



NIAS Area Studies EUROPE MONITOR

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An initiative of NIAS and KAS-India office

Cover Story

Europe: Heatwaves, Wildfires, Droughts, and Ice Melt in Alps

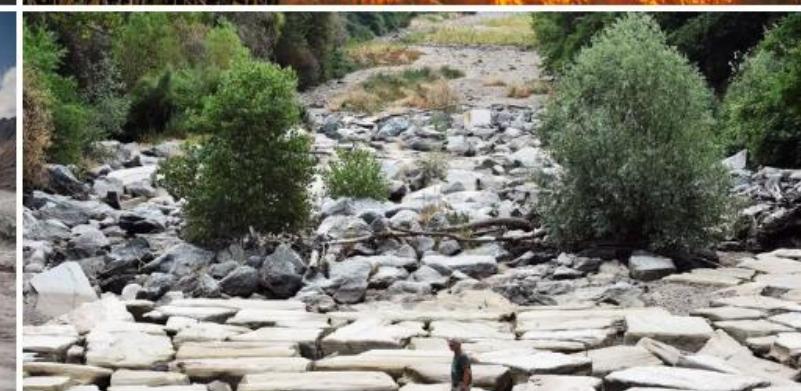


Image source (Clock-wise): 18 July, heatwaves in the UK, AP Photo/Matt Dunham; 15 July, wildfires in southwestern France, AP; 08 August, dry riverbed of the Sangone river, The Guardian; 22 July, The Pers Glacier in Switzerland, REUTERS/Arnd Wiegmann

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Global Politics is a primary focus of the NIAS Programme on Science, Technology and International Relations (STIR). The primary focus is on contemporary world affairs. The Programme publishes *The World This Week*, and *NIAS Fortnightly on Science Technology and International Relations*.

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As a part of pursuing global politics, the programme has started area studies. Europe is a part of the NIAS area studies initiative. With an aim to nurture a pool of scholars working on issues related to Europe, the scope of the studies would range from regional/sub-regional cooperation to new technology and innovations and include gender studies, migration issues, and climate change.

NIAS Europe Studies will focus on capacity building amongst the young scholars, expert lectures by prominent academicians and diplomats, monthly discussions on Europe, and a Monthly Dispatch – *Europe Monitor*.

About Europe Monitor

Europe Monitor is an academic initiative by NIAS Global Politics and the KAS India Office.

The Monthly is an integral part of NIAS Europe Studies. It includes focused commentaries on Europe, short notes, and daily updates on contemporary Europe.

Editor

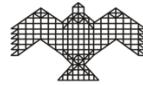
D. Suba Chandran

Assistant Editor

Padmashree Anandhan

Editorial Team

Sourina Bej, Rishma Banerjee, and Emmanuel Selva Royan



National Institute of
Advanced Studies
NIAS

About NIAS

National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) was conceived and founded in 1988 by the late Mr JRD Tata, who sought to create an institution to conduct advanced multidisciplinary research.

The objective is to nurture a broad base of scholars, managers and leaders who would respond to the complex challenges that face contemporary India and global society, with insight, sensitivity, confidence and dedication.



About KAS India Office

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation. Established in 1955 as "Society for Christian-Democratic Civic Education", in 1964, the Foundation proudly took on the name of Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

With 16 regional offices in Germany and over 120 offices abroad, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is committed to achieving and maintaining peace, freedom and justice through political education. KAS promotes and preserves free democracy, social market economy, and the development and consolidation of the value consensus. KAS also focus on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.

