

# EUROPE DIPLOMATIC

MAGAZINE



**ELECTRIC  
DREAMS**

**PLUGGED IN,  
POWERING DOWN**



December 2024

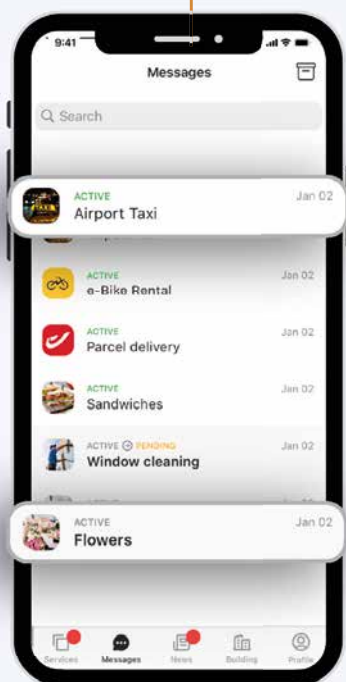
N°65

BRUSSELS - PARIS - GENEVA - MONACO



## 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](mailto:info@asknestor.com)

☎ +32 2 669 07 29

🌐 [asknestor.com](http://asknestor.com)



# 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](mailto:europediplomaticmagazine@gmail.com)

Publisher: **Karel Verpoorten**  
Editor-in-Chief: **Trajan Dereville**  
Editor: **Galaxydigisat Sarl**  
29, bd d'Italie - 98000 Monaco  
Legal Deposit: on publication  
Monthly publication



## **6 GOING FURTHER, CLEANLY AND FOR LESS**

The EU and various governments want to encourage a move towards electric vehicles, but are the public or the manufacturers buying it?

## **13 NEWS IN BRIEF**

From around the World

## **22 THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO**

A nexus in global power dynamics

## **30 TENSION IN EUROPE VIEWED FROM THE RIGHT**

How Europe's right-wing-leaning politicians view the ongoing war in Ukraine and Russian hegemony, among other issues

## **35 PAYING TO SEE THE WORLD?**

Do tourists value a location more highly if they've had to pay to visit it? Or do they stay away?

## **40 MARETERRA**

'A majestic island out of the sea

## **45 RITES OF RENEWAL**

'The enchantment of new beginnings

## **49 TIMELESS CHIC**





10A

Nikola Hendrickx



# EDITORIAL

## 2025 : THE YEAR OF ALL HOPES

Throughout 2024, global diplomacy has faced severe challenges. From Vladimir Putin's persistent aggression in Ukraine and interference in Georgia and Moldova, to Israel's determination to neutralise the threats posed by Hamas and Hezbollah, China's belligerent posture towards Taiwan, and the nuclear provocations of North Korean dictator Kim Jon Un, diplomatic efforts have thus far failed to produce positive results.

The coming year is likely to unfold within a significantly altered political landscape. Europe has witnessed a wave of political upheaval, with some countries experiencing a shift towards the right and others towards the left. Further political changes are anticipated in the near future.

The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States represents a pivotal moment in history, one that will have a profound impact on the global political and economic landscape. The United States has a long history of adapting to emerging challenges, and this event was no exception. The practice of "Realpolitik" swiftly reemerged after this victory, which was greeted with both immense delight and profound dismay by some. But despite the mixed reactions, world leaders were quick to extend their congratulations.

As was the case in 2016, both American and European media and pollsters have been humbled by the outcome of this election. Their failure to accurately predict the result highlights the dangers of letting personal biases cloud judgment. As Europe navigates this new era, its leaders, whether supporters or opponents of the new U.S president must prioritise diplomacy, dialogue, and constructive engagement, abandoning unproductive tactics and baseless assumptions.

The president-elect's controversial cabinet picks have sparked outrage within certain segments of the political spectrum. Nevertheless, European leaders must acknowledge that these individuals will be their interlocutors for the next four years. The future holds important negotiations, and they have no choice but to engage with them regardless of their personal opinions.

The president-elect now enjoys a trifecta of power, and is a force to be reckoned with. Republicans now control both the House and the Senate; Trump therefore has the power to reshape the nation and his ambitious foreign policy agenda, if enacted, has the potential to cause unpredictable global upheaval.

The world is holding its breath, waiting for the next move. With Ukrainian president Zelensky proposing an end to the conflict in 2025 through negotiations, and German Chancellor Scholz reaching out to Putin, it seems some are already anticipating the president-elect's future moves. The stark contrast between the criticism levelled against Donald Trump's interactions with Putin and the muted response to Scholz's phone call to the Russian president highlights a concerning double standard.

To tackle the economic, political, and military challenges ahead, particularly those posed by Russia and China as they seek to capitalise on perceived weaknesses, stronger European unity will be essential. It is crucial that the next U.S. president acknowledges when their political agenda doesn't align with expected outcomes. Whether the focus is on economic policy, military isolationism, or energy strategy, we can only hope that the new administration will consider the potential global consequences of their actions.

*Trajan Dereville*  
Editor-in-Chief  
trajan.dereville@europe-diplomatic.eu

# ANNO 2035

## GOING FURTHER, CLEANLY AND FOR LESS

---

**The EU and various governments want to encourage a move towards electric vehicles, but are the public or the manufacturers buying it?**

---







The real issue here is climate change. Donald Trump doesn't believe in it, but most climate scientists - or meteorologists - emphatically do. One of Trump's comments is interesting and informative: "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make US manufacturing non-competitive," he said. He may believe that (although I personally doubt it) but his view of global warming seems to be that if some days are cold and there is snow falling or a chilly wind blowing then global warming can't be happening. I find it hard to believe he's really that naïve and simplistic but I'm not a psychologist and I suspect that raw ambition can push all other considerations out of the way. Trump himself has dismissed talk about climate change and global warming as "alarmist", but if it is really happening, as most scientists and climate experts believe, then it's rather more alarming than alarmist. It also seems that not even a majority of the members of his Republican party share Trump's negative view. A poll conducted at Monmouth University, a private educational establishment in New Jersey, found that almost two thirds of Republicans now believe climate change is happening. That's 15% more than was the case three years ago.

It's in response to fears over global warming that the European Union set 2035 as the target date for an end to the manufacture of vehicles powered by internal combustion engines or in ways that generate pollution. It's sticking to that deadline, too, despite opposition from several European manufacturers and the embarrassingly large numbers of unsold Chinese electric cars clogging up quaysides and docks, still waiting to be sold. The plan was that by holding the threat of a total ban over the carmakers' heads, EU politicians would inspire or even lead a switch to electric power, despite objections from Europe's own manufacturers. First, of course, is a call to stop making vehicles that require internal combustion engines at all. From 2035 onwards, it would be illegal to produce and sell new vehicles that emit carbon monoxide; a ban on those not using electric power would come later. It was to be called the "Fit for 55" package of measures, aiming to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gas by at least 55% compared with 1990 levels, with the ultimate ambition being to make the EU climate neutral by 2050.



Export-bound vehicles await shipment in Yantai Port, Shandong Province, China

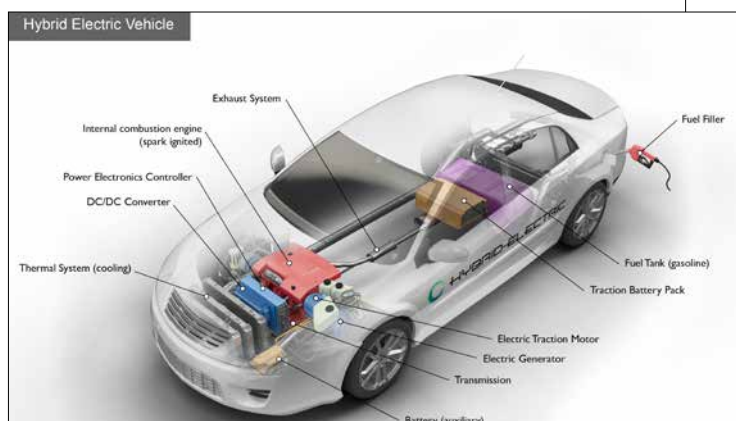
But it hasn't all gone exactly according to plan, although it was a very ambitious plan. So ambitious, in fact, that there had to be compromises to get the legislation passed, with Germany in particular pushing for loopholes, which in turn led to some manufacturers switching their plans from pure zero-emission full electric vehicles to a proportion of hybrid types capable of running on carbon-neutral fuels. It also meant a greater tax on imports of Chinese-made electric vehicles which in turn has led to a build-up of unsold Chinese electric vehicles (EVs). Millions of them. European manufacturers, however, have been scaling back their much-vaunted plans to increase the numbers of electrically-powered vehicles they make whilst reducing other types. At least fifteen famous makers have announced a delay in a planned switch to 100% electric-powered vehicle. They include Ford, General Motors, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Aston Martin, Toyota and Volvo (which is now Chinese-owned).

The whole issue certainly caught the public imagination, with a large proportion of the perceived pollution being blamed on emissions from various vehicles. So, changing to a non-polluting source of energy sounds like a great idea, but it's actually very confusing, with a wide range of definitions about types and their possible emissions, and with different options attracting a different customer base. What, for instance, is a hybrid vehicle? And what is a "mild hybrid"? There is a bewildering number of types on offer, which inevitably leads to uncertainty and confusion. This may explain why they haven't caught on quite as quickly as the manufacturers and politicians imagined and predicted, although they have certainly caught on quite a bit and their growth is progressing at an accelerating rate, meaning that they represent the future.

The strange thing is that some websites enthuse about how electric vehicles (EVs) are catching on fast, while others (albeit fewer) say they're not. However, adapting factories to produce what is, in reality, a totally new product takes time and trouble, and that means it impacts on profits. The car makers seem to find the prospect of making hybrids more appealing than switching to all-out electric vehicles. The fact is that EVs are failing to attract Western buyers as much as expected.

The result has been an overall fall in demand. Meanwhile, Chinese manufacturers have been surging ahead, largely because their EVs are much cheaper. Their Western rivals are finding it impossible to compete. Another point against Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) is that makers can earn more from plug-in hybrids. BEVs lose them money. Yes, sales in the West are rising but at less than half the rate they are in China. Audi has announced a reduction in its EV goals, as have Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, Ford, Kia BMW and a number of others, although Audi has also talked about some "range extender" technology in the pipeline.





Let's take a look at the various definitions, starting with "full hybrids", sometimes called "self-charging hybrids". In most cases this involves a petrol or diesel engine whose main function is to charge up the vehicle's batteries, which are then used as the energy source for the motion of the vehicle itself. Another type of power train is a "mild-hybrid", which can involve a small generator replacing the starter motor and alternator, along with a small battery. This system can boost the performance and improve the fuel economy, too. Fully electric versions, which generally cost more to buy, are nevertheless proving to be the most popular options, although their maximum ranges differ wildly, from a mere 160 kilometres to a more useful 644 kilometres. For all the perceived disadvantages, there is nothing that cannot be overcome with a bit of ingenuity and enough confidence that the future really will be electric. Even so, quite a lot of experts are already predicting that sales of electric vehicles will overtake those of petrol and diesel-powered types quite soon. General Motors originally predicted that all of its vehicles will be electric by 2035, but it has slightly toned down its enthusiasm in the light of experience. Ford said that every vehicle it sold in Europe will be electric as early as 2030, by which time Volkswagen has said that 70% of the vehicles it produces will be electric-powered. Even the mighty Jaguar, producer in days gone by of the much-envied E-type, (the car that many young men who were rich enough wanted to buy because they thought they would prove irresistible to young women; a "bird-puller", in the jargon of the time). Certainly, sales of electric vehicles are climbing fairly rapidly, even if you, like me, have never driven one and the numbers arriving in showrooms are shrinking. The demand is unclear. In fact, manufacturers seem to have lost some of their early enthusiasm.



All-Electric I-Pace 400 Sports Jaguar

## I Keep it clean

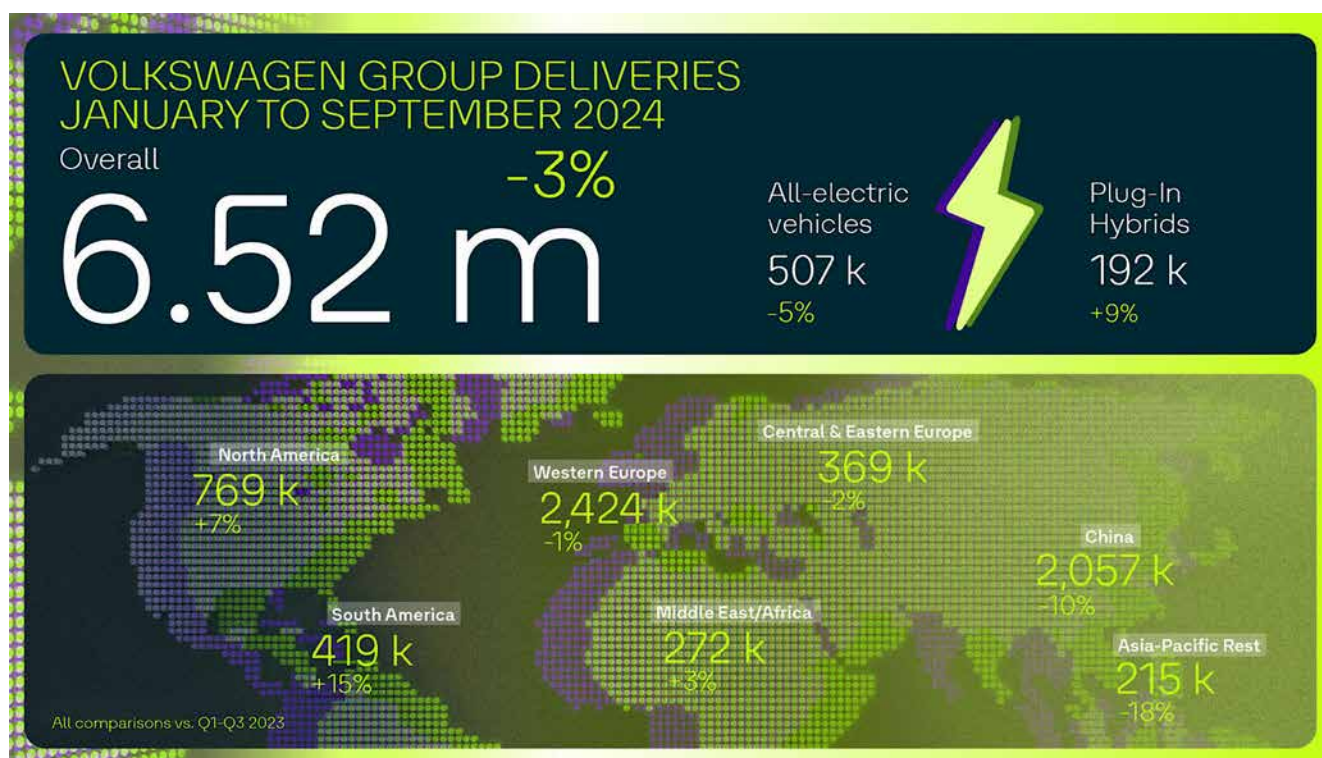
Moving on, the range of available electrically-powered vehicles stretches to "plug-in hybrids", which are seen as a kind of compromise between traditional vehicles, employing petrol or diesel power, and a full electric version. Plug-in hybrids vary in their ranges from just 32 kilometres to almost 100. They are also more expensive to buy when compared with a regular hybrid, although if they are charged regularly and fairly frequently they can cost less to run. Under normal conditions, it takes around three hours to fully charge an EV battery for a fully electric vehicle. The range, once such a battery is full, varies enormously, according to battery capacity, which is why drivers are advised to recharge their vehicles as often as conveniently possible. Nobody wants to be stuck in the middle of nowhere with a totally flat battery and no charging facilities in sight.



2024 Toyota Hybrid Lineup

Fully electric vehicles are often quite an expensive option, although running costs are comparatively low. Perhaps that's why more than one in six new cars is now electric, and as the charging infrastructure grows in its spread and availability, so the attraction of having an electric vehicle increases. Most of them are being made in China. The Japanese motor manufacturer Toyota has said that it intends to unveil a new car in 2027-2028 with a range of 1,000 kilometres with a battery that takes just ten minutes to charge, using liquid components instead of solids.

