

# EUROPE DIPLOMATIC

MAGAZINE

**CRIME AND  
PUNISHMENT**

**A Tale of Two Systems**



October 2025

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# IN THIS ISSUE

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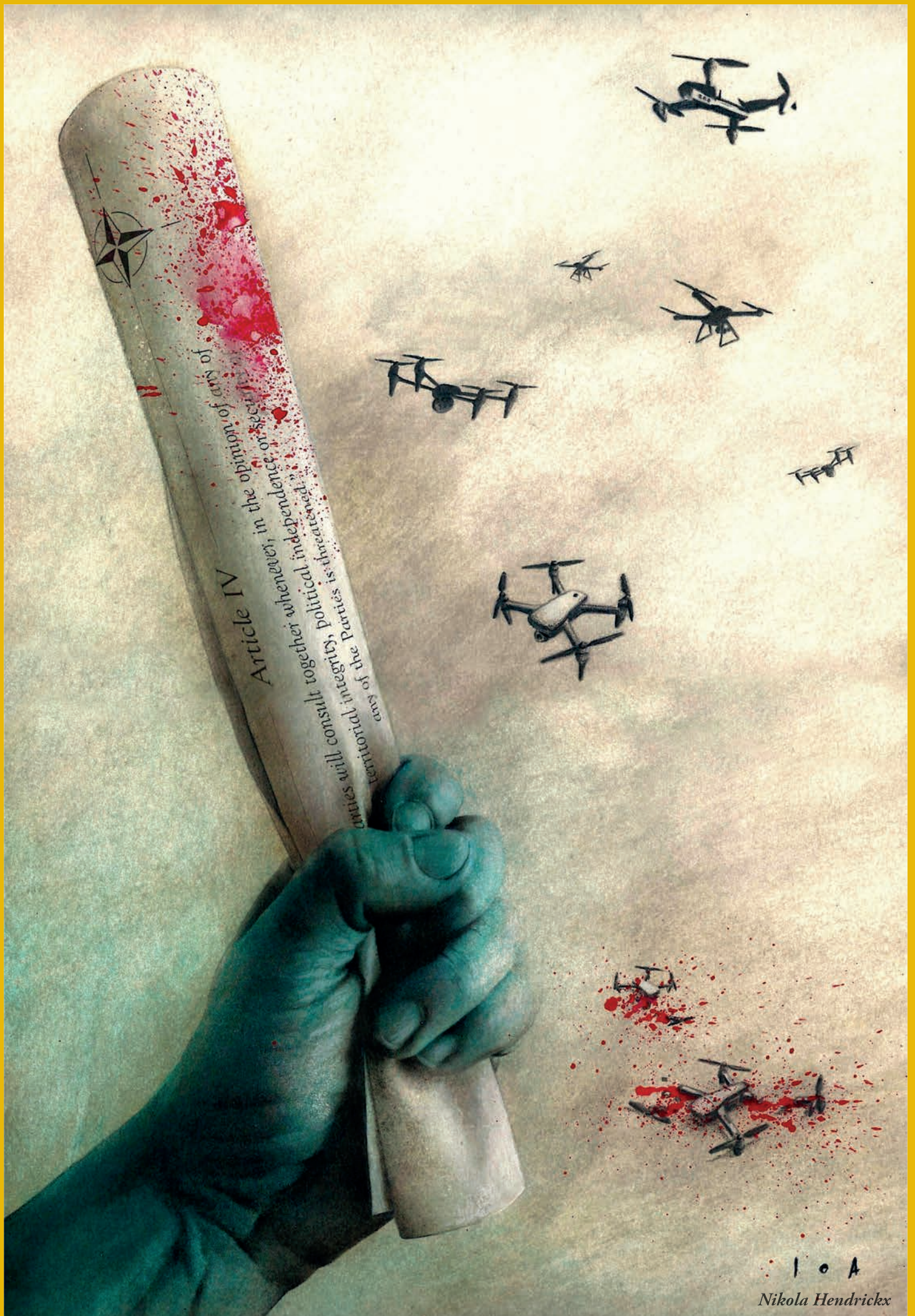


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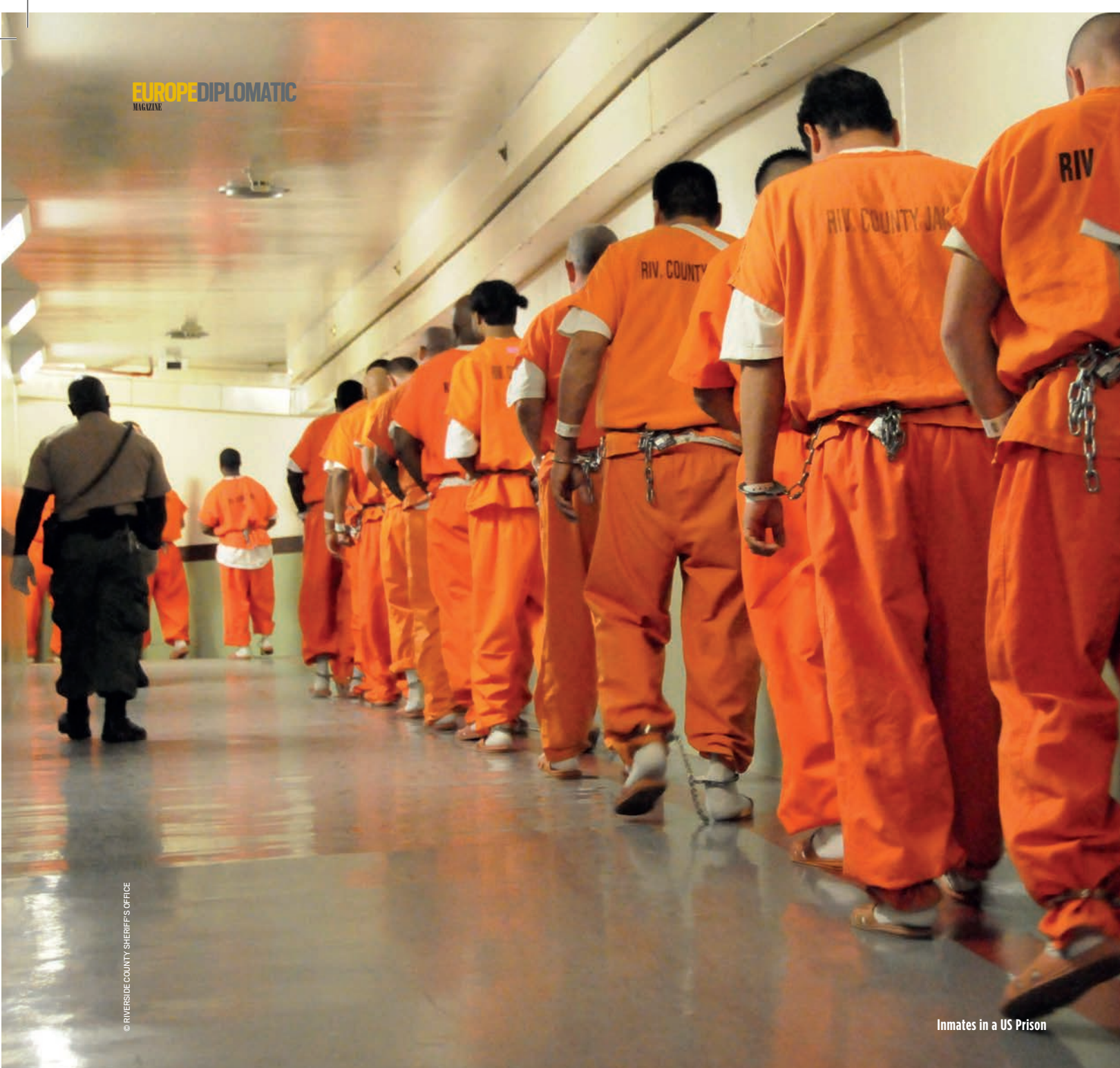
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Inmates in a US Prison

# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

## A Tale of Two Systems



It's a simple fact of life: when a government anywhere in the world decides something is a crime, its biggest, most forceful response is usually to send someone to prison. Taking away a person's freedom is meant to punish them and scare others from doing the same thing. But here's what's fascinating - the entire world can't agree on how to actually use this power. What gets you locked up in one country might only get you a fine or community service somewhere else. And even when two countries both choose prison, the sentence in one might last a few months, while in the other, it could stretch for decades. So the exact same action, tried in two different courtrooms on opposite sides of the planet, can lead to two completely different futures. In the end, the kind of justice you get seems to depend less on what you did - and more on where you were when you did it.

If you take a step back and look at how the US and Europe handle justice, you're not just seeing small policy tweaks - you're looking at two very different worlds. The sheer harshness of sentencing in America compared to Europe isn't some accident. It comes from deep-rooted beliefs about crime, punishment, and what society should be. These are two clashing philosophies. In the US, the justice system and the legal process are intensely adversarial, and for decades, politicians have built careers on being "tough on crime." The driving idea here is to punish and make people pay for what they've done.

Europe, on the other hand, tends to put more faith in the state to actually reform people, not just lock them away. The goal isn't just to punish, but to eventually reintegrate. This isn't just some



Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman arriving in New York under heavy escort by special agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) following his extradition to the U.S. Joaquin Guzman is currently serving a life sentence ADX Florence, the maximum-security federal prison in Colorado, USA

theoretical debate. It makes us ask a very basic, but vital, question: What do we actually want our justice system to do? What kind of society are we trying to build with the power we give our courts?

## Punishment, Politics, Prisons

When we talk about how punitive a country's justice system is, the measuring standard is almost always the imprisonment rate - the number of people locked up per 100,000. And that number tells you something, for sure, but it's also somewhat



Female Inmates in a US prison

imprecise. It really neglects the huge differences in how countries actually use prison. Some nations send hundreds and thousands of people to prison, while others are much more selective.

Then there's sentence length: in some places, getting more than a year is rare; in others, it's totally standard. And as for pre-trial detention or remand as it's known in the UK, this is extremely common in some jurisdictions, but not so much in others.

The crazy part is that because of all this, two countries can have nearly identical imprisonment rates but be punishing people in completely different ways. In Europe, take the Netherlands and Germany, for example. The Dutch system might imprison more people overall, but often for shorter stints. Meanwhile, Germany imprisons far fewer people, but when they do, the sentences tend to be longer. It's the same overall number, but a totally different philosophy.

In the United States, it's a different story. It's become something of a global trend over the last few decades for prison sentences to get longer, but even against this backdrop, the United States stands out as a real outlier. When you look at both the average length of sentence handed down and the actual time people end up serving behind bars, the US figures are consistently higher than those in most other nations. This really underscores a broader pattern in corrections that sets the US apart.



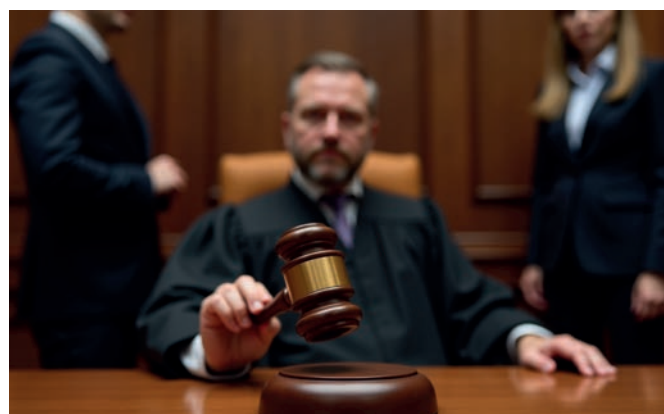
In Germany, Christian Brückner, the prime suspect in the kidnapping of Madeleine McCann, was sentenced to seven years in prison for the 2005 rape of a 72-year-old American woman in Portugal. He was freed last September after having served his sentence.

Now, it's true that the US has to deal with higher homicide rates than many European countries, which might partly explain why long sentences are used more often there. But that fact alone doesn't really explain why the average prison

term for serious crimes like homicide and sexual offences is also so much longer. The distinction becomes even more striking when you compare the US to parts of the world with substantially higher rates of violence. For instance, many Latin American and Caribbean nations have higher homicide rates, yet US states often end up incarcerating more people and for longer periods.

Perhaps most telling are the figures for life sentences. The United States accounts for 40% of all people serving life sentences worldwide. Even more striking, it accounts for the vast majority, 83%, of those sentenced to Life Without Parole (LWOP). Some state laws mandate minimum confinement periods that are exponentially harsher than anything you'd find in Europe.

Then there is what is known as the "Three-strikes" law. This is in reference to baseball, where the umpire calls strikes when a player is batting. The first strike is when you are convicted of a first serious crime (armed robbery or murder). You go to prison for a normal sentence. The second strike is when you are convicted of another serious crime. This time, the sentence will be much longer than usual. The third strike is when you are convicted of any crime (even a less serious one, like shoplifting or burglary). This is your "third strike." Instead of a short sentence for that minor crime, you are automatically sent to prison for a very, very long time - often 25 years to life.



This unique reliance on long-term incarceration is deeply entrenched in the American system, and it originates from its highly decentralised political and criminal justice structures. The problem is further exacerbated by a number of individual states that have exceptionally large populations of people serving these very long terms, maintaining the country's position as a global anomaly.

## Deterrence vs Rehabilitation

A detailed account of the disparities in sentencing severity between the United States and European nations, naturally, requires an examination of fundamental philosophical differences, legal structures, and socio-political contexts. But the core of the disparity can be summarised as a contrast between a generally retributive and deterrence-based model in the US and a rehabilitative and reintegrative model in Europe.

In the United States, the justice system often speaks the language of retribution. The driving idea is that if you commit a crime, you must be punished in a way that precisely matches the harm you've done - an eye for an eye, or '*just deserts*'. There's also





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The La Santé prison, Paris

a powerful element of deterrence: the belief that by making the consequences harsh and highly visible, you'll scare others away from following the same path. Above all, there's a deep-seated urge to simply remove the problem - locking people away to make society feel safer, if only for a while.

## Specific Sentencing Practices

The vast majority of countries around the world - that's 183 out of 216 - have laws that allow for life sentences. On top of that, at least 64 countries have what's called a "de facto" life sentence. This is when someone is given a prison term so long, like 35 years minimum before any chance of parole, that it essentially means life behind bars. In fact, 15 countries use this kind of sentence instead of a formal "life in prison" law.

Globally, the number of people serving life sentences has grown a lot. Back in 2000, there were about 261,000 lifers worldwide. By 2014, that number had jumped to nearly 479,000, and the numbers keep growing. A few of the countries that have contributed the most to this increase are the United States, India, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Turkey. (Source: *Council on Criminal Justice CCJ* <https://counciloncj.foleon.com>)

Perhaps the most fundamental distinction between the American and European justice systems is the sheer length of time people are locked away. The gap isn't just one of scale, but a difference in kind.

This is most apparent with life sentences, which are handed down much more often in the US. But the real divide becomes clear with sentences like Life Without Parole (LWOP). This

means exactly what it says: you will die in prison. A European court issuing such a sentence is almost unthinkable.

Perhaps even more symbolic are the multi-century sentences handed down by some courts. A term of, say, 200 years isn't a measurable period of rehabilitation or punishment - it's a formal and absolute declaration. It serves as a legal mechanism to ensure that imprisonment extends far beyond a single natural lifetime, closing the door on the very idea of a second chance.

In Europe, while life sentences exist, they are governed by a principle of humanity: the belief that people can change. A life sentence almost always comes with the possibility of a parole review, typically after serving 12 to 20 years. This isn't about being soft on crime; it's about offering a real incentive for rehabilitation and acknowledging that a person at 60, for example, is not the same person they were at 25.

You can really see this different way of thinking in action in places like Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Their whole approach is built on a simple but powerful idea: taking away someone's freedom doesn't mean you have to take away their dignity. Prisons there are designed to feel as normal as possible. Instead of just punishing people, they focus on teaching them new skills, offering therapy, and getting them ready for a life outside. The sentences themselves are much shorter, and a 20-year term is almost unheard of - it's saved for the very worst cases. In fact, the European Court of Human Rights has ruled that all life sentences

must be "reviewable" and "reducible."

You can trace this deep split in thinking back to history and culture. After the unimaginable horrors of the Second World War, European countries had seen firsthand what happens when a state is allowed to punish its citizens cruelly and without limits. That experience left them with a deep distrust of pure revenge as justice. Instead, they built new legal systems with human rights at the very core - like the rule that absolutely forbids "inhuman or degrading treatment." This is why you won't find the death penalty anywhere in Europe; it's completely outlawed.

The American story is different. Its culture was heavily shaped by a frontier spirit of individualism and self-reliance. In that view, crime is often seen as a personal moral failing. The response, then, isn't to ask how society might have failed the person, but to demand that the person who failed must be punished severely.

But there is a troubling trend that needs to be considered: over the past few decades, the US hasn't just been sending more people to prison - it's been keeping them there for much longer. Take



Inmates playing a volleyball game with a guard at Halden Prison, Norway

2019, for example. Well over half of everyone in prison - 56%, to be exact - was serving a long sentence. That's a significant jump from just 46% back in 2005. Now, what's interesting is that

this shift wasn't necessarily because courts were handing out more long sentences. It was actually because they were giving out *fewer* short ones. So the overall pie of people in prison started to have a much bigger slice of long-termers.

