

LA LETTRE SCHUMAN

This week's European news

Letter n°1137 of Tuesday 23rd December 2025

The Foundation wishes you a Merry Christmas and hopes that you will join us again on 12 January 2026.

European Women Leading the Way

Fondation Robert Schuman - 23 Dec 2025

The Foundation has published profiles of 27 'European Women of Influence' to highlight the decisive role played by women in the construction and influence of the European Union. Founded on the values of equality and human rights, Europe is also being built by women who innovate, make decisions and are transforming all sectors of society. Although this is still too often overlooked, this project highlights exceptional women who illustrate in a concrete way the wealth and diversity of their careers in various strategic fields, showing that anything is possible on our continent and that, through their actions and professional successes, women are shaping the future of Europe.



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■ [Front page!](#) :



Let's stop the self-loathing!

The European Union disturbs authoritarian regimes with its model based on law and values. Despite criticism from certain elites, it is supported by its citizens and remains a success. In the face of Russian aggression, it has been able to unite, impose sanctions and effectively help Ukraine. Stopping self-denigration would help Europeans to strengthen their influence and credibility. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



RAPPORT SCHUMAN
SUR L'EUROPE
L'ÉTAT DE L'UNION 2025

This Christmas, treat someone to the Schuman Report!

Christmas is coming! There's still time to give your loved ones the 2025 edition of the Schuman Report on the state of the Union. It brings together leading contributions, original maps and statistical studies with commentary on the major issues facing the European Union: security and defence, European competitiveness and the future of space. An essential work to understand everything about Europe. [Read more](#)



New publication on the Schuman Network

Since 2023, the Schuman Network has been working with 22 organisations from 13 European countries. Its 195+ shared publications demonstrate its commitment to fostering cooperation among European research centres to share reliable, high-quality analysis. Through this work, the Schuman Network is establishing itself as an essential platform for strengthening intellectual cooperation and supporting democratic resilience in Europe. [Read more](#)



Follow the progress of the NextGenerationEU recovery plan

On 19 December, the European Commission gave a positive assessment of Cyprus' fifth payment request for €70.5 million. This request is part of NextGenerationEU. Details of the implementation of this plan are available on the Foundation's website. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ European Council :



Conclusions

On 18 December, European leaders decided to provide a €90 billion loan to Ukraine for 2026 and 2027, which will be based on Union borrowing on the capital markets. Then, given the intensification of the hybrid warfare campaign by Russia and Belarus, they called for accelerated efforts to strengthen the Union's resilience and protect its critical infrastructure. Finally, they stressed the need to implement UN Security Council Resolution 2803 to end the conflict in Gaza and allow for the immediate, unimpeded and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid. They also mentioned the need to preserve economic stability and security in Lebanon and reiterated their support for a peaceful and inclusive transition in Syria. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Changes to measures for the automotive industry

On 16 December, the Commission presented changes to measures concerning the automotive industry. The regulations stipulated that 100% of new vehicles sold from 2035 onwards must be 'zero-emission'. The new plan introduces flexibility of up to 10%. This applies to manufacturers who commit to using low-carbon steel produced within the European Union and who allow the use of sustainable fuels. The 10% flexibility will enable companies to continue producing and selling hybrid, electric and combustion engine cars. [Read more](#)



Strengthening the health sector

On 16 December, the European Commission proposed measures to improve the health of Europeans while ensuring the competitiveness of the sector. These measures include, among other things, a law on biotechnology that will encourage companies to conduct research and production in Europe, speed up clinical trial authorisations in all countries, and develop new cutting-edge therapies using AI. They also include the Safe Hearts plan, which is the EU's first comprehensive approach to improving the prevention, detection and treatment of cardiovascular disease. [Read more](#)



Affordable Housing Plan

On 16 December, the European Commission presented the first European Affordable Housing Plan. With average house prices rising by more than 60% over the last ten years, millions of Europeans are struggling to find housing. The plan proposes measures to promote a more productive and innovative construction and renovation sector, which will address the mismatch between housing supply and demand. Finally, it simplifies the rules and procedures that restrict the supply of housing. [Read more](#)



