

LA LIGNE FINE REVIEW

August 2026



From rule to effectiveness: capacities, dependencies and room for manoeuvre

Between available power and real capacity, between legal norms and implementation, between apparent stability and sustainable settlement, several studies published by La Ligne Fine - Institut during the month of August question the same gap: that which separates the existence of an instrument from its concrete effects.

This question crosses international relations as well as public action. Protecting maritime routes is no longer just about controlling the seas; belonging to an alliance does not guarantee, on its own, a credible defence; imposing sanctions does not mean obtaining a concession; stopping the fighting is not enough to build peace. On another note, the Taquet law also shows how much the recognition of new rights depends on the institutional capacities necessary to make them effective.

The Country Briefs published in parallel extend this reflection to the level of States and territories: Algeria, Germany, Andorra, Angola and Anguilla present very different configurations, but all in their own way raise the question of the conversion of resources, openness or stability into sustainable room for manoeuvre.



THE PAPERS OF THE FINE LINE

Les Papiers de La Ligne Fine n°5 — Global maritime security: protecting flows in a space that has become strategic again

Written by Alek UMONT

Maritime security can no longer be reduced to the protection of ships against piracy or to confrontation between naval forces. This Paper proposes to understand it as the protection of a global system of circulation combining trade routes, straits, ports, submarine cables, pipelines, digital infrastructures and private supply chains.

This approach shifts the analysis from the abstract control of maritime spaces to the effective continuity of flows. A localized disturbance can now produce economic consequences well beyond the area concerned, while the multiplication of critical infrastructures makes it impossible for navies to protect them in their entirety by navies alone. The text thus defends a broader conception of maritime security, articulating naval power, logistical resilience, intelligence, diversification of routes, international cooperation and the involvement of private operators. The central issue becomes less that of eliminating all risks than of preventing a local vulnerability from interrupting a function that has become vital.

The Fine Line Papers n°6 — Contemporary Military Alliances: From Solidarity to Strategic Interdependence

Written by Alek UMONT

Contemporary military alliances go far beyond the traditional promise of mutual defense. They now permanently organize intelligence, planning, infrastructure, industrial chains, technical standards, and sometimes nuclear deterrence.

The paper analyzes this transformation from the point of view of the coexistence of traditional alliances, technological partnerships, intelligence networks, bilateral agreements and more flexible coalitions. Their power depends less on the legal formulation of commitments than on the depth of the capabilities pooled and their interoperability. However, this integration produces its own dependencies: critical components, digital infrastructures, logistics, intelligence or technological standards become as much shared resources as possible constraints. The analysis thus leads to a shift in the question: it is no longer enough to know which alliance a state belongs to, but what function it controls and what autonomy it retains when the interests of its partners diverge.

The Fine Line Papers n°7 — Frozen conflicts: stability without peace

Written by Alek UMONT

The expression "frozen conflict" suggests a situation that is at a standstill. On the contrary, the paper shows that these conflicts continue to evolve when large-scale fighting ceases: administrations are consolidated, dependencies are formed, populations move, economies are reoriented, and de facto borders are institutionalized.

The cessation of hostilities can thus produce operational stability without resolving disagreements over sovereignty, security or the status of territories. In some cases, this indeterminacy even acquires a strategic usefulness for certain actors and becomes a lasting means of influence or constraint. Time is therefore not necessarily working in favour of a settlement; it can increase the political and material cost of a future solution. The Paper thus invites us to make a clear distinction between the prevention of war and the construction of peace: preventing the resumption of fighting is a real result, but does not mean that the conditions for a settlement are progressing.

The Fine Line Papers n°8 — International sanctions: coercing without winning



Written by Violette MAZARD

International sanctions occupy an intermediate space between diplomatic inaction and the use of force. Asset freezes, trade restrictions, export controls or financial exclusions can inflict significant costs, but this capacity for economic harm alone does not guarantee political change.

This paper precisely distinguishes between the objectives often grouped under the term sanction: to signal a conviction, to deter, to reduce capacity or to obtain a concession. Their effectiveness depends on the structure of the targeted regime, the possibilities of circumvention, the cohesion of the coalition that applies them and the control of financial, technological or commercial networks that are difficult to replace. Above all, a truly coercive logic assumes that an identifiable outcome remains: if the target believes that the measures will be maintained regardless of his or her behaviour, the incentive to give in decreases. Sanctions thus appear as an instrument that must be calibrated, reassessed and articulated to a political strategy rather than as an end in themselves.

THE FINE MEMO

Memo 9/15 — The Taquet Law: Strengthening the Rights of Protected Children, Between Legal Ambition and Limits of Effectiveness

Written by Ismaïl BOUGHIOUL

Promulgated in 2022, the Taquet law strengthens several guarantees granted to children and young people supported by child welfare, in particular in terms of reception conditions, the maintenance of siblings and the care of certain young adults.

