



The News

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by Emma Phillips

Emmanuel Macron believes that Europe is “entering a new era” and that it would be “folly” to remain a “spectator” to the threat from Russia. The president made a televised address to the nation last night, with fifteen million tuning in. Macron stressed that no tax increases will be introduced in France, but that Europe needs to continue assisting Ukraine, especially as it now uncertain that the US will “remain by our side”. The president pointed to potentially extending France’s protection of its nuclear arsenal to European allies, as well as strengthening the defence budget. An EU summit is being held today on the matter of European defence, which Ukraine president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy will be attending. Member states will potentially be able to increase their military spending without it having any effect on their deficit.

An alleged accomplice of the convicted drug trafficker Mohamed Amra is due to be transferred to France today. The suspect, who is believed to have been the head of the commando that perpetrated the deadly attack against the prison guards leading to Amra’s escape, was arrested in Spain in late February. A total of 19 suspects are facing criminal charges in Paris in this case.

The special consultation between employers and unions that has been dubbed the “pension conclave” is meeting for the second time today. The social partners will be tackling the thorniest issue related to pensions, increasing the retirement age to 64. Negotiations are continuing without the union Force Ouvrière, whose representatives stormed out of the first meeting of the conclave, branding the process a “farce”.

And finally, today will see the launch of the European Space Agency satellite launcher Ariane 6 from the Kourou base in French Guiana. Ariane 6 had been scheduled to blast off on Monday but an anomaly on the ground meant that the launch was delayed. Today, Ariane 6 should put a French military satellite into orbit at an altitude of around 800 kilometers above the Earth, as Europe seeks to reduce its reliance on the United States for security and secure independent access to space.