EU Awareness Centre

NEWSLETTER

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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

EU Awareness Centre at the Paneuropa Conference "For a Strong Europe" in Vienna



The Chairman of the EU Awareness Centre, Ambassador David Dondua, took part in the Paneuropa Conference "For a Strong Europe", held in Vienna from 1-4 October 2026. The conference marked one hundred years since the first Paneuropean Congress, held in Vienna in 1926.

On 3 October, David Dondua spoke on the panel "The EU's Eastern Border and Future Relations with Russia", alongside Juraj Mesik (Slovakia), Oleksandr Aliksiychuk (Member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine) and Tigran Khzmalyan (Paneuropa Armenia). Andrej Lepavcov, President of Paneuropa Macedonia, moderated.

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STATEMENTS

Statement by the EU Awareness Centre on the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Yerevan Center of Foreign and Security Policy

The EU Awareness Centre (EUAC) is pleased to announce that it has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Yerevan Center of Foreign and Security Policy (YCFSP), an independent, non-partisan think tank based in Yerevan.

The Memorandum sets a framework for the two organisations to work together on European integration, democratic governance, human rights, and countering disinformation and hybrid threats. We are pleased to announce that the Brussels-based EU Awareness Centre and the Yerevan Center of Foreign and Security Policy have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation.

This agreement is an important step in building our partnership, deepening our cooperation and advancing our shared goals.



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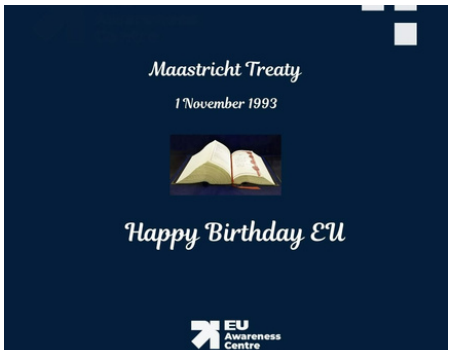
Statement on the 33rd Anniversary of the Maastricht Treaty

On 1 November 1993, the Maastricht Treaty entered into force, formally establishing the European Union and opening a new chapter in European integration.

It was more than an institutional milestone.The Treaty laid the foundations for a Union with a broader political dimension, introduced EU citizenship, paved the way for the single currency and established a framework for closer cooperation.



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PUBLICATIONS

Russia's Kaliningrad Warning: A Case Study in Cognitive Warfare

On 28 September 2026, the Russian Embassy in Belgium released a highly vigorous statement in which it accused NATO and its member states of worsening the military and political situation surrounding Russia's Kaliningrad Region; it stated that NATO was drawing up scenarios for isolating the region, claimed that the Alliance's military actions were becoming more aggressive, and declared that Russia would be ready to use its entire arsenal should any of the NATO countries try to cut Kaliningrad off from the rest of Russia.



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Preparing for a Wider Union: How the EU Plans to Make Enlargement Work



Every enlargement debate eventually arrives at the same question: can the European Union take in new members without weakening itself? For two decades the answer was postponed. Candidate countries were told to reform; the Union, for its part, was rarely asked to do the same. On 6 October 2026 the European Commission published its answer to the second half of that question, in a Communication titled Preparing for a wider Union.

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No second-Class members: What the EU's Enlargement Plan is Missing

The European Commission has once again made enlargement a priority. Its Communication, entitled Preparing for a wider Union (COM(2026) 705), published on 6 October 2026, outlines the actions the EU should take before new countries become members. In 2023, EU leaders agreed in Granada that both candidate countries and the Union should prepare simultaneously. This paper is the first in-depth plan on the EU's role in that agreement. The main issue is whether the EU is ready to alter its own rules: for example, the way in which it makes decisions, how far it allows candidate countries to take part in its policies before they join, what requirements it has for new members, and how it will handle Ukraine's large agricultural sector.



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Hungary's Migration Fine: Between Political Rhetoric and Legal Responsibility



Speaking on a panel at the 21st Bled Strategic Forum on 31 August 2026, Hungarian Prime Minister Péter Magyar stated, "It's quite difficult to explain to Hungarians why Hungary is treated so unfairly in Brussels [over migration policy]. We have a court ruling; we have to pay €1 million a day just for defending the common European borders. It's not fair, and nobody is ready to resolve this issue." The narrative that Hungary has been treated unfairly by Brussels over its migration policy has been pushed by Magyar repeatedly since his election victory in April.

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Sanctions for Sale: Rubio's Athens Doctrine and the Lesson Moscow Learned

On 7 October 2026, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, speaking in Athens with the ancient Acropolis in the background, told Europe that power rests not only on strength but on "the credibility that you are willing to use it". Two days later, on 9 October, President Donald Trump announced, after a telephone call with Vladimir Putin, that Russia would supply diesel to American and global markets. The US Treasury issued a temporary general licence allowing the sale, supply and import of Russian diesel until 7 April 2027. Forty-eight hours were enough to turn a doctrine into a disclaimer. Governments often use different language when addressing the public versus negotiating behind closed doors, so simply calling US recent actions inconsistent would not be enough for analysis.



