

Letter n°1140 of Tuesday 27th January 2026

Hybrid threats: from geopolitics to internal security

Jean Mafart - 27 Jan 2026

Hybrid threats, which originate externally but have internal effects, are testing the European Union's ability to adapt its internal security policy. They blur the boundaries between internal and external security, between national and European competences, and encourage convergence with organised crime. The challenge is to develop a coherent, operational and coordinated response without diluting responsibilities.



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■ Front page! :



Europe, the last obstacle for the coalition of autocrats.

Europe stands as the last bastion against a coalition of autocrats that is converging, from Moscow to Beijing and including certain illiberal tendencies in the United States, to weaken democracies. As recent tensions over Greenland have reminded us, Europe is founded on law, peaceful cooperation and the protection of individual freedoms. It embodies a unique moral and economic power capable of challenging the ambitions of authoritarian regimes. By asserting its historical values and consolidating its strategic credibility, the European Union can continue to offer a civilising alternative based on reason, respect for rights and stability, in the face of forces seeking to reshape the world through force or intimidation. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



New NextGenerationEU disbursements

On 22 and 23 January, the European Commission made the fourth payment of €175.4 million to Denmark and gave a positive assessment of the eighth payment request of €1.1 billion to Portugal under NextGenerationEU. Details of the recovery plan are available on the Foundation's website. [Read more](#)

■ European Council :



Informal meeting of the European Council

On 22 January, European Union leaders met to discuss transatlantic relations and their implications for the European Union. European Council President António Costa confirmed that Denmark and Greenland had the full support of the European Union and reiterated the Union's commitment to international law. He welcomed Donald Trump's reversal on new US tariffs on certain European countries and stressed that the EU was ready to work with the US on implementing the comprehensive peace plan for Gaza. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



New cybersecurity measures

On 20 January, the European Commission proposed new cybersecurity measures to strengthen the 2019 legislation in the face of growing threats. These include a revision of the Cybersecurity Regulation, which strengthens the security of supply chains, information and communication technologies, and more effective security testing through a renewed European cybersecurity certification framework. Finally, they strengthen the role of the European agency (ENISA) by establishing EU-wide cybersecurity skills certification systems. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Referral to the Court regarding the agreement with Mercosur

On 21 January, MEPs adopted a resolution by 334 votes to 324, with 11 abstentions, requesting a legal opinion from the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) on the trade agreement between the European Union and the Mercosur countries. This referral to the Court delays the European Parliament's vote on the ratification of this agreement. In the meantime, however, the European Commission has the option of applying the treaty provisionally if it so wishes. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Air passenger rights

On 21 January, MEPs defended passengers' right to compensation in the event of a three-hour delay, while advocating for simplified refunds and free hand luggage. They also opposed reducing the current amounts of compensation paid in the event of flight disruptions and suggested that they be set between €300 and €600 depending on the flight distance. They called for the introduction of pre-filled forms for compensation and reimbursement claims so as to simplify the processing of claims. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Harmonised rules for innovative businesses

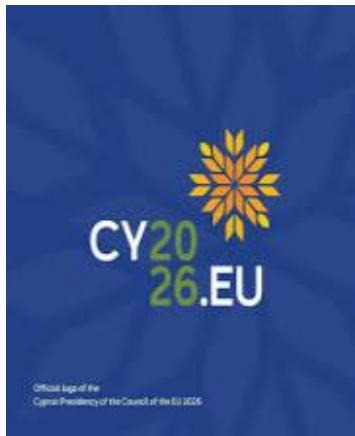
On 20 January, MEPs adopted a resolution aimed at supporting innovative businesses in the European Union. They insisted on the establishment of a single, harmonised set of rules for the 28th regime, which proposes a pragmatic path towards a more integrated and competitive single market, in order to ensure a level playing field for businesses in the Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



The EU must strengthen its global partnerships and deterrence against threats

On 21 January, MEPs adopted two resolutions that marked a turning point in support for a genuine European Defence Union (EDU), prompted by Russia's continued aggression and the transactional shift in the US National Security Strategy 2025. Faced with this deteriorating environment, the European Union is now prioritising its strategic autonomy by establishing a new institutional architecture, including a Commissioner for Defence and Space and a permanent format for the Council of Defence Ministers. This ambition is supported by major financial levers such as the SAFE instrument, with €150 billion to support collaborative acquisitions, the 'ReArm Europe' plan and the EDIP programme, aimed at consolidating the European industrial and technological base. [Read more](#)

■ Council :



European Parliament debate on the priorities of the Cypriot Presidency

On 20 January, MEPs debated the priorities of the Cypriot Presidency of the Council, as outlined by Nikos Christodoulides, President of the Republic of Cyprus. Many MEPs welcomed the focus on European autonomy, security and unity in a challenging geopolitical context. A number of them referred to the situation in Cyprus, the only EU Member State under military occupation, calling for renewed efforts to preserve territorial integrity and international law and to work towards the reunification of the island. Finally, others called for tighter border controls, effective returns and less red tape for businesses. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Eurogroup meeting

