

Letter n°1138 of Tuesday 13th January 2026

The Foundation team wishes you a Happy New Year 2026.

The European strategic approach to technological security: the challenges posed by China

[Earl Wang](#) - 13 Jan 2026

The European Union has increased its vigilance towards China regarding critical technologies, digital infrastructure and cybersecurity, particularly since the launch of 'Made in China 2025'. Chinese investments and market restrictions have exposed economic and security risks, particularly in the high-tech and 5G sectors. The European Union has responded with tools such as foreign investment screening, the 5G toolkit and cyber sanctions. Technological security is now a key strategic issue in relations between the European Union and China.



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■ **Front page! :**



Can Europe save America?

As it is based on law, peace and the balance of power, Europe appears to be shaping up as the counter-model to the present authoritarian, mercantilist excesses of the United States. Its historical experience enables it to defend a world order based on reason, equality and regulation. By fully embracing its values, particularly in the face of technological and scientific powers, it can offer a humanist model and give hope to a part of America that is committed to democracy. [Read more](#)

■ Elections :



Five candidates running neck and neck in Portugal's presidential election

Portugal's presidential election will be held on 18 January and 8 February to choose the successor to Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, who cannot stand for re-election at the end of his second term. Eleven candidates are in the running and none of them seems likely to win in the first round, which is unusual in Portugal.

The polls place five candidates very close together, making it difficult to know which two candidates will qualify for the second round. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



European Women Leading the Way

The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a study entitled 'European Women of Influence'. This project features profiles of 27 women — one for each Member State of the European Union — and highlights some exceptional women who illustrate in concrete terms the wealth and diversity of their careers in various strategic fields. With this publication, the Foundation wishes to highlight the decisive role played by women in the construction and influence of the European Union. Find the study on our website! [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



New publication on the Schuman Network

Since 2023, the Schuman Network has been working with 22 organisations from 13 European countries. With more than 195 shared publications, the Schuman Network strives to promote cooperation between European research centres to share reliable, high-quality analysis. Through this work, the Schuman Network affirms its role as an essential platform for strengthening intellectual cooperation and supporting democratic resilience in Europe. [Read more](#)



Your solidarity keeps Europe's heart beating!

The team at the Robert Schuman Foundation would like to express their heartfelt thanks for your donations in 2025. Thanks to you, the Foundation can continue its mission of promoting European values and projects for a stronger and more united Europe. Thanks to your support, the Foundation continues to exert considerable influence on the European political debate through its publications and events, and will continue to do so throughout 2026! [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Entry into force of the carbon border adjustment mechanism

On 1 January, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which introduces a tax on imports of products with high CO2 emissions, came into force. As a result, importers of steel, aluminium, cement and other heavy products into the European Union now pay for the CO2 emissions produced. The European Union is seeking to protect European manufacturers who face stricter obligations than their foreign counterparts. On 7 January, at the meeting of agriculture ministers, French Agriculture Minister Annie Genevard asked Maroš Šefčovič, European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, to retroactively suspend the application of the MACF to imported fertilisers, meaning that the carbon tax would not be applied to these products. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Strategic platform extends to defence technologies

On 23 December, the defence regulation came into force, aiming to encourage investment in the EU budget and implement the ReArm Europe plan. This regulation extends the scope of the Strategic Platform for Europe (STEP) from digital to defence technologies. STEP is a funding platform open to businesses, Member States and regions, designed to strengthen the EU's competitiveness and resilience in strategic technology sectors. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Discover Europe for the 40th anniversary of the Schengen area

On 7 January, the European Commission awarded more than 40,000 free DiscoverEU travel passes to 18-year-olds to mark the 40th anniversary of the Schengen area. The selected young people will be able to embark on a free train journey across Europe. In addition to the travel pass, participants will receive a card offering thousands of discounts on cultural activities, accommodation, local transport, food and other services. DiscoverEU contributes to the cultural compass for Europe by also promoting a collection of carefully selected European destinations for lovers of cinema, fashion, food, fine arts and more. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Agriculture Ministers

On 7 January, agriculture ministers met at the invitation of the European Commission and Cypriot Agriculture Minister Maria Panayiotou. They took stock of the challenges facing the agri-food sector. The European Commissioners present proposed massive financial support through the 2028-2034 financial framework, including a partnership fund of nearly €294 billion and a doubled financial safety net to protect farmers from increased uncertainty on global markets. They then presented the agreement with the Mercosur countries as an opportunity to increase the EU's agri-food exports to Latin America by 50%. Finally, to reduce the burden on farmers, they presented measures aimed at lowering fertiliser prices through the suspension of customs tariffs. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Green light for the signature of the agreement with Mercosur countries

