

EUROPE DIPLOMATIC

MAGAZINE

**PRIME MINISTER
IRAKLI
GARIBASHVILI**

**GEORGIA'S
UNPREDICTABLE
FUTURE**



October 2023

N°51

3€

BRUSSELS - PARIS - GENEVA - MONACO

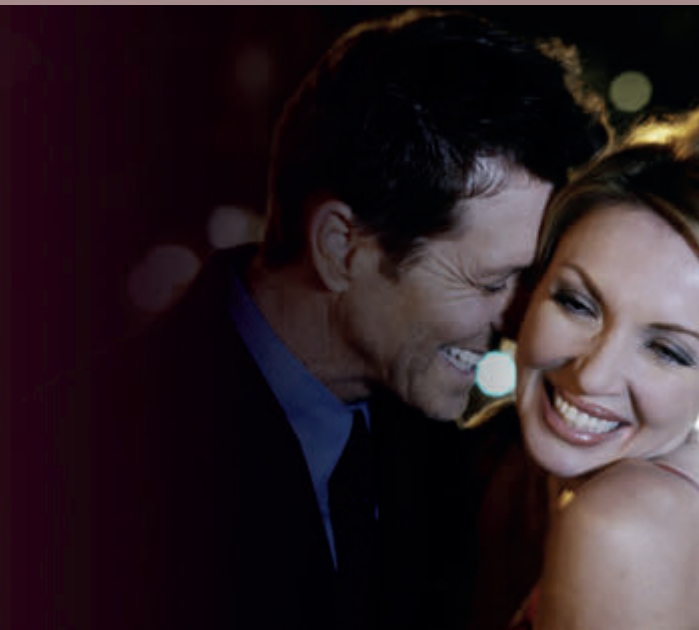


SAVVIVA

Concierge Services

EFFICIENT PERSONAL SUPPORT IN BUSY TIMES

- Personal assistance
- Private concierge
- Property management



WE ARE AT YOUR SERVICE, 24/7
CALL NOW

Experience Belgium's leading
concierge service



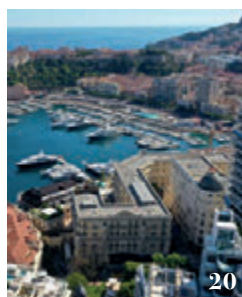
SAVVIVA

www.savviva.be | +32 2 669 07 29 | concierge@savviva.be

IN THIS ISSUE

"Europe Diplomatic Magazine" is characterized by a very open editorial line that allows it to capture all the themes that affect directly or indirectly the European political, economic, social and security issues. Whether piracy in the Gulf of Aden and its threats to the global economy, articles about political leaders, geostrategic situations or technological developments affecting our civilization, Europe Diplomatic Magazine strives to work in comparing opinions and providing an objective analysis based on extensive research. For a wide audience composed of both members of the diplomatic corps, lobbyists, international officials or academics, the magazine gives everyone the necessary and useful information about all topics that make up our daily lives. Covering sensitive issues such as nuclear, the rise of Islamism and energy dependence, the magazine opens its pages to recognized specialists who would like to express first order and exclusive information. But Europe Diplomatic Magazine is not only a source of information on recent topics. It is also addressing older facts with deep thought for further analysis. Whether it's news, security, diplomacy, technology, energy, terrorism, European affairs, no subject is treated superficially. Europe Diplomatic Magazine is an independent media, conveying balanced ideas of openness and analysis based on almost 30 years of experience in the journalistic world.

Visit our site and please
give us your comments:
<https://europe-diplomatic.eu/>
europediplomaticmagazine@gmail.com



6 GEORGIA'S UNPREDICTABLE FUTURE

Will its Prime Minister cosy up to Europe or get closer to Russia instead?

13 NEWS IN BRIEF:

From around the World

20 THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Bargaining power, dynamics and challenges

28 MORE THAN CUCUMBERS

How the British Museum stole its exhibits "for the good of the nation" - and won't (or can't) give them back

36 EU FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Limited impact so far

38 UNDER LOCK AND KEY

The truth about the prison systems of Europe

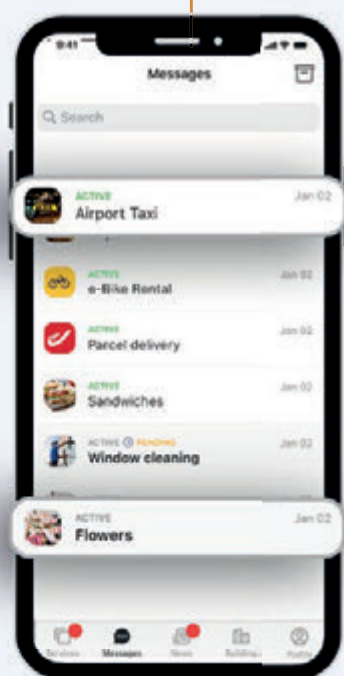
44 THE SOFT POWER POLITICS OF UKRAINE

49 TIMELESS CHIC



Bring Your Building To Life.

Assistance — Services — Community — Information —



Your **all-in-one digital service platform** for your building and community.

Download and Contact Us For a Demo Code

✉ info@asknestor.com

☎ +32 2 669 07 29

🌐 asknestor.com





Nikola Hendrickx

GEORGIA'S UNPREDICTABLE FUTURE

**Will its Prime
Minister cosy up
to Europe or get
closer to Russia
instead?**

Special Operations Forces of Georgia

Irakli Garibashvili is not a name that rolls off the tongue. It's not one that sits comfortably alongside those of, for example, Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Julius Caesar, or William the Conqueror, for instance. But does that matter? He told the media in 2013 that he had sold his assets in Russia "at market price" and he has tried to place distance between himself and the Kremlin, something that probably helped to propel him into the position of Prime Minister of Georgia. There is concern, though, that he may have been able to do that more easily than most people expected because he strictly observes the rules set by Russia, whose own leader has shown staggering incompetence in his decision-making. Indeed, based on what Vladimir Putin has shown the world of his leadership qualities, he would seem to be unsuited to running a small-town sweet shop. In any case, he would probably poison the sweets because he seems to relish killing people, whether or not there is any obvious reason for it. Perhaps he sees it more as a hobby, or maybe he's a participant in some sort of bargain killing game: poison two, stab one for free. He might even be amusing if he wasn't quite so sinister.



Eduard Shevardnadze was a Soviet and Georgian politician and diplomat who governed Georgia for several non-consecutive periods from 1972 until his resignation in 2003

So, what do we really know about Irakli Garibashvili? Although he is now a serious and successful politician, he had also been a business executive, who then served as prime minister from 20 November 2013 until he resigned the post in December 2015, without explaining why. He is a member of the Georgian Dream party. In the past, Georgia has had some dubious leaders who were not much liked in the West, such as Eduard Shevardnadze, who had been a member of the Soviet Politburo, having been appointed to that post by Mikhail Gorbachev. He did a good job, however, successfully extracting Soviet troops from Afghanistan, for instance, and fighting successfully against organised crime, which had long been an issue in the Soviet Union. That may

have been what lay behind an assassination attempt in 1995. It wasn't the only problem to face Shevardnadze: there was also a failing economy and allegations of corruption, which eventually led to his resignation.



Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell Fontelles

Which brings us back to Irakli Garibashvili, the man at the centre of this article and a man seen by many as Georgia's greatest hope for a positive future. That may prove to be wishful thinking. He has not pleased the West and has shown himself to be still very much under Moscow's influence. He has publicly accused Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of seeking to interfere in Georgian politics, a charge he strongly denies. Georgia had been seeking to introduce a new law to restrict the activities of "foreign agents", an idea the Georgian parliament has since scrapped. The proposed law was based very much on one that had existed in Russia under the Soviets, preventing other countries from commenting on the country's internal affairs, so opposition to the proposal was praised by Ukraine, especially as some of the protestors were waving Ukrainian flags. Garibashvili claimed that Ukraine was trying to drag his country into its war with Russia. His comments drew rapid criticism from Ukraine itself, which accused Garibashvili of repeating Russian propaganda. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Oleh Nikolenko was highly critical. "We categorically reject such claims, which have nothing to do with reality," he said. "The Georgian authorities are looking for an enemy in the wrong place. Ukraine has been and will remain a friend of the Georgian people." Indeed, it's hard to understand Garibashvili's motives in taking such a strong line over something he has said doesn't matter, especially since opinion polls in Georgia suggest that most Georgians are strongly pro-Ukraine. Both countries aspire to join the EU one day, but on the present evidence it would appear that Georgia will find that harder. At a meeting of the European Council in 2022, the EU acknowledged that Georgia has carried out a number of challenging reforms and successfully aligned its legislation with the EU acquis in many sectors. It did, however express important concerns over the lack of substantial progress and negative developments in some key areas during the previous year. "The EU encouraged Georgia to redouble its efforts to further consolidate democracy and to reduce the political polarisation, to strengthen the rule of law, the independence, integrity and accountability of the judiciary and the fight against corruption," said the Council report.

Give us back our bits of Country

Of course, Russia's aggressive stance towards its neighbouring states inevitably draws criticism from the West. Six Western nations on the United Nations Security Council have demanded that Russia return territory it took from Georgia on the 15th anniversary of the land grab happening. There was a joint statement to that effect signed by the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, Malta and Albania, which described Russia's seizure of South Ossetia and the Abkhazia region – which had made up 20% of Georgian territory – as “an aggressive trend”. They all pledged to continue their efforts to ensure Georgia's independence by getting Russia to return the stolen land and recognising the internationally acknowledged borders. Internal affairs in Georgia have not been wholly peaceful, with secessionist movements starting up in some regions, especially Abkhazia and South Ossetia, although when Abkhazia reinstated its 1925 constitution and declared independence, the international community refused to recognise it. After flirting with an association of other former Soviet states, Georgia later signed an Association Agreement with the European Union and joined the Council of Europe and the World Trade Organisation. It also became a partner in NATO, which can't have pleased Moscow. Russia, while fighting a pointless war in Ukraine that it began without provocation, is also seeking to absorb Belarus (not difficult, I should think), Georgia and Moldova. Well, we all have ambitions.



Russian troops during the 2008 invasion of South Ossetia



Russian Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu and his South Ossetian counterpart Lieutenant General Ibrahim Gassev signing an agreement in 2017 on integrating a part of South Ossetia's army into the Russian Armed Forces

However, Georgia continues to get closer to NATO, it seems, even if Garibashvili has his doubts. In 2020, a thorough review was conducted by NATO together with the Georgian foreign affairs, defence and interior ministries, as well as with the Georgian Defence Forces and the Coast Guard. This review led to an upgraded Substantial NATO-Georgia Package, which was endorsed by foreign ministers in December 2020.



The Russian Satan II missile has a range of between 10,000 and 20,000 kilometres and can carry up to 15 nuclear warheads to anywhere in the world

Basically, Putin is the school playground bully. He boasts of having more weapons, bigger, more powerful, in fact of no earthly use to humankind other than to exterminate large chunks of it. His latest nuclear device is known as the Sarmat, or Satan II, and it has a range of between 10,000 and 20,000 kilometres while carrying up to 15 nuclear warheads to anywhere in the world. A successful test launch in 2022 led Putin to boast that Russia's enemies would “have to think twice” before issuing threats. But of course, the only country issuing threats is Russia and even Putin isn't crazy enough to threaten himself. Probably.

We must remember, however, that Belarus, Georgia and Moldova were once part of the Russian hegemony, and Putin wants them back within the fold. The more of the world's territory he controls (without giving the residents any say in the matter) the happier he seems to be. Putin appears to fear that some of the former Soviet states he has in his sights may decide they would prefer democracy to being told what to do and what to think by Moscow. It's a great shame: Moscow is a very handsome city that still carries echoes of the glories it once enjoyed. Moscow's world view bears little resemblance to what we believe in the West. For instance, the demand of six Western countries that Russia should give back (or withdraw its claim upon) parts of Georgia has been dismissed as “hypocrisy”, arguing that Georgia only lost territory because of “a reckless gamble”. We must remember that this is a shooting war we're talking about, not a board game for children. Russian Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyansky boasted that relations between Russia and Georgia are improving – a sign of things to come, in his

view – with direct flights being resumed between the two countries, despite – as he put it – “the Russophobic West trying to drive a wedge between us at any price.” Really?

Clearly he doesn't think his country's eagerness to invade any country that takes its fancy and that appears not to favour a Russian takeover of power is likely to put Russia's neighbours off seeking closer links.



Dmitry Polyansky

Georgia's prime minister has assured other European countries that he still sees his country's future inside the European Union. “Our country's path to the EU is irreversible,” he told the media. “In this way, some provocative groups will try to harm our country. Of course, it won't stop us. We will overcome these provocations and we will achieve our common great goal, which is our country's membership in the European Union”, Garibashvili said, referencing a few negative comments about Georgia's European future highlighted on Russian media. Jeffrey Mankoff, a senior research fellow at the US National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies has recently pointed out how determined Putin is to impose his own imperialist stamp on world affairs. “While Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine dominates headlines and diplomatic conversations around the world,” he wrote, “a quieter Kremlin effort to consolidate effective hegemony over neighbouring Belarus, Georgia and Moldova continues apace.” Mankoff explains the thinking behind this unprovoked war where Minsk, Tbilisi and Chişinău are concerned: “Like Ukraine, these three states are former Russian possessions whose post-Soviet independence exacerbated Moscow's isolation from Europe. President Vladimir Putin and other Russian officials fear that democratic governments in Minsk, Tbilisi and Chişinău (not to mention Kyiv) will be more pro-Western and seek deeper integration both with the European Union and NATO.”

1 Whose friend are you?

There are concerns within NATO that Georgia could be Moscow's next target. Putin has an unusual approach to foreign relations: if he doesn't like what's happening on the ground, he sends his troops to change it by force. In a way, NATO has played into his hand by failing to reward Georgia for its support. There is still not a viable time frame for membership or even embarking upon a route towards it. According to Kornely Kakachia, the director of the Georgian Institute of Politics, this has led to what he told DW has turned into “NATO fatigue.” He went on: “Georgia was the first victim of a Russian invasion, one of the front-runners in NATO missions like Iraq and Afghanistan, where it sacrificed its soldiers. Georgia was waiting for NATO to reward that.” It's still waiting. Meanwhile, Garibashvili told the Global Security Conference in Bratislava that the reasons for Russia's invasion of Ukraine are plain to see: NATO's enlargement. “Therefore, we see the consequences,” he said. I'm inclined to think that his view is not fully compatible with Western thinking. Of course, he could be simply hedging his bets. But the comment led to a backlash. “It is hard to imagine NATO embracing a country whose prime minister, echoing Putin's rhetoric, blames the Alliance for the war in Ukraine,” wrote Nata Koridze, a former diplomat who worked closely with NATO for a Georgian media platform, Civil.ge. One is left to ask the question: how many people have got to die just to satisfy Putin's vanity?



Map of Georgia showing the border with Russia, as well as the disputed Abkhazian and South Ossetian sections

For Georgia, the whole issue of relations with Russia is difficult. After all, there is a land border between the two countries. They fought a war in 2008 which ended with Russia deciding to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russian troops are still stationed in both. Some believe it's that border that causes the greatest problem. Another issue is that a country that hosts an extant war in its territory cannot join the alliance. But outside observers have noted how a friendship between Moscow and Tbilisi seems to be deepening, which does not find favour in NATO. At a meeting of NATO's Military Committee in early 2023, the Committee chair, Admiral Robert Bauer, welcomed Georgia's representative, Brigadier General Irakli Dzeladze, pointing out that “NATO and Georgia have been Partners for almost 30 years, and over that time we have built a mutually beneficial cooperation that has both enriched and

solidified our partnership”. Does that still count for much in today’s convoluted international politics scene? Only time will tell, and it may depend on just how nifty NATO’s footwork proves to be. The problem is that NATO tends to dance in delicate steps while Putin’s Russia marches in wearing military boots and shoots those it doesn’t like the look of. Brigadier General Dzeladze gave assurances of Georgia’s commitment, which were welcomed by Admiral Bauer, who noted that “Georgia has been a long-time and steadfast partner as well as a reliable force contributor to various NATO operations.” NATO heads of state and government representatives agreed at NATO’s Madrid summit to: “step up political and practical support for these specific partners, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.”



