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**International & European
Criminal Law Observatory**

ON CULTURAL ISSUES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY

MONTHLY WRAP OCTOBER 2025

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Resolution 2794 (2025): The Question Concerning Haiti (Haiti Sanctions)

On 17 October, the Security Council recalled its previous resolutions on the situation in Haiti, citing persistently high levels of gang violence, criminal activity, human trafficking, sexual violence, and corruption undermining the rule of law and respect for human rights. Determining that the situation continues to threaten international peace and security, the Council decided to renew the travel ban and enforce a strict arms embargo, affirming that it will keep the situation under continuous review. The sanctions regime, first established in 2022, also includes an asset freeze, and its mandate was renewed under Resolution 2794 (2025), drafted by Panama and the United States. The resolution extends the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the Sanctions Committee and represents two individuals, Dimitri Herard and Kempes Sanon, for actions that threaten Haiti's peace and stability. Representatives of the United States and Panama stressed that effective performance of the arms embargo is essential to "remove the fuel feeding the conflict," while Haiti's representative emphasized that sanctions can serve as a "tool of deterrence and justice" if applied properly. The Council will continue to monitor progress based on Haiti's judicial capacity, reduction in gang violence, and decrease in arms trafficking, with the Secretary-General and Panel of Experts expected to report by 1 September 2026.



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Venezuela Calls Caribbean Vessel Attacks ‘Extrajudicial Killings’, as Speakers in Security Council Demand ‘Urgent De-escalation’, Respect for International Law

On 22 October, the Security Council held an emergency session following United States military strikes on Venezuelan vessels accused of drug trafficking — actions that Caracas condemned as “extrajudicial killings,” while the United States described them as an operation to stop drugs from flooding into the country and to bring criminals to justice. Tensions between the United States and Venezuela escalated, with reports of air strikes. Venezuela described the US actions to the United Nations as a violation of international law and as moves aimed at regime change. The Venezuelan representative stressed that Member States must ensure their efforts within the limits of international law. UN Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča reported rising tensions following several deadly incidents in the Caribbean and urged urgent de-escalation and adherence to international law. Many Council members called for restraint and respect for the UN Charter, warning that unilateral use of force without authorization risks setting a dangerous precedent. The United States defended the strikes as acts of self-defence against “non-State terrorist” cartels, while Venezuela accused Washington of violating its sovereignty and manufacturing a conflict. Both delegations took the floor again for a second round of statements.

Resolution 2795 (2025): The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 31 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2795, renewing for 12 months the authorization granted to the European Union for the multinational stabilization force, EUFOR-Althea, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The force is mandated to help implement the military aspects, as well as those concerning the inter-entity boundary line and related issues, of the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is also known as the Dayton Agreement. Further to the text, the Council stressed that the parties shall continue to be held equally



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responsible for the compliance with those aspects and shall be equally subject to such enforcement action by EUFOR-Althea and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) presence as may be necessary.

Resolution 2796 (2025): The situation in Libya

On 31 October the Security Council extended the United Nations Support Mission in Libya or UNSMIL's mandate for one year until 31 October 2026, reiterating its full support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the Mission. Unanimously adopting resolution 2796, the Council encouraged the Mission to implement the recommendations of the Strategic Review. The recommendations include the following: continuing to place the support of a political solution to the Libyan conflict at the core of the Mission's mandate; streamlining UNSMIL's workstreams to advance Libya's political process; and establishing a more consistent presence across Libya, including targeted expansions of the Mission in Benghazi and Sabha while maintaining a cost-neutral realignment and within existing resources. By other terms, the Council urged Libyan political institutions and key stakeholders to resolve outstanding politically contentious issues and make the compromises necessary to progress a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned, UNSMIL-facilitated negotiation to deliver free, fair, transparent and inclusive national presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as possible.



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

South Sudan: UN Commission urges AU and UN Security Council to act decisively as crisis deepens, demanding urgent action and renewed commitment to peace, accountability, and a credible transition

The UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan warned that escalating political crises are driving renewed armed violence, human rights violations, and mass displacement. In 2025 alone, an estimated 300,000 South Sudanese fled to neighbouring countries, adding to 2 million internally displaced persons and 560,000 refugees from Sudan, with women disproportionately affected. The Commission emphasized that systemic corruption, stalled peace processes, and the lack of transitional justice continue to fuel conflict and impunity. It cautioned that, without immediate political engagement, South Sudan's instability will severely undermine human rights across the region. The Commission called on the African Union, IGAD, the United Nations, and international partners to urgently support inclusive political dialogue, establish the Hybrid Court, and advance mechanisms for accountability and reparations, stressing that only coordinated and sustained action can prevent further damage and protect civilians.