I have no idea how that could work and at the time of writing they're not saying. However good they are, however, electric vehicles will never have the sexy roar and growl of six powerful cylinders or a V-8. My favourite driving experience of all time came some years ago when I took my wife to Strasbourg, and she arranged for us to visit the Alsace Motor Museum. Best of all, she arranged for me to drive seven laps of the museum's circuit in a Chevrolet Corvette C1, which has been my dream car since childhood. It lived up to all my highest expectations and driving it was a real thrill.



Electric vehicles remain surrounded by a cloud of myths and misconceptions, even though the United States is aiming to have 50% of all its new vehicles powered by electricity by 2030. It's an ambitious target. But will the West be able to generate enough electricity to meet what is sure to be increased demand? Throughout the West, research continues into "smart chargers" and regulations to ensure there will be sufficient power when needed. In the United States, "smart chargers" are called "Time of Use Rate Programmes", to ensure that prices vary throughout the day, enabling power generators to select the cheapest to recharge your EV when there's plenty of power available and preferably when it's being generated by "green" means: offshore wind farms and other such clean and pollution-free means of generation. We mustn't forget, either, that the switch to electric power is a gradual process, it's not all happening overnight, and this allows the increasing use of renewable energy to happen gradually. More and more such facilities are under construction, despite opposition in some quarters. The UK, for instance, has seen an increase in campaigns to oppose the building of photovoltaic facilities through solar panels on farmland, but it's unlikely to get very far: photovoltaic power is clean and comes for free (apart from the need for the infrastructure). Most people don't seem to mind solar panels, either. In addition, there are biophotovoltaics (BPV), using microbial photo cells, which would arguably be the greenest route of all to the generation of electricity.

It's an interesting concept that has been under development since the 1980s, and it relies on an organism called *cyanobacterium mastigocladus laminosus*, whose cells (remember: it's a microbe, and therefore alive – after a fashion) happen to function as a photoconverter, turning light into energy of a different type, since light itself is a form of energy. In case you're wondering why a microbe should generate electricity, it seems that light-dependent *exoelectrogenesis* is

an evolutionary consequence of photosynthetic microorganisms, allowing them to adapt to "the changing intracellular environments with different redox status", says Science Direct magazine. It also suits us power-hungry humans remarkably well. Having a bug in your system could, perhaps, be a good thing, as long as it's the right type of bug, of course.

In 2023, almost 14-million new electric cars were registered globally. By the end of that year, there were 40-million of them on our roads. By no means everyone realises how many of them there are, because they look so much like traditional cars. Registrations, however, seem to be concentrated in just a few markets, with little or no impact elsewhere. In 2023, for instance, just under 60% of new electric car registrations were in China, less than 25% in Europe and only 10% in the United States. That, added together, accounts for almost 95% of all electric car registrations around the world. In China's case, the 8.1-million electric vehicles registered in 2023 represented a 35% increase over the previous year. But that 27.5% tariff has minimised China's impact on EV sales in the United States and, if he wins, Trump has talked about raising the tariff to 60% on all Chinese goods sold in America, including electric cars (of course) but also freezers, washing machines and vacuum cleaners. Trump could even claim – with some justification – that it's a punishment for China not meeting the trade levels agreed during his first presidential term, since China's imports from the United States have fallen far short of the (unrealistic) targets that were set at that time.



BENTLEY has postponed its intentions to transition to a fully electric lineup by five years due to the insufficient adoption of battery-powered vehicles by consumers. Executives said that the British brand will transition to an entirely electrified lineup by 2035 rather than 2030. Bentley's CEO, acknowledged a "lack of demand" for electric vehicles among the company's current clientele, coinciding with a broader decline in EV sales across the sector this year.



## I Sales increase

China has continued to produce bargain electric vehicles which have sold well in many parts of the world, but a US tariff of 27.5% has kept them away, or at least reduced their impact there. The problem is that the manufacture of cars and other vehicles is a key sector of the American economy. There is quite a lot of support for retaining tariffs, too, out of patriotism. The situation has encouraged some American manufacturers to "bite the bullet" and produce cheap EVs. Buyers have admitted they're not great, in the main, but they're affordable, and that matters. China has huge stocks of BYD cars – a make with which I'm unfamiliar – waiting on the dockside to be shipped to wherever there is demand and only reasonable tariffs applied. In these globalist days, one cannot always tell a vehicle's country of origin from its name, anyway. The Swedish company, Volvo, is now owned by a Chinese firm and hopes to sell Chinese-made EVs in the United States.

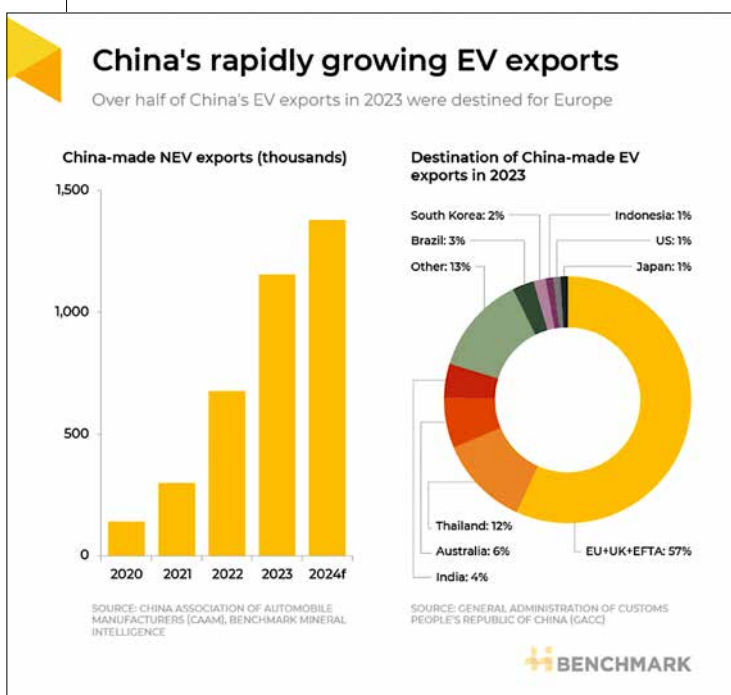
There are rumours of some sort of deal that makes the tariff reasonable and the vehicle prices more affordable, but nobody is admitting anything. The excellent news service NPR (it stands for National Public Radio and is based in Washington and Culver City, California), writes that a BYD Seagull, even after adaptation to meet US safety standards, would still be very cheap, although at present they're banned from American streets. NPR claims, in fact, that if the off-the-shelf price was doubled and the 27.5% tariff added, it would still "undercut every EV

for sale in the United States". The future is electric, the future is affordable, even if Western manufacturers are scaling back their plans to build more EVs.



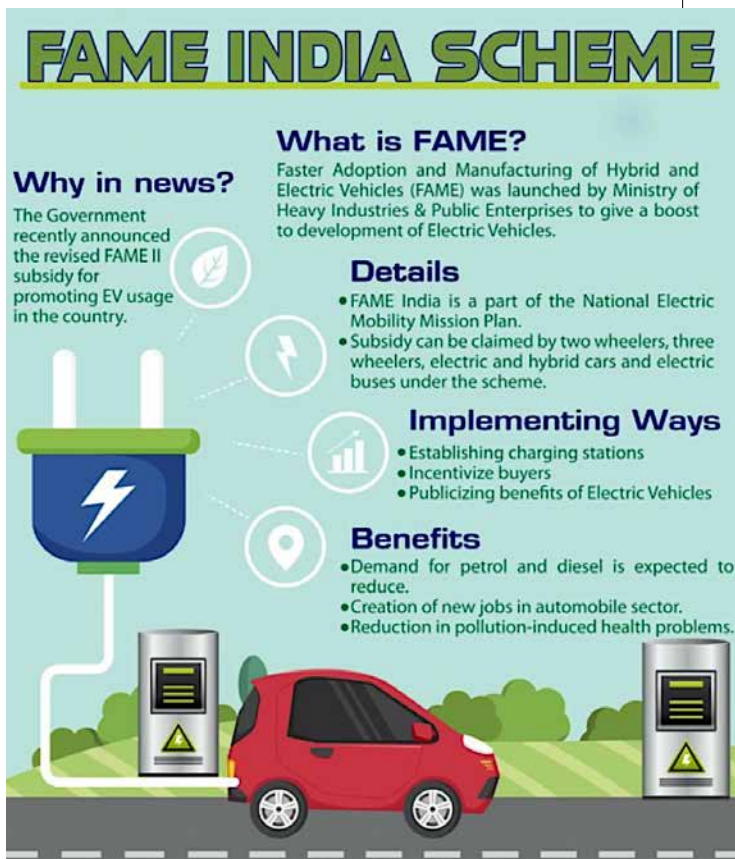
BYD Seagull sells for less than € 9,000

But is the future reliable? That's an issue that must concern potential buyers, and the record suggests a degree of variability. Britain's What Car magazine put a range of EVs to the test to see how they fared. You may not be surprised to learn that some of them, such as the Ford Mustang, the BMW iX3, the Tesla Y and the Skoda Enyaq iV were among those at the top end of the reliability table. Indeed, the Mustang's drivers reported no problems at all at any time. At the other end of the scale, some EVs proved a little less reliable, including the Vauxhall Mokka, the Jaguar I-Pace and the Audi Q8 e-tron, to name but a few, albeit surprisingly, and even there the problems proved small and easy to fix. They were, perhaps, teething problems. The plain fact is that they're all cars and cars can (and do) go wrong.



As for today's electric vehicles, their sales tend to be concentrated in three locations: China, Europe and the United States, but they've been somewhat more limited elsewhere. I

pointed out earlier how many new electric cars were registered in China in 2023. In Europe that year, the percentage of new electric vehicles registered reached 25% and in the United States it was 10%. EVs fared less well in countries like Japan and India, which have well-developed car markets. EVs are sold in China free of tax, which has helped boost sales. Even so, 2023 was the first year in which China's New Energy Vehicle (NEV) industry ran without financial support from national subsidies. What's more, in that same year China exported more than four million vehicles, making it the largest auto exporter in the world. Of those exports, 1.2 million were EVs, but even many of those that have been exported remain unsold to an end-user. Overall, car exports were up by 65% over the previous year, while exports of electric vehicles were up by 80%. In the cautious United States, 2023 saw new electric car registrations rise to 1.4-million. Even Southeast Asia and Brazil are beginning to show more interest.



**Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME II), is a scheme launched by the Government of India to give a boost to development of Electric Vehicles**

In Europe, new electric car registrations reached almost 3.2-million in 2023, an increase of almost 20% over the previous year. In the EU itself, sales reached close to 2.4-million, which suggests that EVs have certainly caught on in quite a big way. According to the British consumer magazine, Consumer Reports, owners of electric cars reported more problems with their vehicles than would have been the case if they'd chosen vehicles with internal combustion engines. The problem, as the magazine points out, is that most EVs are either built by established auto manufacturers with little or no experience of electrical power or by specialists in electrical power with little or no experience of building vehicles. Companies specialising in both are still a bit rare, although not, it seems, in China.

Still, sales of EVs are still rising, and it's been estimated that they could reach something like 17-million by the end 2024, which would be more than one in five of all cars sold worldwide. Electric cars continue, meanwhile, to progress towards becoming a mass-market product in an ever-greater number of countries. Of course, the greatest numbers are sold in China itself, followed by Europe with the United State coming third. More than a quarter of a million electric cars were sold every week in 2023, even though sales numbers still only reached 10% of the numbers of cars with internal combustion engines that were sold. Whether or not we are truly witnessing a breakthrough in electric vehicle sales will depend upon how the sales pick up in emerging and developing economies, although the indications so far are very encouraging.

However, in India, electric cars still have only a 2% share of sales, although Production Linked Incentives (PLIs) may change that in time. People love cars but they also love money, of course. Certainly, further growth is anticipated. Electric car sales are rising in such places as Brazil (3% share), Indonesia and Malaysia (2% share each), with sales (such as they are) underpinned by cheap models from Chinese brands.

It's been estimated, perhaps a trifle optimistically, that by 2035, two thirds of all the cars sold will be electric. Even by 2030, it's thought that one in three of the cars on China's roads will be electric-powered, and one in five will also be in both the European Union and the United States. According to accountants J.P.Morgan, the rapid uptake of EVs of all types – cars, trucks, delivery vans, buses and even two- and three-wheelers will avoid the consumption (as fuel, of course) of 6-million barrels of oil per day (mb/d) and as much as 10-million by 2035. To put that figure into context, it's equivalent to all the oil used for road transport in the United States today. Policy changes will further encourage this development, with new emission standards being adopted, for instance, in Canada, the European Union and the United States. This surge in sales and investment will certainly encourage further development of electric vehicles and ways to power them, if the makers can remain interested. Recent reports show that from 2022 to 2023, investments in EVs and in battery development have totalled almost \$500-billion (€460-billion), with further growth expected. It sounds very exciting but can the manufacturers in the West retain their weakening enthusiasm? Even Tesla's long-promised robotic "cybercab" taxi, which has no steering wheel, pedals, driver (of course) and only two seats has been put back a year, as it has on each of the last ten years. So the answer so far isn't clear.

*T. Kingsley Brooks*

[T.Kingsley.Brooks@europe-diplomatic.eu](mailto:T.Kingsley.Brooks@europe-diplomatic.eu)



# NEWS IN BRIEF

## AIRBUS SIGNS HISTORIC CONTRACT TO PROVIDE 19 H135 MILITARY TRAINING HELICOPTERS TO THE ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE



The Airbus H135 helicopter

Airbus Helicopters has signed a landmark contract with SkyAlyne, a joint venture between Canadian defence leaders CAE and KF Aerospace, to provide the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) with 19 Airbus H135 helicopters to train the next generation of RCAF Pilots. The contract is part of Canada's Future Aircrew Training (FAcT) Program and marks the first time that Airbus helicopters will fly as part of the Canadian Armed Forces.

The twin-engine helicopters will be completed and delivered from Airbus Helicopters' industrial facility located in Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada. They will be customised with a number of Canadian developed Supplemental Type Certificates, including modifications to the avionics suite and communications systems, as well as custom development in the cockpit. Deliveries are expected to begin in the first half of 2026.

"Entering into this partnership with SkyAlyne and the Department of National Defence is a historic moment for Airbus Helicopters in Canada. We thank the Royal Canadian Air Force for placing their trust in Airbus and the H135, joining 12 other militaries around the world that employ the twin-engine H135 to train future aviators," said Dwayne Charette, President of Airbus Helicopters in Canada. "This contract marks Airbus Helicopters' successful entry into the Canadian military market. As we celebrate 40 years of serving Canadian customers locally, we are honoured to contribute to the safety of Canadians for many years to come."

The agreement consists of H135 aircraft acquisition and a support and services package, support for the development of a Ground-Based Training Solution, and advanced engineering support for the release to service.

With more than 400,000 flight hours in a dedicated military training role, the H135 is utilised for basic ab-initio, advanced IFR and tactical training, with operators including several of

Canada's close military allies such as Australia and the UK. A full spectrum training aircraft, the H135 facilitates the development of core skills while providing twin-engines and advanced avionics, allowing easy and safe pilot transition to more complex helicopters in the RCAF's fleet. It joins other Airbus aircraft currently operating for Canadian defence, such as the Airbus 310 (CC150 Polaris), the Airbus A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport (CC330 Husky), and the Airbus C295 (CC295 Kingfisher).

Since 1984, Airbus Helicopters has delivered nearly 600 helicopters in Canada. In 2023, the Canadian fleet of 760 in-service helicopters accumulated over 275,000 flight hours. The Fort Erie facility is also the centre of excellence for light single gearboxes, and the single source for critical composite components supporting platforms worldwide. Each year, Airbus Helicopters ships 34,000 parts from Fort Erie to customers around the globe.

In Canada, more than 4,500 people work at ten Airbus locations, covering the commercial airliner, helicopter, defence and space sectors. Airbus' presence in Canada contributes to approximately 23,000 indirect jobs and generates more than C\$ 2 billion in revenues annually for more than 850 Canadian companies.

## COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS OF VIOLENT INTENTIONAL CRIME:

**The automatic exclusion of certain family members of the victim of homicide does not guarantee 'fair and appropriate' compensation says the court of justice of the European union**



The judges of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in 2022

**Factors other than family ties alone must be taken into account, such as the extent of the harm suffered by the excluded family members**

In 2018, an Italian court ordered a man, the perpetrator of the homicide of his ex-partner, to pay compensation to the members of the victim's family. As the perpetrator of the homicide was

insolvent, the Italian State paid compensation, at a reduced amount as compared to that initially provided for, only to the victim's children and her spouse, from whom she had been separated for several years<sup>1</sup>.