The Memo is less interested in an overhaul of the organization of child protection than in the shift that the law makes towards more precise legal obligations. However, this evolution reveals a fundamental tension: the requirements are defined at the national level, while their fulfilment depends largely on varying departmental capacities (available places, professionals, housing, support or financial means). The strengthening of a right is therefore not enough to ensure its effectiveness. It also requires questioning the institutional means enabling the public authorities to comply concretely with the guarantees it enshrines in the law.



COUNTRY FACTSHEETS

Country Factsheet n°5 — Algeria

Author: La Ligne Fine - Institut

Algeria is studied as a power with significant strategic resources (territorial depth, hydrocarbons, military capabilities and diplomatic positioning) but whose conversion into an economic and social power remains incomplete. Dependence on hydrocarbons, the constraints of the political model, the weakness of regional integration and the difficulties of integrating a young population limit this transformation. The country's trajectory thus depends on its ability to convert its energy, military and geopolitical rents into productive diversification, jobs, infrastructure and sustainable influence.

Country Factsheet n°6 — Germany

Author: La Ligne Fine - Institut

As the largest economy in the European Union and a central industrial power, Germany is facing the erosion of several foundations of its model: relatively cheap energy, export power, geopolitical stability and American security guarantee. The Country Profile does not describe a collapse, but a strategic readjustment. Economic stagnation, industrial transformation, Chinese competition, ageing and rearmament are forcing Berlin to rethink the conditions of its power. The question becomes that of its ability to transform the *Zeitenwende* and its economic resources into effective industrial, military and political capacities.

Country Factsheet n°7 — Andorra

Author: La Ligne Fine - Institut

Andorra offers another reading of power: that of a micro-state whose room for manoeuvre is based on adaptation. Its model combines tourism, services, finance, taxation and economic proximity with the European Union without being a full member of it. This success now produces its own constraints, particularly in terms of housing, labour, infrastructure and the mountain tourism model. The association agreement with the European Union thus crystallizes a broader trade-off between openness and preservation of autonomy, economic diversification and the absorption capacity of a small territory.

Country Factsheet 8 — Angola

Written by Violette MAZARD

Angola's trajectory is based on the stability rebuilt since the end of the civil war, oil and gas revenues and a growing desire for diplomatic projection in Central and Southern Africa. But this power remains vulnerable to the limits of a model that is still heavily dependent on hydrocarbons.

The Country Factsheet thus emphasizes diversification as a condition for consolidation: reducing dependence on rents, absorbing inflationary and unemployment pressures, and converting regional diplomatic weight into lasting influence. As the 2027 general elections approach, the ability of the political system to preserve its stability while meeting economic and social expectations is also a key factor in the country's trajectory.

Country Profile 9 — Anguilla

Author: La Ligne Fine - Institut

At the Anguilla level, the strategic issue is that of managing multiple dependencies: the British institutional framework, tourism, imports, transport infrastructure, international financial standards and climate exposure. But the territory also has its own margins for adaptation.

The new importance of the revenues associated with the ".ai" internet domain illustrates this ability to exploit a global intangible niche despite the narrowness of the local market. The



Country Brief thus describes Anguilla as a constrained but functional micro-sovereignty, whose viability depends on its ability to transform its sectoral advantages — high-end tourism, stability, services and digital rents — into economic, administrative and climatic resilience.

CONTRIBUTION AND COOPERATION

France's Digital Decade — [the YLM-RDF project's civic monitoring reports](#)

In August, La Ligne Fine - Institut also relayed the work published by the [Human Development Research Initiative \(HDRI\)](#) as part of the *Youth-Led Monitoring for a Resilient Digital France* project. These reports are not the Institute's own publications: they are official publications of HDRI.

Alek UMONT, President of La Ligne Fine - Institut, contributed as a consultant-researcher to HDRI, alongside Killian PAPELARD. The work focuses in particular on digital skills and inclusion, territorial inequalities, access to digital public services and the participation of young people and civil society. Their purpose is to compare the objectives of the European Digital Decade with their national implementation and the concrete experience of citizens.

A LINE OF FORCE

At very different scales, the work gathered in this edition poses a common question: **what transforms an intention, a resource or an institutional architecture into an effective capacity?**

A military alliance can be legally solid but strategically fragile if it does not have the logistical, industrial and technological chains that make the engagement credible. A sanction can produce economic losses without changing the political calculation of its target. A ceasefire can prevent war without bringing the parties closer to a settlement. A law can expand rights without the necessary means for institutions everywhere to guarantee them. Even maritime security depends less on theoretical control of the oceans than on the ability to maintain traffic when certain infrastructure or roads are disrupted.

The Country Factsheets extend this question. Having hydrocarbons, a powerful industry, an attractive tax system, political stability or a digital niche does not automatically produce autonomy. These resources only become strategic if they are transformed into sustainable economic, social, institutional or diplomatic capacities.

This is perhaps where one of the common lessons of this month lies: between declared power and exercised power, effectiveness remains a central political issue.

Find the publications and works mentioned in this edition on the website of [La Ligne Fine - Institut](#).

The Review reports each month on what the Institute publishes, examines and puts into discussion.

