

Letter n°1170 of Tuesday 6th October 2026

To the roots of europe for peace and unity

Pape Léon XIV - 06 Oct 2026

In a speech delivered in Metz on 28 September, during his apostolic journey to France, Pope Leo XIV paid a heartfelt tribute to Robert Schuman – the full text of which we reproduce here – as part of a reflection on the roots and future of Europe. Peace, unity, dialogue, human dignity and respect for the law emerge as the essential foundations of the European project. In the face of contemporary challenges, the future of Europe rests on a balance between fidelity to its roots, openness to others and the building of lasting solidarity.



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■ Front page! :



The Pope, Europe, Schuman and Macron

During his apostolic journey to France, Pope Leo XIV made Europe the central theme of his speech delivered in Metz on 28 September. Expressing his commitment to a just and united world, he drew on history to deliver a message of hope for the European continent, thereby echoing the declaration made by Robert Schuman on 9 May 1950. [Read more](#)

■ Foundation :



Further payments under NextGenerationEU

On 29 September, the European Commission gave a positive assessment of the fifth and final payment requests from France and Austria, amounting to €6.1 billion and €306 million respectively, under the NextGenerationEU programme. On 1 October, it paid out €225 million to Belgium, €120 million to Cyprus, €135 million to Estonia, €7.9 billion to Poland and €1.47 billion to Sweden, bringing the total funds released under the Recovery and Resilience Facility to over €450 billion. The Robert Schuman Foundation provides an overview of the various national recovery plans on its website, setting out the amounts, timetables and priorities. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#) - [Other link](#)



Latvian Prime Minister Andris Kulbergs' "United List" wins the election

The Latvian election confirms the wish for continuity under the United List, whilst revealing the rise of nationalist and pro-Russian forces, against a backdrop of geopolitical tensions and economic difficulties. The United List came out well ahead with 35.28 per cent (41 seats), ahead of Latvia First (pro-Russian) with 13.57 per cent of the vote (17 seats) and Sovereign Power (pro-Russian) with 11.71 per cent (15 seats). Next came the National Alliance (conservative right) with 8.89 per cent of the vote (10 seats), the Progressives (social democratic) with 7.87 per cent (10 seats) and New Unity (centre-right) with 6.36 per cent and 7 seats. The challenge now will be to form a stable coalition whilst maintaining Latvia's European and Atlantic ties. [Read more](#)

■ Defence and Security :



Defence cooperation between Romania and Poland

Under the "Security Action for Europe" (SAFE) financial instrument, the Romanian and Polish Defence Ministers signed a letter of intent on 30 September regarding their cooperation. They agreed to strengthen their collaboration to support the defence industries of their respective countries, and to work closely together on the procurement of a loitering munition strike system. This project, managed by the Romanian Ministry of Defence, will be funded by the SAFE instrument. [Read more](#)



Meeting of European Defence Ministers

On 28 September, the defence ministers of the 27 Member States met in Brussels. Their discussions focused, in particular, on the European Union's support for Ukraine, the situation in the Middle East and its implications for the Union, as well as the latest developments concerning Greenland. The ministers approved the first five European defence projects of common interest under the European Defence Industrial Programme (EDIP) and adopted a decision aimed at improving the European response mechanism to space threats. [Read more](#)



The UK announces 31 new sanctions against Russia

On 1 October, the British Government unveiled 31 new economic and financial sanctions against Russia. 23 individuals will be subject to asset freezes and travel bans, and 8 vessels will be subject to maritime and trade sanctions. London is specifically targeting individuals responsible for human rights abuses and the indoctrination of children in the occupied territories of Ukraine, as well as vessels associated with Russia's 'ghost fleet'. [Read more](#)

■ Economy and Finances :



Meeting of Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries

On 28 and 29 September, the ministers for agriculture and fisheries from the 27 Member States discussed, amongst other things, the Common Agricultural Policy with a view to reaching a partial general approach at the next Council meeting on 15 and 16 October. Among other things, they called for the rules to be simplified to reduce the administrative burden on farmers and national administrations. The ministers reached a partial negotiating position on future EU support for fisheries, aquaculture and maritime policy for 2028–2034. [Read more](#)



