LA LETTRE SCHUMAN

This week's European news

Letter n°1172 of Tuesday 20th October 2026

The European Union and foreign interference: understanding, identifying and resisting it

Constance Le Grip - 20 Oct 2026

Foreign interference poses a major threat to European democracies by undermining public trust, manipulating information and disrupting electoral processes. Given these strategies of destabilisation, the European Union must strengthen cooperation, its protective measures and its political sovereignty. The defence of democracy also relies on citizens' engagement, their critical thinking and their vigilance in the face of disinformation.



Foundation | European Council | Economy and Finances | Defence and Security | Diplomacy and Geopolitics | Institutions and Enlargement |

Digital and Technology | Democracy and Politics | Energy and Climate | Culture |

Agenda | Other issues | Contact

Foundation :



Publication of the 6th edition of the "Permanent Atlas of the European Union".

The Foundation has just published the 6th edition of its "Permanent Atlas of the European Union", published by Hémisphères. Available on the Foundation's website, in bookshops and in digital format (e-book), this reference work provides an insight into the European Union, its institutions and each of its Member States through original maps, fact sheets and summary statistics. Order your copy now! Read more



New episode of the Station Schuman podcast with Gunther Krichbaum

Given the deteriorating security situation and geopolitical tensions, what role can Germany play in the future of Europe? In this interview, Gunther Krichbaum, the German Minister for European Affairs, discusses Germany's preparedness in the face of hybrid threats, the changing nature of its influence in Brussels, and the prospects for Franco-German cooperation. As the balance of power in Europe shifts, how can Berlin and Paris continue to drive the European project forward? Read more

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New payments under NextGenerationEU

On 14 October, the European Commission paid out €333 million to Sweden and €661 million to the Netherlands under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). With this payment, Sweden has now received the full €3.45 billion allocated to it. 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

European Council :



European Council meeting

On 15 and 16 October, the Heads of State or Government of the 27 Member States, meeting in Brussels for the European Council, called on the co-legislators to conclude negotiations by the end of the year on the 28th Company Law Package, the acceleration of industrial capacity, the 'European Networks' package and simplification (digital, environment and automotive). On the 2028–2034 budget, they aim to reach an agreement before the end of the year. They held an exchange of views with the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, and expressed their full and resolute support for him. They took note of the first report on operational readiness, drawn up by the European Defence Agency, and endorsed its overall assessment. They call for the critical capability gaps to be addressed. They also reaffirm the objective of a European defence capability ready for rapid and large-scale deployment by 2030. Read more

Economy and Finances :

Statement by the "Friends of Cohesion"

Seventeen Member States of the European Union (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Spain, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic) reiterated, on 15 October, their call not to sacrifice traditional policies – the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and cohesion policy – in the name of a 'modernisation' of the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) that would place the sole emphasis on competitiveness, research and defence. Read more

IMF report on the global economic outlook

On 13 October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published its report on the global economic outlook. The global economy remains resilient despite successive shocks, including geopolitical conflicts, uncertainties surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) and trade tensions. The IMF stresses, however, that the room for manoeuvre available to economies is rapidly narrowing in the short term. It is therefore calling on governments to adopt credible plans to consolidate public finances. Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva presented a global action plan proposing various policies to "manage uncertainty and build resilience", advising in particular that private-sector-led growth should be promoted by harnessing AI and digitalisation, as well as by modernising the labour market and upskilling the workforce. Read more - Other link



The future of the European automotive industry

France and Germany have found common ground on the future of the European automotive industry. In a joint statement published on 16 October, the two countries aim to combine climate targets, regulatory flexibility and production in Europe. They intend to encourage investment, research and development, as well as the resilience of supply chains. The definition of "Made in Europe" could influence decisions on where to locate production and access to public funding. The Franco-German partnership also plans to relax the proposed framework for CO_2 emissions from new cars in 2035. The other Member States and the European Parliament have yet to approve the proposal. Read more

Defence and Security :



The Ukrainian President in the United Kingdom

On 14 October, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited the United Kingdom, where he held talks with the British Prime Minister, Andy Burnham. The Prime Minister unveiled a new package of military aid, comprising light multi-role missiles, designed to strengthen support for Ukraine. He announced that deliveries of British-made air defence systems to Ukraine would be accelerated. He stated that the UK would continue to develop innovative military solutions tailored to the needs of the Ukrainian battlefield, notably by integrating British equipment with materiel supplied by other partners. Finally, with regard to long-range missiles, the two leaders discussed ways of stepping up UK defence support for Ukraine as winter approaches. Read more - Other link



The Commission disburses €2.86 billion to Ukraine

On 14 October, the European Commission disbursed €2.86 billion to Ukraine as part of the defence component of the €90 billion support loan. This funding is intended to finance the purchase of drones, air defence systems, missiles, radars, electronic warfare systems and ammunition. Read more