And for those serving a decade or more, the time they actually spent behind bars grew substantially. If you look at people released after a long sentence in 2019, they had served an average of 15 and a half years. That's a staggering 60% increase from 2005, when the average was just under a decade. (Source: Council on Criminal Justice <https://counciloncj.com>)

This chart represents an overview of sentencing for murder in the United States and selected European countries. The figures include parole timing, whole life/life without parole (LWOP) availability and death penalty status.

With regard to Italy, *ergastolo ostativo* (literally "obstructive life sentence") is a particularly severe form of life imprisonment that is reserved exclusively for the most serious crimes such as Mafia type association, involving multiple murders, terrorism resulting in murder and particularly heinous and premeditated, multiple murders. The goal isn't just punishment but permanent incapacitation of individuals deemed extremely dangerous to society. It is Italy's closest equivalent to a "whole life" or "life without parole" (LWOP).

## Sexual Assault Convictions

Comparing sexual assault conviction regimes between the United States and Europe reveals significant differences in legal definitions, investigative processes, and sentencing outcomes. In the US, the legal system uses a narrow, precise definition, often distinguishing between degrees

Country	Earliest parole (years)	LWOP / Whole life	Death penalty
🇺🇸 USA	25-40 (state dependent)	Yes (common)	Yes
🇬🇧 UK (E&W)	Judge-set tariff, typically 15-30	Yes (whole life order)	No
🇩🇪 Germany	15	Rare (indefinite if dangerous)	No
🇫🇷 France	18-22 (extendable to 30)	Rare (exceptional cases)	No
🇮🇹 Italy	21-26	Yes (ergastolo ostativo cases)	No
🇳🇴 Norway	Typically 10-14 (max term 21)	No (but preventive detention)	No
🇸🇪 Sweden	18-25 (for life terms)	Rare	No
🇪🇸 Spain	25 (reviewable permanent prison)	Yes (reviewable)	No



of rape and sexual assault based on specific criteria (use of force, penetration, victim's capacity to consent). Definitions can vary significantly from state to state. In Europe, many countries have adopted much broader, consent-based definitions following the Istanbul Convention. For example, laws in Sweden, Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands define rape as any sexual act without explicit and voluntary consent. This shifts the focus from the perpetrator's use of force to the victim's lack of agreement.

In the US, sentences can be exceptionally lengthy, especially under "Three-strikes" laws or in cases with aggravating factors. The use of the death penalty for certain aggravated rape cases (in a few states) is a uniquely American practice.

This comparative chart shows the average sentence length in years for sexual assault convictions in the United States and selected European nations (*Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics [www.bjs.ojp.gov](http://www.bjs.ojp.gov)*).

But here's the thing - this trend toward locking people up for longer isn't just happening in the US. It's quietly become a global story. Take Belgium, for instance. In less than ten years, the number of people there getting sentenced to a decade or more shot way up. And it's not alone - places like England, Wales, and Germany have all seen noticeable jumps in longer prison terms. Even countries like France and Lithuania are part of this slow but steady creep toward tougher sentencing. It seems that over the past few decades, much of the world has been shifting, almost without notice, toward keeping people in prison for longer. What started as an American phenomenon has, in many ways, gone global. (*Source: K. Drenkhahn, M. Dudeck & F. Dünkel (Eds.), Long-Term Imprisonment and Human Rights*).

## Drug Offences and Violent Crime

When it comes to drug offences, the difference is just as dramatic. Over in the US, their "war on drugs" led to mass

imprisonment, with strict laws meaning even small-time possession or dealing could land someone in prison for decades. It's an approach that's all about punishment.

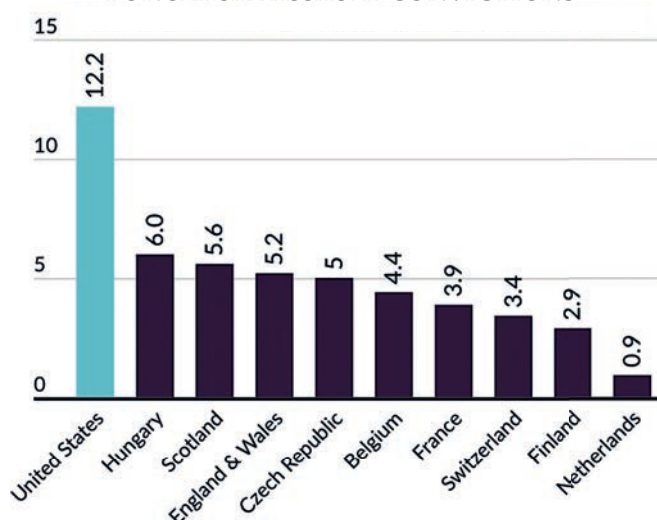
Here in Europe, however, the mindset is completely different. Drug abuse is generally seen as a public health problem. While the laws do vary from country to country, the focus is much more on treatment, reducing harm, and community sentences. Following Portugal's lead, plenty of countries have decriminalised having small amounts of drugs for personal use. So, if it's your first offence and you're caught with a bit of cannabis or something similar, a long stretch in prison is really unlikely. You'd far more likely get a fine, probation, or be directed towards a treatment programme.

And this pattern holds for violent crimes as well - things like murder, rape, and robbery. The US has a clear preference for handing out much longer sentences. A murder conviction there can easily mean 35 years to life behind bars. In many parts of Europe, the maximum sentence might be more like 15 or 20 years, and you could be eligible for parole even earlier. The goal isn't so much about getting decades of revenge; it's about a sentence that fits the crime, but which still leaves open the possibility of someone eventually being reintegrated into society.

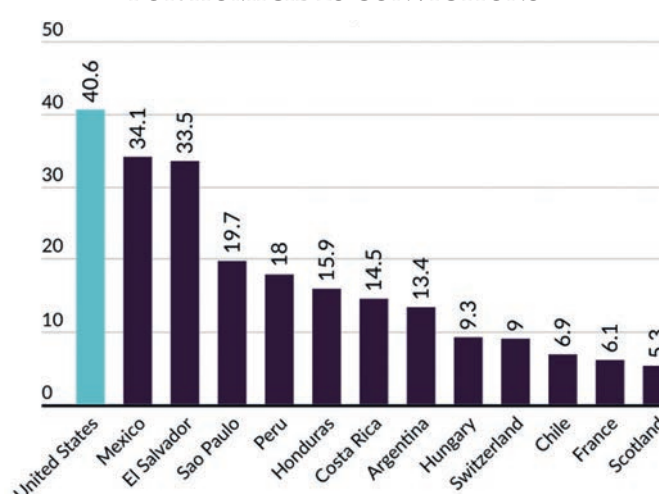
This chart shows the average sentence lengths in years, for homicide convictions in the United States, a number of Latin American countries with relatively high numbers, and selected European nations. (*Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics [www.bjs.ojp.gov](http://www.bjs.ojp.gov)*).

Basically, these numbers show that the average prison sentence in the US has more in common with countries in Latin America than it does with

SENTENCE LENGTH IN YEARS  
FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT CONVICTIONS



SENTENCE LENGTH IN YEARS  
FOR HOMICIDES CONVICTIONS



U.S. data on average sentence length were collected by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). These figures were based on individuals' first releases from state prisons in 44 states after serving time for any given offense; these states accounted for 97% of all individuals released from state prisons nationally.

other wealthy nations in Europe. You could argue that America's higher murder rate - compared to Europe - is part of the reason for its tougher sentences. But that doesn't really explain why the sentences for murder and sexual assault are so much longer across the board. What's even more telling is the comparison with Latin America. The US actually has a lower murder rate than most Latin American countries, yet it locks people up for this crime for far longer. In most of Latin America, someone convicted of murder will likely serve less than twenty years.

## The Death Penalty and the Ultimate Question

The difference in how the United States and Europe view the death penalty is a major one, going far beyond just a legal issue. It's really a clash of core beliefs about justice, the government's role, and human rights.

In the United States, the death penalty is still very much a part of the legal system, with 27 states and the federal government having recourse to it. While it's not always used, the debate around it is fierce as supporters argue that it provides justice for victims, acts as a deterrent, and offers closure for grieving families. However, the system is deeply flawed. It's often criticised for disproportionately affecting minorities, leading to wrongful convictions, and having very long and costly legal processes. Ultimately, its continued use in the US, supported by many politicians, reflect a public belief that for some crimes, this is the only acceptable punishment.

Europe has taken a completely different path by abolishing the death penalty across the continent. This isn't just a choice; it's a mandatory condition for any country that wants to join the European Union. This unified stance came from a deliberate reflection on Europe's history of violence, especially the horrors of the 20th century. After experiencing two devastating wars and witnessing the atrocities committed by totalitarian regimes, and the use of the death penalty as a tool of state oppression, European nations had a profound change of heart. They came to believe that a state killing its own citizens to prove that killing is wrong is a contradiction. This core belief was formalised in the European Convention on Human Rights, which explicitly calls the death penalty "inhuman and degrading treatment."



The lethal injection room at San Quentin State Prison



The last guillotine of France, nicknamed "The Widow". It was used for the execution of Hamida Djandoubi in 1977

For Europe, abolishing the death penalty was a crucial part of building a new identity based on human rights and the protection of the individual. It was a clear way to distinguish themselves from their own violent past and to draw a moral line between the new democratic Europe and the oppressive regimes they were leaving behind. For countries from the former Eastern Bloc, getting rid of the death penalty was a key step in showing their commitment to these new European values and distancing themselves from their oppressive histories.

Be that as it may, the death penalty isn't the cause of longer US sentences; it's a symptom of a justice philosophy that prioritises punishment above all else, in sharp opposition to Europe's focus on human rights and rehabilitation.

To put it simply, the radical difference in sentencing between the United States and Europe is more than just a legal matter - it's a fundamental difference in outlook. On one side, you have a system focused on punishment and exclusion; on the other, a system that aims to correct and reintegrate.

This contrast ultimately raises a deep question: what is society's responsibility towards those who break its laws? The answer, as seen in the practices of these two powers, shapes not just the future of the offender, but the very character of a nation.

While the American reliance on long prison terms has shown its limitations, the European outlook is more nuanced. It dares to propose a hopeful, if demanding, idea: that people can redeem themselves. This system's ambition is not merely to punish, but to restore. It operates on the belief that a justice system's true power lies in its ability to rehabilitate - to prove that even after a wrong, a right is still possible.

Hossein Sadre





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# NEWS IN BRIEF

## EINRIDE OPERATES FIRST EVER FULLY AUTONOMOUS HEAVY-DUTY TRUCK ON A PUBLIC ROAD IN BELGIUM AT THE PORT OF ANTWERP-BRUGES



Einride, a technology company that provides digital, electric and autonomous solutions for road freight, has for the first time operated a fully autonomous heavy-duty vehicle on a public road in Belgium.

This safety-validated demonstration, achieved at Port of Antwerp-Bruges, was permitted under the Belgian regulatory framework and it showcases how Belgium — and Europe — can take the lead in advancing autonomous freight technology.

Johan Klaps, chairman of the board of directors Port of Antwerp-Bruges and Antwerp port alderman: “Antwerp is more than a logistical hub: it is also a place where the mobility of tomorrow is tested and concretized. Autonomous and sustainable applications such as Einride’s proves that innovation is a driver for competitiveness and economic growth.”

Already operational with autonomous trucks on behalf of customers in both Europe and the U.S., Einride demonstrated its autonomous technology, encompassing several advanced hardware and software components, including Einride Driver (its proprietary Autonomous Drive Stack), its purpose-built cabless autonomous truck, and Control Tower (its intelligent fleet management and oversight platform).

Henrik Green CTO and General Manager for Einride Autonomous Technologies: “Now in our third European country, Einride continues to demonstrate success in securing permits and achieving first-of-their-kind deployments. Today in Antwerp, we showcase how public and private sectors can come together toward shared goals. European Ports, such as Antwerp-Bruges, are essential for decarbonizing logistics and secure our supply chains; and with the European Commission acknowledging autonomous vehicles as key to EU competitiveness, we’re proud to showcase a clear example

of how innovation and regulation can be balanced for safer, more efficient and sustainable logistics.”

Einride operates one of the biggest fleets of heavy-duty electric trucks in the world, serving companies across North America, Europe, and the Middle East. The company’s freight platform uses data gathered over years of operations, which puts it in a unique spot to roll out autonomous tech at scale. Because of its purpose-built cabless vehicle, Einride also has the ability to scale with less than one remote operator per vehicle, paving the way for more cost-efficient logistics solutions.

Einride designs, develops and deploys freight technologies to accelerate the transition to future-proofed transportation. Its platform includes connected electric and autonomous heavy-duty vehicles, charging infrastructure and an intelligent freight operating system. Founded in 2016, Einride became the world’s first company to operate an autonomous, electric vehicle on a public road in 2019. Today, Einride operates one of the largest fleets of heavy-duty electric trucks servicing Global Fortune 500 companies across the US, Europe and the UAE.

## €945 MILLION FOR NEW CLEAN AVIATION INITIATIVES: 12 GROUNDBREAKING PROJECTS SELECTED



The Leonardo TP90 Regional Aircraft, a 90-passenger turboprop design for the Clean Sky 2 program

The Governing Board of the Clean Aviation Joint Undertaking has launched €945 million, to support 12 visionary projects aimed at decarbonising aviation.

The selected initiatives in the field of new aircraft concepts and innovative propulsion technologies and systems will complement those funded under Clean Aviation’s First and Second Calls for Proposals. Projects will start beginning of 2026 and first flight tests are planned for 2028-2029. The projects will help reduce net emissions of greenhouse gases for commercial air travel by no less than 30% compared to 2020 state-of-the-art technologies, and will pave the way for cleaner aircraft by 2035.



The results of Call 3 also mark the start of a new cooperation in regional aviation between the EU and Canada: PHARES (Powerplant Hybrid Application for Regional Segment), has been selected to receive €69 million in EU funding. The project, which will advance hybrid-electric propulsion for regional aircraft, is coordinated by a Canadian aircraft engine manufacturer.



Ekaterina Zaharieva (European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation)

"Europe will not fly into the future with yesterday's technologies. Together with trusted partners, like Canada, we set our course toward CO2 emission reductions by 30% – to stay competitive, secure sustainable growth, and keep our industry ahead of other world regions." Says Ekaterina Zaharieva (European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation)



Sabine Klauke (Co-chair of the Governing Board, Head of Digital Design Manufacturing and Services "Next Gen", Airbus)

"Achieving our climate goals and advancing sustainable aviation can only be done if public and private actors work hand in hand. By supporting the brightest minds, fostering technical excellence and encouraging novel solutions, we can accelerate the breakthroughs our industry needs. The projects selected under Clean Aviation Call 3 represent an important milestone on this journey." Says Sabine Klauke (Co-chair of the Governing Board, Head of Digital Design Manufacturing and Services "Next Gen", Airbus)

Overall, 12 projects will receive funding in the following areas:

- €199 million EU funding for Ultra-efficient Short-Medium Range aircraft technologies
- €144 million EU funding for Ultra-efficient Regional aircraft technologies
- €20 million EU funding for Fast Track Areas (FTAs)
- Transversal projects dedicated to Aircraft Concept Integration & Impact Assessment have been awarded €15 million EU funding.



#### **ULTRA-EFFICIENT SHORT-MEDIUM RANGE AIRCRAFT TAKE OFF**

Technology And Knowledge for European Open Fan Flight  
*SAFRAN AIRCRAFT ENGINES*

#### **LEIA**

Large scale Integration demonstrator of hybrid electrical Architecture

*AIRBUS OPERATIONS GMBH*

#### **UNIFIED**

Ultra Novel and Innovative Fully Integrated Engine Demonstrations

*ROLLS-ROYCE PLC*



#### **ULTRA-EFFICIENT REGIONAL AIRCRAFT PHARES**

Powerplant Hybrid Application for REegional Segment

*PRATT & WHITNEY CANADA CORP.*

#### **DEMETRA**

Demonstrator of an Electrified Modern Efficient Transport Regional Aircraft

*AVIONS DE TRANSPORT REGIONAL*

#### **OSYRYS**

On-board SYstems Relevant for hYbridization of Regional aircraftS

*SAFRAN ELECTRICAL & POWER*



#### **FAST-TRACK AREAS**

##### **CRYOSTAR**

Certification Roadmap to Yield an Optimal and Safety methodology of crashworthiness for an integrated cryogenic Tank for liquid hydrogen storAge on board of future aircraft



#### **FAST-TRACK AREAS**

##### **UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DELLA CAMPANIA LUIGI VANVITELLI MODABAT**

Modular, scalable and technology-Open Design for future Aviation BATteries

*FRAUNHOFER GESELLSCHAFT ZUR FÖRDERUNG DER ANGEWANDTEN FORSCHUNG EV*

##### **POWER4AIR**

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*SKYLIFE ENGINEERING SL*

##### **LIME**

Lithium based Innovation for Modular Energy

*ASCENDANCE FLIGHT TECHNOLOGIES*



#### **AIRCRAFT CONCEPT INTEGRATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

##### **HERACLES**

Hybrid Electric Regional Aircraft Concept for Low EmissionS

*AVIONS DE TRANSPORT REGIONAL*

##### **ACI&I**

Short Medium Range - Aircraft Configuration Integration and Impact

*AIRBUS OPERATIONS GMBH*



Axel Krein (Executive Director of the Clean Aviation Joint Undertaking)

"The results of Call 3 show the variety of innovative technological concepts to boost the entry-into-service of highly efficient aircraft by 2035. These projects have high potential to make major advancements towards climate

neutrality and sustainability." Says Axel Krein (Executive Director of the Clean Aviation Joint Undertaking)

Call 3 introduced a new initiative to advance disruptive technologies, the Fast Track Areas (FTAs). The FTAs are

designed to de-risk alternative or complementary technical solutions offered by Research Centres and SMEs. They put the focus on proposals that can rapidly advance impactful technologies to the development phase and are closely connected to the Short-Medium Range and Regional aircraft coordinators. Four promising projects were selected within this realm.

