LA LETTRE SCHUMAN

This week's European news

Letter n°1174 of Tuesday 3rd November 2026

The European maritime strategy at a turning point

Laurent Bechcler, Cyrille Poirier-Coutansais - 03 Nov 2026

The European Union faces growing maritime threats and economic and industrial dependence on powers such as China and the United States. To protect its trade and maritime infrastructure, it must strengthen its naval capabilities, develop its industry and invest in new technologies. Cooperation between Europe's navies is essential to guarantee its security and preserve its strategic autonomy.



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Elections :



Iliana Iotova wins the presidential election in Bulgaria

Iliana Iotova has won the Bulgarian presidential election with 57.56 per cent of the vote, ahead of Andrey Gyurov, who secured 39.48 per cent of the vote. Her election, marked by a particularly low turnout of 29.1 per cent, could strain Bulgaria's relations with Russia and the European Union, against a backdrop of growing tensions in the Black Sea, as the president favours dialogue with Moscow and opposes financial aid to Ukraine. Read more

Foundation :



New issue of the "Permanent Atlas of the European Union"

The Foundation has just published the 6th issue 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



New payments under NextGenerationEU

On 29 October, the European Commission gave a positive assessment of the Czech Republic's seventh and final payment request, amounting to €951 million, under the NextGenerationEU programme. On 30 October, it made payments to France (€6.1 billion), Austria (€306 million) and Luxembourg (€92.2 million) under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). With these payments, France and Austria have now received the full amount of the funds allocated to them. The Foundation provides a summary of the various national recovery plans on its website, setting out the amounts, timetables and priorities. Read more - Other link - Other link

Diplomacy and Geopolitics :



EU–Canada Summit

The 21st EU–Canada Summit took place in Montreal on 29 and 30 October. Leaders called for an "Alliance for the Future" to deepen the strategic partnership between Canada and the European Union. This alliance is centred on six areas: trade and regulatory cooperation; digital, research and communications technologies; critical resources and energy; financial services and markets; security and preparedness; and people-to-people links. Furthermore, the status of "associated member", put forward by the President of the European Commission during her State of the Union address in September, was not included in the joint declaration; instead, the phrase "ever closer association" was preferred. Read more - Other link

Nordic Council Summit in Helsinki

From 26 to 29 October, the Finnish Parliament hosted the 78th session of the Nordic Council, which brings together heads of government, ministers and parliamentarians from the region: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, as well as Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland. On 28 October, the Ukrainian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrii Sybiha, addressed the assembly. In his speech, he called on the Nordic countries to continue their support for Ukraine and to remain united in their efforts to promote peace. Several leaders reiterated their unwavering support for Ukraine. They emphasised the importance for the Nordic countries to cooperate in order to further strengthen prevention and security in all areas. Read more - Other link



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit to Asia

From 26 to 30 October, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz undertook a working visit to Singapore, Japan and South Korea with a view to strengthening economic ties between Germany and its partners in the region. On 28 October, in Japan, he called at the German-Japanese Business Summit for greater investment, enhanced technological cooperation and rules-based free trade. The resumption of trade negotiations between ASEAN and the European Union was discussed. The two countries adopted measures aimed at strengthening their partnership and deepening their cooperation on security, particularly in the field of armaments. They also signed a declaration on economic security and expressed their commitment to reducing their critical dependencies. Read more - Other link

Defence and Security :



The United Kingdom and Poland sign the "Warsaw Defence Plan"

On 27 October, the British Defence Secretary, Wes Streeting, and his Polish counterpart, Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, signed the "Warsaw Defence Plan" in Warsaw. This agreement provides for cooperation between the two countries in the maritime, land, air, cyber and industrial sectors, with a view to strengthening security and deterrence on Europe's eastern flank. It constitutes the first phase of implementation of the new security and defence partnership treaty between the United Kingdom and Poland. The two countries also intend to bring their defence industries closer together, in particular through better coordination of their public procurement processes. Read more - Other link



Agreement Between France and Ukraine on Veterans

On October 29, Alice Rufo, Minister Delegate to the Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs, and Vitalii Kim, Ukraine's Minister of Veterans Affairs, signed a roadmap for Franco-Ukrainian cooperation in the area of veterans affairs. It is based on four pillars: structural and legal issues; health; rehabilitation and social and professional reintegration; and remembrance. This is a plan for specific joint actions between the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and the French Ministry of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs for the next ten years. Read more



Dutch support for Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy travelled to The Hague on 28 October to meet with Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten. They formalised a €500 million military aid package to strengthen Ukraine's air defences, as well as €1.2 billion in humanitarian aid. On the same day, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Sjoerd Sjoerdsma, travelled to Kyiv. He stated that this programme addresses the country's most urgent needs and contributes to its recovery and reconstruction. Read more - Other link