Iran: UN Fact-Finding Mission alarmed by surge in repression and extraordinary spike in executions

The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran reported a serious collapse in human rights following Israeli airstrikes in June and subsequent domestic repression by Iranian authorities. In its first presentation to the UN General Assembly, the Mission expressed concern over civilian casualties, with Iranian sources reporting more than 1,100 deaths and thousands injured, as well as Israel's reported airstrike on Evin prison, which killed dozens of prisoners, staff, and visitors.



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Following the incident, the Mission sent letters to both Iranian and Israeli authorities requesting information on the strikes. It noted that Iran’s response — including missile attacks on Israel and a wave of arrests at home — has further deepened repression across the country. Since mid-August, more than 21,000 people have reportedly been detained as “suspects.” The government expanded the use of the death penalty and introduced new restrictions on expression, including the criminalization of certain social media activity. As a result, Iran was seen to have failed to conduct a fair and transparent investigation process.

Ethnic and religious minorities have faced increased persecution, while executions have reached their highest level since 2015. The Mission also documented rising gender-based violence, continued enforcement of hijab laws, and the return of the “morality police.”

Experts warned that failure to address injustice prolongs the suffering of victims and undermines the State’s obligations under international human rights law to ensure accountability, truth, justice, and reparations.

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

UN experts urge China to end repression of Uyghur and cultural expression of minorities

United Nations human rights experts called on China to immediately end the repression of Uyghur and other minorities’ cultural, linguistic, and religious expression. The statement warns that individuals have reportedly been detained or convicted on charges of “extremism,” “separatism,” or “terrorism” merely for exercising their cultural identity.

The experts warned that China’s broad counter-extremism and counter-terrorism laws, which lack real safeguards, including the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region De-extremification Regulation, continue to restrict minority cultural expression and religious expression. The experts stated that



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protecting the freedom of expression is essential for human rights and dignity. The contact with the Chinese authorities continues.

Violence flares anew in northern Mozambique, forcing 22,000 to flee in a week

UNHCR expressed deep concern over renewed violence in northern Mozambique, where nearly 22,000 people fled their homes in late September amid intensified conflict now in its eighth year. More than 1.3 million people have been displaced since 2017, with all 17 districts of Cabo Delgado affected. Civilians face killings, abductions, sexual violence, and forced recruitment by non-state armed groups, while extreme weather and rising food prices compound the crisis. Despite growing needs, UNHCR has received only \$66 million of the \$352 million required for 2025 operations. The agency urged renewed international support to protect civilians and sustain essential services.

Afghanistan: New restrictions on telecommunications raise further rights concerns, say UN experts

UN experts stated that the Taliban's new restrictions on internet access and social media platforms violate the rights of Afghans and aim to control public discourse. The statement followed the lifting of a nationwide telecommunications shutdown that had lasted from 29 September to 1 October, 2025. Since 7 October, access to major social media platforms has been restricted, severely curtailing freedom of expression and access to information. Experts noted that these measures isolate Afghans from the international community, restricting freedom of expression and access to information. Therefore, any restrictions touching this core of human rights must be necessary and proportionate, the experts said. They further noted that connectivity restrictions undermine the rights to work, education, and health, worsening poverty and unemployment. Lastly, the experts urged the Taliban to fully restore internet access and ensure that any restrictions comply with international human rights standards, particularly the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality. They stressed that



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silencing Afghan voices further obstructs accountability efforts and enables ongoing human rights violations.

Azerbaijan: UN experts urge release of researchers Igbal Abilov and Bahruz Samadov, charged with treason

UN experts called on the authorities of Azerbaijan to release researchers Igbal Abilov and Bahruz Samadov, who have been detained for over a year on charges linked to their academic work, peaceful criticism of government policies, and advocacy for minority rights and peace.

The experts expressed deep concern that the two scholars' research and public statements have been equated with high treason and anti-state activity. Abilov's studies on ethnic minorities in the South Caucasus were reportedly used as evidence of "foreign-instructed" appeals and incitement of hatred, while Samadov, a political analyst and PhD candidate, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his public criticism and calls for peace with Armenia. They warned that the use of vague national security provisions to suppress academic freedom and minority advocacy reflects a broader pattern of judicial harassment and intimidation in Azerbaijan. Such practices, the experts said, violate human rights and send a chilling message to academics and defenders across the country.

The experts urged the Government to ensure an environment where scholars and activists can work freely, in line with Azerbaijan's international human rights obligations. They reiterated concern over the misuse of national security laws to restrict cultural rights, free expression, and academic freedom.



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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

San Marino ratified the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting

On 7 October 2025, San Marino deposited with the Director-General its instrument of ratification of the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (Paris, 14 November 1970).

