

Letter n°1167 of Tuesday 15th September 2026

'Tele 2', ten years on: difficulties and controversies over access to digital data

Jean Mafart - 15 Sep 2026

In 2016, the CJEU's "Tele2" ruling brought about a major shift in access to connection data, imposing new restrictions in the name of privacy. Ten years on, European states remain deeply divided over how to balance individual freedoms, security and the effectiveness of investigations, making access to data a key issue for European security.



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■ Front page! :



The (state of emergency) of the Union

Faced with geopolitical tensions and the weakening of traditional alliances, the European Union must strengthen its autonomy and its capacity for action. This involves accelerating economic, financial and political integration, modernising its governance and responding more effectively to external challenges. The challenge is to enable Europe to assert itself more strongly in an increasingly unstable and competitive international context. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



NextGenerationEU: green light for the Netherlands

On 7 September, the European Commission approved the Netherlands' fourth payment request, amounting to €661 million, under the NextGenerationEU programme. To date, the Netherlands has received 56.4 per cent of its total allocation of €5.44 billion under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The Foundation provides an overview of the various national recovery plans on its website, setting out their funding levels, timetables and priorities. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Latvia goes to the polls on 3 October: what will the new coalition government look like?

On 3 October, Latvia is set to elect the 100 members of its parliament (Saeima) against a backdrop marked by the war in Ukraine and tensions with Russia. The United List leads the polls with 23.6 per cent, whilst New Unity stands at 8.9 per cent. With seven parties likely to clear the 5 per cent threshold – the minimum required to win seats in Parliament – none appears capable of governing alone. The election is dominated by security issues relating to Russia, as well as the cost of living, the country's demographic future and the integration of the Russian-speaking minority. [Read more](#)



Social Democrats and opposition parties just squeeze ahead in Sweden's general election

The Swedish general election on 13 September was closely contested between the left-wing and right-wing blocs. According to still provisional results, the Social Democrats are in the lead with 28.1 per cent of the vote and 100 seats, ahead of the Moderates (19.9 per cent) and the Sweden Democrats (17.6 per cent). The left is set to secure a narrow majority with 176 seats, compared with 173 for the right-wing bloc. The formation of the next government therefore looks uncertain and could lead to lengthy negotiations. [Read more](#)

■ Digital, technologies and space :



International Space Summit

The International Space Summit took place in Paris on 9 and 10 September. Nearly 120 foreign delegations were present for the occasion. Whilst the French President emphasised the need to fully embrace "European preference", the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, highlighted the importance of IRIS², a European initiative aimed at deploying a European satellite constellation to provide Europe with "an autonomous and resilient connectivity capability". According to the Élysée Palace, around 50 contracts and agreements were signed during the summit, with a total value announced at approximately €20 billion. [Read more](#)



Amazon Leo awards six new Ariane 64 launches to Arianespace

On 9 September, Arianespace and Amazon Leo announced the signature of a contract for six additional "Ariane 64" launches, bringing the total number of missions awarded by Amazon Leo to Arianespace to 24, compared with the 18 initially planned under the agreement signed in 2022. These new missions will aim to continue the deployment of the Amazon Leo constellation in low Earth orbit and will begin by 2031 from Europe's spaceport in French Guiana. The order for these six additional launches marks a significant step forward that will enable Arianespace to balance the needs of the commercial market with European institutional missions. [Read more](#)



New European legislative act on innovation

On 9 September, the European Commission proposed a new European legislative act on innovation designed to help European innovations grow, secure funding and compete globally. This proposal forms part of the EU's strategy for start-ups and scale-ups, as well as its Competitiveness Compass. In particular, it aims to facilitate access to funding for innovative businesses and to establish a common approach to markets in the field of research and development (R&D). [Read more](#)

■ Economy and Finances :



ECB key interest rate increases; growth and inflation forecasts

On 10 September, the Governing Council of the European Central Bank (ECB) announced a 25 basis point increase in the ECB's three key interest rates, with effect from 16 September. The deposit facility rate was thus raised to 2.5 per cent, the main refinancing operations rate to 2.65 per cent and the marginal lending facility rate to 2.9 per cent. The increase is attributed in particular to inflationary pressures linked to the conflict in the Middle East. The inflation forecast remained unchanged at 3 per cent for 2026, 2.5 per cent for 2027 and 2.3 per cent for 2028. As for economic growth, the forecast stands at 0.9 per cent in 2026, 1.4 per cent in 2027 and 1.5 per cent in 2028. [Read more](#)



Public procurement reform

On 9 September, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation aimed at modernising and simplifying the European public procurement framework, with a view to promoting investment in public services and infrastructure, in line with the Union's strategic priorities. This proposal should enable the completion of the single procurement market, which accounts for around 15 per cent of European GDP. The Commission's approach is based on four main pillars: simplifying and clarifying the rules; establishing a single platform for all public procurement across the Union; strengthening support for environmental, social and innovation objectives; and enhancing security, resilience and strategic autonomy. [Read more](#)