On 19 January, the Eurogroup ministers of economy and finance discussed the appointment of the ECB Vice-President and approved the candidacy of Boris Vujčić, currently Governor of the Croatian National Bank. Bulgarian Minister Temenuzhka Petkova and representatives of the European Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) briefed ministers on the progress of Bulgaria's transition to the euro. [Read more](#)



Meeting of Ministers for Economic Affairs and Finance

On 20 January, Ministers for Economic Affairs and Finance discussed the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council with a view to advancing legislative work on the savings and investment union, the agenda for tax relief and simplification, and a modernised customs union. They opened an excessive deficit procedure against Finland. Finally, they decided to provide additional macro-financial assistance of €500 million to Jordan to strengthen the country's economic stability. [Read more](#)



Informal meeting of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers

From 21 to 23 January, Justice and Home Affairs Ministers met in Nicosia to discuss how coordinated action by the EU and partnerships with third countries could improve overall results in terms of returns and strengthen the credibility of the EU's migration system. They emphasised the role of national practices and future EU information systems in enabling more targeted and better coordinated action, in full compliance with fundamental rights and the Schengen acquis. They discussed the need to strengthen asset recovery in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing financial landscape. They reiterated that 'following the money' remains one of the most effective tools for combating organised crime. Finally, they examined whether further Union action could lead to more effective cross-border restitution of cultural goods that have been unlawfully removed. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Belgrade-Pristina dialogue on missing persons

On 22 January, the Joint Commission on Missing Persons met for the first time in Brussels. Its objective is to oversee the implementation of the Declaration on Missing Persons, adopted in May 2023, which aims to help shed light on the fate of missing persons and promote lasting reconciliation and peace. [Read more](#)

■ European Agencies :

Unprecedented operation against synthetic drugs

On 21 January, Europol announced that it had conducted the largest operation ever carried out in the European Union against the production of synthetic drugs. The authorities dismantled 24 industrial laboratories and seized nearly 1,000 tonnes of chemicals, thereby depriving the market of hundreds of tonnes of drugs. In total, more than 85 people were arrested, including the two main leaders of the network. In addition to the arrests and seizures, the operation also led to the confiscation of more than 120,000 litres of toxic waste, which would probably have been dumped into the environment. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



German-Italian intergovernmental summit

On 23 January, a German-Italian intergovernmental summit was held in Rome, attended by Giorgia Meloni, President of the Italian Council of Ministers, and Friedrich Merz, German Chancellor. An agreement on strengthening cooperation in security, defence and resilience and an Italian-German action plan for bilateral and EU strategic cooperation were signed, highlighting their commitment to preserving peace in Europe. This meeting followed the German-Italian Economic Forum, held on the same day, during which the two heads of government stressed the importance of strengthening European competitiveness, in particular through increased cooperation between their economies. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Bulgaria :



Resignation of President Rumen Radev

On 19 January, Bulgarian President Rumen Radev submitted his resignation to the Constitutional Court, becoming the first Bulgarian president to leave office before the end of his term. However, the head of state, who was elected in 2016, has not given up on politics and has announced that he will focus on upcoming political events, notably next spring's parliamentary elections, in which he plans to run and hopes to become Prime Minister. Vice-President Iliana Lotova will succeed him as head of state. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Denmark :



Meeting between the British and Danish Prime Ministers

On 22 January, Keir Starmer, the British Prime Minister, welcomed his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen to Chequers. They discussed the importance of security in the Arctic for NATO and the need to strengthen cooperation between their two countries and within Europe on security matters, in particular by developing interoperability between military forces. They also discussed the war in Ukraine, the situation in Gaza and the issue of migration. [Read more](#)



The Arctic central to NATO's defence strategy

On 19 January, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte welcomed Danish Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen and Greenlandic Foreign Minister Vivian Motzfeldt to Brussels to highlight the strategic importance of the Arctic and the island. Troels Lund Poulsen, and Greenland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vivian Motzfeldt, in Brussels to highlight the strategic importance of the Arctic and the island to the collective security of the Atlantic Alliance. With the region attracting increased geopolitical attention, the Allies renewed their commitment to strengthen presence and deterrence in the High North by stepping up investments in essential defence and surveillance capabilities, while exploring the possible establishment of a NATO mission in the Arctic. This meeting illustrates the joint commitment to preserving peace, stability and the shared interests of member countries in the face of contemporary security challenges. [Read more](#)

■ Kosovo :



In Kosovo, recount of votes cast in the snap parliamentary elections

On 19 January, Kosovo's Electoral Commission (CEC) decided to extend the recount of votes to all polling stations in the country, after having begun the process in 914 of them a week earlier. More than 68,000 ballots were allegedly misappropriated, transferring votes within the same lists to favour certain candidates, which should not however affect the initial result. Prizren prosecutor Petrit Kryeziu announced the arrest of 109 electoral commissioners for criminal offences of falsifying election results, coercion and intimidation, as well as active and passive corruption. [Read more](#)

■ Switzerland :