In accordance with Article 21 of the Convention, it will enter into force with respect to San Marino three months after the assurance of the instrument of ratification, that is, on 7 January 2026.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Committee of Ministers approves draft convention establishing an International Claims Commission for Ukraine

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers has approved the draft convention to establish an International Claims Commission for Ukraine. This commission is the second step in the compensation mechanism outlined in the 2023 Reykjavik Declaration, along with the Damage Register, active since 2024, and a future compensation fund. The convention will be adopted and opened for signature on 16 December 2025 in The Hague, entering into force after 25 ratifications, provided sufficient financial support is ensured. Non-member states of the Council of Europe and the European Union may also join. The goal is to ensure that Russia is held legally and financially accountable for the damage caused by its war against Ukraine. The mechanism involves three phases: collecting and recording claims via the Damage Register, assessing and deciding compensation through the new International Claims Commission, and finally paying damages through a future fund.



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So far, the register has received around 65,000 claims related to deaths, disappearances, torture, sexual violence, unlawful detention, deportations, and property damage.

Georgia should step up protection of groups vulnerable to human trafficking

The new GRETA report for 2020-24 assesses Georgia’s measures against human trafficking, focusing on vulnerable groups and the growing use of ICT by traffickers. Key progress includes biannual action plans, a new state shelter opened in Tbilisi in 2023, and a 2021 legal amendment easing victims’ access to state compensation. A total of 49 victims were identified, mostly women and children, primarily exploited for forced begging. Most victims were foreign nationals. Street children, ethnic minorities, asylum seekers, and migrant workers are particularly at risk. GRETA recommends more resources for protection services, targeted training on victim detection, stronger labour inspection capacities, and prevention efforts for people with disabilities. The report calls for better investigations into ICT-facilitated trafficking, updates to the National Referral Mechanism, improved access to compensation, and proper prosecution of trafficking offences. GRETA also raises concern over recent legislation that could hinder NGOs labelled as “foreign agents,” threatening victim privacy.

Council of Europe expert group examines Bulgaria’s efforts to protect vulnerable persons from human trafficking and to ensure effective sanctions for human-trafficking offences

The new GRETA report for 2020-24 assesses Bulgaria’s measures to prevent, detect, and combat human trafficking, with particular focus on the use of ICT both to commit crimes and to counter them. The report highlights delays and inconsistency within the National Commission and insufficient funding, despite a budget increase in 2024. Sexual exploitation remains the most common form, but forced labour—mainly affecting men and foreign nationals—is rising. Vulnerable groups include disadvantaged minorities, people with disabilities, unaccompanied children, asylum seekers,



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refugees, and migrant workers. GRETA calls for stronger prevention efforts, especially online, improved victim identification—also in migration contexts—and more effective sanctions against traffickers. It also urges Bulgaria to incorporate the concept of “abuse of a position of vulnerability” into its criminal law. Several previous recommendations remain unimplemented and should be prioritised.

Montenegro: new report by Council of Europe anti-trafficking body

The new GRETA report evaluates Montenegro’s actions since 2021 to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and prosecute offenders. Legislative progress is welcomed, including non-punishment for victims forced into crime and strengthened cooperation between authorities and civil society. Between 2021 and 2024, 67 victims were identified, 79% of them children, mainly subjected to forced begging, forced marriage, and sexual exploitation. Roma and Egyptian communities, unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers, migrant workers, and stateless people remain highly vulnerable. GRETA urges the authorities to reduce migrant workers’ dependency on employers, improve reporting mechanisms, and ensure interpreter availability during inspections. Better access to employment and healthcare is needed for asylum seekers and refugees, alongside increased resources for social services to protect unaccompanied children. The lack of shelters for male victims persists. GRETA also notes rising online trafficking and calls for enhanced digital investigation tools. Several previous recommendations remain unimplemented, including access to compensation, reflection periods for foreign victims, and proactive investigations.



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EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION (EUROPOL)

Fake number, real damage: Europol urges action against caller ID spoofing

Europol is calling for a coordinated European response to the growing threat of caller ID spoofing, a technique used by criminals to falsify phone numbers and carry out online fraud and social engineering scams. This method causes an estimated €850 million in yearly losses and accounts for 64% of reported fraud cases. Criminal networks, often operating across borders, use “spoofing-as-a-service” to impersonate banks, public authorities, or law enforcement. Investigations are hindered by technical and legal challenges, including limited cooperation with telecom operators, fragmented regulations, and insufficient tools to trace spoofed calls. Europol proposes three priorities: harmonised technical standards to detect and block fraudulent calls; stronger cross-border cooperation between law enforcement and industry; and regulatory alignment to enable lawful call tracing and prevent misuse of caller ID masking. This initiative supports the ProtectEU strategy to strengthen the fight against organised crime and protect citizens from evolving digital and telephone-based threats.

