



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.

Tuesday, 22 September 2026

Europe

Trump signs Greenland security deal with Denmark, *Politico*

US President Donald Trump has signed a trilateral security agreement with Denmark and Greenland at the UN General Assembly, granting the United States permanent control over security matters on the North Atlantic territory. Trump stated the deal gives the US 'complete ability to do what is necessary to defend the American continent and also Europe,' with no adversary permitted to establish a military presence without US approval. The US will build two major bases in Narsarsuaq and Mestersvig, with free access to air, land, and sea routes. The agreement amends the 1951 defence pact, prohibiting non-NATO nations from opening bases or mining critical minerals without signatory consent, and allows Denmark and Greenland to control unmanned military installation requests, while explicitly reaffirming Danish sovereignty and Greenlanders' right to self-determination.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-signs-fantastic-greenland-security-deal-denmark/>

EU to lift sanctions on two Russian oligarchs, *Financial Times*

The European Union has agreed to lift sanctions on Russian oligarchs Alisher Usmanov and Mikhail Fridman to secure a three-year extension of restrictions on thousands linked to Moscow's war against Ukraine. France demanded Usmanov's removal as part of a secret prisoner release deal with Azerbaijan, offering Latvia closer air defence co-operation. Luxembourg insisted on delisting Fridman, who was sanctioned in 2022 and is seeking \$16bn in damages from the Grand Duchy. The agreement, requiring unanimous support from all 27 member states, was struck after weeks of haggling. Ukraine's foreign minister condemned the decision as 'shameful and unjustifiable,' warning it risks granting Moscow a sense of impunity and creating division among Europeans. Russia welcomed the move, while France's brinkmanship generated considerable ill will, marking the first time sanctions were explicitly linked to a prisoner release.

<https://www.ft.com/content/760091dd-20be-4152-aa0d-561475a99ee8>

New taxes crucial to preserve EU budget, says Irish PM, *Politico*

Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin has stated that the European Union must introduce new taxes to prevent significant cuts to its next seven-year budget, the Multiannual Financial Framework. Following talks with European Council President António Costa in Dublin, Martin emphasised that protecting the Common Agricultural Policy and cohesion funds while enhancing EU competitiveness requires generating substantial own resources. He acknowledged that reaching an agreement on new levies would be 'very complicated' due to resistance from national governments. The European Commission proposed five new taxes in 2025 expected to raise €60 billion annually, but member states have pushed back. Ireland, holding the Council presidency, will soon release a revised negotiating document ahead of an Oct. 15 leaders' meeting, where Costa aims to finalise own resources with strong backing among EU countries.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/new-eu-taxes-crucial-to-preserve-budget-says-irish-pm-micheal-martin/>

Associate membership could transform EU-Canada ties. First, Brussels has to define it (*opinion*), *ECFR*

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's offer of 'associate membership' to Canada has been met with enthusiasm, but without a clear legal definition, the proposal risks becoming empty symbolism or merely an

expanded version of the existing CETA trade deal. As the US distances itself from allies, the EU has an opportunity to position itself as a geopolitical anchor, but to succeed, associate membership must be narrow, stopping short of single market access, yet deep, focusing on security, defence, and resilience. The Commission should swiftly define the concept with a timetable and objectives. Practical steps could include deeper Canadian participation in PESCO and the European Defence Agency, while the boldest move would be integrating Canada into the EU's defence technological and industrial base, though French protectionism may pose obstacles.

<https://ecfr.eu/article/associate-membership-could-transform-eu-canada-ties-first-brussels-has-to-define-it/>

Germany's top general to lead NATO's highest military authority, *Politico*
Germany's Chief of Defence Carsten Breuer has been elected to lead NATO's Military Committee after securing support from at least 17 of the alliance's 32 chiefs of defence in a secret ballot. Current chair Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone announced the decision, praising Breuer's operational judgment and deep familiarity with NATO. Breuer, who has led Germany's armed forces since 2023, defeated Canada's Jennie Carignan and will take over next July for a three-year term. The secret vote aimed to prevent disloyalty and divisions. Breuer's victory reflects Germany's growing role in NATO as Europe's top defence spender, with his campaign emphasising leadership in defence investment. The chair provides military advice, oversees working groups, and brokers consensus on operations, with the result underscoring Berlin's increasing influence in the alliance amid US pressure on European allies to boost defence capabilities.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-carsten-breuer-nato-military-committee/>

UK's Burnham wants to work with EU on 'Made in Europe' plan, *Reuters*
UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham has argued for Britain to be a 'trusted partner' in the EU's 'Made in Europe' scheme, which aims to reduce reliance on Chinese components by prioritising European-made goods. Burnham stated that Europe's argument is not with Britain, as both face similar challenges, particularly in steel, and urged avoiding further 'collateral damage' to supply chains. The UK's automotive industry, which contributes €80 billion annually to EU trade, could be severely impacted by exclusion. French

