



European Latitudes

Perspectives on Europe, Italy, and the world.

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

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Europe

EU Commission considers supercharged department for foreign relations, *POLITICO*

The European Commission is examining options to consolidate external-facing policy functions into a more powerful foreign-relations department, potentially incorporating parts of DG TRADE and DG MENA. The proposal forms part of a wider institutional review led by Budget Commissioner Piotr Serafin, intended to make the EU executive more agile and better equipped for a volatile geopolitical environment. Alternative models include restructuring services by geography or theme. Initial thinking is expected to be shared with staff on 13 July, before commissioners are briefed. The initiative reflects a broader effort under Ursula von der Leyen to strengthen the Commission's foreign-policy role, while also heightening institutional sensitivities with the European External Action Service, which is pursuing its own reforms under Kaja Kallas.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/european-commission-consider-department-foreign-relations/>

How Trump is turning NATO into a cash machine, *POLITICO*

Donald Trump has reshaped NATO around a transactional logic centred on European defence spending and purchases of US military equipment, shifting attention away from enlargement, deterrence planning and shared democratic commitments. Ahead of the Ankara summit on 7-8 July, Washington is pressing allies to deepen investment in American arms, after nearly \$120 billion in new defence spending over the past year, around half on US-made equipment. Trump's demand that allies move from 2 per cent to 5 per cent of GDP has

been reinforced by threats to reduce US support. European governments are accommodating the approach through licensing deals and procurement announcements, but concern is rising over US troop reductions, Ukraine policy, tariffs and the long-term credibility of deterrence on NATO's eastern flank.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/07/05/nato-trump-cash-machine-00985766>

AI security questions loom over NATO summit, POLITICO

Access to advanced US artificial intelligence is emerging as a strategic issue for NATO, as frontier models become capable of identifying and exploiting cyber vulnerabilities at a level that could transform both defence and offensive operations. Anthropic's Claude Mythos has been tested by US security agencies, including the NSA and CISA, while European allies have sought access amid fears of being left behind. Initial restrictions, export controls and selective approvals by the Trump administration have highlighted Washington's leverage over allied cyber capabilities. The Ankara summit will include emerging technologies on the agenda, but consensus remains limited. The policy challenge is to balance controlled access, collective security, innovation and the need for trusted AI tools to protect critical infrastructure and support Ukraine-era military adaptation.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/07/04/ai-security-nato-access-00984758>

Europe has replaced most US asset cuts within NATO, top commander says, The Straits Times

European NATO allies have largely backfilled assets cut from US war and crisis plans for Europe, signalling a stronger European contribution within the alliance as Washington reorients its military posture. Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe John Stringer said Europeans are replacing US capabilities where possible and matching effects through alternative assets where direct substitution is unavailable. NATO's military command has asked allies to identify additional forces after US announcements of major cuts to potential deployments in Europe. The shift is being framed as burden-sharing driven by military logic rather than politics. All 32 allies, including Britain, are expected to meet the commitment to spend 3.5% of GDP on core defence by 2035, amid continued concern over US force reviews and strategic reliability.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/europe-has-replaced-most-us-cuts-within-nato-top-commander-says>

French push to exclude UK from EU defence spending backfires, Luxembourg Times

France's effort to restrict UK access to the EU's €150 billion Safe defence fund has reduced Paris's own access to cheap loans for Franco-British weapons projects. The French government sought €16.2 billion but received €15.1

billion, partly because UK-linked projects involving MBDA did not meet eligibility rules France had supported. Safe requires 65% of funded products to originate in the EU single market, Norway, Iceland or Ukraine, with non-eligible contractors limited to 35% unless their government signs a defence partnership and contributes financially. Canada has qualified, but UK participation talks stalled after disputes over a fee. The outcome exposes tensions between European preference, integrated supply chains and the practical need to scale defence production against Russian and US strategic uncertainty.

