

**Letter n°1135 of Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

## The European Space Context after ESA's 2025 Ministerial Council Meeting

Josef Aschbacher - 09 Dec 2025

Space has become essential to modern societies and the global economy, but Europe is losing ground to the great powers. ESA, which has celebrated its 50th anniversary, is launching Strategy 2040 to strengthen sustainability, autonomy, innovation and exploration, while modernising its methods. The 2025 ministerial meeting validated this ambition, with a record subscription from its members to take up the challenges. Thanks to these reforms, Europe intends to consolidate its resilience and its strategic role in a space sector undergoing radical change.



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### ■ Front page! :



#### Trumpism, a full-scale ideology

The publication of the US Security Strategy on 5 December confirms what was already apparent: this President of the United States considers Europe to be in decline and, in order to reverse its policies, intends to promote nationalist opposition in the Member States. Fighting against this is now a duty and a matter of urgency for Europe. It is a vital necessity within Europe and an imperative outside Europe for the fate of the world. [Read more](#)

### ■ Foundation :



## New NextGenerationEU disbursements

On 1 and 2 December, the European Commission made further disbursements under NextGenerationEU. Bulgaria received its 3rd payment request for €1.6 billion. Croatia received a positive assessment of its 7th payment claim for €1.1 billion. Italy received a positive assessment for its 8th payment claim of €12.8 billion. Lastly, Poland received its 3rd payment of €6.2 billion. Details of these disbursements are available on the Foundation's website. [Read more](#)



## Offer the 'Schuman Report' for Christmas!

As every year, the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union" brings together leading contributions, previously unpublished maps and commented statistical studies on the major challenges facing the Union in 2025: defence and security, European competitiveness and investment in the space sector. It is available in bookshops, on the Foundation's website and in digital format. Order your copy now! [Read more](#)

## ■ Commission :



## Meeting Ukraine's financing needs

On 3 December, the European Commission proposed two options for financing Ukraine's needs in 2026-2027. Firstly, collective borrowing, which involves raising funds on the financial markets by issuing bonds guaranteed by the European budget. Secondly, the repair loan mechanism, which would enable the Commission to borrow not on the financial markets, but directly from EU financial institutions that hold assets of the Russian Central Bank that are currently frozen as a result of the sanctions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Strengthening economic security

On 3 December, the European Commission presented a strategy for strengthening economic security, aimed at reducing strategic dependencies for goods and services; attracting secure investment; supporting a dynamic European defence and space industry; ensuring EU leadership in critical technologies; protecting sensitive information and data; and protecting Europe's critical infrastructure. The strategy highlights the ResourceEU proposal, which aims to secure supply chains for critical raw materials and boost the EU's competitiveness. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Fully integrating financial markets

On 4 December, the European Commission presented measures to simplify the potential of the single market in financial services with the aim of creating a more integrated, efficient and competitive financial system. The proposed measures include improving passporting opportunities for regulated markets and central securities depositories, introducing 'pan-European market operator' status for trading platform operators, and strengthening the coordinating role of the European Securities and Markets Authority for the asset management sector. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



## Fine imposed on social network X

On 5 December, the European Commission fined X €120 million for breaching its transparency obligations. Three breaches were found: the misleading use of its 'blue verified label', which can be purchased without any real verification of the identity of the person behind the account; the lack of transparency of its advertising directory; and finally, X did not comply with its obligations under the legislative package concerning researchers' access to the platform's public data. The procedures put in place by X for researchers' access to public data impose unnecessary barriers. [Read more](#)



## New drugs strategy

On 4 December, the Commission presented its new anti-drugs strategy and a new action plan against drug trafficking to protect citizens and disrupt criminal networks. The strategy adopts a comprehensive approach, focusing, among other things, on improving preparedness and response to drug-related threats, protecting public health and enhancing security. [Read more](#)

## ■ Council :



## Meeting of Defence Ministers

On 1 December, the defence ministers discussed defence industrial cooperation with Ukraine and how to mobilise additional private funding. They discussed military mobility and guidelines on how to strengthen the European Defence Agency (EDA). [Read more](#)



## Meeting of Transport and Telecommunications Ministers

On 4 December, the transport ministers proposed amending the directive laying down maximum authorised dimensions and weights for certain road vehicles so as to support the transition to zero-emission vehicles. They proposed a complete overhaul of European rules on road safety and vehicle registration. On 5 December, the digital ministers called for the implementation of the Digital Decade 2030 action programme to be speeded up. They stressed that simplification in the digital field should focus on reducing regulatory burdens for businesses, SMEs and public authorities. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Meeting of Employment and Health Ministers

