



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, 11 August 2026

Europe

Europe's crisis reserves weren't meant for this kind of drought, POLITICO

Europe's recurring droughts are exposing a mismatch between climate risk and EU agricultural crisis instruments designed for exceptional shocks. Czechia recorded just 32 millimetres of rain in March and April, Hungary expects harvests 10–20 per cent below its five-year average, and France its smallest maize crop in at least 25 years, down about 30 per cent. Seven central and eastern European countries want post-2028 emergency funds to cover weather losses automatically, lower the compensation trigger from one-third to one-fifth of a crop and accelerate payments. The Commission argues that even a proposed €900 million reserve would be inadequate and instead favours irrigation, water infrastructure and insurance backed by the European Investment Bank. The policy dispute centres on whether scarce EU resources should compensate recurring losses or finance structural climate adaptation.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-crisis-reserve-agriculture-drought-climate-change/>

German states suspend Sunday truck ban as low Rhine levels disrupt shipping, *Financial Times*

German states are temporarily suspending Sunday lorry restrictions as record-low Rhine levels disrupt freight and threaten industrial output. At Kaub, a critical shipping chokepoint, water levels have fallen about one-third below the previous 2018 record, forcing vessels to reduce loads and pushing freight rates close to 15-year highs. North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and Baden-Württemberg have relaxed restrictions for heavy vehicles. Inland shipping carries only about 5 per cent of German freight, but the Rhine is essential for coal, oil, minerals and chemicals. ING estimates the disruption could reduce 2026 GDP growth by 0.3 percentage points, against central-bank growth projections of around 0.5 per cent. Manufacturers including Daimler Truck and BASF are shifting logistics or warning of supply-chain disruption and possible shortages.

<https://www.ft.com/content/884d643c-15e6-474d-99ca-6bab23811c7f>

Germany's gas gamble puts Europe's winter at risk, *POLITICO*

Europe enters the winter-refilling season with unusually low gas stocks, making Germany a systemic vulnerability because it holds more than 20 per cent of EU storage capacity. EU reserves are around 58 per cent full, 16 percentage points below the five-year average, while Germany stands at roughly 47 per cent, its lowest recorded August level. The EU reduced its winter storage target from 90 to 80 per cent amid the Iran war, but one analysis projects stocks reaching only 65 per cent by November without materially higher prices. Berlin is resisting orders for state-controlled SEFE and Uniper to buy gas, arguing intervention would inflate costs. Critics favour stronger incentives or direct action as LNG dependence, Asian competition and disruption around the Strait of Hormuz increase volatility and shortage risks.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-gas-reserve-low-europe-winter-energy/>

Putin threat pushes Germany to give spies major new powers, *POLITICO*

Germany's cabinet has approved a major expansion of the BND's powers in response to Russian hybrid threats and concern over dependence on US intelligence. The reform would allow the foreign intelligence service to

conduct sabotage, offensive cyber operations and more aggressive espionage, while easing data-protection restrictions to permit greater use of AI, facial recognition and longer data retention. Active measures could include disrupting explosives, damaging hostile assets or feeding adversaries false information, provided actions are linked to an originating threat and do not endanger life. The package still requires approval by both parliamentary chambers and is intended to take effect by 2027. Berlin has also increased the BND's budget by about 26 per cent to €1.51 billion this year, signalling a major shift in Germany's post-war security doctrine.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-to-give-spies-bnd-new-powers-to-counter-russia-threat/>

Italy

Clima, l'Italia con +2 °C può perdere 74 miliardi e 960mila posti di lavoro, *Il Sole 24 Ore*

Le siccità pluriennali producono effetti economici molto più persistenti di quanto rilevato dalle statistiche ufficiali. In Italia, l'episodio 2015-2018 avrebbe ridotto la crescita del Pil pro capite di 1,45 punti percentuali, pari a circa 24,3 miliardi di euro, e comportato 330.000 posti di lavoro in meno; la siccità del 2022 avrebbe sottratto 43 miliardi al Pil. Con un riscaldamento globale di +2 °C rispetto all'era preindustriale, le perdite potenziali salirebbero a 3,99 punti percentuali, circa 74 miliardi, e 960.000 occupati. Agricoltura, manifattura ed edilizia risultano particolarmente vulnerabili, con effetti prolungati sugli investimenti. A livello europeo, la siccità 2015-2018 avrebbe causato circa 439 miliardi di perdite e 5,8 milioni di posti di lavoro in meno.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/clima-l-italia-2-c-puo-perdere-74-miliardi-e-960mila-posti-lavoro-AJLT3Rh>

