

Letter n°1150 of Tuesday 7th April 2026

EU-India Renewed Strategic Partnership and Its Significance in the Shifting Global Landscape

Karine de Vergeron - 07 Apr 2026

Against a backdrop of US isolationist withdrawal, India is moving away from its traditional non-alignment towards a pragmatic 'multi-alignment' approach. This strategic pivot makes the European Union a key partner, a relationship cemented by a historic free trade agreement in 2026. This rapprochement aims to ensure economic stability and the modernisation of India's defence capabilities in the face of regional pressure from China.



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■ Front page! :



Europe without Trump

US President Donald Trump has been making a series of blunt statements against the transatlantic agreement, which the United States itself initiated in 1949. He is justifying his attacks on the grounds that Europeans are refusing to participate in the war he is currently losing in the Middle East. Europe now knows that it cannot count on him to come to the aid of one of its members in the event of an aggression. There is now no ambiguity: Trump's America will not come to Europe's aid. Europeans must take responsibility for the collective defence of the continent and organise a de facto solidarity amongst themselves in the event of an attack. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



New payment under the Next Generation EU plan

On 30 March, the European Commission disbursed €898.9 million in grants and loans to Croatia under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. This is the eighth payment made to Zagreb under the Next Generation EU plan, which supports recovery, economic growth and competitiveness in Member States. With this payment, Croatia has now received 73% of the total €10 billion allocation, comprising €5.8 billion in grants and €4.2 billion in loans, and has achieved 62% of the targets set out in its national recovery and resilience plan. The Foundation provides a summary of the various national recovery plans on its website, setting out the amounts, timetables and priorities. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



EDIP: Adoption of a €1.5 billion programme

On 30 March, the European Commission approved a €1.5 billion programme under the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP). Adopted on 8 December 2025, EDIP aims to strengthen the European Union's defence preparedness in the face of changes in the European security landscape. More than €700 million will thus support increased production of essential defence components and products, including €260 million under the EDIP support instrument for Ukraine. European projects of common interest in the defence sector will receive €325 million, whilst €240 million will be used to finance joint procurement of defence equipment. Finally, start-ups in the defence sector will receive €100 million in support. [Read more - Other link](#)



Carbon market: enhancing stability in the face of price volatility

On 1 April, the European Commission proposed a measure aimed at strengthening the functioning of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) by reforming the Market Stability Reserve (MSR). Since 2019, the MSR has stabilised carbon prices by regulating the supply of CO₂ emission allowances. It absorbs allowances or releases them back into the market depending on market fluctuations. Against a backdrop of increased energy price volatility and geopolitical tensions, the reform will put an end to the invalidation mechanism, which triggered the release of the reserve as soon as the threshold of 400 million allowances was exceeded, thereby creating a liquidity buffer capable of supporting market stability. A more comprehensive review of the EU ETS is scheduled for next July. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Preparatory measures for the €90 billion financial support package for Ukraine

On 1 April, the European Commission proposed an implementing decision to put in place the €90 billion support loan for Ukraine for 2026 and 2027. This loan, approved by foreign ministers last December, aims to meet the country's budgetary and military needs. The first package of measures adopted provides for the disbursement of €45 billion by 31 December at the latest. The aid package is currently blocked by a veto from the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, due to a dispute over the Druzhba oil pipeline. The European Commission has also adopted a decision authorising Ukraine to make use of derogations for the procurement of drones. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries

On 30 March, the Ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries decided to increase their mackerel fishing quotas in the North Atlantic, sticking to a 48% reduction rather than the 70% reduction decided in December 2025, thereby aligning themselves with the United Kingdom, Norway, the Faroe Islands and Iceland. They asked the Commission to draw up a plan aimed at reducing agricultural production costs, particularly those of fertilisers. The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and the recent entry into force of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) are leading to considerable additional costs for the arable farming sector, against a backdrop of already deteriorating cash flow levels over the last three years. [Read more](#)



Informal meeting of energy ministers

On 31 March, energy ministers met to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East and the resulting rise in energy prices. Sharing their analysis of the situation, they indicated that there was no shortage at this stage but that coordinated action was needed to mitigate the impact of rising energy prices. The Commission is expected to present measures shortly regarding energy supply security and energy price control. [Read more](#)



Sanctions extended due to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Iran