<https://www.luxtimes.lu/europeanunion/french-push-to-exclude-uk-from-eu-defence-spending-backfires/158282838.html>

EU calls for ‘fair play’ after Trump’s red card intervention rocks World Cup, *POLITICO*

European institutions and football authorities have warned that political pressure must not influence sporting decisions after FIFA suspended Folarin Balogun’s one-match World Cup ban following a call between Donald Trump and Gianni Infantino. The European Commission stressed the autonomy of sport while insisting that competition rules must be applied through objective and transparent criteria. Sport Commissioner Glenn Micallef said sporting rules belong to governing bodies, not politicians, and warned against the weaponisation of sport for political purposes. UEFA described FIFA’s decision as incomprehensible and unjustifiable, while Belgian officials said it raised questions about fair play and institutional credibility. The case has intensified governance concerns before the United States’ last-16 match against Belgium.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-fair-play-donald-trump-red-card-intervention-world-cup-folarin-balogun/>

Infernos devastate forests as Europe’s temperatures rise again, *The Straits Times*

Wildfires across southern Europe have destroyed more than 19,000 hectares in Portugal, Spain, France and Greece, forcing evacuations and emergency restrictions as temperatures again approach 40 deg C. Around 10,500 people were evacuated near Perpignan after a fire advanced rapidly towards homes, while Tour de France organisers barred spectators from part of a Pyrenees stage to reduce risk. Fires also affected Thessaloniki, Costa Brava, Drome, Hvar and Albania, with Portugal reporting 80% control of a 13,000-hectare blaze. The early intensity follows a June heatwave during which France recorded more than 2,000 excess deaths in a week and Spain and Belgium each reported over 1,000. Authorities warn the fire season has begun unusually early and may be prolonged.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/infernos-devastate-forests-as-europes-temperatures-rise-again>

Italy

Trump escalates Meloni feud with 'restraining order needed' post, *The Irish Times*

Donald Trump has intensified his dispute with Giorgia Meloni ahead of the NATO summit in Ankara, using social media to mock the Italian prime minister after weeks of tension over their relationship and Italy's stance on US-led military action against Iran. The feud began after Trump claimed Meloni had sought a photo opportunity at the G7 to bolster her domestic standing, a claim she denied forcefully. The dispute risks complicating relations between Washington and Rome at a sensitive moment, with concerns over US force reductions in Europe and pressure on allies to increase defence spending. Italy has also resisted using its €14.9 billion allocation of EU security loans, reflecting domestic unease over borrowing for defence before an election year.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/world/europe/2026/07/06/trump-escalates-meloni-feud-with-restraining-order-needed-post/>

Nel ridimensionamento delle politiche di coesione la miopia delle classi dirigenti europee (*opinion*), *Il Sole 24 Ore*

L'analisi sostiene che la proposta di bilancio Ue 2028-2034 rischia di indebolire la coesione territoriale proprio mentre competitività, difesa e allargamento richiederebbero risorse aggiuntive. Mantenere invariata la dimensione complessiva del bilancio e finanziare nuove priorità riducendo le politiche tradizionali comporterebbe un taglio di circa un settimo alla coesione, con effetti particolarmente critici per Mezzogiorno e regioni fragili. La centralizzazione nei governi nazionali, ispirata al modello Pnrr, potrebbe alimentare conflitti distributivi e ridurre la capacità europea di calibrare gli interventi sui divari territoriali. I fondi competitivi e quelli per la difesa tenderanno probabilmente a concentrarsi nelle aree più forti, ampliando disparità economiche e politiche e favorendo spinte euroscettiche.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/nel-ridimensionamento-politiche-coesione-miopia-classi-dirigenti-europee-AJOyRL>

Vertice Nato, Governo al lavoro sulle spese militari. Si studiano ulteriori aumenti (ma lo spazio è stretto), *Il Sole 24 Ore*

L'Italia si presenterà al vertice Nato di Ankara con una spesa per la difesa pari al 2,8% del Pil, confermando l'impegno a mantenere una traiettoria di crescita verso il target del 5% entro il 2035. L'aumento dello 0,71% è sostenuto soprattutto da voci legate alla sicurezza interna, nell'ambito dell'approccio multidominio consentito dall'Alleanza. Sono allo studio incrementi dello 0,3% nel 2027 e dello 0,6% nel 2028, per un possibile impatto complessivo di 17-18

miliardi, ma lo spazio politico e di bilancio resta limitato. In vista della campagna elettorale, restano congelati prestiti Safe, valutazioni sul Purl e nuovi pacchetti militari per Kiev, mentre il Governo punta a rispettare gli impegni senza accelerazioni immediate.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/vertice-nato-governo-lavoro-spese-militari-si-studiano-ulteriori-aumenti-ma-spazio-e-stretto-AIr5rh1D>

Pnrr, è corsa contro il tempo in Regioni e Comuni per completare le opere, Il Sole 24 Ore

