity and stressed the need for stronger and more coherent action to protect and restore marine biodiversity. They welcomed the European Commission's comprehensive approach in the European Ocean Pact, which links ocean health, the blue economy and coastal communities. [Read more](#)



Eurozone summit

On 23 October, heads of state and government met for a Eurozone summit. Leaders expressed their unity and determination to strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of the European Union's economies. In particular, they promoted the digital euro, which would enhance Europe's strategic sovereignty and economic security. [Read more](#)



19th package of sanctions against Russia

On 23 October, the Council adopted the 19th package of sanctions, comprising 69 new lists of targeted individuals and several restrictive economic measures. These target sectors such as energy, finance and the military industry. Among other things, this package introduces a ban on imports of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) into the EU, starting in January 2027 for long-term contracts and within six months for short-term contracts. It strengthens the ban on transactions with Rosneft and Gazprom Neft. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



First summit with Egypt

At the European Union-Egypt summit on 22 October, both parties announced the launch of a dialogue on security and defence, including the fight against terrorism, cyber security and maritime security, particularly in the Red Sea, notably through the EUNAVFOR Aspides and Atalanta operations. Both parties welcomed the Mediterranean Pact, which aims to strengthen regional cooperation. In addition, the EU has committed to a €7.4 billion package, to be supplemented by €5 billion in additional investments by 2027, to support the Egyptian economy. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



18th meeting with Uzbekistan

On 21 October, the 18th meeting with Uzbekistan was held in Luxembourg. Both sides reiterated their strong commitment to deepening political and economic cooperation. Discussions focused on flagship projects under the Global Gateway strategy (digital connectivity) and cooperation on trade, investment, energy, climate, digitalisation and critical raw materials. Regional and international issues, including Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, as well as Afghanistan and the South Caucasus, were also addressed. [Read more](#)

■ European Agencies :



Cyprus signs association agreement with European Space Agency

After a decade of cooperation, Cyprus signed an association agreement with the European Space Agency (ESA) on 23 October. The country will ratify the agreement and plans to obtain associate member status by early 2026, during its presidency of the Council of the European Union. [Read more](#)



Trial of 132 members of the Ndrangheta mafia

On 21 October, in a 'maxi-trial' involving 132 members of the Ndrangheta mafia arrested in 2023, 76 of the defendants were tried by the court in Reggio Calabria. The first judicial decision was handed down and the competent judge sentenced the defendants to a total of 1,098 years in prison and a fine of €440,000. The joint operation involving the Italian, Belgian, German, French, Portuguese, Slovenian, Spanish, Romanian and even Brazilian and Panamanian authorities is considered one of the greatest successes against the Italian multi-crime network to date. The support of Eurojust and Europol in the investigation was crucial given the large number of countries involved. [Read more](#)



Airbus, Thales and Leonardo merge their space activities

On 23 October, European companies Airbus, Thales and Leonardo signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create a European leader in the space sector. They will combine their satellite production and space services systems by 2027. The aim of this project is to generate significant synergies and encourage innovation in order to strengthen European autonomy in the space sector in areas such as telecommunications, global navigation, Earth observation, science, exploration and national security. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ France :



French President's visit to Slovenia

On 21 and 22 October, French President Emmanuel Macron visited Slovenia to meet with his Slovenian counterpart Nataša Pirc Musar and Prime Minister Robert Golob. The visit provided an opportunity for the two countries to strengthen their strategic partnership and to promote and launch joint cooperation initiatives, particularly in the industrial and maritime sectors. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Hungary :



Péter Magyar, Viktor Orbán's main opponent

Six months before the general election, a new political figure has emerged in Hungary: Péter Magyar, a former ally of Fidesz who has become Viktor Orbán's main opponent. On 23 October, he gathered hundreds of thousands of people in Budapest, surpassing the Prime Minister's mobilisation. Founder of the Tisza movement, he embodies a centrist and reformist alternative, promising to restore the rule of law and fight corruption. For the first time in fifteen years, the Hungarian head of government faces credible opposition, driven by a discourse of democratic renewal. [Read more](#)