EM DAILY FOCUS



Source: Kay Nietfeld/dpa/Deutsche Welle/ PA, atlanticcouncil, Anne Sjöholm/Finnish Government, NATO, Sergey Kelin/Dreamstime/ SchengenVisaInfo, ERR

Europe Monitor

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COVER STORY

Europe: Heatwaves, Wildfires, Droughts, and Ice Melt in Alps

Padmashree Anandhan, Sai Pranav, Rishma Banerjee, and Rashmi Ramesh

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By Padmashree Anandhan

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Source: REUTERS/Alexander Ermochenko, REUTERS/BBC, UK Ministry of Defence/Twitter, Reuters photo/Daily Sabah, AP Photo-DailySabah, Weibo/SCMP

War in Ukraine section covers the everyday developments from Day 157 to Day 187 in four dimensions. First, The War on the Ground. Second, The Moscow View: Claims by Russia. Third, The West View: Responses from the US and Europe. Fourth, THE GLOBAL Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war.

By Padmashree Anandhan, Rishma Banerjee, Emmanuel Selva Royan, and Sai Pranav

EM SHORT NOTES



Source: gov.uk, AP Photo/Anis Belghoul, REUTERS/Robert Pratta/File Photo, REUTERS/Denis Paquin, Lisi Niesner/Reuters/The Guardian, REUTERS/Michael Kappeler/Pool

EM Short Notes provide a brief overview of the latest developments in Europe, and provides the sources from which they are compiled. The daily developments cover from the UK, western Europe, Nordic, Baltic, Balkans to the far east Russia.

By Padmashree Anandhan, Rishma Banerjee, Emmanuel Selva Royan, and Sai Pranav

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COVER STORY

Europe: Heatwaves, Wildfires, Droughts, and Ice Melt in Alps

Padmashree Anandhan, Sai Pranav, Rishma Banerjee, and Rashmi Ramesh

I Heatwaves

Since 1920's, Europe began to experience extreme high temperatures in the air, land, and sea surfaces leading to life threatening climate disasters such as heatwaves, wildfires, droughts and flash floods. In the present the extent of damages has scaled up causing severe challenges to lifestyle and European economies. The commentary aims to study the geographic spread of the heatwaves, tracing the highest occurrence in Europe since the 1980 and will provide the causes behind Europe's continuing heatwaves.

Geographic mapping

First record of high temperatures was seen in July following into August. Now, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) predicts the temperature to persist till October, marking the longest period of heatwaves since 1980. As per the weather anomaly chart of ECMWF, the temperature has increased to 10 degrees Celsius above average in (46) Portugal, (45) northern Spain, (40) western France, and southern England. With the hot air moving north, the Benelux countries, Baltic region, Ireland, (40.3) the UK, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, northern Italy, Switzerland and western Germany recorded six-degree Celsius high than the average temperatures. In case of the Northern Europe, it is expected to heat up by three degrees Celsius. As per European Space Agency using Sentinel 2 & 3 (Earth observatory satellite), separated air, and land surface temperatures and found that the land surfaced amounted for 55 degrees Celsius due to increasing weather and climate shifts. While the "slow-moving high pressure" pushes the hot air from North Africa, it sways into western and central Europe affecting the Benelux. The northerly winds from Scandinavian and southerly

winds from Ural Mountains have created heatwaves over Russia, extending to western and eastern Siberia. Overall, the western Europe, western Siberia, eastern Siberia and Russia are marked as four hotspots experiencing heatwaves through double jets from 2010-2020.

In terms of the sea surface temperatures, all five European seas, Black Sea, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean, North Sea and the North Atlantic began warming since 1870. Mediterranean Sea is observed to be the warmest of all. As per the Copernicus Ocean State Report 5, the Mediterranean Sea is most affected by marine heat waves as the area has experienced significant warming over the last decades. An increase in the temperature of the eastern Mediterranean Sea in 2019 contributed to a northern spread of invasive lionfish, Pterois miles, through the Suez Canal – an invasive migration that had relatively declined in 2018. As far as the Arctic Ocean, the surfaces have shown a slow heating trend, whereas the land surrounding the Arctic showed a faster trend in rising temperatures. Although the source link between the increasing sea temperatures and the adjacent effect on land is being studied, now scientists have only found the carbon sequestering capacity of the oceans to have lost its pace to keep up since 1990's, impact on the living species and the doubling marine heatwaves compared to land surface temperatures. Therefore, marine heatwaves have varying impacts on the growth, reproduction, and behavior of specific marine species, impacting their populations as well as their catches.