On 9 January, the Council gave the green light for the signature of the trade agreement between the European Union and the South American Mercosur countries. After twenty-five years of negotiations, this decision marks a milestone in relations between the two regions. In a market of nearly 700 million consumers, the treaty includes provisions to reduce trade barriers and facilitate investment. However, in a global context marked by growing economic and geopolitical uncertainty, and reflecting the protests in the agricultural sector that have intensified in recent weeks, this agreement has far from been unanimously welcomed. The agreement is expected to be signed on 17 January. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Launch of the Cypriot Presidency

Cyprus holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union until 30 June. Under the slogan 'A self-reliant Union – open to the world', the Cypriot Presidency is focusing on strengthening the European Union's strategic autonomy, while promoting openness, cooperation and global engagement. On 7 January, the opening ceremony of the Cyprus Presidency took place, attended by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President António Costa. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Summit with Jordan

On 8 January, European Council President António Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen attended the first EU-Jordan summit in Amman. The leaders reviewed the implementation of the EU-Jordan Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership of January 2025. It is supported by a €3 billion financial and investment package and focuses on supporting Jordan's stability in an extraordinary geopolitical context. A joint declaration was published. Both sides support the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and are committed to helping rebuild Syria. Finally, they reiterated their commitment to intensifying cooperation on security, trade and energy transition. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



The Weimar Triangle and India strengthen their strategic dialogue

On 7 January, the French, German and Polish Foreign Ministers met in Paris for a multilateral forum bringing together the countries of the Weimar Triangle and India. Jean-Noël Barrot, Johann Wadephul and Radosław Sikorski met with their Indian counterpart, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, to discuss security issues and political cooperation at the international level. The meeting highlighted the need for Europe to work closely with global partners such as India to promote an international order based on the rule of law, collective security and respect for universal norms. In addition to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, discussions focused on deepening the partnership between the European Union and India, as well as negotiations for a free trade agreement designed to stimulate trade and investment. [Read more](#)



Spain and Portugal celebrate 40 years of membership in the European Union

On 1 January 2026, the Spanish and Portuguese governments celebrated the 40th anniversary of their countries' accession to the European Union, which took effect on 1 January 1986. This double entry marked a major turning point in the contemporary history of the Iberian Peninsula. Following the Carnation Revolution in Portugal and Spain's transition to democracy after the Franco era, membership of the European Union has enabled both countries to consolidate their democratic institutions in the long term, while embarking on a process of economic modernisation and social convergence. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ ECB :



Six candidates for the position of Vice-President

At the Eurogroup meeting on 11 December, the process of selecting a successor to the current Vice-President of the European Central Bank (ECB), Luis de Guindos, whose term of office expires at the end of May 2026, was launched. The call for applications closed on 9 January. Six applications were received: Mário Centeno (Portugal), Mārtiņš Kazāks (Latvia), Madis Müllner (Estonia), Olli Rehn (Finland), Rimantas Šadžius (Lithuania) and Boris Vujčić (Croatia). The Eurogroup will discuss these applications at its next meeting on 19 January. The European Council will decide on the new ECB Vice-President by enhanced qualified majority. [Read more](#)

■ Bulgaria :



Bulgaria joins the eurozone

On 1 January, the European Central Bank (ECB) officially confirmed Bulgaria's adoption of the euro. This transition marks a historic turning point for the country's economic integration, as it becomes the 21st member of the eurozone. This monetary adoption is part of a long process of adaptation to European convergence criteria. It should allow Bulgaria to consolidate its long-term economic growth and strengthen its resilience. ECB President Christine Lagarde said that this move was a boon for individuals and businesses. Among its concrete effects, the euro should facilitate transactions and trade between Bulgarians and other Member States. [Read more](#)

■ Denmark :



Joint statements on the security of Greenland

On 6 January, several European countries announced that they would be strengthening their presence, investments and activities in Greenland and the Arctic to ensure the security of the Danish territory. The foreign ministries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, and the heads of state and government of Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Denmark reiterated that the security of Greenlandic territory must be jointly ensured by NATO, including the United States, under the United Nations Charter, in particular sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Spain :



Ambassadors' Conference

On 8 January, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez opened the Ambassadors' Conference. On this occasion, he presented the four pillars of Spain's external action for 2026: coherence, commitment, cooperation and creativity. These four pillars are to become a clear roadmap with three priorities: more Europe, better multilateralism and a strengthening of democracy. These objectives are part of Spain's Foreign Policy Strategy for the period 2025-2028. This multi-year strategy defines three main objectives: strengthening Europe, Spain's commitment to defending international law and human rights, and Spain's willingness to work for global peace and security by fighting terrorism and promoting collective defence and disarmament. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Finland :