Strengthening the effectiveness of the carbon border adjustment mechanism

On 17 December, the European Commission proposed measures to close loopholes so as to prevent circumvention and strengthen the effectiveness of the European Union's carbon border adjustment mechanism. It will be extended to certain downstream products that are steel- and aluminium-intensive. Key proposals include enhanced reporting requirements for better traceability of covered goods. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Strengthening Europe's defence technological and industrial base

On 16 December, MEPs adopted measures to strengthen Europe's defence technological and industrial base as part of the ReArm Europe plan. The text will make it possible to allocate more European funds to defence-related investments by amending the rules of existing programmes, such as Horizon Europe, which will support civilian applications with military potential (dual use), while continuing to develop civilian applications. In addition, 'defence technologies' will be added as the fourth strategic sector within the Strategic Technologies Platform for Europe (STEP). [Read more](#)



Simplification of the CAP and support for farmers

On 16 December, MEPs adopted new rules introducing greater flexibility and support for farmers under the Common Agricultural Policy. They agreed that small farms will be eligible for annual support of up to €3,000, as well as new one-off financial aid for business development of up to €75,000. Finally, the new rules ensure that land classified as arable on 1 January 2026 will retain that classification, even if it is not ploughed or resown. The Council adopted the text simplifying the CAP on 18 December. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Phasing out imports of Russian gas

On 17 December, MEPs approved a phased ban on imports of Russian gas via pipeline and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from 2026. Russian LNG purchased on the spot market will be banned in the EU as soon as the regulation comes into force in early 2026, while gas imports via pipeline will be phased out by 30 September 2027. [Read more](#)

■ Trilogues :



Mercosur: Agri-food safeguard clause

On 17 December, negotiators from the Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the safeguard clause for agricultural products in the trade agreement between the EU and the Mercosur countries. This clause will allow for the temporary suspension of tariff preferences on imports of certain sensitive agricultural products, such as poultry and beef, from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, if these imports are considered to be detrimental to EU producers. On 18 December, the President of the European Commission announced a one-month postponement of the signing of this trade agreement. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Overhaul of asylum policies

On 18 December, negotiators from the Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on an overhaul of asylum laws concerning the conditions for applying third-country safe status to asylum seekers who are not nationals of those countries. This new agreement extends the possible grounds for the rejection of asylum applications under three conditions with a view to making these procedures more efficient. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Better protection for retail investors

On 18 December, negotiators from the Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on new rules to protect European investors in financial markets. The new measures will enable retail investors to make informed decisions that suit their needs, while ensuring that they are treated fairly and offered products that are good value for money. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Energy Ministers

On 15 December, Energy Ministers reached agreement on the mechanism for interconnection in Europe for the years 2028-2034. They discussed the Energy Union and the need for rapid electrification and decarbonisation in a context of geopolitical uncertainty. Finally, they exchanged views on the links between energy and security with NATO Assistant Secretary General Radmila Šekerinska. [Read more](#)



Meeting of Environment Ministers

On 16 December, Environment Ministers emphasised the urgency of advancing climate resilience and the transition to a circular economy, recognising the interdependence of both issues in addressing climate and environmental challenges. They welcomed the European Union's bioeconomy strategy and reiterated the need to ensure the sustainable supply and long-term availability of biomass in the European Union, taking into account the health of ecosystems and the Union's strategic autonomy. [Read more](#)

Priorities of the Cypriot Presidency



On 21 December, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides presented the programme and priorities of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from 1 January to 30 June 2026, under the motto 'An autonomous Union. Open to the world'. The approach focuses on strengthening the Union's autonomy, particularly in terms of security and competitiveness. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Meeting of Foreign Ministers

On 15 December, Foreign Ministers discussed the geopolitical situation in the Middle East and emphasised the need to find a new partnership with Syria. In the context of discussions on Russian aggression against Ukraine, ministers imposed additional restrictive measures against nine actors of the Russian 'ghost fleet,' twelve individuals and two entities in light of Russia's continued hybrid activities, and expanded the scope of sanctions against Belarus. Finally, they adopted a declaration on the full use of the international maritime law framework in relation to threats from the 'ghost fleet' and the protection of critical underwater infrastructure. [Read more](#)



