LA LETTRE SCHUMAN

This week's European news

Letter n°1173 of Tuesday 27th October 2026

Asymmetric knowledge war : Europe a prime target

André Gattolin - 27 Oct 2026

Europe has become a major target for foreign interference in the fields of research and higher education. These operations aim to steal sensitive scientific knowledge or to influence ideas and political decisions. International openness, a lack of funding and insufficient coordination between European countries are exacerbating this vulnerability. Such interference is on the rise and threatens both Europe's sovereignty and its unity.



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Elections :



The results of the first round of the Bulgarian presidential election were closer than expected, with a very low turnout

With 34.76 per cent of the vote, the incumbent president, Iliana Iotova, narrowly leads former Prime Minister Andrey Gyurov (31.95 per cent), contrary to the poll predictions. This first round was marked by a very low turnout of 22 per cent, which undoubtedly reflects a certain mistrust among Bulgarians towards their political class. The two candidates hold differing views on relations with Russia and support for Ukraine, with the outgoing president favouring dialogue with Moscow and opposing military aid to Ukraine. The second round on 1 November is therefore set to be particularly closely fought, with significant implications for Bulgaria's European and diplomatic future. Read more

Foundation :



A new episode of Station Schuman featuring General Lecouffe

How is Europol adapting to changing crime patterns in Europe? In this episode, Jean-Philippe Lecouffe explores the Agency's remit and responsibilities, the key issues in European police cooperation, and the challenges it faces – from migrant smuggling to cybercrime. A discussion to gain a better understanding of Europol's role in European security and the prospects for the development of its mandate – available to listen to on the Foundation's website, Spotify, Deezer and YouTube! Read more



New issue 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 and in bookshops, as well as in digital format (e-book) in French, this reference work provides an insight into the European Union, its institutions, each of its Member States and their overseas territories through maps, fact sheets and summary statistics. Order your copy now! Read more

NextGenerationEU: green light for Germany

On 21 October, the European Commission gave a positive assessment of Germany's fourth and final payment request, worth €6 billion, under the NextGenerationEU plan. The country has met the milestones and targets associated with its Recovery and Resilience Plan. The Foundation provides a summary of the various national recovery plans on its website, setting out their funding levels, timetables and priorities. Read more - Other link

Diplomacy and Geopolitics :



Emmanuel Macron's visit to the Middle East

The President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, visited Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar from 19 to 21 October. In light of the current geopolitical situation, he championed freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and the diversification of France's energy supplies. He succeeded in securing additional monthly deliveries of 200,000 tonnes of diesel from Bahrain, as well as the equivalent of 2 TWh per month of liquefied natural gas from Qatar during the winter months. In principle, this supply should limit the impact of the energy crisis on purchasing power. Read more - Other link



Middle East meeting in Istanbul

On 23 October, the foreign ministers of eight countries – four from the E4 (France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom) and four from the R4 (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey) – met in Istanbul. Their discussions focused on the conflict between the United States, Israel and Iran, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the situation in Yemen, as well as security and freedom of navigation, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb and the Black Sea. They emphasised the need to prioritise dialogue, diplomacy and de-escalation in order to achieve lasting negotiated solutions. They agreed to continue their discussions in this format in order "to prevent conflicts and promote regional and international peace and stability". Read more

Defence and Security :



Visit by the Finnish Prime Minister to Kyiv

On 22 October, the Finnish Prime Minister, Petteri Orpo, travelled to Ukraine to restate his country's support. He announced a contribution of €5 million to the energy guarantee fund and €2 million in humanitarian aid. Together with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, he took part in the Ukraine-Finland Forum, which saw the signing of several contracts relating to the defence industry, drones, transport, satellite communications and construction. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, Finland has provided nearly €5 billion in financial support to Ukraine. Read more - Other link



Towards a European response to the escalation of Russian strikes within the EU and in the Black Sea

On 20 October, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg regarding the escalation of Russian strikes in the European Union, in particular those targeting maritime transport in the Black Sea and Ukrainian export routes, and the consequences of these attacks on global food supplies. She condemned Russia's exploitation of food security. To address this, she called for a "strong and united European response on three fronts": maintaining Ukraine's access to global markets, strengthening security in the Black Sea and on the Danube, and increasing international pressure on Russia. Read more



Starlink service resumes in Ukraine

On 24 October, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced the resumption of Starlink service in the country. Ukraine had seen its access to the Starlink network severely disrupted after being accused by Elon Musk of using it to carry out lethal strikes in Russia. For its part, Kyiv has denied the accusations and reaffirmed the vital importance of the network for its military communications. The Ukrainian President thanked the United States for its support and emphasised the importance of involving European partners in future peace negotiations. Read more - Other link

Economy and Finances :



