

**Letter n°1146 of Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

## Transnistria: the Achilles heel of Moldova's European future?

Régis Genté - 10 Mar 2026

Moldova hopes to join the European Union by 2030, backed by a pro-Western government. However, the separatist region of Transnistria, where Russian troops are stationed, remains a major strategic obstacle to this integration, even though the region has lost much of its capacity to cause trouble due to Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Between hybrid pressure from the Kremlin and energy dependence, the country's future is linked to the outcome of the conflict in Ukraine. A peaceful resolution requires the economic suffocation of the Tiraspol regime and increased European support to guarantee Moldovan sovereignty.



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### ■ Front page! :



#### A significant step towards European autonomy

Emmanuel Macron's speech on nuclear deterrence on 2 March marks a major shift in French nuclear doctrine in the interests of European security. With several Member States already signalling their interest, some by signing agreements with France, the new French concept of 'forward deterrence' could ultimately constitute a genuine European revolution capable of ensuring the continent's security. [Read more](#)

## ■ Foundation :



### Europe, a women's continent

Europe is a women's continent, but there is still progress to be made. To illustrate the place of women in European politics, society and the economy, the Robert Schuman Foundation offers a map and three tables showing the number of women in governments, national parliaments and the European Parliament. [Read more](#)

## ■ Women :



### New strategy for gender equality 2026-2030

On 5 March, in time for International Women's Day, the European Commission unveiled its new strategy for gender equality for the period 2026-2030. While the European Institute for Gender Equality estimates that it will take 50 years for the EU to achieve full equality, the strategy aims to step up the actions initiated under the 2025 Roadmap for Women's Rights. From health to politics and the economy, it covers all areas and focuses on combating cyberviolence, which disproportionately affects women and girls. [Read more - Other link](#)



### Women still under-represented in innovation and patenting in Europe

On 3 March, the European Patent Office published a new study on the place of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in Europe. Although the proportion of women among teams of inventors is rising slightly, they are very rarely mentioned as individual inventors: less than one in ten start-up founders involved in patenting is a woman. As the European Commission prepares a European Action Plan to support women in research, innovation and start-ups, the report provides several insights to support the formulation of appropriate policy priorities. [Read more](#)



## International Women's Rights Day

On 8 March, several international and European institutions reiterated their commitment to women's rights. The European Union highlighted the work it has been doing for many years to promote gender equality. On 5 March, the WHO organised an online event to highlight the importance of the right to physical and mental health. Finally, in the current geopolitical context, the Council of Europe emphasised the need to pursue the objectives of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in order to protect women facing armed conflict. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Commission :



### Launch of the industrial accelerator

On 4 March, the European Commission presented a draft regulation on industrial acceleration to increase demand for low-carbon technologies and products 'made in Europe'. By establishing a 'European preference' in certain strategic sectors, the text aims to support industrial production in the EU in a context of growing unfair competition and dependence on third countries. The draft regulation sets a target of increasing the share of industry in European GDP to 20% by 2035, up from 14% currently. [Read more](#)



### Launch of maritime and industrial port strategies

On 4 March, the European Commission unveiled its strategies to boost competitiveness across the maritime sector. In the port of Antwerp, Europe's second largest port, it adopted a maritime industrial strategy and a port strategy. The first aims to strengthen the global leadership of the maritime industry, particularly in shipbuilding and innovation, with the flagship call for proposals "Shipyards of the Future". The second focuses on the competitive position of ports while strengthening their connectivity, safety and decarbonisation. These two complementary proposals aim to address the growing concerns of the European maritime, port and industrial sectors in the face of increased global competition. [Read more](#)

## ■ Council :



## Meeting of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers

Justice and Home Affairs Ministers, meeting on 5 and 6 March, reaffirmed their support for Lebanon while stressing the importance of supporting cooperation at a more technical level with Libya. On the Schengen area, they approved the revised roadmap for the interoperability of EU IT systems after 2026. In addition, they agreed on a position on a regulation that will protect the rights of vulnerable adults. They continued their discussions on the independence of lawyers in Europe, on combating Russian impunity in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and on combating organised crime. [Read more - Other link](#)



