



European Latitudes

Perspectives on Europe, Italy, and the world.

The press review connecting the key socio-political and economic developments shaping today's debate.

 The non-English articles present in the Europe and International section are translated to English.

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Europe

As Europe's memory fades, radicalism is returning (*opinion*), *Financial Times*

As Europe's historical memory of 20th-century conflicts fades, radicalism is resurging, with younger generations no longer shaped by the legacies of communism and fascism. The AfD's gains in Saxony-Anhalt reflect this shift, as voters prioritise identity and sovereignty over past lessons. The EU faces a potential "bank run" of support, with upcoming elections in France, Italy, Spain, and Poland possibly empowering eurosceptic coalitions. The challenge lies in building a new consensus where liberals and far-right forces coexist within the EU, balancing sovereignty with unity. The author argues that while policy disagreements can be managed, existential threats like alignment with Moscow or Trump's America could destabilise the bloc.

<https://www.ft.com/content/65181a27-bea2-4ac0-96df-2d0d8dfe0b58>

The AfD won't stop with Saxony-Anhalt (*opinion*), *Financial Times*

The AfD's surge in Saxony-Anhalt signals broader ambitions beyond regional leadership, with its extremist platform advocating ethnonationalist reforms,

mass deportations, and opposition to EU policies. The party's refusal to disavow neo-Nazi links and its focus on mapping Germany's security vulnerabilities underscore its radical agenda. While Chancellor Friedrich Merz's centrist coalition falters, the AfD exploits voter discontent over immigration, economic stagnation, and global shifts. The author warns that Germany's democratic centre must address these grievances or risk further erosion, as the AfD's pragmatic yet ruthless approach resonates with a disillusioned electorate.

<https://www.ft.com/content/4e1c7760-b716-47a9-bc08-064d13b936df>

Migration, trade and future EU members to dominate summit of bloc's leaders, *Politico*

The upcoming European Council summit in October will focus on addressing the EU's dependencies on uncertain trading partners, resolving disputes over the €2 trillion long-term budget, and discussing the admission of new member states. Leaders will also tackle strategic issues such as migration, enlargement, internal reforms, support for Ukraine, Middle East tensions, and Europe's defence readiness. European Council President António Costa aims to secure significant progress on the budget before the Christmas break, ensuring the bloc remains cohesive amid growing geopolitical and economic challenges.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/migration-trade-and-future-eu-members-to-dominate-summit-of-blocs-leaders/>

EU, China trade chiefs to hold call Thursday as talks near crunch time, *Politico*

EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič will hold a videoconference with China's Wang Wentao on September 17 to address the EU's €1 billion daily trade deficit with China. The call follows intensified engagement ahead of an October EU summit, where leaders seek progress on reducing reliance on Chinese supply chains. Šefčovič will also consult European CEOs on diversifying critical supply chains and discuss a potential "diversification tool." The EU is under pressure to demonstrate tangible results from its outreach to Beijing, particularly as geopolitical and economic tensions reshape global trade dynamics.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-and-chinese-trade-chiefs-to-hold-videoconference-thursday/>

European firms unprepared for China shock as EU tries to cut reliance on Beijing, *Politico*

A Bertelsmann Stiftung survey reveals that European companies are ill-prepared for geopolitical shocks, with only 10% taking steps to address potential Taiwan contingencies despite 81% of respondents being affected by Russia's war in Ukraine. Just 24% plan to reduce reliance on Chinese suppliers, and only one-third consider stockpiling critical raw materials. The EU is developing a diversification tool to strengthen supply chains amid its €1 billion daily trade deficit with China. With US-China trade tensions escalating, the survey highlights vulnerabilities in European supply chains and the need for proactive risk mitigation.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/european-businesses-china-us-trade-tech-war-supply-chains/>

World Trade Organization reform failure could cost 10% of global GDP, report warns, *Politico*

A new WTO report warns that failing to reform the organisation could shrink global GDP by 10% by 2050, as the trading system faces its worst disruption in 80 years. The report compares three scenarios: enhanced cooperation (boosting GDP by 2.9% and exports by 18%), geopolitical fragmentation (reducing GDP by 5.1% and exports by 19%), and a shift to bilateral/regional trade deals (cutting GDP by 6.9% and exports by 27%). The WTO struggles to adapt to a more digital, multipolar economy, with rising trade barriers and diverging national policies fragmenting markets. Reform is urgent to address structural pressures like shifting economic power and state intervention.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/wto-could-cost-10-of-global-gdp-report-warns-tariffs-trade-economy/>

‘Slowing things down’: Trade wars hit global electrification shift, *Politico*

Rising trade barriers, including tariffs on EVs, solar panels, and grid components, threaten to slow the global energy transition and increase costs. Governments, seeking to protect domestic industries and counter China's dominance in green technology, have imposed measures that risk stifling electrification efforts. The EU and US have introduced restrictions on clean tech imports, while developing nations like Brazil have raised tariffs on solar and EV products. Analysts warn that these barriers could hinder

decarbonisation, increase electricity bills, and delay grid modernisation, undermining climate goals and economic competitiveness.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/09/13/trade-wars-are-going-electric-the-planet-could-pay-the-price-01068417>

European Union leaders to meet in Finland to set priorities for Arctic [translated], *The Straits Times*