■ Defence and Security :



Interview on "forward deterrence" and Finland's involvement

Faced with a more aggressive Russia and uncertainty surrounding US support, France is seeking to strengthen the European dimension of its nuclear deterrent. "Forward deterrence" is based on increased cooperation with European partners, whilst maintaining the nuclear decision-making process under French sovereignty. The challenge is also to combine European nuclear forces with conventional military capabilities to strengthen the continent's security. For Jean-Dominique Giuliani, this cooperation – which is already underway – must above all enable Europeans to build trust and their capacity to act together in the face of crises. On 14 September, Finland in turn decided to join the advanced deterrence scheme. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Strategic partnership between Canada and Ukraine

On 10 September, in the presence of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced a new phase of the strategic partnership between the two countries. Thus, in addition to recent partnerships between key companies in the Ukrainian and Canadian defence sectors concerning the procurement and production of drones, the Canadian government will invest nearly 370 million Canadian dollars to strengthen Ukraine's long-term security. It will provide funding of over 600 million Canadian dollars to support Ukraine's energy security and reconstruction, and will provide an additional 6 million Canadian dollars in aid to facilitate the repatriation of Ukrainian children forcibly displaced by Russia. [Read more](#)

■ Energy and Agriculture :



New European approach for the agri-food sector

On 8 September, the European Commission adopted a communication on "A new strategic approach to research and innovation for competitive, resilient and sustainable agriculture, forestry, rural areas and food systems". It aims to make the agri-food sector more competitive and resilient. The approach is structured around two interconnected frameworks: AgRI 2040 and Food 2040. Six common priorities lie at the heart of this new approach: competitiveness, food security, sustainability, food safety, equity and global cooperation. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



REPowerEU

European Court of Auditors' report on the REPowerEU plan

On 9 September, the European Court of Auditors published a report on the REPowerEU plan. Since the plan was adopted in May 2022, the European Union has significantly reduced its dependence on Russian fossil fuels. However, the Court highlights a significant shortfall in investment. Of the additional €300 billion estimated by the Commission in 2022 as being necessary to meet the REPowerEU targets by 2030, only €54.3 billion (18 per cent) had been committed by April 2026. It highlights insufficient progress in the development of renewable energy and cross-border interconnections, as well as inadequate monitoring and steering of the plan's implementation. It calls on the Commission and the Member States to better coordinate their plans, to bridge the funding gap and to strengthen the monitoring of the REPowerEU targets. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Diplomacy and Geopolitics :



New strategic vision for the outermost regions

On 10 September, the European Commission adopted a communication on the outermost regions of the European Union, namely French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Réunion, Saint Martin (France), the Azores, Madeira (Portugal) and the Canary Islands (Spain). In it, the Commission sets out a new strategic vision for these regions, with a view to boosting their socio-economic development. The communication is accompanied by a regulatory package comprising several legislative proposals aimed at adapting certain European rules to the challenges faced by these territories. In particular, exemptions and derogations are envisaged in the areas of taxation, forestry, agriculture, fisheries and migration. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Arctic Summit in Finland

On 13 and 14 September, Finland hosted the Arctic Summit, bringing together European Union leaders in Rovaniemi. The aim of the summit is to strengthen the Union's common strategic approach to the Arctic, a region whose geopolitical importance is growing rapidly. In light of current geopolitical tensions, European Union leaders now wish to focus more on peace and security, as well as on economic activity in the region. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Ursula von der Leyen visits Greenland

On 6 and 7 September, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, was in Nuuk, Greenland. Following discussions with the Greenlandic Prime Minister, Jens-Frederik Nielsen, and the Danish Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, a joint declaration was signed. It provides, in particular, for greater cooperation in areas of mutual interest such as infrastructure development and construction, connectivity, critical raw materials and climate action. Ursula von der Leyen also announced a €200 million partnership programme for Greenland as part of the 'Global Gateway' strategy. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Western sanctions against goods produced in Israeli settlements

On 8 September, the foreign ministers of Canada, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Sweden decided to establish and/or uphold, at the European level, import restrictions on goods produced by Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which are deemed illegal under international law. In a joint statement, the aforementioned states urged the Israeli government to cease all settlement expansion and renewed their commitment to a lasting peace enabling "Israel and a sovereign, democratic and viable Palestinian state to recognise one another and live side by side in peace and security within secure and internationally recognised borders." [Read more](#)