All selected projects are in line with the Clean Aviation Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA).

## C-PROC OPENED ITS DOORS TO YOUTH AND CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES FROM 13 COUNTRIES FOR A THEMATIC STUDY VISIT ON CYBERCRIME AND ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE



On 5 September 2025 the Cybercrime Programme Office of the Council of Europe (C-PROC) opened its doors to the Group of the European Youth for Change (GEYC) NGO in Romania for a thematic visit to learn more about Council of Europe's work against cybercrime and cyberviolence.

The thematic visit was part of the project titled "Digital bridges: Youth work and citizenship in the digital world" implemented by GEYC and was organised in the framework of the European Digital Citizenship Week. The initiative was a follow-up to the Youth and Cybercrime workshop held in Strasbourg during the Council of Europe's Octopus Conference 2025.

38 youth and youth workers, CSOs representatives and teachers from Romania, Bulgaria, Malta, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Ukraine, Slovakia took part in the thematic visit and were introduced to the framework of the Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention) backed by the work of the Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) and supported by C-PROC's capacity building projects worldwide. They learned more about the challenges of cybercrime and electronic evidence, the criminal justice response to cybercrime (including crimes involving cryptocurrencies and AI), and the support offered by the Council of Europe to countries worldwide.

Prevention through partnerships between the law enforcement agencies and civil society was discussed as well. Speaking at the event, a representative of the Romanian National Police outlined how national campaigns and joining forces with NGOs can increase safety online through awareness raising and strengthened resilience, treating human vulnerability as even more important than technology vulnerability in view of ensuring crime prevention.

In the second part of the visit, the Cyberviolence Resource initiated through the Octopus Project implemented by C-PROC and Council of Europe's latest developments and plans in this direction were presented as well. To conclude, a practical session on Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) tools to protect safety online engaged participants in a discussion on how every Internet user can be better equipped to not fall victim to crimes in cyberspace.

## HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM MAJOR DENTAL HEALTH DRIVE

**Hundreds of thousands of 3 to 5-year-olds in deprived areas of England have received over two million toothbrushes and toothpastes in major dental health drive.**

Ground-breaking government collaboration with Colgate-Palmolive is delivering more than 23 million toothbrushing products to support the NHS and help protect children from tooth decay.

National supervised toothbrushing programme is tackling health inequalities and raising the healthiest generation of children, as part of the Government's Plan for Change.

Over two million free toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste have been delivered to children in the most deprived areas of England, thanks to a ground-breaking partnership between the Government and Colgate-Palmolive.

The milestone this month is part of the Government's Plan for Change to give children the best start in life. It marks the beginning of a five-year collaboration between the Government and Colgate-Palmolive to help children develop positive toothbrushing habits and set them on a path to better oral health.



Up to 600,000 3–5-year-olds in early years settings will benefit from the pioneering scheme which will help to develop good toothbrushing habits this school year.

Health Minister Stephen Kinnock visiting Tinsley Primary School to see how the rollout was progressing in the city, where nearly 9,500 children will receive brushing products this year said:

*"It is Dickensian that a third of five-year-olds in the most deprived areas of this country have suffered tooth decay, and that children are most commonly admitted to hospital to get their teeth removed.*

*Our Plan for Change is tackling the country's shameful health*



*inequalities and rooting out these health issues that can have a lifelong impact on children as we drive forward a major shift in care from treatment to prevention.*

*Our partnership with Colgate-Palmolive will help give children the best start in life by reinforcing good toothbrushing habits, vastly improving dental and oral health”.*

Colgate-Palmolive’s Representative Jimena Rodriguez, VP, Consumer Experience said:

*“At Colgate-Palmolive, our purpose is to reimagine a healthier future for all. We believe every child deserves a healthier smile—and a brighter future.*

*That’s why we were excited to see the launch of the Supervised Brushing Programme and to have already delivered more than 2 million fluoride toothpaste and toothbrush products directly to children who need them most, and an additional 3 million products by the end of December.*

*This achievement marks a significant step forward in tackling oral health inequalities and making meaningful, lasting impact where it’s needed most.*

*The strides we are making today aren’t just about brighter smiles – they are about building a solid foundation for better health and brighter opportunities for generations to come”.*

## EU DEFENCE SPENDING HITS €343 BLN IN 2024, EDA DATA SHOWS

The European Defence Agency (EDA) has published its annual Defence Data report for 2024-2025, detailing defence spending from all 27 EU Member States. In 2024, defence expenditure by the 27 EU Member States reached an unprecedented €343 billion — a 19% rise on 2023 — bringing spending to 1.9% of GDP. The increase, driven largely by record levels of equipment procurement and rising investment in research and development, reflects Member States’ determination to strengthen Europe’s military capabilities in response to the evolving security environment.



For the first time, defence investment exceeded €100 billion, accounting for 31% of total expenditure, the highest share recorded by EDA since data collection began. While spending continues to grow and is forecast to climb further in 2025, it remains below the levels of military powers such as the United States — underlining the need for sustained investment and greater collaboration to maximise efficiency and ensure interoperability across the EU’s armed forces.

Head of EDA, HRVP Kaja Kallas, said: "Europe is spending record amounts on defence to keep our people safe, and we will not stop there. This investment will be funnelled into everything from research and development to the joint procurement and production of essential defence components. The European Union is pulling every financial and political lever we have to support our Member States and European companies in this effort. Defence today is not a nice-to-have but fundamental for the protection of our citizens. This must be the era of European defence."

2025 Forecast:

- EU defence spending is projected to reach €381 billion in 2025 (vs €343 billion in 2024)
- Bloc’s spending is seen at 2.1% of GDP in 2025, exceeding the previous NATO 2% target for the first time since EDA records began
- Defence investment is set to reach close to €130 billion in 2025 (vs €106 billion in 2024)
- Research and Development (R&D) spending may increase to €17 billion in 2025 (vs €13 billion in 2024)

2024 European Defence Spending – Key Findings:

- In 2024, 25 Member States increased their defence spending in real terms, one more than in 2023, while only two countries slightly decreased defence spending. Sixteen Member States raised their expenditure by more than 10%, compared to eleven in 2023.
- In 2024, the total defence expenditure per active military personnel reached a record €249,000, up from €211,000 in 2023 and significantly more than the €138,000 spent in 2014.
- In 2024, 24 Member States met the 20% benchmark on defence investment, up from 20 in 2023, an accelerating trend as countries direct an increasingly larger share of their expenditure to investments.
- Defence equipment procurement rose by 39% from 2023 to €88 billion in 2024, with spending in 2025 projected to exceed €100 billion. The upward trend is expected to continue as several Member States have announced further budget increases and signed major procurement deals in 2024.
- Equipment procurement represents more than 80% of defence investment. While short-term needs have led Member States to prioritise existing solutions, R&D investment has grown.
- A significant rise in R&D spending is essential to develop next-generation capabilities and reduce dependence on foreign markets. Defence cooperation offers benefits such as economies of scale, lower costs, improved interoperability, and reduced duplication.
- In 2024, defence R&D expenditure increased. The 20% rise in 2024 represents a notable acceleration compared to the 6% growth recorded in 2023. Defence R&D spending reached €13 billion in 2024.

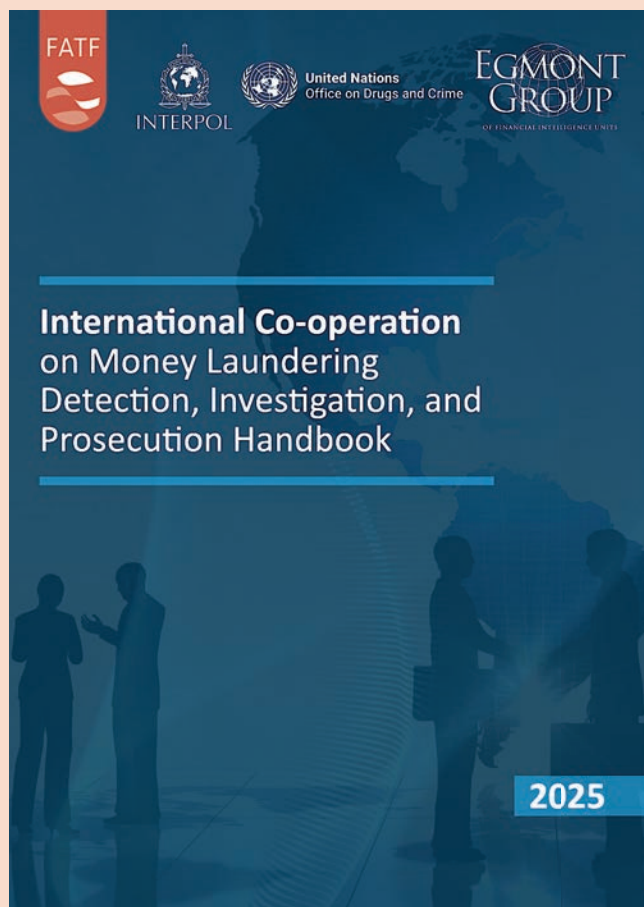
## FATF, EGMONT GROUP AND INTERPOL LAUNCH HANDBOOK TO FIGHT MONEY LAUNDERING

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Egmont Group, INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), are calling for stronger global collaboration among analysts, investigators, prosecutors and

others as they launch a practical Handbook on International Cooperation against Money Laundering, providing essential tools to help countries speed up investigations and bring more criminals to justice.

Money laundering almost always crosses borders, and criminals exploit gaps between national legal systems to hide their activities and avoid punishment. Yet, FATF evaluations consistently show that investigating, prosecuting and sanctioning money laundering remains one of the weakest areas worldwide. Without more effective co-operation, countries cannot stop financial crime in its tracks.

FATF President, Elisa de Anda Madrazo said: "An international threat requires an international response. A victim can often be on the other side of the world to the criminals that are destroying their lives or livelihoods, so we need to see countries working more effectively together and multiplying our defences to keep people safe, bring more criminals to justice and recover ill-gotten gains."



### Speeding up investigations

The handbook responds to the globalisation of financial systems and rapid technological advancements, which demand faster intelligence and action to keep pace with criminals.

It therefore promotes informal cooperation, such as secure communication channels, rapid response mechanisms and joint analysis, which can provide faster, more flexible, and targeted investigations, complementing formal, usually legal processes, which are often slower and procedurally complex.

### Impactful collaboration

The handbook highlights real-world cases that demonstrate

the impact of international cooperation: Financial Intelligence Units in Italy, Spain and the Netherlands uncovered a €95 million cross-border laundering scheme through joint analysis and intelligence sharing.

Operation AVARUS-X in Australia, supported by U.S. Homeland Security, dismantled a laundering network exploiting money service businesses to transfer billions of AUD annually.

U.S. and Indian authorities co-ordinated in real time to seize cryptocurrency assets worth USD 150 million linked to drug trafficking.

An INTERPOL-supported multinational investigation into rhino horn trafficking secured convictions in Singapore, backed by evidence from South Africa.

*"Tackling money laundering requires unity across borders and between organizations, and this handbook is an important step in achieving this", said INTERPOL Secretary General Valdecy Urquiza. "Strengthening cooperation not only strips criminal networks of their profits but also safeguards a global financial system that is vital for prosperity, equality and stability."*

### Guides for financial intelligence units, law enforcement and prosecutors

The organisations warn that criminals will continue to exploit legal loopholes unless financial intelligence units, law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate more effectively.

They have therefore developed three 'practical guides' to accompany the handbook.

#### To download the Handbook:

(<https://www.fatf-gafi.org/content/dam/fatf-gafi/reports/International-Cooperation-ML-Detection-Investigation-Prosecution.pdf.coredownload.pdf>)

## NHS BEGINS ROLL-OUT OF WORLD-FIRST GONORRHOEA VACCINE PROGRAMME



- Vaccination against gonorrhoea now available in sexual health clinics in England for those at greatest risk of infection

- Vaccine will protect thousands of people and save the NHS over £7.9 million over next decade

- Roll-out is part of shift from sickness to prevention under government's Plan for Change

People at highest risk of infection with gonorrhoea will now be better protected from the disease, as the NHS and local authorities begin the roll-out of a world-first



vaccination programme in England.

Today, sexual health clinics are able to offer a free vaccine to patients at highest risk of the sexually transmitted infection (STI), including gay and bisexual men who have a recent history of multiple sexual partners and a bacterial STI in the previous 12 months.

The 4CMenB vaccine will help shield those most at risk of gonorrhoea - potentially averting up to 100,000 cases of the disease, while easing pressure on vital NHS services.



GSK's meningococcal vaccine Bexsero (4CMenB)

#### **GSK's meningococcal vaccine Bexsero (4CMenB)**

It will play a significant role in the government's shift from sickness to prevention as it makes the NHS fit for the future as part of its Plan for Change.

Minister for Public Health and Prevention, Ashley Dalton, said:

Rolling out this world-leading gonorrhoea vaccination programme in sexual health clinics in England represents a major breakthrough in preventing an infection that has reached record levels.

This government's world-first vaccination programme will help turn the tide on infections, as well as tackling head on the growing threat of antibiotic resistance.

I strongly encourage anyone who is eligible to come forward for vaccination, to protect not only yourselves but also your sexual partners.

The ground-breaking vaccination programme comes at a critical time, with diagnoses of gonorrhoea reaching their highest levels since records began. In 2023, a record 85,000 cases of the disease were reported in England - 3 times higher than in 2012.

This vaccine will protect thousands of people and save the NHS more than £7.9 million over the next decade. It will also help combat increasing levels of antibiotic-resistant strains of the disease.

The roll-out is part of this government's commitment to keep people healthier through an array of prevention and community-based health initiatives.

This includes the Department of Health and Social Care's national HIV Prevention England programme, funded at £1.5 million a year and delivered by the Terrence Higgins Trust, which has worked with local activation partners to deliver National HIV Testing Week and the summer campaign for the past 4 years.

More widely, as part of the 10 Year Health Plan, we are helping to reduce demand for hospital services by increasing uptake of other vaccines, including the world-leading respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine, which protects infants and older adults against this potentially deadly disease.

## **WARNING ABOUT SHARP RISE IN ILLEGAL MEDICINES SOLD IN THE EUE**

EMA and the Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA) are warning the public about the growing threat of illegal medicines being advertised and sold online across the European Union (EU).

In recent months there has been a sharp rise in the number of illegal medicines marketed as GLP-1 receptor agonists such as semaglutide, liraglutide and tirzepatide for weight loss and diabetes. These products, often sold via fraudulent websites and promoted on social media, are not authorised and do not meet necessary standards of quality, safety and efficacy.

Such illegal products pose a serious risk to public health. They may not contain the claimed active substance at all and may contain harmful levels of other substances.

People who use these products are therefore at a very high risk of treatment failure, unexpected and serious health problems and dangerous interactions with other medicines.

Authorities have identified hundreds of fake Facebook profiles, advertisements and e-commerce listings, many of which are hosted outside the EU. Some fraudulent websites and social media advertisements misuse official logos and use false endorsements to mislead consumers. Illegal suppliers are being actively monitored by national authorities. Enforcement actions include ordering product withdrawals, blocking websites and cross-border collaboration with enforcement officers and other international partners.



GLP-1 receptor agonists are prescription medicines for serious health conditions such as diabetes and obesity. They should be taken under the supervision of a healthcare professional. Patients who think they might benefit from treatment with GLP-1 receptor agonists should talk to a doctor and should not buy them without a prescription or from sources other than legitimate retailers.

#### **Obtaining medicines from legitimate suppliers in the EU**

The online sale of prescription only medicines is not allowed in all Member States.

To help the public identify legitimate online medicine retailers, the EU introduced a common logo which appears on the websites of all registered online pharmacies and retailers. Clicking on the logo takes buyers to a national register of authorised retailers.

If a website does not have this logo or is not listed on a national register, the website is fraudulent and operating illegally.

The national flag and the text are an integral part of the logo.

Only national flags of an EU Member State, as well as those of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, can be displayed.

#### **Warning signs that a medicine may be illegal**

A product is likely to be illegal if:

- it is advertised as “endorsed” by a national authority or features official logos of a national authority or EMA;
- it is sold through unofficial websites or social media platforms;
- it is claimed to be superior to authorised treatments without scientific evidence;
- it is not available through licensed pharmacies or healthcare providers;
- the website offering it does not have the common EU logo or is not listed on a national register.