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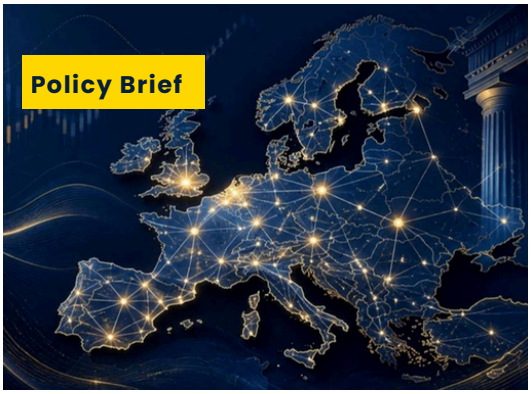
Beyond National Silos: Why Europe Needs a Stronger Common Framework for Capital Markets Supervision



On 9 October 2026, EU finance ministers reached political agreement on the key elements of the Council's negotiating position on the Market Integration and Supervision Package (MISP). The package combines measures against cross-border barriers, including on asset management, the depositary passport and the distributed-ledger technology (DLT) pilot regime, with a stronger role for the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) in supervising the most significant cross-border market operators. The text must still be finalised and formally adopted; negotiations with the European Parliament can begin once Parliament has adopted its own position.

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Russian FIMI Inside the European Union: Democratic Legitimacy and the Limits of Resilience

Between January and October 2026, Russian information operations accompanied elections across the European Union: in Hungary and Bulgaria in the spring, and in the German Länder, Sweden, Estonia and Latvia in the autumn. The European External Action Service (EEAS) recorded 540 FIMI incidents in 2025 and placed France and Germany among the four most targeted countries, alongside Ukraine and Moldova.It attributed 29 per cent of the incidents to Russia and 6 per cent to China; the remainder showed indicators of coordination with Russian or Chinese assets

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Why are European Rallies Turning Violent?

On 17 October, more than half a million people marched across France against the high cost of living. Most of them marched peacefully and then went home. But by the evening, the town hall in Limoges was on fire, there was tear gas in Paris, and one police officer and one protester were dead. On the same weekend, there were riots in Milan, Turin and Bologna. In Tirana, someone threw a Molotov cocktail at the police.
A few days later, ministers in Paris and Rome started to blame other countries. Italy's defence minister spoke of a "hybrid war" carried out through TikTok and YouTube. France's foreign minister named Russia, China and Iran.



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The Serbian Paradox: Democratic Change Without a Geopolitical Shift?

Aleksandar Vučić's electoral defeat is a watershed moment in Serbian politics. He stepped down as president in September to run as the SNS list's candidate for prime minister. On 25 October he was voted out. The Student List (which emerged from nearly 2 years of student protests) took 52.65% of the vote compared to 39.2% for the SNS list (figures from the electoral commission's count of approximately 97% of polling stations). With around 140 of the 250 seats it can govern on its own. It is the end of 14 years of SNS rule.

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War in Ukraine – what we have learned and what to expect

The prolonged war in Ukraine has irrevocably dismantled the post-Cold War illusion of permanent European stability, signaling a definitive return to industrial-scale warfare and unapologetic great-power competition. For decades, the dominant Western strategic paradigm rested on the principles of liberal internationalism, the assumption that deep economic interdependence, free trade, and integration into global financial institutions would inherently pacify authoritarian states and tether them to the rules-based order.



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THINK BEFORE YOU TRUST



MANIPULATION 13

On 12 August 2026, a video circulating on X appeared to show a caricature of presidential candidate Gabriel Attal projected onto a wall of the Panthéon in Paris. One week later, on 19 August, a second wave followed: at least five fake news reports and five forged front pages attributed to French and European media, including a counterfeit Agence France-Presse (AFP) item. Over the course of August, fabricated content about Attal borrowed the visual identity of outlets including AFP, Le Monde, Le Figaro and Libération.The fakes pushed two main narratives. **READ MORE**

MANIPULATION 14

On 30 June 2026, AfD co-chair Alice Weidel told Reuters that "cheap energy from Russia was the secret of the success of 'Made in Germany'. We need it back." She called for lifting sanctions on Russian oil and gas.

The same day, Russian state outlets carried the story. TASS ran it as "'Alternative for Germany' leader urges resumption of oil, gas supplies from Russia". RT headlined it "Leader of Germany's most popular party wants to restore ties with Russia". Both cited Reuters. To a reader, each looked like a faithful summary of a respected Western news agency's report.

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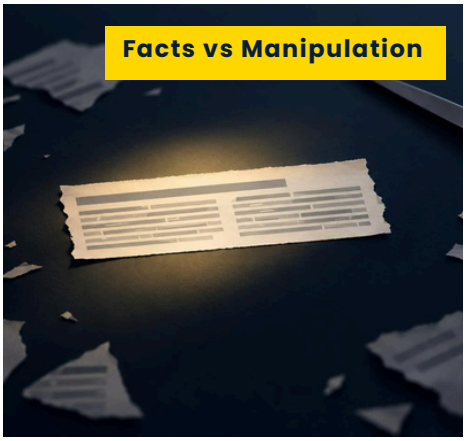

AI OR REALITY?



Made to Look German: How AI Can Localise Foreign Propaganda

Artificial intelligence is changing how foreign influence operations communicate with audiences abroad. ...

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How a Russian operation used AI to fake a think tank that never existed

A case OpenAI disclosed on 25 August 2026 works differently, and it deserves attention precisely because of that difference. It did not fake a message. It faked the messages' source

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