EU budget for 2027

On 21 October, MEPs voted in favour of a budget of €194 billion in commitment appropriations for 2027, which is €1.17 billion more than the Commission's initial proposal. They wish to increase funding for programmes that support European competitiveness, the agricultural sector and the EU's capacity to manage migration. The programmes concerned include Erasmus+, the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund and the 'Asylum, Migration and Integration' Fund. Negotiations with the Council are due to begin in November. Read more - Other link



Vision for fisheries and aquaculture in 2040

On 20 October, the European Commission presented its vision to ensure thriving fisheries and aquaculture by 2040. This strategic framework aims to protect marine ecosystems whilst ensuring sustainable food production and security of supply. It sets out the following priorities: the energy transition, support for producers and facilitating access to finance. Finally, it calls for the EU to take action on the global stage to safeguard the sustainability and fairness of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, by stepping up the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Read more - Other link



Partnership with New Caledonia on raw materials

On 20 October, the European Commission and the authorities of New Caledonia signed a memorandum of understanding in Nouméa, establishing a strategic partnership on sustainable value chains for raw materials. This sets out a policy framework for cooperation aimed at strengthening their economic and industrial integration, promoting investment and supporting the sustainable development of the mining sector. This memorandum of understanding forms part of the European 'Global Gateway' strategy. Read more - Other link



London grants permission for North Sea gas drilling

On 21 October, the government granted permission for drilling at the Jackdaw gas field in the North Sea, off the coast of Scotland. The project had been initiated by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson in 2022, but was put on hold due to legal challenges. The UK government maintains that the drilling will not hinder the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2050, will support the country's energy security and will have a positive impact on employment and purchasing power. With the Budget presentation just days away, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the creation of a £2 billion green transition fund, financed by North Sea oil and gas revenues. Read more

'Invest in Germany' Summit in Berlin

On 19 and 20 October, the first 'Invest in Germany' summit took place, during which commitments totalling around €230 billion were announced. This figure relates only to projects worth more than €100 million. Among the investors, the e-commerce giant Amazon plans to invest over €16 billion in Germany by 2027, notably in data centres, cloud and AI infrastructure, logistics and satellite internet. Around 200 German and international executives from major corporations, investment banks and funds attended the event. Read more - Other link

Institutions and Enlargement :



Trilogues on organic farming, securitisation and the emissions trading scheme

On 20 and 21 October, the Council and the Parliament reached provisional agreements on three texts. On the 20th, they agreed on a targeted review of measures relating to organic farming in the EU to support its competitiveness, and on a targeted amendment to the rules governing the market stability reserve of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). This amendment aims to "increase the market's liquidity and long-term predictability, whilst protecting industrial competitiveness". On the 21st, they reached a provisional political agreement on the Savings and Investment Union, which aims to revitalise and simplify the EU securitisation market. Read more - Other link - Other link



Signing of an association agreement with Andorra and San Marino

On 19 October in Brussels, an association agreement was signed between the European Union, Andorra and San Marino. This agreement aims to deepen the economic and institutional integration of these two microstates with the EU, in particular by granting them access to the single market in accordance with "common rules and a level playing field". The European Parliament must give its approval before the Council can conclude the agreement. Read more

Citizenship and Mobility :



Strengthening passengers' rights

On 20 October, MEPs adopted a legislative resolution aimed at strengthening the enforcement of passengers' rights within the EU. The text provides for clarification of the rules for airline tickets purchased through an intermediary, the introduction of a common European form for claims for compensation and refunds, and better protection for passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility. It extends the obligation to draw up and publish service quality standards relating to the rights of these passengers to air carriers, bus and coach operators, and terminal operators. Following its formal adoption by the Council, the text is expected to come into force on 23 October 2027. Read more - Other link



Meeting of Ministers responsible for Employment and Social Policy

On 19 October, the ministers responsible for employment and social affairs, meeting in Luxembourg, adopted a recommendation on combating housing-related exclusion. They held a policy debate on the forthcoming legislative act on quality jobs. Finally, they approved conclusions on equality as a driver of growth and competitiveness. Read more



The Polish Parliament has voted to relax abortion laws

On 20 October, the lower house of the Polish Parliament adopted two measures aimed at relaxing abortion legislation: one authorises the termination of pregnancy in cases of foetal abnormalities (233 votes to 203), whilst the other decriminalises assisting in an abortion (217 votes to 213). MPs thus intend to challenge the near-total ban introduced under the previous government. However, this bill could face a veto from President Karol Nawrocki, who has suggested he would oppose any liberalisation. Read more

Democracy and Politics :



70th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution

On 23 October, numerous commemorative events were held to mark the 70th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Hungarian diplomatic missions organised a wide range of events in several countries, including wreath-laying ceremonies, receptions, conferences and celebrations. The main ceremony took place at the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest, attended by António Costa, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission. Read more - Other link