Warsaw Security Forum

The Warsaw Security Forum took place on 12 and 13 October, where speakers exchanged views to coordinate their strategies, enhance interoperability and strengthen the political will required for credible deterrence in the Euro-Atlantic area. The WSF 2026 report was presented during the Forum. Drafted by the Casimir Pulaski Foundation's team of analysts, with the support of a working group comprising 27 high-level contributors, it sets out a concrete and actionable programme for the region, centred on three areas: foreign policy and European integration, defence and international security, and energy and resilience. Its central premise is that the Nordic-Baltic-Polish group must be recognised as one of the key architects of the future security order in Europe. Read more - Other link

Diplomacy and Geopolitics :



Meeting of Foreign Ministers

On 12 October, the 27 foreign ministers, meeting in Luxembourg, discussed, amongst other things, the security implications of the Union's enlargement. As part of the sanctions relating to Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, they adopted sanctions targeting nearly 1,600 individuals and entities involved in the Russian military-industrial complex. They extended the framework of restrictive measures against the proliferation and use of chemical weapons. Finally, they approved a decision establishing a European Union military-civilian support mission in Lebanon (EUSM Lebanon) with a view to strengthening the country's defence and security institutions. Read more



Visit by the King of Spain to Ceuta and Melilla

King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia of Spain visited Ceuta on 13 October, marking the royal couple's first visit to the Spanish enclave two months after an unprecedented influx of migrants from Morocco. Addressing the people of Ceuta, the King reaffirmed Spain's sovereignty over the territory, stating that Ceuta and Melilla "[were] part of Spain's national and political reality" and that the country's territorial integrity "[was] non-negotiable". After meeting with local residents, they paid tribute to the migrants who died during the crossing on 30 and 31 July from the city's Muslim cemetery. The following day, they continued their visit to Melilla, another autonomous Spanish enclave. Read more - Other link

Institutions and Enlargement :



Meeting of Ministers responsible for European Affairs

On 13 October, the 27 Ministers responsible for European Affairs, meeting in Luxembourg, discussed, amongst other things, the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034 and took stock of the implementation of the 'One Europe, One Market' roadmap. They approved conclusions aimed at strengthening democratic resilience in the European Union, following on from the Commission's communication on the European Democracy Shield published in November 2025. Read more



Tripartite Social Summit

On 14 October, the leaders of the European institutions and the social partners met in Brussels for the tripartite social summit 'Driving Europe Forward'. Discussions focused in particular on how the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034 could boost Europe's competitiveness and attractiveness to businesses, whilst supporting the creation of high-quality jobs. Participants also discussed strengthening the single market and implementing the 'One Europe, One Market' roadmap. Read more



Accession conferences with Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine and Moldova

On 12 and 13 October, accession conferences were held in Luxembourg with Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine and Moldova. Montenegro provisionally closed negotiations on a further three chapters, bringing the total to 21 out of 33. Albania provisionally closed negotiations on the chapter on enterprise and industrial policy. As for Ukraine and Moldova, both have opened negotiations on clusters 2 and 3, covering the internal market, competitiveness and inclusive growth, which encompass 17 negotiation chapters. Read more - Other link - Other link - Other link - Other link

Digital and Technology :



Launch of the RAISE initiative to support European research

On 15 October, the European Commission launched a commitment initiative under RAISE (Resource for AI Science in Europe), with the aim of mobilising support from the private sector and philanthropic organisations for European research into AI and science. This initiative aims to facilitate researchers' access to essential resources, such as AI models, computing capacity, research software licences, data, etc. Read more



Eurobarometer survey on the use of AI in European businesses

On 14 October, the European Commission published the results of a Eurobarometer survey on the use of AI and algorithmic management in European businesses, conducted between March and April. According to the survey, 75 per cent of the businesses surveyed believe that the use of AI and algorithmic management will improve the quality of employment, whilst 61 per cent say they use AI to aid decision-making. However, the survey highlights a highly uneven uptake of these technologies by businesses across the various Member States of the European Union. Whilst two-thirds of Danish businesses report using them, only around a quarter of businesses in France, Italy and Germany report doing so. Read more - Other link

Democracy and Politics :



Adoption of the Law on Linguistic Minorities in Ukraine

On 12 October, Ukrainian MPs passed a bill authorising state schools to deliver certain lessons in minority languages, provided that these are official languages of the European Union. Seeking to preserve the diversity of the country's linguistic and cultural heritage, whilst limiting the role of the Russian language in Ukraine, this law aims to strengthen the country's European trajectory. Indeed, Hungary had stated that it would oppose Ukraine's accession to the European Union until the rights of the Hungarian minority were sufficiently protected. Read more



Inauguration of Ülle Madise, President of the Republic of Estonia

On 12 October, the President of the Republic of Estonia, Ülle Madise, who was elected on 2 September, was sworn in before the Riigikogu (Parliament) in Tallinn. She succeeds Alar Karis for a five-year term. She made her first official visits to Riga on 13 October and to Helsinki on 14 October, where she met her counterparts, Edgars Rinkēvičs and Alexander Stubb. These visits underscore the importance of maintaining close ties and strong alliances with neighbouring countries at a time when European security requires closer cooperation between allies and a greater contribution to collective defence. Read more - Other link - Other link - Other link