Bollette, arrivano i rincari: +23% per le famiglie, +54% per le imprese, *Il Sole 24 Ore*

Nomisma Energia stima un forte aumento della spesa energetica italiana entro fine 2026, sulla base dei prezzi all'ingrosso attuali e dei rincari attesi a settembre. Per una famiglia tipo, il gas potrebbe salire a 137 centesimi al metro cubo e l'elettricità a 31,93 centesimi per kWh, determinando circa 515 euro di spesa aggiuntiva annua, pari al 23% rispetto al 2025. Considerando

anche i carburanti, stimati mediamente a 2,017 euro al litro, l'aggravio complessivo potrebbe raggiungere 876,8 euro. Per le imprese l'impatto è molto maggiore: un'azienda tipo con consumi elevati di gas ed elettricità potrebbe sostenere 572.032 euro in più, +54%. La dinamica riflette soprattutto il rincaro del gas legato alle tensioni nello Stretto di Hormuz.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/bollette-arrivano-rincari-23percento-le-famiglie-54percento-le-imprese-AJy8WPk>

Meloni back to her far-right roots, *POLITICO*

Giorgia Meloni is hardening her rhetoric on migration and security as Roberto Vannacci's National Future party gains support ahead of Italy's expected 2027 election. Following a mass migrant influx into Spain's Ceuta enclave, Rome suspended Schengen free-movement arrangements with Madrid until at least 15 August, prompting reciprocal Spanish controls. Vannacci is polling above 7 per cent, threatening Meloni's coalition arithmetic and intensifying competition over immigration, identity and security. The main substantive divide remains foreign policy: Meloni backs Ukraine, while Vannacci and the League oppose arms deliveries and higher defence spending. Italy has provided about €3 billion to Kyiv in four years and has not joined NATO's PURL arms-purchasing scheme, making geopolitical alignment potentially decisive for any future alliance.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/roberto-vannacci-rival-italy-giorgia-meloni-far-right/>

***** Supplementary information:** Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) is a procurement mechanism for providing Ukraine with military equipment from U.S. stockpiles for the current Russo-Ukraine war, and more generally, funding. The program was established in fiscal year 2022 (in July) under the aegis of the United States Department of Defense and NATO; more than twenty nations have contributed or pledged funding (Wikipedia).

Tax cuts, the family allowance and 'golden power': Vannacci's programme beyond remigration, *Il Sole 24 Ore*

Roberto Vannacci's Futuro Nazionale has published the first part of a ten-year programme combining tax cuts, economic nationalism, tougher migration rules and a revisionist foreign policy. Proposals include reducing the tax wedge and personal income tax, introducing a family quotient, raising the

cash-payment ceiling to €10,000, strengthening Golden Power and creating a sovereign investment fund. Energy policy would revive Russian gas imports and expand coal, nuclear, hydro and biomass. The movement rejects further arms for Kyiv and leaves open renegotiating or potentially exiting NATO, the EU and the euro. Migration proposals include port closures, expanded detention and repatriation, “remigration”, doubling the citizenship residence requirement to 20 years and requiring C1 Italian. Security measures include 10,000 additional prison places and lowering criminal responsibility to age 12.
<https://en.ilsole24ore.com/art/tax-cuts-family-allowance-and-golden-power-the-vannacci-programme-plus-remigration-AJLnKBk>

Migranti, perché la Germania ha riaperto il caso dublinanti con l'Italia, // Sole 24 Ore