Recent occurrences

When it comes to Europe, in the 20th century, the extreme weather conditions are nothing new as it started in 1920, which was a dry autumn and a winter first affecting the water supply, agriculture, and livestock farming. This developed into wildfires, severe

drought and dry hazards in England, the Czech Republic and parts of central Europe. Such phenomenon continued through the summers of 2003, 2010, 2015. Later, with rise in global temperatures, soil moisture deficit and increase in GHG's turned the hot summer to occur frequently from 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2022. The first severe heatwave which began in 2003 recorded 35 to 40 degrees Celsius according to the UNEP data. It was caused due to anti-cyclone in the western Europe, which blocked the "rain-bearing depressions" that enter from the Atlantic Ocean. Thereby resulting in hot air across the Mediterranean, western, central and parts of southern Europe. The impact was majorly felt in agricultural production, Alpine glacier melting up to 10 per cent and energy needs. After 2003, 2015 was when the temperatures hit the peak, where the range increased from the 35 degrees margin to 36.7 degree Celsius, with 39.7 degree marked the highest in Paris.

All five European seas, Black Sea, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean, North Sea and the North Atlantic showed rapid warming from late 1970s. Between 1982 and 2018, Sea surface temperature increased by between around 0.3°C per decade, in the North Atlantic, and around 0.6°C per decade, in the Black Sea. Although the increasing trend is expected to go further, it is slow when compared to the air and land temperatures. The frequency and magnitude of marine heatwaves have increased significantly both globally and in European seas and is projected to continue, with increasing expected impacts on climate and ecosystems.

During 1925 to 2016, along with the increase in Sea surface temperatures, there was an increase in the frequency and intensity of marine heatwaves, in European seas. Which has resulted in ecological impacts, promoting harmful algal blooms, increased risks to human health, and aquaculture. For example, recent marine heatwaves led to vibriosis infections along the Baltic Sea and North Sea coasts. Marine heatwaves also affect the climate on land, with those in the Mediterranean Sea being thought to have contributed to amplifying heatwaves and heavy precipitation events over central Europe and triggering intense

weather anomalies. Which can be now seen in the southern France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain located facing the climate extremes.

Causes

Jet stream/double jets

The causal factors for the heatwaves and rising temperatures are mainly caused due to the increased human activities and rising global temperatures, but the high concentration of Carbon dioxide gases, flow of jet stream where the hot air from Africa, circulation of atmosphere and the ocean is attributed to Europe. As far as analysing the heatwaves, no two heatwaves were observed to be of same nature but differed in temperatures due to "upper level low-pressure air" which is called as the "cutoff low" where the cut off from a river of westerly winds, the mid-latitude jet stream, that circles the planet at high altitudes. Low-pressure zones tend to draw air toward them. In this case, the low-pressure zone has been steadily drawing air from North Africa toward it, thereby pumping hot air northward into Europe. A study published in Nature communications keeping Europe as the center of heatwave hotspot found that increased occurrence of double jet marking the extreme heat since 2003 heatwave. As per Observational and model-based studies have discovered the cause behind the raise in temperatures to be "blocking anti-cyclones," which act as high-pressure system creating double-jet stream. Such flow of double jets can soon become more common when zonal flows are weakened under Arctic amplification.

The scientists from Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research (PIK) were able to find out the reason behind 35 per cent of the extreme heatwaves in Western Europe, which were due to continuing double jets.