#### **Important information for patients and their families**

- Illegal medicines are being promoted online across the EU on fraudulent websites and social media, often using false claims and fake endorsements.
  - They may not contain the claimed active substance at all and may contain harmful levels of other substances.
  - Illegal medicines pose serious risks to health, including treatment failure, unexpected and serious side effects and dangerous interactions with other medicines.
  - Legal online medicines retailers are listed in registers of national authorities.
  - EMA and national authorities do not endorse or promote specific products or brands. Any claim suggesting otherwise is false.
  - If you are offered a medicine online, especially one claiming to be endorsed by a national authority, consult official sources such as EMA or your national competent authority.
  - The online sale of prescription only medicines is not permitted in all Member States; always obtain prescription medicines through a qualified healthcare professional and a licensed pharmacy.
- Report any suspicious websites, advertisements or products to your national competent authority.

## **FRAUDSTERS REGISTERED DRAFT DODGERS AS ‘TEACHERS’ AT NON-EXISTENT HIGH SCHOOLS TO EXEMPT THEM FROM CONSCRIPTION IN THE UKRAINIAN FORCES**

The SSU Counterintelligence has dismantled another large-scale scheme to evade mobilization. As a result of the operations in Kyiv and Vinnytsia, perpetrators have been detained for making money by fictitiously employing conscripts in non-existent educational institutions, which gave them the right to deferral from mobilization.

The investigation established that the organizers of the scheme had registered eight private lyceums, for which they received licenses to conduct educational activities from Kyiv City State Administration.

The schools existed only ‘on paper’, had no physical addresses, and did not actually conduct any educational activities.

The criminal scheme consisted of the organizers arranging for draft evaders from all over Ukraine to be employed as ‘teachers’ at these non-existent high schools, which guaranteed them

exemption from conscription.

The cost of such a ‘service’ was USD 3,000. In addition, ‘clients’ paid almost UAH 20,000 per month, part of which went into the organizers’ pockets, while the rest was given to the bogus directors of non-existent schools as ‘salaries’.

It has been documented that over 200 men tried to evade mobilization in this way.



**Seized fake paperwork**

The SSU established that the organizer of the scheme used the proceeds to purchase a premium car for UAH 6 mln and elite apartments in downtown Kyiv.

Telephones, seals, documentation, and notes with evidence of crimes were found during the searches of the suspects’ homes.

The organizer, his accountant, and one of the fake ‘directors’ have been detained. SSU investigators notified them and two other accomplices of suspicion under Articles 28.2 and 114-1.1 of the CCU (obstruction of lawful activities of the AFU, committed by a group, upon prior conspiracy).

The suspects face up to 8 years in prison. The investigation is ongoing.

The operational and investigative activities were carried out under the procedural supervision of the Prosecutor General’s Office.

## **LITHIUM BATTERIES IN AVIATION: POWERING THE FUTURE, AND MANAGING THE RISKSE**

It’s hard to imagine a world without lithium batteries. They power everything – from our smartphones and laptops to electric cars – and store renewable energy. Being used in a wide range of devices and applications, lithium batteries have made modern life more convenient, but they also come with risks – especially when taken onboard an aircraft. Every year, airlines report incidents involving overheating, or even fires, caused by lithium batteries. This is precisely why strict rules exist for carrying these powerful, yet somewhat unpredictable, energy sources.

### **Why are lithium batteries a risk?**

The same technology that makes lithium batteries so efficient also makes them volatile. If damaged, overcharged, or exposed to extreme heat, they can go into “thermal runaway” – a chain reaction where the battery overheats, releases gas, and potentially catches fire - causing safety hazards. Such reactions have already occurred during flights, sometimes due to damaged phone batteries, improperly packed power banks, or even spare



batteries being stored in checked luggage. Error! Filename not specified.

As a passenger, you need to be aware of how to handle these batteries when flying.

The do's and don'ts of flying with lithium batteries according to EASA's Safety Information Bulletin

- DO carry spare batteries (including power banks) in your hand luggage instead of your checked luggage.

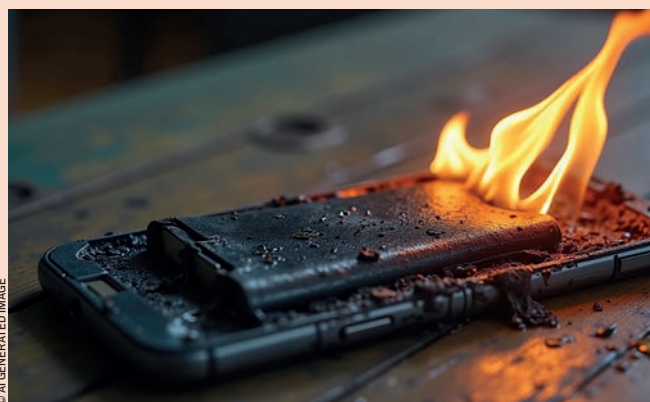
- DO carry e-cigarettes and power banks where they can be monitored.

- DO ensure your device's batteries are below 100Wh (examples of compliant devices are normal cell phones, laptops, and tablets)

- DO check with the operator if you plan to carry devices where you are not sure about their energy level (e.g. tools, power banks, drones), and request appropriate approvals (between 100 and 160Wh).

- DO NOT charge your electronic devices using anything other than the aircraft power supply at your seat (Do NOT use power banks to charge your devices onboard the aircraft).

- DO NOT ignore airline-specific rules – some have specific restrictions as per the maximum number of devices allowed and their watt-hour rating.



### The growing role of lithium batteries in aviation

Although the hazards that lithium batteries carry can be significant for airline safety, they also have many uses in the airline industry itself. Pilots use lithium battery-powered tablets for flight planning and aircrafts rely on lithium backup systems. With the rise of e VTOLS and battery-powered planes, the ability to properly manage lithium batteries goes beyond the safety of the passengers and leans into the future of sustainable flying.

As lithium batteries are becoming increasingly essential not only in our everyday lives but also in the next generation of aviation, it's now more important than ever to handle them with caution and responsibility. So next time you fly take a moment to check how your batteries are packed and whether you comply with your airline's rules: a little caution can go a long way to keeping air travel safe.

## U.S., NORWAY TEST MARITIME STRIKE IN HIGH NORTH

Eglin Air Force Base, FL -- The U.S. Air Force partnered with Norwegian Allies to test next-generation precision maritime strike capabilities on September 3rd in the Norwegian Sea.

In partnership with Royal Norwegian Air Force F-35s and personnel, the U.S. Air Force's 53rd Wing integrated a U.S. B-2 Spirit stealth bomber into a long-range strike scenario employing the Air Force Research Laboratory's QUICKSINK maritime weapon, demonstrating seamless cooperation and interoperability to defeat a surface vessel in a realistic setting.

"This test is a clear example of how we work with trusted allies to bring new capabilities into play faster and smarter," said U.S. Air Force Col. Scott Gunn, 53rd Wing commander. "We're not just preparing for tomorrow; we're shaping it together."

The B-2 played a central role, employing precision-guided QUICKSINK munitions to engage and sink the maritime target. In addition to testing the munition's capabilities, the mission also validated the aircraft's enduring advantages, including its stealth, range, and payload flexibility, while reinforcing its evolving role in maritime strike.

In addition to Norwegian F-35s and personnel who participated in the strike, support from Norway enabled U.S. forces to gain access to critical infrastructure and airspace, allowing the test to be conducted in a strategically relevant and operationally challenging environment. The event advanced tactics, techniques, and procedures for long-range sensor-to-shooter operations. These included integrating beyond-line-of-sight communications and multi-domain targeting, both crucial capabilities in highly contested environments.

"We are building readiness on both sides of the Atlantic and creating options that make maritime strike more distributed, survivable, and integrated," said Lt Col. Stephen Bressett, commander of the 72nd Test and Evaluation Squadron. "We anticipate, adapt, and respond to what our senior leaders need at a speed that's relevant to the strategic environment we're in – that's what the 53d Wing does best!"

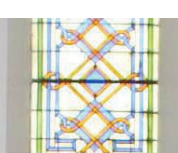
The test also advanced the development of both large and small variants of the precision strike system under evaluation, expanding operational options for commanders in maritime-focused operations. Together, the team validated prototype performance and refined operational concepts in a real-world setting, strengthening the Air Force's ability to deliver agile and resilient combat power.

By leveraging access to a new operational theater and working alongside coalition partners, the 53rd Wing continues to lead in accelerating and integrating new technologies for the joint fight.



A USAF B-2 Spirit, flying over the North Sea, in formation with Royal Norwegian Air Force F-35 stealth fighters





© EDM

Afghan refugees in a church

# ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN THE EU

**Down by 23% in  
the first half of  
2025**



Europe's asylum landscape underwent a series of significant shifts in the first half of 2025. By the end of June, EU+ countries received 399 000 asylum applications, a 23 % decrease year-over-year. A two-thirds drop in Syrian applications meant that Germany was no longer the main receiving EU+ country, with both France and Spain receiving more applications. A majority of applications continued to be lodged by citizenships with low recognition rates in the EU+.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has just published its Mid-Year Review of the Latest Asylum Trends, paired with detailed analysis of the main citizenships seeking asylum and the key European countries receiving their applications. By the end of June 2025, EU+ countries received 399 000 asylum applications, a 23 % decrease compared to the first half of 2024. This shift was driven by far fewer Syrians (25 000) applying, for whom the number of applications dropped by two thirds (- 66 %). However, Venezuelans (49 000) applied in significant numbers, up by almost a third (+ 31 %) year-over-year.

## Changing trends belay a complex asylum landscape

Following the fall of the Assad regime in Syria last December, and after a decade during which Syrians were consistently the main citizenship seeking protection in the EU+, Venezuelans became the largest nationality group in the first half of 2025. This shift had a significant impact on the main receiving EU+ countries of asylum applications. By the end of June, France (78 000) and Spain (77 000) both received more applications than

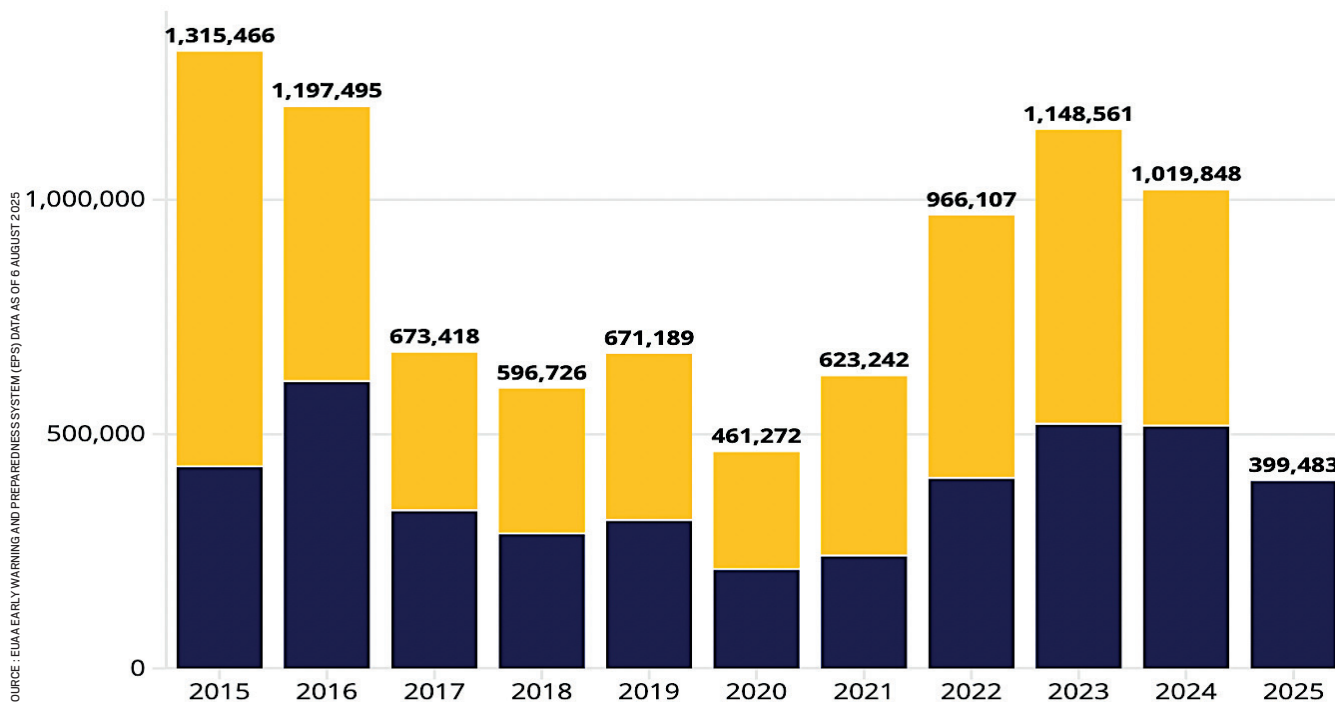
Germany (70 000). They were followed by Italy (64 000) and Greece (27 000). Greece received the most applications *per capita*: 1 application for every 380 residents. Importantly, while the number of applications in France was stable, year-over-year, applications in Germany (- 3 %), Italy (- 25 %) and Spain (- 13 %) all fell compared to the first half of 2024.

Third country nationals tend to favour specific EU+ countries when seeking international protection. Venezuelans tend to apply in Spain due to a shared language, an existing diaspora and a tendency by the Spanish authorities to grant them a national form of protection. Indeed, Venezuelans lodged almost all of their applications in Spain (93 %). Compounding this reality, Venezuelan applications in Spain also rose by almost a third (+ 29 %), compared to the first half of 2024. Typically, around a quarter of asylum applications in the EU+ are lodged by citizenships with visa-free access to the Schengen area. Venezuelans and Colombians represent the majority of such applicants. The European Parliament is expected to vote on a stronger and more flexible visa suspension mechanism soon.

In addition to Venezuelans, other citizenships displayed increased trends. Ukrainians (16 000) have continued to lodge increasing numbers of asylum applications, also up by 29 %. France accounted for nearly half of all Ukrainian applications, whereas Poland accounted for almost one third. However, these figures were dwarfed by the 4.3 million Ukrainian beneficiaries of

### APPLICATIONS FOR ASYLUM

■ Jan-Jun ■ Jul-Dec



APPLICATIONS LODGED  
JAN - JUN 2025

temporary protection at the end of June 2025.

Afghans (42 000) were the second largest applicant group in the first half of 2025. Despite representing a tenth of all applications, the semi-annual figure has been on a downward trend since 2023. Following Syrians, Bangladeshis (17 000) and Turks (17 000) also lodged fewer applications, recording decreases of 26 % and 41 %, respectively, year-over-year.

In addition to asylum applications, at the end of June 2025, approximately 4.5 million individuals were benefiting from temporary protection in the EU+. This figure has remained relatively stable since early 2023 but continues to significantly contribute to the overall number of people in the EU+ with protection needs.

Temporary  
Protection

Temporary protection is granted under the 2001 Temporary Protection Directive, which was activated for the first time in 2022 in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, enabling the rapid and effective provision of assistance to those displaced to the EU+. For further details, refer to the EUAA report on the Application of the Temporary Protection Directive.

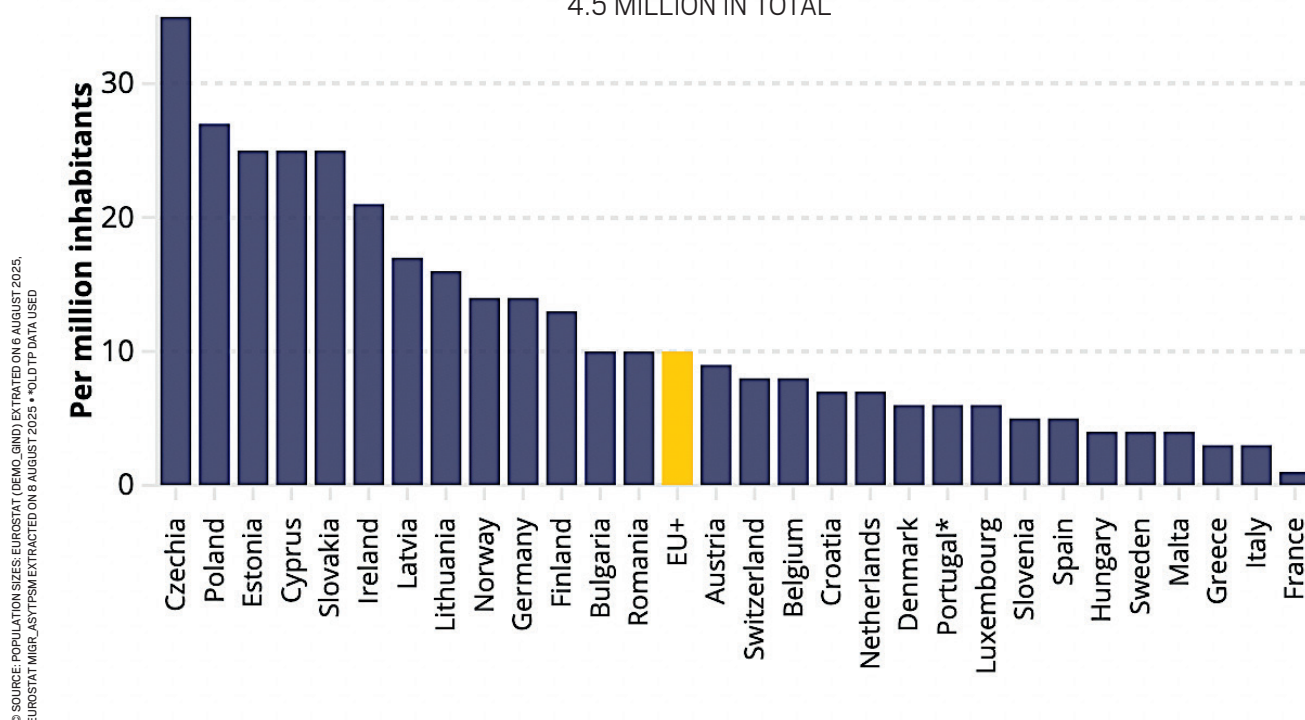
At the end of June 2025, nearly half of all beneficiaries of temporary protection were in Germany (1.2 million) and Poland (just under 1 million, based on Eurostat data). To provide comparative context alongside asylum application inflows, Figure 12 illustrates the number of beneficiaries of temporary protection per capita across EU+ countries.