On 1 and 2 December, the Employment ministers adopted a position on a directive aimed at extending the scope of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, improving the prevention of occupational diseases and protecting workers from exposure to harmful substances. On 2 December, their counterparts in the Health sector adopted their position on the legislative act on critical medicines, which aims to strengthen Europe's resilience in the face of supply challenges. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Trilogues :



## Revision of the regulation on deforestation

On 4 December, the Council and the European Parliament reached agreement on a targeted revision of the regulation on products free from deforestation. The aim is to simplify its implementation and focus on reducing administrative burdens while preserving the aims of the regulation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Improving the competitiveness of the agri-food sector

On 4 December, negotiators from the Council and the European Parliament reached agreement on rules establishing a legal framework for the use of certain plants derived from new genomic techniques (NGT). The regulation aims to improve the competitiveness of the agri-food sector and ensure a level playing field for European operators. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Stepping up the fight against corruption

On 2 December, negotiators from the Council and the European Parliament reached agreement on minimum standards for the way Member States define and punish corruption offences in their criminal codes. The agreement contains measures to prevent corruption and rules for more effective investigation and prosecution. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Towards a competitive European wine sector

On 4 December, the Council and the European Parliament reached agreement on a modernised policy framework to support a competitive European wine sector. The updated measures are designed to better balance supply and demand, strengthen adaptation to climate change, simplify and harmonise labelling practices, encourage innovation, increase planting flexibility and boost rural economies through wine tourism. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Ending dependence on Russian gas once and for all

On 3 December, the Council and the European Parliament reached agreement on a regulation aimed at phasing out imports of Russian natural gas. The regulation introduces a legally binding and progressive ban on gas imports from Russia. Member States will have to present national plans outlining measures to diversify their gas and oil supplies by 1 March 2026. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)







## Launch of the KOMPSAT-7 satellite

On 1 December, Arianespace successfully launched the KOMPSAT-7 satellite using the VEGA-C launcher. This is the 6th launch for Arianespace in 2025. The aim of this mission is to support South Korea's space programme by providing high-resolution satellite images. The Vega 'VV28' rocket lifted off from the European spaceport at Kourou in French Guiana. [Read more](#)

## ■ Germany :



### Polish-German consultations

On 1 December, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz chaired bilateral consultations in Berlin, focusing on security and defence. A new 'sign of the times' in the relationship between the two countries is cooperation in the military field, notably in the development of infrastructures designed to strengthen security. Energy policy also illustrates another development in relations between the two countries. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Cyprus :



### Government reshuffle

On 8 December, four new ministers (Labour, Justice, Health, Social Affairs) were sworn in and two ministers changed portfolio (Energy), in the presence of Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides. While none of the four new ministers has any ministerial experience, some are prominent figures in Cypriot public life. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Czech Republic :



### Czech President appoints Andrej Babiš as new Prime Minister

The leader of the ANO party, Andrej Babiš, who came first in the general elections on 4 October, was appointed Prime Minister on 9 December, after giving up the Agrofert holding company, a condition imposed by the President of the Republic, Petr Pavel. [Read more](#)

## ■ Kosovo :



## 22 Parties contending in the elections

On 2 December, the Kosovar Electoral Commission announced that it had approved 22 political parties to take part in the snap election on 28 December. Of the 24 initial candidates, only two were rejected: NISMA and Srpska Lista, the latter having failed to win enough votes. The refusal to validate the Serbian List prompted a wave of negative criticism from the international community. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Ukraine :



### Ukrainian President visits France

On 1 December, French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He expressed once again his support for the Ukrainian people and his desire to ensure a just and lasting peace. In particular, Emmanuel Macron questioned the legitimacy of the American peace plan, stating that peace guarantees 'cannot be discussed or negotiated without the Ukrainians and without the Europeans being around the table'. [Read more](#)



### Meeting with the President of Cyprus

On 4 December, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met his Cypriot counterpart Nikos Christodoulides in Kyiv for the first time. They discussed support for Ukraine's accession to the EU, underlining the importance of the Cypriot Presidency of the EU Council in the first half of 2026 for progress in the negotiations. [Read more](#)



### New economic partnership with Ireland

On 2 December, Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin welcomed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Dublin. He announced €125 million in financial assistance for Ukraine as part of the 'Ukraine-Ireland Partnership Roadmap 2030'. This agreement contains measures to bring the two countries strategically closer together, including political and security cooperation, the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine, cooperation in innovation and education, the creation of the Ireland-Ukraine Economic Forum and cultural cooperation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ NATO :





## Renewed commitment to investing in defence and supporting Ukraine

On 3 December, the foreign ministers, in the absence of the US Secretary of State, stressed the need to show strength and unity, and to define as a priority a credible trajectory of devoting 5% of GDP to defence spending. A meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council was held, at which new commitments to Ukraine were announced. [Read more](#)