On 30 March, the Council decided to extend the European Union's restrictive measures until 31 March 2027 due to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and until 13 April 2027 for Iran. The Union thus retains its ability to impose restrictive measures against persons or entities undermining the sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order and international legal personality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, due to serious human rights violations in Iran, the extended measures consist of a ban on entry into the territory of the Union, an asset freeze and a ban on exports of specific equipment to Iran. 262 individuals and 53 entities are targeted by this latest sanctions regime. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Maritime security: updated mandates for the ASPIDES and ATALANTA missions

On 31 March, the Council amended the mandates of the EU naval operations, EUNAVFOR Aspides and EUNAVFOR Atalanta, which actively contribute to safeguarding freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa. The EUNAVFOR Aspides mission, launched in 2024, will now, in addition to its original tasks, collect and share information on suspicious activities linked to critical subsea infrastructure (CSI), contribute to capacity-building by training Djiboutian maritime forces, and cooperate with the Yemeni coastguard. The EUNAVFOR Atalanta mission, launched in 2008, has been assigned a new task involving the collection of information on suspicious activities related to CSIs. [Read more](#)



Ireland prepares for its Presidency of the Council of the European Union in Helsinki and Warsaw

On 31 March, Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin began a series of preparatory visits ahead of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2026. He travelled to Helsinki, where he met his Finnish counterpart, Petteri Orpo, and then to Warsaw to hold talks with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk. Discussions focused on European competitiveness, strengthening the internal market and coordination on urgent international issues, such as the war in Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East. Micheál Martin affirmed his commitment to ensuring an effective and consensus-driven presidency in an unstable European context. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Joint statement on the situation in Lebanon

On 31 March, the foreign ministers (of Belgium, Cyprus, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom), together with the High Representative of the Union, Kaja Kallas, issued a joint statement on the situation in Lebanon. In it, they express their full support for the Lebanese government and people, and call on all parties to de-escalate tensions. Furthermore, they affirm their determination to support the Lebanese armed and security forces by actively participating in the international conference to be held as soon as conditions permit. Finally, they condemn the attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and demand guarantees of safety and security for its personnel. [Read more](#)



Berlin and London resume diplomatic dialogue with Damascus

On 30 and 31 March, Syrian President Ahmed al-Charaa embarked on a tour of Europe, visiting Berlin and then London, where he met with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. These talks, which mark a significant step in the re-establishment of relations with European capitals, pave the way for more in-depth discussions on migration and economic matters. Friedrich Merz announced a joint programme aimed at facilitating the return of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, emphasising the importance of their contribution to the reconstruction of a country devastated by years of conflict. Keir Starmer stressed the importance of adopting cooperation measures to strengthen border security and the fight against smuggling networks. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ ECB :



Comprehensive strategy for the future of European payments

On 31 March, the European Central Bank published its comprehensive strategy for payments in Europe against a backdrop of rapid technological change. In particular, the European Central Bank has opened up to financial instruments issued as tokens on a blockchain within the framework of its funding facilities. Its strategy aims to take account of the gradual adoption of new technologies and to ensure the development of innovation, whilst ensuring that central bank money remains the cornerstone of financial stability. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ European Agencies :



Appointment of the Chair of the European Banking Authority

On 30 March, the Council appointed François-Louis Michaud as Chair of the European Banking Authority (EBA) with effect from 16 April 2026 for a five-year term, renewable once. Based in Paris, the EBA is an independent European Union financial authority whose role is to ensure an effective level of regulation and supervision in the European banking sector. [Read more](#)

■ France :



The French President's visit to Japan and South Korea.

The French President undertook an official visit to Japan from 31 March to 2 April, followed by a state visit to the Republic of Korea on 2 and 3 April. These visits formed part of the preparations for the G7 Summit in Évian. However, against an international backdrop marked by crises, this visit served to reaffirm the importance of strategic autonomy and the vital role of the Indo-Pacific. On this occasion, France and Japan decided to deepen and strengthen their exceptional partnership. The French and South Korean Presidents also agreed to elevate the level of bilateral relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership". [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Hungary :



Collusion with Russia: Damning recording for Hungary

On 31 March, a recording of a telephone conversation between the Hungarian Foreign Minister, Péter Szijjártó, and his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, was published, revealing close cooperation between Hungary and Russia on issues of strategic importance to the European Union. In the call, Szijjártó promises coordinated action between Hungary and Slovakia to benefit Russia regarding certain European sanctions. [Read more](#)