According to experts from ECMWF, heatwaves can be the result of a stationary high-pressure system with clear skies and weak winds. These conditions can create longer heatwaves, such as the recent one in mid-August," Florian adds. "The effect on near-surface temperature depends on how much energy is used to evaporate water from the ground and plants, and how much

is heating the air. If the soil is already dry or the surface is just concrete and tarmac, there is little cooling of the near-surface temperature due to evaporation. Instead, most of the energy will heat the air and thus increase the magnitude of the heatwave."

Rise in sea temperatures

The slow increase of water temperatures due to long-term anthropogenic change and increased occurrences of marine heat waves have been having devastating effects on local ecosystems. Marine heat waves have also been associated with the likelihood of extreme weather events, such as cyclones and heavy precipitation. The rise in ocean temperature is one of the major drivers for migration of marine species to higher latitudes. More subtropical and tropical marine species are replacing temperate water fish, reshaping fisheries and catch compositions. Mediterranean Sea being the warmest of all, single jets have been one of the causes for its rising temperatures and changes in the local land atmosphere along with its combination with soil preconditioning. Whether it is having a direct influence over rising land surface temperatures, Mediterranean Sea, influence on the moisture balance and its role in the regional hydrological cycle is substantial. Warmer Mediterranean SSTs lead to enhanced evaporation and moisture transport in the atmosphere. Therefore, making this region a major climate change hot spot for the coming decades.

II Wildfires

Mapping

Climate change has created heatwaves, drought, floods and wildfires across Europe. European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) rated conditions of 19 countries as extremely dangerous and Spain, Portugal and France as very hazardous. Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, and Greece are EUMED5 or EU Mediterranean region countries. An annual average occurrence of 50000 and wildfires have burnt an average of 480000 hectares of land per year from 1980 to 2009. These Mediterranean region countries are prone to wildfires from June until October yearly. The affected countries

are Greece, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, the UK, Turkey, Croatia, Romania, Germany, Austria, Slovenia and the Czech Republic.

Greece became the first victim of 2022's wildfires. Greece recorded its worst ever wildfire in 2021 that affected Evia. The first reported wildfire was on 04 June at Mount Hymettus, an Athens suburb of Ano Glyfada. Fires started to break out on 24 June at Mt Athos. The blaze then travelled to Schimatari, north of Athens, on 04 July. On 05 July, a large fire broke out at Porto Germeno, a seaside resort west of Athens. Deadly fires spread to Samos island, Feriza, Rethymno in Crete, and Mount Pentelli resulting in casualties.

Spain suffered with the greatest number of lands engulfed in fire. The troubles of Spain started even before the wildfires. Spain recorded one of the hottest temperatures in Europe due to heat waves. The province of Zamora, Castile and Leon, Galicia, Aragon, Madrid, and Castile La-Mancha were affected by the wildfires covering close to 283,000 hectares of land. The municipality of Ateca in the province of Zaragoza suspended all train services to Madrid, Catalonia and Aragon.

Portugal witnessed wildfires blazing across the country on 17 June. It started with Murca municipality in Northern Portugal. The fire spread toward Vila Pouca de Aguiar and Carrazedo de Montenegro. On 07 July, several fires broke out in the Leiria and Santarem districts and the Ourem municipality.

France had its share of wildfires beginning on 12 July. The affected areas were the southwest Gironde region, where 37000 people were evacuated in a month. The fire in the Gironde region has been reported as the biggest France has ever seen in its history. The wildfire also affected the South of Bordeaux region in southwestern France.

Turkey saw wildfires near the town of Marmaris in the Aegean province of Mugla on 13 July. Wildfires spread through sparsely populated across the region. The UK also suffered from heat waves and droughts. The intense heat led to breaking the record of having the highest temperature

in the country, 42.1 degrees Celsius, at Heathrow International airport. More than dozens of fires broke out in and around London.

Italy also witnessed an increase in the wildfire in its northeastern region near the boundary with Slovenia. The northern part of Italy faced an intense drought and heat waves which resulted in the drying of the Po River. Multiple wildfires were witnessed in the Kras region in Slovenia and Friuli Venezia Giulia Region in Italy as of 21 July. The Carso Fire in Italy started on 19 July and is located between Gorizia Town and Trieste City.