For instance, Czechia hosted approximately 378,000 beneficiaries, equating to 35,000 per million inhabitants, or 1 beneficiary for every 29 residents. Meanwhile, Slovakia and Cyprus were hosting very different numbers of beneficiaries (133,000 and 24,000, respectively) yet exhibited the same per capita distributions, with each hosting 1 beneficiary for every 41 residents.

The Council of the EU has extended temporary protection for people fleeing Russia's aggression against Ukraine until 4 March 2027.

## BENEFICIARIES OF TEMPORARY PROTECTION PER CAPITA

JUNE 2025  
4.5 MILLION IN TOTAL





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## BRITAIN TURNS RIGHT (A LITTLE?)...





Tommy Robinson (born Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, right) leads a demonstration on September 15.

**Some UK residents  
give tacit support to nationalism**

Recent events in the UK suggest that right-wing nationalism is a growing phenomenon there. Some people (myself included) find this flag-waving “Britain in best” nonsense rather offensive, but the trend is clearly visible in the rash of ultra-patriotic (?) shows and in tabloid newspaper headlines. Even in the small Lincolnshire village I call home there are a number of Union Jack flags flying, alongside the Cross of St. George, for reasons I find hard to understand. After all, the Cross of St. George is actually the official flag of Barcelona as well as forming part of Georgia’s national flag, and is flown proudly throughout Catalonia. I assume that the householders of a Lincolnshire village (and other parts of England) are not displaying their patriotism for a Spanish region, nor for the lovely country of Georgia.

It’s nothing to do with actual patriotism, of course. It’s really meant to demonstrate that the people displaying it are opposed to the acceptance of refugees and would rather see the boats sent back to wherever they came from. I’ve never really understood why. Most refugees are leaving behind the harsh conditions of their lives in the hope of a brighter future for them and their children, which seems to me to be an admirable ambition. Displaying flags is OK, I suppose, as long as things don’t get worse. Sadly, there have been examples of things getting considerably worse with violence taking place on occasions. Of course, there is a certain segment of society that quite enjoys violence and even encourages it. We’ve often seen it at football matches in the UK and it has led to quite a number of supposed football “fans” being sent to prison. What violence has to do with sport is completely beyond my comprehension. I’m sure that most of these bungalow-dwelling middle class flag wavers in English villages don’t really favour seeing people (even asylum-seekers) suffering violence at the hands of their fellow-Britons. Many observers, however, think the flags are intended to intimidate those from overseas and to make them realise they’re not universally welcome. Violence, however, is a rather “un-British” way to behave, after all, in everyday life. However, the tensions over asylum and the arrival of small boats on British shores, loaded with a few of the World’s poorest and most threatened people, have given a boost to the right wing of politics.



© UK GOVERNMENT  
Illegal migrants on a small inflatable boat

The so-called “Reform” party, very right wing and led by Nigel Farage, has seen its share of the votes rise and a number of local authorities, especially in the North of England, are now in that party’s control. Those regions used to be regarded as mainly “Labour-voting”. Mr. Farage himself has predicted that he will become Prime Minister of the UK by (or in) 2027. He may well be right. I always got on quite well with Mr. Farage when he

was a member of the European Parliament and I was reporting on it for various television station and news organisations. We occasionally even sat for a chat over a beer at a bar near the press entrance of the European Commission. We never agreed over things like policy, of course, but we were, as I recall, invariably polite to each other. The bar in question, which was called “The Old Hack”, was owned by a retired tabloid newspaper reporter who chose the name because “hack” is a slang word for a journalist and the bar owner was, of course, quite old.

## There’s “Right” (as in “Right Wing”), but also “Wrong”



A campaign poster for Reform UK portrays party leader Nigel Farage welcoming US President Trump

I’m rather more worried about the apparent surge in support for a more extreme right-wing figure: Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, who chooses to call himself Tommy Robinson. He is an ardent anti-Islamic campaigner who has been arrested and jailed several times for a variety of offences, and who chose his adopted name in honour (if that’s the right word) of a well-known Luton Town football hooligan. The choice was made at the urging of Mr. Yaxley-Lennon’s uncle, who





© 10 DOWNING STREET

Angela Rayner, formerly the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, was appointed Deputy Prime Minister by Prime Minister Keir Starmer

disliked the real Tommy Robinson and who hoped his nephew's activities would damage him, or at least be an embarrassment. Mr. Yaxley-Lennon identifies as a Fascist and has a lengthy prison record.

Most of his followers share his somewhat extreme views about foreigners, which may unintentionally provide a boost for Nigel Farage. Some people with right-wing nationalist opinions may sympathise with the Fascist beliefs but be afraid to support them too overtly, which could mean more votes for the rather more moderate Mr. Farage. Given the electoral support already shown for Mr. Farage's political party, the activities of Mr. Yaxley-Lennon may offer Mr. Farage's supporters a "more respectable" alternative to vote for. At least slightly. It's certainly true that some Conservative politicians have been defecting to Reform, seeing it as offering a better chance of re-election and electoral success. Additionally, the government of Keir Starmer has disappointed quite a few former Labour Party voters, who voted Labour in the belief that it was a show of support for Socialism. As it is, Mr. Starmer and his team have disappointed them and many would argue that Mr. Starmer's Labour Party is not Socialist at all. We must recall here Mr. Starmer's former deputy leader, Angela Rayner, who seems to have collected quite expensive properties all over Britain in much the same way other people might have collected stamps or rare butterflies.

The various scandals attending some of the ministers and other senior figures certainly haven't helped. It's the sort of thing that leaves voters undecided and disillusioned. Labour's first leader was James Keir Hardie and I'm afraid he might have been shocked. Not that the other leading British political party, the Conservatives, have been winning friends, either. Some ardent supporters still miss Margaret Thatcher. Is everyone living in the past?

## I Lies Aplenty!

The fear being expressed in some places is that Mr. Yaxley-Lennon may actually be a symbol of the future, too. It's a worrying thought. Not so long ago a 20-year-old Sikh woman was dragged into bushes by two shaven-headed white men and beaten and raped. One of the men is reported to have said to his victim "You don't belong in this country. Get out". The police have stepped up their patrols around Birmingham, where the attack happened, but it's still shocking. The incident is being regarded as a racially motivated sex assault. Not long afterwards, the far-right campaigner Mr. Yaxley-Lennon led a protest march against the admission of asylum seekers. Incidentally, among his wide range of outrages, Mr. Yaxley-Lennon has also shown his liking for Vladimir Putin, promoting his propaganda and even visiting Moscow to talk with some of Mr. Putin's allies with a view to urging cooperation to "preserve our Christian values, culture and identity". I don't know about you but I never thought of rape as being included in what could be called "Christian values". Mr. Yaxley-Lennon untruthfully claimed that the London event, which attracted a worrying 150,000 supporters, was the biggest protest in British history, despite falling woefully short of the million-plus protestors who took part in the rally and march against Brexit (I know because I was there and

saw one Conservative MP standing on the balcony of a private club, watching the march and laughing, which made me realise that ours was a lost cause) Unfortunately the march failed to change the government's mind (it never could have done). The pro-Brexit movement was largely led by Boris Johnson, whose fondness for truth and honesty has been called into question from time to time.



Tommy Robinson in Moscow in February 2020

He's just a mild nuisance, however, when compared with Mr. Yaxley- Lennon. At the London rally held shortly after the Birmingham rape – a rally which Mr. Yaxley-Lennon, with no trace of irony, billed as “a festival of free speech” – some of his supporters were openly snorting cocaine, while some were allegedly calling for Kier Starmer to be murdered and even, in some cases, chanting “Heil Hitler”. As you can judge, it was not a friendly event, nor a sensible one that was ever likely to win widespread popular support (I hope). We must assume that the attendees, by and large, were not very bright and nor were they well-informed. Its organisers seem to hate all foreigners indiscriminately, but especially those with a slightly darker skin and a dream of living in the UK, and are urging others to share their views. It must be mentioned, though, that Nigel Farage resigned from the UK Independence Party over its support for Mr. Yaxley-Lennon and its general anti-Islamic attitude. My money would be on Mr. Farage to take power, rather than Mr. Yaxley- Lennon; if Mr. Yaxley-Lennon ever got close to power I would be surprised and somewhat perturbed. I don't think I'd like to see swastikas on display. The Conservative Party. However, whilst not espousing the murderous hatred of some extremist elements, but they may still favour the deportations of immigrants, at least in theory. Britain has long been a multi-cultural society, however, and it is to be hoped that it stays that way. It is not what Mr. Yaxley-Lennon wants, it seems: he would prefer the Putin-style extremism he apparently admires. The Economist magazine reminded readers that in the past it has been the moderate centrist parties that have called the shots, but now that centre seems to be crumbling, while Mr. Farage seems to be in the driving seat. Perhaps we should just be grateful that it isn't Mr. Yaxley Lennon. At least, not yet. But leaders have their weak spots. According to my 1827 edition of “A Classical Dictionary”, edited by Dr. J. Lempriere, most people admired the great Greek hero Achilles, but in attempting to make him invulnerable, Thetis plunged him into the River Styx, although he did so by holding on to his heel, which therefore didn't get into the water, meaning it would remain vulnerable. That is why

a person's weak spot is often referred to as their “Achilles' Heel”. All politicians have them by the score, (more heels than one might expect with a centipede) despite never having been dipped even partially in the Styx. Of course, they didn't get their education from a centaur, either, as Achilles supposedly did from Chiron, according to the legends. What one might learn from a horse with a human brain one can only guess at. How to spot a good stable, perhaps?



The Union Jack (flag of the UK) and St George's Cross (flag of England, in the background)

The current issues in Britain over flag-flying are stirring up the almost forgotten memories of racial tensions in the past. One pub landlady, interviewed by the “I” newspaper, said she would refuse to take down her flags because she's “British and proud of it”. I'm sure the patriots of Barcelona and Georgia would applaud her. But the locals of those old industrial northern towns have a point, of course. Constant factory and mill closures and the way many of the old towns have been allowed to become run-down is disheartening in the extreme. The Labour and Conservative parties must come up with solutions to deindustrialisation, but it won't be easy. Not that the sorts of solutions that might emerge from the ranks of Mr. Yaxley-Lennon's party are likely to hold much promise of change, but we should remember that Adolf Hitler used the poverty that had seized the old industrial parts of Germany to bolster his personal support. Like Mr. Yaxley-



Lennon, Hitler had also spent time in prison, although he still managed to climb the slippery pole to seize power. The world has changed and continues to change, of course. It's not the fault of any individual politician or party, it's just what happens in a vibrant, living world. No-one said it will always change for the better; only that it will change. But while flying flags is one way to demonstrate your allegiance, there's no excuse for hating people, especially if they're people to whom you've never spoken and don't know. You cannot judge people purely by the colour of their skin, as Mr. Yaxley-Lennon seems to do. And, of course, no political beliefs, however deeply felt, can ever excuse rape, which is merely the uncontrolled lust of violent men with no social conscience. Gosh, they must have hated their mothers to do anything so inexcusably awful.

## Dealing With Economic Collapse



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Winston Churchill

So what is anyone to do to tackle industrial decline, which seems to lie at the heart of the problem? Make no mistake: it's the sort of thing that empowers extremists, who then try to blame foreigners for all their ills, however undeservedly. In Hitler's case, he blamed German Jews; in Mr. Yaxley-Lennon's he appears to be trying to shift the blame onto Asians, or anyone foreign seeking a better life in the UK. Looking at the history of Britain during the 20th century it's easy to concentrate on Sir Winston Churchill, but despite his many admirers' Churchill lost Britain's 1945 election to Clement Attlee, whose Labour Party administration gave the country

its National Health service, introduced National Insurance and saw Britain join NATO and experience the fear and excitement connected to the development of the atomic bomb. He always believed in humanity and many historians have described him as Britain's greatest peace-time Prime Minister. Incidentally, Attlee remained an admirer of Churchill and the two men, who were great friends, would sit and talk together, often laughing, although Churchill's worsening deafness meant he couldn't hear what Attlee said to him, largely because he refused to use his ear trumpet.

The economic crisis, however, was and still is very real. It began in earnest in 2008, the unfortunate result of a deregulated market with too much liquidity and low interest rates, coupled with a global real estate bubble, according to the economist Joseph Stiglitz in his excellent book, *Freefall*. It had nothing at all to do with foreign immigrants, of course. He believed that the crisis was caused by the United States, just as the Great Depression of the 1930s had been. First came the bursting of the "tech bubble", which the chairman of America's Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan had allowed to build up. Stock prices for tech companies plunged by 78% between March 2000 and October 2002. Naturally, this affected other industries, not just those directly connected, and America was plunged into recession.



Former Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, 2005

President George W. Bush thought the best solution would be to cut taxes for the rich, but this rather failed to stimulate the economy. Greenspan flooded the market with liquidity by lowering interest rates, but this totally failed to result in more investment in plant or equipment, as many economists had predicted. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 led to soaring oil prices and Washington was obliged to spend billions of dollars importing oil, rather than

pouring it into the US economy. Wall Street failed to come up with a solution, putting their greatest efforts into maximising profits, instead of stabilising mortgage prices. Homeowners lost their properties while the rich profiteered. It was hardly the fault of poor asylum-seekers in Britain or anywhere else.

Naturally, how much anyone earns must depend on their productivity, which in turn depends to a great extent on their education and training. "The supply of skills depends on, among other things, the state of the educational system," wrote the economist Thomas Piketty, in his book "Capital in the 21st Century", but the elimination of educational inequality in France, for instance, failed to affect wage inequality. It had nothing to do with the arrival of foreigners seeking jobs and everything to do with straightforward economics. No far right political rabble-rouser can change that and nobody should believe them if they say they can. Even the governmental theorists get it wrong, according to Mr. Piketty: "Theoretical discussion of educational issues and of meritocracy," he writes, "is often out of touch with reality, and in particular with the fact that the most prestigious schools tend to favour students from privileged social backgrounds." Civilisations throughout history have mainly found it impossible to create the legendary "level playing field" for job and earnings opportunities. But I digress. What one can say, unequivocally, is that the relative wealth of any country or community has nothing whatever to do with foreigners trying to set up home there. Waving flags at them will not make a difference.

## Shifting The Blame – For What?

It's a sad fact of life (and has been since our ancestors first came down from the trees) that some people do better out of life than others. It's not necessarily anything to do with skill, dexterity or even who your relations are, either. Some people are simply luckier in life than others because of sheer chance. But, of course, it's always comforting if we can find somebody to blame. A scapegoat, you may say. The far right political figures may not even believe what they claim about immigrants: they are a way to power, especially for those lacking any real talent, although having what's called "the gift of the gab" is certainly a help. The plain fact is that those who have been dealt a bad hand in the card game of life will inevitably try to find someone or something to blame. Their misfortune could not possibly be due to a failing on their part. Somebody has deliberately cheated, to rob them of their birthright. I think it's probably true to

say that it's been going on for centuries.

It is not – cannot ever be – possible to ensure that absolutely everyone gets a square deal. Life simply isn't like that. There is now and has always been global inequality. After all, the migrants themselves would clearly prefer not to have to risk life and limb, for themselves and their families, in order to get a fair chance to make a successful living. To borrow from Piketty again, this time from his book "Nature, Culture and Inequality", in a perfectly egalitarian society a person's share would equate to their fair proportion of overall income, but that doesn't happen in the real world. In fact, just how fair the divisions are varies according to where in the world you are. It's really very complicated and the picture is further muddled by the way in which everyone strives to do better, earn more and overtop their rivals and their friends (often the same people). It's very understandable and completely inevitable. We wouldn't be human if that was not so.