From CLICK to CRIME: investigating intellectual property crime in the digital age

Online intellectual property crime is expanding, endangering consumers, businesses, and the wider economy, with fake goods ranging from medicines to toys and illegal streaming services. The “From CLICK to CRIME” conference, held in Sofia in October 2025 by Europol, EUIPO, and Bulgarian authorities, stressed the need for strong international cooperation to tackle online-enabled counterfeiting and piracy. Counterfeit products sold via social media and digital platforms pose serious health and safety risks, while organised criminal networks treat IP crime as a core business model. The EU-SOCTA 2025 report highlights the shift of counterfeit trade online, especially via



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social commerce, driven by the cost-of-living crisis and low consumer awareness. Since 2016, Europol and EUIPO have jointly operated the IPC3 to strengthen a coordinated public-private response against counterfeiting and piracy, both online and offline.

Over 30 potential victims identified in action against human trafficking enabled online

From 15 to 19 September 2025, Europol supported the fourth EMPACT Human Trafficking Hackathon, led by Dutch authorities with support from Germany and the UK, involving 73 experts from 26 countries. Investigations targeted social media, marketplaces, dating apps, job portals, escort sites, and messaging platforms. Results included: 33 potential victims identified, 31 suspected traffickers detected, 302 URLs and 137 social networks linked to trafficking uncovered. Findings show that escort agencies dominate the sexual services market across EU countries, controlled by a small number of criminal groups. Investigators detected increased use of AI-generated ads and exclusive cryptocurrency payments. Indicators of organ trafficking, child sexual abuse material, and dark web platforms offering to rent or sell minors, including newborns, were also found. Since its launch in 2022, the hackathon has become a key tool for coordinated online monitoring and early victim identification in cross-border investigations.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL POLICE ORGANIZATION (INTERPOL)

83 arrests in landmark African operation against terrorism financing

Operation “Catalyst” (July–September 2025), jointly coordinated by INTERPOL and AFRIPOL, resulted in 83 arrests across six African countries and the identification of 160 persons of interest. The operation targeted terrorism financing and related criminal activities. Of those arrested: 21 for terrorism, 28 for fraud and money laundering, 16 for cyber-enabled scams, and 18 for illegal use of



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virtual assets. Over 15,000 entities were screened, uncovering USD 260 million in both fiat and crypto potentially linked to terrorism, with USD 600,000 already seized. Investigations revealed close links between terrorism financing and crimes such as fraud, illicit trade, cyber scams, and cryptocurrency misuse. Key cases included the seizure of USD 588,000 in Angola, the dismantling of a cryptocurrency-based Ponzi scheme worth USD 562 million, and multiple arrests in Kenya and Nigeria for terror-linked financial crimes. The operation was delivered under the ISPA programme, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, to strengthen AFRIPOL's role in combating organised crime and terrorism in Africa.

INTERPOL border security operation yields record arrests, vital information on terrorist travel

Operation Neptune VII (July-September 2025), coordinated by INTERPOL with Europol, Frontex and the World Customs Organization, involved 20 countries and over 70 border control sites across Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. It identified 328 individuals subject to INTERPOL Notices or Diffusions, including 57 with suspected terrorist links. A total of 153 arrests were made, up from 66 in 2024. Among those detained was Igor Grechushkin, linked to the 2020 Beirut explosion. The operation led to the issue of 10 Blue Notices and new insights on around 60 foreign terrorist fighters. Significant seizures included stolen travel documents, 220 kg of marijuana, USD 130,000 in cash and luxury cars, often used to finance criminal and terrorist activities.

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS



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[Judgment *Misiūnas v. Lithuania* - Former judge did not have effective legal avenue to challenge decision not to reappoint him following his term as a government minister, application no. 38687/22](#)

In the Chamber's judgment in *Misiūnas v Lithuania*, the ECHR unanimously ruled that there was a violation of Article 6 § 1 (right of access to justice) of the Convention. The appellant is a former judge who had assumed a position in the Government, who at the end of his mandate presented requests to be reconfirmed judge, receiving refusal from the President of the Republic. The domestic courts refused to grant for consideration the claims submitted by the claimant, arguing, in particular, that it was within the powers of the President to decide judicial appointments and that they had no jurisdiction to hear his case. The Court found that the domestic courts had failed to provide an effective legal remedy capable of addressing the merits of the applicant's complaint, even though he had a legitimate and reasonable expectation that his application for re-entry into the judicial profession would be properly considered. There were no exceptional or compelling reasons to justify the lack of judicial review of the President's decision.