© NATO
Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at NATO Headquarters on April 2023

As for Russia? Well, Moscow will not smile upon a further expansion of NATO, which is the excuse it uses for invading Ukraine. Georgia, however, has some work to do to prepare itself for NATO membership, if it seriously still wants it. Russia, meanwhile, is demanding assurances from NATO and Washington that neither Ukraine nor Georgia will be allowed to join the Alliance. But Javier Colomina, NATO’s special representative for the South Caucasus, has made it clear to Moscow that NATO’s “Open Door” policy is not up for negotiation. “We’ve been extremely clear with the Russians: We won’t compromise on our basic principles,” Colomina said. “We won’t compromise on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine or Georgia. I think it’s 100 percent clear from NATO that we won’t compromise on our open-door policy.”



© MARIAM NIKURADZE/OC MEDIA
A demonstrations in support of Georgia’s EU membership in Tbilisi, Georgia

Colomina made clear to Georgia that it should take steps now to prepare for NATO membership, even if that remains some way in the future. It won’t be easy, and that is largely Russia’s fault. The reason Moscow keeps troops in the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is to prevent Georgia from being admitted to the Alliance: no country can join if wars are going on in its territory. So-called “frozen conflicts” suit Moscow’s purposes very well, and clearly Putin doesn’t care how many Georgians are killed in the process.

Georgia has a number of violent far-right groups that certainly don’t help it towards its stated goal of EU membership. A Gay Pride march was cancelled after violent attacks on journalists following comments by Prime Minister Garibashvili claiming that 95% of the population are opposed to gay rights and that only the military have the right to stage a march at all. Within 24 hours, a cameraman covering the violence had been killed by a far-right mob. Garibashvili may claim his country’s path towards the EU is “irreversible” but his illiberal words don’t suggest that he believes it himself. It may be no more than a sign of how far-right thinking is moving back into the political mainstream, now that so few people are left who remember where it led the last time. Germany’s far-right party, which seems to have growing support, wants the country to abandon the euro in favour of the Deutschmark and also to quit the EU altogether. If the growth of such beliefs is what Garibashvili is counting on, it bodes ill for Europe’s future.



© EUROPEA EU
Georgia’s president Salomé Zourabichvili and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

The future for Georgia is very hard to predict. It seems to lean politically in two very different directions, one of them quite favourable towards Russia and its murderous leader. Of course, NATO needs Georgia to keep the peace in the region, but with two frozen conflicts on its territory it’s hard to see things turning out to NATO’s liking.

There is disagreement over joining the EU, too, despite what Garibashvili has said. Georgia's president, Salome Zourabichvili visited Berlin and Brussels for private talks with EU leaders and the Georgian government is now trying to impeach her for it, saying she had "flagrantly violated" the constitution. For a country supposedly keen to join, it's an odd approach. She has claimed that the ruling Georgian Dream political party is pro-Russian and insufficiently committed to joining either the EU or NATO, which frequent opinion polls have shown to be what most Georgians want.

Former Georgian Defence Minister Davit Kezerashvili accused the Georgian government of being both high-handed and out of touch with what the Georgian people want. "Opinion polls have consistently shown that ordinary Georgians overwhelmingly favour EU and NATO membership," he said. "Sadly, the authoritarian actions of the current Tbilisi government are derailing those ambitions, and Georgia appears to be slowly drifting back into the Kremlin's grip."



Former Georgian Defence Minister Davit Kezerashvili

After meeting Zourabichvili, Charles Michel, President of the EU Council, reaffirmed the EU's determination to assist Georgia in its bid to become a full candidate for EU membership. Thomas de Waal, a senior fellow at the think-tank Carnegie Europe, described what he called the "slide away from democracy" as "alarming" and said it was complicating the country's efforts to join Moldova and Ukraine as EU accession candidates. After meeting with Zourabichvili in Brussels, Michel reaffirmed the EU's commitment to supporting Georgia in advancing to candidacy status, and he repeated earlier EU observations that the country needed to pursue reforms in "justice, deoligarchisation (an interesting new word to me) and anti-corruption and media pluralism".



An anti LGBTQ+ demonstration in Tbilisi

De Waal noted that the government had banned the entry of high-level critics of Russia to Georgia, which sounds like a restriction on freedom of speech, while the prime minister, Irakli Garibashvili, had accused those who urge more support for Ukraine of being a "party of war", although it's Russia's tanks that are rolling across Ukraine and Russian missiles and drones that are destroying homes, schools and hospitals. Despite the actions of far-right extremists, research suggests (as I've said) that most Georgians favour a future that is European in flavour and in freedoms, but the Georgian government seems to have a contrary approach. In terms of the propaganda war, in Georgia's case Russia would seem to be winning.

The illiberal side of any debate on human rights would also seem to be leading the field. Kicking off a sitting of government, Irakli Garibashvili said it is "the opinion of our population" that Gay Pride marches should not be allowed to go ahead in Georgia," he said, before entering into a bizarre debate on semantics. "I know only one parade – the parade of our army, which will be held in our country," he said, although he has welcomed marches in support of his political party. "When 95 per cent of our population demonstratively opposes the propagandistic parade, we must all obey it," he continued, albeit without any sort of plebiscite or sign that most people share his views.

With no proof whatever, he continued: "This is the opinion of our people and we as a government elected by the people must obey it. Police arrested the perpetrators. We will hold all the perpetrators accountable." It's hard to believe that he really wants to see Georgia as a member of NATO or the EU. His rhetoric seems geared more towards keeping Moscow happy.

There are, of course, many different views where Gay Pride is concerned, but it seems hard to see street violence as a matter of policy. Garibashvili's certainty that a large majority want to see it stamped out is without any proof whatever. It may well be (and almost certainly is) that most people are not homosexual and would not indulge in its practices, but that's a long way short of supporting thuggish violence against those who are that way inclined. For most people, I think, a person's sexual orientation is of very little concern, if any, and unlikely to affect how they work. It's easy to see why NATO and the EU support Georgia for wanting to join them in policy terms: the more the merrier, as they say. Whether or not Georgia will live up to its promise is another matter entirely, the outcome far less certain in the longer term.

Jim Gibbons

Jim.Gibbons@europe-diplomatic.eu

NEWS IN BRIEF

GERMANY SIGNS THE ARTEMIS ACCORDS

International consortium for peaceful space exploration gains a strong new partner



© NASA/KEGAN BARBER
Director General of the German Space Agency at the German Aerospace Center (DLR) Walther Pelzer signing the Artemis Accords, on September 14, 2023, at the German Ambassador's Residence in Washington. Germany

The Moon and Mars are the next big topics for exploration in the coming years. The USA is preparing the next steps towards the Moon and Mars with its Artemis programme. In order to become part of this important stage in space history, Member of the DLR Executive Board and Director General of the German Space Agency at the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt; DLR), Walther Pelzer signed the Artemis Accords on behalf of Germany. He was accompanied by NASA Administrator Bill Nelson and NASA Deputy Administrator Pam Melroy, Executive Secretary of the U.S. National Space Council Chirag Parikh, the German Federal Government Coordinator of German Aerospace Policy at the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action, Anna Christmann, and the German Ambassador to the USA, Andreas Michaelis. The Federal Republic of Germany has thus become the 29th signatory to this initiative, which is being led by the United States. The Artemis Accords formulate principles for cooperation in the civilian exploration and use of the Moon, Mars, comets and asteroids for peaceful purposes.

“Germany and the United States have been successful partners in space for a long time. For example, German companies in the space sector are already central contributing to the Artemis programme. The German signing of the Artemis Accords gives a further boost to this joint endeavour to carry out programmes for the exploration of space. Thus, the Artemis Accords offer a multitude of new opportunities for industry and scientific research in Germany – and ultimately also across Europe,” explained Walther Pelzer on the occasion of the signing in Washington.

Long history of successful international cooperation

“I’m thrilled to welcome Germany to the Artemis Accords family!” said NASA Administrator Bill Nelson. “Germany has long been one of NASA’s closest and most capable international partners, and their signing today demonstrates their leadership now and into the future – a future defined by limitless possibilities in space and the promise of goodwill here on Earth.”

Political foundation for the peaceful exploration of space

Germany has a long history of successful international cooperation in scientific research and space exploration for peaceful purposes – both as a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) and more widely with its other international partners. In the spirit of this ongoing cooperation, the signing of the Artemis Accords by the German Space Agency at DLR strengthens the common goal of DLR and its international partners to pursue programmes for crewed and robotic exploration of space. The declaration of principles lays the political foundation for the peaceful, responsible and sustainable exploration of space within the framework of the Artemis programme. In particular, it reaffirms the importance of the universal framework established by the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and the commitment to establish international rules and regulations in accordance with international law through a comprehensive multilateral approach. Germany will continue to advocate for the development of a binding international legal framework for activities on celestial bodies based on the United Nations (UN) Outer Space Treaties in the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), the central forum for the further development of international space law. The German signature of the Artemis Accords extends and deepens these close partnerships in space. Participation in the Artemis Accords therefore includes an exchange of ideas between the Artemis partners to strengthen the application of the UN Space Treaties in the context of activities on celestial bodies. This new partnership further advances Germany’s efforts in space diplomacy, which is strongly based on promoting international cooperation in civilian science and technology with all spacefaring nations.

DEUCALION: A NEW EUROHPC SUPERCOMPUTER

Deucalion, the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking supercomputer located in Portugal, is now operational at the University of Minho in Guimarães.

Deucalion is a petascale system capable of executing more than 10 petaflops or 10 million billion calculations per second, supplied by Fujitsu Technology Solutions. Deucalion is a

unique EuroHPC supercomputer combining ARM A64FX processors and the Bull Sequana technology provided by Eviden, the Atos-owned business in advanced computing. This makes Deucalion the first EuroHPC supercomputer based on ARM processors, thus paving the way for the European Processor Initiative (EPI) which aims to develop European energy-efficient microprocessors and accelerators.

Deucalion is the most powerful supercomputer in Portugal. Its computing capabilities will be made available to users in Portugal and throughout Europe, providing them with access to a new design that enriches the diverse and complementary set of computing architectures already made available by the EuroHPC systems.

Deucalion's architecture makes it perfect to be used to advance research and development in a wide range of domains, for example in meteorology and climate modelling, fluid dynamics and aerodynamics, astrophysics and cosmology, as well as technologies aiming to improve energy efficiency of computing infrastructures. It will also boost innovation in domains such as artificial intelligence, personalised medicine, pharmaceutical/medicine design and new materials, firefighting, territorial planning, but also smart mobility and autonomous vehicles.

Deucalion is co-funded with a total budget of EUR 20 million from EuroHPC JU and FCT (the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology). Access to the computing resources of the new machine will be jointly managed by FCT and EuroHPC JU in proportion to their investments.

The supercomputer is hosted by the Minho Advanced Computing Centre (MACC) at the University of Minho, on the Azurém Campus in Guimarães, Portugal.



© FCT

VINCENT JAMIN APPOINTED ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR OF EUROJUST

The College of Eurojust appointed Mr Vincent Jamin as new Administrative Director of the Agency today. Mr Jamin is a French prosecutor by profession. He brings with him 25 years of experience in the area of criminal justice, ranging from assignments in the French Ministry of Justice (2003-2010) to several high-level positions at Eurojust since 2010. Before becoming Administrative Director of Eurojust, he served as the head of the Agency's Operations Department since 2018.



© EUROJUST

Vincent Jamin

As the Administrative Director of the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, Mr Jamin is responsible for the day-to-day administration and implementation of key organisational developments, such as the recent extension of Eurojust's mandate and its comprehensive digitalisation efforts. He will take up his duties on 1 October 2023, serving a term of four years.

Eurojust is the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, a specialised hub providing tailor-made support to prosecutors and judges from across the EU and beyond to effectively tackle serious cross-border crime.

EU COURT REJECTS CASE OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN CLAIM AGAINST FRONTEx

A group of Syrian refugees who fled to Greece in 2016 were hoping to find safety and protection. But instead, they were sent back to Türkiye by a joint operation of Frontex and Greece, without having their asylum claims examined. They then had to risk their lives again to reach Iraq, where they have been living ever since.

They blamed Frontex, the EU agency that helps Member States manage their borders, for violating their fundamental rights and causing them harm. They sued Frontex for compensation, demanding more than € 136 000 for their losses and suffering.



But on 6 September, the EU General Court dismissed their case, saying that Frontex was not responsible for their fate. The court said that Frontex only provided technical and operational support to the Member States, but did not have the power to decide who should be returned or who should be granted asylum. The court also said that the refugees did not prove that Frontex's actions directly caused their damage, as there were other factors involved.

However, the refugees claim that they suffered damage because of Frontex's actions. They say that they had to pay for housing and furniture in Türkiye, for smugglers to take them to Iraq, and for living expenses there. They also say that they felt scared and hurt by their hard and dangerous trip to Iraq. But the court does not think that these damages came directly from what Frontex did. The court says that the refugees did not show enough proof that there was a clear connection between the damage they claim and the actions Frontex is accused of.

Frontex does not have the authority to decide who should be returned or who should be granted asylum. Therefore, it cannot be blamed for any harm caused by the return of those refugees to Türkiye.

UK GOVERNMENT GIVES HORNSEA PROJECT FOUR OFFSHORE WIND FARM THE GO-AHEAD



Hornsea One is the largest offshore wind farm in the world and produces enough energy to power well over one million homes. Number of turbines: 174 Capacity: 1.2 GW

The Hornsea Project Four Offshore Wind Farm application has been granted development consent by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

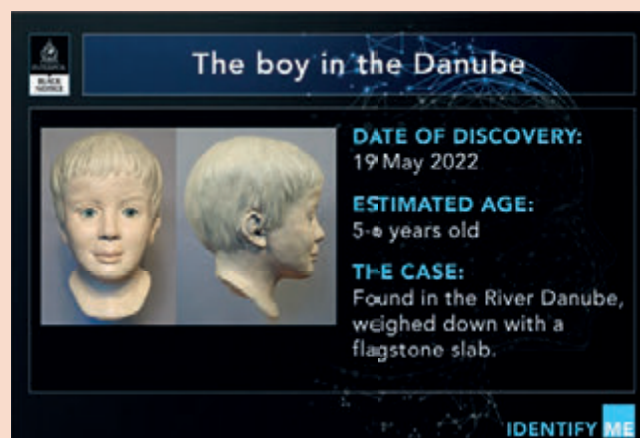
The application involves the development of the Hornsea Project Four offshore wind farm. This is within the western area of the former Hornsea known as Zone 4, under the Round 3 offshore wind licensing arrangements established by The Crown Estate.

Hornsea 4 is an offshore wind farm which the Danish company Ørsted is proposing to develop in the North Sea, approximately 69km off the Yorkshire Coast.

The Hornsea Projects are four record-breaking offshore wind farms which Ørsted are operating, constructing and developing off the East Coast in the North Sea.