The victim's parents, sister and children brought proceedings before the District Court, Venice (Italy) seeking "fair and appropriate" compensation, which takes into account the harm they suffered as a result of the homicide.

In that context, the Italian court asks the Court of Justice whether national legislation which automatically excludes the payment of compensation to certain family members of the victim of violent intentional crime in the event of the death of that person resulting from homicide is compatible with the EU directive on compensation to crime victims<sup>2</sup>.

The Court states, first of all, that that directive requires Member States to establish a national scheme on compensation which is capable of covering not only persons who have themselves been subject to violent intentional crime, as direct victims, but also their close family members where those family members suffer, indirectly, the consequences of that crime, as indirect victims.

Furthermore, the Court reiterates that the directive in question imposes on each Member State the obligation to establish a scheme on compensation to victims of violent intentional crime which guarantees fair and appropriate compensation. Although Member States have a margin of discretion in that regard, they cannot

confine themselves to purely symbolic or manifestly insufficient compensation having regard to the seriousness of the consequences, for those victims, of the crime committed.

The contribution must adequately compensate the suffering to which those victims have been exposed, in order to contribute to the reparation of the material and non-material harm suffered. In addition, where the national scheme concerned provides for fixed rate compensation, the compensation scale must be sufficiently detailed so as to avoid the possibility that the compensation provided for a specific type of violence proves to be manifestly insufficient.

The Court therefore holds that a national scheme that automatically excludes certain family members from entitlement to all compensation solely because of the presence of other family members, without taking into account other considerations (such as, inter alia, the material consequences for those family members of the homicide of the person concerned or the fact that they were dependants of the deceased person or lived with him or her), cannot result in 'fair and appropriate' compensation.

## EDA CHARTS NEW WATERS IN MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

**Maritime security experts, military leaders, and industry professionals gathered to enhance international cooperation and expertise in defending maritime infrastructure.**

The Naval Station of La Algameca, in Cartagena, hosted the first "Harbour Protection Seminar-Exercise". Organized by the Spanish Navy's Unit of Countermine Measures Divers (UBMCM) in collaboration with the European Defence Agency (EDA), the exercise gathered over 100 experts and professionals from 10

different countries: Spain, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Ukraine, Greece, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Romania, and Belgium. The event underscored the importance of international cooperation in safeguarding harbors and critical maritime infrastructures.



The main objective of the seminar was to update participants on the latest technologies, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) related to maritime infrastructure protection, with a special focus on the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

During the first week, presentations were given by experts from renowned institutions, such as the National Geographic Institute and the IED Centre of Excellence in Countermeasures (COE-CIED).

Industry was also present and several companies from the defence sector presented cutting-edge technological innovations in this field.

The most relevant innovations included the Bayonet tracked underwater robot, an aerial drone equipped with a LIDAR with bathymetric sensor, and software for the creation of 2D models from sonar images. A 5G remote device control system was also presented.

The second phase of the seminar consisted of simultaneous practical exercises in various maritime scenarios, including port areas, shallow waters and a simulated gas pipeline. During these exercises, limpet mines and over 100 kg of explosives were used, where teams worked on the identification and neutralisation of mines and explosive ordnance, covering all stages of the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and incident management (WIT) process.

The 'Harbour Protection Seminar-Exercise 2024' has proven to be an invaluable platform for the improvement of tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) and interoperability between the various participating Armed Forces. It highlighted the importance of continuous readiness and learning in a constantly evolving technological and threat environment.

## EIB PROVIDES OCEANLOOP WITH €35 MILLION FOR ITS SUSTAINABLE INDOOR SHRIMP FARMING TECHNOLOGY

- The Munich-based food-tech company offers a high-quality, sustainable, and environmentally friendly alternative to imports from outside the EU
- The EIB's €35 million venture-debt investment is backed by the European Union's InvestEU guarantee programme.

<sup>1</sup> The Italian compensation scheme on compensation for violent intentional crime provides that the parents of a deceased person may receive compensation only in the absence of a spouse and children and that the siblings may obtain compensation only in the absence of parents

<sup>2</sup> Council Directive 2004/80/EC of 29 April 2004 relating to compensation to crime victims



The European Investment Bank (EIB) is providing a €35 million loan to German aquaculture technology start-up Oceanloop to help growing its business in Germany and expanding it to Gran Canaria, Spain. The EIB's venture-debt investment will also enable the Munich-based company to accelerate the development of the technology for its sustainable recirculating aquaculture system (RAS) for indoor farming.

The EIB loan will support the company's expansion by funding two key phases: Oceanloop will invest the EIB loan in expanding its existing RDI farm in Kiel from 5 tonnes per year to 60 tonnes per year, and it will construct the first-of-a-kind large-scale in-land farm for white leg shrimp in Gran Canaria, with an annual capacity of 2,000 tonnes per year.



Founded in Munich in 2012, Oceanloop is a German food-tech company that operates two pilot stage innovative land-based shrimp farms in Kiel and Munich, supplying premium-quality shrimp through its sister company Honest Catch to restaurants, supermarkets and consumers directly. The company offers a high-quality, sustainable, traceable and animal welfare compliant alternative to imports from outside the EU. With Oceanloop technology farmers can control every parameter to improve efficiency and the use of natural resources. In addition, Oceanloop is working with digital technologies such as computer vision and AI to detect biomass and stress levels in real time to ensure a better animal welfare.

The white-leg shrimp is the most farmed seafood species in the world with more than 5 million tonnes produced annually due to its popularity in all kitchens of the world and its beneficial health aspects. The EU is mostly dependent on imports of shrimp from various countries in the world. Oceanloop's self-developed land-based farming technology sets a new standard in quality, sustainability and productivity, contributing to the growing demand for climate-friendly protein sources. Its software-controlled artificial ecosystems are modular, scalable, and location-independent.

The company's circular economy efforts aim at reducing waste through vapor-thermal carbonization to produce a bio-coal based fertilizer, and soil enhancer and anaerobic digestion to produce biogas. The company also plans to produce renewable energy for self-consumption with a wind turbine and solar panels.

"The European Investment Bank supports European tech pioneers with European ambitions that push forward innovative solutions. Oceanloop is a perfect example of our commitment to help start-ups and scale-ups in their growth phase with the right financing solutions", said EIB Vice-President Nicola

Beer. "Developed here in Europe, their innovative technology opens new ways to produce seafood environmentally friendly by integrating new technologies in their aquaculture-business. The reduction of water-usage and CO2-emissions supports preserving the environment while producing protein rich high-quality seafood on land."

"While the demand for sustainably produced animal proteins will increase significantly in the coming years, their sources are particularly at risk today. Decades of overfishing and an unsustainable aquaculture industry that cannot be controlled in times of climate change are leading to an increasing risk of supply chain disruptions to Europe. We are thrilled that the EU has recognized this and is helping us to bring our innovative technology to industrial-scale commercialization.", said Oceanloop's founder & CEO Fabian Riedel.

The EIB loan is supported by the InvestEU programme, which aims to trigger more than €372 billion in additional investment in new technologies until 2027. The deal is aligned with the InvestEU objective of promoting research, development and innovation.

## EU-WIDE ENFORCEMENT ACTION ON INLAND WATERWAYS: WORKERS PAID LESS THAN MINIMUM WAGE, WORKED LONG HOURS AND EXPIRED VISAS FOUND

**Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Portugal inspected river cruise ships and freight carriers in September coordinated and supported by the European Labour Authority and the waterborne law-enforcement network AQUAPOL. 78 ships and 82 companies were checked. Over 330 employees were interviewed. Breaches of minimum wage rules, expired visas or long working hours were discovered. Legal proceedings in at least 100 cases were initiated.**



Almost 200 enforcement officers from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Portugal inspected river cruise ships and freight carriers in September. The inspections were coordinated and supported by the European Labour Authority (ELA) and the waterborne law-enforcement network AQUAPOL.

78 ships and 82 companies were checked. More than 330 employees were interviewed. The suspected offenses include undeclared work, which means that workers lacked social

protection; illegal employment, as migrant workers were employed without the necessary working permit or visa in the EU. The inspectors also discovered breaches of minimum wage rules; too long working hours due to incorrect working and resting time registrations; and other labour law and nautical offenses. Legal proceedings have been initiated, and at least 100 of these instances require further investigation by the authorities of the involved Member States.

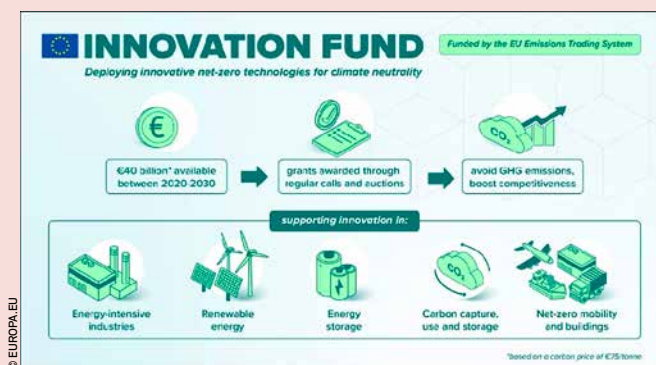
In this joint cross-border action, police, labour, customs, transport and social security authorities simultaneously inspected river cruise ships on European waterways: Danube, Datteln-Hamm Canal, Douro, Dortmund-Ems Canal, Main, Merwede, Elbe Lateral Canal, Mittelland-Canal, Rhine, and waterways in the Antwerp, Amsterdam and Liège regions. ELA enabled officers and inspectors to deploy to other participating countries to support the joint cross-border controls.

During the inspection of working conditions on ships in the Netherlands, enforcement officers discovered signs of exploitation of workers. The Dutch enforcement authorities - the National Police, the Rotterdam Seaport Police, the Netherlands Labour Authority and the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate – were joined by labour inspectors from Belgium and Germany. They checked 55 people working as nautical, hotel and catering staff on board the ships. A total of ten employees were found working illegally and had to stop their work immediately. For a number of ships, this meant that they could not continue sailing until other qualified personnel arrive. Two companies and one employment agency are being investigated for possible violations of the Dutch Minimum Wage, Minimum Holiday Allowance and the Working Hours Act.

The aim of these inspections was to tackle serious labour and nautical offenses and to protect the ships' personnel from labour violations and exploitation, such as poor working and living conditions, undeclared work, underpayments and longer working hours than permitted. Such breaches also affect the safety on board and could jeopardise the passenger and boat safety on European rivers and canals.

About 48,000 workers are employed in the inland waterways transport sector (nautical and other service staff, for example, in accommodation, hospitality, catering, cleaning, etc.). At least 1.6 million tourists cruise European rivers and canals on more than 400 ships each year. The freight transport using inland waterways accounts for about six per cent of the overall EU transport market; almost three quarters are carried using inland waterways in the Netherlands and Germany (Eurostat).

## EU INVESTS €4.8 BILLION OF EMISSIONS TRADING REVENUES IN INNOVATIVE NET-ZERO PROJECTS



Today, the Commission has selected 85 innovative net-zero projects to receive €4.8 billion in grants from the Innovation Fund, helping to put cutting-edge clean technologies into action across Europe. For the first time, projects of different scales (large, medium and small, alongside pilots) and with a cleantech manufacturing focus are awarded under the 2023 call for proposals. This is the largest since the start of the Innovation Fund in 2020, boosting the total amount of support to €12 billion and increasing the number of projects by 70%.

The selected projects are located in 18 countries: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. They cover a wide range of sectors from the following categories: energy-intensive industries, renewable energy, energy storage, Industrial Carbon Management, net-zero mobility (including maritime and aviation) and buildings.

The selected projects are set to enter into operation before 2030 and over their first ten years of operation are expected to reduce emissions by about 476 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. This will contribute to European decarbonisation objectives, reducing emissions from those sectors that are particularly difficult to decarbonise, strengthen European industrial manufacturing capacity and reinforce Europe's technology leadership and supply chain resilience.

### Supporting industrial innovation for key policy objectives

Today's selected projects particularly contribute to reaching the following EU policy objectives:

**Cleantech manufacturing:** In line with the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA), clean-tech projects selected will develop, build and operate manufacturing plants for key components in wind and solar energy and for heat pumps, as well as components for electrolyzers, fuel cells, energy storage technologies and the batteries value chain. Selected projects will contribute to 3 GW of solar photovoltaic manufacturing capacity in the EU and 9.3 GW of electrolyser manufacturing capacity in the EU, further strengthening EU's clean energy infrastructure.

**Energy-intensive industries:** Selected projects will support various technologies to cut net greenhouse gas emissions in energy-intensive industries, target renewable energy integration, heat and energy storage solutions, recycling and reuse, as well as electrification.

**Industrial carbon management:** Projects selected in this call will capture CO<sub>2</sub> and contribute 13% of the NZIA target of storing at least 50 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year from various hard-to-abate sources in energy-intensive industries, such as cement and lime, (bio)-refineries, chemicals and waste-to-energy.

**Renewable hydrogen:** Selected projects will deliver 61 kilotonnes of RFNBO (renewable fuel of non-biological origin) annually, contributing to increase the use and production of renewable energy in hydrogen in hard-to-abate applications in industry and transport.

**Net-zero mobility:** Projects will help cut emissions in the mobility sector, with the maritime sector benefiting the most. These projects involve building and retrofitting vessels for RFNBO fuels and electricity use, as well as reducing emissions in road transport component manufacturing. Awarded projects will also support sustainable transport fuels, producing 525 kilotonnes of renewable fuels per year.

The selected projects were evaluated by independent experts against five award criteria: potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; degree of innovation; operational, financial, and technical maturity; replicability; and cost efficiency.



## FIGHTING CROSS-BORDER CRIME: COUNCIL ADOPTS EU LAW ABOUT TRANSFER OF PROCEEDINGS



Bence Tuzson, Hungarian Minister of Justice

The Council has given the final green light to an EU law that regulates the conditions under which proceedings in a criminal case initiated in one member state may be transferred to another member state.

The law will be critical in ensuring that the best-placed country investigates or prosecutes a criminal offence. It also prevents unnecessary parallel proceedings (of the same suspect) in different EU member states and therefore will help to fight cross-border crime more effectively.

The fight against cross-border crime needs EU member states to work together. Making sure that the best-placed member state will be in charge of a criminal investigation is of crucial importance in this respect.

*Bence Tuzson, Hungarian Minister of Justice*

The rules which were adopted will also improve the respect of fundamental rights of the suspect or accused in the process of transferring criminal proceedings from one country to another.

Common rules for the transfer of proceedings

Under the new law, the authorities of a country will decide to request the transfer of proceedings (to another member state) on the basis of a list of criteria. These include that the criminal offence has been committed on the territory of the member state to which the proceedings are to be transferred or one or more suspects or accused persons being present in that member state.

Next steps

The regulation will enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. The regulation is directly applicable and will apply two years after it comes into force.

Background

Fuelled by the increase of cross-border crime, criminal justice in the EU is increasingly being confronted with situations where several member states have jurisdiction to prosecute the same case. The law which was adopted today is the first specific EU instrument regulating the transfer of proceedings.

## BRAZILIAN POLICE COMMISSIONER VALDECY URQUIZA ELECTED NEW INTERPOL SECRETARY GENERAL

INTERPOL's General Assembly has appointed Valdecy Urquiza as the forthcoming Secretary General of the world's largest policing organisation.

The Brazilian Police Commissioner takes over from Jürgen Stock who has completed his second and final term after a decade of leadership in the Organisation.

Mr. Urquiza expressed gratitude to the delegates for their trust in his appointment, pledging to advance equality and diversity within the Organisation, collaborate with nations to ensure effective investigations and operations, and provide capacity-building programs customised to regional policing challenges.

Mr. Urquiza stated, "My commitment is to develop an INTERPOL that not only addresses current demands but also anticipates and prepares for future challenges." An effective INTERPOL is one that encompasses all nations. By honouring and promoting diverse viewpoints, we achieve a more lucid and holistic understanding of global security. "Collectively, we can establish an INTERPOL that functions as a symbol of hope and security, collaborating with every police force in every nation to foster a safer world for all."

