

Letter n°1164 of Monday 13th July 2026

A European security strategy for peace

COMECE Secrétariat - 14 Jul 2026

A European security strategy for peace

The European Union must strengthen its security in the face of current threats whilst remaining true to its commitment to peace. In the view of COMECE, and in line with recent statements by Pope Leo XIV, the future European security strategy should combine defence capabilities, diplomacy, conflict prevention and international cooperation. It should guarantee respect for human dignity and international law, and provide an ethical framework for military technologies. The aim is to ensure a just and lasting peace by also addressing the root causes of conflict.



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■ Foundation :



What energy strategy for the Europe of tomorrow?

Given geopolitical instability, the climate emergency and the need to remain competitive, Europe must rethink its energy model. In this new episode of Station Schuman, Valérie Plagnol, an economist and former member of the Energy Regulatory Commission (CRE), examines the key choices that will shape the continent's energy future and analyses the European Union's ability to balance security of supply, the climate transition and energy sovereignty. [Read more](#)



NextGenEU: new payment for Lithuania

On 7 July, the European Commission made the sixth payment to Lithuania, totaling €153 million, under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. This payment will support Lithuania's efforts to implement measures to promote digitalisation, transparency and efficiency in its public sector. Lithuania has now received 73.7 per cent of its total allocation of €2.8 billion. The Foundation provides a summary of the various national recovery plans on its website, setting out the amounts, timetables and priorities. [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Strategy for the livestock sector

On 7 July, the European Commission adopted its strategy for the livestock sector, aimed at ensuring the resilience of European livestock farmers in the face of economic, environmental and trade challenges. The strategy sets out five priorities: resilience, competitiveness, sustainability, adaptability to farms and regions, and excellence in production. Recognising the vital role of livestock farming in Europe's food security, the Commission has set out a protein action plan. This aims to increase the supply and use of proteins produced within the EU, raising their share to 35 per cent by 2035, up from the current 25 per cent. [Read more](#)



Action Plan on Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence

On 7 July, the European Commission unveiled an action plan aimed at developing a response to the risks and new opportunities presented by artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of cybersecurity. Among the key measures, the Commission is calling for the establishment of a European capacity to evaluate AI models, enabling a better understanding of these tools. It aims to create a secure platform for testing AI applied to cybersecurity. The Commission intends to strengthen the European Union's capacity to harness AI in the field of cybersecurity and to capitalise on all the opportunities it offers. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



New sanctions regime against organised crime

On 9 July, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the High Representative, Kaja Kallas, presented a new sanctions regime aimed at combating migrant smuggling, human trafficking and other forms of organised crime. The main objective of this initiative is to disrupt the business model of people smugglers and reduce their profits. The proposed restrictive measures include asset freezes, travel bans and prohibitions on the provision of resources to those on the list. [Read more](#)



Meta (Instagram and Facebook) is in breach of digital services legislation

On 10 July, the European Commission reached a preliminary conclusion that the addictive design of Meta's apps, Instagram and Facebook, breached the Digital Services Act. In particular, features such as highly personalised recommendations, autoplay, infinite scrolling and push notifications contribute to compulsive and unhealthy use by users. The measures taken by Meta to mitigate the addictive design of its apps are, at this stage, insufficient. If these preliminary findings are confirmed, the Commission may adopt a decision finding an infringement, which could result in a fine being imposed on Meta. [Read more](#)

■ Parliament :



Priorities of the Irish Presidency

On 8 July, Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin outlined the priorities of the Irish Presidency of the Council to MEPs. Under the slogan 'Strength in Unity', the Taoiseach explained that the Presidency would focus on strengthening the European Union's competitiveness, values and security. In particular, the aim is to encourage trade within the single market and remove unnecessary regulatory burdens, whilst continuing to deepen trade relations with the European Union's key partners. This presentation was followed by a debate with MEPs, who welcomed the emphasis on competitiveness and raised the issues surrounding the EU's next long-term budget on several occasions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Coordination of social security for the mobility of workers

On 7 July, MEPs approved the revision of the social security coordination rules for European workers who live or work in another Member State of the European Union. These updated rules introduce clearer criteria for determining which country applies social security legislation, such as unemployment benefits, family benefits or long-term care. They also encourage better information sharing between Member States in order to combat fraud and abusive practices effectively. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Temporary derogation from the ePrivacy Directive