E5 Defence Ministers' Meeting

On 26 October, the defence ministers of the E5 countries – Germany, France, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom – met in Paris to discuss support for Ukraine and strengthening Europe's role within NATO through increased military and industrial cooperation. This entails "greater interoperability between the armed forces, enhanced mastery of strategic technologies and stronger coordination of military investment". The next meeting of the E5 defence ministers is scheduled for March 2027 in Rome. Read more



Meeting of the Franco-Finnish Nuclear Steering Group in Paris

Having joined the French advanced deterrence programme on 14 September, Finland took part in the first meeting of the joint nuclear steering group with France, held in Paris on 27 October. Representatives from the Élysée Palace and the offices of the Finnish President and Prime Minister, officials from the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs, as well as senior military officers, attended the meeting. The two countries expressed their shared commitment to strengthening their strategic alignment, reaffirming their ambition for a stronger, safer and better-defended Europe. Read more

Economy and Finances :



Meeting of Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries

On 26 and 27 October, the ministers for agriculture and fisheries, meeting in Luxembourg, agreed on a negotiating position on the regulation establishing the framework for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2027. They discussed trade-related agricultural issues and ways to make better use of the EU's trade agreements. On fisheries, they reached a political agreement on fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2027. Read more



ECB Governing Council meeting

On 29 October, the Governing Council of the European Central Bank (ECB) announced that it was keeping its three key interest rates unchanged. The deposit facility rate thus remains at 2.50 per cent, the main refinancing operations rate at 2.65 per cent and the marginal lending facility rate at 2.90 per cent. At the press conference, Christine Lagarde and Boris Vujčić, President and Vice-President of the ECB respectively, emphasised that, despite certain adverse factors, the euro area economy was continuing to grow. They noted that the euro area unemployment rate stood at 6.4 per cent in August and that inflation had accelerated again, rising from 3.2 per cent in August to 3.8 per cent in September. Read more



Christine Lagarde announces her departure from the ECB on 7 February 2027

On 29 October, Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank (ECB), informed the Governing Council of the ECB and the President of the European Council, António Costa, that she would be stepping down from her post on 7 February 2027, eight months before the end of her term of office, which is due to expire in October 2027. Her successor will be appointed by the European Council, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 283 TFEU. Read more

Energy and Climate :



Energy Ministers' Meeting

On 29 October, energy ministers meeting in Luxembourg discussed the proposed regulation on electricity network charges, which aims to reduce the costs of the electricity system and electricity bills, in particular through the roll-out of smart grids and smart meters, as well as a more favourable tax framework for electricity. They discussed the EU's energy security outlook for the winter of 2026–2027 and in the longer term, whilst supply and price pressures linked to the geopolitical context persist. Finally, they discussed the energy objectives to be incorporated into the post-2030 framework, particularly with regard to resilience, electrification, flexibility and interconnection. Read more

New European framework for climate resilience

On 27 October, the European Commission presented a new framework for climate resilience. It aims to better prepare and protect Europe against climate-related risks such as heatwaves, droughts, forest fires and floods. It provides for the use of the new digital tool, the "European Climate Viewer", which supplies harmonised information on climate hazards across Europe to inform risk assessment and decision-making. The framework seeks to improve climate resilience planning and simplify the monitoring of progress at both national and European levels. Read more - Other link

Technologies and Space :

ESA orders four additional satellites

On 27 October, the European Space Agency (ESA) announced the extension of its contracts with Airbus Defence and Space (Germany) and Thales Alenia Space (Italy) for the construction of four additional second-generation (G2) Galileo satellites. The contracts were signed on 23 October in Rome and on 26 October in Ottobrunn. These four satellites supplement the twelve G2 satellites already ordered in 2021 (six from each manufacturer) and bring the G2 fleet to sixteen satellites. They are due to be delivered in 2031, with launch to follow immediately. As a flagship programme of the European Union, Galileo is funded and managed by the European Commission as part of the EU's space programme. Read more

Democracy and Politics :



Sweden: Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist recommended for the post of Prime Minister

On 26 October, the talks led by Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist, leader of the Swedish Centre Party, broke down. Despite this failure, on 30 October, the Speaker of Parliament, Andreas Norlén, recommended Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist as a candidate for the post of Prime Minister, to lead a government comprising the Centre Party, the Social Democrats, the Christian Democrats, the Greens and the Liberals. The Riksdag will vote on this proposal on 3 November. Read more