INTERPOL President Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi welcomed Mr. Urquiza's election and acknowledged Mr. Stock's accomplishments, stating: "Mr. Urquiza embodies the future of INTERPOL—a diverse, technology-driven organisation dedicated to collaborating with its 196 member countries to promote global safety for all." In the last ten years, Secretary General Stock has guided our organisation with passion and a commitment to excellence. His tenure has yielded significant advancements in international police collaboration and a robust dedication to enhancing global security.

The Secretary General is elected by the General Assembly, INTERPOL's highest governing authority, under a one-country, one-vote system, where each member nation's vote holds equal significance.

The Secretary General, located in the INTERPOL General Secretariat headquarters in Lyon, France, serves as the Organization's principal official, overseeing daily decision-making and the operations of the General Secretariat throughout all 15 global duty stations.

This encompasses overseeing all operational support, knowledge, databases, and services that INTERPOL offers to its 196 member nations to assist them in combating international crime.



Valdecy Urquiza

## THOUSANDS OF CANCERS CAUGHT EARLY THROUGH NHS LUNG CHECKS



© NHS / PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND

An NHS mobile lung-cancer screening clinic

**More than 5,000 people in England have been diagnosed with lung cancer earlier thanks to an innovative NHS initiative, which uses mobile scanning trucks to visit local communities.**

The NHS Targeted Lung Health Check Programme is the biggest initiative in NHS history aimed at improving early lung cancer diagnosis, and is specifically targeted at areas of the country with the highest rates of lung cancer.

The latest NHS data shows that 5,037 lung cancers have now been found through the programme since its launch in 2019.

Data also shows that more than three-quarters (76%) of the lung cancers identified by the programme were found at the earliest stages of one and two, when it is potentially curable. People diagnosed with lung cancer at the earliest stages are nearly 20 times more likely to survive for five years than those whose cancer is caught late.

Using a mix of hospital services and roving scanning trucks that visit convenient community sites, such as supermarket car parks, sports stadiums and town centres, in-depth lung health checks are carried out on current and past smokers.

NHS data also shows that more than a third of people diagnosed with lung cancer from the most deprived areas of England were diagnosed at an earlier stage since the targeted lung health checks initiative began.

**Dame Cally Palmer, NHS Cancer Director, said:** “These lung checks can save lives, so it’s fantastic that the NHS has been able to diagnose thousands of people at an early stage when lung cancer is potentially curable.

“The targeted lung health check programme is a new model of care with a community focus, making it easier for people to come forward in a way that works for them, whether in a supermarket car park or a sports stadium. It has been amazing to see the response, and initiatives like this will make a big difference in improving cancer survival for people throughout the country.”

NHS data shows there was a 7.4% improvement in lung cancer early diagnosis rates by the NHS last year (April 2023 to March 2024) compared to the period before COVID-19 (March 2019 to February 2020).

Lung cancer is the third commonest type of cancer in the UK, with 72% of cases caused by smoking, leading to around 35,000 deaths each year.

Among the symptoms of lung cancer are a long-standing cough that gets worse, coughing up blood, persistent breathlessness, continuing tiredness or lack of energy, and an unexplained loss of weight or appetite.

Under the programme, current and past smokers aged between 55 and 74 are invited to speak with a nurse or other healthcare professional about their lung health and, if they have a higher chance of developing cancer, are offered a Computerised Tomography (CT) scan of their lungs on a mobile scanning unit.

The UK National Screening Committee and Government announced the Targeted Lung health Check Programme should be fully rolled out across the country by 2030.

## RAIL BALTICA DREAM OR REALITY?

The ambitious Rail Baltica project aims to create a high-speed railway connecting the three Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—over a distance of 870 kilometres. Initially conceived as an infrastructure initiative, its significance has shifted dramatically following Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, as the Baltic nations increasingly view Russia as a serious threat.



Currently, there is no direct rail link that connects the Baltics to Poland, making Rail Baltica essential. This railway is expected to improve travel efficiency, boost economic growth, and minimise environmental impact. For example, the journey from Tallinn to Vilnius, the capitals of Estonia and Lithuania, could be reduced from over 12 hours to under four. Estonian Infrastructure Minister Vladimir Svet has emphasised the railway’s role in enhancing regional security, drawing parallels to the historical context of Soviet aggression.

The memory of Soviet occupation is still fresh in the Baltics, adding urgency to the project. With a shared border with Russia and around 10,000 NATO soldiers stationed in the region, military readiness is a priority. Rail Baltica is anticipated to improve military mobility, facilitating rapid troop movements—something NATO officials deem crucial for security.

Despite its clear benefits, the project faces significant hurdles. The estimated cost has surged from 7.2 billion euros in 2017 to around 30 billion euros today, raising alarm among the Baltic states and their partners. The European Union has committed substantial funding, covering 85% of



the expenses and announcing an additional 1.4 billion euros in subsidies. However, rising costs are linked to factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which have disrupted supply chains and increased material prices.

The project is divided into two phases, with the first focusing on a single track and key train stops, slated for completion by 2030. This phase alone is expected to cost about 19 billion euros, but securing the necessary funding is proving challenging. Critics have noted that the Baltic states have started building rail terminals before the railway is fully operational, raising concerns about project management.



Cultural differences among the three countries also complicate the project. Each nation has its own regulations and approaches, which are often overlooked when considering the Baltics as a unified entity.

Baltic leaders highlight the importance of Rail Baltica not just for transportation, but as a vital lifeline for regional security and economic stability. Estonia's national auditor, Janar Holm, has warned that unresolved funding issues could lead to delays. Overall, Baltic officials share a sentiment that a robust connection to the EU and NATO is essential for maintaining their sovereignty and cultural identity.

Rail Baltica represents a crucial infrastructure project for the Baltic states, with the potential to reshape regional dynamics. Successfully navigating the financial, logistical, and political challenges will be essential for its completion, positioning it as a cornerstone of future Baltic cooperation and security.

## BRIDGING THE GAP: SUPPORTING CROSS-BORDER ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE

The SIRIUS Conference 2024 took place from 5-7 November, bringing together law enforcement, judicial authorities, policy makers, and service providers to discuss the evolving challenges in cross-border access to electronic evidence. This annual event serves as a platform for updates on legal developments, data disclosure procedures, and the latest investigative tools, with hands-on training from industry experts.

In a rapidly changing online environment, law enforcement and judicial authorities need support to cope with the complexity and volume of information and to develop their knowledge when obtaining electronic data from service providers based in other jurisdictions. The SIRIUS

project, co-implemented by Europol and Eurojust, supports investigators with a variety of services, such as guidelines, trainings and tools, to help with accessing data held by the industry. These services are available to law enforcement and judicial authorities via the SIRIUS restricted platform and mobile application.

This year's conference included a 3-day programme, with the third day reserved for law enforcement and judicial authorities. Attendees benefited from interactive workshops, networking opportunities, and presentations on pressing topics in the field.

Presentations included an update on the state of play of the EU Electronic Evidence Regulation from the European Commission followed by insights from government judiciary and service provider representatives. The SIRIUS team gave an overview into the upcoming 'SIRIUS EU Electronic Evidence Situation Report 2024', the upcoming UN and Budapest Conventions on Cybercrime was presented offering future opportunities for international cooperation. Workshops explored topics such as audio deep fakes, lawful access to data, the EU AI Act and future AI-related challenges, and digital asset seizures for evidentiary purposes.

The SIRIUS project is a central reference point in the EU for knowledge sharing on cross-border access to electronic evidence. To this day, SIRIUS serves a community of competent authorities from over 50 countries, representing all EU Member States and a growing number of third countries. Building on its existing expertise and resources on the legal instruments currently in force, SIRIUS will assist law enforcement, judicial authorities and service providers in navigating the increasingly complex legal framework during the third phase of the project, starting next year.



## UKRAINE: COUNCIL EXTENDS THE MANDATE OF THE EU MILITARY ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR TWO YEARS

The Council has adopted a decision extending the mandate of the European Union Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) for a further two years, until 15 November 2026, with a budget allocation of nearly €409 million for the period from 14 November 2024 to 15 November 2026.



© PRESIDENT.GOV.UA

President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy and President of the European Council Charles Michel in Brussels in October 2024

EUMAM Ukraine remains a key tool for EU's military support to Ukraine, with its core objective of contributing to enhancing the military capacity of Ukraine's Armed Forces.

In line with today's decision, EUMAM Ukraine will cooperate with NATO, in particular the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU), and exchange information with the latter in a transparent, reciprocal and inclusive manner.

#### Background

On 17 October 2022, the Council adopted a decision establishing EUMAM Ukraine with an initial duration of two years. The strategic objective of the mission is to contribute to enhancing the military capacity of Ukraine's Armed Forces (UAF) to regenerate and to effectively conduct operations, in order to allow Ukraine to defend its territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, effectively exercise its sovereignty and protect the civilians from Russia's armed aggression.

EUMAM Ukraine has trained 63 000 UAF soldiers so far, which is an equivalent of ten brigades. The mission will train additional 15 000 troops in coming months, bringing the total number of soldiers trained to 75 000 by the end of winter 2024/2025.

EUMAM Ukraine provides individual, collective and specialised training to the UAF within European Union territory, along with coordination and synchronisation of member states' activities delivering training. The training is supported by the provision of equipment for lethal and non-lethal purposes to the UAF. EUMAM is financed from the European Peace Facility.

The future training targets of EUMAM Ukraine will be continuously adjusted in terms of number of troops to be trained and skills, according to combat needs expressed by Ukraine, and in coordination with partners. Provision of military training to Ukraine is one of the activities under the joint security commitments between Ukraine and the EU, signed in June 2024.

## THE VESSEL, A TOURIST ATTRACTION IN MANHATTAN CLOSED FOLLOWING SEVERAL SUICIDES REOPENS WITH ENHANCED SAFETY MEASURES AT HUDSON YARDS

The Vessel, an impressive honeycomb-like edifice situated in Hudson Yards in New York City, has recently reopened following a series of closures prompted by suicides. Conceived by British architect Thomas Heatherwick, the Vessel rapidly emerged as a prominent tourist destination following its inauguration in 2019, providing tourists with expansive vistas of Manhattan and the Hudson River from its 154 interlinked flights of stairs. The edifice, rising to a height of 150 feet, emerged as an emblem of contemporary architecture and urban advancement in the region.

Nonetheless, its popularity was eclipsed by a series of suicides, raising safety concerns and resulting in the Vessel's closure on many occasions. From 2019 to 2021, four individuals committed suicide by leaping from the structure, prompting criticism regarding insufficient safety measures. The Vessel was closed to the public in January 2021 to mitigate these issues.

The management and developers of Hudson Yards, Related Companies, in collaboration with mental health professionals and suicide prevention organisations, initiated the implementation of new safety standards. This involved the installation of physical barriers and mental health signage to assist distressed visitors. Upon reopening, a notable alteration was the establishment of new admission regulations: visitors are now required to be accompanied by at least one other individual to access the Vessel, aimed at mitigating the risks linked to solitude.

The reopening of the Vessel signifies a new phase for the structure, featuring improved security protocols and an increased emphasis on guest welfare. The management has increased personnel presence, deploying security teams trained to identify and aid anyone experiencing emotional distress. Visitors are urged to appreciate the architectural grandeur and city vistas while adhering to the new laws established to safeguard both themselves and others.



© EDM





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 30 years of experience worldwide



A dynamic and creative team,  
at your entire disposal



Tel. : +33 (0)4 93 20 43 32 - Port : +33 (0)6 12 22 70 51 / +33 (0)6 23 46 79 53  
Email : [contact@noubamusic.com](mailto:contact@noubamusic.com) - Web : [www.noubamusic.com](http://www.noubamusic.com)



# THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO

**A nexus in global  
power dynamics**



The Chagos Archipelago, a remote cluster of fifty eight islands nestled in the heart of the Indian Ocean, may seem like an isolated paradise with its azure waters and coral reefs, but its history is deeply intertwined with the geopolitical machinations of the 20th century.

The archipelago became the site of profound human suffering as their indigenous inhabitants were forcibly removed to make way for a strategic military airbase on Diego Garcia, its largest island and a vital asset in the ongoing Cold War.

The plight of the Chagossians, caught in the crossfire of British and American interests, serves as a poignant reminder of the human cost of geopolitical transactions, echoing through the corridors of power far from the shores of their homeland.

In a significant recent development, the United Kingdom has announced plans to cede the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius, a decision that carries profound implications for both the local populace and the broader geopolitical landscape. As nations grapple with the rising influence of China and the evolving dynamics of international relations under the new Trump administration, the future of the Chagos Archipelago sits at a precarious intersection of human rights and strategic interests.



The Battle of Grand Port between French and British naval forces, 20–27 August 1810

The Chagos Islands were discovered by European explorers in the 16th century. Initially uninhabited, the islands were settled by enslaved Africans and labourers brought by the French, who controlled the region in the 18th century, as a dependency of Mauritius.

Later, the British took over the islands during the Napoleonic Wars and used them primarily for plantations, especially for coconut production.

The British used the archipelago as a key military base during World War II. When they agreed to leave Mauritius in 1965, they excluded the Chagos Islands. This resulted in Mauritius gaining independence without the islands, which were then designated as a British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)

## I A legacy of displacement

In 1966, at the height of the Cold War, the United Kingdom and the United States forged an important agreement, with the United States leasing the strategically-located island of Diego

Garcia for a period of 50 years. This arrangement was not merely a matter of real estate; it came as part of a broader defence collaboration. In return for granting the US access to this vital area for the construction of a military base, the UK received a substantial financial concession: a discount of \$14 million on its purchase of advanced nuclear-armed submarine-launched Polaris ballistic missile systems.



This deal underscored the deepening military ties between the two nations during the Cold War era and highlighted the importance of Diego Garcia as a key asset in global military strategy.

However, the British government forcibly removed around 2,000 Chagossians from their homes, a process marked by hardship and trauma. They were relocated, primarily to Mauritius and the Seychelles, where they faced significant challenges in their new lives.

This forced displacement has not merely been a personal tragedy for the Chagossians; it has also sparked extensive legal and political controversies that have persisted for decades.

The ramifications of their removal from their ancestral land has sparked an ongoing struggle for recognition and restitution that has reverberated through international courts and diplomatic discussions, highlighting the complexities of colonial legacies and the pursuit of justice for marginalised communities.



Chagos Islanders protesting in the UK in 2018

## Cession to Mauritius: a turning point

Fast forward to recent years, and the international legal landscape surrounding the Chagos Archipelago has experienced a dramatic shift. A pivotal moment came in 2019 when the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a groundbreaking advisory opinion. This ruling declared that the United Kingdom's ongoing administration of the islands constituted a violation of international law, shining a spotlight on the pressing need to confront the historical injustices that the Chagossians have endured for decades.

This watershed moment did not go unnoticed. In the wake of the ICJ's opinion, the UK government took a significant step by announcing its intention to cede the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius. And in a momentous agreement unveiled on 3 October, British prime minister Keir Starmer and Pravind Jugnauth, the then-Mauritian prime minister, jointly proclaimed the restoration of full sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago to the Republic of Mauritius. This historic accord, struck between the two nations, was predicated upon a series of guarantees that ensured the continued operational presence of a United States military base on the archipelago for a period of ninety-nine years.

The arrangement represents a delicate balance of geopolitical interests, as it addresses both the longstanding territorial claims of Mauritius and the strategic needs of the United States, while also signaling a new chapter in international diplomacy and cooperation.



Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and Keir Starmer in July 2024

British Foreign Minister, David Lammy highlighted that the current administration had navigated a complex situation where the long-term, secure operation of the Diego Garcia military base was at risk, facing both contested sovereignty and ongoing legal challenges. He emphasised that the newly agreed-upon arrangement ensures the continued viability of this vital military asset for the future. According to Lammy, the agreement will bolster Britain's role in safeguarding global security, effectively closing off any potential use of the Indian Ocean as a dangerous route for illegal migration to the UK. Furthermore, it solidifies the long-term relationship between the UK and Mauritius.

But this decision represents not just a legal maneuver; it is a profound turning point in the long and painful saga of the Chagossians. By transferring sovereignty, the UK is attempting to address the deep-seated grievances of those who were forcibly removed from their homeland, offering them a glimmer of hope for restitution and recognition. Moreover, this shift in governance has far-reaching implications for the strategic dynamics of the region, as it reshapes the geopolitical landscape and invites new discussions about the future of these islands and their people.