On 9 July, MEPs adopted a derogation from the rules on privacy and electronic communications to enable the detection of online sexual abuse of children. They wish to exclude end-to-end encrypted communications from the scope of the legislation. The Council now has three months to approve or reject the amendments. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Green light for closer ties with Mexico

On 8 July, MEPs adopted two agreements supporting the modernisation of the partnership between the European Union and Mexico and the simplification of trade. The Modernised Comprehensive Agreement (MCA) replaces and modernises the framework currently in force. The Interim Trade Agreement covers trade matters falling within the exclusive competence of the Union, allowing for rapid implementation. The agreement would remove almost all remaining customs duties, benefiting European farmers, whilst protecting 568 European geographical indications in Mexico. Finally, at a time when the geopolitical landscape is becoming increasingly fragmented, MEPs believe that this partnership will be essential for continuing to defend and promote rules-based multilateralism. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Economy and Finance Ministers

On 10 July, the Economy and Finance Ministers approved Hungary's new recovery plan. This is expected to provide €10 billion to Budapest under the NextGenerationEU programme. At the same time, they approved targeted amendments to the national plans of eight Member States. They discussed measures relating to market integration and supervision. They expressed their intention to establish the Council's negotiating position on this package by October. The Irish Presidency presented its work programme, guided by three priorities: competitiveness, values and security. Finally, the ministers decided to open an excessive deficit procedure against Bulgaria, whose projected public deficit for 2026 stands at 4.1 per cent. [Read more](#)



Eurogroup

. On 9 July, the Eurogroup finance ministers adopted a statement on the euro area's budgetary stance with a view to drawing up the national budgets for 2027. Following the presentation of the European Central Bank's annual report, they held an exchange of views on the international role of the euro, which is used on a daily basis by around 350 million people. Finally, the ministers held an exchange of views on the implications of artificial intelligence and cybersecurity for the financial sector, with the participation of Mistral's CEO, Arthur Mensch. [Read more](#)



Strengthening air passenger rights

On 7 July, MEPs adopted the amendments to the rules on air passenger rights agreed with the Council. These will allow passengers to benefit from simplified compensation procedures in the event of flight delays, fares that include hand luggage on booking platforms, and free seat allocation for children. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Navalny case: New sanctions against Russia

On 6 July, the United Kingdom announced sanctions targeting seven Russian officials and scientists, as well as two research institutes, accused of being involved in the development of the Novichok nerve agents and the toxin epibatidine. London believes that these substances were used in the poisonings of opposition figure Alexei Navalny and British national Dawn Sturgess, respectively. These measures include, in particular, asset freezes and travel bans. These new sanctions follow the European Union's decision on 3 July to impose sanctions on several Russian scientists involved in the development of epibatidine, on the grounds that this toxin was most likely responsible for Alexei Navalny's death. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Court of Justice :



Apple's challenge to the Digital Markets Act dismissed

On 8 July, the General Court of the European Union dismissed Apple's challenge to the Digital Markets Act (DMA), the European law on digital markets. The company brought the case before the General Court in 2024, seeking to challenge its subjection to the DMA in respect of certain services, such as iMessage and the App Store. With this rejection, the General Court confirms that Apple must continue to comply with the interoperability obligations relating to iOS, its operating system, as set out in the DMA – the aim of which is to ensure fair competition in the markets. [Read more](#)

■ Germany :



Approval of the 2027 budget

On 7 July, the German government adopted its draft budget for 2027 and its financial plan up to 2030, marking a turning point in its economic policy. The budget provides for €118 billion in investment, aimed at modernising infrastructure and supporting high technology, artificial intelligence and innovation. It also provides for a significant increase in defence spending, which will rise to €109 billion, with a view to strengthening the country's military capabilities. To fund this effort, Berlin is combining administrative savings, cuts to certain subsidies, new tax revenues — notably on cryptocurrencies and plastic — and targeted increases in certain levies. The government thus aims to reconcile the revival of growth, fiscal consolidation and a strengthening of security. [Read more](#)

■ France :



Emmanuel Macron's visit to Syria

On 6 and 7 July, President Emmanuel Macron visited Syria, becoming the first head of state from a European country to do so since the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024. The head of state met with representatives of Syrian civil society and his Syrian counterpart Ahmed al-Charaa, before taking part in an economic forum dedicated to the reconstruction of Syria and strategic corridors. In addition, a comprehensive partnership was signed between the two countries, along with several agreements covering economic matters, the fight against terrorism and impunity, energy infrastructure, education and culture. [Read more](#)

