



European Latitudes

Perspectives on Europe, Italy, and the world.

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

Tuesday, 16 June 2026

Europe

EU countries approve starting membership talks with Ukraine, Moldova, *Politico Europe*

EU member states have approved the opening of accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova, starting with the fundamentals cluster covering rule of law, democratic institutions and core EU values. The decision gives both countries a concrete step towards membership and reinforces their strategic pivot away from Moscow after years of Russian coercion, military aggression and political interference. Ukraine has treated accession as central to long-term security since Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion, while Moldova continues to face Russian troops in Transnistria and recent election meddling. The breakthrough followed Hungary's decision to lift its veto after new leadership replaced Viktor Orbán's government and Ukrainian-Hungarian experts discussed minority rights. The process remains lengthy, but politically significant.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-countries-membership-talks-with-ukraine-and-moldova/>

Trump is turning his attention back to Ukraine — and Kyiv's allies are worried, *POLITICO*

European governments are seeking to prevent a rupture with President Donald Trump at the G7 summit as he refocuses on Ukraine after the Iran crisis. Kyiv's allies want Washington aligned with a strategy of sustained pressure on Moscow, continued military and financial backing for Ukraine, and no territorial concessions. Trump's calls with Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy,

together with plans for US envoys to visit Moscow, have fuelled fears that Europe could be sidelined from negotiations. EU leaders argue they now finance much of Ukraine's support, including €90 billion covering two-thirds of Kyiv's needs for this year and next, and must therefore be represented in any settlement process.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-ukraine-peace-talks-g7-european-allies/>

***** Supplementary information:**

Ukraine Support Tracker

Donor	Indirect / non-military aid allocated	Direct military aid allocated	Total allocated
EU institutions + EU member states	€102.2bn	€79.2bn	€181.4bn
United States	€50.8bn	€64.6bn	€115.4bn

Using the Kiel Institute Ukraine Support Tracker for a like-for-like comparison, EU institutions and EU member states have allocated substantially more support to Ukraine than the United States: about €181.4bn in total compared with €115.4bn from the US. Europe's advantage is especially marked in indirect or non-military support, where it has allocated around €102.2bn in financial, humanitarian and economic assistance, roughly double the US figure of €50.8bn. On direct military aid, Europe is also ahead, though by a narrower margin, with €79.2bn allocated compared with €64.6bn from Washington. Official EU figures put combined EU and member-state support at €204.8bn, including €108.8bn in financial, economic and humanitarian assistance, €75.2bn in military support, €17bn for Ukrainian refugees inside the EU, and €3.8bn from immobilised Russian-asset proceeds. US figures are more complex because headline congressional appropriations include both direct Ukraine assistance and wider Ukraine-war-related spending, such as strengthening the US military posture in Europe and supporting other affected countries.

*The gap becomes much larger if commitments rather than allocated aid are counted, because European pledges include major forward-looking packages for Ukraine's budget, reconstruction and defence needs.

<https://www.kielinstitut.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/>

EU kicks off first phase of membership negotiations with Ukraine, *The Straits Times*

The European Union has formally advanced Ukraine and Moldova to the first cluster of accession negotiations, marking a significant political step after roughly two years of blockage by Hungary. Kyiv must still align its laws,

institutions and standards with 35 negotiating chapters grouped into six clusters, covering fields from agriculture and environment to justice and security. The process remains highly political, as any member state can slow or halt progress. While Ukraine seeks full membership with full rights, some EU leaders are exploring interim models, including associate membership without voting rights, and reforms to limit future members' voting powers on sensitive issues. Supporters argue the EU should prepare for Ukrainian accession by 2030 if reforms are completed.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/ukraine-starts-first-phase-of-eu-membership-talks-in-rubicon-moment>

Ukraine is winning the drone war. Now it needs to win over Trump, *Politico*

Ukraine is seeking to turn its battlefield advantage in drone warfare into a strategic industrial and diplomatic gain at the G7, particularly by persuading the Trump administration to support wider defence co-operation. Kyiv still expects Washington to lead peace negotiations with Russia, but wants European leaders formally involved and insists any settlement exclude territorial concessions or legal recognition of Russian control in the Donbas. Air defence remains a severe constraint: Ukraine uses 60 to 70 Patriot interceptor missiles each month, exceeding current Raytheon production, and wants US approval to manufacture interceptors domestically. Drone partnerships are advancing elsewhere, with British companies due to deliver 120,000 drones this year and Canada, Germany and European manufacturers expanding joint production.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/06/14/ukraine-us-g7-drones-00960697>