EU leaders will convene in Rovaniemi, Finland, to strengthen the bloc's strategic approach to the Arctic amid rising geopolitical tensions and economic interests. The summit, initiated by Finnish PM Petteri Orpo, precedes the European Commission's new Arctic strategy and includes discussions on security, economic engagement, and a joint declaration. Climate change, which is warming the Arctic nearly four times faster than the global average, has intensified competition for resources and maritime routes. The EU plans to increase its engagement, including a €200 million support package for Greenland, as Russia, China, and the US expand their Arctic activities.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/european-leaders-to-meet-to-set-priorities-for-arctic>

Italy

Italy eyes nuclear power comeback by 2035, *Politico*

Italy is poised to reintroduce nuclear power by 2035, with Energy Minister Gilberto Pichetto Fratin championing a landmark bill to reverse the country's decades-long nuclear shutdown. The legislation, expected to pass the Senate imminently, establishes a legal framework for new reactors, focusing on small modular reactors (SMRs) to address energy security and decarbonisation. Pichetto Fratin cites geopolitical uncertainty and high electricity costs as key drivers, arguing that nuclear power is now a matter of national security. The bill will also create an independent nuclear safety authority and advance plans for radioactive waste management, with industrial partners already assessing costs and potential sites.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/italy-nuclear-power-comeback-2035-landmark-senate-vote-new-reactors/>

Meloni: nel 2026 crescita all'1%. Sull'Ue in disaccordo con Draghi [translated], *Il Sole 24 Ore*

Il primo ministro Giorgia Meloni prevede una crescita economica italiana dell'1% nel 2026, in linea o superiore alla media dell'area euro, nonostante un contesto difficile. Meloni si discosta da Mario Draghi su una maggiore integrazione europea, preferendo un modello confederale che preservi la sovranità degli Stati membri. Ha escluso alleanze con partiti che votano contro il sostegno all'Ucraina e ha criticato i "cordoni sanitari" contro l'AfD, sostenendo che sia più efficace affrontare le questioni nel merito. Ha anche espresso soddisfazione per l'apertura del centrosinistra all'estensione delle Zone Economiche Speciali (ZES) in tutto il territorio nazionale.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/meloni-2026-crescita-all-1percento-sull-europa-non-sono-d-accordo-draghi-AJXagMBB>

Fitch conferma il rating italiano a BBB+ con outlook stabile [translated], *Il Sole 24 Ore*

Fitch ha confermato il rating dell'Italia a BBB+ con outlook stabile, sostenuto da un'economia diversificata, stabilità istituzionale e appartenenza all'UE e all'euro. Tuttavia, il debito pubblico elevato (138,2% del PIL nel 2026) e la crescita limitata restano vincoli significativi. Fitch prevede un miglioramento del deficit al 2,9% del PIL nel 2026, grazie a una gestione prudente della spesa e a un mercato del lavoro solido. Il governo ha attivato clausole di flessibilità per spese energetiche e di difesa, ma il debito rimarrà un problema strutturale, con una riduzione graduale prevista a partire dal 2027.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/attesa-il-giudizio-fitch-rating-italiano AJRy7hAB>

Ricchezza famiglie italiane, crescita record delle disuguaglianze: il 5% più ricco possiede metà del patrimonio [translated], *Il Sole 24 Ore*

La ricchezza delle famiglie italiane cresce meno rispetto alle principali economie europee, con un aumento del 22,8% tra il 2015 e il 2025, contro l'87,3% della Germania e il 56,6% della Spagna. Il 5% delle famiglie più ricche detiene oltre la metà della ricchezza netta, mentre il 50% meno abbiente ne possiede appena il 7,3%. La crescita è concentrata nelle attività finanziarie dei più ricchi, con il tasso di risparmio lordo fermo al 10,7%, il più basso in Europa. La Cisl propone una politica dei redditi per elevare le

retribuzioni e ridurre le disuguaglianze, sottolineando la necessità di un fondo nazionale per sostenere l'economia reale.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/ricchezza-famiglie-italiane-crescita-record-disuguaglianze-5per cento-piu-ricco-possiede-meta-patrimonio-AJDmZpDB>

International

EPA scraps climate curbs for U.S. power generation, *Politico*

The Trump administration has repealed Biden-era carbon emission standards for fossil fuel power plants and proposed blocking future regulations, arguing that the Clean Air Act does not authorise EPA to regulate greenhouse gases for climate change. EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin announced the move at a G20 energy meeting, framing it as a defence of affordable energy. The repeal, paired with a proposal to eliminate EPA's legal basis for power plant carbon rules, aims to prevent future climate regulations. Critics warn the decision could increase pollution and undermine climate efforts, while supporters argue it will stabilise energy costs and grid reliability amid rising demand.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/09/14/epa-power-plant-climate-rules-01069146>

UN Security Council meets as Houthis tighten grip on Red Sea chokepoint, *Politico*

The UN Security Council is convening to address escalating tensions in the Red Sea as the Iran-backed Houthis consolidate control over the Bab el-Mandeb strait, a critical chokepoint for 8.7% of global seaborne trade. The Houthis recently seized the port of Mokha and Mayyun Island, and their advances coincide with renewed missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia. Despite Houthi claims that shipping remains safe, their ban on Saudi vessels raises concerns over global trade disruptions. US-Saudi discussions on potential strikes against Houthi targets have yet to yield direct military intervention, as Washington remains cautious.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/un-security-council-meeting-houthis-red-sea-chokepoint/>

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