■ Hungary :



Hungary joins the European Public Prosecutor's Office

On 10 July, the Commission adopted a decision confirming Hungary's participation in the European Public Prosecutor's Office, following its application to join in May 2026. It thus becomes the 25th member. Established in 2020, the European Public Prosecutor's Office is responsible for investigating and prosecuting financial offences affecting the EU budget. Only Denmark and Ireland do not participate. [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



Appointment of an acting Prime Minister

On 7 July, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Economy Eugen Osmochescu was appointed acting Prime Minister by President Maia Sandu. This appointment follows the resignation of former Prime Minister Alexandru Moise on 3 July, after eight months in office. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Cabinet reshuffle

On 12 July, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced a cabinet reshuffle, with the aim of supporting a "change in political strategy". Relations with the United States, strengthening defence cooperation with European partners and EU accession are among the priorities announced. A new Prime Minister will be appointed shortly. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Cooperation agreement with Estonia on drones

On 7 July, Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a cooperation agreement on drones during a bilateral meeting held on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Ankara. The agreement provides, in particular, for the export of Ukrainian products to Estonia, and the joint development and manufacture of new capabilities between the two countries. Furthermore, it will facilitate closer collaboration on knowledge sharing, technological development and industrial cooperation. [Read more](#)



New Multilateral Defence Mechanism

On 7 July, Finland, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom announced that they were accelerating the establishment of the Multilateral Defence Mechanism (MDM), a new instrument designed to transform the financing of European defence capabilities. Designed to pool arms procurement, streamline demand and accelerate military investment, the mechanism is to be set out in an international treaty, with negotiations due to begin shortly and implementation hoped for by 2027. On 8 July, Canada and the United Kingdom signed a joint declaration to this effect. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



NATO Summit in Ankara

On 7 and 8 July, the 32 NATO leaders met in Ankara, Turkey, for the organisation's 36th summit. In a joint statement, they reiterated their commitment to collective defence, as enshrined in Article 5 of the Treaty. They renewed their unwavering support for Ukraine in its conflict with Russia, and pledged to provide €70 billion for military equipment, assistance and training for Ukraine, as well as to provide aid of at least the same value in 2027. They also announced new investments and procurement in defence and technology, and committed to maximising their industrial cooperation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ OSCE :



Annual Meeting: The Hague Declaration

From 4 to 8 July in The Hague, the 33rd annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was held under the theme "International law and common principles: the foundations of security and co-operation in the OSCE area". Discussions centred on the war in Ukraine, the Middle East, hybrid threats, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, terrorism and the protection of critical infrastructure. Parliamentarians adopted the Hague Declaration, as well as a series of resolutions aimed at strengthening support for Ukraine, upholding international law and fostering cooperation in the face of new security challenges. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Strengthening the EU's innovation performance

On 9 July, the European Commission published the European Innovation Scoreboard, which assesses countries' performance each year to monitor the EU's progress in closing the gap with its competitors. Between 2025 and 2026, analysts noted a 1.7 per cent improvement in European performance, with Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands topping the rankings. These results are part of a positive trend since 2019, with the overall score for the 27 Member States having risen by 11.6 per cent since then. Beyond the European Union, South Korea remains the world's most innovative competitor, followed by China. [Read more](#)



IMF's revised economic outlook

On 8 July, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published an update to its World Economic Outlook. The growth forecast has been revised down to 3 per cent in 2026, compared with the 3.1 per cent anticipated in April, before bouncing back to 3.4 per cent in 2027. The IMF attributes this revision to the consequences of the war in the Middle East, which has led to a rise in energy and commodity prices, fuelling inflationary pressures and weighing on economic activity. It emphasises, however, that the development of artificial intelligence continues to support growth in economies that are most closely integrated into technology value chains. Despite a global economy that has so far proved more resilient than expected, the IMF believes that the risks remain predominantly on the downside. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



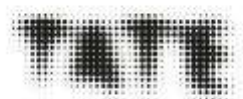
Beksiński in Poznań

Until 18 October, the Poznań Exhibition Centre in Poland is hosting an exhibition dedicated to the painter and photographer Zdzisław Beksiński, one of the most important Polish artists of the 20th century. Nearly 120 works, some of which are usually held in private collections, allow visitors to explore Beksiński's fifty years of surrealist art. [Read more](#)