## Strategic implications



A U.S. Air Force B-1B Lancer bomber takes off on a strike mission against al Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan on Oct. 7, 2001, during Operation Enduring Freedom

The strategic implications of this cession are most significant, particularly in the context of rising tensions with China. The Indian Ocean, a vast expanse of water that connects continents and cultures, has long been a strategic crossroads of global trade and power. Its waters carry over a third of the world's bulk cargo and two-thirds of its oil, making it a vital artery for the global economy. Thirty-three nations, home to a staggering 2.9 billion people, border its shores, each with their own unique history, culture, and aspirations. Due to its strategic importance, the Indian Ocean has become a key focus of US foreign policy, and at the heart of this strategy lies the controversial island of Diego Garcia.

There are many advocates of the agreement between the UK and Mauritius to keep Diego Garcia out of the equation and leave it in place. However, this does not preclude Mauritius from leasing other Chagos islands to China or



allowing Chinese military vessels to operate in the surrounding waters. What's more, lease contracts can be broken. In this context, the UK's 1967 agreement, which saw Mauritius sacrifice the islands in return for independence and financial aid, seems to have been forgotten.

It has been suggested that US President Joe Biden actually pressured the UK into ceding the Chagos Islands for fear that the US could lose control of the military base on Diego Garcia if Mauritius were successful in its application for a binding ruling at the International Court of Justice to take control of the islands.



Solemn, flag-raising ceremony held in Gwadar Port on 1 October, 2022 on the national day of the People's Republic of China, in celebration of the 75th founding of the People's Republic of China. The port is financed and operated by the PRC and is located in the northern Indian Ocean

## Maritime dominance

The world has been witnessing what has been called China's "Port Conquest".

China has invested in over 100 ports across 63 countries, cementing its status as a major player in the global maritime trade. The strategy appears to be aimed at bolstering China's global influence in key maritime locations without the need for deploying soldiers, ships, or weapons. This subtle approach to power projection is noteworthy because it not only enhances the global trade economy but also raises concerns about potential military objectives and national security implications for host countries and their allies.

China's relentless pursuit of global trade dominance is evident in the colossal scale of its infrastructure projects. This rise to power began in 2013 when China eclipsed the United States as the world's leading trading

nation. China's domestic maritime prowess is undeniable, with some of the world's busiest and largest ports gracing its coastline, including Shanghai, Shenzhen, Ningbo-Zhoushan, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Qingdao, Tianjin, and Dalian. However, China's ambitions extend far beyond its shores. The Belt and Road Initiative's 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is a testament to this ambition, aiming to connect China to Southeast Asia, Africa, and Europe via maritime routes. This ambitious project is reshaping global trade and geopolitical dynamics, cementing China's position as a global maritime powerhouse.

The cession of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius could be interpreted as a strategic counterbalance to China's growing influence. With Mauritius positioned as a critical partner for both the U.S. and India, the archipelago could serve as a strategic asset in any efforts to contain Chinese expansionism. The U.S. may leverage its historical ties with Mauritius to foster closer military and economic cooperation, ensuring that the islands remain aligned with Western interests.

## Donald Trump's China policy

Under President Trump's first term in office, the U.S. adopted a more confrontational approach towards China, viewing its expansionist policies as a threat to U.S. national security and global stability. The administration's suspicions regarding China were reflected in its military and diplomatic strategies, which sought to strengthen alliances in the Indo-Pacific region.

In this context, the cession of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius will probably be an opportunity for the U.S. to reinforce its presence in the Indian Ocean. The U.S. may put to use its historical ties with Mauritius to bolster its strategic partnerships, thereby ensuring that the archipelago remains aligned with Western interests rather than succumbing to Chinese influence.



US President Donald J. Trump and CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping in July 2017

However, it seems clear that the incoming Trump administration will face a landscape of U.S. – China relations that will be more complex and unpredictable than before.

A revival of the more nationalist and hawkish voices within Trump's close circle could be anticipated; notable figures such as Marco Rubio, the new Secretary of State, and Mike Waltz, the next National Security Adviser, are both staunch hardliners, and view China as a significant and existential threat. Their perspectives will most probably shape the new administration's approach. Referring to Pete Hegseth, his pick for the new Defence Secretary, Donald Trump described him as *"tough, smart and a true believer in America First"*.

However, it is crucial to recognise that influential business leaders, especially those with considerable investments in China, such as Elon Musk, will also play a pivotal role in the shaping of this dialogue. Their interests and insights could provide a counterbalance to the more hardline stances taken by political figures.



Marco Rubio, the future US Secretary of State

As was seen during Trump's first term, the dynamics surrounding who interacts with him most frequently and who occupies his inner circle at critical moments will probably have a significant impact on policy decisions. The interplay between these nationalistic voices and the interests of powerful business leaders will create a complex landscape that could greatly influence future U.S. foreign policy in general, and vis-a-vis China in particular.

Scenarios can be envisioned where a significant diplomatic breakthrough—a major agreement on economic or security matters—to a severe downturn that could lead to a complete freeze in relations or even potential military conflict.

On the trade front, tariffs will probably be a constant factor. Donald Trump has indicated

plans to impose tariffs as high as 60% on Chinese imports. These tariffs could serve as either a negotiating tactic or an attempt to inflict economic harm on China, especially during a time when Chinese exports are crucial for its growth. His advisors are likely to use these tariffs as a means to push for economic decoupling.



Shi Islet, with anti-landing spikes on Lesser Kinmen (Taiwan) in the foreground, and Xiamen (China) in the background

The response from Beijing will be crucial. Will China take a restrained approach and seek a compromise, or will it retaliate aggressively? Although a full-blown trade war would be detrimental to China's already fragile economy, President Xi Jinping is a steadfast nationalist who has equipped himself with various tools to counter U.S. pressure. A trade conflict could escalate quickly, with catastrophic consequences not just for Washington and Beijing, but for the global economy as well.

When it comes to Taiwan, there are a number of alarming possibilities, given that the situation has gained global significance, especially after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, Trump has questioned Taiwan's importance to U.S. interests and might view it as leverage in negotiations. Meanwhile, China probably sees Trump's presidency as an opportunity to persuade the U.S. to abandon its support for Taiwan, provided the price is right.



Navin Ramgoolam, prime minister of Mauritius



On the other hand, many of Trump's advisors are inclined to advocate for a strong pro-Taiwan stance. Trump might go along with this to enhance his bargaining position during trade discussions. Yet, either approach could provoke a crisis with Beijing, especially as Xi has instructed his military to remain prepared for conflict, and it is uncertain whether a Republican Congress would be able to rein in the U.S. president's actions. Regarding strategic competition, Donald Trump does not share the same ideological zeal as some of his advisors, who are calling for regime change. He is likely to allow them to pursue their agendas as long as it doesn't interfere with his deal-making or tarnish his image.

This focus on competition could lead to a wave of new export controls targeting an increasing number of Chinese sectors. Under a second Trump administration, a more aggressive and costly set of technology restrictions could materialise, possibly leading to a significant decoupling from China.



Port Louis, the capital city of Mauritius

## The role of Mauritius

Mauritius has emerged as a crucial player in the current geopolitical landscape, thanks to its strategic location and its increasingly strong economic ties with powers from both the West and the East. This island nation is uniquely positioned to serve as a vital partner in fostering stability in the Indian Ocean region. Its government's dedication to democratic governance and respect for human rights resonates with Western values, making Mauritius an appealing ally for the United States and its partners.

Moreover, Mauritius has shown a keen interest in developing the Chagos Archipelago for purposes such as tourism and conservation. This initiative not only has the potential to revitalise the local economy but also aims to address the longstanding historical injustices experienced by the Chagossians, who were displaced from their homeland decades ago. However, the prospect of military collaboration with the U.S. presents a complex and sometimes contentious dilemma for the Mauritian government.

As Mauritius navigates its evolving role on the global stage, it faces the challenge of balancing its relationship with China, which has made substantial investments in the region, against the expectations and demands of its traditional allies. This delicate balancing act will be crucial as the country seeks to assert its influence while ensuring its sovereignty and economic interests are protected.

## The Chagossians : a voice for justice

As the geopolitical landscape continues to evolve, it is essential that the plight of the Chagossians is not overlooked; their quest for



Chinese President Xi Jinping with Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth in Port Louis, Mauritius in 2018

Amid these varied possibilities, two outcomes seem certain. First, a deterioration in relations, potentially at an alarming rate. The underlying forces driving competition are intensifying and diversifying. The newly empowered Trump administration will likely be bold and unpredictable.

Second, China will probably seize this moment to present itself as a champion of globalisation and multilateralism, especially as Trump's protectionist and isolationist policies may alienate certain countries. During Trump's first term, China missed the chance to capitalise on global dissatisfaction with the U.S.; this time, it will probably not let that opportunity slip away.

justice and recognition is a vital part of the story surrounding the Chagos Archipelago. The recent cession of the archipelago to Mauritius does bring a glimmer of hope for the Chagossian people, who aspire to reclaim their homeland and have their rights acknowledged and respected.

## A complex and fraught future

The cession of the Chagos Archipelago by Britain to Mauritius embodies a multifaceted interplay of historical injustice, geopolitical maneuvering, and the ongoing struggle for human rights. As the region navigates the implications of this transition, it is also important for the international community to ensure that the voices of the Chagossians are heard amidst the shifting tides of global power dynamics.

In this context, China's strategy exemplifies the evolving nature of this global power dynamics. Dominance is no longer solely defined by military might; instead, it is increasingly articulated through narratives of development, commercial growth, and enhanced global connectivity. This approach allows China to project its power

in a more nuanced, yet equally impactful, manner. China's expanding investments in global ports and various commercial ventures create an impression of a peaceful ascent on the world stage. However, beneath this façade of economic development lies the potential for establishing military footholds. It is not merely the act of investment that raises concerns, but the looming threat of military-civil fusion and the dual-use nature of these developments that sparks apprehension.

As China embarks on its 'Port Conquest,' a crucial question emerges: are these investments purely commercial, or do they serve a broader military agenda? The answer to this question could significantly influence the future landscape of global security and the dynamics of world power. While fostering global connectivity and trade is vital, it is equally important to ensure that such cooperation does not undermine either national or global security. The international community must come together to assess these developments with a sense of caution and foresight, striving to maintain a balanced world order.

The strategic importance of the Chagos Archipelago in the context of U.S.-China relations cannot be overstated. As both powers compete for influence in the Indian Ocean, the archipelago finds itself at the centre of a new geopolitical reality. The outcomes of this transition will not only determine the future of the islands themselves but will also play a critical role in shaping the balance of power in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

**Hossein Sadre**

[hossein.sadre@europe-diplomatic.eu](mailto:hossein.sadre@europe-diplomatic.eu)





# 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](http://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



© MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF UKRAINE

# **TENSION IN EUROPE VIEWED FROM THE RIGHT**

**How Europe's right-wing-leaning politicians view the ongoing war in Ukraine and Russian hegemony, among other issues**



How to judge the issues causing the greatest tension in Europe? Well, first of all we would have to decide exactly what things are causing most tension. That would have to include the war in Ukraine, of course, upon which several differing views are often expressed, sometimes quite fiercely. Russia's position is often criticised, but it is not without its supporters, even within the European Union. The big question on which there are several varying opinions concerns how the EU's concept of national sovereignty clashes with that of Russia.



MEP Geadis Geadis



MEP Jaak Madison

For the moment, let's take Estonian Centre Party MEP Jaak Madison, back in early January 2024, who said: "Estonia's rationale remains clear: Russia is a clear and present security threat to us." Well, there's no ambivalence there. He went on: "Historically, Russia has been an empire only when this included Ukrainian territory, and the loss of these areas to Russia would thus equate to the rebirth of that empire, and which in turn would intensify the risk of war in Estonia." Nobody sensible would want that, of course (except, maybe, Vladimir Putin?). But the outcome in Ukraine is by no means the only issue to occupy the thoughts of members of the European Parliament. There is concern, too, about other countries seeking to interfere politically but on – for instance – religious grounds. It was Geadis Geadis, a member of the European Conservative and Reformist Group, who has expressed his concern on behalf of his own homeland: "Unfortunately, a Member State of the European Union, Cyprus, is the victim of foreign interference and hybrid warfare waged against it by Turkey," he told the House during a debate, "on the one hand in violation of international law, sending settlers to illegally Turkish-occupied Cyprus, while on the other hand sending illegal immigrants daily by sea and occupied territories."

The goal is the demographic alteration of the island and the transformation entirely into an Islamic state leading to its strategic goal, the complete occupation of Cyprus." It goes without saying that Turkey denies such an extreme ambition, even if its actions would seem to lend weight to such an idea.

Certainly, Geadis Geadis is sure: "I must denounce actions that unfortunately undermine European values, such as your presence at the conference of the Turkish-born states on the side of the leader of the occupation in Cyprus Ersin Tatar." He went on to explain his viewpoint: "Patriotism is the defence of European nations and international law, not illegal separatist regimes. To prioritise national, not economic interests. To support countries such as Cyprus, which is the victim of a barbaric invasion and the victim of illegal occupation, colonization and dozens of other war crimes." We clearly live in uncertain times, just as we have done since civilisation first began, to be perfectly frank.

## Russia, right or wrong?

Uncertainty over how to respond to President Putin's territorial ambitions has been a hallmark of Europe's response to the invasion. For her part, Marion Maréchal, an independent member of the French Assemblée Nationale but formerly representing the far right-wing Rassemblement National (RN), has been criticised for "defending" Russia's invasion by opposing the imposition of sanctions, which she denies. She says she only opposed the use of sanctions with regard to the supply of energy to Europe, although the RN also considers the training of Ukrainian soldiers is "a belligerent act". She decided to form her own political party, Identité-Libertés, to be part of a new right-wing bloc and to "contribute to the victory of the national camp", as she told the French newspaper Le Figaro.



"I wish for Ukraine's victory against Russia," said MEP Marion Maréchal during her campaign for the European Elections

She also explained that: “My objective is to work at a coalition alongside Marine Le Pen, Jordan Bardella and Eric Ciotti,” with the aim of assisting in securing a Le Pen presidency in 2027. Maréchal is Marine Le Pen’s niece, after all, so that keeps it in the family.

In France, the issue has led to a lot of bitter if unimpressive squabbling among largely like-minded politicians, most of them right-wingers but disagreeing on points of detail. Jordan Bardella, the RN’s acting president, for instance, blames the energy crisis, which understandably worries French citizens, on Europe’s help for Ukraine. Marine Le Pen has condemned what she called: “dangerous war-mongering attitudes”.



© THOMAS BRESSON

Jordan Bardella during the last European Elections campaign

Meanwhile, Russia’s Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, has claimed that if the Ukrainian government should fall it would mean that the EU would be at war with Russia. On very many levels this is demonstrably untrue, but Russia has not been on good terms with accuracy or truth for a very long time. As for Lavrov, was he thinking about how best to address the intense poverty of , for instance, Tolyatti, in Russia, home of the Lada car as well as massive unemployment, where 720,000 residents are said to be “critically poor,” or at best on very low incomes. Or could he be thinking about a possible dinner at White Rabbit, Moscow’s plushiest and most expensive new restaurant.? Was it named after the character in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (sequel to *Alice in Wonderland*) or to the song written by Grace Slick and recorded by the psychedelic rock band Jefferson Airplane in 1967?



© NRP

The White Rabbit restaurant, located opposite the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow



© WIKICOMMONS

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

It’s not something you think about while munching something very expensive, such as grey shushi with black chanterelles and oxtails or sturgeon caviar, while drinking Sovetskoye Shampanskoye, Russia’s best sparkling wine, said to equal champagne for flavour. It would seem Lavrov just wants to dissuade European leaders from siding with Ukraine and against Russia’s unprovoked invasion. Certainly, Russia’s ambitions lacked that welcome sense of adventure demonstrated during its careful expansion in the 1930s, when it was motivated by the aim of “building Socialism”. It’s not clear exactly what it’s striving to build now, except a larger fiefdom for Tsar Putin. Another glass of Sovetskoye Shampanskoye, former-comrade?