[Judgment *Petruzzo and Others v. Italy* - Proceedings concerning confiscation of unlawfully built property incompatible with Convention, applications nos. 1986/09 and 67556/13](#)

The case of *Petruzzo and Others v. Italy* concerns two groups of claimants who complained about the confiscation of their land and buildings. Authorities had found the property to be an illegal development. In today's ruling of the Chamber, the Court unanimously ruled that there was: no violation of article 7 (no penalty without law) of the European Convention on Human Rights in respect of the first group of applicants; a violation of article 7 of the Convention in respect of the second group of applicants; and a violation of article 1 of Protocol No. 1 (protection of property) to the Convention in respect of all claimants. As regards the application under Article 7, the Court held that the national provisions establishing the offence of abusive development of sites were sufficiently



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foreseeable for the first group of applicants, who had constructed buildings which did not comply with the master plan on part of their land in common ownership. The Court found, however, that there had been an infringement of Article 7 in respect of the second group of applicants, who had purchased the flats which constituted one of the buildings. A penalty had been imposed on them even though they had not been parties to the criminal proceedings and had never been formally charged with any offence. The Court also laid down the requirements of conformity with the Convention to be met by the Italian authorities when conducting asset confiscation proceedings against purchasers held jointly and severally liable for the illegal development of sites. As to the claim under article 1 of Protocol No. 1, the Court found that the first group of claimants had had to bear an excessive and impractical burden. Moreover, the procedural obligations under article 1 of Protocol No. 1 had not been complied with in respect of the second group of claimants, who had not had the opportunity to participate in the proceedings that had led to the confiscation of their property. The Court also held, unanimously, that the Italian State should have returned the confiscated assets to the applicants in the first group and to Ms Marsala, one of the applicants in the second group.

Judgment Tsatani v. Greece - Lack of guarantee of impartiality in disciplinary proceedings brought by the President of the Court of Cassation against a prosecutor, application no. 42514/16

In *Tsatani v. Greece*, the Court held, by 6 votes to 1, that there had been a violation of Article 6 § 1 (right to a fair trial) of the Convention. The case concerned disciplinary proceedings initiated against Ms Tsatani, public prosecutor at the Athens Court of Appeal, by the President of the Court of Cassation, V.T., after the latter had conducted a preliminary disciplinary investigation against Ms Tsatani for having closed the investigation into a criminal fraud case. Ms. Tsatani called for V.T.'s recusal, arguing that she was not impartial. The request for recusal was rejected and the disciplinary councils of the Court of Cassation found Ms. Tsatani guilty of gross negligence and she was stripped



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of two months' salary. The Court held that Ms. Tsatani's concerns regarding the impartiality of the proceedings before the courts that had heard her case were not unreasonable, subjective or unjustified. In particular, the disciplinary council had not addressed the impact of an official press release issued by V.T. in reference to the preliminary investigation when it was still pending. The Court held that the press release itself was incompatible with the notion of “independent and impartial tribunal” in view of its content and the context in which it had been issued. Since V.T. was President of the Court of Cassation, had the highest authority in the civil and criminal courts, and was also known as a former acting Prime Minister, she should ensure that she acted impartially, especially since she had investigated and initiated disciplinary proceedings against a member of the judiciary. Given the singular background to the case, the Court found that the proceedings had not complied with the Convention's standard of impartiality.

[Judgment *A.J. and L.E. v. Spain* - Failure to conduct effective investigation into allegations of sexual assault by chemical submission, application nos. 40312/23 and 40388/23](#)

In the Chamber's judgment in *A.J. and L.E. v. Spain*, the Court ruled, unanimously, that there was a violation of Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the European Convention and a violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life). The case concerned the investigation into the applicants' complaints that they had been drugged and sexually assaulted in December 2016, as well as the subsequent loss and manipulation of crucial evidence in police custody. The Court found that the Spanish authorities had not conducted an effective investigation, in particular because of the systematic loss and manipulation of potentially crucial evidence, insufficient guarantees of the independence of the investigation and a manifestly inadequate response to those investigative deficiencies, which went beyond “isolated errors” or minor investigative omissions. The measures taken by the authorities were unable to compensate for the loss of evidence that had been



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central to allegations of the submission of chemicals. Moreover, investigations into possible police misconduct had been initiated only after a considerable amount of time and had been entrusted to the same judicial and law-enforcement bodies that had supervised the initial investigations.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Qaeda: Council renews sanctions regime by another year

The Council renewed the EU's autonomous restrictive measures against ISIL/Da'esh, Al-Qaeda, and associated individuals and entities. The measures include asset freezes, travel bans for designated individuals, and a prohibition on providing funds or economic resources to them. These sanctions complement those imposed by the UN Security Council. The EU remains firmly committed to countering the terrorist threat posed by these groups and their affiliates, and to taking strong action against those involved in terrorism and its financing or promotion worldwide.

Chairs' statement following 24 October Coalition of the Willing Leaders' meeting

Prime Minister Starmer and President Macron co-chaired a virtual meeting of the Coalition of the Willing with President Zelenskyy, reaffirming united support for Ukraine and the pursuit of a just and lasting peace. Leaders welcomed Zelenskyy's call for a full ceasefire and condemned Russia's rejection of it, escalation of attacks, and violations of NATO airspace.