Conference of Heads of German Diplomatic Missions

From 7 to 11 September, the heads of German diplomatic missions met in Berlin for the annual ambassadors' conference. On 10 September, Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul spoke on the perception abroad of German foreign and security policy. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte attended the conference – the first time a NATO chief has done so. The Minister urged the ambassadors to actively advocate, in their host countries, for increased support for Ukraine, noting that Germany is now Kyiv's largest bilateral supporter. This year, Germany has invested €124.7 billion in 'hard' defence capabilities, representing around 2.7 per cent of its GDP. This figure is expected to reach at least 3.5 per cent by 2029, amounting to more than €150 billion. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Democracy and politics :



Dissolution of Parliament

On 7 September, Serbian Prime Minister Djuro Macut asked President Aleksandar Vučić to dissolve the Assembly. On 9 September, the President dissolved the Assembly, paving the way for snap general elections to be held on 25 October. Since November 2024, the country has been rocked by a widespread protest movement sparked by the deadly collapse of a canopy at Novi Sad railway station in the north of the country. Since that accident, an activist movement has mobilised, viewing it as the result of the corruption plaguing the country, even as it negotiates its accession to the European Union. [Read more](#)



Visit by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to Latvia

On 10 and 11 September, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, held talks with the Latvian President, Edgars Rinkēvičs, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Baiba Braže, and the Speaker of the Parliament (Saeima), Daiga Mieriņa. Alain Berset emphasised that Latvia's experience in combating hybrid threats is invaluable in building a common European response. He also attended the Riga Conference, where he spoke about Ukraine's future as a pillar of European security. Finally, he visited the NATO Centre of Excellence for Strategic Communications, where discussions focused on possible synergies between NATO's expertise and that of the Council of Europe. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



PISA rankings: the majority of European countries have seen a decline in the performance of their education systems

On 8 September, the OECD published the results of the 2025 PISA rankings: Asia continues to occupy the top spots, whilst the majority of European countries have seen a decline in their pupils' performance. Nevertheless, two European countries feature in the global Top 10 thanks to improving results: Estonia, in 6th place, and the United Kingdom, in 8th place. Finland has slipped to 12th place, although it remains above the OECD average. The Scandinavian countries, which had previously held dominant positions, are also experiencing a downward trend. [Read more](#)



Drop in asylum applications

On 10 September, the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) published a report providing an overview of recent trends in asylum in the European Union, as well as in Switzerland and Norway. The number of applications for international protection received in the first half of 2026 stood at 332,000, which is 17 per cent lower than in the same period the previous year. France received the highest number of applications, followed by Italy, Spain and Germany. Together, these four countries accounted for around three-quarters of the applications received. The recognition rate at first instance during the first six months of the year stood at less than a third. [Read more](#)

■ Culture :



European Heritage Days

September sees the 43rd annual European Heritage Days, centred around two themes: "Photographic Heritage" and "Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine". Organised across the 50 signatory countries of the European Cultural Convention, numerous sites will open their doors to the public for the occasion, including embassies, historic monuments and venues that are usually closed to visitors. England is hosting the event from 11 to 20 September, Germany on 13 September, France on 19 and 20 September, whilst Poland will spread the event over two consecutive weekends, from 18 to 20 September and then on 26 and 27 September. In Spain, the dates vary depending on each autonomous community. [Read more](#)



Reopening of the Baths of Trajan to the public

The project to restore and showcase the great exedra and the underground gallery of the Baths of Trajan, situated on the Oppius, has been completed. New archaeological areas and major remains from Imperial Rome are thus once again accessible to visitors. These decorative elements belong to a building predating Trajan's Baths, dating from the 1st century AD. Since 12 September, small groups of visitors have been able to access the site by booking and registering for a guided tour. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



The Bohemian Crown Jewels in Prague

To mark the 500th anniversary of Ferdinand I of Habsburg's accession to the Bohemian throne, Prague Castle is exhibiting the Bohemian Crown Jewels until 28 September. Forged in 1347 for the coronation of Charles IV, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor, the Crown of St Wenceslas and its jewels are symbols of Czech identity. [Read more](#)

Maurizio Cattelan in Berlin

The Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, a leading figure in contemporary art, is the winner of the 2026 Nationalgalerie Prize. With the exhibition "Night", Berlin's Neue Nationalgalerie is presenting the artist's first major exhibition in Germany. Selected for this prize by an international jury, the artist is showcasing a collection that brings together landmark works from his past as well as recent creations. The exhibition will run until 7 March 2027. [Read more](#)



Lyon Art Biennale

From 19 September to 13 December, Lyon is hosting the 18th Contemporary Art Biennale. Under the theme 'Moving from one dream to another', this year's edition brings together 119 artists from 42 different countries. It is taking place across several venues throughout the city. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :



14-17/09/2026

Plenary session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)



18/09/2026

Eurogroup Meeting (Dublin)



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