Regioni e Comuni stanno accelerando rendicontazione e completamento degli interventi Pnrr dopo la scadenza del 30 giugno, con risultati molto differenziati sul territorio. Piemonte e Toscana hanno raggiunto il 100% degli obiettivi: in Piemonte sono stati attivati 39mila progetti per oltre 10 miliardi, con 1,78 miliardi gestiti direttamente su 2.419 interventi; in Toscana risulta avviato il 95,47% dei progetti regionali. Tra i Comuni emergono Firenze, Bologna, Torino e Napoli, che ha investito 1 miliardo completando il 90% degli interventi. Le risorse si concentrano su sanità, lavoro, transizione ecologica, infrastrutture e digitalizzazione. Restano tuttavia criticità di spesa e rendicontazione, mentre il post-Pnrr richiederà capacità europea sulla competitività.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/pnrr-e-corsa-contro-tempo-regioni-e-comuni-completare-opere-AIQ7iC1D>

Meloni: Italia al vertice del turismo mondiale, successo che premia bellezza e qualità, Il Sole 24 Ore

L'Italia si conferma tra le principali destinazioni turistiche europee per l'estate 2026, sostenuta da un tasso di saturazione sulle Online Travel Agencies del 51,2%, superiore alla Spagna, al 42,8%, e alla Francia, al 32,9%. Il dato è accompagnato da una tariffa media di 153 euro, inferiore ai 170 euro della Spagna e ai 195 euro della Grecia, rafforzando la competitività dell'offerta nazionale. La crescita delle ricerche aeree, aumentate del 26% rispetto all'anno precedente, segnala un forte interesse internazionale, favorito anche dall'incremento della capacità aerea. Il Governo intende continuare a sostenere un comparto ritenuto strategico per l'economia, valorizzando qualità, attrattività territoriale e lavoro degli operatori.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/meloni-italia-vertice-turismo-mondiale-successo-che-premia-bellezza-e-qualita-AIFAmW1D>

International

Shipping industry still at sea as it tries to navigate to net zero, Reuters

Shipping faces a complex transition to net zero as new International Maritime Organization rules are expected to require a 30% cut in fuel greenhouse-gas

intensity by 2035 and 65% by 2040, alongside a global emissions price from 2028 if ratified. The EU has already brought shipping into its emissions trading system and introduced FuelEU Maritime requirements. Oil-based fuels still supply 99% of international shipping energy, while the sector accounts for around 3% of global emissions and could reach 5-8% by 2050 without action. Ammonia, methanol, hydrogen, biomethane, biofuels and wind-assisted propulsion are advancing, but costs, infrastructure and safety remain barriers. Near-term gains may come from efficiency measures delivering up to 15% fuel savings and wind systems reaching 20%.

<https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/decarbonizing-industries/shipping-industry-still-sea-it-tries-navigate-net-zero-2025-06-04/>

Shippers Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd begin return to Suez Canal trade route, *The Straits Times*

Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd will resume some sailings through the Suez Canal under their Gemini network after security assessments in the Red Sea, marking a cautious step towards restoring the fastest Asia-Europe maritime corridor. The route accounted for about 10% of global seaborne trade before Houthi attacks pushed most carriers around Africa's Cape of Good Hope, lengthening voyages and lifting freight rates. The companies said any further change depends on stability in the Red Sea and the absence of regional escalation. Markets reacted to the prospect of lower rates, with Maersk shares down 6.6% and Hapag-Lloyd down 3.8% in late morning trading. Analysts expect a full return by year-end could pressure freight rates and shipping earnings as new vessels enter service in 2027-2028.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/shippers-maersk-and-hapag-lloyd-begin-return-to-suez-canal-trade-route/>

FIFA 'crossed a red line' in Balogun match ban reprieve after Trump call, UEFA says, *Euronews*

FIFA's decision to suspend Folarin Balogun's automatic one-match ban for a year has triggered a major governance dispute at the World Cup, with UEFA saying the ruling crossed a red line. Under FIFA rules, a straight red card normally brings a one-game suspension that cannot be appealed by the player's team. Balogun had been due to miss the United States' last-16 match against Belgium after being sent off against Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the ban was suspended following political pressure, including a call from Donald Trump to Gianni Infantino and public intervention by Marco Rubio. Belgium is examining possible remedies, while FIFA cited Article 27 of its disciplinary code. The case raises concerns over consistency, fair play and political interference.

<https://www.euronews.com/2026/07/06/fifa-lifts-us-striker-baloguns-red-card-world-cup-suspension-after-trump-calls-infantino>

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