On the more domestic front, Marion Maréchal is concentrating her fire on immigration. She’s not alone in that. She is especially interested in ‘anticipating the socio-economic consequences of the large increase in world population’, and especially what she has called the ‘demographic imbalance’ between Europe and the rest of the world. She believes the flow of incoming migrants is at an early stage and will grow incessantly (as, indeed, will the world population). She told *The Spectator* magazine that immigration has barely started and that over the next three decades, the overall global population will swell by some two billion people, mostly in India, China and Africa, while Europe’s population remains unchanged (apart from the new arrivals, of course). That means, she says, that vast numbers of people will seek a new life in Europe. This, she argues, will require effort on Europe’s part to halt the flow and to feed those who have already arrived. “To stop them coming”, she has said, is “the only way to defend Europe’s independence, prosperity and freedom”. It is an unrelentingly bleak prediction, with a relatively unpalatable solution being suggested. Her speeches in the House, however, suggest a very intense interest in



keeping foreigners at bay. In a speech she gave in Strasbourg, she informed her fellow-MEPs that “70% of rapes committed in the streets of Paris and 60% of sexual assaults on public transport in the Paris region were by foreigners,” adding that: “the lax immigration policy brings foreign predators to our countries.” After all, foreign predators are unnecessary: Europe produces a great many of its own.

## I Faith and fighting

For many European politicians who are considered “right wing”, either mildly or extremely, the issues in Russia and Ukraine are not at the top of the list of priorities anyway. When asked, they, like Marion Maréchal, are most likely to cite immigration as their greatest concern, with a side order of fears over religious extremism. The world is polarising between the “haves” and the “determined to gets”, with most of us caught up somewhere in the middle. There is, however, a general agreement, it seems, that the EU should be doing more to assuage their concerns. For instance, take the views of Arkadiusz Mularczyk of Poland’s Law and Justice Party: “In the face of the war in Ukraine and Russian attempts to circumvent sanctions using a shadow fleet,” he warned, “I appeal on my own behalf and also on behalf of my country, Poland, for decisive action by the EU in cooperation with NATO.” There may also be a role for NATO in addressing the concerns of Cristian Terhes of the Romanian National Conservative Party, who is also a consecrated priest of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church in Oradia, the Capital city of Bihor County, Transylvania, in western Romania. Like many others, he is angry with Russia’s adventurism. “Through specific Soviet means,” he said in a speech to fellow MEPs, “such as disinformation, manipulation, active measures and other means specific to hybrid warfare, the Kremlin wants to keep the Republic of Moldova in its sphere of influence.” Terhes has strong words of advice to Europe: “It is imperative to give clear signals to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova that we are on their side.” It’s a well-known fact, of course, that Vladimir Putin often fails to understand Western reactions to his aggression. We in the West repeatedly get him wrong, just as he fails to comprehend democracy and our place within it. He still appears to believe that simple bullying will help him to achieve his ends, and he seems genuinely puzzled when it doesn’t work.



Arkadiusz Mularczyk



Cristian Terhes

“Finland knows very well what Russia’s hybrid influence is,” said Sebastian Tynkkynen of the centre-right Finns Party. “When Russia sent hordes of instrumented migrants (his words, according to an on-line translation) to our borders, Finland did not hesitate to act.” He continued: “The Finnish parliament passed a law with a large parliamentary majority to combat this kind of influence. Now Russia’s other neighbour, EU country Poland, is also taking the same step. This means we have a threat of hybrid influence that affects the EU countries extensively, from which the countries want to protect themselves. Now, the big question is: what does the EU do and does it give such a procedure its full support? Or are we really so stupid in the EU that every single migrant pushed to their borders by Russia and Belarus should be welcomed with open arms?” It’s a question to which few think they have a definitive answer, but Tynkkynen has no hesitation in giving his verdict: “We must not fall for this under any circumstances. There is a point to be made for Russia’s influence and the EU must show its support for the legislation that countries use to protect their borders. Every country has the right to this.” That is not a point that Putin appears to understand, however obvious it may seem.

Tynkkynen also reminds us that there are problems potentially affecting Europe, though occurring far away. “China is threatening its neighbours in the South China Sea,” he points out, adding that: “Europe seems to be completely incapable of breaking away from China. Are we really so clumsy (complacent?) towards the East that we continue a permissive trade policy that makes us dependant on China, while oppressing the Uighurs, blockading Taiwan and attacking Filipino fishing boats?” Clearly, none of that is Europe’s intention, but our lack of perception makes it possible.



© KREMLIN.RU

Russian President Vladimir Putin awarding Ukraine war veterans

“China takes advantage of the conflicts raging in the world,” says Tynkkynen, “imagining that we have forgotten the threat it poses. China cannot be pressured if it is not isolated in the world political arena. That is why Europe should say as clearly as possible (that) we have not forgotten, and we will also act accordingly.” That sounds rather like fighting talk, although it’s hard to imagine a war between Finland and China.



© EUROPEAN UNION/LAURIE DIEFFENBAC

MEP Sebastian Tynkkynen

## | Any more fireworks?

It goes without saying that there are disputes a-plenty about the various rival sets of beliefs. People get so unreasonably and unthinkingly

angry about such differences that one might be tempted to believe that the argument is of greater importance than the faith itself, whatever that might be. It’s not so much a question “like “do you believe in God?” as “how exactly do you believe in God?”

And which God is that?” “Left-wing radicals are, of course, providing support with EU funds that have been ‘deported’ (according to the on-line translation) to Hamas in Palestine”, said Jaak Madison of the Estonian Central Party. “This money has been used to support the Islamic terrorists, to kill Jews and destroy peace there,” Madison said in a speech at the European Parliament. “We know the facts, that Hamas is working together with Hezbollah in Lebanon, with Russia, with Iran and North Korea. That is the side of evil.” It’s true: religion and politics have become indissolubly and strangely intertwined. Does Putin believe in a religion? If so, which one? Who knows? Who cares? It makes little or no difference; religious folks may boast about love and peace but it doesn’t seem to reduce the pressure of their fingers on the triggers or missile launch buttons that have nothing whatever to do with mutual love or respect and everything to do with sudden violent death. In that way, Madison is quite justified in saying “We are standing on the good side to destroy the terrorists and to finally fight for peace”. An admirable sentiment, but I fear there is nothing “final” about it (except for the victim, I suppose) nor will there ever be.

Violent rows and even wars about who loves their God most, which God deserves that love and how it can overcome all competition, not necessarily in a peaceful way, will probably continue into eternity. It is the fate of humankind to find excuses – even religious excuses – to commit slaughter on a massive scale. It will be reflected in the endless conflicts and acts of violence that fill our newspapers day after day, with supposedly “holy men” excusing it all as just a part of showing how much they love their god. We’re a strange lot, we humans, but always inclined towards violence if we can find an excuse for it, God help us.

*Jim Gibbons*

[Jim.Gibbons@europe-diplomatic.eu](mailto:Jim.Gibbons@europe-diplomatic.eu)





**PAYING TO  
SEE THE  
WORLD?**

**Do tourists value a location more highly if they've had to pay to visit it? Or do they stay away?**



Lots of places in Europe set out to attract more visitors. More visitors means more money for those whose living depends on tourism and the spending power of people from elsewhere, however far they may have come. But not everyone likes tourists. No, I shall rephrase that. Virtually everyone who doesn't depend on tourism for their living actively dislikes tourists. They get in one's way, clutter up any famous site or famous building and can be a real pain in the passport. The problem is that Europe's leading tourism sites depend on getting a lot of generous visitors, many of them happy to splash their cash on what is sometimes called "tourism tat": relatively worthless mementoes sold to visitors at elevated prices so that those who come visiting have decorative or in some way interesting articles to display around the home and even to show off to visitors. "Yes, that's where we went for our holidays this year. Lovely, isn't it?" Having travelled to lots of places in my life as a journalist I must admit to having brought quite a few things home as mementoes, even if some might dismiss them as "tourism tat". I like them anyway, and so does my wife. After all, I bought them, so I must have.

But tourists have caused anger in a number of places, however necessary they may be for the local economy. Let's look at Paris, for instance (a city I love, by the way) where there are moves to charge people for entering the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. It sounds like a reasonable proposal, given how much wear and tear all those visitors inflict on the ancient structure. Now there is a proposal to charge an entrance fee, although it has been free until now. Then there's Rome, which is now proposing to charge visitors to visit the Trevi Fountain. Venice already demands payment from those wanting to potter around the place, camera in hand (it's certainly well worth the money, if you've never seen it). Other places are also beginning to take note of their potential for raising funds through their understandable popularity.



© NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS

Notre-Dame de Paris undergoing renovation

Nowhere has tourism caused more problems than in Spain, where those opposed to having their towns and beaches filled with foreigners having a good time have shown their displeasure in colourful ways. There have been instances of locals traipsing across beaches to attack and even injure visitors, which isn't a way to boost tourism figures. Just in case more of them turn up, Barcelona has announced plans for a city-wide ban on all short-term rentals.

I suppose that may please the hoteliers who would prefer people to stay with them, but over-all it can only depress the total numbers of visitors. Placards reading "Tourists go home, you are not welcome" probably don't help to boost the holiday trade either, but they've been seen in Barcelona. Strangely, all the protestors shown in press photographs seem to be smiling, rather than looking angry or unhappy. Maybe they were just pleased to get their pictures in the local newspaper. Action against tourists has increased with some visitors even being sprayed with water from hosepipes whilst being screamed

at over what has been called the "touristification" of such places. This applies especially to those considered to be "culturally significant", because of the way that the soaring numbers of visitors is impacting on the lives of locals. We should, perhaps, bear in mind that Barcelona attracted almost 26-million visitors in 2023, which is roughly sixteen times the local population. Mass tourism has been – and remains – on the increase.



© BILLIE GRACE WARD

Anti tourist graffiti in Barcelona, Spain

There have always been locals eager to gaze upon sunbathers, especially those wearing few clothes, although the gazers were, of course, mainly men and "gaz-ees" (if I may call them that) were by-and-large young and scantily-clad women. But there have been anti-tourist protests and demonstrations held in Greece, Italy and Portugal, too, as well as in more northerly parts of Europe, such as Bruges in Belgium, where new restrictions on tourist numbers are being enforced following a bumper crop of more than ten million visitors in 2023.

That's a lot, but I'll bet they enjoyed the town and the local beer. I always did, although I was just there to work. Bruges is a vastly underrated destination, in my view. But while the tourists may not be welcome, their money certainly is. Without them a lot of services would doubtless disappear, and everything would cost more. But sloganizing and logic seldom go hand-in-hand.

## You're welcome (to spend) here

New rules are also being applied in Amsterdam and other parts of the Netherlands, where locals were seeing *te veel mensen* – too many people. The whole issue has disturbed people's feelings and attitudes. Take the Spanish town of Málaga, for instance, which one local told the BBC is "collapsing" under the sheer weight of visitor numbers. An exaggeration, obviously, but also a reflection of local attitudes, despite the fact that tourism accounts for 13% of Spain's GDP. Losing it would severely damage much of the country and a great many of its people, whatever the protestors may think or wish.



The same holds true for the popular tourist resorts of England, although trying to drive visitors away comes at a cost. In Cornwall, in south-west England, which has long been a tourism magnet because of its (relatively) sunny weather (a rarity in much of the UK), a drop in tourist numbers has led to the closures of some shops, including one selling vintage fashions. Vintage Superstore, as it was called, has collapsed, with debts of some £250,000 (just over €300,500) because of a sharp fall-off of tourism. Its owner, Ollie Hawkins, blamed a tough winter in 2023, especially because an expected upturn in the ensuing summer failed to materialise. The summer was certainly fairly poor in 2024 and that fact seems to have been reflected in smaller numbers of visitors. We should not forget, perhaps, that tourists have long been unpopular in some parts of the English south-west.

In Cornwall, for instance, tourists are referred to as “emmetts”, an old word in the Cornish language, which very few people know, let alone speak. It means ants. Next door, in the county of Devon, tourists are called “grockles”, and I have no idea of that word’s origin. It’s not used in a friendly way, however, in the main. Poor Mr. Hawkins: “Unfortunately” he said, “the summer tourism trade – our main source of profitable income – plummeted in 2024.” Sadly, we still cannot control the weather, although few people would want a wet, chilly holiday with non-stop rain.

The result of all this resentment, which seems to be rooted partly in local jealousy of the visitors’ relative seeming wealth, has been the increasing imposition of monetary charges for the right to gaze and “gawk”, a word defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as meaning “to look at something or someone in a stupid or rude way”. Of course, the tourists simply want to see somewhere that’s new to them and enjoy the novelty of the surroundings, the architecture, the history or even the local cuisine. The issue is posing problems for ancient churches, which find themselves obliged to charge worshippers (or at least visitors) for looking admiringly at the historic and beautiful architecture. Take the lovely and ancient York Minster, where access is now only free to those who can prove they’re residents of the city or else are studying there. The church authorities point out that they never charge people who enter the building to attend a religious service, to pray or to light a candle. Then there’s Canterbury Cathedral, which has been a leading place of worship for 1,400 years. Here, during such religiously important times as Christmas and Easter, for instance, there is no entry charge, although the church authorities invite donations to help maintain the fabric, of course. Such important and historic buildings are not cheap to maintain, requiring specialist skills that are increasingly rare in our mechanised world.



**Málaga is a place to live, not to survive”: Residents protest against tourism amid rising rents and gentrification**

How did we arrive at this odd juncture, with interesting places competing for tourists they don’t seem to want or to welcome? It seems

that it’s a combination of post-pandemic demand, greater disposable income in such countries as India and China and the ready availability of air travel to virtually everywhere, according to Yassin El Khououj, Managing Director of Boston Consulting Group, writing in Fortune magazine. “The rise of low-cost airlines,” he wrote, “has allowed the development of cheap city breaks and short trips, in parallel, in most cases, “overtourism” has yet to be properly addressed by destination authorities.” Meanwhile, the falling price of airline tickets has made weekend visits to popular holiday destinations more feasible for many. Indeed, “overtourism” has become a very important issue and a talking point for locals living in popular holiday destinations.



**Canterbury Cathedral, Kent, England**

## Attracting more tourists (and money?)

The plain fact, for businesses based in such popular spots, is that tourists have money that they’re more than willing to spend, but more and more shops selling tourist goods can change the character of the very areas people come to see. It’s not much fun for locals, either, unless their income depends directly on tourists. Of course, the tourists do not realise the negative impact they may be having on the places they’ve come to see, although their presence in such vast numbers will undoubtedly put local water supplies and sewage disposal under stress. Temperatures have risen, too, and there is inevitably a social impact: the price of success in attracting tourists is, it seems, too many tourists. Manuel Alector Ribeiro, an Associate Professor in tourism management at the University of Surrey in the UK has blamed a lack of effective management as “tourism is supposed to be an industry or sector for social good.” But he contends that instead it has been “breeding hostility between residents and tourists.” That is undoubtedly true, but tourism is in most cases vital to the local economy. Travel tourism, according

to the World Travel and Tourism Council, directly provided 7.7% of the GDP for Venice in 2022. Unfortunately, it has also pushed up the price of housing, with short-term stays winning out over long-term rentals, forcing out the local residents who find themselves obliged to seek permanent accommodation further from their work or from local amenities.

In many cases, local residents believe that tourism has reached – or even exceeded – its reasonable limits. A top UNESCO official has warned that the impact of tourism is seriously harming local people's ability to buy property, making them feel increasingly hostile towards the holidaymakers. Professor Ribeiro said that "tourism is dying of success in some destinations".

We must not assume that nothing comes for free. Some things – a dwindling number, perhaps – still do. Looking at London, for instance, daily service at St. Paul's Cathedral are still free and, indeed, open to everyone, although sightseeing tickets will cost you £25 (around €30), which will get you access to the Cathedral floor, the Crypt and the Dome Galleries, which include the remarkable Whispering Gallery, the circular walkway that surrounds the nave, far below. The acoustics are so strange that somebody standing on one side is able to whisper to someone on the opposite side and be heard perfectly. It's quite a site to see, although you'll have to climb 259 steps to reach it. Other places of interest to tourists in London include the Natural History Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, which are free although visitors are urged to make voluntary donations. There may also be a charge to see special exhibitions being held there. Free admission to the various national museums began in December 2001 and is sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. And I can say with personal conviction that these places are well worth visiting, whether or not you decide to make a donation.



In Britain's case, the decision to quit the European Union has meant that trips to Europe are likely to cost more. For example, a visit to see such wonderful places as the Louvre museum or the Cathedral of Notre Dame will shortly cost British tourists an extra €5 because the UK is no longer in the EU, although some of Europe's less well-visited destinations are cashing in on this by advertising that they're not charging this so-called "Brexit tax".