Causes

Immediate causes

Prolonged heat waves and drought across Europe are the leading causes of the continent's wildfires occurring in the continent. The intense heat waves and extreme drought has brought forth dry weather. The dry conditions gave rise to dry wind, spreading the fire across multiple locations. Dryness in the soil increases the chances of the spread of forest fires.

Accidental causes

Negligence of the people has also caused the rise in wildfires in 2022. An EU report mentioned that migration of the population towards urban areas leaving behind the rural regions, caused negligence of care in these regions. Urban migration has increased dried leaves and woods, dead trees and vegetation fodder for wildfires. The abundance of flammable materials has also increased the rate of spread of forest fires. In some cases, like near the Bordeaux region, a man was arrested on suspicion of arson which might have started the wildfire. In a similar case, a forest fire near Giorgio Armani's Sicilian residence, the cause of the fire is suspected to be arson.

Anthropogenic climate change

Climate change resulting from man's actions is also one of the causes of the increase in wildfires in Europe. A report by the UNEP found that the Mediterranean region gets warmer by 20 per cent more than the global average. Scientists have announced that extreme climate conditions will be a regular

as climate change has affected the world. Using fossil fuels and nonrenewable resources has increased the global temperature by one-degree Celsius compared to the 1990 world temperature. Climate change has led to intense heat waves, droughts and wildfires.

Impacts of the Wildfires

First, wildfires can result in loss of life or impact public health, and cause economic, environmental, property, and infrastructure damage. Besides increasing air pollution, wildfire smoke can hurt the eyes, irritate the respiratory system, and worsen chronic heart and lung diseases. Smoke may also worsen symptoms for people with pre-existing respiratory or heart conditions. People and wildlife may also suffer burns and trauma.

Second, increased soil erosion is likely across burned scars during bouts of rainfall due to loosened soil and loss of vegetation. Power outages are possible in places due to damaged substations and transmission lines. Intentional power cuts may also be necessary to prevent infrastructure damage or help in preventing the spread of fires.

Third, supply chain disruptions can occur, especially if wildfires burn across highways and roads or approach large population centers. Wildfires can also lead to evacuations, road closures, and ground transport diversions. Disruptions to arterial roads and the scarcity of alternative routes in some areas mean significant transport disruptions will increase. Due to their relative inaccessibility, roads in remote regions are likely to be disrupted for more extended periods than urban roads.

Fourth, low visibility from smoke and possible ashfall could contribute to traffic delays and congestion and prompt short-notice flight disruptions if wildfires occur near airports. Railways can also experience occasional cancellations of services and long waits.

Fifth, wildfires can destroy crops and livestock, resulting in economic losses. Businesses are also expected to be adversely affected by supply chain disruptions,

especially if they require the transportation of perishable goods.

III Droughts

Since May 2022, Europe has been facing several climatic extremes, with heatwaves, wildfires, drought conditions, and flash floods reported across the continent. Drought conditions have affected the continent since the beginning of 2022, but it is now expanding. According to the researchers at the European Drought Observatory, the combined drought indicator (CDI) shows that 47 per cent of Europe is under "warning conditions" and 17 per cent is under "alert conditions". The European Commission Joint Research Centre (EC-JRC) has warned that the current drought could be the worst in 500 years.

Mapping

Drought hazards have been increasing in Central and Southern Italy, Southern Greece, Spain, Portugal, France, Western Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Romania, Hungary, northern Serbia, Ukraine, Moldova, Ireland, and central and southern UK.

The Po River is under the highest drought severity in Italy, where water levels are seven feet lower than usual. Italy's Prime Minister Mario Draghi described the situation as the "most serious water crisis in 70 years". To compensate, more water from Lake Granda was allowed to flow out to local rivers but even that had to be stopped when the lake's water level reached just 32cm above the water table. Drought emergencies have been declared in five Italian regions along the Po basin, home to nearly 30 per cent of Italy's population.