Summit with the Western Balkans

On 17 December, the EU-Western Balkans summit, chaired by European Council President Antonio Costa, was an opportunity to reaffirm the strength of the strategic relationship between the European Union and the Western Balkans. The declaration, signed at the end of the meeting by all parties except Serbia, emphasises that regional cooperation, reconciliation and good neighbourly relations are essential, and reaffirms their support and solidarity with Ukraine. The next meeting will be held in June 2026. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



9th Association Council with Lebanon

On 15 December, the European Union and Lebanon held the ninth meeting of the Association Council. Both sides reiterated their determination to deepen their partnership and work together towards a stable, secure and prosperous Lebanon. [Read more](#)

■ Court of Justice :



Failure on the part of the Polish Constitutional Court

On 18 December, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that Poland had failed to fulfil its obligations, as the Polish Constitutional Court had declared certain interpretations of the Treaties to be contrary to the Constitution and described the case law of the European Court of Justice on effective judicial protection as ultra vires, in disregard of the principles of primacy, autonomy, effectiveness and uniform application of EU law, as well as the binding nature of CJEU decisions. [Read more](#)

■ ECB :



Governing Council

On 18 December, the Governing Council of the European Central Bank (ECB) decided to keep key interest rates unchanged. At the press conference, Christine Lagarde and Luis de Guindos emphasised that monetary policy would remain dependent on incoming economic data, with all instruments available to ensure price stability and address global uncertainties, while mentioning the risks related to the external environment and wage pressures. The updated macroeconomic projections indicate that inflation is expected to fall below 2% in 2026-2027, while GDP growth remains moderate but positive in the coming years. [Read more](#)

■ European Agencies :



The United Kingdom rejoins the Erasmus programme

On 17 December, the European Union and the United Kingdom agreed that the latter would rejoin the Erasmus+ programme from 2027. They agreed to begin negotiations on reintegration into the European electricity market and a trade agreement on food and beverages. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Galileo launched by Ariane 6

On 17 December, Arianespace successfully placed two European Galileo satellites into orbit using the Ariane 6 rocket from the Guiana Space Centre. This mission, VA266, marks the fifth launch of the Ariane 6 rocket. Galileo offers optimal performance in terms of real-time geolocation on a global scale, with accuracy to within one metre. It also offers innovative features such as signal authentication and high-precision services. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Finland :



Eastern Flank Summit

On 16 December, the Presidents of Romania and Lithuania and the Prime Ministers of Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Poland and Sweden signed a joint declaration at the Eastern Flank Summit in Helsinki. They discussed the situation in Ukraine and decided that Finland and Poland would be responsible for coordinating the project to strengthen collective defence on the Eastern Flank. They emphasised the need to strengthen military cooperation. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Strategic partnership agreement with Cyprus

On 15 December, French President Emmanuel Macron hosted his Cypriot counterpart Níkos Christodoulides. They discussed the priorities of the Cypriot Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2026, as well as major international issues, such as support for Ukraine. In particular, they issued a joint statement and signed a strategic partnership agreement to strengthen their relationship in the areas of defence, the economy, culture and education. [Read more](#)



New generation aircraft carrier

French President Emmanuel Macron took the opportunity of the traditional Christmas celebration with the armed forces in the United Arab Emirates on 21 December to announce the construction of a new aircraft carrier to replace the Charles-de-Gaulle, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2026. This 'new generation' ship is scheduled to enter service in 2038. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



International Claims Commission for Ukraine

On 16 December, thirty-five countries and the European Union signed a convention establishing an International Claims Commission for Ukraine at a diplomatic conference co-organised by the Council of Europe and the Netherlands. The European Commission signed it on the same day. This signature is a major step forward in Europe's collective efforts to ensure accountability and justice for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council of Europe :



Marta Cartabia elected President of the Venice Commission

On 10 December, the Council of Europe's Venice Commission elected its new President, Marta Cartabia, President Emeritus of the Italian Constitutional Court and former Italian Minister of Justice. On the same day, the Commission adopted an updated version of the list of criteria for the rule of law. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



European institutions' priorities for 2026

On 18 December, the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission set out their legislative priorities for 2026: strengthening the European Union's competitiveness and resilience, protecting citizens and businesses, while pursuing ambitious simplification objectives. Priority will be given to policy objectives for a new era of European defence and security, to ensure Europe's sustainable prosperity, competitiveness and simplification. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Agricultural Outlook