However, seeking gain for one's self and one's family should not involve slandering an entire section of society, I feel. When it does, something has gone badly wrong, and that appears to be what is happening in parts of Britain. Rivalry and "one-upmanship" are just part of human nature; blaming others for doing much the same thing clearly is not. That's why current trends in the UK bother me, and why I shudder at the sight of flags which seem not to be being displayed as an act of patriotism but rather as a way of saying "go away" to those whose right to nearby residence you dispute. People have to live where they can, preferably without annoying the neighbours by playing loud music, especially at night. But tolerance costs nothing. I'm afraid that its opposite can prove very costly indeed. So let's have fewer flags flapping about, especially if they're a message to no-nationals that they are unwelcome and unwanted. Yes, there have been racial tensions in the past, but things work better – far better – when mistrust and suspicion are replaced by cooperation. I would urge the people of Britain to ignore the rabble-rousers and the fomenters of hate and learn to live with their neighbours – even those new neighbours – with sympathy and understanding. It will make the world a much nicer place, free from hatred and pointless violence. Save those flags for national celebrations, such as anniversaries of wars ending or even the King's birthday. I feel sure he'd appreciate it and nobody would get hurt. As for those people who seek to foment violence because they enjoy it, I can only say they're being very UN-British, the reverse of what they claim to represent. Perhaps we should consider changing the words of that patriotic son, "Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves" to the sadly more accurate "Rule Britannia, Britannia waives the rules?"

*T. Kingsley Brooks*





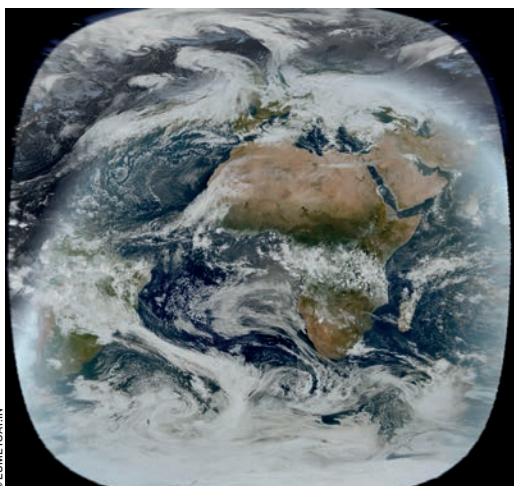
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Europe's first MetOp Second Generation weather satellite, MetOp-SG-A1, which hosts the Copernicus Sentinel-5 mission, launched on an Ariane 6 rocket from the European spaceport in French Guiana

# WEATHER

## Europe's meteorological future begins with METOP-SG-A1

On 13 August 2025, Europe commenced a new epoch of meteorological observation with the successful launch of MetOp-SG-A1, the inaugural satellite in the MetOp Second Generation series. Launched into orbit by an Ariane 6 rocket from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, this 4-ton polar-orbiting satellite is poised to substantially improve weather forecasting, climate monitoring, and atmospheric science across the continent and beyond.



This image was captured by the FCI instrument on EUMETSAT's Meteosat Third Generation satellite (MTG) on 4 December 2024. The Meteosat weather satellites provide imagery for the early detection of fast-developing severe weather, weather forecasting and climate monitoring

MetOp-SG-A1, the first satellite of the EUMETSAT Polar System – Second Generation (EPS-SG) programme, is equipped with an advanced array of instruments, including the Copernicus Sentinel-5 payload. This satellite, positioned in a polar orbit roughly 800 kilometres above Earth, will provide high-resolution, timely observations of atmospheric gases, cloud cover, temperature, and humidity. This data is anticipated to enhance numerical weather prediction, support early warning systems for severe weather, and

augment our comprehension of climate change amid increasing meteorological obstacles.

Data from the inaugural MetOp satellites have been the primary contributor to improving the precision of European weather forecasts for durations spanning 12 hours to 10 days. It is now time for the MetOp-Second Generation mission, abbreviated as MetOp-SG, to assume responsibility—not only to maintain the continuity of global observations from polar orbit for weather forecasting and climate analysis, but to enhance these capabilities.

Weather influences numerous aspects of daily life, affecting public health, well-being, and the economy, while the effectiveness and productivity of critical sectors such as agriculture, business, commerce, manufacturing, transportation, and maritime operations depend significantly on precise forecasts.

With the escalation of climate change, extreme weather events are increasingly frequent and intense. Given the escalating unpredictability of weather patterns, accurate and prompt forecasting is now more essential than ever.

Data collected by the initial MetOp series of three satellites since 2006 have significantly enhanced the precision of numerical weather prediction. These satellites orbit the Earth from pole to pole as the planet rotates beneath them, encompassing the globe approximately every 24 hours. Moreover, their comparatively low orbital height allows for the acquisition of highly detailed observations of diverse atmospheric variables.

This capability is enhanced by Europe's primary meteorological initiative, the Meteosat series, which functions in geostationary orbit. Situated around 36,000 kilometres above the equator, these satellites maintain a stationary position in relation to Earth's rotation. This permanent high-altitude geostationary orbit enables continuous observation of a significant area of Earth's surface to monitor rapidly changing weather systems.

The presence of both types of meteorological missions in orbit enhances the efficacy of data transmission for weather forecasting, predictive modelling, and climate analysis by providing diverse perspectives on Earth.

In contrast to the original MetOp series, which consisted of three individual spacecraft, the new MetOp-SG mission includes three sequential pairs of satellites.

Each MetOp-SG pair consists of an A-type and a B-type satellite, each equipped with distinct yet complementary instruments of exceptional capability.

The package comprises ten distinct instruments spanning both



MetOp Second Generation A-type satellite





MetOp Second Generation B-type satellite

satellites, some derived from the acoustic legacy of the initial MetOp series, while others are entirely novel.

The A-type satellites are equipped with six instruments: a next-generation infrared atmospheric sounder, a microwave sounder, a multispectral imaging radiometer, an innovative multiviewing, multichannel, multipolarisation imager, a radio occultation sounder (also present on the MetOp-B satellites), and the Copernicus Sentinel-5 spectrometer.

The type-B satellites are equipped with five instruments: a scatterometer, a radio occultation sounder, an innovative microwave imager, a revolutionary ice-cloud imager, and an Argos-4 data collection system.

Equipped with extensive arrays of instrumentation, both variants are sizable satellites, each approximately 4000 kg, akin to a small truck.

The MetOp-SG mission not only guarantees the continuation of polar orbit data for numerical

weather prediction, weather forecasting, and climate analysis, but also enhances the accuracy and resolution of the original MetOp mission while including additional measurements into its outputs.

The MetOp-SG satellites, collaborating and positioned 90 degrees apart, deliver high-resolution observations of temperature, precipitation, clouds, winds, sea ice, aerosols, soil moisture, volcanic dust, air pollution, and numerous additional parameters.

This data is utilised not just for meteorological forecasting and climate studies but also for operational services pertaining to atmospheric chemistry, oceanography, and hydrology.

The operational lifespan of each satellite in orbit is 7.5 years, with successive satellites of each series deployed at seven-year intervals to attain a cumulative mission duration exceeding two decades.

The inaugural MetOp-SG-A was inaugurated on 13 August 2025, with the first MetOp-SG-B scheduled for 2026.

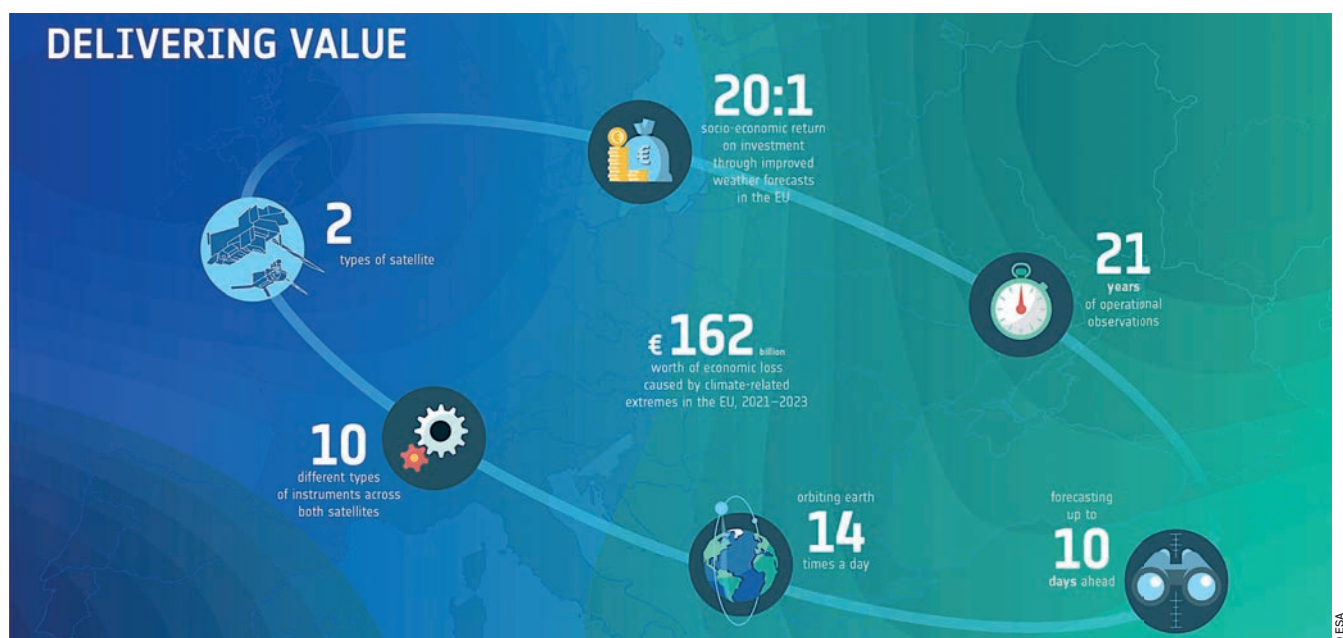
Similar to the first MetOp mission, MetOp-SG is an integral component of the Joint Polar System, a collaborative initiative between Europe and the United States, aimed at providing meteorological data from polar orbit at no cost to customers globally. Europe oversees the 'mid-morning orbit,' while the United States manages the 'afternoon orbit.'

The mission is a result of the enduring collaboration between ESA and Eumetsat, with ESA tasked with the design and construction of the satellites, while Eumetsat secures the launch service, develops the ground segment, operates the satellites, and supplies data to the global meteorological user community.

The French Space Agency CNES is supplying two instruments, while the German Aerospace Centre DLR is providing one. The European Commission is supplying the Sentinel-5 sensor via Copernicus.

The primary contractors for the mission are Airbus Defence and Space in Toulouse, France, for the A-type satellites, and Airbus Defence and Space in Friedrichshafen, Germany, for the B-type satellites. The initiative unites over 110 organisations through 280 contracts throughout 16 European nations, with more than 2000 individuals contributing everyday.

*James Lookwood*





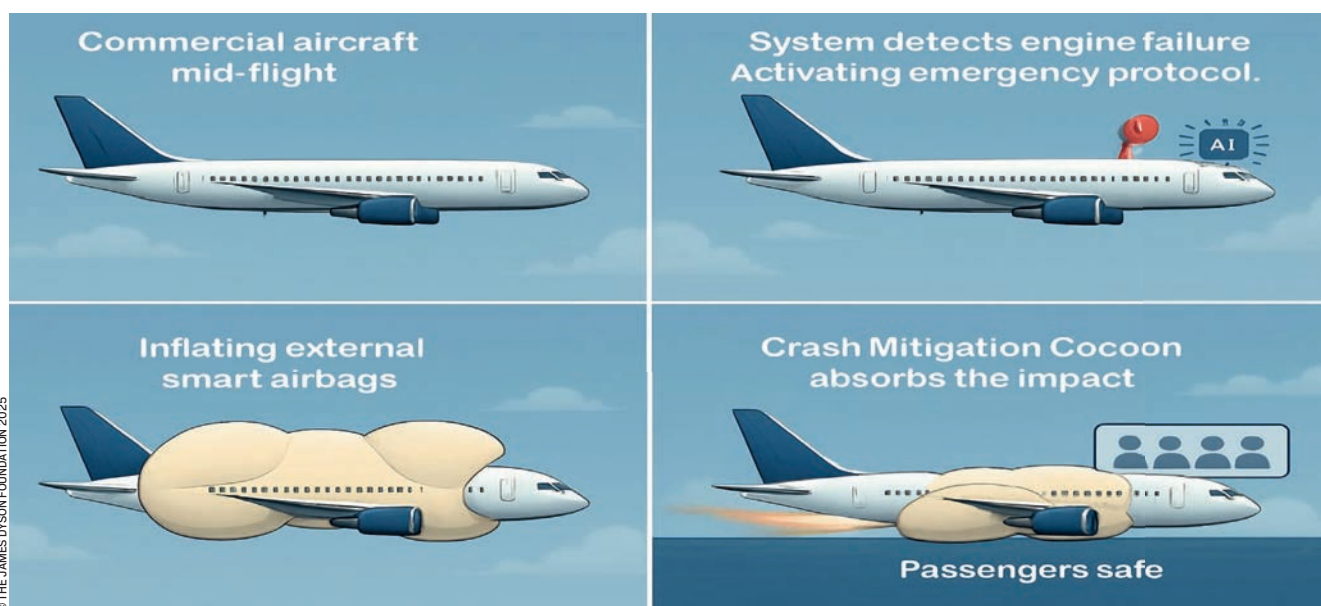


# PROJECT REBIRTH





**Dubai's AI-Enhanced Crash-Survival Initiative Designed to Render "Unsurvivable" Aviation Incidents Survivable**



In recent weeks, a student-initiated initiative from Dubai has garnered significant attention in aviation and technology news. Project REBIRTH is an AI-driven crash-survival system designed to envelop an aeroplane in rapidly inflating exterior airbags, introduce “smart” impact-absorbing fluids, and utilise reverse thrust or gas thrusters to decelerate and stabilise a failing descent. The team, located at BITS Pilani, Dubai, has submitted the concept to the 2025 James Dyson Award competition, presenting it as a critical safety measure to transform deadly accidents into survivable landings.

Despite being in the conceptual phase, REBIRTH is remarkably detailed. The designers delineate an AI detection framework that supervises altitude, velocity, engine and system integrity, flight trajectory, potential onboard combustion, and pilot inputs. Should the system determine that a collision is inevitable—especially below approximately 3,000 feet, when alternatives are severely restricted—it would autonomously initiate a series of safety measures while allowing pilots the opportunity to override. This is presented not as a revolution in autonomy, but as a safety mechanism that activates when traditional airmanship and redundancy have been depleted.

The fundamental concept: procure survivability through temporal extension, resistance, and cushioning.

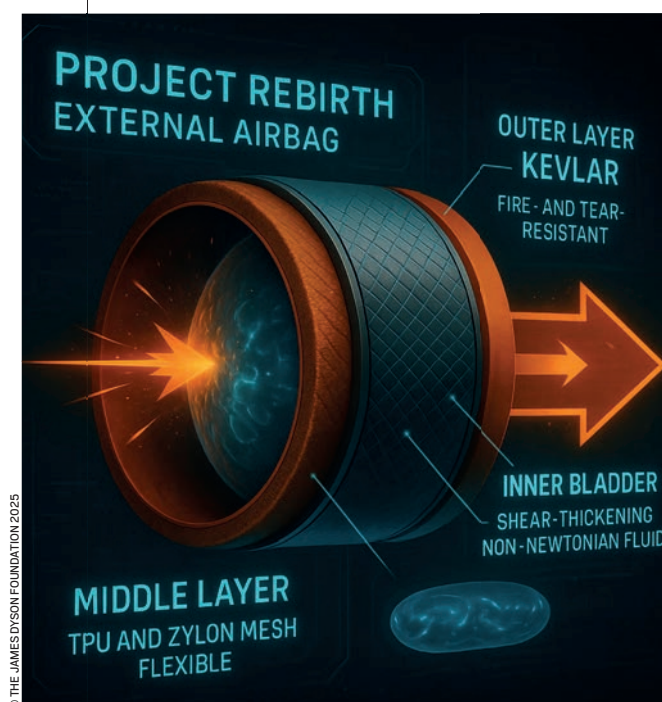
REBIRTH is founded on three principles: external airbags, impact-modulating materials, and reverse-thrust/auxiliary deceleration.

- External airbags would activate from the nose, belly, and tail, creating a high-velocity “crash pad” encircling the fuselage. In conceptual animations and renderings, the skin expands rapidly, redistributing loads from the stiff airframe and absorbing a substantial portion of kinetic energy upon touchdown. The objective is not to preserve the aeroplane but to sustain habitable space and safeguard humans from fatal deceleration and structural breaches.

Impact-absorbing fluids and intelligent liners—such as shear-thickening or non-Newtonian materials optimised for swift energy dissipation—would collaborate with airbags to mitigate the “crash pulse,” transforming a sudden spike in g-loads into a prolonged, survivable plateau. REBIRTH materials would be included into seats and internal panels to mitigate secondary injuries.

- Reverse thrust or gas thrusters would be utilised opportunistically. If engines maintain responsiveness, reverse thrust may provide drag prior to touchdown; if not, independent gas thrusters could stabilise attitude and reduce speed in the closing moments. This is a bold inclusion—reverse thrust during flight is often limited on transport jets—but the design regards it as a regulated, emergency measure rather than a standard operation.

The team asserts that preliminary simulations indicate a significant decrease in impact forces, with publicly cited values exceeding 60% reductions in certain virtual scenarios; however, these results have not yet undergone peer review and require thorough validation.