These wind farms are a new generation of offshore power stations; further from the coastline than ever before, and at a scale which is a step-change in size from current wind farms.

INTERNATIONAL APPEAL TO IDENTIFY DEAD CHILD IN GERMANY



German police and INTERPOL are seeking the public's help in identifying a deceased boy and to determine the suspicious circumstances surrounding his death.

The child's remains were discovered on 19 May 2022 in the River Danube near Grossmehring in Bavaria, Germany, weighed down with a flagstone slab and wrapped in foil. It is not known how long the body was in the water.

The boy is thought to be aged between five and six. He was approximately 110 cm tall and 15kg, with brown hair and blood type 0.

The results of investigations indicate that he likely spent time outside of Germany.

To widen the investigation's reach, and at the request of German authorities, INTERPOL has circulated a Black Notice to the Organization's 195 member countries.

Black Notices are international alerts used to gather information and intelligence on unidentified bodies.

As part of the public appeal to identify the boy, key details of the Black Notice are now being shared, including facial reconstruction images and physical characteristics.

"Through this Black Notice, INTERPOL is calling upon the global law enforcement community to cross-check databases and consult open or unsolved cases," said Jürgen Stock, INTERPOL Secretary General.

"Someone, somewhere knows something about this boy, making it equally important to release certain details publicly. Whether he was the victim of trafficking, abduction or violence, we are committed to mobilizing all of INTERPOL's policing capabilities to identify him and help investigators shed light on his death."

Members of the public, particularly those who remember a missing child whose characteristics and disappearance indicate a potential link to this case, are invited to contact the national police team in Germany should they have any information.

Since 2021, INTERPOL has been providing investigators with the I-Familia database, a global tool which helps identify unknown bodies through international family DNA kinship matching. For biological relatives who believe the boy could be a member of their family, national police once contacted can liaise with INTERPOL for international DNA comparison.

The case falls under the framework of the Identify Me programme and the public release of information contained in Black Notices to help unlock 'cold cases'. Identify Me was

first launched in May of this year in connection with on-going efforts to identify 22 suspected female murder victims, with more than 500 messages and tips received from the public.

<https://www.interpol.int/en/Contacts/Contact-the-national-police-team-in-Germany>

IRAN ADMONISHED BY THE UN NUCLEAR AGENCY FOR PREVENTING SEVERAL INSPECTORS FROM CHECKING ON ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM



IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi

The tough declaration was made in the midst of long-standing animosities between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is in charge of overseeing Iran's nuclear program, which Western countries have long thought is intended to eventually create a nuclear weapon. Iran maintains that the program is peaceful.

IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi, said :

"The Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran), informed me of its decision to withdraw the designation of several experienced Agency inspectors assigned to conduct verification activities in Iran under the NPT Safeguards Agreement. This follows a previous recent withdrawal of the designation of another experienced Agency inspector for Iran.

These inspectors are among the most experienced Agency experts with unique knowledge in enrichment technology. They have conducted essential verification work at the enrichment facilities in Iran which are under Agency safeguards. »

« I strongly condemn this disproportionate and unprecedented unilateral measure which affects the normal planning and conduct of Agency verification activities in Iran and openly contradicts the cooperation that should exist between the Agency and Iran. »

The Governments of the France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States also released a statement :

« In direct response to Iran's consistent and severe non-compliance with its JCPoA commitments since 2019, the governments of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom

intend to maintain nuclear proliferation-related measures on Iran, as well as arms and missile embargoes, after JCPoA Transition Day on 18 October 2023. We have jointly notified the JCPoA Coordinator in that regard.

This decision is fully compliant with the JCPoA. It follows our attempts to resolve Iran's non-compliance through the JCPoA's Dispute Resolution Mechanism which we triggered in January 2020. Iran has refused opportunities to return to the JCPoA twice and has continued to expand its programme beyond JCPoA limitations and without any credible civilian justification. Its enriched uranium stockpile stands at more than 18 times the amount permitted under the JCPoA.

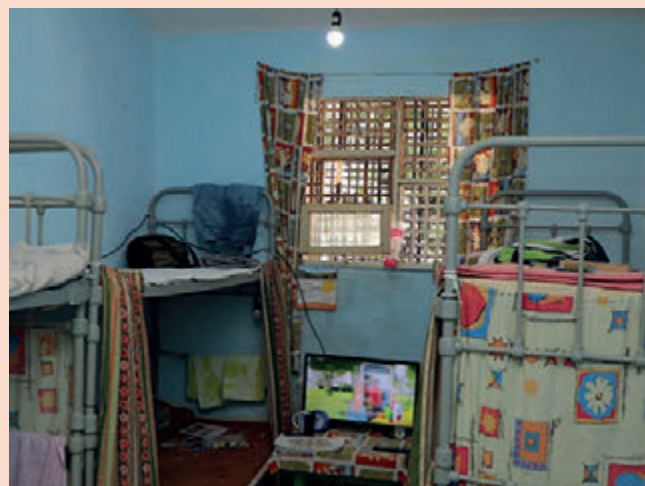
Our commitment to finding a diplomatic solution remains. This decision does not amount to imposing additional sanctions nor to triggering the snapback mechanism. We stand ready to reverse our decision, should Iran fully implement its JCPoA commitments.

ANTI-TORTURE COMMITTEE URGES MOLDOVA TO ADDRESS PERSISTENCE OF INFORMAL PRISONER HIERARCHIES AND INTER-PRISONER VIOLENCE

In a new report the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) calls upon the Moldovan authorities to take resolute action, without delay, to tackle the phenomenon of informal prisoner hierarchy and inter-prisoner violence and intimidation throughout the prison system, which they have failed to address over the years. (See the executive summary)

The report contains the findings of a visit carried out to the Republic of Moldova in December 2022 to re-examine the treatment and conditions of detention of persons held in prison.

The report highlights that the phenomenon of informal prisoner hierarchy and the resulting inter-prisoner violence and intimidation remains largely unaddressed and prisons still generally fail to ensure a safe environment for incarcerated persons. Once again, a high number of persons held in prison described to the CPT delegation the overall atmosphere of intimidation and violence created by the informal prison leaders and their close circles.



Women's prison cell in Moldova

The situation of persons considered to be “humiliated” or “untouchable”, that is, those on the lowest “caste” of the informal prisoner hierarchy, remains a matter of serious concern. The CPT considers that it could be considered to constitute a continuing violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Further, the delegation observed a strikingly uneven distribution of prisoners within the establishments visited, a situation closely linked with the phenomenon of informal prisoner hierarchy; certain privileged prisoners were dwelling in spacious rooms or even small flats consisting of several rooms, with abundant equipment. The CPT recommends that prisoners be fairly distributed in cells and dormitories and be provided at least 4 m² of living space per person.

The report has been made public under the automatic publication procedure introduced by the Moldovan authorities.

MBDA'S SPEAR-EW MOVES TO THE NEXT STAGE



The SPEAR-EW

MBDA, the multi-national European group and world-leader in the field of complex weapon systems has received additional funding from the UK Ministry of Defence to accelerate the development of the SPEAR-EW stand-in jammer.

SPEAR-EW is a novel electronic warfare effector designed to confuse and suppress enemy air defence, protecting friendly forces and acting as a significant force multiplier.

The additional Rapid Design Phase funding will accelerate SPEAR-EW's development, maturing all its key sub-systems, and perform mission and planning evaluation.

Chris Allam, Managing Director of MBDA UK, said: *“SPEAR-EW will be a true game-changer for the suppression and defeat of enemy air defences. As we have seen lately, air defence networks are exceptionally hard to operate against with today's toolkit: SPEAR-EW is the key that will enable allied air forces to unlock this challenge and gain air superiority”.*

Dean Pask, Spear Senior Responsible Owner at the MOD, commented on the commitment: *“By embracing collaborative partnering, agile methods, and strategic technology, we are steadfastly dedicated to ensuring that our front line commands receive critical capabilities in the most effective and efficient manner possible”.*

The weapon's electronic warfare payload is being developed by Leonardo and utilises the company's Digital Radio Frequency Memory (DRFM) technology. This technology is mature, was proven effective in trials and will deliver the advanced sensing and electronic attack capabilities of SPEAR-EW. Operators will be able to use SPEAR-EW to jam enemy radar systems as well as deliver more subtle electronic warfare effects such as creating decoy targets to draw the attention of threat systems away from crewed aircraft or effectors.

Iain Bancroft, SVP Electronic Warfare at Leonardo UK, said: *“SPEAR-EW will incorporate a world-class electronic warfare payload, designed and manufactured here in Luton, UK. Based on our experience providing on-board jamming capabilities for the Eurofighter Typhoon and, more recently, off-board jamming in the form of our BriteCloud expendable active decoy, our technology can reliably beat current threats while remaining adaptable for the threats of the future”.*

SPEAR-EW utilises the same airframe as MBDA's SPEAR miniature cruise missile being manufactured for the Royal Air Force. This commonality has reduced the development costs for SPEAR-EW and is also enabling a joint integration/launcher solution, reducing logistics burden and offering a high load-out potential.

UNODC: METHAMPHETAMINE TRAFFICKING IN AND AROUND AFGHANISTAN EXPANDING RAPIDLY AS HEROIN TRADE SLOWS

Methamphetamine trafficking in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries is surging, with a drastic, nearly twelvefold increase in seizures of the drug in five years from 2.5 tons in 2017 to 29.7 tons in 2021, according to a report published today by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

UNODC findings further suggest that heroin trafficking has continued, although at a lower rate, after the Taliban returned to power in August 2021 and introduced a drug ban in April 2022. Methamphetamine trafficking, however, has intensified since the ban, indicating a rapid expansion of the drug's manufacture and a possible reshaping of illicit drug markets long dominated by Afghan opiates.

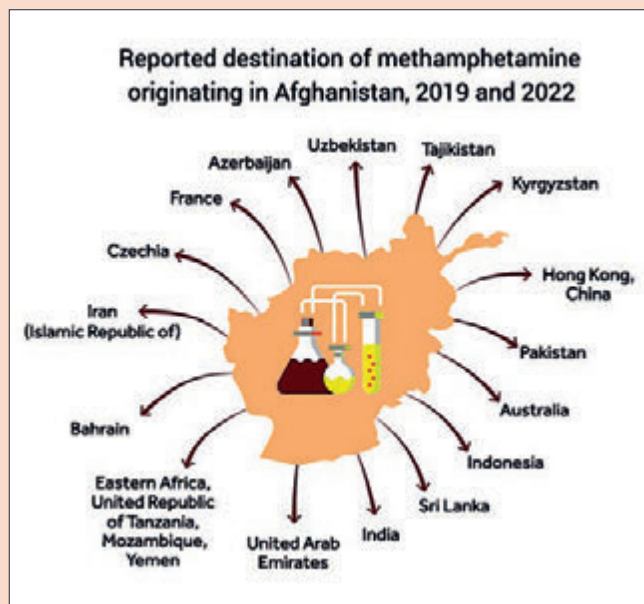


The Taliban-run Agoosh drug treatment centre in the Afghan capital Kabul

“The surge in methamphetamine trafficking in Afghanistan and the region suggests a significant shift in the illicit drug market and demands our immediate attention. Regional coordination targeting the diversion and smuggling of chemical precursors is essential to stopping the continued expansion of illicit methamphetamine manufacture in and around Afghanistan,” said Ms. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of UNODC. “This new UNODC report aims to provide the international community with vital information to tackle the growing synthetic drug threat”.

Seizures of methamphetamine of suspected Afghan origin have been reported in places as far away as the European Union, the Near and Middle East, South-east Asia and Eastern Africa.

The report, *Understanding Illegal Methamphetamine Manufacture in Afghanistan*, analyses the different precursors used to produce the drug. Coverage of suspected methamphetamine manufacture in Afghanistan has often focused on the use of the ephedra plant, which grows abundantly in the region and contains ephedrine that can be extracted to make the drug. Although cheaper to use in the short-term, the large amount of ephedra needed, unreliable harvests and the intensive labour involved make it unlikely that the rapidly expanding methamphetamine trade in Afghanistan can depend on the ephedra plant alone. Common cold medications and industrial-grade chemicals are more efficient and cost effective for the manufacture of methamphetamine and thus pose a far bigger threat, the report warns.



Such chemicals are legally produced and traded in large quantities in the region and could be accessible to methamphetamine producers. The emphasis on ephedra risks undermining effective law enforcement responses, which need to be regionally coordinated and focus on preventing and curbing the diversion and smuggling of bulk chemical precursors.

Different regions and countries are affected by different levels of trafficking of heroin and methamphetamine. Overall, South-West Asia was identified as having a transshipment role for methamphetamine to onward

wholesale markets, while South-East Europe maintains an important transshipment role in the trafficking of heroin towards the main market in West and Central Europe.

The UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform Brief on patterns and trends in heroin and methamphetamine trafficking from 2020 to 2022 for Afghanistan and neighbouring regions can be accessed at the following URL : https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/briefs/Methamphetamine_Manufacture_in_Afghanistan.pdf

NASA'S X-59 MOVES CLOSER TO RUNWAY



Technicians check out the X-59 aircraft as it sits near the runway at Lockheed Martin Skunk Works in Palmdale, California

The Lockheed Martin X-59 QuessT (“Quiet SuperSonic Technology”), sometimes known as the “son of Concorde,” is an American experimental supersonic aircraft being developed at Skunk Works for NASA’s Low-Boom Flight Demonstrator project.

One of the significant events that prepare the X-59 for its initial and future flights is the transfer from its production site to the flight line. The team will then carry out extensive ground testing to confirm that the aircraft is safe for flight.

NASA’s first purpose-built, supersonic X-plane in decades will soon take to the skies. A single pilot is to fly the 99.7-foot-long, 29.5-foot-wide aircraft powered by a single jet engine. Its design research speed will be Mach 1.4, or 925 mph, flying at 55,000 feet. In less than four hours, the aircraft could fly from London to New York.

NASA will use the experimental X-59 to provide data that could change the rules that ban supersonic flight over land by proving a sonic boom can be reduced to a barely-audible sonic thump heard on the ground.





Choose the Best Artists for your
Luxury Private and Corporate Events



Make your high society cocktail reception,
birthday party or wedding celebration a
unique and unforgettable happening



More than 20 years of experience worldwide



Our staff has been trained to ensure
Covid19 compliance outdoor parties



Tel. : +33 (0)4 93 20 43 32 - Port : +33 (0)6 22 14 45 60 / +33 (0)6 23 46 79 53
Email : contact@noubamusic.com - Web : www.noubamusic.com

THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

**Bargaining
power,
dynamics and
challenges**

The European Union (EU) and the trio of Andorra, Monaco and San Marino – the so-called AMS states – have a long and complex history of relations which the Council of the European Union has described as “extensive but fragmented”. Over the years, they have stitched together a quilt of agreements based on practical needs and mutual benefits. However, this quilt is getting old and worn out and does not cover the AMS states’ desire for greater integration with the EU. Nor does it match the EU’s vision of a coherent and harmonious relationship with its western neighbours. On March 18, 2015, the EU and Monaco formally launched negotiations on an Association Agreement. The talks were held in Brussels, Belgium, and were attended by Prince Albert II of Monaco and his then-Minister of State (Prime Minister), Michel Roger.

Since then, both sides have been trying to sew a new fabric of association, and although the process is not yet complete, important steps have been taken towards that goal. A final agreement would represent a far-reaching step, comparable only with the European Economic Area Agreement (EEA) that came into force in January 1994, and which brought Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein into the EU single market.