Swedish MPs refuse to appoint Magdalena Andersson as Prime Minister

On 15 October, the Swedish Parliament rejected Social Democrat leader Magdalena Andersson's attempt to form a government. This vote prolongs the uncertainty surrounding the identity of the next Prime Minister, one month after the general election on 13 September, in which the left bloc secured a three-vote lead over the right bloc. However, none of the centre-left parties, apart from the Social Democratic Party, voted in her favour. The Speaker of Parliament must now begin discussions with the various party leaders to find a candidate to nominate for the post. On 19 October, the Speaker of Parliament, Andreas Norlén, tasked the leader of the centrist party, Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist, with exploring the conditions for a government that could be supported by a majority of MPs. Read more - Other link - Other link

Energy and Climate :



Meeting of Environment Ministers

On 12 October, the 27 Environment Ministers, meeting in Luxembourg, discussed, amongst other things, the revision of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), and approved conclusions setting out the EU's negotiating position ahead of COP17 on biodiversity, to be held from 19 to 30 October, and COP31 on climate change, to be held from 9 to 20 November. Read more



Methane: Commission proposes flexibility for importers

On 14 October, the European Commission adopted a proposal to postpone the implementation of the specific provisions of the EU Methane Regulation relating to importers by one year, in a bid to ease the pressure on European industry and national authorities. The proposed targeted amendment concerns the monitoring, reporting and verification obligations for importers of natural gas, oil and coal. Read more

Culture :

Design Week in Eindhoven

Dutch Design Week (DDW) is taking place until 25 October in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. The event showcases the creations and concepts of 2,500 designers to nearly 350,000 visitors, across around 100 venues throughout the city. The programme includes exhibitions, talks, debates, professional networking events and presentations. Read more



AR(t]CHIPEL Festival in the Loire Valley

Until 30 April 2027, the 4th edition of the AR(t]CHIPEL festival is taking place across the Centre-Val de Loire region. In partnership with the Centre Pompidou, it is showcasing works by Alexander Calder and Max Ernst. What makes the festival unique is that it is spread across several venues, notably the Château de Chambord and the Chaumont-sur-Loire estate, located across the region's six departments, allowing visitors to discover contemporary art and the region's heritage in an original way. Read more

Anselm Kiefer in Barcelona

The Fundació Catalunya La Pedrera is hosting the first exhibition in Barcelona devoted to the work of Anselm Kiefer, running until 24 January 2027.
The exhibition offers a focused and meaningful insight into his conceptual world through a selection of around forty pieces of work from Hans Grothe's private collection – one of the most significant privately held collections dedicated to the artist – supplemented by works from other private collections.
It reveals the complexity of Kiefer's output, whilst highlighting the coherence of an artistic project that unfolds across multiple forms and media: painting, sculpture, installation and photography. Read more

Pontormo in Rome

Until 7 February 2027, the Scuderie del Quirinale are hosting the first major solo exhibition dedicated to Pontormo. A leading figure in 16th-century Florentine painting, Pontormo embodies the transition from the High Renaissance to Mannerism. In addition to a remarkable collection of works from the Uffizi Galleries, the exhibition will feature loans from museums and collections around the world. Read more

'Pre-Raphaelites' in Newcastle

Until 13 February 2027, the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle is hosting an exhibition devoted to the creative exchanges between art and poetry within the Pre-Raphaelite movement. In particular, it explores how the artists drew inspiration from poets and writers such as Dante Alighieri, John Keats and Alfred Tennyson to create their works. Over 100 pieces of work are on display. Read more

Leonor Fini in Frankfurt

Until 21 February 2027, the Schirn Museum in Frankfurt am Main is hosting the first retrospective devoted to Leonor Fini in Germany. Around a hundred artworks – including paintings, drawings, photographs and objects – offer a comprehensive overview of the artist's oeuvre. Influenced by the Renaissance, Symbolism, German Romanticism and magical realism, Leonor Fini developed a unique visual language, halfway between dream, myth and the imagination. Read more

Basel Art Fair in Paris

From 23 to 25 October, the Grand Palais is hosting Art Basel Paris, a contemporary art fair bringing together 211 international galleries from 41 countries and territories. The fair is organised into three sections: 'Galleries', dedicated to established galleries; 'Emergence', devoted to emerging galleries and artists; and 'Premise', showcasing unique curatorial projects. Alongside this, exhibitions, installations and events are taking place across the city. Read more

Agenda :

19/10/2026

"Employment and Social Policy" Council (Luxembourg)

19-22/10/2026

Plenary session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)

25/10/2026

Presidential Election (first round) (Bulgaria)

26-27/10/2026

"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council (Luxembourg)



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