EU says China trained Russian troops to fight in Ukraine war, *The Straits Times*

The EU's foreign policy chief has said Brussels has verified reports that China's military trained Russian personnel for operations in Ukraine, intensifying concerns over Beijing's role in sustaining Moscow's war effort. Previous intelligence reporting indicated that about 200 Russian troops were trained in China in late 2025, with sessions focused on drone use under an agreement between senior officers. Beijing denies enabling the war, but the EU and US have already sanctioned Chinese entities supplying dual-use goods. The latest EU measures target two mainland manufacturers accused of providing drone components and lubricant additives, and two Hong Kong shipping firms linked to Russian oil exports. The issue adds pressure to broader EU-China trade and security tensions.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/eu-says-china-trained-russian-troops-to-fight-in-ukraine-war>

Steel and chemicals giants demand freeze to EU's flagship climate policy, POLITICO

Four major European industrial groups have called for an immediate halt to rising costs under the EU Emissions Trading System, warning that the bloc's core climate policy is undermining competitiveness and threatening manufacturing capacity. ArcelorMittal, ThyssenKrupp, Voestalpine and BASF argue that carbon prices of about €75 per tonne of CO₂, alongside high energy and regulatory costs, risk carbon leakage, closures and job losses. They want a major overhaul in the Commission's mid-July ETS review and say the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is too narrow to offset global competition. Critics note that heavy industry already receives extensive free allowances, including billions of euros for steelmakers, and that new benchmarks could grant industry a further €4 billion.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/steel-and-chemicals-giants-demand-freeze-to-eus-flagship-climate-policy/>

UK hits Russia with fresh energy sanctions at G7, POLITICO

The United Kingdom has announced new energy sanctions against Russia at the G7 summit, targeting revenues and networks that support Moscow's war effort. The measures are expected to focus on Russia's shadow fleet, following the first interception by British forces of a banned oil tanker, and on financial channels used to evade sanctions and supply the Russian military. They will also include an embargo on vessels transporting sanctioned Russian liquefied natural gas. Separately, the UK will use £210 million of export finance to support Urenco's supply of enriched uranium to Ukraine's nuclear operator, Energoatom, over two years. The package strengthens London's case for coordinated G7 pressure and long-term support for Ukraine's energy security.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-hits-russia-with-fresh-energy-sanctions-at-g7/>

Jordan Bardella is coming for Europe, Politico Europe

Jordan Bardella has signalled that a National Rally presidency would seek a fundamental redesign of EU governance while avoiding formal withdrawal. His immediate target would be the EU's next long-term budget, with a demand to halve France's contribution and challenge what he casts as pre-emptive spending commitments before the 2027 election. The position would confront Brussels with a major fiscal and institutional dispute from a founding member state already under budgetary strain. On security, Bardella has moderated his party's stance, saying France should remain in NATO's integrated command while war continues near Europe's borders, and describing Russia as a multidimensional threat. His strategy relies on alliances with nationalist governments, regulatory rollback and a sharper assertion of French sovereignty.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/france-eu-far-right-jordan-bardella-coming-for-europe/>

Italy

Scure su 250 emendamenti, parte la maratona sulla legge elettorale, ANSA

La riforma della legge elettorale entra nella fase decisiva in commissione Affari costituzionali alla Camera, dopo il taglio di circa 250 emendamenti: su 731 proposte residue, ne saranno discusse 479. L'obiettivo resta portare il testo in Aula il 26 giugno, anche se non è escluso l'approdo senza relatore. La maggioranza, che ha presentato solo quattro emendamenti, punta a respingere le modifiche di opposizioni e vannacciani, rinviando all'Aula il nodo delle preferenze. Il tema divide centrodestra e opposizione, mentre cresce il peso politico di Futuro Nazionale, dato da SWG al 5,3%, pari alla Lega. Sullo sfondo restano le ipotesi di elezioni anticipate nel 2027 e l'appello a un uso responsabile dell'intelligenza artificiale in campagna elettorale.