The Iberian Peninsula comprising Spain and Portugal has been severely affected too. In Spain, reservoirs were at 40 per cent capacity by the end of July. The volume of water stored in reservoirs is currently 31 per cent lower than the 10-year average. Such is the drought in the country that a prehistoric stone circle called the Spanish Stonehenge has emerged on the Valdecanas

reservoir. In Portugal, the water reservoirs that store hydroelectric energy are at less than half the average of the last five years. Water for irrigation has also been affected.

In France, around two-thirds of the country is under a crisis alert. French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne reported that July 2022 was France's driest month in 60 years. 100 villages have run out of water and depend on water supply trucks. On 05 August, an inter-ministerial crisis unit was set up to mitigate the potential crisis. The agricultural ministry said that the corn harvest has been affected due to water scarcity and is expected to be 18.5 per cent lower than in 2021. Even though Europe is anticipating an energy crisis, nuclear power stations are reducing their outputs. High water temperatures and low flows have affected their ability to use river water to cool the plants.

In Germany and Netherlands, the Rhine River has reported such a low water level that freight is being loaded to only 30-40 per cent of the capacity to avoid running aground. The Rhine is the main artery for shipping in the two countries, and thus, low flows severely impact commercial navigation and the logistics sector. In the Netherlands, dike stability and water distribution have also been affected.

In the UK, July was the driest month since 1935, with only 35 per cent of the average monthly rainfall. The reservoirs are at a 25-year low; on 12 August, a drought was declared in 8 of the UK's 14 environment agencies.

Recent occurrences

Studies show a robust greenhouse-gas-forced temperature change in temperatures in the first half of the 20th century (1900-1949). Observational datasets confirm that human activities affected the tendencies of droughts across Europe during this time.

The major drought in this time frame occurred in 1921 and 1947. In 1921, the drought was driven primarily by a significant rainfall deficit. The worst hit area was the triangle between Brussels, Paris, and Lyon, and a vast stretch of the continent, from Ireland to Ukraine was also affected. It

impacted water supply, agriculture and livestock farming. The drought of 1947 was of exceptional severity and spread across Central Europe. It originated due to an anticyclone over Central Europe and the ridges of high pressure extending over the region. It led to a terrible harvest of cereals and other crops.

However, in the mid-20th century (1950-1980), a decrease in drought tendency is revealed, and greenhouse gases are seen to have a lesser impact on sporadic dry spells across Europe. Increased aerosol pollution and frequent volcanic eruptions also blocked sunlight and induced more rainfall than the average. The major drought that affected Europe during this time was 1975-76. This was brought about by a relatively dry, mild winter with below-average precipitation. The precipitation deficit developed during spring and summer over Western Europe, centring in northwest France and southeast England. While the drought in 1975-76 was not the only one in this time frame, the remaining recorded ones were lesser in intensity and extent and had faster turnaround timelines.

In the later part of the century (1980-2000), an increased compound influence of greenhouse gas on droughts is noted again. The major drought incidents in this time frame started in the winter of 1989 and 1991. The drought conditions that affected the Iberian Peninsula in 1989-90 were less severe in intensity, but they heralded dry conditions that prevailed over Europe throughout much of the early 1990s. This event had two peaks, one in the spring of 1989 and the next during the summer of 1990. While the former was mainly restricted to Spain and Portugal, the latter expanded north and westward to affect southern France. From 1996-1997, the drought began with meteorological shortages in Great Britain and expanded over south Scandinavia, Denmark and northern Germany. It started with a dry winter and reduced available water for Europe in the early spring.

In the 21st century, droughts have been a common occurrence across Europe. These droughts have been regarded as

exceptionally severe and linked primarily to increased temperature, heat waves, and a lack of precipitation in the summer months. 2003, 2015, and 2018-2019 saw the most intense drought events in this time frame, other than the ones currently affecting Europe.