Budget: tough negotiations between the 'Frugal Six' and those championing agriculture and cohesion

On 29 September, the leaders of Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden co-signed a letter calling for a far-reaching reform of the 2028–2034 multiannual financial framework. These six Member States are making their agreement conditional on a reduction in the budget of several hundred million euros. In response, on 3 October, the leaders of seventeen Member States sent a letter to the Irish Prime Minister (Taoiseach) Micheál Martin, whose country currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. They argue that agriculture and cohesion must remain the central priorities of the next multiannual budget. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



A move towards European payment sovereignty?

On 30 September, five European payment system companies (Bancomat, Bizum, Wero/EPI, SIBS-MB WAY and Vipps MobilePay) announced the creation of a joint venture, the European Network for Payments (ENP), with the aim of offering a European alternative to the US payment systems that dominate the continent, such as Visa, Mastercard and PayPal. The initiative seeks to overcome the current fragmentation of payment systems by interconnecting existing systems via a shared infrastructure based on European standards. The ENP, which will be based in Madrid, will now have to ensure it complements the European Central Bank's (ECB) digital euro project and secure the support of merchants and European Union member states. [Read more](#)



€2.9 billion disbursed to Ukraine

On 2 October, the European Commission disbursed €2.9 billion to Ukraine under the Ukraine Facility. This eighth instalment is intended, amongst other things, to support the country's financial stability and the implementation of reforms. The Commission states that Ukraine has completed ten reform milestones, relating in particular to the justice system, energy and agriculture. To date, the total support provided under the Ukraine Facility exceeds €32 billion, including contributions from partner countries and funds from the Ukraine Support Loan. [Read more](#)



G7 Statement on Global Energy Security and Market Stability

On 2 October, an extraordinary G7 meeting was held to address issues relating to the energy crisis. In particular, the Heads of State and Government announced a release, coordinated by the International Energy Agency, of 100 million barrels of oil over the next four months. Other measures designed to ensure global energy security and market stability were announced, such as the coordination of refinery maintenance programmes across the G7 countries. [Read more](#)



State visit by the French President to Spain

On 29 and 30 September, French President Emmanuel Macron undertook a state visit to Spain, the first by a French president since 2009. He delivered a speech on digital technology at the Complutense University, opened the Franco-Spanish Economic Forum, attended a state dinner hosted by King Felipe IV, and held talks with the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez. At a press conference, the two leaders reaffirmed their shared European priorities regarding foreign policy, competitiveness, migration and digital affairs. Finally, they expressed their shared hopes for the future ratification of the Franco-Spanish Friendship Treaty following the Spanish Senate's rejection of the text. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



State visit by the Finnish President to Luxembourg

On 29 and 30 September, the Finnish President, Alexander Stubb, paid a state visit to Luxembourg. On 30 September, he visited the University of Luxembourg and learnt about several research projects presented by their lead researchers in the fields of health, artificial intelligence and data, quantum communications, high-performance computing and quantum sciences.

He then went to Betzdorf Castle, the headquarters of the European Satellite Company (SES), accompanied by Prime Minister Luc Frieden. Following a brief presentation on the company's activities and key projects of interest to Finland, the participants toured the Satellite Operations Centre and spoke with the team responsible for satellite monitoring and management. [Read more](#)



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in Ukraine

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz visited Ukraine on 4 October, accompanied by the Minister for Economic Affairs, Katherina Reiche, and a business delegation. During his visit, he pledged a new aid package: €1 billion in military funding, plus a further €350 million earmarked for the energy sector, which has been the target of repeated Russian strikes. According to the German Chancellor, the core of this new aid package is an agreement to jointly manufacture interceptor drones, known as 'anti-jet' drones, as well as missiles capable of striking targets over 1,000 kilometres away. The agreement also covers satellite technologies, which will enable the Ukrainian army to better identify and designate its targets. [Read more](#)

■ Democracy and Politics :