Davos Economic Forum

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, several leaders (European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, French President Emmanuel Macron, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz) reiterated their unequivocal support for Greenland and Denmark, emphasising the non-negotiable nature of their sovereignty. Refusing to bow to force, the leaders insisted on the need to turn these global shocks into opportunities and to defend multilateralism as a means of forging balanced and sustainable trade partnerships. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Ukraine :



Lublin Triangle Meeting

On 25 January, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda and Polish President Karol Nawrocki met in Vilnius, Lithuania, to strengthen cooperation within the Lublin Triangle and emphasise the crucial strategic importance of continued European support in the face of Russian attacks, particularly in order to consolidate Ukraine's energy resilience and defence. Among the most active partners, Lithuania and Poland reiterated their political, financial and military commitment and their determination to maintain this support until a dignified and lasting peace is established, fully guaranteeing Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Emergency generators for Ukraine

On 23 January, the European Commission sent 447 emergency power generators to Ukraine, worth €3.7 million, from the EU's strategic reserves. The aim is to restore power to hospitals, shelters and essential services. They will be distributed to the most affected communities by the Ukrainian Ministry of Community and Territorial Development, in cooperation with the Ukrainian Red Cross. [Read more](#)



The European Parliament wants to speed up the aid loan to Ukraine

On 20 January, MEPs approved a request to speed up legislative procedures concerning new financial support measures for Ukraine. The proposal provides for a €90 billion support loan to Ukraine, financed by a joint loan. At the same time, they decided to speed up their work to amend the 'Facility for Ukraine'. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Report on geo-economic fragmentation

On 22 January, the European Central Bank and the European Systemic Risk Board published a joint report on the dangers of geo-economic fragmentation. The institutions warn that global political instability could lead to tighter financial conditions and weaken economic growth within the European Union. The study reveals that geopolitical shocks are prompting banks to limit their lending, thereby reducing international diversification despite increased protection against external risks. To address these uncertainties, the authors recommend the adoption of a new supervisory framework and better harmonisation of statistical data. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Culture:



Basquiat in Copenhagen

Until 17 May, an exhibition dedicated to the works on paper by American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat is on display at the Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen. The first comprehensive retrospective dedicated to the artist's representations of the human head, it includes many works that were kept secret during his lifetime, ranging from drawings to oil paintings on paper, mainly produced between 1981 and 1983. [Read more](#)



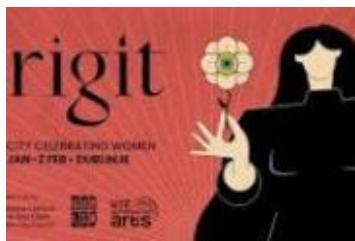
Art in Geneva

From 29 January to 1 February, Palexpo will host the 14th edition of Art Geneva, a showcase for modern and contemporary art. The fair brings together more than 80 international galleries and numerous institutional projects, offering a demanding and accessible overview of current artistic creation. This year's Art Geneva fair stands out for the diversity of its exhibits, combining modern, contemporary and emerging works, installations and performances. [Read more](#)



Metaphysics in Milan

Until 21 June, an exhibition entitled Metaphysics is being held at the Palazzo Reale in Milan. 400 works are on display, including paintings, sculptures, photographs, drawings, design objects, and plastic and architectural models. [Read more](#)



Brigit Festival in Dublin

Until 2 February, the Brigit Festival is being held in Dublin to celebrate women through art, culture and dialogue. Inspired by the figure of Brigit, both mythological and Christian, a symbol of creativity, light and renewal, the festival highlights women's historical, artistic and social contributions. [Read more](#)



Martin Parr in Paris

Until 24 May, the exhibition 'Martin Parr. Global Warning' is on display at the Jeu de Paume in Paris. It offers a retrospective of the British photographer's work through various series produced from the late 1970s to the present day. From his early days in the British Isles to his explorations across five continents, Martin Parr explores the turpitudes of our time with some 180 works divided into five sections. [Read more](#)



Contemporary Art Festival in Vilnius

The 8th edition of the Contemporary Art Festival in Vilnius is being held every weekend until 1 March. More than 50 contemporary art contributions are on display, including galleries, museums, exhibitions and outdoor art. The initiative aims to promote culture while offering activities for citizens and tourists during the winter months. [Read more](#)



Rotterdam Film Festival

From 29 January to 8 February, Rotterdam will host the 55th edition of its Film Festival. With a selection of works from nearly 90 countries, it offers screenings, installations, artistic performances and conferences. Each year, several prizes are awarded in various categories. [Read more](#)



La Folle Journée in Nantes

From 28 January to 1 February, the Cité des Congrès in Nantes will host a unique classical music festival, 'La Folle Journée'. Created in 1995 with the aim of democratising this art form and making it accessible to as wide an audience as possible, it offers more than 270 concerts involving nearly 2,000 artists. The closing concert will be broadcast on the ARTE channel. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

26/01/2026

"Agriculture and Fisheries Council" "General Affairs Council" (Brussels)

27/01/2026

EU-India Summit (New Delhi)

29/01/2026

"Foreign Affairs" Council EU-Morocco Association Council (Brussels)

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