https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2026/06/15/scure-su-250-emendamenti-parte-la-maratona-sulla-legge-elettorale_548750c1-b5ac-4f6d-accf-46938a069f50.html

***** Supplementary Information:**

La proposta di riforma della legge elettorale: contenuti e critiche

La riforma proposta supererebbe il Rosatellum trasformando l'elezione di Camera e Senato in un sistema prevalentemente proporzionale a liste o coalizioni, con abolizione dei collegi uninominali oggi usati per 3/8 dei seggi, salvo Valle d'Aosta e Trentino-Alto Adige. Alla lista o coalizione prima classificata verrebbe attribuito un premio fisso di governabilità pari a 70 deputati e 35 senatori, purché raggiunga il 40% dei voti, con tetti massimi di 230 seggi alla Camera e 114 al Senato. Se le prime due forze superassero il 35% senza arrivare al 40%, scatterebbe un ballottaggio. La proposta obbligherebbe inoltre a indicare il candidato premier, pur senza vincolare il Quirinale. La critica evidenzia rischi per rappresentanza, scelta degli eletti e organi di garanzia.

<https://www.rivistailmulino.it/a/la-proposta-di-riforma-della-legge-elettorale-contenuti-e-critiche>

UniCredit rejects Commerzbank claims that bid's take-up is lower than seems, Reuters

UniCredit has rejected Commerzbank's claims that support for its €40 billion all-share takeover bid is overstated, intensifying a dispute with the German

lender and the wider German establishment. Commerzbank argues that tendered shares have largely come from banks acting as derivatives counterparties rather than long-term institutional investors, but UniCredit says tendered shares are valid and denies they were borrowed from it. The offer closes on Tuesday with UniCredit controlling about 41.8% of Commerzbank, including a near 27% equity stake, 11.86% tendered shares and 3.2% in share-settled derivatives, plus 13.2% in cash-settled derivatives. That position could enable UniCredit to dominate shareholder votes, reshape the supervisory board and indirectly replace management to pursue its profit strategy.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/unicredit-rejects-commerzbank-claims-that-take-up-is-lower-than-seems-2026-06-15/>

Dal taglio delle tasse per le Pmi al mutuo tricolore, le proposte economiche di Vannacci, *Il Sole 24 Ore*

Roberto Vannacci's Futuro Nazionale has outlined an economic and social programme centred on tax cuts, energy sovereignty, restrictive migration policy and a more selective welfare model. The platform proposes a single flat-rate tax for small and medium-sized enterprises, described as representing 96% of Italy's economy, alongside a family quotient with sharp Irpef reductions for each child. Energy measures include second-generation nuclear power, more hydroelectric dams, biomass incentives, an end to bill-funded renewable subsidies, no coal phase-out, withdrawal from the Green Deal and abolition of carbon tax. Housing proposals include a state-guaranteed "mutuo tricolore" for first homes, linked to family size. The programme also proposes citizenship requirements for public housing, stopping the decreto flussi, limiting immigrants to 4%, restoring work booklets from age 14 and tightening benefit conditionality.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/dal-taglio-tasse-le-pmi-mutuo-tricolore-proposte-economiche-vannacci-AIBVYRfD>

Cacciamine e navi di supporto italiane per Hormuz: il Crotona e il Rimini sono già a Gibuti con 500 militari coinvolti, *Il Sole 24 Ore*

L'Italia si prepara a contribuire a un'eventuale missione internazionale di sminamento nello Stretto di Hormuz, subordinando l'impiego operativo al consolidamento della tregua, alla definizione del mandato e al via libera parlamentare. I cacciamine Crotona e Rimini, già a Gibuti e formalmente aggregati alla missione europea Aspides, sono equipaggiati con sonar avanzati e veicoli filoguidati capaci di operare fino a circa 600 metri di profondità. L'assetto potrebbe coinvolgere circa 500 militari, con supporto logistico della nave Atlante e protezione di unità come il Raimondo Montecuccoli o la fregata Luigi Rizzo. Gli esperti stimano tre-sei mesi per una bonifica completa e una normalizzazione dei traffici.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/cacciamine-e-navi-supporto-italiane-hormuz-crotone-e-rimini-sono-gia-gibuti-500-militari-coinvolti-AllVvdgD>

