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, 28 July 2026

Europe

France, Germany seek grand bargain on cars and 'Made in Europe', *POLITICO*
France and Germany are negotiating a package linking stronger European industrial preferences to greater flexibility on the EU's 2035 phaseout of new combustion-engine cars. Berlin would support tighter "Made in Europe" conditions in the Industrial Accelerator Act, restricting access by non-EU "trusted partners" to procurement and subsidy schemes. Paris would, in return, consider easing the vehicle target to support manufacturers facing weak demand and large job cuts, including Volkswagen's warning of 100,000 reductions worldwide. Talks aim for agreement before the 24 September industry ministers' meeting and the 15–16 October EU summit. The bargain could attract Italy, shape EU-China trade negotiations and determine whether industrial policy reinforces European supply chains without breaching trade commitments or undermining climate objectives.
https://www.politico.eu/article/france-german-deal-eu-auto-industry-made-in-europe/

China exploits EU trade divisions as surplus pressures bloc industry, *Traders Union*
China is exploiting divisions among European governments as its trade surplus with the EU widens, increasing pressure on industrial competitiveness. The surplus reportedly rose 24 per cent year on year in the first half and reached €360 billion in 2025, exceeding China's surplus with the United States. Brussels and Beijing are consulting on trade balancing, export controls, intellectual

property and WTO reform, with an October deadline for progress. China seeks lower EU tariffs on electric vehicles and looser Dutch controls on ASML equipment, while cultivating member states and companies exposed to retaliation. Chinese investment in the UK reached nearly €85 billion by 2025, while Morocco attracted about $6 billion after the pandemic, strengthening indirect access to the EU market through regional supply chains.
https://tradersunion.com/news/financial-news/show/2793198-china-eu-trade-divisions-surplus/

Moscow-linked nuclear project in northwest Germany gets green light, *POLITICO*
Lower Saxony has authorised Framatome to manufacture Russian-designed nuclear fuel rods and assemblies at Lingen, using essential components supplied by TVEL, a subsidiary of state-controlled Rosatom. Approval follows a revised federal security assessment and imposes strict safeguards: Rosatom and TVEL staff are generally barred from the site, machinery must undergo extensive inspections, and Framatome personnel face rules designed to prevent espionage, sabotage and recruitment. The state environment minister opposed the project but concluded that federal findings left no legally defensible basis for refusal. Critics within the CDU are demanding revocation on national-security grounds. The decision highlights the EU's competing priorities of strengthening nuclear-energy capacity, reducing fossil-fuel dependence and severing strategic exposure to Russia.
https://www.politico.eu/article/moscow-linked-nuclear-project-in-northwest-germany-to-get-green-light/

Europe's AI moment: Four imperatives for business leaders *(opinion)*, *POLITICO*
The author argues that Europe must accelerate artificial-intelligence policy and investment across sovereignty, scale, security and sustainability. A hybrid sovereignty model should reserve tighter European control for the roughly one-third of corporate workloads considered sensitive, while allowing lower-risk uses to benefit from global providers. Europe must also close the AI-readiness gap between large and smaller companies, rebalance spending from infrastructure towards workforce skills, and treat training as productive capital. With 72 per cent of organisations reporting increased cyber threats but only 10 per cent adequately prepared, security must become proactive. Data-centre electricity demand could rise by 49–187 per cent by 2030, requiring smaller models, efficient infrastructure and decarbonisation. Competitiveness will ultimately depend on faster execution and enterprise-wide scaling.
https://www.politico.eu/sponsored-content/europes-ai-moment-four-imperatives-for-business-leaders/

Made by AI? EU tells firms to stick a label on it from Aug 2, *The Straits Times*
From 2 August, EU transparency rules require companies to identify AI-generated or manipulated content, including deepfakes, and ensure chatbots disclose that users are interacting with artificial intelligence. Labels may rely on watermarks or other machine-detectable markers, with substantial fines for non-compliance. The obligations cover professional content and public-interest information produced without human editorial oversight, while purely personal use and artistic, creative, satirical or fictional works are exempt. Existing AI systems have until 2 December to adapt. Major platforms already apply labels: TikTok says more than three billion items have been marked, while Meta and Google have introduced related systems. Industry representatives nevertheless warn that overlapping disclosures and regulatory complexity could confuse users rather than strengthen trust in digital information.
https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/made-by-ai-eu-tells-firms-to-stick-a-label-on-it-from-aug-2

France challenges UK participation in EU tech fund amid reset talks, *Traders Union*
France is seeking stricter terms for British participation in the Scaleup Europe Fund, despite the UK offering €150 million in seed capital. The technology equity vehicle, linked to the €96 billion Horizon Europe programme, is expected to exceed €5 billion from 2027, including €1 billion from the European Commission and further private investment. Paris wants rules ensuring that a non-EU participant does not dilute benefits for member states, particularly concerning contribution formulas, funding access and the 25 per cent withdrawal cap applied within the EU. The dispute is intertwined with broader post-Brexit negotiations on border checks, carbon-market linkage and youth mobility. It echoes failed talks over UK access to a €150 billion defence fund, showing that sectoral cooperation remains tied to political leverage.
https://tradersunion.com/news/business-wealth/show/2798215-france-uk-eu-tech-fund-dispute/