Luca Niculescu appointed Prime Minister by the Romanian Parliament

On 20 October, the Romanian Chamber of Deputies granted Luca Niculescu a vote of confidence to form a government. The former ambassador is the fourth person appointed by President Nicuşor Dan to lead the government following the no-confidence vote against Ilie Bolojan last May. Luca Niculescu secured the support of 280 MPs (out of 330), having succeeded in persuading the Social Democratic Party (PSD) to join the government, taking 11 out of 16 ministries. This vote of confidence allows Romania to regain a degree of political stability. Read more



Incumbent president defeated in Serbia's parliamentary elections

On 25 October, Serbs voted for change in the snap parliamentary elections. The incumbent president, Aleksandar Vučić, who had been in power for fourteen years and had tendered his resignation so that he could stand as prime minister, conceded defeat. The Student Movement is credited with 53 per cent of the vote and 140 seats – exceeding the absolute majority of 126 seats – compared with 39 per cent and 104 seats for the outgoing leader's party. Voter turnout was particularly high: nearly 69 per cent, a level not seen for over thirty years. Read more - Other link



Georgian courts are considering a request to ban five opposition parties

On 21 October, the Georgian Constitutional Court began examining the petition lodged by the ruling Georgian Dream party seeking to ban five pro-European opposition parties. All five parties advocate the country's European integration and its accession to NATO. Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze had described these parties as "unconstitutional". This move comes in the wake of the parliamentary elections held in late 2024, the results of which the opposition is contesting. Read more - Other link - Other link

Prizes :

European Parliament's Daphne Caruana Galizia and Sakharov Prize Ceremonies

On 21 and 22 October, the European Parliament's Daphne Caruana Galizia and Sakharov Prizes were awarded, respectively, to an investigation into the migration agreement between Italy and Albania, and to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its senior officials. The Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize recognises "journalism of excellence that promotes and defends the fundamental values and principles of the Union, such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights". The Sakharov Prize, meanwhile, honours individuals, groups or organisations that have made an exceptional contribution to the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular freedom of thought. Read more - Other link

Culture :

Jihlava Documentary Film Festival

Until 1 November, the city of Jihlava in the Czech Republic is hosting the 30th edition of the International Documentary Film Festival, featuring over 350 films. The festival brings together more than 1,000 film professionals, making it a key event for the international documentary industry. Read more - Other link

Etiuda&Anima in Kraków

Until 31 October, Kraków is hosting the 33rd edition of the Etiuda&Anima film festival. As Poland's leading festival for animated short films, Etiuda&Anima showcases works by professional filmmakers, independent filmmakers and students. Alongside screenings of the selected films, the festival offers a rich programme of music, visual arts, creative workshops and discussions. Read more

'Portraits!' in Berlin

Berlin's Gemäldegalerie is hosting a major exhibition on portraiture. It traces the history of the genre from the 15th to the 20th century, bringing together works in unexpected ways. These juxtapositions reveal common threads and prompt us to reflect on the representation of others and of oneself, on staging, role and character. The exhibition runs until 14 March 2027. Read more

'Soleil noir' in Brussels

The 'Soleil noir' exhibition at the Villa Empain features around a hundred works by Belgian artists, spanning 130 years of creative output. It presents the work of Léon Spilliaert alongside leading figures of modern and contemporary art. The exhibition is organised around several themes: the self-portrait, the nude, melancholy, the landscape and the North Sea. The exhibition runs until 19 March 2027. Read more



Whistler in Amsterdam

Until 10 January 2027, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam is paying tribute to the painter James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) in a unique retrospective, the first of its kind in the Netherlands. A 19th-century enfant terrible, Whistler is renowned for his innovative, avant-garde and even rebellious style. Particularly noteworthy among his works are the engravings he produced across Europe – in Amsterdam, Paris and Venice – which earned the admiration of none other than Vincent van Gogh himself. Read more

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BUD.

Gauguin in Budapest

Until 28 February 2027, the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts is hosting the first exhibition of the French Impressionist painter's work in Hungary. Comprising loans from the Musée d'Orsay and nearly 40 public and private collections, the exhibition "Bonjour Monsieur Gauguin" traces the chronology of the artist's work, the evolution of his style and his intellectual development, paying particular attention to the relationships and places that shaped him. Read more

Agenda :

26-27/10/2026

"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council (Luxembourg)

28-29/10/2026

ECB Council of Governors (Frankfurt/Main)

29/10/2026

"Transport, Telecommunications and Energy" Council (Energy) (Luxembourg)

29-30/10/2026

EU-Canada Summit (Montréal)

1/11/2026

Presidential election (2nd round) (Bulgaria)



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