The mayor of Bruges, which received 7-million tourists in 2023, thinks his city is onto a winner with that: "Come to Bruges, it's cheaper!". Dirk De fauw told Britain's Daily Telegraph that Bruges will always welcome visitors. "For us it is all the same," he said, "if they come from Mexico, or if they come from China, or if they come from Korea, or if they come from London." He is hoping his city can benefit from the backlash against tourists that is being witnessed elsewhere. Venice, after all, is making a €5 "tourist charge" in a bid to cut down on overcrowding. De fauw is urging people to come and see the city's

magnificent canals and many historic buildings, especially after the day trippers have gone to bed for the night. Berlin and Amsterdam are among the cities that have stated that they will not impose a "Brexit" tax on tourists.



Bruges, Belgium

## Facing down a tourist overdose

European holiday destinations are not alone in trying to tackle excess tourism. Japan, for instance, has blocked off a popular view of Mount Fuji. You'd need an enormous sheet to hide the Eiffel Tower, I think. Meanwhile Copenhagen has come up with a novel notion: get the visitors working. If they pick up litter or carry out other environmental services for the city they can earn a modest reward. Yes, "Wonderful, Wonderful Copenhagen", as Danny Kaye sang in the 1952 movie, Hans Christian Andersen, has been encouraging its visitors to keep it clean (among other things) in order to earn free food and "special cultural experiences", with the aim of putting a lid on just how many tourists the city can absorb. It's far from being the most "over-touristed", with only twelve annual visitors for every inhabitant. Florence gets thirteen, with Bruges, Rhodes and Venice each getting twenty-one while poor old Dubrovnik, in Croatia, gets a stunning thirty-six! That's a lot of visitors.



Tourists in Amsterdam



In Amsterdam's case, there's now a ban on creating new hotels as a means of restricting the numbers. In 2023, twenty-seven million new jobs were created in the travel and tourism sector, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council. Indeed, travel and tourism account for around 10% of global GDP and when the COVID-pandemic struck Europe, revenues in some sub-sectors fell by 80%, affecting some 11-million jobs. The inevitable pause in world leisure travel is at least giving policy-makers an opportunity to re-examine their policies.

According to the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Development Index, there is an "imperative to embed sustainability and resilience into the design and management of the sector". Some regions concerned about the volume of tourists coming each year have introduced various measures to keep them under control. Venice has its entry fee for tourists who've come to see the famous canals but are only staying for one day. There is also now an overnight tax, the rate varying according to the number of nights involved and the number of stars the accommodation has been awarded. Amsterdam is seriously considering a ban on cruise ships visiting its city centre (it may have been enacted by the time you read this), while Marseille (lovely, exciting place!) has introduced a reservation system aimed at limiting the numbers entering the Calanque National Park (located on the Mediterranean coast in Bouches-du-Rhône, in Southern France) which was established in 2012 and which extends over 520 km<sup>2</sup>, around 85 km<sup>2</sup> of which is land. France gets some 37-million visitors every year, but they tend to gather in just 20% of the country, which seems a bit unfair on local residents. There again, we have Italy's Amalfi coastal road, upon which non-residents are only allowed to drive on certain days. The views are said to be stunning, by the way. In other popular spots for foreign visitors, the authorities are considering (or have already imposed) a tourism tax. If you can't keep them out, it seems, you can at least extract money from them.



**The Trevi Fountain, Rome. There are discussions about introducing an entrance fee ranging from 1 to 2 euros, to support the fountain's maintenance. These changes are part of a broader effort to manage Rome's tourist traffic during the Jubilee year, which is expected to draw millions of visitors**

Tourists have been obliged to pay taxes for their travels over many years, with the money raised in that way going to help fund infrastructure and useful facilities (which ironically can attract yet more visitors). Now, however, we come to specific "ecotourism taxes", which are to be ring-fenced for reinvestment in what are called "sustainability projects", although they also serve to remind visitors that their visits involve a certain amount of environmental effort, all of which costs money, of course. Topaz Smith, who is Community Lead for Aviation, Travel and Tourism at the World Economic Forum, says it's to support conservation activities, promoting environmental education, training hospitality workers and boosting the ability of local communities to manage tourism and also derive benefit from it.



**Tourists on an open-top bus tour of Paris, France**

Looking further afield, Asian destinations also face problems. Take the case of water, for instance in Bali, a province of Indonesia and also the most western of the Lesser Sunda Islands. Local inhabitants get through around 14 litres of fresh water per day, while any one of the place's daily 625,665 tourist visits during July 2024 will get through 1,785 litres per day. You think that's bad? Well, for tourists staying in hotels there, that figure jumps to 4,000 litres per day. Aa Zhang Jiajie, Assistant Professor in Human Geography at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, points out, a proper working balance must be worked out. "A robust framework needs to be set up," he told the Eco-Business website, "for proper reporting on how the funds raised by such taxes benefit conservation efforts and local livelihoods. Otherwise," he warned, "the trickle-down effect is questionable." On a lovely island that tourists love to visit, and which enjoys a lovely sunny clime, but which doesn't get a great deal of rain (or even enough), it's very clear that action is needed urgently, although exactly what sort of action is not so easy to see. It's clear that driving the tourists away would have a negative impact on the whole, but on the other hand how can anyone find a safe way to deliver sufficient safe water to those who need it?

So here we are: a world in which increasing numbers of people can afford to enjoy exotic foreign travel to places with sunshine, sea and sand, do we really want to stop them from fulfilling their dreams? Clearly not: they've worked hard for their money (unless they're crooks or politicians) and they deserve to fulfil a long-held dream of comfort and luxury (perhaps) far from their everyday troubles. The conundrum comes in achieving that without causing social, environmental and/or financial disaster in so doing. It's certainly not easy. If it's any consolation, it's a problem that is rooted in human success; otherwise few indeed could afford all that travel, so very few would get to visit the world's many beauty spots and enjoy their holidays there. Time for the world's great thinkers to contemplate the difficulties and find ways to overcome them that won't negatively affect others (perhaps especially those fortunate enough to live in such lovely parts of the world). There's no easy solution, as far as I can see, but we all have the right to enjoy our few days in the sunshine, don't you think? OK, pack your swimming gear, perhaps your snorkel and rubber ring, and off we go for a seat in the sun. If only!

**T. Kingsley Brooks**

**T.Kingsley.Brooks@europe-diplomatic.eu**



# MARETERRA

**A MAJESTIC ISLAND  
OUT OF THE SEA**









The Mareterra project, previously known as Anse du Portier, or Portier Cove, represents a stunning transformation of Monaco's coastline, extending over 60,000 square metres into the shimmering Mediterranean waters.

This innovative project employs state-of-the-art methods for environmental sustainability in addition to satisfying the Principality's increasing need for high-end housing alternatives.

As it prepares to welcome its first residents, Mareterra is poised to redefine the very essence of urban life in Monaco, harmonising luxury with nature and setting a new standard for how cities can evolve in an environmentally conscious manner.

Monaco has a long history of expanding its reach into the waters of the Mediterranean, and reclaiming land from the sea is by no means a recent development. The Principality has steadily expanded its territory since the 1950s, and these bold attempts have already created around 20 per cent of its landmass.



© ALFONSO ROMERO

In 1981, Prince Rainier III inaugurated Fontvieille, a 22 hectares "port and city" constructed almost entirely on artificially reclaimed land

Mareterra, however, is one of the most audacious initiatives to date. This new area will add almost 3 per cent to Monaco's size through a succession of massive and intricate infrastructures across 6 hectares. This will be a major milestone in the Principality's continuous efforts to combine luxurious living with creative land development.

Mareterra, which was launched in 2015, is the most ambitious and costly real estate project in Europe, with an astounding expenditure of some 2 billion euros. The majority of this enormous investment came from private sponsors who were enticed by the innovative opportunities this new location presents. The project was of course, not without its challenges, especially with the task of building on the sea. However, every step of the construction process was carefully thought out to reduce disturbance to the local population and to save the fragile coastal environment. For example, the impact on the neighbourhood was much reduced since the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of building materials were transported to the site by ship.



© NRF

With five exquisite luxury buildings comprising 114 units that perfectly exemplify elegance and grace, Mareterra is poised to become a bustling new neighbourhood. Together with these magnificent buildings, the complex also has a number of outstanding private villas, all of which are intended to provide unmatched luxury and elegance. The centre of this ambitious project is a busy commercial plaza that is expected to be a hub of activity and social interaction, as well as a port that offers residents and tourists direct access to the Mediterranean.

A beautifully landscaped public park that provides a tranquil haven in the middle of the city perfectly complements these features. The goal of these carefully designed buildings is to meet the growing demand for upscale real estate in Monaco, where every square metre is highly coveted and space is at a premium.



© BOUYGUES

Concrete cases (caissons) used as a protective belt around the reclaimed land, being towed to the construction site in 2019. These massive structures were transported by ship from Marseille

## I A colossal undertaking

At the heart of the Mareterra project stands its flagship building, "Le Renzo", a stunning creation by the renowned architect Renzo Piano. This remarkable structure captivates the eye with its unique architectural form, reminiscent of a ship gracefully navigating the sea. Stretching an impressive 126 metres in length and soaring to 71 metres high across 17 stories, "Le Renzo" houses 47 opulent apartments, including an extraordinary quadruplex penthouse that redefines luxury living.





“Le Renzo”

The floor-through apartments at “Le Renzo” are genuinely remarkable, with stunning dual views of the busy town and the sea. Each residence is opulent, with the smallest unit exceeding an impressive 372 square metres. Residents will enjoy a sense of exclusivity and privacy because there are only two apartments per level; nevertheless, some buyers have chosen to acquire neighbouring units, which allows for the development of even bigger, custom-tailored living areas.

“Le Renzo” provides a number of highly sought-after facilities that are common to the best buildings in the most prominent cities in the world. Modern fitness facilities and a tastefully decorated wine room are available to residents, adding to the opulent lifestyle this outstanding property offers. Additionally, homeowners can acquire the supplementary flats on the lower levels, giving them a variety of possibilities. These extra rooms can be used as a nanny’s or servant’s quarters or as a peaceful, independent home office, which enhance the luxurious living experience at “Le Renzo.”

Piano’s namesake building is not merely a stunning architectural feat; it also features an extraordinary amenity that significantly enhances the appeal of the neighbourhood: a magnificent saltwater swimming pool measuring 20 by 16 metres, named in honour of Princess Charlene, Prince Albert’s wife and a former champion swimmer. This exclusive venue is accessible only to the residents of “Le Renzo”, while other Mareterra apartment dwellers can only admire its beauty from a distance, perhaps with a hint of envy!



A living room in a Le Renzo duplex

In addition to being a magnificent architectural achievement, Piano’s namesake building has an exceptional feature that greatly raises the neighborhood’s appeal: a magnificent 20 by 16-metre saltwater pool named in honour of Princess Charlene, the wife of

Prince Albert and a former swimming champion. Only residents of “Le Renzo” have access to this unique location; other Mareterra apartment occupants may only gaze at its splendour from afar, perhaps with a hint of envy!

Beyond its visual appeal, the pool’s remarkable design, which flows smoothly into the water, has another function. It acts as a protective barrier for the harbour, providing better wave mitigation than a conventional seawall, according to Michel Desvigne, the project’s landscape designer. This creative solution not only improves the nearby marina’s safety but also exemplifies the Mareterra project’s careful blending of luxury and practicality. In this sense, the pool embodies the elegance and sustainability that characterise this remarkable structure, serving as a representation of affluent life as well as a workable answer to environmental problems.

The ethereal nature of “Le Renzo,” which appears to float above the ground and offers residents breathtaking panoramic vistas of the Mediterranean and the mesmerising sunsets that colour the sky, is one of its most outstanding qualities. “Le Renzo” epitomises contemporary living in every way, skilfully fusing architectural innovation with the surrounding natural beauty.



Monsignor Bernard Barsi, late Archbishop of Monaco (left), accompanying Prince Albert II for a ceremony to bless the construction work, on the arrival of the first of 18 massive ‘caissons’ in Monaco, in 2018

Prominent architects like Sir Norman Foster, Stefano Boeri, and Tadao Ando are among those who have contributed to the ensemble of villas. Each of these architects has brought their distinct vision and experience to this elite group of 10 outstanding properties. Notably, Tadao Ando created a stunning pair of villas that blend in well with one another, tucked away in the development’s charming southwest corner.

This careful placement not only improves the collection’s visual appeal but also shows a profound regard for the local environment, demonstrating how creative design can coexist peacefully with the natural world. The unique styles of each architect contribute to the collection’s overall character, resulting in a varied yet unified tapestry of opulent living that exemplifies the pinnacles of architectural brilliance.



Panoramic view of the Principality of Monaco

## Eco-friendly design and urban development

Mareterra is a ground-breaking project in the field of sustainable development in addition to being a marvel of architecture. This location has been carefully designed to limit its environmental impact. Utilising the sun's energy to power the community, the district displays an array of 9,000 square metres of solar panels fitted into its buildings and public areas. Furthermore, cutting-edge heat pump systems that use saltwater to effectively heat in the winter and cool in the summer are prime examples of creative climate control solutions.

In an effort to foster biodiversity, Mareterra is planting 800 trees as part of its ongoing commitment to sustainability. In order to facilitate the shift to greener modes of transportation, the construction also has 600 meters of bike lanes and electric car charging stations.

The Principality of Monaco and H.S.H. Prince Albert II personally support the ultimate goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2050, which includes all of these activities. The aim is to make Mareterra the first eco-district in Monaco, where ecological responsibility and luxury coexist harmoniously. By establishing artificial reefs, the initiative also seeks to increase local biodiversity, which is essential for maintaining and nourishing the nearby marine ecosystems. Mareterra not only reimagines urban life but also establishes a standard for environmentally friendly modern development.

## A canvas of art and culture

Mareterra is intended to be a seamless continuation of Monaco's dynamic, urban environment, establishing links with important cultural sites like the Japanese Garden and the Grimaldi Forum. This creative project has improved the coastal experience for

both locals and tourists by introducing a stunning coastal promenade that expands on the Larvotto Beach boardwalk, forming a welcoming 1.5-kilometre walkway that stretches all the way to Port Hercule.

Art plays a pivotal role in the Mareterra initiative. A remarkable sculpture by Alexander Calder, purchased in 1966 by Prince Rainier III and Princess Grace, is prominently displayed in a courtyard designed by Renzo Piano. This carefully planned space features comfortable benches and a variety of other public art installations, transforming Mareterra into a vibrant hub where art, architecture, and nature converge, inviting all to gather, reflect, and appreciate the beauty that surrounds them.



Monaco's Larvotto Beach is at a walking distance from Mareterra

## Redefining Monaco: a new icon

Mareterra is much more than just a straightforward urban growth; it marks a turning point in the Principality's remarkable history and is evidence of Monaco's everlasting commitment to sustainable luxury. With a concept that puts ecological responsibility first, this extraordinary district is set to draw an elite worldwide audience. Through its cutting-edge architecture, abundant green spaces, and commitment to sustainability, Mareterra is setting a new benchmark for luxury real estate across the world.

And here, we conclude with the following words from H.S.H. Prince Albert II : *"I wanted this new area to embody the excellence and conviviality which distinguish the Principality of Monaco so well. Mareterra will integrate perfectly with our shoreline, and in a few years will be seen as a natural extension of our territory."*

**James Lookwood**

[james.lookwood@europe-diplomatic.eu](mailto:james.lookwood@europe-diplomatic.eu)





© AI GENERATED IMAGE

**rites of  
renewal**

**the enchantment of  
new beginnings**



*'Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one.'* (Brad Paisley - American singer/songwriter)

Five, four, three, two, one... Happy New Year!

As each new year approaches, it is a near-universal sentiment to anticipate its arrival with hope and excitement. We collectively yearn for it to be a time filled with the abundance and goodness we feel we've earned, and perhaps even more.

Every year, billions of people make hopeful New Year's resolutions, only to abandon them by the end of January. This cycle continues, year after year.

The tradition of celebrating the New Year has ancient roots, dating back thousands of years. The earliest records of such celebrations come from Babylon (ancient Mesopotamia), where they took place in March at the spring equinox, as they were linked to the agricultural calendar. The festivities, called "Akitu", lasted eleven days and centred on the rebirth of nature.