## Approval of agricultural safeguard clauses in the EU-Mercosur agreement

On 5 March, the Council adopted the regulation implementing the safeguard clause provided for in the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement and the EU-Mercosur Interim Agreement on trade in agricultural products. This clause strengthens the protection of EU agriculture against sudden increases in agricultural imports from Mercosur countries. The regulation allows the EU to take action more quickly and effectively by simplifying the conditions for triggering existing safeguard mechanisms. It also adopted the regulation on new rules to combat unfair cross-border trading practices in the agricultural and food supply chain. [Read more - Other link](#)



## Binding climate target by 2040

On 5 March, ministers gave the green light for the revision of the European Climate Law, introducing a binding interim target of a 90% reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions by 2040 compared to 1990. This target aims to keep the EU on track to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The text stipulates that at least 85% of the reductions must be achieved within the EU, while a limited share may come from international carbon credits from 2036 onwards. The reform also provides for greater flexibility between sectors and the postponement until 2028 of the new emissions trading system for buildings and road transport. [Read more](#)

■ Trilogues :



## Agreement on the position of farmers in the food supply chain

On 5 March, the Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on an amendment to the regulation on the common organisation of agricultural markets (CMO). This targeted amendment will strengthen the negotiating position of farmers in the agri-food supply chain. In response to pressure on agricultural incomes and the growing risks faced by farmers, the amendments to the regulation promote the implementation of fairer and more resilient agricultural markets. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Diplomacy :



## Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council

On 5 March, the Foreign Ministers of the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held a meeting to discuss the situation in the Middle East. The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs, Kaja Kallas, strongly condemned Iran's recent attacks on Gulf states and reaffirmed the solidarity of Member States with the victims of these attacks. The ministers expressed their commitment to de-escalation, respect for international law, and the need to prioritise diplomacy and dialogue in order to avoid an escalation of the conflict. [Read more](#)



## European Union position on the situation in the Middle East

On 1 March, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Kaja Kallas, expressed her deep concern about the regional escalation and reiterated the need to prioritise diplomatic channels to resolve this conflict. While the European position seems to be widely shared, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was the only one to strongly oppose US intervention in Iran. He refused to allow the US military to use his country's military bases, denouncing the violation of international law and alluding to the mistakes made in Iraq in 2003. Member States reasserted their solidarity with the affected countries, particularly Cyprus. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



## Digital trade agreement with Canada

At the fifth meeting of the Joint Committee of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union on 6 March, Canadian Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu and European Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič decided to launch negotiations with a view to concluding an agreement on digital trade. They endorsed the Joint Committee's decision to adopt additional rules on expedited arbitration procedures for the settlement of investment disputes between investors and states, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises, and concluded work on amending the protocol on good manufacturing practices to include active pharmaceutical ingredients. [Read more](#)



## Strengthening of European military presence in the eastern Mediterranean

On 3 March, the United Kingdom deployed its state-of-the-art warship and Wildcat anti-drone helicopters to the eastern Mediterranean to strengthen its defences in the region, following the deployment of radar systems, air defence systems and F-35 aircraft. In addition, on 4 March, two Greek warships arrived off the coast of Cyprus, following the deployment of four F-16 Viper fighter jets already stationed at a Cypriot air base. On 6 March, French President Emmanuel Macron announced the reinforcement of French military capabilities in the Near and Middle East, with the deployment of additional air defence assets, the frigate Languedoc off the coast of Cyprus and the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle and its carrier strike group. The President of the Republic visited Cyprus yesterday, where he met with the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ EIB :



## First agreement with the World Trade Organisation

On 4 March, the leaders of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and the European Investment Bank (EIB), Nadia Calviño, signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at strengthening sustainable trade and investment globally. This agreement marks the beginning of a partnership that will leverage the EIB's financial resources and the investment facilitation tools developed under the Agreement on Facilitation of Investment for Development, concluded by a large number of WTO Members, to improve the regulatory framework, mobilise investment and expand opportunities for developing countries. [Read more](#)

## ■ Germany :



### Victory for the Greens in the state of Baden-Württemberg

On 8 March, voters in the German state of Baden-Württemberg went to the polls to elect a new regional parliament. According to the results, the Green Party/Alliance 90 narrowly won with 30.2% of the vote, ahead of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), which obtained 29.7%. Voting for the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party increased, reaching 18.8%, while the Social Democratic Party (SPD) recorded a historically low result of 5.5%. This election, the first in a series of regional elections in 2026, comes after the announcement of the retirement of the outgoing Minister-President, Winfried Kretschmann, and could therefore lead to the renewal of the governing coalition between the Greens and the CDU in this prosperous state in the south-west of the country. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