Latest opinion polls one week before the election

On 12 April, parliamentary elections will be held in Hungary, where, for the first time since 2010, Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party could lose the election to Péter Magyar's Tisza party. According to the latest polls, Tisza is credited with 49–50% of the vote, compared with 39–40% for Fidesz. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Poland :



Poland launches Armenian-language media outlet to promote European news

On 30 March, the Polish public television broadcaster Telewizja Polska (TVP) launched an Armenian-language news service, 'VT Hayastan News', aimed at audiences in Armenia and within the diaspora. Supported by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this initiative aims to provide coverage of political, economic and social news from a European perspective, whilst strengthening cooperation between Armenia and the European Union. Designed to combat disinformation and increase resilience to information manipulation, this project forms part of the development of a multilingual media offering for the countries of the Eastern Partnership, against a backdrop of growing information-related pressure. [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



Moldova confirms its European stance

On 30 March, the Chair of the Parliament's Committee on European Integration, Marcel Spatari, together with representatives of the European affairs committees of the parliaments of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Finland, Poland and Germany, signed a joint declaration reiterating their unwavering support for the Republic of Moldova's European path. [Read more](#)

■ UK :



Agreement reached between the European Union and the United Kingdom over Gibraltar

On 1 April, the Council of the European Union approved an agreement with the United Kingdom concerning Gibraltar, marking a milestone in the consolidation of the post-Brexit framework. This agreement aims to ensure the region's prosperity by removing physical barriers to the movement of people and goods between Spain and Gibraltar, whilst preserving the Schengen area, the single market and the customs union. Complementing the 2020 Trade and Cooperation Agreement, from which Gibraltar was excluded, this agreement paves the way for enhanced cooperation and greater cross-border integration, to the benefit of local communities and economic activities. It is expected to enter into force provisionally on 15 July 2026. [Read more](#)



Participation in European programmes

On 30 March, the Council of the European Union officially authorised the Commission to open negotiations with the United Kingdom on two agreements concerning the country's participation in the internal electricity market and the United Kingdom's appropriate financial contribution to cohesion policy. The Council also agreed to authorise the United Kingdom's participation in the Erasmus+ programme for the year 2027. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Ukrainian President visits the Gulf region

From 27 to 30 March, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited the Gulf region, during which agreements were signed with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Jordan. These agreements mainly concern defence cooperation, including the strengthening of air defence systems and the joint development of the military industry. At the heart of these partnerships lies the transfer of Ukrainian expertise gained in the face of Russia, in exchange for increased support – particularly in the energy sector – with supplies essential to the economy and the war effort. This visit thus marks a diplomatic turning point, anchoring Ukraine in lasting alliances and strengthening its strategic presence in the region. [Read more](#)



Bucha Summit: EU commemorates victims of mass atrocities

On 31 March, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky attended a summit in Bucha to commemorate, alongside delegations from the European Union, NATO and the OSCE, the victims of the atrocities committed during the Russian occupation of the region in 2022. In a joint statement, all EU Member States, with the exception of Hungary, reiterated their support for Ukraine and called for enhanced coordination of security, economic and humanitarian measures, whilst emphasising the need to maintain sanctions against Russia and step up aid to Kyiv. Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed this stance as a sign of unity, noting that only the defence of truth and justice could lead to the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and lasting peace. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Frozen Russian assets: fourth transfer of €1.4 billion in proceeds

On 1 April, the European Union received €1.4 billion in windfall profits from interest on frozen Russian assets. These funds will be used to support Ukraine and strengthen its military and defence capabilities. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Member States adopted several rounds of sanctions, including the freezing of Russian Central Bank assets held within the EU. On 21 May 2024, foreign ministers adopted a set of legal acts allowing the net proceeds from these assets to be used for the benefit of Ukraine. This is the fourth transfer of its kind, following an initial tranche in July 2024 and the most recent one in December 2025. [Read more](#)



New defence agreement with Bulgaria

On 30 March, Ukraine and Bulgaria signed a ten-year defence agreement during a visit by Bulgarian Prime Minister Andrey Gyurov to Kyiv. They agreed to draw up a roadmap of practical bilateral measures, covering, amongst other things, energy, defence, transport and security in the Black Sea region.