**Romans celebrating New Year (Late antique Roman mosaic displayed in Switzerland at the Chateau de Boudry)**

In ancient Egypt, the New Year was celebrated during the annual flooding of the Nile, which coincided with the rising of the star Sirius around mid-July. This was a major celebration for the Egyptians, as they owed much of their existence and development to the great river and its annual cycles. However, the tradition of celebrating New Year's Eve as we know it today goes back to the Roman Empire.

Julius Caesar reformed the calendar in 46 BC, introducing the Julian calendar and setting 1 January as the start of the new year. January was named after Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, endings and transitions, who had two faces: one that looked forwards and one that looked backwards. The Romans began to celebrate the New Year by exchanging gifts, decorating their homes and organising merry feasts.

During the early Middle Ages, the celebration fell out of favour in Christian Europe, but Pope Gregory XIII reinstated 1 January as New Year's Day in 1582 with the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, aligning most European countries with the ancient Roman tradition.

Living in different countries and experiencing the variety of customs and traditions that people uphold

as the year comes to a close, fosters an appreciation for cultural diversity and an interest in exploring various social customs.

Every year, as the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve, Europe transforms into a kaleidoscope of cultural traditions. From time-honoured rituals to contemporary celebrations, the continent's final night of the year is a captivating display of diversity. From the bustling streets of major cities to the quiet villages, each country embraces its own unique way to usher in the new year.

So, join us as we explore the delightful customs that make New Year's Eve a memorable occasion—or possibly one to forget, if one has indulged in too much of that 'bubbly'!

In Spain and Portugal, it is customary for people to eat twelve grapes at midnight—one for each month of the new year—as a symbol of good luck. At the stroke of midnight, Spaniards also toast with a glass of Cava, a sparkling wine from the Catalonia region. Some even drop a gold ring into their glass of Cava before drinking, symbolising wealth and prosperity in the year ahead. The first part of the evening is typically spent with family at the table, enjoying traditional Spanish dishes, seafood, ham, and a variety of tapas. Desserts often include Turrón (a nougat-like sweet) and other treats typical of the Christmas season.

In some parts of Spain, it is believed that wearing new clothes on New Year's Eve brings good fortune. After midnight, many people join in the celebrations in town, which continue until dawn. Traditional dances, such as flamenco in the south or sardana in Catalonia, may be performed in more regional settings. Another highlight of the holiday season in Spain is the El Niño lottery, where many buy tickets in the hope of starting the new year with an unexpected win. In the Canary Islands, it is customary to wear white on New Year's Eve to attract positive energy, while in Galicia, there is a tradition of throwing a bucket of water out of the window to cleanse the house and wash away the negative energy from the previous year.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, "Hogmanay"—a term deeply embedded in Scottish culture—marks a major three-day festival featuring street parties, concerts, and a spectacular fireworks display. The torchlight procession is particularly iconic, creating a magical atmosphere. Scots eagerly participate in the tradition of "first footing" by visiting friends' homes on New Year's Eve, hoping that a tall, dark stranger will bring good fortune for the year ahead.



**Up Helly Aa Vikings during the Torchlight Procession, Edinburgh during the Hogmanay celebration in Scotland**

If you have Danish guests joining you for the New Year's celebration, don't be surprised if they begin breaking dishes at your doorstep; this tradition is believed to bring good luck for the year ahead. They also enjoy jumping off chairs at midnight, symbolising the leap into the new year.

Germans tend to be slightly more reserved; rather than wishing to "jump" into the new year, they prefer to "slide" smoothly into it. Their



traditional greeting, *Guten Rutch*, reflects this sentiment. Additionally, they uphold the tradition of watching the same programme, “Dinner for One,” each year—a British short comedy made in the 1920s, which is now officially the most repeated TV show of all time (according to the Guinness Book of Records). Germans also have a strong affinity for fireworks; they are possibly one of the largest consumers at midnight celebrations. Many wear lucky charms, such as small pigs, mushrooms, or clovers, and they often buy edible lucky charms made of marzipan for good fortune.

If you find yourself in the Netherlands during this time of year, you should try their traditional “Oliebollen,” delightful doughnuts that may also provide you with the energy needed for the next day’s cold swim in the North Sea, known as “Nieuwjaarsduik.” Regardless of the weather, many enthusiastic participants plunge into the frigid waters to welcome the new year.

Italians celebrate with a feast that always includes lentils on the menu, symbolising wealth and prosperity. It is also quite common to wear red underwear for good luck. Additionally, the last person to leave a party is often jokingly blamed for any misfortune in the coming year, resulting in a humorous game where everyone attempts to sneak out unnoticed.



The “Nieuwjaarsduik” in Scheveningen, The Netherlands

When it comes to food, Romanians will fill your table with an array of traditional dishes, including pork and sauerkraut, a variety of salads, and a special dessert called “cozonac,” which is a sweet bread filled with nuts, raisins, and cocoa. These feasts are complemented by drinks, music, abundant fireworks, and a cheerful atmosphere. Cities often host public fireworks displays and large gatherings. The New Year’s celebrations last until dawn and continue the following day with “Sorcova,” when children wish older individuals a happy new year in exchange for gifts and money.

In Greece, a cake known as Vasilopita is baked each year for New Year’s Eve. This cake contains a hidden coin, and the person who finds the coin is believed to have good luck for the year ahead.

At midnight, Austrian national television broadcasts the sound of the Pummerin bell from the famous Stephansdom cathedral, the largest church bell in the country and the third largest in Europe. This is followed by the beautiful Blue Danube Waltz, while people melt small pieces of lead (*Bleigießen*) or, more recently, wax, as it is less dangerous and toxic. They then throw the melted material into cold water, creating various shapes and figurines that are said to predict the future. Apparently, Finns have a similar tradition, which is full of fun and always brings lots of giggles!



Waltzing on New Year’s Eve in the streets of Vienna, Austria

The Austrian capital is host to the famous “*Silvesterpfad*”, featuring street parties with live music, food stalls and entertainment leading up to midnight. A most significant event is the traditional New Year’s Concert, held every year on 1 January at noon, when the Vienna Philharmonic performs timeless and beloved classical pieces from the vast repertoire of Johann Strauss and his sons, in Vienna’s resplendent Musikverein concert hall. This event has gained immense popularity over the years and is now broadcast live in over 90 countries.

In Norway, people usually spend the evening with family and friends, enjoying a meal of *ribbe* (pork ribs) or *pinnekjøtt* (dried lamb) and plenty of fireworks at midnight.

The Swiss eat “*Fondue chinoise*”, made of raw meat and blanched vegetables, cooked in a simmering broth and then dipped into a variety of sauces.

Polish people go on sleigh rides known as “*kulig*”, but only after ensuring all debts are paid and cupboards are stocked up for a prosperous new year.

Hungarian New Year’s Eve traditions include burying straw dolls to ward off winter and making lots of noise to scare away evil spirits. People also enjoy a meal of *virslis* (Viennese sausages) and lentil soup or *korhelyleves*, a sauerkraut soup with meat, believed to cure hangovers.

Swedes traditionally celebrate New Year’s Eve by partaking in a *smorgasbord* (buffet-style meal) and watching the ‘Sveriges Television’ programme in the company of friends and family.

In Turkey, New Year’s Eve, or “*Yılbaşı*”, is traditionally marked by a sumptuous feast featuring stuffed grape leaves, pilaf, and baklava. The exchange of gifts and cards is customary, particularly among close friends and family. Some people incorporate lucky charms, such as coins or pomegranate seeds, into their celebrations to attract prosperity in the new year.

A charming tradition comes from Belgium, especially from Flanders, where children write *Nieuwjaarsbrieven*, beautifully decorated New Year’s



letters, with good wishes to their parents, godparents or grandparents, which they then read to them on New Year's Day, as a sign of affection. People carry gold coins or jewellery in their pockets to attract prosperity in the coming year. Traditionally, rabbits, lentils or cabbage are eaten, considered symbols of wealth and luck. In large cities, especially in Brussels and Antwerp, people attend New Year's Eve balls and gala dinners, formal events with good food and live music, which last until the small hours.



© ZAKOPANE.INFO

New Year's Sleigh ride (kulig) in Zakopane Poland

In France, "*Réveillon de la Saint-Sylvestre*" is celebrated with lavish dinners, often featuring oysters, foie gras and a variety of seafood. As the clock strikes midnight, it is traditional to toast with selected French champagne, wishing "*Bonne Année*" to everyone. It is also still customary to send New Year's cards to family and friends, often accompanied by small gifts or tokens of appreciation. In Paris, there are public celebrations with fireworks and parties, especially along the Champs-Élysées, where massive crowds gather to celebrate into the early hours of the morning.



© JEAN-BAPTISTE GURLAT/VILLE DE PARIS

The "*Réveillon de la Saint-Sylvestre*" along the Champs-Élysées in Paris

In fact, Europe hosts some of the most famous New Year's parties worldwide, each with its own unique flavour. Berlin's New Year's Eve

party at the Brandenburg Gate is one of the largest in the world, attracting over a million people each year. With live music, DJs, fireworks and a vibrant atmosphere, it is broadcast on German television and is a must-see for party enthusiasts.

London's spectacular fireworks display over the Thames, near the London Eye, draws huge crowds each time. Amsterdam attracts many to Dam Square, where there is certainly something for everyone. Similarly, Madrid's iconic Puerta del Sol is a major draw.

Piazza del Popolo in Rome is the centre of the New Year's celebrations in the Italian capital. It is a great place to enjoy traditional Italian food and immerse oneself in the festive cheer.

Many European countries also observe specific religious ceremonies around this time of year. In the UK, Watch Night services are held on New Year's Eve, featuring prayers, hymns, and reflections on the past year, as well as hopes for the year ahead.



© SKIDDLE

"The best New Year's Eve boat party in London and the best way to see the New Year's Eve fireworks" says the advertisement of Skiddle, recognised as the leading UK website for event promotion and online ticketing

In Italy, it is common to attend a special mass on New Year's Day to give thanks and seek blessings for the year ahead. In Greece, 1 January is a significant religious holiday, when the faithful go to church and bless their food.

In Ireland, some follow traditional Celtic customs, with rituals to honour ancestors and seek blessings for the new year.

Some Eastern Orthodox countries, such as Moldova, Serbia, Georgia, Macedonia, and Russia, still celebrate New Year's Eve on 13 January, according to the Julian calendar, known as the Old New Year.

No matter how and when the first moments of 2025 are celebrated, let us hope that it will be a year full of laughter, accomplished dreams, good health, and peace.

The enchantment of starting anew is one of the most delightful experiences.

Happy New Year to one and all!

**Alexandra Paucescu**

**alexandra.paucescu@europe-diplomatic.eu**



# TIMELESS CHIC

## STANDOUT FASHION AND BEAUTY TRENDS

### NEUTRAL VS COLOURFUL: THE GREAT COAT SHOWDOWN

In the world of fashion, the debate is settled: a neutral coat is a timeless essential. Yet, over the past few seasons, the spotlight has shifted to high-impact colour coats. So, the question remains: which team will you join?

Classic elegance  
or bold vibrancy?

Choose your side and  
make a statement!

### 1. The neutral coat collective

Their versatility makes them a reliable choice, effortlessly adapting to various styles, from chic to casual.

**Fashion tip:** A camel, black, or grey coat is the ultimate finishing touch for any outfit. It effortlessly crafts a sophisticated monochromatic ensemble or serves as the perfect canvas to highlight a bold pop of colour.



© INSTAGRAM / @QDRESSCODE



© ZARA

Wool blend double-breasted coat (zara.com)



© MAX MARA

Long double-breasted coat in fine pure wool broadcloth (maxmara.com)



© JACQUEMUS

Off-white draped-collar coat (jacquemus.com)

### 2. The colour coat crew

There's truly no downside to experimenting with a playful winter coat, even if you're a die-hard neutral fan. Bright statement outerwear has emerged as one of the foremost winter trends that undoubtedly remains a source of joy and brightness in the dreariness of winter.

**Fashion tip:** If you're feeling unsure, pair your colourful coat with casual pieces such as denim and sneakers, for a laid-back look.



© INSTAGRAM / @ANNABELROSENDAHL



© GUCCI

Short double-breasted wool coat (farfetch.com)



© ISABEL MARANT

Double-breasted wool and cashmere coat (mytheresacom)



© PARO.S.H

Wool and cashmere blend wrap coat (farfetch.com)

## “ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS...”

As the festive season draws near, we're excited to present the ultimate gift guide featuring items we genuinely believe are worth it. Whether you're shopping for a loved one or treating yourself, happy shopping!



© TIFFANY & CO

### Christmas at Tiffany's

Who wouldn't dream of finding a beautiful blue Tiffany gift box nestled under the Christmas tree? If you're eager to indulge someone, we recommend one of Tiffany's iconic pendant keys. These exquisite pieces come in a stunning array of options, offering nearly limitless variations. In mini or maxi size, you can choose from elegant yellow, rose, or silver gold. Each pendant can be as minimalist or dazzlingly adorned with diamonds. ([tiffany.com](http://tiffany.com))



© SAINT LAURENT

### “Scent with Love”: Gift sets they'll adore !



© CHANEL

A perfume gift set might often be considered boring but they're actually an excellent choice for someone who has everything, yet would still appreciate something lovely, especially since many perfumes come in sets containing 'extras' such as body cream, shower gel, scented candles, etc...

N°5 Eau de Parfum and N°5 The Body Oil limited-edition case adorned with signature snowflakes. ([chanel.com](http://chanel.com))

### An it-bag , please !

When it comes to gifting a bag, the best choice is a timeless model. Opt for neutral colors and practical shapes, such as a spacious shoulder bag, to complement elegant outfits or for everyday use, even in the most casual looks.

Suede supple tote bag. ([ysl.com](http://ysl.com))



© HERMÈS

### Time to impress



© CARTIER

Just like a piece of jewellery, a watch can assure you that unwrapping its precious case will make eyes light up. An iconic model, subtly bicolour (gold and silver), remains the guarantee of a perfect gift.

Medium model Panthère watch. ([cartier.com](http://cartier.com))

### The Hermès touch

Gifting a scarf is always a thoughtful choice, offering versatility in styling—whether wrapped around the neck, worn as a top, cinched at the waist, or fashioned as a headscarf. Among the various options available, nothing compares to the exquisite designs by Hermès. These scarves effortlessly enhance any outfit, making them the ideal accessory for any occasion.

Scarf in silk twill with hand-rolled edges. ([hermes.com](http://hermes.com))



© CHANEL

### Beauty bliss in a box !

There's nothing quite like the gift of fabulous makeup! The most coveted palettes deliver results worthy of a pro, and this year's limited editions are simply stunning.

Enchanted Night eyeshadow and blush palette. ([chanel.com](http://chanel.com))

Diorshow 5 Couleurs eye shadow palette. ([dior.com](http://dior.com))



© DIOR



# EUROPE *Diplomatic* magazine

YOUR ESSENTIAL MONTHLY  
NEWSMAGAZINE



Offer a printed edition subscription to a friend  
Contact us : [europediplomaticmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:europediplomaticmagazine@gmail.com)

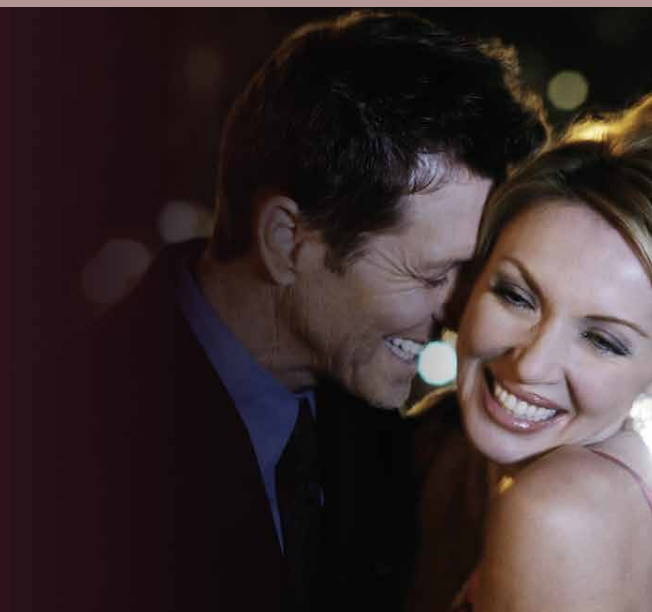


# SAVVIVA

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](http://www.savviva.be) | +32 2 669 07 29 | [concierge@savviva.be](mailto:concierge@savviva.be)