Third shipment of RescEU material assistance to Ukraine

On 9 January, Finland announced the third shipment of material assistance to Ukraine from the European Union-funded strategic stockpile: rescEU. The aid includes equipment to respond to chemical, biological and radiological threats, as well as medical equipment. RescEU stocks are mobilised by decision of the European Commission when a country does not have sufficient resources to deal with a given situation and are primarily intended for Member States. However, they can be made available to ten other countries participating in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. This group mainly consists of neighbouring countries, such as Ukraine. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Ambassadors' Conference

The 31st Ambassadors' Conference was held from 7 to 9 January. On 8 January, French President Emmanuel Macron outlined the priorities that will shape the diplomatic agenda for 2026: European sovereignty; the French presidency of the G7; and Africa, with a view to the Africa-France summit in Nairobi. The Head of State emphasised that, in the face of a deregulated world marked by the law of the jungle, France must strengthen its power and strategic autonomy in order to reject both vassalage and impotence. On 9 January, the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Noël Barrot, called on French diplomats to face up to a changing world by firmly defending international law, asserting Europe's independence and capacity for action, and strengthening France's influence abroad. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ireland :



Presentation of the equality strategy

On 6 January, Irish Minister for Children, Disability and Equality Norma Foley welcomed Ireland's first Data for Equality Strategy. This five-year action plan (2026-2031) aims to help decision-makers measure and reduce inequalities in society. To this end, all ministries have approved standards for the classification and use of data. In line with this strategy and Ireland's recent progress in gender equality, as evidenced by its ranking in the European Index, the Irish government now hopes to establish itself as a European leader in this area. [Read more](#)

■ The Netherlands :



Agreement on a minority government coalition

On 9 January, the centrist D66 party, which won the Dutch general election last October, the Christian Democrats (CDA) and the liberal VVD party announced the formation of a minority government coalition. This coalition is set to hold 66 of the 150 seats in the lower house of parliament. This means that the three parties will need the support of other political parties to obtain a majority. Rob Jetten, leader of D66, is tipped to head the new government. [Read more](#)

■ Kosovo :



Snap parliamentary elections on 28 December

On 28 December, Kosovo held snap parliamentary elections in an attempt to resolve the political crisis in the country. Since the parliamentary elections in February 2025, Prime Minister Albin Kurti had been unable to form a government. His party, the Self-Determination Movement (LVV), came out on ahead with 49.3% of the vote. This represents a 7% increase on the February 2025 parliamentary elections. The LVV party won 56 seats, compared to 48 previously. The main opposition party, the Democratic Party (PDK), won 21% of the vote, a slight decrease compared to the last elections. [Read more](#)

■ Switzerland :



Guy Parmelin, President of the Swiss Confederation in 2026

On 1 January, Guy Parmelin took office as President of the Swiss Confederation, heading the country's executive body for one year. A member of the Federal Council since 2016, the head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) has been elected to lead the country for the second time. A proponent of dialogue and compromise, he has also distinguished himself in recent weeks by reaching an agreement with Washington on customs duties for Switzerland. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Statements by the coalition of the willing

On 6 January, 35 members of the coalition of the willing, meeting in Paris, reiterated their support for Ukraine and emphasised their political will to offer a system of binding political and legal security guarantees that will come into effect at the same time as a ceasefire. Five guarantees were agreed upon: the organisation of a mechanism for monitoring and verifying the ceasefire led by the United States; support for the Ukrainian armed forces; the creation of a multinational force for Ukraine defined by a tripartite declaration of intent between France, the United Kingdom and Ukraine; commitments to support Ukraine in the event of a new Russian armed attack; and, finally, the strengthening of long-term defence cooperation with Ukraine. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Vatican :



Pope's speech to ambassadors

On 9 January, Pope Leo XIV hosted 420 members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, representing nearly 184 countries. He presented the Vatican's New Year's greetings and drew attention to the many problems affecting different societies around the world. Leo XIV spoke at length about conflicts and wars, issues related to the importance of humanitarian law, dialogue and the meaning of words, religious freedom and freedom of expression, as well as the persecution of Christians, birth rates and the suppression of life, the condition of prisoners, drug addiction, migrants, young people and the elderly, while also mentioning the difficulties faced by families. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ OECD :



Agreement on the implementation of a global minimum tax

On 5 January, OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann emphasised the importance of the decision on the implementation of a global minimum tax. A total of 147 countries and jurisdictions that are members of the Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) agreed to establish harmonised rules on minimum taxation for large multinational enterprises. This decision is part of a broader framework of international tax cooperation, which aims to end aggressive tax competition between countries and ensure that large companies pay a minimum level of tax wherever they operate. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Cross-border marketing of investment funds in Europe

On 6 January, the European Securities and Markets Authority published a report on the cross-border marketing of investment funds in Europe. For the first time, the report contains statistics on notifications of cross-border marketing of funds. These are administrative procedures whereby a manager informs the authorities that it wishes to market a fund in another country. Luxembourg and Ireland remain the main jurisdictions, accounting for 59% and 30% of notifications respectively. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :

The logo for the Valletta Baroque Festival, featuring the text "VALLETTA BAROQUE FESTIVAL" in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters on a bright yellow rectangular background.