They endorsed President Trump's view that the current line of contact should serve as the basis for future talks and reiterated unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Leaders stressed the need to intensify economic pressure on Russia, phase out Russian oil and gas from global markets, and discourage third countries from aiding Russia's war effort.



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They agreed to strengthen measures against shadow fleet vessels through sanctions, regulatory action, and increased coordination. They also committed to addressing Ukraine's financial needs, including using immobilised Russian assets while maintaining existing military aid.

Leaders condemned Russia's attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure and pledged urgent assistance to ensure energy resilience and additional military support, including air defence. They confirmed plans to establish a Multinational Force Ukraine after hostilities end to help secure Ukraine's territory and rebuild its defence capabilities.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Russian gas and oil import ban: MEPs ready to negotiate with Council

The proposed legislation aims to safeguard the EU's interests against the weaponisation of energy supplies by the Russian Federation.

Parliament endorsed the launch of negotiations with the Danish Presidency of the Council on a ban on Russian gas and oil imports, following the position adopted by the Committees on International Trade and on Industry, Research and Energy.

Negotiations between Parliament and the Council will proceed with the objective of reaching an agreement at first reading, based on the joint position adopted by EU ministers.

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (FRA)

New guide empowers workplace inspectors to combat labour exploitation in the EU

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Labour Authority (ELA) have jointly launched a new practical guide to help labour inspectors identify and address labour



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exploitation. The guide will also support workers in claiming and enjoying their rights across the European Union.

The publication focuses on the protection of EU citizens working outside their home countries and of third-country nationals employed within the EU. It provides labour inspectors with clear and practical tools, offering explanations of the various forms of labour exploitation, an overview of the rights of foreign workers under EU law, guidance on how to communicate effectively with workers, indicators for detecting potential cases of exploitation, and advice on supporting victims of labour exploitation. This new resource builds on previous work carried out by the FRA, including a training manual for labour inspectors and reports on labour exploitation, as well as on ELA's training manual addressing labour exploitation and breaches of labour law. Together, these resources help to safeguard the fundamental rights of workers and to ensure their ability to move and work freely throughout the European Union.

EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY (FRONTEX)

EU external borders: irregular crossings fall 22% in the first 9 months of 2025

Irregular entries into the European Union decreased by 22% in the first nine months of 2025, reaching 133,400 according to preliminary data from Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. Across Europe, more than 3,600 Frontex officers continue to assist national authorities in safeguarding the EU's external borders. The data show strong declines on the Western African (-58%), Western Balkan (-47%), and Eastern Land Border (-36%) routes. The Central Mediterranean remains the busiest route, accounting for nearly 40% of all irregular entries this year, while the Western Mediterranean recorded a 28% increase in irregular entries.



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New Reference Architecture Strengthens Europe's Border Surveillance Systems

Frontex has released the *European Border Surveillance Reference Architecture*, a blueprint designed to enhance the interconnection of Europe's border surveillance systems, promote information sharing, and maximise the value of investments in border and pre-frontier monitoring.

This initiative responds to rapidly evolving risks and challenges: criminal networks continuously adapt their methods, technology progresses at great speed, and changing regulations reshape operational frameworks. The new architecture offers a common foundation for Frontex and EU Member States to address these challenges jointly.

The publication analyses the current state of border surveillance in the European Union, outlining its strengths and weaknesses, and considers key regulatory drivers and emerging threats. It also reviews comparable systems in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom, and highlights major technological trends such as sensor innovation and data management.

Based on this analysis, Frontex identified operational requirements and translated them into functional capabilities and modular *building blocks* to guide the design or modernisation of surveillance systems. Two annexes complement the report: one summarises insights from industry and operational experts, while the other presents a taxonomy of system components to foster a shared technical language across Europe.

The reference architecture can be applied throughout the full system lifecycle: to assess existing tools, guide investment decisions, improve procurement specifications and ensure operational coherence across EU borders. Importantly, it is not a static model — it will evolve over time in line with technological advances and changing security landscapes, helping Europe modernise its border surveillance in a coordinated and efficient way.



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Frontex, EUAA, Europol and Italy use Lampedusa as a testing ground for a new screening process in view of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

At the invitation of the Italian Ministry of Interior, Frontex together with Italian authorities, the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA) and Europol, successfully completed a two-week pilot of the new EU screening process on the island of Lampedusa. The exercise, held from 13 to 24 October, forms part of the preparation for the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

The Pact establishes a unified European approach to migration and asylum, aiming to strengthen border management, ensure faster and more efficient screening, and promote solidarity among Member States while protecting fundamental rights. Most of its provisions, including the Screening Regulation, are set to apply from 12 June 2026. During the pilot, the participating agencies tested the new *Screening Toolbox*—a collection of standardised procedures and digital tools designed to support the upcoming regulation. The trial simulated real operational conditions with 240 irregular arrivals, focusing on workflow optimisation and inter-agency coordination. Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens highlighted that this cooperation demonstrates how joint European efforts yield concrete results, ensuring effective border management while safeguarding rights. Italian National Police Chief Vittorio Pisani and EUAA Executive Director Nina Gregori also emphasised Italy's commitment and the importance of testing the new framework before its formal entry into force.