Industry Minister Sebastien Martin acknowledged potential for enhanced cooperation but insisted non-members cannot expect the same rights as EU states. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders warned that exclusion would weaken competitiveness, with Burnham seeking to deepen EU relations following his predecessor's reset, as a UK-EU summit is hoped to take place this year.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/andy-burnham-argue-uk-role-eus-made-europe-2026-09-22/>

Don't get 'locked in' by EU rules, top nuclear adviser warns Burnham, *Politico*

John Fingleton, a top nuclear adviser to the UK government, has warned that Britain should not feel 'locked into' pre-Brexit EU environmental rules as it seeks to rapidly expand nuclear power capacity. Fingleton argued that Whitehall must avoid risk aversion that could dampen efforts to boost domestic nuclear output, noting that EU member states retain significant flexibility within the bloc's framework. The UK, he stated, should not accept less flexibility than EU members when complying with regulations. His 2025 review called for a 'radical reset' of nuclear regulations, including scrapping duplication in environmental laws. With the UK negotiating post-Brexit electricity market alignment with the EU, Fingleton stressed that overly stringent interpretations of habitat regulations could delay projects and increase costs unnecessarily, citing EDF's £700 million expenditure on marine life protection at Hinkley Point C.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-rules-nuclear-power-adviser-john-fingleton-andy-burnham/>

Italy

In blow to Meloni, Italy misses early exit from EU fiscal watch, *Politico*

Italy has failed to exit the European Union's excessive deficit procedure after the Italian National Institute of Statistics confirmed its budget deficit reached 3.1% in 2025, exceeding the bloc's 3% cap. Finance Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti admitted Italy will not achieve an early exit this year, though it may do so in 2026. The country has been under EU fiscal oversight since 2024, with the deficit breach maintaining its place in the procedure. Italy's economy

is expected to grow by just 0.6% next year, the lowest rate in the EU, while its debt is projected to exceed Greece's at 139% of GDP. The figures represent a disappointment for Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's government ahead of the 2027 general election, with opposition parties arguing her austerity-focused policy lacks a growth strategy amid rising energy and debt costs from the Middle East conflict.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/italy-falls-short-of-early-exit-from-eu-fiscal-watch/>

Pil, Confindustria: il 2026 sorprende al rialzo ma la crescita rallenta a fine anno, *Il Sole 24 Ore*

Confindustria ha rivisto al rialzo le previsioni di crescita per il 2026 all'+0,8% (da +0,5% ad aprile) grazie ai primi due trimestri positivi, trainati dalla domanda mondiale di petrolio più debole del previsto, dal minor trasferimento dei rincari ai beni non energetici e dall'effetto traino del PNRR alle battute conclusive. Tuttavia, la crescita rallenta a fine anno per l'aumento dei prezzi energetici: la quota dei transiti attraverso lo Stretto di Hormuz è bassa (13% rispetto al normale), il prezzo del Brent è alto e volatile, il gas in Europa è salito a 77 euro MWh (da 33 a febbraio), e l'inflazione ad agosto ha toccato il 3,3% annuo, spinta dai carburanti (+17,1%). La BCE ha portato i tassi al 2,50%, con ulteriori rialzi attesi tra fine anno e il prossimo. L'industria tiene (+0,7% a luglio), ma il PMI di agosto scende sotto la soglia neutrale (49,6).

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/pil-confindustria-2026-sorprende-rialzo-ma-crescita-rallenta-fine-anno-AJphOGLB>

Previdenza, nel 2029 pensione di vecchiaia a 67 anni e sei mesi, *Il Sole 24 Ore*

La Ragioneria Generale dello Stato ha aggiornato le tabelle pensionistiche in base alle aspettative di vita, prevedendo che nel 2029 l'età per la pensione di vecchiaia salga a 67 anni e sei mesi, con un ulteriore aumento a 67 anni e otto mesi dal 2031. Per la pensione anticipata, i requisiti contributivi per gli uomini passeranno a 43 anni e 4 mesi nel 2029 e a 43 anni e 6 mesi nel 2031, con un anno in meno per le donne. La legge di Bilancio 2027 ha già previsto incrementi mensili, portando l'età a 67 anni e un mese nel 2027 e a 67 anni e tre mesi nel 2028. Il rapporto conferma la 'gobba pensionistica', con la spesa previdenziale che raggiungerà il 17,1% del PIL nel 2041 a causa dell'invecchiamento della popolazione e dell'uscita dal lavoro delle

generazioni del baby boom, per poi scendere progressivamente al 16,2% nel 2050.

https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/previdenza-2029-pensione-vecchiaia-67-anni-e-sei-mesi-AJhBIKLB?refresh_ce