The links between the EU and the microstates are like a web of threads, each with its own colour and texture. To unravel this web, one must delve into the fascinating histories of these small nations and their connections to the EU. One of the most important threads is history, sometimes mixed with geography. For example, it is not easy to understand the links between the EU and Andorra without knowing how Andorra came into being and why this patch of land in the middle of the Pyrenees is neither part of France nor Spain nor the EU.

However, there is also a common thread that links all microstates: their special bond with their closest neighbours. This often explains how they have managed to survive and maintain their identity. But at the same time, this commonality also makes it difficult to draw a general picture of them.

For centuries, Europe was a mosaic of small states, each with its own identity and culture. Some of these miniature states, such as Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino, still grace the map today. What makes them so fascinating is the paradox of their survival. While powerful empires have come and gone, microstates have somehow survived despite scarce land and resources. How? Because they have understood how to adapt to the changing times.



Monaco Yacht Club

To compensate for their smaller economic power and make up for the wide gap with larger states, successful microstates have consistently focused their economies on a few select sectors, leaving behind others that were less important or profitable. The big challenge they face today is deciding which economic sectors to focus on in the future. Only if they have a clear economic vision will they find a modern and dynamic economic and political *raison d'être*.



A view of the Principality of Monaco

Monaco at the forefront

Monaco has a more special and complex relationship with the EU than the other microstates, and faces different challenges and opportunities in its negotiations with the EU. It is the only such state that uses the euro as its official currency due to a monetary agreement with the EU, while the other microstates use their own or other currencies, such as the Swiss franc in Liechtenstein.

Monaco is also the only small state that is part of the EU customs territory through an agreement with France and is administered as part of France for customs purposes. The other small states have their own customs regimes or are in a customs union with the EU, such as Andorra and San Marino.

Monaco has an open border with France and is administered as part of France under the Schengen Agreement, while the other small states have their own border controls or are full members of the Schengen area, like Liechtenstein.



Prince Albert II addressing the United Nations in New York in June 2023, to mark Monaco's 30th UN admission anniversary

Of considerable significance is the fact that Monaco is a member of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, as well as a member of the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, an 88-member international organisation representing countries and regions where French is a *lingua franca*.



Carabinieri du Prince

A constitutional monarchy, the state has been ruled by the House of Grimaldi since 1297. It has a bicameral National Council (Parliament) and a Minister of State (Prime Minister) appointed by the Prince of Monaco, currently Prince Albert II. He has absolute power in matters of foreign policy, but shares power with the National Council in matters of domestic policy.

The European Union and the Principality of Monaco are like-minded, close neighbours, sharing a common history, culture and language, and have signed several very important cooperation agreements. These allow Monaco to adapt its policies to certain EU rules and to benefit from certain economic privileges that correspond to the Principality's specific circumstances and governmental structure.

Monaco is known for its status as a tax haven. It levies no income tax on individuals (with the exception of French nationals who have lived in Monaco for less than five years), and no capital gains tax. This favourable fiscal environment attracts high-net-worth individuals, entrepreneurs and companies looking to benefit from low taxation.

Monaco also enjoys a high degree of economic stability. Its small size, well-regulated financial sector and prudent fiscal policies contribute to a favourable business environment. The Principality has AAA credit rating and low public debt, which boost the confidence of investors and companies operating in Monaco.

However, the relationship between Monaco and the EU is not as comprehensive and as homogeneous as it could be and there are still some areas where Monaco does not fully align with EU rules and standards, such as taxation, financial services and data protection. Therefore, since 2015, Monaco and the EU have been negotiating a new Association Agreement that should cover all these areas and create a more stable and coherent framework for their cooperation.

The thorny issues

Monaco's status as a tax haven has brought both benefits and challenges to its aspirations for deeper integration into the European Union. This status has, of course, contributed significantly to the country's economic prosperity and the absence of an income tax on individuals as well as the favourable

tax treatment of companies have attracted wealthy individuals, entrepreneurs and businesses to settle in Monaco. This has boosted economic growth, created employment opportunities and considerably increased the Principality's revenues.

Monaco is also a hub for financial services, including private banking, wealth management, and investment services. The presence of financial institutions and professionals has further strengthened Monaco's position as an international financial centre.



Monegasque authorities invest heavily in the construction of new buildings in order to meet the needs of Monegasques who are able to obtain apartments at privileged rents such as these at the 170 meters high Odeon Tower and at the two 100 meters high Testimonio II Towers

The numbers of foreign visitors to Monaco is of major importance. The country's reputation as a tax haven and its association with wealth and luxury attracts tourists from all over the world. The tourism industry is thriving as foreign visitors are drawn to Monaco's glamorous lifestyle, casinos, yachts and world-class shopping.

But Monaco's advantageous income tax regime may also attract companies and individuals looking to minimize their tax obligations in their home countries. Other than leading to an outflow of capital and talent from other countries and impacting their economies and tax revenues, Monaco's status as a tax haven has also drawn criticism from international organisations and some countries for facilitating tax evasion, money laundering and a lack of transparency in financial transactions.



The Monte Carlo Casino

All in all, this situation has been putting pressure on Monaco to improve its legal framework so that it can address these concerns.

One of the EU's main goals in the talks is to make sure that Monaco implements the same standards of protection against money laundering and terrorist financing as the EU, and that it follows the Union's rules and guidelines on these issues. The EU also wants Monaco to adopt Moneyval's suggestions and to show its dedication to combat financial crime.

Moneyval is a specialized body within the Council of Europe that assesses the compliance of member states with international standards on anti-money laundering (AML) and countering the financing of terrorism (CFT). Its evaluations aim to ensure that countries, including those in the EU have robust frameworks in place to combat illicit financial activities.

Moneyval's evaluation process involves a comprehensive review of a country's legal and regulatory framework, the effectiveness of its institutions and measures, and the level of cooperation in international efforts to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

The evaluation is based on the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which are considered the global standard in this field.

As a member of the Council of Europe, Monaco has been subject to five rounds of evaluation since 2002. The latest evaluation report was adopted in December 2022, and it found that Monaco had made some progress in strengthening its legal and institutional framework to prevent and combat money laundering and terrorist financing, but it also identified some deficiencies and challenges that needed to be addressed.



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz at a meeting of the Financial Action Task Force in Berlin : « The fight against money laundering and terrorist financing starts at home, at the national level »

These are some of the main recommendations that Moneyval has made to Monaco:

- To further enhance the effectiveness of its investigation and prosecution of money laundering, especially for complex and cross-border cases, and to increase the use of confiscation and recovery of proceeds of crime.
- To strengthen its supervisory system for financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses and professions, such as casinos, lawyers, accountants, real estate agents, etc., and to ensure that they apply adequate preventive measures and report suspicious transactions.
- To improve its international cooperation with other countries, especially within the European Union, and to exchange information and provide mutual legal assistance in a timely and effective manner.

However, in the course of several debates, parliamentarians have raised some objections regarding the assessment of Moneyval and other EU requirements in terms of wider participation in the EU single market and other areas.

Specifically, Monaco claims that it has already implemented most of Moneyval's recommendations and that it has a robust anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime comparable to or even better than that of some EU member states. It also argues that some of Moneyval's recommendations are not applicable or relevant to its specific situation, such as its small size, its constitutional monarchical system, its civil law tradition, etc.



Monaco has also expressed concern about the possible impact of an Association Agreement on its economy and society, in particular on its financial sector, which is one of its main sources of revenue. Some are worried that an Association Agreement would expose it to greater competition from other financial centres in the EU or elsewhere and reduce its attractiveness to investors or clients. Monaco also harbours fears that an association agreement would bring more costs than benefits to its public finances or services.

Priorities and perspectives

The aim of the agreement is to allow Monaco to participate more fully in the EU's internal market, taking into account the Principality's unique geographical, demographic and economic characteristics. Discussions have been ongoing for over eight years, have been characterised by tough negotiating tactics and have presented a number of important challenges.



Brigitte Boccone-Pagès, President of the National Council (Parliament)

One of these, and not the least, has been the need to reconcile the interests of the EU and Monaco. The EU wants to ensure that Monaco complies with all its laws and regulations, while Monaco wants to preserve its sovereignty and its right to manage its own affairs.

Another challenge was the need to find a way to address Monaco's specific concerns. One example is the limited labour force due to the country's small size. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the agreement does not lead to unfair competition for Monegasque companies.

But despite the challenges, the negotiations have made some progress. In 2018, the EU and Monaco concluded an agreement on the free movement of goods. This means that goods produced in

Monaco can be freely traded within the EU. The two sides are also working on agreements on the free movement of services, capital and people.

Monaco's sovereignty and its ability to act independently of the European Union are of great importance to the Monegasque people. Monaco has a long history of maintaining its independence and sovereignty as a principality. The Monegasque people feel very attached to their unique identity and value their ability to make independent decisions.

Therefore, it came as no surprise when in January 2023, Brigitte Boccone-Pagès, the president of the National Council (parliament), and leader of the Monegasque National Union Party (UNM) declared: *'The question is not "yes or no to Europe" ... it is not even a question of "yes or no to an agreement", which is only a tool'. And she added with a dash of flamboyance: 'The UNM will not sell off our model... I guarantee it'.*

One of the pillars of the model in question, to which crucial importance is attached, is the so-called national priority. This is a policy to promote the employment and recruitment of Monegasque citizens in the Principality. It is based on the principle that Monegasque nationals have priority in filling vacancies.

It should be noted that national primacy does not mean that foreign workers are completely excluded. Monaco is a cosmopolitan country that attracts many foreigners and workers from abroad. However, the policy aims to strike a balance between employment opportunities for Monegasque citizens and the preservation of the identity and interests of the local population.

And, of course, there is a concern that bringing Monegasque labour market regulations more in line with EU standards could affect the implementation of national priority policies by limiting the possibility of preferential treatment

for Monegasque citizens in employment, housing, health care and other areas.

While negotiations have accelerated this year and there is hope, especially on the European side, that they can be concluded before the end of 2023 and before the European elections in 2024, the Princely Government has commissioned a prospective study on the consequences for the Principality of an agreement or failure of the talks.



Pierre Dartout, Monaco's Minister of State (Prime Minister) is a French national. The head of government can be either a Monegasque or a French national; the Prince consults with the Government of France before his appointment

Pierre Dartout, Monaco's Minister of State (Prime Minister), while making clear his determination to forge ahead with the ongoing talks, warned at a press conference in August that Monaco would not put pen to paper at any cost. He acknowledged that the EU has its own policies and procedures, but that it is up to individual states to provide for and protect their citizens. He then went on to add: *"I continue to believe that an agreement is*



The Monaco National Council

necessary. The Principality cannot remain isolated, because an isolated territory will find it harder to diversify than others. Diversification of the economy is necessary here, and I would even say inevitable”.

However, the National Council, whose 24 seats were all won by the Monegasque National Union Party (UNM) in last February’s parliamentary elections, issued a press release in August, in which they made it known that the desirability of an agreement has not been proven. The communiqué read: “Pierre Dartout’s statement is, to say the least, surprising for several reasons” before proceeding to explain, “First of all, to say publicly to the partner with whom you are negotiating, that an agreement is necessary, is the best way, in our view, to place yourself in a position of weakness in the negotiations. The question therefore arises as to the appropriateness of this statement”.

Secondly, the elected representatives once again pointed out that “any agreement will have to be the subject of a law that authorises such a ratification. This law must be put to a vote in the National Assembly, respecting the red lines, which as things stand, is far from certain”.



Monegasque Foreign Minister Isabelle Berro



European Commission Executive Vice-President, Maros Sefcovic

In short, the National Council wishes to carefully weigh up all the factors involved in the decision-making process, in which the advantages are decisive, compared to the concessions that Monaco will have to make.

I Negotiation breakdown

The persistence of fundamental disagreements between the two parties finally took its toll.

Following a meeting between Monegasque Foreign Minister Isabelle Berro-Amadei and European Commission Executive Vice-President, Maros Sefcovic in Brussels on 14 September, it was decided to suspend the negotiations. This decision effectively annuls the deadline of 31 December 2023, set by the EU at the beginning of the talks in 2015.

The two parties ultimately found themselves unable to reconcile the demands of the European Union with the red lines set out by Prince Albert II at the beginning of these talks, which aim to preserve the current living, working and housing conditions of the Principality’s nationals and residents.

Shortly after this announcement, the National Council released a statement recalling the scepticism of its elected representatives since 2018, while underlining its always firm position, which served as an encouragement to Monegasque negotiators not to give in. It described itself not as “anti-European” but as “Euro-pragmatic” and stressed the importance of preserving the Monegasque economic and social model, which includes a national priority for employment, housing and the creation of activities for Monegasques.

The National Council nevertheless encourages the government to continue the dialogue with the EU, with a view to possible future sectoral agreements that would not compromise the sustainability of the Monegasque model.

The suspension of the talks can be considered detrimental to both sides. The EU is eager to conclude a new agreement with Monaco, as it sees the country as a strategic partner in the region, and Monaco is also keen to reach a new agreement, as it is heavily reliant on the EU for trade and investment.

It has been stressed though that the suspension of the talks does not mean that the negotiations are over. Both sides have said that they are committed to reaching an agreement, and the talks are expected to resume at some point in the future.

I Renewed scrutiny

As for the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism, Prince Albert II and his government are determined to ultimately implement all recommendations so as to fully comply with international standards. To this end, the Monegasque government has enacted and updated laws and has taken steps to strengthen its regulatory institutions responsible for overseeing the financial sector. It has also adopted a risk-based approach to anti-money laundering measures.

However, a report published on 23 January 2023 by the Council of Europe’s Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Moneyval), has put Monaco and its financial sector under renewed scrutiny. The country was recently accused of protecting the assets of Russian oligarchs before complying with international sanctions against Russia.



The 2 billion-euro extension project of six hectares, representing 3% of Monaco's surface area, directly reclaimed from the sea

According to the report, Monaco's anti-money laundering efforts still have weaknesses and the country may be closely monitored by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the international financial watchdog. The report also warned that Monaco remains at risk of money laundering, mainly because of the "internationally oriented financial activities" it offers - and the Principality is an attractive destination for illicit cross-border financial flows.

The report said most fraud is committed outside Monaco, while the money from the crimes is laundered inside Monaco. The report added that risk assessments, international cooperation and the deterrent effect of sanctions are not fully sufficient to combat fraud and corruption risks.

The report notes that risks related to terrorist financing, which is also monitored by the FATF at the global level, are relatively low but need to be analysed more thoroughly by the Monegasque authorities. After the report was presented to the FATF plenary on 20 February, a one-year

observation period was set for Monaco. If the country does not implement the required structural reforms, it can be publicly placed on a "grey list". Monaco was on the grey list until it was removed from it in 2009.

The report however, also acknowledges that the Principality has made "commendable efforts" to assess risks, but points out that there is room for improvement, rating effectiveness as "moderate".

This assessment was confirmed by Jean Castellini, the Minister of Finance and Economy when he said in a TV interview on Monaco Info: *"Improvements have to be made notably on Monaco's capacity to expand its measures, to hire more people and to prioritise its actions better"*. But while acknowledging advances that have been made in the meanwhile, particularly on the legislative front, he was also very keen to stress: *"Team Monaco is well aware of the stakes" and promised: "Monaco will pass Moneyval's most stringent tests in 2024"*.

After the National Council (Parliament) issued a statement in which the lawmakers reiterated that they have played a significant role in the last five years to make sure that Monaco's laws meet the top global standards, Minister of State, Pierre Dartout declared: *"The Principality is in line with Prince Albert II's vision of an exemplary Monaco in terms of ethics, transparency, the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. This exemplarity is essential for Monaco in terms of its raison d'être and attractiveness. We will therefore continue and intensify our efforts."*

Many political analysts and economists are of the opinion that an Association Agreement, that takes into account the EU's concerns, as well as Monaco's priorities is important for both parties, as it would strengthen their political and economic relations, promote their common values and interests, and enhance their regional stability and security.