■ The Netherlands :



Latest polls before the general election

On 29 October, early parliamentary elections will be held in the Netherlands following the collapse of the government, caused by the departure of Geert Wilders' PVV party from the ruling coalition. According to the latest polls, this party is expected to win 17-19% of the vote, followed by the Labour Party allied with the Green Left (PvdA-GL) 16%, Democrats 66 (D66) 15%, Christian Democrats (CDA) 14% and the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) 12%. The other parties are expected to receive less than 10% of the vote. [Read more](#)

■ Slovenia :



12th Summit of the Southern Country of the European Union

On 20 October, the 12th Summit of the Southern Countries of the European (MED9) was held in Portorož. Leaders reiterated that strengthening the Union's strategic autonomy, economic security and competitiveness remained a priority. They stressed the importance of cooperation with Mediterranean regional organisations and welcomed Cyprus's initiative to place the Mediterranean at the heart of its upcoming Council Presidency (January-June 2026), in particular through the implementation of the Mediterranean Pact and the strengthening of regional relations. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Moldova :



New Prime Minister

On 24 October, Moldovan President Maia Sandu appointed economist and businessman Alexandru Munteanu as Prime Minister, following his party's victory in the 28 September parliamentary elections. She asked him to form a government capable of 'meeting the most important expectations of citizens: ensuring peace, preparing the country for accession to the European Union, strengthening the economy and improving the standard of living of the population'. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ UK :



Meeting of the Coalition of the Willing

On 24 October, the 26 countries of the Coalition of the Willing supporting Ukraine met in London to discuss the delivery of long-range weapons and the use of frozen Russian assets. They reiterated their support for Ukraine and welcomed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's willingness to agree to a ceasefire. Participants decided to increase economic pressure on Russia, including by reducing its energy exports and limiting trade with Moscow. They also announced financial support for Ukraine for 2026-2027, through the mobilisation of frozen Russian assets. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Switzerland :



Swiss association with EU programmes

On 21 October, ministers gave the green light for Switzerland to join EU programmes such as Horizon Europe, Euratom Research and Training, ITER/Fusion for Energy (F4E), Digital Europe, Erasmus+ and EU4Health. This agreement is part of a broader set of bilateral agreements negotiated between the European Union and the Swiss Confederation in 2024. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Towards the establishment of an International Claims Commission for Ukraine

On 22 October, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe approved a draft convention establishing an International Claims Commission for Ukraine. This is the second part of a comprehensive compensation mechanism provided for in the Reykjavik Declaration, adopted in 2023, which involves collecting, examining and compensating for damage and losses caused by the Russian army. This mechanism will strengthen the Damage Register for Ukraine, which has been collecting claims since early 2024. The draft convention will be adopted and opened for signature at a diplomatic conference on 16 December 2025 in The Hague. [Read more](#)



Letter of intent for the delivery of Gripen aircraft to Ukraine

On 22 October, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signed a letter of intent providing for the delivery of 100 to 150 Saab JAS Gripen E fighter aircraft to Ukraine from January 2026. This represents one of the best exports for this aircraft and a major development for the Ukrainian army's air capability. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



EIB provides €46 million to support cities in Ukraine

On 21 October, the European Investment Bank (EIB) disbursed €46.2 million to support projects designed to help Ukrainian municipalities restore essential public infrastructure and ensure the continuity of basic services for the population. This financing is backed by a European Union guarantee under the Investment Facility for Ukraine set up by the European Commission. [Read more](#)

■ Vatican :



Meeting between Charles III and Pope Leo XIV

On 23 October, King Charles III of England visited the Vatican to celebrate the 2025 Jubilee. This visit was the first meeting between the two leaders since the election of Pope Leo XIV last May. It also provided an opportunity for King Charles III of England to pray alongside Pope Leo XIV, a first since the schism of the Church in the 16th century that separated the Anglican Church from the Catholic Church. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Prize :