## Three categories of challenges are prominent:

1. Aerodynamics and structural cohesion. Externally housing big airbags without inducing parasitic drag during normal flight necessitates innovative packaging solutions. Deployment must be nearly instantaneous yet regulated, averting asymmetric inflation that could trigger a roll or pitch disturbance. The envelope must endure initial touch and then navigate irregular terrain or water without sustaining catastrophic tears. Incorporating hard-points into a pressurised fuselage—without incurring weight penalties that diminish payload and efficiency—will be a primary trade-off.

2. Dependability and false-positive mitigation. Airbags that deploy at inappropriate times would be intolerable. This advances the AI/avionics towards triple-modular redundancy, diverse sensors (e.g., radar altimeter, inertial state, optical terrain mapping), and stringent “arming” logic linked to altitude above terrain and rate-of-change criteria. This also prompts enquiries on maintenance: how can one identify a compromised cartridge or a micro-tear in a packed airbag prior to flight? These issues are solvable—automotive airbags, evacuation slides, and ram-air turbines establish precedents—but necessitate airline-grade reliability.

3. Operational compatibility. Utilising reverse propulsion during flight is prohibited for valid reasons: ingestion of debris, disruption of airflow over control surfaces, and increased structural loads. REBIRTH would require either engines specially authorised for limited reverse at certain speeds and attitudes or separate thrusters appropriately sized to assist without transforming the aeroplane into a rocket. Certification agencies would require comprehensive envelope safeguards.

## What history reveals regarding “last-resort” systems

Aviation has embraced certain contingency systems previously regarded as implausible. Evacuation slides and life rafts are now conventional, and Engineered Material Arresting Systems (EMAS) have mitigated aeroplane overruns that might have been more severe in previous decades. Ballistic recovery parachutes for light aircraft, once considered a curiosity, have proven to save lives. Each of these included packaging, weight, and maintenance expenses that the industry finally deemed acceptable. REBIRTH

occupies a philosophical position within that family, albeit at the scale of transport planes and with somewhat higher energies. The impulse of the student creators—to incorporate a survivability “airbag” in aerial endeavours instead of depending exclusively on terrestrial mitigations—aligns with that tradition.

## The human element: psychology, training, and communication

Should it be accomplished, REBIRTH would moreover constitute a human-factors initiative. Pilots require unequivocal arming criteria, cockpit notifications, and procedures that ensure activation is predictable under duress. The cabin crew necessitates procedures for brace placements suitable for “soft-shell” contact and for post-impact egress when the fuselage is enveloped in fabric. Passengers require briefing cards that elucidate, without inducing anxiety, the concept of an external cocoon. The designers have indicated the inclusion of rescue beacons and post-crash communication to expedite response—prudent measures if the aircraft lands off-airport or in inhospitable terrain. We intend to construct functional prototypes of REBIRTH's primary components—AI crash detection, airbags, intelligent seat liners, reverse thrust, and rescue signals. We will evaluate them in laboratories with specialists utilising wind tunnels and drop testing. We seek to collaborate with aircraft manufacturers, safety organisations, and governmental entities to obtain certification. REBIRTH is engineered for compatibility with older aircraft, enabling rapid installation by carriers. We will establish a firm to develop the concept, file patents, and secure support. “In five years, we aim for REBIRTH to be tested, approved, and implemented in actual flights—transforming crash survival from an anomaly into a standard,” states the Rebirth Project.

*Jean Louis Vigneay*





Pierre-Auguste Renoir, "Le déjeuner des canotiers", 1880-1881

A STAR  
IS BORN

**The Invention of  
Culinary Prestige**



**'One cannot think well, love well and sleep well, if one has not dined well'. (Virginia Woolf)**

Welcome to the world of Michelin stars, where your fork becomes a magic wand and every bite tells a story you'll savor long after the napkin hits your lap. In such selected restaurants, dining is more than simply consuming food; it is a meticulously choreographed performance where small portions pack a punch in terms of flavor, and sauces are artfully applied to plates. Chefs transform ingredients into characters, and diners experience a culinary drama that can be described as a 'delicious entertainment'. It is the kind of meal that prompts a moment of reflection, admiration, and occasionally even a quiet expression of delight to one's neighbor. A Michelin-starred experience is not merely about satiating the appetite, but rather inspiring guests to make plans for their next visit.

Food possesses the unique power to tell a story, forging connections between people and creating memorable experiences. It's a truth captured perfectly by Julia Child's famous observation: 'People who love to eat are always the best people.'

Nowhere is this more evident than in a Michelin-



A 1929 Michelin Guide

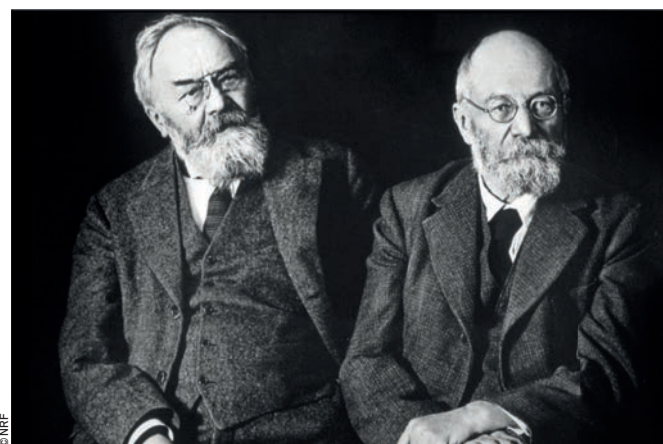
starred restaurant, an experience often described as both transformative and awe-inspiring. For chefs, a Michelin star is the ultimate mark of extraordinary quality. For diners, the experience extends far beyond taste alone, encompassing the precise context and impeccable ambience of the meal itself.

The story behind the Michelin Star rating system is both intriguing and somewhat unexpected. The Michelin Guide was first published in France in 1900 by André and Édouard Michelin, the founders of the Michelin tire company. Their strategy was a stroke of genius: to encourage people to drive more, which would cause their tires to wear out faster, thereby increasing demand for their own product.

The inaugural guide, a free booklet handed out to French motorists, was very practical. It contained maps, tire-changing instructions, and listings for fuel stations, hotels, and restaurants—all designed to facilitate travel. A pivotal change occurred around 1920 when the guide was no longer given away but began to carry a price. This shift transformed it from a promotional item into a valuable resource, instantly adding prestige to its contents.

The culinary recognition we know today began in 1926 with the introduction of a single star to denote a "fine dining establishment." The iconic three-tiered system was finalized after 1931, cementing definitions that have endured for nearly a century: one star for a "high-quality restaurant in its category," two for "excellent cooking worth a detour," and the coveted three stars for "exceptional cuisine that justifies a special journey."

In 1955, two additional special categories were introduced: the 'Bib Gourmand', recognizing exceptional cuisine at reasonable prices, and in 2020, the 'Green Star', acknowledging restaurants that demonstrate outstanding commitment to sustainability.

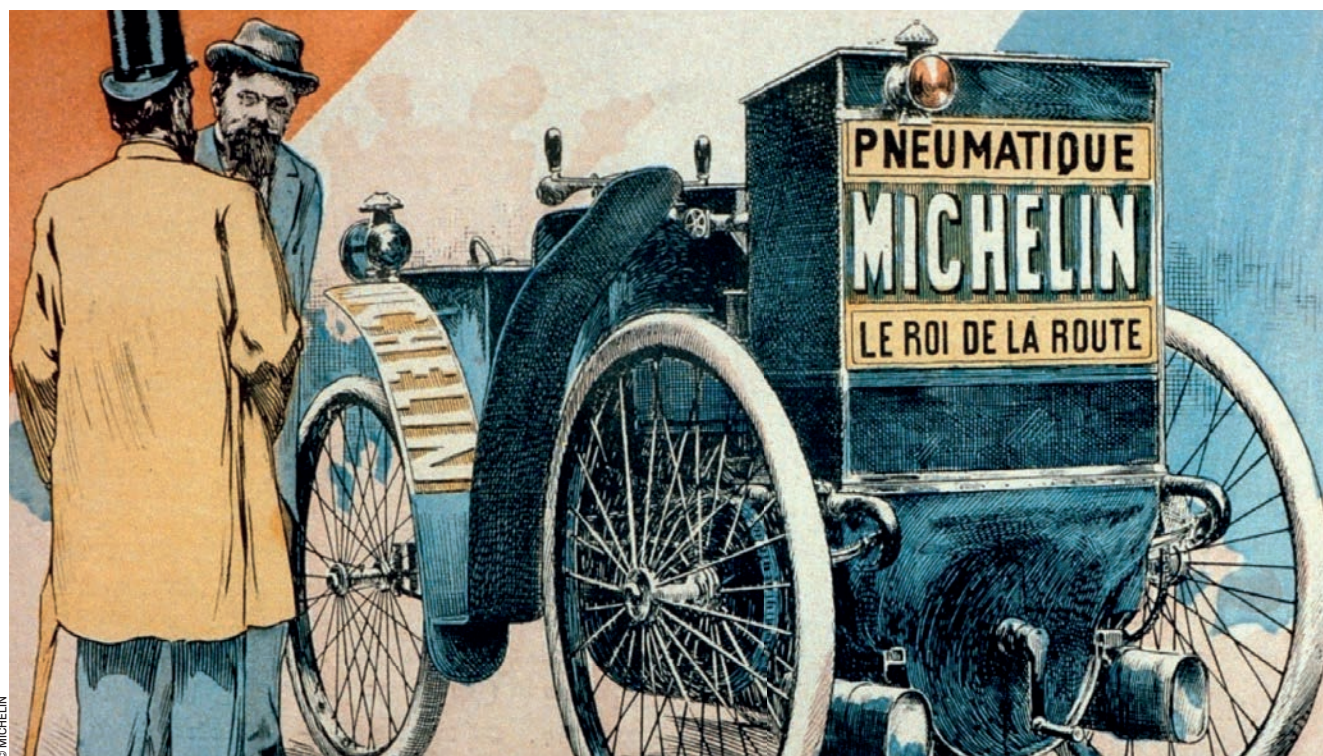


André and Édouard Michelin

In the late 1920s, the guide expanded to include Belgium, and then the rest of Europe. It became a symbol of postwar prosperity and a guarantee of culinary excellence. Today, its reach is truly international, with guides covering more than 30 countries across the Americas and Asia. The stars remain the most coveted accolades in the restaurant industry, upheld by one of the most secretive and prestigious rating systems ever devised.

Michelin employs a team of full-time inspectors, often with backgrounds in hospitality, culinary schools or fine dining. They always dine incognito, paying their own bills to guarantee impartiality. Stars are awarded based on strict and globally consistent criteria that include the quality of ingredients, cooking techniques, harmony of flavors, the personality of the chef in the cuisine, as well as the consistency of the service. Stars are awarded not only across visits but also throughout the menu and over time. Inspectors make multiple visits to restaurants annually, and final decisions are reached collectively during Michelin's annual 'star meetings', to ensure every award is fair, uniform and unquestionably earned across countries.

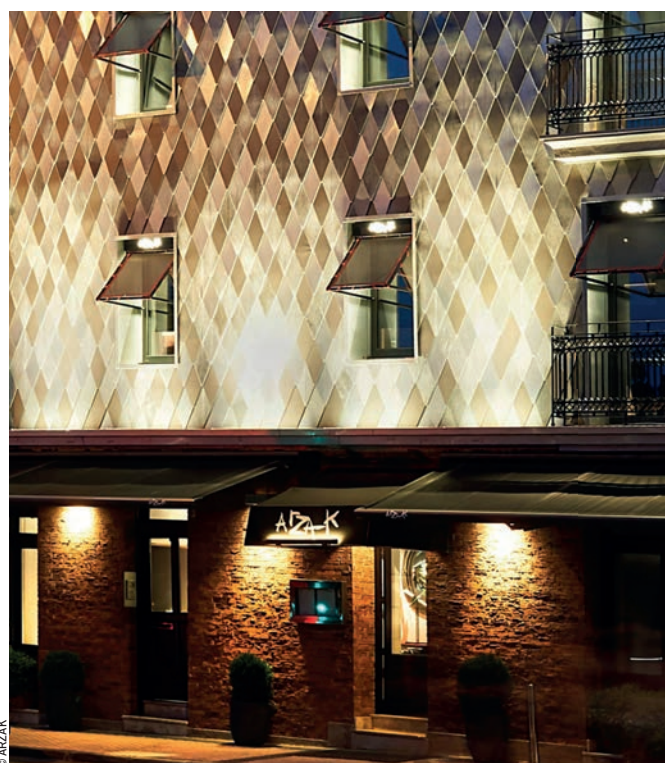




Vintage publicity poster: Michelin tyres « King of the Road”

This unique perspective is further highlighted by the juxtaposition of Michelin's origins as a tire company booklet with its current global reputation as the gold standard in fine dining.

Despite the guide's international expansion, Europe remains the undeniable heartland of Michelin-starred dining. As the birthplace of the guide, France continues to lead with a formidable tally of more than 630 starred restaurants, including over 30



3-Star Michelin restaurant Arzak in San Sebastián

that hold the coveted three-star distinction. Italy follows in second place with approximately 380 starred establishments, home to world-renowned venues such as Osteria Francescana in Modena and Piazza Duomo in Alba.

Germany boasts a robust culinary scene with around 330 Michelin-starred restaurants, concentrated in hubs like Berlin, Munich, and the Black Forest region. Spain, with around 270 starred restaurants, is celebrated for iconic three-star institutions like El Celler de Can Roca in Girona—a multiple-time "World's Best Restaurant" winner—and the legendary Arzak in San Sebastián, a culinary landmark for over fifty years.

The United Kingdom and Ireland together claim about 230 starred restaurants, with most of them in London. Meanwhile, Belgium, with around 140 starred restaurants, stands out for having one of the highest number of Michelin stars per capita.

Beyond these dominant players, other European nations make significant contributions to the Michelin landscape. Switzerland, the Netherlands, Austria, and the Nordic countries—particularly Denmark and Sweden, driven by the influential New Nordic Cuisine movement. Outside of Europe, Japan is the leader, with 387 Michelin-starred restaurants. (Source: Statista.com).

Europe isn't just a major player in the Michelin universe; it's the foundational influence. The continent embodies the full spectrum of the guide's philosophy, from French cuisine and the avant-garde creativity of Spain, to Italy's passion for ingredients and the Nordic commitment to sustainable innovation.



Although expensive as a general rule, a Michelin-starred meal in Europe can vary considerably depending on the country, the number of stars awarded and style of the restaurant.

Generally, one-star menus range from €50 to €150 per person, with many establishments offering more accessible prix-fixe options at lunch. For example, a one-star bistro in Brussels may feature menus under €100. Dining at a two-star restaurant typically costs between €120 and €250 per person. At this level, the focus shifts toward technical innovation and rare ingredients,

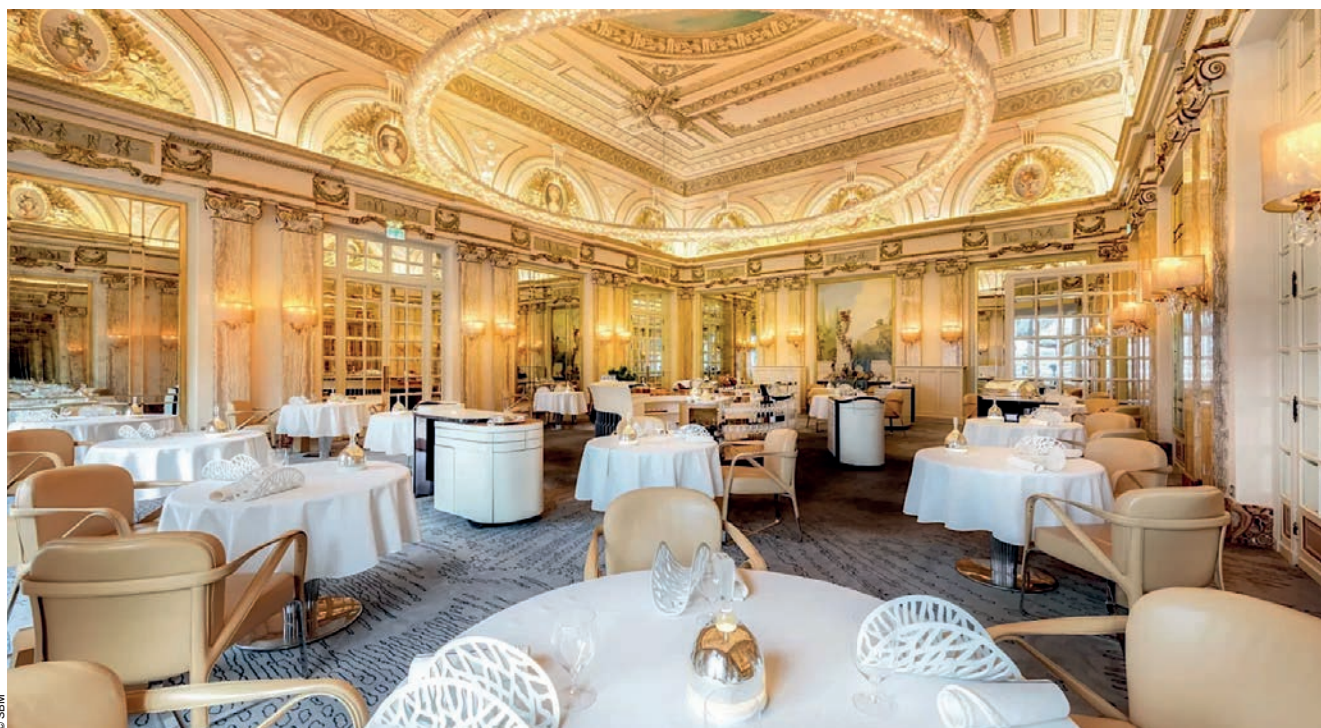


Alain Ducasse

often accompanied by an elevated wine pairing experience that can add €100 or more to the final bill. Most three-star restaurants propose menus generally starting around €250 and exceeding €400 per person. At certain celebrated establishments, extensive tasting menus can reach up to €800. Nordic countries such as Denmark, and Switzerland are typically at the premium end, while Spain and Portugal are renowned for offering exceptional value. A number of chefs are introducing shorter, more affordable "discovery menus," democratizing access to this echelon of dining.