Such an agreement would also represent a significant step for Monaco's economic resilience. While the short-term economic benefits may not be immediately visible, the long-term benefits would certainly underpin and stimulate Monaco's economy, and secure its future in an increasingly interconnected, global landscape.

Hossein Sadre



Former Minister of Finance and Economy Jean Castellini

Figures of three goddesses from the east pediment of the Parthenon

MORE THAN CUCUMBERS

How the British Museum stole its exhibits “for the good of the nation” – and won’t (or can’t) give them back

There is claimed to be an old Indian saying: "A thief is a thief, whether he steals a diamond or a cucumber". It's very true, of course, but people take less notice when a cucumber goes missing, while a person who steals cucumbers tends to be regarded rather more leniently by the police and the courts than someone who goes after diamonds. In terms of the scale of thefts, few come close to the British Museum. Its many glorious exhibits and precious artifacts were largely taken dishonestly from their rightful owners by an empire that nevertheless claimed some kind of moral superiority. Not surprisingly, several of the countries from which these goodies were stolen back in those "glorious" days of empire now want them back, and who can blame them? Perhaps the most viciously worded article has been in the *Global Times*, which is owned by the Chinese Communist Party's flagship newspaper, the *People's Daily*. In an editorial, it accuses the British authorities of "stubborn and evasive" behaviour. "The UK has a bloody, ugly and shameful colonial history," it writes, "has always had a strong sense of moral superiority over others, often standing on the moral high ground to dictate to and even interfere in the internal affairs of other countries." It then adds this killer line: "We really do not know where their sense of moral superiority comes from." When you put it like that, neither do I.



© NATIONAL MUSEUMS ORG.UK

Former British Museum's Director Hartwig Fischer

In an additional irony, the Museum has now admitted to having lost some of its precious exhibits in a series of thefts. And not a cucumber among them! The Museum itself has been remarkably quiet about what is, in

reality, a shocking example of careless disregard for other countries' cultural heritage. One senior curator was sacked after something approaching 2,000 artifacts, together worth millions of euros, were believed to have been stolen. The Metropolitan Police said in a statement: "We have worked closely with the British Museum and will continue to do so," adding the enigmatic line: "We will not be providing any further information at this time." This doesn't really provide much in the way of solace to those countries whose historical items were (they thought) safely stored there, not on their home soil of course but at least where everyone knew their location and might manage to visit them one day. The tight-lipped museum has not specified how many items were taken, nor has it identified exactly what they are, other than to claim that they were "small items" and that they included "gold jewellery and gems of semi-precious stones and glass dating from the 15th century BC to the 19th century AD." No vegetables were mentioned.



© CONSERVATIVES/PAUL TOEMAN

The Chair of the British Museum's trustees George Osborne

Some of the missing items have been recovered (very few, in fact), but many people think the Museum should have acted more swiftly when some of the stolen items turned up for sale on E-Bay. They had been warned in 2021 (and possibly earlier) about certain items appearing for sale on-line, but the Museum authorities did nothing. In fact, according to some Museum staff, many of the missing items were not on public display anyway: around 99%, it's thought, were kept in the Museum's private archives, and there have long been calls for their safe return to their countries of origin. Who had the pleasure of gazing upon them? That's not clear, other than to say it didn't include the true owners of the items. The Chair of the Museum's trustees, former Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, has admitted that the Museum does not have a comprehensive catalogue of all the items in its vast collection, which is hampering the recovery of those artifacts that are currently missing. It's a matter of global concern because the collection is so vast, having come from many places all over the world. This is not just a British tragedy, it's a global one. All in all, the British Museum is where some 8-million objects are housed, almost all of them looted by previous generations of British soldiers, historians and 'get-rich-quick' enthusiasts.

To the victor the spoils (and the everlasting shame)

Of course, Britain is not the only imperialist power to have stolen objects from the countries it conquered. Belgium's King Leopold was especially brutal towards the Congolese, housing some of them in a kind of "human zoo" in central Brussels, bearing notices instructing people not to feed the exhibits. Other countries carried out similar atrocities, while no doubt claiming to be guided by the morals of their religious faiths. Presumably they could see nothing wrong or morally dubious about their activities. The British Museum itself houses a very large number of items stolen in the distant past, including India's Amaravati Marbles, the Benin Bronzes from Nigeria and Egypt's Rosetta Stone, not forgetting Greece's famous Parthenon Marbles (nowadays generally referred to as the "Elgin Marbles") and lots of other things that should be on show in the places from which they came. Demands for that to happen have been increasing. After all, their present location is the result of colonialism. Or 'theft', if you prefer.



Sir Mark Jones

France's President Emmanuel Macron commissioned a report by art historian Bénédicte Savoy and Senegalese economist Felwine Sarr in 2018 to look into the issue of restitution, and they concluded that "any

objects taken by force or presumed to be acquired through inequitable conditions" should be returned to their country or countries of origin. Similar recommendations made to the British Museum have been ignored because the British Museum Act of 1963 prevents it from returning anything in the collection, even though the law permits it to return any object it considers "unfit to be retained in the collections of the Museum." An object's arrival in the UK as a result of an officially-sanctioned act of theft apparently doesn't count.

At the time of writing, Sir Mark Jones has replaced Hartwig Fischer as the Museum's Director, although that decision still had to be rubber-stamped by the Prime Minister at the time of writing. When he was running the Victoria and Albert Museum, Sir Mark advocated "sharing" the Elgin Marbles with Greece, but Athens has repeatedly declined the offer, stating – not unreasonably – that the Marbles are part of Greek history and that if they are to be put on display it should be there.



The Trustees of the British Museum, as well as the painter (right, sitting), are depicted pondering the artistic and humanistic value of the Parthenon sculptures (1819), on display in "The Temporary Elgin Room" of the museum as of 1817

They are known as the "Elgin Marbles" because it was Lord Elgin who, between 1801 and 1805, stripped them from their original position and moved them to Britain. Sir Mark has received universal acceptance as Director, according to George Osborne. The British Museum, in an on-line announcement, said: "An independent review will be led by former trustee Sir Nigel Boardman, and Lucy D'Orsi, Chief Constable of the British Transport Police. They will look into the matter and provide recommendations regarding future security arrangements at the Museum. They will also kickstart – and support – a vigorous programme to recover the missing items." It's highly likely that most, if not quite all of the missing items will be irrecoverable, having been sold on the international market as artifacts in – I was going to write "good faith", but that would not be appropriate; if you're wandering the antique shops and somebody offers you a rare item at a knock-down price but with dubious provenance, you're bound to know it's stolen. In British slang, you'd say the item is "hot", which presumably is not a description that would ever suit a cucumber. Who would want a 'hot' cucumber?



Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis speaking during a formal ceremony for Reunification of Parthenon Sculptures at the Acropolis Museum in Athens, Greece, Jan. 3, 2022

Sir Mark's views on "sharing" the treasures chime with those held by Osborne, who has been holding talks with Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the Greek prime minister, over a "Parthenon partnership". That could result, if successfully worked through, in some of the sculptures being displayed in Athens while never-before-seen treasures are lent to the British Museum in return. There were rumours that Osborne and Fischer did not see eye-to-eye about the marbles and since it was Britain that took the cucumber, and is therefore a thief under the old Indian definition, it would appear that Athens has a strong argument on its side. Don't expect an early resolution to the dilemma.

Stealing history and heritage

The so-called "Elgin Marbles" may be seen as centre-stage in this dispute because of their worldwide fame, but they're far from being the only items at issue. Take, for example, Ghana's Akan Drum. According to Ernest Domfeh, a present day Ghanaian drummer and dancer, it was made when Prempeh I was King of the Ashanti (1888 to 1931) and was thus the 13th ruler of the Ashanti people. Britain deposed him and deported him to Sierra Leone in 1897 because the British saw the Ashanti peoples as powerful and therefore a potential danger to British rule. The drum is made of bronze, an Ashanti speciality. Putting scenes into bronze was how the people of the time recorded events and personalities. When the British took the

drum (and other bronze artifacts) they stole some of the people's history. History is important, of course, because it's part of the identity of the people whose lives and origins it represents. Prempeh's life was tragic because of Britain. In 1924 he was finally allowed to return to Kumasi and in 1926 was installed as Kumasihene, a simple divisional chief, a much lower and non-royal position.

There seems to have begun a movement towards restoring these artifacts to their rightful

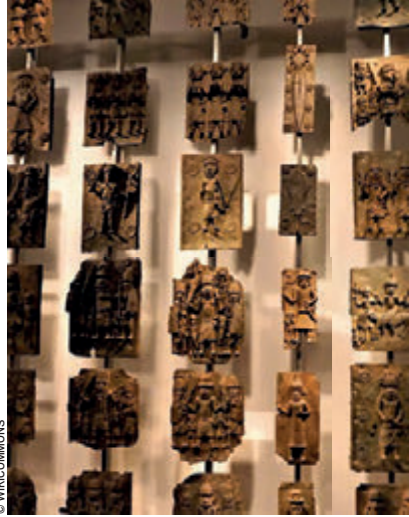
owners, but it's a very slow process. It's also embarrassing for the former colonial power to admit it is in possession of "the priceless cultural patrimony of a formerly colonized continent," as Howard W. French, a columnist at Foreign Policy put it.



British soldiers with objects looted from the Kingdom of Benin's royal palace during the military expedition to Benin City in 1897

He also points out how the theft of so much cultural art in the past has to do with the continent's current instability, poverty, and weakness. We Europeans didn't just steal priceless historical objects, we stole history itself. Apart from the artifacts, of course, we also shipped more than twelve million Africans across the Atlantic in chains, mainly to work on plantations. According to French, only some 42% of those loaded onto slave ships survived to be sold. As the historian Brenda Plummer wrote of the wars in Africa among European powers over the land they had stolen: "These wars featured the theft of indigenous treasures and the first widespread use of machine guns. Mandingo warrior-king Samori Touré lost to France in 1898. German punitive expeditions against the Maji-Maji uprising in Tanganyika from 1905 to 1907 cost 120,000 African lives. In seeming dress rehearsal for the destruction of the European Jews a generation later, German troops in Southwest Africa (now today's independent Namibia) nearly exterminated the Herero and Hottentot tribes." It's also been estimated that the wars promulgated by Belgium's King Leopold and which helped build Belgium's wealth also killed ten million Africans.

Some of the best known cultural items that the British Empire holds from other countries



The Benin bronzes



Mummy Of Katebet



Maori Taonga



The Rosetta Stone in the British Museum



The Crown with the Koh-i-Noor diamond



Diptych in a silver gilt



Easter Island Head

It was in the interests of the European powers to play down the sophistication of African people and to portray them as backward and “in need of leadership by Europeans” (which means, of course, “leadership by white people”). If that attitude on the part of Europe’s colonists hadn’t existed, Africa would be a very different continent today. Take Ghana as an example. In the late 19th century, the Fante ethnic group there formed a confederacy and created a written constitution, with a king-president, a council of kings and elders and even a national assembly. However, Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands had considerable economic interests there and saw the increasingly sophisticated political arrangements as a threat to their profits. The Fante people’s dream of a modern future was deliberately smashed by European powers one might have imagined would have welcomed such a step forward. An attempt in the early years of the 20th century to bring West Africa’s English-speaking colonies together was declined by Britain, despite the plan’s originator, Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford expressing a willingness for the place to remain part of the British Empire. In a sense it reinforces the belief that the theft of so much of Africa’s cultural art was more about power and control than it was about the market value of the items stolen. We Europeans were thieves of totems, the ideas of a better future and the things that represented those ideas to the public eye.



A Benin bronze memorial head in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum. These Benin bronzes were taken from the sacked city during a British punitive expedition in 1897 and later sold to German museums in Berlin, Hamburg, Stuttgart and Cologne

I Grab it and run

Where did this gross greed for other people’s land begin? Of course, the Romans, Phoenicians, Arabs, and Egyptians, among others, had been colonialists, too. It’s hardly a new phenomenon. However, it really caught on in the modern era following the fall

of Constantinople to the forces of the Ottoman Empire in 1453, which closed the profitable trade routes to Asia. Several European countries pushed their way into Africa, while the Spanish started taking an interest in the Americas, which took their name in 1503 from the explorer Amerigo Vespucci. The Spanish also took with them the Inquisition, unfortunately. With the demand for sugar came an increased demand for sugar plantations and that meant slavery, of course. In the 16th and 17th centuries, England, France and the Dutch Republic started to build empires overseas, mostly (but not exclusively) in Africa. The colonising states were frequently at war with each other, like gangs of thieves arguing over the loot from a lucrative burglary. Such was the urge to colonise that only thirteen of today’s independent countries escaped such a fate.



German State Minister for Culture, Monika Grütters

According to Deutsche Welle (DW), a few “historic milestones” have been reached in coming to terms with Germany’s colonial history. The news channel quoted German State Minister for Culture Monika Grütters, who listed the return to Namibia of the whip and the Bible of local folk hero Hendrik Witbooi, along with Germany’s commitment to return the so-called Benin bronzes to Nigeria, which should have begun in 2022.

“The matter must and will continue to be a high priority for cultural policy, also and especially here in Germany,” said Grütters at the opening of the conference. Requests for the return of cultural and historic objects in the 19th century were largely declined or ignored, undermining the political authority of the country concerned. Mainly, this colonisation was motivated by the lust for profits, but these dishonourable motives were hidden by a supposed wish to spread Christianity and by the bizarre belief in the fictional Christian kingdom of Prester John, with the aim of encircling parts of the Islamic Ottoman Empire.

The profits to be made from these conquests mainly centred on the spice trade. The colonisation that ensued was largely disastrous for the local peoples the Europeans encountered, either because of their superior weaponry or because of the wide variety of diseases they brought with them, which swiftly spread. The Europeans also showed themselves to be far more ruthless than the local population had ever experienced before. If you think it’s odd that a supposedly religious race could be so brutal, take a look at the Valladolid Controversy (1550-1551), over which fierce arguments raged concerning whether or not the native Indian population possessed souls. If not, then they were not entitled to mankind’s basic rights. One of those who was against giving them rights claimed they were born as “natural slaves”. Throughout this controversy, of course, the Spanish and Portuguese continued to make a lot of money, some of which the Spanish crown used to

fund religious wars in Europe. European nations fought against each other, sometimes using attacks by pirates as a weapon. Sir Francis Drake, now held up as an English hero, was one such pirate. But perhaps we should not single him out, when entire governments were devoted to theft and pillage. Vast numbers of items were taken.



Sir Francis Drake by Jodocus Hondius

There are several problems concerned with returning the stolen items: do we know who created them and where? Who really owns them? How did they end up in European collections? What exactly do they mean in historical and symbolic terms and to whom? It's clear that in most cases the items must be returned to their owners, if they still exist and can be reliably traced. What's more, some of the countries to which these artifacts should be returned lack the facilities to display them and to protect them, although following the experience at the British Museum that may seem a rather weak argument. Should the stolen items only be returned to countries that have appropriate facilities to put them on display whilst also protecting them from theft? But if Britain is incapable of protecting the valued items it looted in days gone by, where would be safe? It's not easy.



The Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) in New York

I Sponsored theft

Aljazeera writes in an editorial about returning plundered artifacts, but argues that sending the items back to where they started, although necessary, is not enough: "Decolonising the museum has to go far beyond returning plundered artefacts or tinkering with exhibition displays to present a more accurate version of history. The abject dependence of museums on corporate sponsorship and super-wealthy donors is increasingly coming under fire." The problem, argues Aljazeera, arises with the museums themselves: "These institutions are the public face of the art world, but their trustee boards are stacked with corporate freebooters whose business values are starkly at odds with those of the cultural creatives whose names and works they buy and sell." The entire world, it sometimes seems, is in the hands of the super-wealthy, whose morality and motives are, at best, doubtful. The article condemns many of the official responses, both of the museum and of collections themselves, and their corporate sponsors, as inadequate.

Does anyone have the definitive answer? Seemingly not, according to Aljazeera. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) in New York has been the location for a number of protests and demonstrations. "MoMa director Glenn Lowry has responded to the weekly on-site demonstrations by accusing Strike MoMa (the protest movement behind the protest) of wanting to "disassemble" MoMa and all museums "so they no longer exist". That is clearly not the aim of Strike MoMa, which has said it wants to see the Museum upholding the values it's supposed to endorse. There is certainly not, in the US or elsewhere, a call to close all museums, a move that most people would see as counter-productive and certainly not the aim of those wanting to see looted artifacts return home. Popular opinion would seem to favour restoring the looted treasures.

Take the case of the Rosetta Stone, currently on show at the British Museum. It may well be simply too big and heavy to steal. "It's war spoil," said Heba Abd al Gewad, an Egyptian Egyptologist, who told VICE World News: "That's what it is in reality. It has never left Egypt legally...It's a trophy of empire." President Macron's report by Bénédicte Savoy and Senegalese economist Felwine Sarr concluded that: "Any objects taken by force or presumed to be acquired through inequitable conditions" (surely that must mean all of them?) should be returned to their country of origin, with a broad definition of what constitutes force and inequity." The British Museum has long hidden its inaction behind that 1963 Act of Parliament that forbids it from returning anything. It's a pretty poor excuse, really, and always was.

That being said, don't expect an immediate and thoroughgoing response to all these calls for repatriation. It's a more complicated story than it appears at first sight, and there are those who are totally opposed to it. The arguments will continue, although hopefully no longer about whether or not native people have souls. We must trust that such nonsense is now behind us. People will come up with similar and equally silly arguments that could protect their rights to act wickedly. Still, at least the discussion has begun, although some of the many, many items held by the British Museum before their more recent theft (their arrival at the Museum at all, of course, came about through theft on a grander scale) may never be recovered so that they're available for return. Whoever holds them now, we must assume, knows that they are stolen property. Oh, well: at least my cucumber is still here.

T. Kingsley Brooks

EPIONE

CABINET ELISABETH THURAT

YOUR TRUSTED PODIATRY AND MEDICAL PEDICURE CLINIC IN BRUSSELS



PLANTAR REFLEXOLOGY LASER THERAPY TARGETED AROMATHERAPY



- Uses APIVITA natural French products
- Proposes various treatments using organic essential oils
- Uses the unique Low Level Laser Therapy (manufactured by Erchonia, a US company and world leader in the field of Low Level Laser Therapy)
- Bespoke treatment programs and state-of-the-art equipment
- Spotless hygiene



We provide the best care possible

ELISABETH THURAT CLINIC offers a wide range of care specifically tailored for young children, teenagers, adults, athletes, and people with disabilities.

AT EPIONE CLINIC, YOUR FEET ARE IN GOOD HANDS !

www.cabinet-thurat.be • +32 4 94 04 84 24

Avenue Brugmann 292 • 1180 Uccle • Belgium

Consultations only by appointment • From 8am to 8pm • Monday to Saturday

EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS :

**« EU flagship programme
to end violence against
women worldwide shows
limited impact so far »**

- **Almost one third of the €500 million in EU funding for the “Spotlight Initiative” went to its management by the United Nations**
- **The initiative did not achieve its objective of attracting additional funding from new donors**
- **Auditors call for better value for money and note risks to the sustainability of the activities**

The €500 million Spotlight Initiative has been an ambitious attempt by the European Commission, together with the UN, to ensure that women and girls around the world live free from violence and harmful practices. However, according to a new report by the European Court of Auditors, this flagship EU programme for combating sexual and gender-based violence has shown little impact to date in terms of improving the situation of those it is intended to help. Despite positive achievements, the auditors found that the initiative could be managed more efficiently and could provide better value for money, as well as increasing the share of funding that reaches final beneficiaries to help more women and girls.

The Spotlight Initiative is a global strategic partnership between the EU and the UN to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in partner countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Pacific and the Caribbean. Initially launched in 2017 for a period of four years, it was extended to the end of 2023 due to delays.



Bettina Jakobsen

“Violence against women and girls has no place in the world, and no woman or girl should be left behind,” said Bettina Jakobsen, the ECA member in charge of the report. “Through the Spotlight Initiative, the EU has put more money than ever into ending such abuse, but more should reach final beneficiaries and we still need to see more impact.”

The auditors acknowledge that the initiative has benefited women and girls globally and helped to address violence. For instance, it has supported activities to prevent violence against women and girls, such as training and awareness campaigns, and services to victims of violence in all African and Latin American countries, albeit to different degrees and with varying levels of

success. However, the initiative’s set-up only allows for a limited assessment of performance. Moreover, given its short time span and the fact that data are incomplete, it has not yet been possible to measure the improvement for beneficiaries, such as victims of violence or participants in training courses, and it is difficult to assess the extent to which it has achieved its intended results. There is no evidence that violence against women and girls has fallen in the countries covered.

External and internal factors led to challenges and delays in implementation. These included not only the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and domestic political changes, but also complex governance arrangements due to the number of UN organisations involved. The Commission’s choice of the UN as its implementing partner was a political decision in support of multilateralism. However, the UN’s costs of administering the initiative totalled \$155 million (i.e. 31 % of the initiative’s total budget), leaving \$351 million for the implementing partners and beneficiaries. Although the EU’s executive was aware that UN involvement entailed higher costs, it did not thoroughly compare the alternatives.

Despite being the sole funder, the EU has not always been given sufficient credit for funding visibility. Moreover, although the EU’s contribution was intended as seed funding to attract additional investors, no new donors have been found, and so results may not be sustained. The auditors also stress that the programme is not long enough to create lasting change on a complex issue which requires long-term actions and additional resources.

The Spotlight Initiative¹ is founded on the ‘Theory of Change’ and its six pillars supporting policies and legislation, institutions, prevention, services, data, and women’s movements. This approach is complemented by the “leaving no one behind” principle, including measures to focus on marginalised populations. The initiative receives EU funding of €497 million (€250 million for Africa alone), €465 million of which is managed by the UN in more than 26 countries on four continents. The remaining €32 million is managed by the EU through civil society organisations; other donors have committed only symbolic amounts. An estimated one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence at least once since the age of 15. According to data from the Initiative, in some countries the share of people who think it is justifiable for a man to beat his partner fell in 2021, but the figure actually went up in some Latin American and African countries. In Latin America, none of the supported programmes recorded a fall in cases of femicide.

¹ ECA special report 21/2023 “The Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls – ambitious but so far with limited impact” is available on the ECA’s website (eca.europa.eu).



UNDER LOCK AND KEY

**The truth about the
prison systems of
Europe**

“This ain’t no place for me,” sang blues singer Lightnin’ Hopkins in a country and western song, after first asking his listener to unlock the door and let him out. That must surely be the wish of everyone who ends up behind bars, having fallen foul of the law in some way. As Sonny Curtis sang: “I fought the law and the law won”. Several other performers have also sung it. It’s a good song. The fact is that Europe’s prisons “ain’t no place” for anyone by choice either. We cannot return to the barbarous practices of a century or so ago, with chain gangs and whips, but neither can we allow those with criminal tendencies free range to commit whatever crimes they want. There has to be law and order to keep the rest of us safe and relatively happy and secure. Many people don’t seem to care much what sort of treatment is handed out to felons who have been condemned by the courts, however. Some seem to think that corporal punishment is a good idea. It would certainly discourage re-offending, although some criminologists have argued that ill treatment of offenders encourages them to be more violent towards their victims, next time. Assuming there is a next time.

“We have to break with what must be broken with once and for all,” wrote Fedor Dostoevsky in his novel ‘Crime and Punishment’, “and we have to take the suffering upon ourselves...freedom and power – power above all.



Samuel John “Lightnin” Hopkins

Power over all the tumbling vermin and over all the ant-hill!” Some bibliophiles consider Crime and Punishment to be one of the greatest books ever written. It is about a small and insignificant man who commits a crime out of desperation but who is then wracked with guilt because of it, meeting along the way some of the poorest and most pitiful citizens of St. Petersburg who are always shown according to the author’s own sympathetic viewpoint. The punishment suffered by Radon

Romanovich Raskolnikov is uniquely his own: to be tortured by his own sense of guilt for killing a pawnbroker. His name is derived from the Russian word ‘raskolnik’, which means divided, as Raskolnikov clearly is. He is inclined towards confession, but his self-important intellectualism makes him suspect that he is not like other men and that his crime may be justifiable because it kept him alive. The book is still on the compulsory reading list in Russian schools. Its main theme remains as much an issue now as when Dostoevsky wrote it. Whether or not real criminals feel as divided and ambivalent about their crimes in real life I do not know. No judge is likely to view a guilty conscience as sufficient punishment for criminal wrongdoing (especially for murder, as in Raskolnikov’s case). But getting the balance right is never easy. As the American film-maker, actor and comedian Woody Allen wrote: “Human beings are divided into mind and body. The mind embraces all the nobler aspirations, like poetry and philosophy, but the body has all the fun.” It also commits most of the punishable crimes (who knows what terrible crimes are committed in the human imagination?).



St Gilles Prison, Brussels, Belgium

According to research by both the EU and the Council of Europe, the biggest problem facing Europe’s prisons is overcrowding, although there is also the issue of underfunding. In a report prepared for the European Parliament, the researchers wrote that: “Recent empirical research shows that, in general, EU countries with the highest prison populations (Germany, France, Italy and Spain) allocate a substantial budget to the prison administration, with the exception of Poland. It is further noted that Eastern European countries spend less resources (most of them less than €50,00 per detainee per day) while Western European countries (Italy, France, Germany, and Austria) spend over €100,00, which is still below the costs incurred by northern European countries such as Ireland, the Netherlands or Sweden (between €180,00 and €380,00).” Furthermore, economic restrictions have led to reductions in the budgets allocated to prisons and prisoner welfare in some countries. Portugal is singled out in the report as having that particular problem quite badly. Overcrowding, which is a widespread problem, is cited as being of particular concern. “because of the adverse consequences for the fundamental rights of prisoners which are likely to result, in the most serious cases, in inhuman and degrading treatment.”

How small is too small?

European standards set the minimum amount of space to be granted to each prisoner, and it's this data that is used to assess what counts as "overcrowding". The rules establish the reference criterion for assessing what counts as overcrowding. According to the established European rules for a minimal standard of personal living space in prison, each prisoner should have 6 metres of living space in a single occupancy cell and 4 metres in a multi-occupancy cell. In either case, there must be fully-partitioned toilet facilities. There must be at least 2 metres between the walls of a cell and 2.5 metres between floor and ceiling. It sounds quite reasonable, but it cannot be assumed that failure to meet these standards counts as being incompatible with fundamental rights.



A prison cell

It's a complicated set of recommendations (not exactly rules) that leave much of the interpretation to the people running the prison. In a significant number of complaints alleging insufficient living space being available to an inmate, the European Court of Human Rights considers that when a detainee has less than 3 metres of floor space in multi-occupancy accommodation, there is a strong presumption that the conditions of detention constitute 'degrading treatment in breach of Article 3'. The EU itself lacks standards to be applied in detention facilities and therefore defines minimum standards of

cell space according to case law established by the European Court of Human Rights, which is not an EU body but part of the Council of Europe.

It matters a great deal. A recent report by the United Nations says that a third of prisoners held in detention in European prisons suffer mental health problems. Suicide rates are also high. "Prisons are embedded in communities and investments made in the health of people in prison becomes a community dividend," according to Doctor Hans Henri P. Kluge, the regional director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) at its regional office for Europe. "Incarceration should never become a sentence to poorer health," he said. "All citizens are entitled to good-quality health care regardless of their legal status." Taking care of the inmates is a challenge. "The second status report on prison health in the WHO European region provides an overview of the performance of prisons in the region based on survey data from 36 countries, where more than 600,000 people are incarcerated.

Research has revealed that the commonest ailment among people in prison was a mental health disorder, which affects some 32.8 per cent of the prison population. The WHO had previously raised concern about the shortage of mental health facilities in Europe's prisons, which may go some way towards explaining why the commonest cause of death in European prisons is suicide. One in five European countries has reported serious overcrowding, which can have bad implications for the health of prisoners. The WHO has recommended that legal authorities look at alternatives to incarceration as a punishment.

Overcrowding can also help some prisoners to escape from custody. In a case in the UK, a suspected terrorist escaped from Wandsworth Prison in London by hiding under a delivery truck. He has since been recaptured but it has raised questions about his imprisonment: why was he being held in a relatively low-security facility, for instance? In the UK's case, the Covid pandemic has led to an increase in crime, longer sentences being handed out and a backlog in cases reaching



Wandsworth Prison, South West London

court. It has also led to an increase in the numbers of female prisoners. Although prisoner numbers have been falling in Britain for five years, the Ministry of Justice now anticipates the numbers of female prisoners reaching 4,300 by July 2025, an increase of nearly 30% from today's figure.



Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge

I Fitting everyone in

As the Council of Europe points out, by and large, the public takes little interest in prison matters. In many Council of Europe member States, the prevailing attitude is: we need more security against crime and therefore offenders should be kept off the streets. It's an understandable attitude among law-abiding citizens. The job of the police, courts and prison service is to protect them from criminals. Most people don't want to be involved with criminals in their everyday lives. As a Council of Europe report put it: "we do not want to meet recidivists hardened by inhuman and degrading treatment in overcrowded prisons run by criminal gangs. We want to meet people in good physical and psychological health, people who have made their decision and have the attitude to keep it – people who have acquired the skills needed to reintegrate, re-socialise and live the normal life of law-abiding citizens."

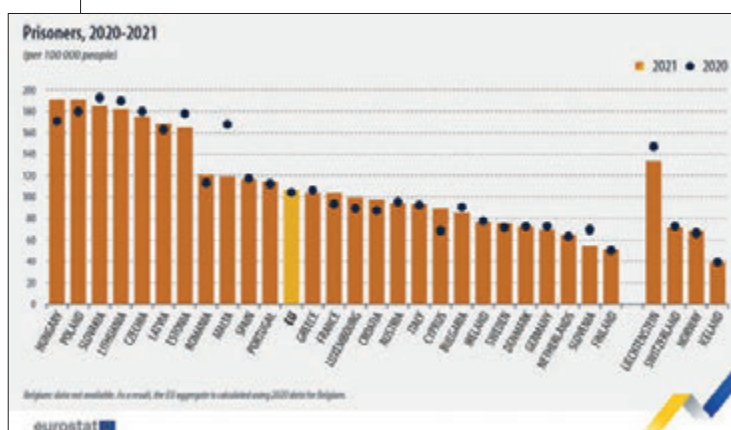
The report, by Ivan Koedjikov, head of the Council's Action Against Crime Department, said that the purpose of prison should be to help prisoners to rebuild their lives in a more positive way, rejecting crime as a means of gaining their daily bread.