Joint Screening Teams, composed of experts from Frontex, EUAA, Europol, and Italian authorities, conducted health and vulnerability assessments, identification, biometric registration, and security checks. Each individual was informed about their rights, the asylum procedure, and available support. The collected data and findings will contribute to the finalisation of the Screening Toolbox, to be distributed across the EU and Schengen-Associated countries in 2026.



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Frontex rolls out fully-fledged operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Frontex, has launched its first full operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, marking a new stage of cooperation in the Western Balkans. Over one hundred Frontex officers from across the EU will work together with Bosnian border guards to strengthen border management, combat cross-border crime, and enhance information exchange, while ensuring full respect for fundamental rights.

The operation brings additional training, equipment, and European expertise to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's daily border activities. "Working together makes a real difference," said Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens. "Our officers will stand shoulder to shoulder with their Bosnian colleagues, ensuring borders are managed safely and fairly." This milestone follows years of preparation and partnership between Frontex and Bosnia and Herzegovina. During his visit, Leijtens met national security leaders and EU representatives to discuss further strengthening of regional cooperation. A ceremony in Sarajevo officially marked the beginning of the operation, attended by Commissioner Magnus Brunner and Bosnia's Deputy Minister of Security Ivica Bošnjak.

Commissioner Brunner highlighted that the security of the Western Balkans is inseparable from Europe's own, noting that cooperation with Frontex has contributed to a 90% decrease in irregular border crossings over the past three years. Bosnian officials also emphasised that the operation represents a major step in the country's European integration process and its contribution to collective security. Frontex already operates in Albania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, and the new mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina further strengthens regional ties and European solidarity.



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EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY (EDA)

Progress report 2025: EU's ambitions take shape through PESCO

The year 2025 marks strong momentum for Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), now encompassing 74 projects, with 66 active and nearly half in the execution phase. These initiatives aim to close capability gaps, enhance readiness, and strengthen the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). The PESCO Secretariat — composed of the EDA, EEAS, and EU Military Staff — continues to support implementation across projects.

Key achievements include the Cyber and Information Domain Coordination Centre (CIDCC), which reached Initial Operational Capability, the Common Hub for Governmental Imagery (CoHGI), and the Network of Logistic Hubs (NetLogHubs), all advancing EU-wide defence integration. In the air and maritime domains, projects such as 4E and iUGS2 are shaping technologies for joint operations and unmanned ground systems.

The sixth wave of projects, approved in May 2025, introduced 11 new initiatives covering air and missile defence, electronic warfare, quantum technology, soldier systems, and military medical facilities. Flagship programmes include IMLAMD and TWISTER for layered missile defence, CoBaS for counter-artillery operations, and DES for directed-energy weapons.

Looking ahead to 2026–2030, PESCO remains a cornerstone of Europe's strategic autonomy, bridging persistent capability gaps in an era of growing insecurity. Its success will depend on Member States' willingness to transform political ambition into tangible military power.



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EDA's head Kallas urges EU unity, resolve in support of Ukraine

Kaja Kallas, Head of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has called for a “common European vision for defence,” stressing that Russia must not be allowed to prevail in its war against Ukraine.

During her visit to the EDA headquarters, Kallas urged Member States to invest “wisely and collaboratively” amid growing defence budgets. She highlighted the need to strengthen cooperation within the EU and with Ukraine, breaking down barriers between defence policy, capability development, and industrial strategy.

“EDA is the catalyst helping Member States grow their military capabilities further,” she said, reaffirming the goal of achieving full defence readiness by 2030. Kallas also warned that allowing aggression to succeed in Ukraine would encourage it elsewhere.

Appointed in December 2024, Kallas met with EDA Chief Executive André Denk and senior management for strategic discussions. As the EU’s intergovernmental defence platform, the EDA supports Member States by defining priorities, coordinating research and innovation, developing interoperable capabilities, promoting joint procurement, and aligning defence with EU policies.

Through its operational support — including satellite communications, maritime surveillance, cyber defence, and cross-border mobility — the EDA plays a key role in Europe’s collective security framework, which Kallas aims to strengthen through unity and shared purpose.



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EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR CYBERSECURITY (ENISA)

The 2025 ENISA Threat Landscape shows that threat groups are reusing tools and techniques, introducing new attack models, exploiting vulnerabilities and collaborating to target the security and resilience of the EU's digital infrastructure.