The agreement provides for Bulgaria to continue providing military aid to Ukraine and to develop cooperation in the defence industry, notably through the joint production in both countries of various types of weapons, including drones. The two countries will also cooperate in the fields of intelligence and security, and in combating hybrid threats and disinformation. [Read more](#)



Ireland steps up its support for Ukraine

On 1 April, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Helen McEntee, travelled to Kyiv to express Ireland's solidarity with Ukraine. On this occasion, she announced an additional €40 million package to address urgent humanitarian needs and support long-term reconstruction and resilience. This aid aims to provide medical care, emergency shelter and support for the most vulnerable populations, whilst supporting reforms and the process of accession to the European Union. During this visit, which included the opening of Ireland's new embassy in Kyiv, the Minister reiterated that support for Ukraine will be a key priority of Ireland's forthcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union. [Read more](#)



Strategic meeting between Ukrainian and Romanian drone companies

On 1 April, the Romanian government organised a strategic networking meeting between Ukrainian companies specialising in the drone sector. Discussions focused on the development of projects and partnerships in the field of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and advanced detection and neutralisation systems (Anti-UAS). This meeting follows the signing of the strategic partnership agreement between the two countries last March. Furthermore, the Romanian Minister of Defence, Radu Miruta, announced that his country intends to allocate €200 million to the joint production of drones with Ukraine, as part of the European Union's SAFE programme. [Read more](#)



'May those who have the power to wage war choose peace'

In his first Easter message and Urbi et Orbi blessing, Pope Leo XIV addressed a world torn apart by wars and violence. He recalled that the power of the Easter message—the victory of life over death—stands in opposition to the violence and spirit of vengeance that are tearing the world apart. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Culture :



European Film Festival in the Czech Republic

From 9 to 19 April, the 'European Film Days' festival is taking place in several cities across the Czech Republic for the 33rd time. Entirely devoted to contemporary European cinema, it offers audiences films that would otherwise not be shown in Czech cinemas. Each year, the festival awards two prizes: one for the best debut film and one for the best film or musical. [Read more](#)

ALBERTINA

Honoré Daumier in Vienna

Until 25 May, the Albertina Museum in Vienna is hosting an exhibition devoted to Honoré Daumier, entitled 'Mirror of Society'. The first major retrospective of the artist's work in nearly 90 years, it brings together a series of lithographs, drawings, paintings and sculptures, enriched by significant loans from the Städel Museum in Frankfurt. Through this exhibition, the display highlights Daumier's incisive view of 19th-century French society, denouncing abuses of power and social injustices with biting humour. [Read more](#)



Cecily Brown in London

Until 6 September, the Serpentine Gallery in London is hosting an exhibition devoted to the artist Cecily Brown, entitled 'Picture Making'. Internationally renowned for her dynamic and complex approach to painting, Cecily Brown explores the boundaries between abstraction and figuration.

Her canvases, often large-scale, are notable for their rich colours, energetic brushwork and a constant tension between what is shown and what is suggested. The exhibition features new works, created especially for the occasion, alongside a selection of key paintings dating from 2001, as well as recent monotypes and drawings. [Read more](#)



Brassaï in Stockholm

Until 4 October, the Moderna Museum in Stockholm is hosting a retrospective devoted to the Hungarian-born, naturalised French photographer Brassai. Through 160 black-and-white photographs, visitors are taken on the photographer's long night-time strolls through 1930s Paris. [Read more](#)



François Morellet at the Centre Pompidou-Metz

Until 28 September, the Centre Pompidou-Metz is hosting a retrospective on François Morellet (1926–2016), entitled "100 per cent", to mark the centenary of his birth. Bringing together one hundred pieces of work spanning over 70 years of creative output, this unique exhibition traces the career of an artist working in geometric abstraction. The exhibition is organised into two complementary strands, creating a tension between mathematical rigour and optical illusion, from his early pictorial experiments of the 1940s to his light installations of the 2010s. [Read more](#)



Art Paris at the Grand Palais

From 9 to 12 April, the Grand Palais will host Art Paris, the key spring event for modern and contemporary art. Its 28th year will bring together nearly 165 French and international exhibitors from 20 countries.

This year, Art Paris is organised around two main themes: "Babel – Art and Language in France" explores how artists manipulate signs, words and writing systems; "Repair" examines contemporary creation from the perspective of care and reconstruction. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 12/04/2026

General election in Hungary



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