### German Chancellor visits the United States

On 4 March, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz travelled to Washington to meet with US President Donald Trump to strengthen transatlantic cooperation in the face of global challenges. Following the meeting, he expressed his support for the United States in the Middle East, condemning the Iranian regime's responsibility for internal repression and highlighting the threat that Iran's nuclear and ballistic programmes pose to world peace. Finally, the two leaders discussed the upcoming NATO summit in Ankara, viable trade cooperation between the EU and the US, as well as the war in Ukraine and Europe's involvement in peace efforts. [Read more](#)

## ■ Finland :



### Towards lifting restrictions on nuclear weapons?

On 6 March, Finnish Defence Minister Antti Häkkinen announced the possibility of installing future nuclear weapons to strengthen Finland's and the High North's defence capabilities. He specified that a deployable NATO CIS module could be established in Riihimäki and enter service in early 2027. [Read more](#)

## ■ France :



## Speech by President Emmanuel Macron on nuclear deterrence

On 2 March, French President Emmanuel Macron gave a speech on French nuclear deterrence. In particular, he proposed the establishment of 'forward deterrence' involving the participation of European partners in French deterrence, without, however, opening up the definition of the nation's vital interests or the ultimate decision-making process to sharing. This approach, which complements NATO, includes joint exercises, reporting and strategic deployment on the continent. Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Sweden and Denmark have announced their participation in this project. In addition, France and Germany announced on the same day the establishment of a high-level nuclear steering group, which will serve as a bilateral framework for doctrinal dialogue and the coordination of strategic cooperation. [Read more - Other link](#)

## ■ Slovakia :



## Polish-Slovak dialogue on defence and industry

On 3 March, in Bratislava, Polish Defence Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz and his Slovak counterpart, Robert Kaliňák, took part in the Polish-Slovak Industrial Dialogue on Defence. This event was the first forum of this scale to bring together representatives of the governments and public and private companies in the defence sector from both countries. The discussions were a direct follow-up to the agreements reached in February 2025 in Warsaw, when the defence ministers of both countries signed a letter of intent concerning the strengthening of relations in the field of air defence, ammunition manufacturing, and armoured vehicle and armoured wheeled transport vehicle programmes. [Read more](#)

## ■ Georgia :



## Suspension of visa exemption for Georgian diplomats and civil servants

On 6 March, the European Commission suspended the visa exemption for Georgian holders of diplomatic, service or official passports. This is the first time it has activated its revised visa exemption suspension mechanism, which came into force in December 2025. This decision comes in response to the democratic backsliding of the Georgian authorities since October 2024, as well as Georgia's refusal to align itself with European visa policy. In its November 2025 report on EU enlargement, the European Commission had already described Georgia's candidate status as 'nominal', while the ruling Georgian Dream party announced in November 2024 that it was suspending the country's EU accession negotiations. [Read more](#)

## ■ Iceland :



## Referendum on Iceland's accession to the European Union

On 6 March, the Icelandic government decided to submit a motion to the Althing, the Icelandic Parliament, proposing to hold a referendum on 29 August on the resumption of negotiations for accession to the European Union. Iceland applied for membership in 2009, and negotiations took place between 2010 and 2013 before being suspended. If the referendum proposed in August leads to the resumption of negotiations and a positive outcome, a second referendum will be held to ask Icelanders whether their country should actually join the European Union. [Read more](#)

## ■ Kosovo :



## Parliament dissolved, new elections called and case referred to the Constitutional Court

On 6 March, Kosovo's President Vjosa Osmani dissolved Parliament and announced new legislative elections, less than a month after the formation of the government, due to the inability of MPs to elect a new head of state. Her term of office expires in April. Despite winning two elections, in February and December 2025, Prime Minister Albin Kurti's party failed to secure the support needed to elect its candidate. This will be the third election in just over a year. The Constitutional Court has been asked to rule on the validity of this presidential decree. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

## ■ Studies/Reports :



## Report on Safety Gate, the rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products

On 5 March, the European Commission published its annual report on Safety Gate, the rapid alert system that tracks dangerous non-food products on the European market. This enables national product safety authorities to quickly share information on dangerous products and take appropriate action. In 2025, 4,671 alerts were recorded. This is the highest number since the system was launched in 2003. The report presents another record, that of the number of follow-up measures taken by national authorities, up 35% compared to 2024. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