Il nuovo Patto Ue su migrazione e asilo, in vigore dal 12 giugno, ha riaperto il contenzioso sui “dublinanti” tra Germania e Italia, confermando che la domanda di asilo resta generalmente a carico del Paese di primo ingresso. Per gli ingressi irregolari, la responsabilità passa da 12 a 20 mesi e può estendersi fino a tre anni se il richiedente si rende irreperibile; resta invece a 12 mesi per gli arrivi dopo operazioni di ricerca e soccorso. I trasferimenti diventano più rapidi tramite Eurodac e il Paese competente non può rifiutarli. Il Patto introduce inoltre compensazioni mediante assunzione di responsabilità e un meccanismo annuale di solidarietà: almeno 21.000 ricollocamenti o 420 milioni di euro. L'Italia resta sotto osservazione dopo il rifiuto delle prime 12 richieste.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/migranti-perche-germania-ha-riaperto-caso-dublinanti-l-italia-AJCNkSj>

International

Il pianeta in secca, è crisi idrica globale, // Sole 24 Ore

La crisi idrica del 2026 sta assumendo dimensione globale, con record negativi simultanei in Europa, Nord America, Corno d'Africa e Sud-Est asiatico. In Inghilterra il 71,3% del territorio è in siccità e 27 milioni di persone subiscono restrizioni; in Francia il raccolto di mais è atteso in calo del 35%, mentre il Reno ha raggiunto minimi storici, danneggiando trasporti e industria. Negli Stati Uniti, Lake Mead e Lake Powell sono rispettivamente al 27% e

22,7% della capacità. Nel Corno d'Africa, 20-26 milioni di persone necessitano di assistenza alimentare urgente. Un possibile "Super El Niño" minaccia inoltre il Mekong e le produzioni asiatiche di riso e olio di palma. La risposta richiede investimenti strutturali, cooperazione transfrontaliera e accelerazione dell'adattamento climatico.

<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/il-pianeta-secca-e-crisi-idrica-globale-AJiRByk>

US company stokes Greenland tensions by unloading drilling gear, *The Straits Times*

A US energy company has intensified political and environmental tensions in Greenland after unloading drilling equipment without prior authorisation near its east-coast exploration area. Greenland Energy holds licences issued in 2015 and 2018 that remain valid despite Greenland's 2021 moratorium on new oil exploration and extraction. It received a strong warning requiring future logistics to be approved by the mineral resources authority and still lacks the environmental and social impact studies needed for drilling, making autumn operations unlikely. More than 100 of Ittoqqortoormiit's 325 residents reportedly protested the project in July. The region may contain the equivalent of 2.35 billion barrels of oil, but policy concerns centre on wildlife, local livelihoods, Arctic environmental fragility and heightened geopolitical sensitivities surrounding continuing US interest in control of Greenland.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/us-company-stokes-greenland-tensions-by-unloading-drilling-gear>

The backlash to social media bans has already begun, *POLITICO*

Governments worldwide are increasingly restricting minors' access to social media, but evidence and legal concerns are driving a shift from blanket bans towards platform-design regulation and liability. Australia's under-16 ban, introduced in December 2025, has inspired proposals elsewhere, yet more than eight in ten Australian under-16s still reportedly use social media. Brazil instead requires platforms to reduce harms, bans targeted advertising and loot boxes for under-16s, and mandates parental controls. California has moved away from an outright ban towards disabling addictive features, while US litigation is targeting platform design and child-safety failures. In Europe, Digital Services Act enforcement is scrutinising addictive design. Policymakers increasingly face a trade-off between reducing online harms

and preserving minors' rights to information, communication and access to regulated digital spaces.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/social-media-bans-minors-global-backlash/>

New space object 'black hole star' discovered by astronomers, *The Straits Times*

Astronomers using the James Webb Space Telescope have identified a possible new class of object, a "black hole star", potentially explaining the mysterious "little red dots" observed in the early universe. MoM-BH*-1 dates from about 660 million years after the Big Bang and appears roughly the size of the solar system while producing around 100 billion times more energy than an ordinary star. Spectral analysis indicates its red colour is caused by hydrogen gas rather than dust. Because nuclear fusion cannot account for its luminosity, modelling suggests a central black hole enveloped in a dense gas cocoon that makes the system resemble a star. The object outshines its host galaxy, enabling unusually direct observation of this configuration and potentially providing a common explanation for other early-universe red sources detected by Webb.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/new-space-object-black-hole-star-discovered-by-astronomers>

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