On 16 December, the European Commission published its report entitled 'Agricultural Outlook 2025-2035'. It describes continued productivity growth, albeit at a slower pace of 0.3% per year compared to 0.9% from 2011 to 2021 for arable land, 1.2% for dairy yields and only 0.1% for cereal yields. European agriculture is moving towards more sustainable production systems with an estimated 6.1% reduction in greenhouse gases from agriculture and 8.4% from livestock farming. Finally, the average income of a European farmer is expected to increase by an average of 8% by 2035. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Publications :



Publication of the European News Journal

The European News Journal offers specialised analysis on geopolitics, security and defence. It publishes articles, interviews and commentaries by international correspondents and experts on topics such as global tensions, European defence cooperation, space, and the growing challenges of climate change and protecting populations. The first issue has just been published. [Read more](#)

■ Prizes :



Sakharov Prize awarded to Andrzej Poczobut and Mzia Amaglobeli

On 16 December, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola presented the 2025 Sakharov Prize to representatives of two journalists currently imprisoned in Belarus and Georgia, Andrzej Poczobut and Mzia Amaglobeli. Andrzej Poczobut is a journalist and essayist from the Polish minority in Belarus. He was represented by his daughter, Jana. Mzia Amaglobeli, a Georgian journalist and co-founder and director of the independent media outlets Batumelebi and Netgazeti, was represented by her colleague, Irma Dimitradze. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



Annie Leibovitz in A Coruña

The MOP Foundation in A Coruña is hosting the Wonderland exhibition, dedicated to the work of Annie Leibovitz, until 1 May 2026. It brings together four distinct sections that have never been presented before in a single exhibition. Beginning with an immersive installation dedicated to the Rolling Stones, the exhibition continues with two sections, "Early Years" and "Stream of Consciousness", which trace the evolution of the photographer's stylistic vocabulary, illustrating her creative process. [Read more](#)



Castelbajac in Toulouse

Until 23 August 2026, Les Abattoirs in Toulouse is hosting an exhibition by Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, visionary fashion designer and multifaceted artist. Featuring nearly 300 works, 'L'Imagination au pouvoir' (Imagination in Power) is an invitation to discover the many facets of an artist with boundless inventiveness, who turns clothing into a work of art, armour and adornment. [Read more](#)



Neoclassicism in Milan

The Galleria d'Italia in Milan is hosting the exhibition 'Eternal and Vision. Rome and Milan, Capitals of Neoclassicism' until 6 April 2026. The exhibition aims to capture this exceptional creative period by showcasing the highest level of artistic production in these two cities, which were oriented towards modern Europe while remaining firmly attached to the grandeur of the past, of which they considered themselves the heirs. [Read more](#)

Afif in Berlin



Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Until 13 September 2026, Berlin's contemporary art gallery, Hamburger Bahnhof, is hosting an exhibition dedicated to Saâdane Afif, offering an insight into the work of this interdisciplinary artist, particularly his multi-part work, 'The Fountain Archives'. This artistic archive project is dedicated to one of the most significant chapters in 20th-century art history: Marcel Duchamp's readymade Fountain dating from 1917. [Read more](#)

TOWNER Eastbourne

Dana Awartani in Eastbourne

Until 25 January 2026, the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne is hosting the exhibition 'Dana Awartani - Standing by the Ruins'. It pays tribute to traditional craft techniques – from mending to adobe construction methods – by collaborating with skilled artisans and using local materials, in work imbued with historical and visual references from artistic traditions. [Read more](#)



Sarah van Rij in Paris

Until 25 January 2026, artist Sarah van Rij's photographic project, which offers a unique vision of the street, somewhere between documentary observation and poetic construction, is on display at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie (MEP). The exhibition brings together urban landscapes, self-portraits and collages, through which the artist paints a poetic portrait of the modern city. [Read more](#)



New Year's Concert in Vienna

The traditional New Year's Concert will be held on 1 January at 11:15 a.m. This year, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra will be conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin. The ceremony will be broadcast live on several media outlets around the world. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 28/12/2025

General Elections (Kosovo)

 01/01/2026

Cypriot Presidency of the Council

 08/01/2026

EU Summit-Jordan



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