Massive wildfire prompts evacuation in the French city of Bordeaux, *AP News*
Wildfires across France and Spain have displaced more than 250,000 people, including around 70,000 in central Spain. A major blaze west of Bordeaux prompted evacuations, destroyed about 140 homes and generated its own winds, while shifting conditions threatened to drive flames towards the city. France deployed 1,400 firefighters, soldiers, at least 18 aircraft and helicopters, and a converted A400M dropping flame retardant; 1.5 million masks were also dispatched against smoke. The Tour de France’s final stage was reduced from 133 to 89 kilometres so security personnel could reinforce emergency

operations. Spain mobilised 2,600 responders and 19 aircraft. The crisis exposes growing civil-protection demands as heatwaves and climate change intensify fire behaviour.
https://apnews.com/article/europe-wildfires-france-spain-93678a31ff53fc46564b6dfd9934eae1

Italy

Infrazioni Ue dell'Italia al top da 4 anni: 80 dossier aperti, *Il Sole 24 Ore*
Le procedure d'infrazione dell'Unione europea contro l'Italia sono salite a 80 al 24 luglio, il livello più alto dal 2022: 61 riguardano violazioni del diritto Ue e 19 il mancato recepimento tempestivo di direttive. Sessantasette dossier sono ancora nella fase precontenziosa, mentre 13 hanno già raggiunto la sentenza o fasi successive. Nel confronto europeo, l'Italia risulta settima per numero di pendenze, a pari merito con la Bulgaria, dietro a Spagna, Polonia, Ungheria, Belgio, Portogallo e Grecia. L'ambiente concentra 27 casi, seguito dal lavoro con nove; energia, mobilità e trasporti, e stabilità finanziaria ne contano otto ciascuno. La legge di delegazione europea 2026 dovrà quindi accelerare l'adeguamento normativo.
https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/infrazioni-ue-dell-italia-top-4-anni-80-dossier-aperti-AJ7HqxX

Tajani: Safe, prenotati 14,9 miliardi ma ne useremo meno, *Il Sole 24 Ore*
L'Italia ha prenotato fino a 14,9 miliardi di euro attraverso Safe, lo strumento Ue che concede prestiti agevolati per la difesa, ma la quota effettivamente utilizzata sarà decisa entro fine anno e potrebbe limitarsi a 6–9 miliardi. Il Governo presenta Safe come alternativa tecnica all'emissione di BoT e CcT per finanziare spese militari già previste, mentre un eventuale aumento degli stanziamenti richiederebbe una scelta politica sullo scostamento di bilancio. La Lega rivendica il voto finale del Parlamento e nega che esista una decisione definitiva. La Commissione europea chiede chiarezza rapida, poiché occorre firmare l'accordo di prestito e, in caso di riduzione, riallocare tempestivamente le risorse disponibili.
https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/tajani-abbiamo-deciso-chiedere-safe-149-miliardi-AJzWVwX

Ex Ilva, Jindal rimane in partita: «Impegnati nell'acquisizione delle aree a caldo e a freddo», *Il Sole 24 Ore*
Jindal conferma l'interesse ad acquisire l'intero perimetro dell'ex Ilva, comprese le aree a caldo e a freddo, nonostante la Corte d'Appello di Milano abbia ordinato la chiusura dell'area a caldo entro 90 giorni per amianto ed emissioni di polveri sottili. L'operazione resta subordinata agli accordi e alla costruzione

di un nuovo forno carbon free a Taranto. Il Governo ha autorizzato altri 100 milioni di euro per garantire la continuità operativa, attingendo al prestito ponte Ue da 390 milioni; la nuova tranche si aggiunge a 149 e 100 milioni già erogati. Flacks Group propone due forni elettrici, DRI e capacità fino a 4,6 milioni di tonnellate, ma resta penalizzato da garanzie finanziarie insufficienti.
https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/ex-ilva-jindal-rimane-partita-impegnati-nell-acquisizione-aree-caldo-e-freddo-AJNTBpX

La guerra in Iran cancella due anni di recupero del potere d’acquisto, *Il Sole 24 Ore*
Quattro mesi di guerra in Iran e le tensioni nello Stretto di Hormuz hanno annullato due anni di recupero del potere d’acquisto italiano. Il divario cumulato dal 2021 tra prezzi e retribuzioni è risalito da 7 punti a gennaio a 9,7 a luglio: in cinque anni i prezzi sono aumentati del 22,7%, contro il 13% dei salari. A giugno l’inflazione ha raggiunto il 3%, trainata dagli energetici regolamentati, +9,2%, e non regolamentati, +13,3%. Nel secondo trimestre ha colpito maggiormente le famiglie a bassa spesa, con un tasso del 3,7% contro il 2,6% per quelle più abbienti. Le intenzioni d’acquisto calano del 2,7%, mentre crescono viaggi ed investimenti nell’efficienza energetica.
https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/la-guerra-iran-cancella-due-anni-recupero-potere-d-acquisto-AJ1QkJY

International

Trump finalizes new tariffs on dozens of countries, *POLITICO*
The Trump administration has imposed new tariffs of 10 or 12.5 per cent on dozens of trading partners after a five-month Section 301 investigation into forced-labour controls. Seventeen partners, including Canada, the EU, Mexico and the UK, will face 10 per cent duties, alongside ten countries that signed related agreements; 43 others, including China, Japan, South Korea and Australia, will face 12.5 per cent. Exemptions remain for coffee, North American agreement-compliant goods and products unavailable domestically, including cork and certain gemstones. The measures partly rebuild tariffs invalidated by the Supreme Court and replace a temporary 10 per cent global duty. Further investigations into industrial overcapacity, pharmaceutical pricing and other trade practices could generate additional tariffs.
https://www.politico.com/news/2026/07/23/trump-new-tariffs-dozens-of-countries-01010228

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