In 2003, the drought resulted from increased evapotranspiration due to significant precipitation deficits with heat extremes. Due to the drought, crop yield suffered significantly, and low discharge levels of rivers were reported across Europe. In this case, the drought conditions expanded rapidly because of the persistent blocking of the high-pressure pattern that lingered over Western Europe. From 2004-2007 several parts of Europe underwent drought conditions. While the intensity was considerably lower in Western Europe, like France and the UK, this episode is considered one of the worst drought events for Spain and Portugal. It affected hydropower and crop production severely. Such was the disaster in Portugal that the country declared a "calamity status", a temporary "Drought Commission" had to be established.

In 2015, over 50 per cent of Europe was affected by severe drought. It developed rapidly over the Iberian Peninsula, France, southern Benelux, and central Germany in May. It reached peak intensity and spatial extent by August, affecting especially the eastern part of Europe. Over the summer period, four heat wave episodes were associated with persistent blocking events.

The 2018-2019 drought was due to extremely high temperatures and increased evapotranspiration rates. Record-breaking high temperatures reached the otherwise cool and humid northern regions, and the compound hot-dry event led to major impacts in north-central and north-eastern Europe, particularly affecting agriculture, livestock farming and forestry as reported for Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, and eastern France. The propagation of the meteorological drought resulted in low reservoir levels and river discharge, which

impaired public water supply, leading to partial shutdowns of nuclear power plants and triggering massive fish deaths. In contrast to central and northern Europe, the western Mediterranean countries experienced above-average wet conditions in 2018. Opposite to 2018, the 2019 drought was centred on eastern Germany, the Czech Republic, and Poland before spreading westward.

It can thus be noted that regional droughts are a regular occurrence, especially in Southern Europe. However, the extent of the dry spell in 2022 is showing signs of being exceptional.

Tracing the causes

First, Europe's current weather and wind patterns. The jet stream current usually brings the wet Atlantic winds to Europe. However, the lessening of temperature differences between regions has weakened the intensity of the stream. Thus, instead of bringing in moisture-laden winds, a weak or unstable jet stream is bringing hot air from North Africa into Europe, leading to more intense heat and drought. Moreover, most of the continent has noticed high mid-tropospheric pressure anomalies, which are associated with heatwaves and droughts. These steer away continental weather systems that bring moist and cool air.

Second, prolonged high temperatures and wildfires. The droughts are both a cause and an effect of the sweltering summer in Europe. Hot weather dries up the landscape, which dries up the atmosphere and makes the air easier to heat up. As evapotranspiration increases, high-pressure 'heat domes' are created that deflect precipitation, thus enhancing the severity of droughts.

Third, climate change, global warming and anthropogenic causes. Climate change has increased Europe's average temperature by 1.9 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels, which is faster than the world average. As a result, rainfall patterns are shifting, whereby they occur in shorter and more intense bursts, often not in unity with the monsoon season. Thus, non-perennial rivers do not replenish their water

levels, and water retention in the soil also becomes difficult. Absorption of this water to fill the underground water table also becomes difficult, thus exacerbating agricultural drought. The rise in temperature evaporates more water, therefore drying up land further. This climate change has also been caused by human behavior in the form of industrialization, fossil fuel use, and increased water demand for civilizational use has also exacerbated the anomalous weather patterns. Though human activity has not been an immediate trigger for the 2022 drought, the effects accumulate and compound over the years to have an adverse impact on the environment.

While droughts have been a regular occurrence in the history of Europe, the current one persisting over an extensive part of the continent is showing signs of being intense and long-lasting. The 2022 drought is exacerbated by the climate anomalies like heatwaves and wildfires that Europe is experiencing. This has increased the demand for water, which the continent is not equipped to provide. This drought, especially amidst an impending energy crisis, will be brutal for Europe to mitigate.