International

Iran, US agree to halt war and reopen Hormuz, sending oil prices tumbling, *Reuters*

The United States and Iran have agreed a framework to end their war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, easing immediate pressure on energy markets while postponing the most difficult nuclear questions. The memorandum of understanding is due to be signed in Switzerland and provides for a 60-day ceasefire period, including a permanent halt to military operations on all fronts, with Lebanon a central test of implementation. Trump said the Strait of Hormuz would reopen on Friday and ordered the end of the US blockade of Iranian ports, prompting Brent crude to fall by more than 4% and equities to rise. Later talks are expected to address sanctions relief, potentially \$25 billion in frozen assets, and Iran's more than 400 kg of near bomb-grade uranium.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/iran-us-agree-halt-war-reopen-hormuz-sending-oil-prices-tumbling-2026-06-15/>

US at odds with allies over how easy it is to reopen Hormuz, *The Straits Times*

The United States and its G7 allies remain divided over the feasibility and timing of reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic chokepoint normally carrying about one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies. President Donald Trump says the waterway will be fully open by 19 June, but European governments question the timetable, the legal mandate, and the security conditions for demining and patrol operations. A preliminary US-Iran memorandum is expected to guarantee toll-free passage for 60 days, yet its terms remain unpublished. European planning, led by France and the UK, involves more than 15 countries, but mine-clearance vessels would be vulnerable unless hostilities have clearly ceased and Iran provides reliable information.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/us-at-odds-with-allies-over-how-easy-it-is-to-reopen-hormuz>

What to know about the G7 summit in France, *AP News*

The G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains is set to test allied cohesion across Iran, Ukraine, China, trade, energy and artificial intelligence, with Trump's newly announced Iran framework altering the summit's tone. Reopening the Strait of Hormuz would relieve pressure on Persian Gulf energy flows, but leaders are likely to press for details on the ceasefire, nuclear follow-on talks and possible

maritime security operations, including mine clearance and tanker escorts by France and Britain. Ukraine will use the summit to demonstrate battlefield resilience and persuade Trump that Russia cannot achieve its objectives militarily, strengthening the case for renewed pressure on Moscow. Economic sessions will focus on China's subsidised exports, while additional discussions cover online safety, AI, developing economies and engagement with invited leaders from India, Brazil, South Korea, Kenya and the Gulf.

<https://apnews.com/article/g7-trump-macron-france-china-iran-persian-gulf-energy-7e7dfed708daa482c6079863758e6f95>

Trump's critical minerals pricing plan faces skeptical G7, divided industry, *Reuters*

The Trump administration's proposal to secure critical minerals supply through price regulation faces scepticism from G7 partners and disagreement across the mining sector. The plan seeks to reduce dependence on China, whose dominance in minerals such as cobalt, lithium and nickel has been reinforced by low-cost production and opaque pricing that can suppress Western investment. Possible tools include price supports, market standards, subsidies, guaranteed purchases and adjustable tariffs, with Washington considering a Pentagon-developed AI pricing model called OPEN. European governments are wary of US control over pricing, uncertain governance and who would fund premiums across supply chains, and prefer more transparent market indices. Washington is now pursuing faster bilateral deals with Japan and the EU, potentially covering five to 10 minerals including heavy rare earths, antimony, graphite and tungsten.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/trumps-critical-minerals-pricing-plan-faces-skeptical-g7-divided-industry-2026-06-15/>

Inside the whirlwind 24 hours that led the White House to slap export controls on Anthropic, *Politico*

The Trump administration's export controls on Anthropic mark a major escalation in US oversight of frontier AI deployment, following official concerns that the company's Fable 5 and Mythos 5 models could be misused despite claimed safeguards. Officials sought a voluntary withdrawal after Amazon raised guardrail concerns and after national security agencies reviewed the alleged vulnerability; Anthropic disputed the severity, arguing no universal jailbreak had been found and that complete elimination of jailbreak attempts is not technically feasible. The order, imposed under national security authority, barred use by foreign nationals and effectively forced Anthropic to disable the models for all customers. The episode exposes unresolved governance questions over emergency intervention, technical evidence, due process and the balance between AI innovation and security.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/06/13/inside-the-whirlwind-24-hours-that-led-the-white-house-to-slap-export-controls-on-anthropic-00961519>

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