International

War pollution: how the environment also dies *[translated]*, *Il Sole 24 Ore*
Wars have a devastating and long-lasting environmental impact, with the military sector accounting for 5.5% of global CO2 emissions, ranking it between fourth and fifth among the world's largest emitters. Examples include Verdun's Place à Gaz, where arsenic levels exceed European averages by 35,000 times, and Sarajevo, contaminated by depleted uranium munitions. In Gaza, 61 million tonnes of rubble equal ten Pyramids of Giza, while Ukraine's Kakhovka dam destruction released 83,000 tonnes of heavy metals. In Colombia, Amazon deforestation increased after the FARC peace deal. These damages persist for decades, underscoring the need for ecocide to be recognized in the Rome Statute, as anticipated by constitutions like Italy's, which protect the environment 'also in the interest of future generations'.
<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/inquinamento-guerra-cosi-muore-anche-l-ambiente-AJX6IFCB>

Trump supports diesel export ban as fuel prices hit records, Reuters

US President Donald Trump has expressed support for a ban on diesel exports as fuel prices reach record highs, driven by supply disruptions from wars in Iran and Ukraine that have cut exports from major producers like Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Trump stated he has called for such a ban 'within my people' amid pressure from farm-state lawmakers, including Senator Chuck Grassley, who argued that high diesel prices are devastating farmers' incomes. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the administration is examining the feasibility of full or partial export restrictions. However, Energy Secretary Chris Wright warned a ban could raise fuel and gasoline prices on the coasts, reduce supply, and prompt refiners to cut production, while Interior Secretary Doug Burgum cautioned about potential retaliatory measures from other countries, which would likely tighten supplies in Europe, structurally short on diesel and heavily reliant on US exports.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-says-he-backs-idea-ban-diesel-exports-2026-09-22/>

Donald Trump presses Volodymyr Zelenskyy to stop hitting Russian refineries, *Financial Times*

US President Donald Trump pressed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a call to halt Kyiv's strikes on Russian refineries, expressing concern that the attacks are exacerbating a global diesel shortage and pushing up prices. Trump's main message was reportedly 'diesel, diesel, diesel,' with the president urging Zelenskyy to cease drone and missile attacks to allow Russian supplies to reach global markets. The call followed Ukraine's largest drone attack on Moscow, which Russian authorities said set a major oil refinery ablaze. US diesel prices hit a record \$6.51 a gallon, with Trump stating that the war with Iran and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are squeezing supply. Zelenskyy indicated Ukraine would honour a reciprocal ceasefire if the US and partners could ensure Russia did the same, though Russian President Vladimir Putin is unlikely to agree before winter, as his forces plan a devastating aerial bombardment of Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

<https://www.ft.com/content/adb80fa3-b54a-4b3d-8ed2-0ebe55a5e05e>

Hill investigates after F-35 parts diverted to Hong Kong, *Politico*

A shipment of F-35 fighter jet parts bound for US repairs was unexpectedly diverted to Hong Kong this summer, sparking a Capitol Hill investigation into potential exposure of top-secret weapons technology to a foreign adversary, including China. The shipment, which an intermediary was transporting on behalf of Lockheed Martin from Australia, included a stealth-coated cockpit canopy critical to the jet's radar-evasion capabilities. The Pentagon confirmed the disappearance of some components and is working with US authorities and industry partners to retrieve them, investigate the incident, and place safeguards to avoid a future occurrence. Congressional staff have received briefings, with concerns that China, already engaged in widespread espionage on secret Pentagon programs, including the F-35, could reverse-engineer the prized technology if it had access to the canopy.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/09/18/congress-f-35-china-investigation-01083647>

Trump rejects global entity for AI oversight, *Politico*

US President Donald Trump has rejected the creation of a global entity to oversee artificial intelligence, declaring at the UN General Assembly that the United States 'rejects any attempt to construct a globalist scheme to control' AI. Trump asserted the US is leading the world in AI innovation, ahead of China by a significant margin, and dismissed concerns about its disruptive or dangerous capabilities as a 'hoax,' warning that regulation could hinder American progress and allow China to gain an advantage. He proposed renaming the field to 'super intelligence' (SI), arguing the current term is inaccurate. The announcement comes as Chinese President Xi Jinping prepares for US meetings where AI is expected to be a major topic, and follows a declaration by 22 nations suggesting a global supervisory regime for AI.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/09/22/trump-rejects-global-entity-ai-oversight-01087546>

China spends record amount importing over 1,000 tonnes of gold this year, *Financial Times*

China has spent a record \$158.8 billion importing over 1,000 tonnes of gold in the first eight months of 2026, far exceeding the \$96.5 billion spent on 886 tonnes for all of 2025. The surge follows a pause in purchases during 2025's price rally, which saw gold soar from \$2,625 to \$5,595 per troy ounce. Both the People's Bank of China and private investors are driving the demand, diversifying assets amid geopolitical tensions and poor returns on local investments. Chinese holdings of US Treasuries fell to \$618 billion in July, the lowest since 2008, while the CSI 300 index remains over a fifth below its 2021 peak. With domestic options limited by the property market collapse, gold has become a core driver of global prices, with analysts noting China's central bank likely underreports its purchases, as Goldman Sachs estimated 35 tonnes bought in July alone, significantly higher than official figures.

<https://www.ft.com/content/ed38995e-c7be-4703-9775-eb384a037ce3>

Curated by Sergio Pablo Belis