Snap election in Spain on 29 November

On 5 October, the Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez (PSOE-PSE), announced the dissolution of Parliament and the calling of early general elections to be held on 29 November. He has led a minority coalition government from 2023, with the term originally due to end in mid-2027. However, following Parliament's rejection of a housing bill, the Spanish Prime Minister stated that he wished to secure a larger majority "to carry out far-reaching reforms". Spaniards are therefore set to go to the polls on 29 November to elect new members to both chambers of the Cortes Generales: the Congress of Deputies and the Senate. [Read more](#)



Magdalena Andersson tasked with forming a government

On 28 September, the Social Democrat Magdalena Andersson abandoned her attempt to form a government due to a lack of sufficient support, following the election of Andreas Norlén as Speaker of Parliament, which was secured with the backing of the Left Party. On 2 October, the Speaker of Parliament tasked her with making a further attempt to form a government. She must inform him of her decision by 12 October, or request an extension. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 4 October, 3.4 million voters were called to the polls to elect their representatives within a multi-tiered institutional framework designed to distribute power amongst Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into two autonomous entities, each with its own government: the Republika Srpska and the Bosnian-Croat Federation. The whole is headed by a central government and a tripartite presidency. Two presidents (the Bosniak Denis Becirovic and the Serb Milorad Dodik) were re-elected for four years. The outgoing Croat president, Zeljko Komsic, has been replaced by a woman, Darijana Filipovic, of the HDZ party. Voters were called upon to elect more than 500 elected representatives and officials, including the members of the presidency. According to the authorities, turnout stood at 42 per cent, a fall of nearly 10 percentage points compared with the previous election in 2022. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



Siegfried Mureșan fails to win the confidence of Romanian MPs

On 30 September, the Romanian Chamber of Deputies refused to grant a vote of confidence to Siegfried Mureșan, who had been nominated by President Nicușor Dan as Prime Minister following the collapse of Ilie Bolojan's government last May. A Member of the European Parliament (EPP), he received 182 votes out of the 233 required to secure a vote of confidence in Parliament. The Head of State may now call a snap election or attempt to appoint a Prime Minister. [Read more](#)

■ Digital and Technologies :



Report on Science, Research and Innovation

On 1 October, the European Commission published the latest edition of its report on science, research and innovation (SRIP). In it, the Commission highlights the need to increase investment in research and development to strengthen European competitiveness, to better coordinate public and private investment, and to make greater use of the capabilities of the various regions. In this context, it is, in particular, preparing a European Research Area Act and, in September, proposed a European Innovation Act. [Read more](#)



Nobel Prize in Medicine

The Nobel Prize in Medicine was awarded on 5 October to the American Karl Deisseroth and the Germans Peter Hegemann and Georg Nagel "for their discoveries concerning light-activated ion channels and optogenetics". [Read more](#)

■ Citizenship and Mobility :



Meeting of European Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs

On 1 and 2 October, the ministers for justice and home affairs adopted new return rules for those who do not have the right to reside in the European Union, as well as a decision on the conclusion of the agreement on passenger name records with Switzerland. They also gave the go-ahead for the signing of an agreement with South Korea on the transfer of passenger name record data, which would help to "prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute terrorism and serious crimes". On 2 October, the ministers approved conclusions on combating racism and related forms of hatred and discrimination. They held a policy debate on the revision of the mandate of Eurojust, the European Union's judicial cooperation agency in criminal matters. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



DiscoverEU programme for 18-year-olds

Until 15 October, young people born in 2008 and living in one of the Member States of the European Union, in an associated overseas country or territory, or in a third country participating in Erasmus+, can apply for the DiscoverEU programme. As part of the Erasmus+ programme, DiscoverEU gives 18-year-olds the chance to explore Europe with a travel pass, particularly by train. For this round, selected participants will be able to travel for up to 7 days over a maximum period of one month, between 1 March 2027 and 31 May 2028. They will also be able to meet other travellers at 'Meet-ups' organised as part of the programme. [Read more](#)

■ Institutions and Enlargement :