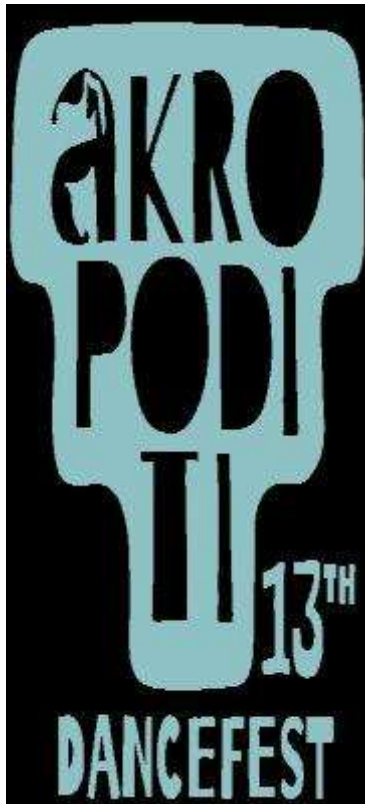
Gustave Courbet in Essen

Until 8 November, the Folkwang Museum in Essen is hosting an exhibition dedicated to the 19th-century French painter Gustave Courbet. This retrospective, comprising nearly 120 works and divided into nine sections, covers various periods of the artist's career and offers visitors the chance to see numerous major works on loan from private collectors. [Read more](#)



Ana Mendieta in London

Until 17 January 2027, the Tate Modern in London is hosting a major exhibition dedicated to Ana Mendieta, featuring many of her iconic pieces, as well as recently remastered films, her early paintings and her sculptures – many of which have never been exhibited in the UK before. The exhibition extends beyond the gallery walls, highlighting the deep connection the artist had with the natural world. [Read more](#)



Dance festival in Syros

Until 19 July, the 13th Akropoditi dance festival on the island of Syros is centring its programme around the theme 'disabilities within'. The festival aims to open dialogue on the role of artists with disabilities in the performing arts through a programme combining performances, workshops, screenings, talks and discussions. [Read more](#)



Anibar Animation Film Festival

Until 18 July, the 17th Anibar International Animation Film Festival is taking place in Peja, Kosovo. Regarded as one of the leading cultural events in the Balkans, the festival offers a programme combining short films, documentaries, student films, productions focusing on human rights and screenings for young audiences. [Read more](#)



Verbier Festival

Until 2 August, the resort of Verbier is hosting the 33rd annual international classical music festival. Over the course of 19 days, more than 60 concerts and 100 masterclasses will bring together the biggest names on the international scene and emerging talents in the heart of the Swiss Alps. [Read more](#)



Les Vieilles Charrues Festival

From 16 to 19 July, the Les Vieilles Charrues Festival returns to Carhaix in the heart of Brittany for its 34th year. Known for its eclectic musical line-up, this year's festival will feature a host of stars. [Read more](#)



72nd Puccini Festival

Until 6 September, the 72nd Puccini Festival is taking place in Tuscany, in Torre del Lago, where Giacomo Puccini lived and composed much of his work. The festival's programme focuses on his most famous operas, alongside several gala concerts featuring internationally renowned artists. The 2026 edition marks the centenary celebrations of "Turandot", with a new production of the opera. [Read more](#)



20th edition of the Olmedo Festival

The Olmedo Clásico Festival is celebrating its twentieth anniversary until 26 July with thirteen performances, carefully selected from the works of the great names of classical theatre, including Cervantes, Shakespeare and Molière, combining comedies, intrigues, tragedies and music. [Read more](#)



Salzburg Festival

The Salzburg Festival, one of the most prestigious classical music and theatre festivals, will run until 30 August. Centred on the theme of exploring the different forms of love, this 106th edition offers a rich programme of operas, concerts and performances depicting the many facets of love, human relationships and the perception of time. A total of 208 performances are scheduled to take place at various iconic venues across the city. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :



13/07/2026

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



13/07/2026

Meeting of the "Coalition of the Willing" (Paris)



14/07/2026

"General Affairs" Council (Brussels)



The Letter n°1164

PDF

in English -- Edition of Monday 13th July 2026

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N° ISSN: **2729-6482**

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