Sakharov Prize and Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize

On 22 October, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola announced the winners of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought: Andrzej Poczobut, a journalist from the Polish minority in Belarus, known for his criticism of the regime, imprisoned since 2021 and sentenced to eight years' detention, and Mzia Amaglobeli, director of the Georgian media outlets Batumelebi and Netgazeti, arrested in January 2025 for participating in an anti-government demonstration. The day before, on 21 October, the Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize for Journalism was awarded to the Dutch media outlet Follow the Money for its investigation into the Russian ghost fleet. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Culture :



Gerhard Richter in Paris

Until 2 March 2026, the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris is dedicating all of its facilities to German painter Gerhard Richter, considered one of the most important artists of his generation and enjoying international recognition. For the first time, an exhibition offers a comprehensive overview of sixty years of creation in the practice of a studio painter. [Read more](#)



Art fair in Turin

From 31 October to 2 November, the contemporary art fair Artissima will be held in Turin, with 176 Italian and international galleries participating, 63 of which will present monographic projects. The galleries come from 36 countries and 5 continents. The theme is 'Operations Manual for Spaceship Earth', inspired by the eclectic figure of Richard Buckminster Fuller, American architect and designer. [Read more](#)



Michael Kenna in Nice

Until 25 January 2026, the Museum of Photography in Nice is presenting the exhibition 'Constellation', a retrospective of the work of Michael Kenna, a leading figure in contemporary black-and-white photography. The exhibition brings together 124 silver prints, selected from a corpus of around 4,000 works. It highlights natural, urban and industrial landscapes, particularly in the north of England. [Read more](#)



Exhibition in Milton Keynes

Until 25 January 2026, the Milton Keynes Art Gallery is hosting the exhibition: 'Improvising a Mountain'. Curated by figurative painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, this exhibition brings together a diverse group of international artists working in the fields of painting, sculpture, photography, film and drawing from the 19th century to the present day. 'Improvising a Mountain' invites visitors on a contemplative journey through pieces that address themes of identity, beauty, activism and intimacy, ranging from the post-impressionism of Bonnard, Vuillard and Sickert to the radical video essays of the Otolith group. [Read more](#)



Masterpieces on paper in Zurich

The exhibition 'Making an Impression! Masterpieces on paper, from Albrecht Dürer to Dieter Roth' presents more than 80 works from six centuries at the Kunsthhaus Zurich until 25 January 2026. It brings together the most important representatives of printmaking and presents masterful etchings and woodcuts that highlight the work of the motif and technical mastery. The exhibition does not follow a strict chronology, but is organised by type of technique. It thus allows visitors to understand how the same process has given rise to very different forms of expression over the centuries. [Read more](#)



Chez Matisse in Madrid

Until 22 February 2026, the CaixaForum Museum in Madrid is hosting the exhibition: 'Chez Matisse, the legacy of a new painting'. This exhibition explores Matisse's career, development, significance and influence on international artists and avant-garde movements. The exhibition highlights part of the dialogue surrounding his name in 20th- and 21st-century art, from his first self-portrait to the artistic freedom of his later paintings and gouaches. [Read more](#)

MUSEUM BARBERINI POTSDAM

The Myth of the Unicorn in Potsdam

Until 1 February 2026, the Barberini Museum in Potsdam is hosting the exhibition: 'Unicorn: The Mythical Beast in Art'. This exhibition, in partnership with the Cluny Museum and the Grand Palais in Paris, brings together nearly 150 pieces of art spanning a period of around 4,000 years, including paintings, drawings, engravings, illuminated manuscripts, sculptures and tapestries. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 27-28/10/2025

"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council (Luxembourg)

 29-30/10/2025

ECB Council of Governors (Florence)

 29/10/2025

General Elections (The Netherlands)



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