## Global Debt Report

On 4 March, the OECD published its Global Debt Report 2026, warning of record public and private debt worldwide, under pressure from rising financing costs, persistent deficits and significant investment needs. The OECD pays particular attention to recommendations for European countries. It warns against the effects of high debt levels in a context of sustained increases in financing costs and calls for greater economic policy coordination, proactive management of refinancing risks and structural reforms of financial markets to ensure greater long-term stability and sustainability. [Read more](#)



**STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL**

## Increase in global arms flows and European demand

On 9 March, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute published new data on global arms flows. According to this data, the volume of heavy weapons transfers between states increased by 9.2% between the period 2016-2020 and 2021-2025. European states have more than tripled their arms imports, becoming the largest importing region. Total exports from the United States, the world's largest arms supplier, have increased by 27%, including a 217% increase in US arms exports to Europe. France is the world's second largest supplier of major arms in 2021-2025, accounting for 9.8% of global exports. [Read more](#)

## ■ Culture :

**MUSEUM BARBERINI**  
**POTSDAM**

## Max Liebermann and Impressionism in Potsdam

Until 7 June, the Barberini Museum in Potsdam is hosting an exhibition dedicated to Max Liebermann and Impressionism. With more than 110 works from over sixty international collections, it presents the development of Impressionism in Germany from the 1880s to the 1930s, focusing on the artist, who played a decisive role in the internationalisation of the German art world as a painter, collector and president of the Berlin Secession. Particular attention is paid to the long-neglected contribution of women artists to the development of German Impressionism. [Read more](#)



## Spring Film Festival in Vilnius

Until 22 March, the Lithuanian capital is hosting the 31st edition of the Vilnius International Film Festival, a springtime cinema event. Created in 1995, in the wake of post-Soviet cultural renewal, this event showcases internationally acclaimed films, daring contemporary works and eagerly awaited Lithuanian premieres. A true celebration of the seventh art, it confirms the Lithuanian capital's position as a dynamic cultural hub for film lovers and emerging talents in European and world cinema. [Read more](#)



## Mark Rothko in Florence

Until 23 August, Palazzo Strozzi in Florence is hosting an exhibition devoted to Mark Rothko, tracing the artist's career as a master of 20th-century abstract expressionism. With more than 70 works, including paintings of a scale rarely seen in Italy, on loan from international museums, this retrospective is a true immersion in colour and emotion. 'Rothko in Florence' celebrates the artist's intimate connection with the city and extends his dialogue beyond the Palazzo Strozzi, from the San Marco Museum to the Medicea Laurenziana Library, building a striking bridge between modernity and Italian heritage. [Read more](#)

## TEFAF MAASTRICHT 2026

### TEFAF Art Fair in Maastricht

From 14 to 19 March, the European Fine Art Foundation (TEFAF) is organising a fair in Maastricht dedicated to fine art, antiques and design, bringing together 7,000 years of art history. With more than 260 prestigious dealers from some 20 countries, this event is a showcase for the finest works of art currently on the market. In addition to the traditional fields of old master paintings, antiques and classical objects, which occupy about half of the fair, visitors will also find modern and contemporary art, photography, jewellery, 20th-century design and works on paper. [Read more](#)



### Photo by John Minihan in Dublin

Until 11 October, the exhibition 'Visual Poetry', presented by the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin, offers an overview of the career of Irish photographer John Minihan, spanning more than sixty years, exploring his experience as a press photographer for the Daily Mail. From the beginning of his career, Minihan's quest to photograph 'what might have gone unnoticed' and his desire to bring out the poetry of everyday life were central to his craft. [Read more](#)



### Simone Veil. Mes soeurs et moi (My Sisters and I) at the Shoah Memorial in Paris

Until 15 October, the Shoah Memorial in Paris is hosting an exhibition dedicated to Simone Veil, retracing the Jacob sisters' journey before, during and after the war. The exhibition presents several writings and photographs preserved by the family and reveals the relationship between Simone and her two sisters, Denise and Madeleine. [Read more](#)

## ■ Agenda :

 09/03/2026

**Eurogroup**

 09/03/2026

**Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Social Policy)**

 09-12/03/2026

**Plenary session of the European Parliament** (Strasbourg)

 10/03/2026

**'Economic and Financial Affairs' Council**

 16/03/2026

**"Transport, Telecommunications and Energy" Council (Energy)**

 16/03/2026

**Foreign Affairs Council**



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