Looking around Europe it would seem that there are just too many prisoners for the accommodation available. Since the start of 2023 and month by month, France has been breaking records. As France 24 reports, "prison populations

hit an all-time high on July 1, according to the justice ministry, continuing to rise after reaching 120 percent capacity in April." On 1 July, the prison population hit 74,000 for the first time. Some prisoners are now sleeping on mattresses on the floors of cells already holding two inmates. Occupancy rates have surged alarmingly in some areas, reaching a staggering 212 percent in the Perpignan prison. Things are no less worrying in Belgium. "As of February 15, there were 11,326 inmates in Belgian prisons for 9,752 available places, an overcrowding rate of 16%," reported *Le Monde*. The response to this catastrophe is a plan to build four new prisons by 2030, one in Antwerp, which will be a high security facility and promised to be completed by 2025, and three in Wallonia. Together, they will provide 900 new places.

Luxembourg has an unenviable reputation: more of its prisoners escaped in 2020 than from any of the other 45 nations of the Council of Europe. In 2020, it also had the 4th highest suicide rate among prisoners. In the same year, it also had the fifth highest percentage of pre-trial detainees, 43% of them waiting to appear before a judge. 73% of them were not natives of Luxembourg, the highest proportion of foreign prisoners of the countries surveyed. Prisons in Germany have a different ethos from those elsewhere, being very much focussed on encouraging inmates to lead a life of social responsibility, free of crime, upon their release. They also have more freedom inside prison than those being held in most other countries.

Many of them have access to television and have posters on their walls. Austria has similarly good conditions for prisoners. The Leoben Justice Centre, in the south-eastern state of Styria, consistently ranks as one of the best prisons in the world, to the extent that some prisoners reportedly told Swiss tabloid *Blick* that "you'd stay here voluntarily - nobody will break out" when asked about the conditions.



In the Netherlands, the problem is very different. In fact, it would seem to be the reverse of what other countries are experiencing: it has too few prisoners. But it still has other issues that should be addressed urgently, according to the Council of Europe. A tour of Dutch prisons by the Council's anti-torture committee (CPT) reported excessive security measures and verbal and racist abuse. It also reported that prisoners being held on remand often spent up to 21 hours each day locked in their cells. "While the CPT acknowledges the need for adequate security measures for those who pose an enhanced security risk," said the report, "the highly restrictive regimes and various security measures applied in the units appeared to be excessively restrictive. There can be no justification for the routine handcuffing of persons held in these units." The committee was also concerned about the use

of force at the Rotterdam immigration detention centre, which the CPT found to be excessive. It was also worried about examples of racism there and what it considered to be the overuse of solitary confinement. The committee said that there should be “better safeguards and conditions” at the facility.



© EDM

I Getting better?

Some experts have said that the UK could learn from the rest of Europe in order to improve its prison conditions. It's recorded that Britain's prisons were worse than those in several other European countries, a fact noted by the prison reformer John Howard who made a point of visiting prisons all over Europe during the late 18th century. He wrote that those in Britain were full of sick, emaciated and suffering prisoners living in “stinking hell holes”, infected with what was known at the time as “jail fever”, now known as typhus. The disease may have gone but conditions in British prisons are still awful, with prison budgets cut in the name of austerity and the numbers of frontline staff reduced by some 26%. Assaults have increased, rising by 21% in the year ending September 2022. British prisons are clearly unsafe for prisoners and staff and the number of prison officers leaving the service is on the increase. Inspections have revealed British prisons to be filthy and in no way likely to achieve the aim of rehabilitation. A recent report by the official prison inspectorate referred to one prison as “unsafe” and issued an urgent notification to the government minister responsible about high rates of self-harm and drug use within structures that were themselves very run down. In response to complaints, following an investigation by the Observer newspaper, Andrea Albutt, President of the Prison Governors Association, said “we are doing little more than warehousing people”. She also said: “With too many prisoners and too few staff, it is difficult to keep order in prison.”



© KRIMINALOMSORGEN

A cell at the Ila Detention and Security Prison in Norway

So, can prisons be successful, or even admirable? Yes; we've already noted how Austria's prisons are highly regarded. Norway and other Nordic countries also come high on the list of countries with good prisons. They tend to be smaller with more informal interactions between prisoners and staff, while the food is better and there are meaningful activities. The staff are better paid, too. In Iceland, inspectors saw prisoners cooking their own food, taking part in classes, and carrying out paid work, such as tending animals. It's an object lesson in how good prisons can be if properly funded and run. They also serve the useful social function of making reoffending less likely, which is presumably the overall aim.



© KRIMINALOMSORGEN

Ila Detention and Security Prison, Norway

The organisation Penal Reform International believes that much more remains to be done concerning Europe's penal system. “Some of the key challenges in the region include prison overcrowding, delays in the trial process, poor treatment of people in vulnerable situations and in some areas poor coordination between criminal justice agencies, lack of resources and political will to make significant reforms.” Matters were undoubtedly made worse by the COVID pandemic, which led to prisoners being locked up more and with reduced opportunities for interaction with others. Effectively, it enforced a form of solitary confinement, which is bad for discipline and which causes distress among inmates. The question now arises: how do we move forward? As the organisation writes in its annual report for

2022: “Over 11-million men, women and children are in prison around the world, a large proportion of them for minor and non-violent offences. Over 3-million people in detention are awaiting trial. Overall, crime is not rising; however, the number of people in contact with criminal justice systems across the globe, and significantly the number of people in detention, is rising.”

There is also the additional problem of justice for women and for children. There are more than 740,000 women in prisons around the world, even though they account for 3% or fewer of the overall prison population. When women are imprisoned, of course, it also affects any children they may have. For the most part, their crimes are non-violent. The numbers of female prisoners is rising and at a faster rate than the rise in the numbers of male prisoners. In the United States, for instance, the number of women serving sentences of more than one year grew by 757% between 1977 and 2004, which is roughly twice the rate of the rise in male prisoner numbers, which comes to some 388%. Women normally constitute between 2 and 9% of the prison population, but the effect on their families – especially young children – is disproportionately greater than the imprisonment of male parents.



Seized drugs in a UK prison

The United Nations wants to see greater use of alternative forms of punishment to prison, especially for female offenders. “Prisons have very serious health implications,” writes the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). “Prisoners are likely to have existing health problems on entry to prison, as they are predominantly from poorly educated and socio-economically deprived sectors of the general population, with minimal access to adequate health services. Their health conditions deteriorate in prisons which are overcrowded, where nutrition is poor, sanitation inadequate and access to fresh air and exercise often unavailable.” All in all, it is far better to keep an offender out of prison if possible, and that is especially true for women.

There is little global consistency in sentencing policies, and it means that what is seen as a major crime in one country may be viewed much more leniently in another, as Catherine Heard wrote in a blog for the Institute for Penal Reform International (PRI): “For a drug trafficking conviction you could be looking at life imprisonment and a hefty fine if you were sentenced in Thailand, but be home within months if you happened to be in the Netherlands,” she wrote. Furthermore, the number of women in prison has increased 33% over the past 20 years, compared

with a 25% rise among men. Around 261,200 children worldwide are estimated to have been in detention on any given day in 2020 – up from previous estimates of 160,000–250,000 children in 2018. It’s not an encouraging sign, although offenders must receive some sort of punishment both as a discouragement to further offending and to satisfy the demands of honest citizens who demand some form of retribution, just to balance things up.



© COE

But prison is not an effective solution for the problems of law-breaking in our society. “With some research,” writes Britain’s Heywood Foundation, a public policy research body, “it is clear that, with a 65% to 77% reoffending rate and inmates facing diminished career prospects, more criminal connections, poor connection to social services, poor education opportunities – which do not link-up with other prisons or when outside of prison – and a higher chance of being introduced to substance abuse or addiction; our prisons represent extremely poor value for money.” As the World Economic Forum notes: “Most criminal justice systems around the world are increasingly reliant on prisons. Globally, the number of prisoners has grown by almost 20% since the turn of the millennium and continues to rise.” The United States has by far the highest incarceration rate with 698 out of 100,000, followed (a long way behind) by the UK with 139 out of 100,000. The lowest figure comes from Iceland with just 38. Is it worth it? The World Economic Forum says not. “In most countries, the evidence is clear that they are not. In the US, two in three (68%) of people released from prison are rearrested within three years of release. In England and Wales, two in three young people (66%) and nearly half of adults leaving prison will commit another crime within a year.” Finding an alternative form of punishment for criminals will not be an easy task, but the current system is clearly broken, so perhaps we should look hard at countries like Austria and Norway, which seem to do things better.

Jacob Bright

Olena Zelenska, First Lady of Ukraine :
« Soft power + Heart power = Smart power »

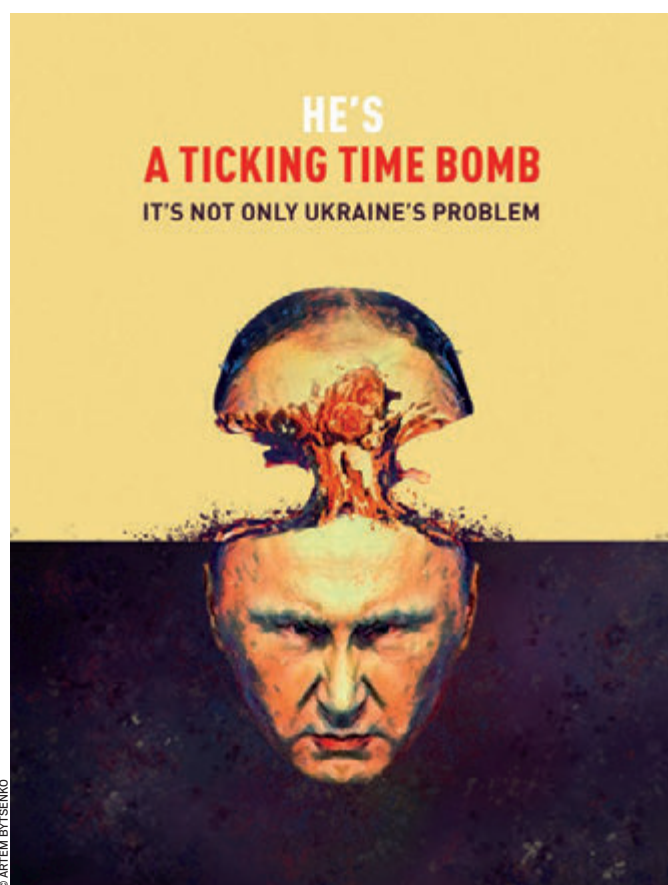
THE SOFT POWER POLITICS OF UKRAINE

In February 2022, Europe witnessed its first military confrontation in decades. This local dispute, with its high potential for escalation and spill over, caused widespread concern. The threat persists, with many drawing parallels to the ominous atmosphere of the 1930s that preceded World War II. However, others argue that such a scenario is implausible in today's world, asserting that contemporary wars are, in any case, far more intricate and multi-layered than those of eighty years ago.

Indeed, in today's world, the image has significantly greater impact and influence than in the past. News and information disseminate rapidly, and victories can often be achieved beyond the confines of traditional battlefields.

Ukraine's successful garnering of media support in the face of Russian aggression can be attributed not only to their persistent and creative presence across all information platforms and channels, but also to the empathetic response they elicited from ordinary people. This response was not just a result of the innate human tendency to support the underdog, but also a testament to the inspiring actions and reactions of both the Ukrainian people and their leaders, which resonated deeply both domestically and internationally.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's initial response is now celebrated: *'The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride!'*. Whether these were his actual words or not is uncertain. However, their impact was to galvanise the local populace and elicit an unparalleled reaction and support from international public opinion and policymakers. This once again demonstrated the potency of words. Since the onset of this conflict, we have continually witnessed the effective use of soft diplomacy by Ukrainian leaders and others.



© ARTEM BYTSEVKO

Poster published on the war.ukraine.ua2 site

In a recent conversation with Viktoriya Lialina-Boiko, who serves as the Deputy Director for Communication and Public Diplomacy at Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she shared insights into their communication strategy and its evolution, particularly after February 2022.

'In 2021, together with the experts in communications we developed this strategy, for the first time for the MFA. We then defined the mission, our vision, main target audiences as well as the preferred and most effective channels of communications. This document considered all the lessons learned from communication challenges we had faced in times of crises, and it is still relevant now, during full scale Russia's war against Ukraine. In January 2021, the official website of Ukraine — www.ukraine.ua — was launched. Before the war, this was primarily meant to promote Ukraine, its beauty and traditions, economic and tourism potential, to foreign audiences. The platform told an inspiring story about Ukraine, as everyone could get their first impression of the country.' (Viktoriya Lialina-Boiko)

Through aspects such as customs, tourism, culinary arts, music, and economic opportunities, the website showcased the vast potential of the country. Ukraine.ua emerged as a potent voice across all social media platforms. With over a million followers on Instagram, it ranks among the top five official country accounts on this widely-used social media platform. It serves as an effective communication tool to connect with individuals worldwide.

'After the full-scale war started, the website was no longer relevant in terms of information, as the public wanted to find out news about the war. So, in only one week, our partners and our team succeeded to create a new website, war.ukraine.ua — Ukraine's official and verified digital platform launched to cover Russia's invasion, now available in 9 languages.' (Viktoriya Lialina-Boiko)

The communication strategy astutely designated distinct communication channels of the MFA for various target audiences: Facebook primarily for the domestic audience, Twitter for public officials, and Instagram for the international general public.

'We see the unprecedented attention to Ukraine and try to satisfy it with the most creative communication products.' (Viktoriya Lialina-Boiko)

Since the onset of the war, numerous international public figures have rallied to aid Ukraine.

A host of artists have participated in charity concerts worldwide, while others have backed various initiatives. Hollywood actor Liev Schreiber, whose maternal grandfather was a Ukrainian Jewish immigrant to the United States, has made several trips to Ukraine since last February and has formed a group to support organisations assisting Ukrainians. Alongside another renowned actor, Sean Penn, and several international athletes, he serves as an ambassador for www.United24.gov.ua. This official fundraising platform of Ukraine, launched by President Zelenskyy, has amassed over US\$ 337 million to date.



Canadian actress Katheryn Winnick One of UNITED24's Ambassadors

Canadian actress, film star, director, and producer, Katheryn Winnick boasts a captivating family history rooted in Ukraine. Her parents are the offspring of Ukrainian immigrants who initially relocated to Germany to escape the Soviet regime before eventually settling in Canada. Her maternal grandparents were born in Halychyna. Her paternal grandfather enlisted in the Sich Riflemen, even going so far as to claim he was two years older than his actual age to meet the eligibility requirements for service.

Katheryn Winnick has nurtured her Ukrainian heritage since childhood. Until the age of eight, she communicated solely in Ukrainian, attended a Ukrainian Sunday school in Toronto, and was a scout. On the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's independence, Winnick made a visit to the land of her ancestors.

On February 24, 2022, the actress expressed her solidarity with Ukrainians across all her social media platforms, stating, *'We are a peaceful nation. We do not deserve this war'*. By March 2022, Winnick and her mother had established The Winnick Foundation, a charitable organisation dedicated to raising funds for Ukraine's needs. Her journey then led her to become involved with UNITED24. As the platform's first Canadian ambassador, she advocates for the "Rebuild Ukraine" programme.