In Poland, the Constitutional Tribunal at the centre of a political standoff

The conflict between Donald Tusk's government and President Karol Nawrocki is escalating around the Constitutional Tribunal. Following the events of the night of 31 October to 1 November, hundreds of protesters gathered outside the Tribunal in Warsaw. The trigger: a statement from the Court announcing the temporary removal of its president and deputy president, with Judge Anna Korwin-Piotrowska taking over on an interim basis. In power from 2015 to 2023, Law and Justice (PiS), which is close to Nawrocki, had appointed judges sympathetic to the party to lead the Court. However, in December 2025, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that the Court was neither independent nor impartial, due to serious irregularities in the appointments. The Polish President refused to administer the oath of office to several judges elected by Parliament, despite this being a purely formal procedure. Read more - Other link - Other link

Citizenship and Mobility :



Strengthening the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)

On 27 October, the European Commission proposed strengthening the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) "by improving its capacity to protect the external borders and making it the Union's central actor in the field of return". The reform envisages increasing its permanent staff to 30,000 officers, including 17,000 within a new European reserve for border management and returns, as well as the creation of a new online monitoring centre. It would enable the agency to support third countries in return operations. This reform forms part of the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2028–2034, under which a budget of €11.8 billion has been announced for Frontex – nearly double the €6 billion allocated to it for 2021–2027. Read more - Other link

Eurobarometer surveys on young people and European civil protection

On 28 October, the European Commission published the results of a Eurobarometer survey on young people and democracy, carried out between June and July 2026. According to the survey, whilst 75 per cent of young people surveyed believe that decisions taken at European level affect their daily lives, only 38 per cent think that policy-makers take the long-term consequences of their choices into account. On 30 October, the Commission published the results of a Barometer survey on the European Union's role in civil protection. According to this survey, 91 per cent of those surveyed believe that the Union's coordinated action should be further strengthened in order to deal more effectively with disasters and crises in the future. Read more - Other link

Culture :

Art Cologne

From 5 to 8 November, Art Cologne, the world's oldest modern and contemporary art fair, will be taking place in the German city of Cologne. Paintings, sculptures, photographs, installations and digital artworks will be on display for visitors. The fair will feature a programme of lectures, panel discussions, special exhibitions, award ceremonies and guided ARTtours. Read more

The Parisian Belle Époque in Athens

Until 15 February 2027, the Goulandris Foundation in Athens is showcasing the Parisian Belle Époque. The exhibition illustrates the period through the posters that dominated public spaces, revealing the ambitions, anxieties and contradictions of a society in the midst of profound change. Curated in partnership with the Museum of Impressionism in Giverny, the exhibition offers an overview of this artistic golden age with nearly 90 works by various artists. Read more

Anne Jagiellon in Prague

The exhibition "Anne Jagiellon (1503–1547): Queen at the Dawn of a New Era" has been organised to mark the 500th anniversary of the House of Habsburg's accession to the Bohemian throne and the establishment of the Habsburg monarchy in Central Europe. It centres on Queen Anne, highlighting her personality and her major historical role within the dynasty. It invites the public to discover the eventful and often trying life of this queen, marked by numerous duties, frequent travels and motherhood to fifteen children. Over two hundred items, on loan from national and international institutions, make up the exhibition. The exhibition runs until 28 March 2027. Read more

Henri Cartier-Bresson in Aix-en-Provence

Until 21 March 2027, the Centre d'Art Chaumont in Aix-en-Provence is hosting an exhibition dedicated to Henri Cartier-Bresson, to mark the bicentenary of the birth of photography. The exhibition explores the photographer's work through the prism of his relationship with Europe. Organised chronologically, the exhibition invites visitors to discover, through Cartier-Bresson's lens, the tensions that preceded the Second World War, the ruins and traumas of the post-war period, and the Cold War, during which the European Union project began to take shape. Read more

Angelika Kaufmann and Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun in Naples

The Galleria d'Italia in Naples brings together Angelika Kauffmann (1741–1807) and Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842) for the first time, shedding light on their lives, work and careers. As leading figures in women's painting, they stand out both for the quality of their work and for their place in history: both enjoyed success on the international art market around 1800. Through their portraits and history paintings, they left their mark on Neoclassicism and continue to shape our view of their contemporaries. The exhibition runs until 7 March 2027. Read more

Aurèlia Muñoz in Barcelona

Until 2 May 2027, the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) is hosting a retrospective of the work of the Catalan artist Aurèlia Muñoz. The exhibition presents a detailed analysis of the artist's practice, which lies at the crossroads of the figurative and the abstract and spans a variety of distinct media. Read more

Agenda :

09/11/2026

"Economic and Financial Affairs" Council (Brussels)

09/11/2026

Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)



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