VALLETTA BAROQUE FESTIVAL

Malta Baroque Festival

Until 25 January, the Maltese capital is hosting the 14th edition of the Valletta International Baroque Festival. This event offers a rich and varied programme of concerts, operas and other performances, presented by international artists in the city's most iconic historical venues. Bringing together lovers of Baroque music and fans of 16th-century architectural heritage, this festival offers an opportunity to discover the beauty and acoustics of these monuments. [Read more](#)



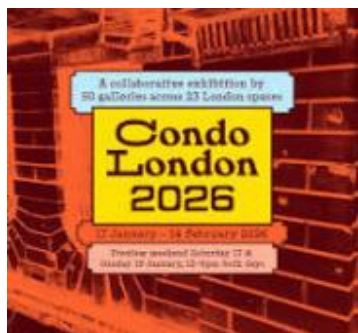
Delacroix in Paris

The exhibition 'Delacroix. A Place, an Artist' is being held at the Delacroix Museum in Paris until 6 September. Drawing on archives, old posters and photographs rarely seen by the public, the exhibition focuses on three questions about the artist: what do Delacroix's friendships and professional relationships tell us about him? How did his admirers pay tribute to him? How did he work in the privacy of his studio? During his lifetime and after his death, Eugène Delacroix had many admirers who paid tribute to him in many ways: painting copies of his most famous works, creating paintings, sculptures or writings representing him or evoking his work. [Read more](#)



Marina Abramović in Metz

Until 27 April, the Centre Pompidou in Metz is honouring Marina Abramović with the exhibition 'Looking at Colors'. The internationally renowned artist and major figure in contemporary performance art invites the public to immerse themselves in a truly meditative experience based on attention, rigour and self-awareness. This participatory exhibition is part of a series of exceptional invitations dedicated to the artist's work. [Read more](#)



Condo in London

Until 14 February, the collaborative contemporary art exhibition Condo London is being held, involving 50 galleries across 23 venues in London. This series of exhibitions, held simultaneously by various partner galleries, welcomes guest galleries to showcase works from the United Kingdom and abroad. They present a variety of works ranging from sculpture and painting to installation and video. [Read more](#)

museumrietberg



Eine Kulturinstitution
der Stadt Zürich

Colour in Zurich

Until 10 May, Zurich's Rietberg Museum is hosting an exhibition of an important collection of Indian photographs and paintings entitled 'Colour'. Located in the heart of the museum's historic park, this exhibition invites the public to explore the meaning and role of colour in the arts. As usual, the splendid Park-Villa Rieter showcases the finest non-European works. Through its cross-disciplinary approach and the dialogue it establishes between works, cultures and eras, this exhibition offers visitors a new interpretation of colour as a universal language. [Read more](#)

**ME
AM**

Realism in Barcelona

Until 17 May, Barcelona's MEAM is hosting the exhibition: 'Realism 26 - Figure and Time'. This exhibition celebrates the strength and vitality of contemporary figurative realism. Paintings and sculptures come together in a journey that reveals the diversity of approaches and languages within current realism, from hyperrealism to the most expressive forms. The exhibition offers a reflection on the body, time and identity, providing a renewed vision of the human condition in a world saturated with images and speed. [Read more](#)



Immersive experience in Milan

From 14 to 18 January, the temporary exhibition ROOMS is being held at the Spazio Lambrate Arti Performative artist residency in Milan.

The installations by Angelo Thomann, Eva Luna Thomann and Laura Maddalena Gerosa create a path made up of rooms to walk through rather than simply observe. Light and sound become structural elements, capable of altering the perception of space and time. Each environment invites visitors to slow down, let themselves drift and suspend contact with the outside world. [Read more](#)



Festivities kick off in Oulu, European Capital of Culture

In 2026, the two European Capitals of Culture are the cities of Oulu in Finland and Trenčín in Slovakia. This initiative, supported by the European Union through the Europe Culture programme, begins with a festival in Oulu from 16 to 18 January. For the occasion, the city centre will be transformed into a festival village hosting more than 200 events across 20 art installations. With theatre, music, exhibitions and artistic performances, the city of Oulu aims to raise awareness of environmental issues and their specific temporality. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 18/01/2026

Presidential election (first round) (Portugal)

 19/01/2026

Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)

 19-22/01/2026

Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)



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