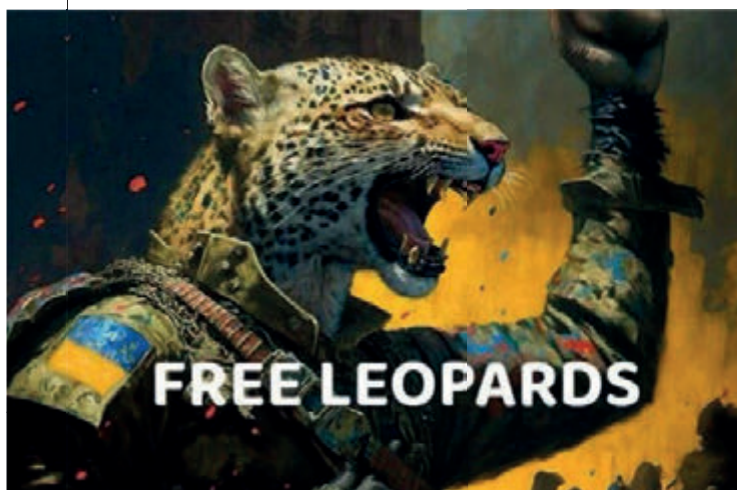
'A home is where a family comes together. It's where love is shared, and memories are made. Rebuild Ukraine will rebuild not only homes but also families', Katheryn Winnick shared.

These platforms, along with all other pillars of Ukraine's public diplomacy strategy, have so far developed numerous image projects. For instance, on 21 December, the longest night

of the year, a campaign was launched to highlight Ukraine's current energy crisis to the general public. A remarkable number of iconic buildings worldwide, including the Colosseum in Rome, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and the Sydney Opera House, were momentarily plunged into darkness. The accompanying message urged support for the Ukrainian population with electricity generators.

To rally support for the dispatch of Leopard tanks to the Ukrainian military, a "Free the Leopards" flash mob was initiated on the Ukraine.us Instagram account. Participants were invited to don leopard costumes or leopard print attire, and then share their photos with the appropriate tags. This innovative approach went viral, achieving widespread global attention.

Another inventive initiative by the MFA, in collaboration with Saatchi & Saatchi Ukraine, involved reworking the lyrics of the renowned Christmas carol, 'Carol of the Bells'. The original music for this song was composed by Ukrainian musician Mykola Leontovych in 1914. The revised version appealed for aid for children affected by the war in Ukraine, who could no longer enjoy a normal Christmas. Listeners were encouraged to use the Shazam App and then donate to the needs of Ukrainian children through the Olena Zelenska Foundation. This project has garnered several international accolades, including Silver and Bronze at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity.



A Ukrainian social network photo for the 'Free Leopards' campaign

All these innovative approaches are designed to ensure the message reaches individuals of diverse backgrounds and geographical locations. The communication strategy of Ukraine has demonstrated its effectiveness, directness, and diversity. A fundamental component of this strategy is diplomatic activity, which, in addition to traditional and conventional methods, includes the involvement of spouses. This has proven to be a potent and intriguing promotional tool. The network of diplomatic spouses is extensive and can significantly enhance the visibility of actions. Ukraine has fully leveraged this and acknowledged its immense potential.

Tanya Sybiha, the spouse of Andriy Sybiha, who formerly served as a Ukrainian ambassador and is currently a top advisor to President Volodymyr Zelensky and deputy head of his office, shared with me their diplomatic endeavors and actions, particularly since the onset of the war: *'It was in December 2021, three months before the war started, that we,*

the Ukrainian diplomatic spouses, had a first meeting with the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska. This was a summit for the spouses of Ukrainian ambassadors at first. It eventually turned into a "Platform of the Ukrainian diplomatic spouses" involving all the spouses and designed to support them in their efforts at soft cultural diplomacy, and to enhance their presence on the international diplomatic stage. We are now already at our third Summit.'



The Ukrainian First Lady, (right), meeting with representatives of Spouses of Ukrainian Diplomats Association, August 2023

Tanya Sybiha, who previously served as a UN official and is currently a board member of the diplomatic spouses' platform, explains that these meetings are also designed to equip the spouses with new tools: *'We have lectures about communication and protocol, we discuss our official presence in different projects. We coordinate all the work, especially in Europe, together with our foreign ministry. It's multifaceted and a platform where we all share our experiences or brainstorm for new ideas. Together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we have public speaking workshops; we provide videos and other support material, to help with an efficient communication. When we connect our efforts, we are more successful. Culture is very important, it builds bridges. That is why I feel that it is so important to present our culture to the world. People need to learn more about our own traditions and long history. We, as spouses, do not have any formal role, but we are active and try to do our part. I have a saying: "You have to find your super-power and use it!" Well, our super power is in our voice, our actions.'* (Tanya Sybiha)

An illustrative example comes to mind. Last year, I had the opportunity to interview Maria Yemelianova, the spouse of a Ukrainian diplomat. She conceived the idea of launching a charity website offering cooking classes based on traditional Ukrainian recipes (www.ukrainian-taste.weblium.site). The website collects donations and is hosted on a free platform, Weblium, designed for volunteers and NGOs providing humanitarian aid to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

One of the most publicised events in recent months, which stands as a testament to the totally successful efforts of these diplomatic spouses, was their visit to the Vatican. Initially, around 20 spouses of Ukrainian diplomats convened in Istanbul, where they met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the 270th Archbishop of the 2,000-year-old Church of Constantinople and a prominent figure in the Orthodox Church. Subsequently, these women and their children were granted an audience with

Pope Francis at the Vatican, marking a first-time occurrence. In a private meeting that spanned nearly an hour and a half, Pope Francis, the leader of the Catholic Church, listened to their poignant testimonies and offered prayers for the well-being of Ukrainian children deeply affected by the war.

Svitlana Melnyk, the wife of the former Ambassador of Ukraine to Germany (January 2015 – October 2022), who holds a PhD in Law and is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of State and Law of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, was among the spouses present at this audience with the Pope. During their tenure in Berlin, she and her husband, the ambassador, were the foremost advocates for Ukraine, tirelessly championing their country's cause in Germany. She explained that it was an intensely emotional experience that also conveyed a potent message; she is well-versed in such matters: *'The last two years (2021-2022) of our diplomatic life in Berlin were extremely tense. Especially since April 2021, the ominous shadow of a full-scale war began to hang over Ukraine like a black cloud. We felt the approach of this artificial hurricane on our land. My husband, Ambassador Andriy Melnyk, tried to inform the German public about the ever-increasing threat of armed intervention by the Kremlin, using all available tools. The soft power of domestic diplomacy came in handy as I had to put aside all the classical tools, forget about the traditional methods which are at the disposal of an ambassador's spouse, and instead gather my own strength, relying primarily on creativity, experience, personal contacts, social networks and all other levers to help as much as possible, so that Ukraine could survive in those eerie times of blackout. The doors of our residence became wide open for the German media, where television crews or ordinary journalists could come at any time of the day to record an interview or comment with the Ambassador.'*



Enthronement of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, during the hour of liturgy of the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev

This trend continued until the last moment of our departure from Berlin. I was constantly preparing the room for filming in our residence and hospitably greeted German journalists. Often, they also wanted to hear my informal thoughts in order to better understand the complex international situation. I tried by all possible means to convey to them the feelings, position and thoughts of our people, the drama of the whole situation. My critical post on Facebook about the story of the provision of German helmets was widely distributed, also by the Russian media. That is when I also understood that defending our position publicly during the war will be associated with waves of discredit. However, it only testified that my open and public activity in covering events, the position of Ukraine, or explaining the actions of the ambassador on social pages, acts as an effective tool of soft power in diplomacy and on the information battlefield. In Berlin, many women, members of the diplomatic club, have launched active humanitarian activities to help Ukraine and our refugees since the beginning of the war. We often communicated during the first months of the war and supported each other in various humanitarian projects. Sometimes they were not so large-scale, but they were done from the heart and showed their solidarity, which became an invaluable support.’ (Svitlana Melnyk)



Former Ukrainian Ambassador to Germany and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andriy Melnyk

On the morning of the Russian invasion, the group of Ukrainian diplomatic spouses quickly reached out to each other to coordinate emergency actions. They agreed on a unified response and a collective declaration, which they disseminated on social media platforms, imploring the entire international community for assistance. Since then, they have wielded cultural diplomacy as one of the most potent weapons in modern warfare. They have organised charity concerts worldwide, featuring the talents of prominent Ukrainian

artists they wished to showcase to the world. The First Lady of Ukraine personally endorsed several of these projects, delivering heartfelt welcome speeches to the attendees



Memorial entitled “Testament of Bucha” on George-Grosz-Platz, Berlin-Charlottenburg, Germany

Svitlana Melnyk was at the heart of organising such an event in Berlin: *‘We held the first big concert already on March, 19 at the Berlin Philharmonic, with only two and a half weeks to organise. More than 1,200 seats were sold out. The brightest performers of classical music and opera, tenor Dmytro Popov, pianists Kateryna Titova and Oleksiy Botvinov and violinist Bohdana Pivnenko, beautifully performed music by Ukrainian composers. German society discovered Ukraine as a cultural nation in a completely new light. All the funds collected during the concert were transferred through the German branch of the Red Cross and directed to the creation of the Center for the Reception of Ukrainian Refugees in Tegel, Berlin. A month later, a unique gala concert of world ballet followed, with prima ballerina Yana Salenko. It raised funds for the purchase of a neurosurgical instrument for the hospital in Kropyvnytskyi. Another fantastic public diplomacy project that we, together with the volunteers, managed to carry out in Berlin, happened at the end of August 2022: the installation of the ‘Testament of Bucha’. On the central and famous Kurfürstendamm Street in Berlin, a burned minibus was brought from Bucha, in which three women and a 14-year-old girl had been mercilessly shot. This exhibition caused a colossal public resonance and a powerful media echo. (<https://testamentofbuch.com>). Meanwhile, I had to answer the hundreds of letters that arrived daily at the residence, asking for support. These are busy times for all our diplomatic spouses’.* (Svitlana Melnyk)

Indeed, each individual is actively contributing to this intricate communication puzzle, which

I am confident will serve as a case study for university students in the years to come. It has already been demonstrated that culture has emerged as a crucial battleground in modern warfare, and that innovative and targeted soft-power tools can sometimes outperform actual weapons in effectiveness. It certainly appears that these days, soft power is synonymous with Ukraine...

Alexandra Paucescu
alexandra.paucescu@europe-diplomatic.eu

TIMELESS CHIC

STANDOUT FASHION AND BEAUTY TRENDS

RED OCTOBER

With the arrival of autumn, a captivating trend is taking centre stage in the fashion and beauty world—the emergence of the colour red. Prepare to elevate your style with these seven irresistible items that exude energy and glamour.

| The red handbag

The symbolism of red handbags has long represented power, self-confidence and sophistication. This season, their significance is reaching unprecedented heights. Prominent fashion houses like Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Prada showcased an extensive collection of red hand bags featuring diverse shapes and sizes during the Fall-Winter Fashion Weeks held in Paris and Milan.



© MARCJACOBS.COM

Marc Jacobs Tote bag: A go-to carryall that's ready for anything you throw in it



© PRADA.COM

Prada Galleria bag: The Galleria has emerged as a defining symbol of Prada's identity, contributing to the very essence of "timelessness."



© SPOTTED ON ZALANDO.FR

Coach Tabby bag: An exclusive patent leather edition of the iconic crossbody bag

| Red lips

Undeniably, red lips possess a timeless allure. With red poised to be the season's dominant colour, red lipsticks have attained unprecedented popularity. One remarkable advantage of red lipstick is its ability to minimise the need for elaborate facial makeup, as it effortlessly makes a bold statement on its own.



@JULIE.BELANSKA.BEAUTY © INSTAGRAM



© SPOTTED ON SEPHORA.COM

Glossier Ultralip High Shine Lipstick with Hyaluronic Acid: We found nothing more appetising than this "watermelon red" shade

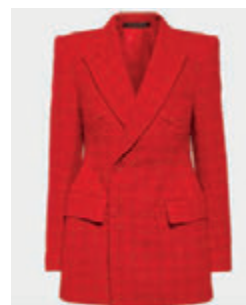
M.A.C Powder Kiss Liquid Lipcolour: a liquid lipstick with a whipped, mousse-like texture, providing ten hours of hydration



© MACCOSMETICS.COM

| The red jacket

While the classic black or brown jacket remains an essential staple for autumn, a distinctive particularly burgundy and cherry red variation is now making its presence known: the red jacket (or blazer). This style is gaining popularity across influencers' social media feeds, showcasing an array of red shades.



© SPOTTED ON MYTHERESA.COM

Balenciaga Hourglass blazer: This elegant tweed design is an iconic representation of its genre



© SPOTTED ON YOOX.COM



@DARJABARANNIK © INSTAGRAM

Isabel Marant jacket: This waisted jacket, made of 100% lambskin embodies casual chic at its finest

WRAP UP IN STYLE

The fashion season of autumn 2023 is promising to be captivating, showcasing jacket and coat trends that blend the rich heritage of classic styles with a daring and modern twist. Let's discover the four major trends.

#1 The leather bomber jacket

As we enter the 2023 school year, the iconic leather jacket continues to hold its position as a timeless autumn essential, but it is the leather bomber jacket that is making a stunning comeback. This trend seamlessly combines the daring essence of urban fashion with the everlasting elegance of leather, and it has garnered attention from renowned fashion icons worldwide, including Hailey Bieber, as well as the Hadid sisters, Gigi and Bella, to name just a few.



@AMYROWLEYY © INSTAGRAM



© BA-SH.COM

The ba&sh Rue jacket reinvents the bomber with its oversized design



@FRANCESCASAFFARI © INSTAGRAM



© TOTEME-STUDIO.COM

TOTEME coat jacket featuring an attached scarf that's embroidered along the edges for an artisanal finish

#2 Coats with an integrated scarf

For the autumn-winter season of 2023, the maxi scarf is poised to be a prominent trend, making coats with integrated scarves a must-have for the colder months. Blending modern aesthetics with smart functionality, these coats embody a blend of practicality and elegance. It appears that the fashion-forward 'it-girls' have taken notice of the Toteme coat with a scarf, setting their sights on it as a coveted piece.

#3 The long, black coat

Autumn 2023 also marks the return of that timeless classic, the long black coat. Renowned for its elegance and sophistication, this iconic coat takes its rightful place at the forefront of trends this season, as seen in collections by Chanel, Prada, Khaite, Givenchy, Dolce & Gabbana, and more. From graceful and minimalist designs to structured silhouettes with broad shoulders, the long black coat effortlessly adapts to various styles and occasions, solidifying its status as an absolute must-have for autumn/winter 2023.



@AMANDA_SAND © INSTAGRAM



© MAXMARA.COM

An icon in the world of fashion with perfect proportions and an oversized line with kimono sleeves that make the style timeless. The 101801 coat is the best-known Max Mara garment in the world

All fashion sources are from Stylight.

Stylight is the world's leading online search platform for fashion, beauty and design. It helps users search through more than 1.500 online shops at once, across 15 different markets worldwide. It can therefore publish data reports about products, brands and current trends

EUROPE *Diplomatic* magazine

YOUR ESSENTIAL MONTHLY
NEWSMAGAZINE



Offer a printed edition subscription to a friend
Contact us : europediplomaticmagazine@gmail.com

BY YOUR SIDE IN MONACO FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS

Discover our solutions in Private Banking,
Retail Banking and Corporate Banking.

privatebanking.societegenerale.mc

**THE FUTURE
IS YOU**



**SOCIÉTÉ
GÉNÉRALE**

The present document has been distributed in Monaco by Société Générale Private Banking (Monaco) S.A.M., located 13/15, bd. des Moulins – 98000 Monaco – Principality of Monaco, governed by the *Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution* and the *Commission de Contrôle des Activités Financières*. The financial products marketed in Monaco can be reserved for qualified investors in accordance with the Law No. 1339 of 07/09/2007 and Sovereign Ordinance No 1.285 of 10/09/2007. Further details are available upon request or on www.privatebanking.societegenerale.mc. © Getty Images.