The latest *ENISA Threat Landscape 2025* report analyses 4,875 cyber incidents recorded between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, offering a detailed view of the evolving EU cyber threat ecosystem. This year's edition adopts a more threat-centric approach, underscoring the growing interconnection between cyberspace and critical infrastructures.

DDoS attacks dominated, accounting for 77% of reported incidents, largely driven by hacktivists. Ransomware remains the most impactful threat, while state-aligned actors expanded cyberespionage against public administrations. Phishing (60%) and vulnerability exploitation (21.3%) were the main intrusion methods. Nearly 80% of incidents were ideology-driven, linked to hacktivist campaigns. Public administration was the most targeted sector (38.2%), followed by transport (7.5%), digital infrastructure (4.8%), finance (4.5%) and manufacturing (2.9%). Over half of the incidents affected entities covered by the NIS2 Directive, reaffirming its strategic importance.

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGION

Opinions on internal security and international partnerships advance

Members of the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX) on 1 October adopted recommendations on the European Union's internal-security strategy and on the Global Gateway initiative that now guides the EU's development cooperation



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The Committee of the Regions (CoR) CIVEX commission has emphasised the critical role of local and regional authorities in implementing EU security, development, and geopolitical strategies. When reviewing the ProtectEU strategy, CIVEX members stressed that municipalities and regions are “on the frontline” of prevention, detection, and resilience during security crises. They called for stronger involvement and access to funding, training, and coordination tools to ensure the strategy’s effectiveness. Rapporteur Anne Rudisuhli (FR/Renew Europe) highlighted that Europe’s security depends on equipping territories with the resources and expertise to act effectively. The opinion will be considered at the CoR plenary in December.

On the Global Gateway initiative, CIVEX adopted a draft opinion recognising that local and regional authorities are key to the EU’s development and investment goals. The opinion calls for their full integration into governance and project implementation, as well as a dedicated budget line in the next Multiannual Financial Framework for city-to-city and region-to-region partnerships. Rapporteurs Jaume Duch Guillot (ES/PES) and MEP Hildegard Bentele (DE/EPP) underlined that local actors bring legitimacy, proximity to citizens, and administrative capacity, enabling the EU to achieve tangible results. The opinion will also be sent to the December plenary, coinciding with Forum 2025 – Cities and Regions for International Partnerships.

Regarding the EU’s strategic approach to the Black Sea region, CIVEX members stressed that local and regional actors are essential to implementing measures across the strategy’s three pillars: security, sustainable growth, and environmental resilience. The region, encompassing Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and five non-EU countries, was described as a strategic crossroads for trade, energy, connectivity, security, and the rules-based international order. Rapporteur Blagomir Kotsev (BG/Renew Europe), mayor of Varna, will present the opinion to the CoR plenary in March 2026.



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Across these initiatives, the CoR highlights that the success of EU strategies depends on empowering local and regional authorities, ensuring that high-level policies translate into concrete results on the ground.

Women's rights: local and regional authorities are pivotal to speed up progress

Local and regional leaders urge the EU to recognise them as strategic partners in the new Gender Equality Strategy and to integrate gender equality in the next EU long-term budget 2028-2034 to advance women's rights across all EU regions.

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) reaffirmed gender equality as a fundamental European value, calling for its systematic integration across all EU programmes under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2034), including cohesion and recovery funds. Members emphasised gender-responsive budgeting and objectives to ensure that regional development strategies actively reduce gender gaps and promote social justice, particularly in rural and less-developed areas where women face multiple barriers.

Regional and local leaders urged the European Commission and Member States to adopt a consent-based definition of rape, in line with the Istanbul Convention, and to guarantee access to quality healthcare and sexual and reproductive rights, including abortion, across the EU.

The debate also highlighted the need to ensure women's full participation in the economy, politics, and society, through measures such as equal pay, equitable distribution of care responsibilities, support for female entrepreneurship, and inclusive education. Accountability mechanisms, such as gender equality observatories and regular gender audits, were identified as essential to translate commitments into measurable progress.



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Regions and cities demand European preference for defence strategy that strengthens security

European regions and cities are at the frontline of current security challenges, including the consequences of the war in Ukraine, pressure on external borders, and hybrid threats. Recognising the importance of local resilience and preparedness, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) debated and adopted an opinion on European Defence Readiness 2030. The opinion emphasizes that Europe's defence ambitions must enhance overall security while supporting and empowering local industries. CoR members stressed the importance of a strong European preference, ensuring that investments in EU security benefit local industries and reinforce European sovereignty, with at least 70% of defence component costs originating in the EU and design authority retained within the Union. Local leaders also emphasised the need to preserve regional cohesion while strengthening the defence industry, maintain competitiveness of territories hosting defence clusters, and avoid fiscal instability. They proposed extending the defence spending path to 2032 and creating a new system of genuine EU own resources to provide stable, sustainable financing for security and defence.



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