## ■ Studies/Reports :



### Report on gender inequality at work

On 2 December, the European Institute for Gender Equality published data on equality between men and women at work. According to the report, a woman has to work an average of 15 and a half months to earn what a man earns in 12 months. Despite the progress made by the European Union, full equality will not be achieved for at least another 50 years. The annual report, which monitors the EU's progress towards full equality, gives the EU an overall score of 63.4 out of 100. [Read more](#)



### OECD Economic Outlook

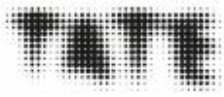
On December 2, the OECD published its Economic Outlook for 2025, according to which the world economy has proved more resilient than expected. However, underlying fragilities are building up, particularly in the labour market: despite a stable unemployment rate of 4.9% in the OECD area, the number of job vacancies is now below the 2019 average in many countries, while confidence is eroding. Global GDP growth is expected to reach 2.9% in 2026, and 3.1% in 2027. [Read more](#)

## ■ Culture :



### Kandinsky in Gallarate

The exhibition 'Kandinsky and Italy' is on at the Gallarate Art Museum until 12 April 2026. The exhibition focuses on the significance of the artist's work and thought in relation to the European art scene and, in particular, the great era of Italian abstract art that developed between the 1930s and the 1950s. Through 130 works, the exhibition traces the birth of abstract art and its development in Europe and Italy, a legacy that remains vital to contemporary creative language. [Read more](#)



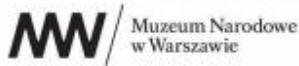
## Emilija Škarnulytė at St Ives

Until 12 April 2026, Tate Saint Ives is hosting the exhibition 'Emilija Škarnulytė'. Straddling the border between the documentary and the imaginary, the Lithuanian artist creates immersive films and installations that explore deep time and invisible systems, as well as the structures of power potentially concealed within the cosmic and geological order. In her work, Cold War military bases, neutrino observatories, disused nuclear power stations and underwater data storage units become the remnants of a vanished human culture. [Read more](#)



## Daniel Dezeuze in Sète

Until 8 March 2026, the Musée Paul Valéry in Sète is hosting the 'Daniel Dezeuze' exhibition. The artist constantly questions the constituent elements of painting and artistic creation. Using the simplest and most diverse materials, from hijacked materials to assemblages of scraps, the artist renews the objects of his enduring curiosity and forges disturbing works, a contemporary poetry of fragility. [Read more](#)



## Photography in Warsaw

Until 1 March 2026, Warsaw is for the first time the focus of an exhibition at the National Museum's Photography Room. On display are photographs of the city being expanded in the 1840s and 1850s, and the metamorphosis resulting from new investment in the 1880s. The architectural aspect of the streets and squares, as well as that of individual buildings shown from different angles, recall the history of this capital city in the 19th century. [Read more](#)



## Tapestries in Leipzig

Until 12 April 2026, the Leipzig Museum of Fine Arts is hosting the exhibition 'A world of threads, tapestries of modern times'. Featuring a selection of some fifty tapestries, the exhibition reveals the astonishing aesthetic wealth of this textile world, its historical development and explores its contemporary artistic relevance. [Read more](#)

Until 3 May 2026, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is presenting Arts of the Earth, an exhibition that reinterprets the transformation of artistic practices through the prism of the environment. Artists from several generations have explored ways of working with the earth. Arts of the Earth adopts an innovative museography, using local, compostable or recycled materials, as well as an innovative approach to logistics. [Read more](#)



## Season of Ukraine in France

The 'Season of Ukraine in France' was launched on 1 December. Organised jointly by the Ukrainian Institute and the French Institute, it focuses on the visual arts, performing arts, cinema, literature, digital creation, heritage and the debate on ideas. The programme allows visitors to discover new facets of Ukrainian society and culture. Taking place in several cities (Paris, Marseille, Lille, Rennes, Metz, Lyon, Toulouse, Nantes, Caen and Strasbourg), the Season aims to strengthen long-term links between France and Ukraine, by affirming culture as a major lever for resistance, transmission and the future. It will run until 31 March 2026. [Read more](#)

## ■ Agenda :



8-9 December 2025

**"Competitiveness" Council, "Justice and Internal Affairs" Council** (Brussels)

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11-12 December 2025

**"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council** (Brussels)

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11 December 2025

**Eurogroup Meeting** (Brussels)

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12 December 2025

**"Economic and Financial Affairs" Council** (Brussels)

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15 December 2025

**"Energie" Council "Foreign Affairs" Council** (Brussels)



## The Letter n°1135

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