Ursula von der Leyen's tour of the Balkans

From 30 September to 2 October, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, undertook her sixth annual tour of the Western Balkans. She visited Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia in turn. Her discussions focused on the next steps required to help the region's partners progress towards EU membership, as well as on the ongoing process of gradual integration. As part of this tour, memoranda of understanding were signed in Budva between seven industrial parks and business zones from the six Western Balkan economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) and partner organisations from the European Union. This signing officially launched the partnership between the region's industrial parks and those of the EU. [Read more](#)



Andy Burnham leaves the door open to a return to the European Union

On 29 September, during his speech at the Labour Party's annual conference, British Prime Minister Andy Burnham described Brexit as having done "more harm than good" to the country and announced his intention to reshape UK-EU relations in the long term. Whilst he proposes rejoining the customs union and the single market, he has not ruled out the possibility of a second referendum on rejoining the European Union. This change of course has been welcomed by the European Commission and several national governments. The next EU-UK summit in November will provide the first opportunity to assess, in concrete terms, the effects of the rapprochement between London and Brussels. [Read more](#)



Plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

From 28 September to 2 October, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe met in Strasbourg. The proceedings began with the presentation of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize to the Iranian lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh. Parliamentarians discussed solidarity with Ceuta, support for Ukrainian soldiers with disabilities, and the contribution of diasporas and migrants to social cohesion. On 30 September, they addressed media freedom, the pressure being exerted on the International Criminal Court, and Russia's manoeuvres. On 1 October, debates centred on climate change and the impact of artificial intelligence on employment, in conjunction with the OECD. The session concluded with a reform of the Rules of Procedure, particularly regarding the Assembly's external and inter-parliamentary relations. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



'Women Painters' exhibition in Oslo

Until 7 February 2027, the National Museum in Oslo is hosting an exhibition celebrating female painters in Europe between 1550 and 1650. Bringing together around fifty paintings by 19 artists, including Lavinia Fontana, Artemisia Gentileschi, Michaelina Wautier and Sofonisba Anguissola, the exhibition explores the place of women in the history of painting. In particular, it addresses issues of visibility, recognition, autonomy and artistic training, whilst examining the ways in which art history has contributed to the marginalisation of certain female artists. [Read more](#)

THYSSEN- BORNEMISZA MUSEO NACIONAL

The Dutch Golden Age in Madrid

Thanks to an exchange of works between the Mauritshuis in The Hague and the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid, 17th-century Dutch masterpieces will be on display in the Spanish capital until 10 January 2027. The works on loan include masterful pieces by the Dutch masters (Frans Hals, Rembrandt van Rijn, Johannes Vermeer) as well as "The Garden of Eden" by the Flemish artists Jan Brueghel the Elder and Peter Paul Rubens. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



The French Riviera in Paintings in London

Until 31 January 2027, the Royal Academy in London is paying tribute to the Mediterranean as a source of inspiration for the great Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and Modernist artists. Featuring over 160 paintings, sculptures, travel posters and short films from the 1870s to the 1960s, the exhibition "Painting the French Riviera" reveals the Côte d'Azur through its most iconic artistic representations. [Read more](#)



Zurbarán at the Louvre

Until 25 January 2027, the Louvre is hosting an exhibition dedicated to the Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán. Organised into seven sections, the exhibition allows visitors to explore different facets of this 17th-century master's work through some fifty of his paintings. [Read more](#)



Moovy, Cologne's dance festival, celebrates its tenth edition

For its tenth edition, Cologne's "Moovy" dance festival continues to foster dialogue between choreography, cinema, immersive media and technological innovation. The programme features screenings of dance films as well as performances in public spaces and digital environments. Talks and discussions provide artists, researchers and students with the opportunity to reflect on the possibilities and challenges raised by the intersection of dance, film and technology. The festival will run until 18 October. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :

 5/10/2026

10th EU–Moldova Association Council (Brussels)

 5-8/10/2026

Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)

 8/10/2026

Eurogroup Meeting (Luxembourg)

 9/10/2026

"Economic and Financial Affairs" Council (Luxembourg)

 12/10/2026

Foreign Affairs Council "Environment" Council (Luxembourg)



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