Currently, some of the most affordable Michelin-starred restaurants in Europe include Hostellerie la Montagne (Colombey-les-Deux-Églises, France), offering traditional French cuisine in a simple countryside setting, with menus starting from just €20 per person. L'Antic Molí (Ulldecona, Spain) serves creative Mediterranean dishes with a strong focus on sustainability and local produce, with tasting menus ranging from €45 to €65. Kajitsu (Vienna, Austria), provides an innovative Japanese vegetarian experience, with lunches priced between €35 and €45. Liath (Dublin, Ireland), an extremely popular spot, offers an early evening tasting menu for approximately €50. EssZimmer by Käfer (Munich, Germany), stands out as a two-star restaurant where lunch menus are available for €75–€90, representing exceptional value for its caliber. This strategy of offering more affordable menus, particularly at lunch, is a common and effective way for Michelin-starred restaurants to attract a broader audience.

On the other end of the spectrum, Europe is home to Michelin-starred restaurants that represent



3- star Michelin Restaurant, Louis XV Alain Ducasse, in Monaco



the pinnacle of luxury and expense, often corresponding with their star count. A prime example is the two-star Sublimotion in Ibiza, Spain, which transcends traditional dining. It offers an immersive "dinner show" combining gastronomy, virtual reality, and live performance. This multi-sensory experience commands a price of approximately €1,500–€1,800 per person...probably too prohibitive for everyone. Le Louis XV – Alain Ducasse, in Monte Carlo is a legendary, three-star establishment within the famous Hôtel de Paris. Set in a lavish dining room overlooking Casino Square, its menus range from €400 to €450. Guy Savoy, a three-starred restaurant in Paris is famed for signature dishes like its artichoke and black truffle soup, featured within a tasting menu priced around €630. Alain Passard's Arpège, also in Paris is a popular restaurant that focuses on vegetables and offers seasonal tasting menus for between 420 and 490 EUR with premium wine pairings available. Piazza Duomo in Alba, Italy is known for its sophisticated Piedmontese cuisine. Menus here range from around 300 to 400 EUR, but these prices increase significantly during the autumn white truffles season.

While the affordable Michelin experience can start from just 20 EUR, the high end – particularly when incorporating wine pairings, exclusive ingredients and "experience-based" dining can easily exceed 1,000 EUR per person, making it an exclusive luxury.

But we should not forget that while these temples of gastronomy celebrate cuisine as an art form, millions worldwide face food insecurity and struggle to afford basic sustenance. This profound disparity forces us to confront a difficult question: what is the role of such extreme culinary luxury in a world where hunger remains a pervasive crisis? Fine dining, therefore, is not merely an indulgence; it is a privilege. In an era where food security is one of humanity's most pressing challenges, the difference between culinary artistry and having enough to survive has never been more apparent.

While the cost is undoubtedly significant, for those who partake,



Multi-Michelin starred chef Gordon Ramsay has opened a string of successful restaurants across the globe, from the UK and France to Singapore and the United States



Paul Bocuse (1926–2018) was a legendary French chef and restaurateur from Lyon, France, known as "the Pope of Gastronomy"

the experience is considered a meticulously crafted investment in artistry. Ultimately, the price tag is secondary to the true defining element of a Michelin-starred meal: the culinary genius on the plate. Securing a reservation requires strategic planning far in advance. For a one-star restaurant, booking two to four weeks ahead is typically necessary. The demand increases sharply with two-star establishments, where reservations often need to be made approximately three months in advance. For the world's most celebrated three-star temples of gastronomy, planning six to twelve months ahead is essential, as tables frequently sell out within minutes of becoming available. El Celler de Can Roca, run by the three Roca brothers, opens its reservation book precisely eleven months in advance, and waiting a full year for a table is commonplace. Similarly, a dinner at Gordon Ramsay's restaurant in London typically requires a lead time of two to three months. While last-minute cancellations can occasionally create openings, many restaurants now manage demand through waiting lists or even lottery systems.

Michelin stars have served as a primary catalyst for launching chefs into the global spotlight. Gordon Ramsay, famous for his television persona, is also a celebrated figure in the Michelin world. He has maintained three stars at his London restaurant since 2001.

The late Paul Bocuse, often called the 'Pope of French Cuisine,' was a titan of *nouvelle cuisine*, and his restaurant, l'Auberge du Pont de Collonges near Lyon held three Michelin stars for over 55 years.

Joël Robuchon, hailed as the 'Chef of the





Restaurant Paul Bocuse in Collonges au Mont d'Or in 2001

Century,' became the most decorated chef in history, holding an unprecedented 32 Michelin stars at his peak across his global L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon restaurants.

Alain Ducasse, from France, made history as the first chef to hold three stars in three different cities simultaneously (Monaco, Paris, and London) and now oversees a constellation of starred restaurants.

Massimo Bottura of Italy's Osteria Francescana and Heston Blumenthal of The Fat Duck in the UK used their three-star status and "World's Best Restaurant" titles to become synonymous with creative, avant-garde cuisine.

True innovation has also been recognized. René Redzepi of Copenhagen's Noma fundamentally reinvented Nordic food, creating a worldwide movement before the restaurant's closure in 2024.

Anne-Sophie Pic stands as the only woman in France to hold three Michelin stars for her restaurant, Maison Pic, celebrated for its refined and aromatic style. For many, the Michelin star is not just an award but the foundation of a global business empire, allowing chefs like Robuchon, Ducasse, and Ramsay to monetize their prestige and influence on an international scale.

The world of fine dining is definitely changing. These days, a Michelin-starred meal doesn't automatically mean a formal palace with crystal chandeliers. There's a real push for chefs to be not just talented, but also thoughtful about where their food comes from. You see more menus highlighting local farms or even the



Anne-Sophie Pic is the only woman in France with a three-star restaurant (Maison Pic, Valence)

restaurant's own garden. Today's celebrated chefs are expected to be not only masters of flavor but also carers of the environment. This is reflected in menus that highlight hyper-seasonal, locally sourced ingredients, often procured directly from small-scale farms or the restaurant's own garden. Concurrently, there is a culinary renaissance in



© AI GENERATED IMAGE

A 3D printer crafting a gastronomic dish

vegetarian and vegan cuisine, with chefs applying sophisticated techniques once reserved for meat and fish to vegetables, grains, and plant-based proteins, elevating them to the center of the plate.

The experience of dining itself has also evolved. The traditional French wine pairing, while still revered, now shares the stage with creative alternatives like curated tea selections, house-made kombuchas, and complex non-alcoholic fermentations. The atmosphere in many top restaurants has become more relaxed and engaging, featuring open kitchens, convivial service, and a focus on genuine hospitality. The goal is not to intimidate, but to create a memorable and accessible experience.

Michelin-starred chefs are increasingly incorporating their cultural heritage into haute cuisine, creating dishes that blend classic French techniques with flavors from Asia, Africa, or Latin America. Today, a meal at such a restaurant is a narrative journey, where food is paired with stories of tradition, memory, or sustainable practices.

Technology also plays a subtle role, appearing in fermentation labs, interactive plating, and digital storytelling. Some chefs are even experimenting with 3D-printed food and AI-generated menus. This focus on innovation is matched by a shift toward more curated tasting menus, where quality, precision, and sustainability take precedence over quantity.

Consider how you feel after a Michelin-starred meal: satisfied,

but never stuffed. This isn't a strategy to upsell dessert—it's central to the experience. Each artfully composed portion is a choreographed act of culinary magic, allowing your palate to appreciate each course fully. Think of it as a marathon of flavors, not a sprint. The modest portions ensure you can savor every nuance, admire the presentation, and eagerly anticipate what comes next. In fine dining, less is indeed more... except when it comes to the applause for the chef.

Ultimately, Michelin-starred dining has gone beyond the white tablecloths and unpronounceable dishes. It's now about chefs who tell stories with unexpected ingredients, sommeliers who might pair a course with kombucha instead of champagne, and restaurants proving that sustainability can be divine. The contemporary culinary scene feels less like an intimidating etiquette exam and more like a creative adventure—a chapter in your own story, marking life's memorable and festive moments. It's an experience where the planet, your palate, and perhaps even your Instagram feed all earn a star.

*Alexandra Paucescu*



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# TIMELESS CHIC

## STANDOUT FASHION AND BEAUTY TRENDS

### THE 3 MUST-HAVE AUTUMN TRENDS

This autumn, prepare to be charmed by a symphony of rich hues, compelling accessories, and footwear designed to captivate.

## | These boots are made for gawking!

As the days grow crisp and the air turns sharp, autumn calls for a wardrobe shift. This season's true icons? **BOOTS**. Sleek, bold, and irresistible, they stride back into the spotlight, ready to anchor every look with confidence. Discover the three most coveted models redefining autumn chic—your ultimate essentials for the months ahead.

### | The stacked-heel boots

Stacked-heel boots bring an everyday polish with a little lift. Pair ankle styles with straight-leg jeans and a cropped jacket, or taller versions with a midi skirt and chunky knit. For evening, offset a mini dress with a sharp blazer. They are the ultimate trifecta: sleek, versatile, and walkable.

Knee-high boots with chunky heels



© LOEFFLER RANDALL



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© INSTAGRAM @STEPINTOSTYLE



© ISABEL MARANT

Tasseled leather-trimmed suede knee boots

### | The slouch boots

The slouch boot returns, featuring soft, relaxed folds for a chic 2000s revival. Choose from ankle or over-the-knee styles and pair them with slim pants, midi skirts, or oversized knits to achieve effortless, modern sophistication.

### | The riding boots

The riding boot rides back into style with its sleek, columnar shaft and subtle heel. Slip it on under skirts or over slim pants—it's the perfect choice for everyday polish with a timeless, equestrian edge.

Smooth leather knee boots with block heels



© AEYDE



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## Makeup trends: “Red October”

For autumn-winter 2025-2026, the bold lip trend features rich, deep red tones like garnet and cherry, alongside velvety burgundy shades—a classic look with a modern edge.



© PINTEREST

## A New Season, A New Timepiece

As winter time falls back, let your style spring forward. This season's key statement piece is the watch. Sleek, bold, or jewel-toned, it's the perfect accessory to embrace the change with elegance.



© LONGINES

The 2025 PrimaLuna collection represents Longines' commitment to the woman who values elegance in design as well as the precision of Swiss mechanical excellence.



© LONGINES

Longines  
“Conquest  
Heritage”  
watch



© CARTIER

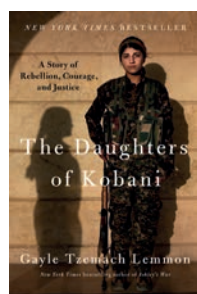
Cartier  
“Tank Louis”  
watch



© BALMAIN

Balmain  
“Balmainia  
Bijou” watch

## BOOKS

THE DAUGHTERS  
OF KOBANI

A Story of Rebellion,  
Courage, and Justice

By Gayle Tzemach Lemmon

**The extraordinary story of the women who took on the Islamic State and won**

In 2014, northeastern Syria might have been the last place you would expect to find a revolution centered on women's rights. But that year, an all-female militia faced off against ISIS in a little town few had ever heard of: Kobani. By then, the Islamic State had swept across vast swaths of the country, taking town after town and spreading terror as the civil war burned all around it. From that unlikely showdown in Kobani emerged a fighting force that would wage war against ISIS across northern Syria alongside the United States. In the process, these women would spread their own political vision, determined to make women's equality a reality by fighting—house by house, street by street, city by city—the men who bought and sold women.

Based on years of on-the-ground reporting, *The Daughters of Kobani* is the unforgettable story of the women of the Kurdish militia that improbably became part of the world's best hope for stopping ISIS in Syria. Drawing from hundreds of hours of interviews, bestselling author Gayle Tzemach Lemmon introduces us to the women fighting on the front lines, determined to not only extinguish the terror of ISIS but also prove that women could lead in war and must enjoy equal rights come the peace. In helping to cement the territorial defeat of ISIS, whose savagery toward women astounded the world, these women played a central role in neutralizing the threat the group posed worldwide. In the process they earned the respect—and significant military support—of U.S. Special Operations Forces.

Rigorously reported and powerfully told, *The Daughters of Kobani* shines a light on a group of women intent on not only defeating the Islamic State on the battlefield but also changing women's lives in their corner of the Middle East and beyond.

TAKING  
PARIS

The Epic Battle for the  
City of Lights

By Martin Dugard

May 1940: The world is stunned as Hitler's forces invade France with a devastating blitzkrieg aimed at Paris. Within weeks, the French government has collapsed, and the City of Lights, revered for its carefree lifestyle, intellectual freedom, and love of liberty, has fallen under Nazi control—perhaps forever.

As the Germans ruthlessly crush all opposition, a patriotic band of Parisians known as the Resistance secretly rise up to fight back. But these young men and women cannot do it alone. Over 120,000 Parisians die under German occupation. Countless more are tortured in the city's Gestapo prisons and sent to death camps. The longer the Nazis hold the city, the greater the danger its citizens face. As the armies of America and Great Britain prepare to launch the greatest invasion in history, the spies of the Resistance risk all to ensure the Germans are defeated and Paris is once again free.

The players holding the fate of Paris in their hands are some of the biggest historical figures of the era: Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, General George S. Patton, and the exiled French general Charles de Gaulle, headquartered in London's Connaught Hotel. From the fall of Paris in 1940 to the race for Paris in 1944, this riveting, page-turning drama unfolds through their decisions—for better and worse. *Taking Paris* is history told at a breathtaking pace, a sprawling yet intimate saga of the heroism, desire, and personal sacrifice for all that is right.

THE LAST KING  
OF AMERICA

The Misunderstood Reign of  
George III

By Andrew Roberts

The last king of America, George III, has been ridiculed as a complete disaster who frittered away the colonies and went mad in his old age. The truth is much more nuanced and fascinating—and will completely change the way readers and historians view his reign and legacy.

Most Americans dismiss George III as a buffoon—a heartless and terrible monarch with few, if any, redeeming qualities. The best-known modern interpretation of him is Jonathan Groff's preening, spitting, and pompous take in *Hamilton*, Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway masterpiece. But this deeply unflattering characterization is rooted in the prejudiced and brilliantly persuasive opinions of eighteenth-century revolutionaries like Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson, who needed to make the king appear evil in order to achieve their own political aims. After combing through hundreds of thousands of pages of never-before-published correspondence, award-winning historian Andrew Roberts has uncovered the truth: George III was in fact a wise, humane, and even enlightened monarch who was beset by talented enemies, debilitating mental illness, incompetent ministers, and disastrous luck.

In *The Last King of America*, Roberts paints a deft and nuanced portrait of the much-maligned monarch and outlines his accomplishments, which have been almost universally forgotten. Two hundred and forty-five years after the end of George III's American rule, it is time for Americans to look back on their last king with greater understanding: to see him as he was and to come to terms with the last time they were ruled by a monarch.

THE REBEL  
AND THE  
KINGDOM

The True Story of  
the Secret Mission to  
Overthrow the North  
Korean Regime

By Bradley Hope

In the early 2000s, Adrian Hong was a soft-spoken Yale undergraduate looking for his place in the world. After reading a harrowing account of life inside North Korea, he realized he had found a cause so pressing that he was ready to devote his life to it.

What began as a trip down the safe and well-worn path of organizing soon morphed into something more dangerous. Hong journeyed to China, outwitting Chinese security services as he helped asylum-seeking North Koreans escape across the border. Meanwhile, Hong's secret organization, Cheollima Civil Defense (later renamed Free Joseon), began tracking the North Korean government's activities, and its volatile third-generation ruler, Kim Jong-un. Free Joseon targeted North Korean diplomats who might be persuaded to defect, while drawing up plans for a government-in-exile. After the shocking broad-daylight assassination in 2017 of Kim Jong-nam, the dictator's older brother, Hong, along with U.S. Marine veteran Christopher Ahn, helped ferry Kim Jong-nam's family to safety. Then Hong took the group a step further. He initiated a series of high-stakes direct actions, culminating in an armed raid at the North Korean embassy in Madrid—an act that would put Ahn behind bars and turn Hong into one of the world's most unlikely fugitives.





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# Smoking causes lung cancer



World Health  
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