IV

Ice Melt in Alps

Mapping

The recent heatwave in Europe has resulted in the Alps glaciers melting at an unprecedented rate, since monitoring began 60 years ago. Rapid melting is seen in the Alps in Switzerland, Italy and Austria. Due to unusual heat in the Alps, the freezing level or the zero-degree isotherm was established at an altitude 5,184 metres in Switzerland, against the normal level at 3,000-3500 metres in summer. The Alps are increasingly vulnerable due to climate change combined with their smaller size and thinness.

Causes

Global warming or the long-term heating of the earth's surface has both natural and anthropogenic causes. However, the latter has expedited the process, with the planet's

average temperature now increased by 1.1 degree Celsius.

The previous winter witnessed below average snowfall, which now combined with the early heatwaves in June and July exposed the glaciers to direct sunlight much before the end of summer this year. Andrea Fischer, a veteran glaciologist studying the Alps, and the vice director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research at the Austrian Academy of Sciences remarked that "...this year is outrageous compared to the average of the past 6000 years..." could not have imagined a more dramatic melt as this summer. The melt has occurred in the early months of summer and the glaciologists express their concern over the rate of melt in the forthcoming two summer months.

The 2019 IPCC report said that with the increasing greenhouse gas emissions, the Alpine glaciers are expected to lose more than 80 per cent of their current mass by 2100. The glacier retreat is bound to happen despite any climate action to limit the warming to 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius.

Impact

First, the possibility of disasters. Increasing temperatures are turning glaciers into lakes and raising the possibilities of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF). In 2018, Lenk, a municipality in Bern, Switzerland was flooded as the Faverges Lake burst open, forcing the authorities to swiftly evacuate people. GLOF can become more common as temperatures are on the rise. Thawing permafrost has increased the cases of rock sliding and landslides. In early July, the collapse of a glacier on the Mount Marmolada in the Italian Alps, created an avalanche that killed 11 hikers. Italian authorities have confirmed that the incident is a climate change-driven disaster.

Increased chances of disasters and reduced snow cover in the early months of summer is now having a negative impact on the tourism sector, particularly on the famous Alpine hiking routes.

Second, the impact on science. Diminishing alpine glaciers have uncovered human remains, a mummy and remnants of a wreckage. Human skeletal remains were

found on the Chessjen glacier and Stockji glacier in the Swiss alps. On 4 August, debris from a plane crash was found on the Aletsch glacier, and an investigation has revealed that the plane crashed on the glacier on 30 June 1968. An approximately 500-year-old mummy of a chamois, a goat-antelope is one of the intriguing uncovering on the melting Austrian Alps. Albert Zink, the head of the Institute for Mummy Studies at the Eurac Research in Italy said that "with the melting of the glaciers, there should be more of these findings, maybe also other humans showing up in the ice."

While the findings have a positive impact on science and discoveries, the loss of glaciers and the fast rate of melting is resulting in loss of precious data. The cryosphere contains frozen vegetation from the past that can be carbon-dated. Estimation of the age of the materials will also help in knowing more about the ice, its formation and paleoclimate. Rapid loss of ice can mean loss of data required for scientific studies.

Third, the changing borders. Climate change has a long-known connection to geopolitics. The realist notion of static geography is challenged by climate change that has the ability to change borders. The recent glacier retreat in the Alps has shifted the border between Italy and Switzerland. In recent years, the flow of the water sourced from the melting Theodul Glacier has significantly modified the border. The Rifugio Guide del Cervino, an Alpine refuge for visitors and hikers built originally in Italy at an altitude of 3480 metres has two-thirds of its property on Switzerland's territory, prompting the two countries to intensify their diplomatic efforts to demarcate the international border.

About the authors

Padmashree Anandhan, is a Project Associate at the School of Conflict and Security Studies, NIAS.

Sai Pranav and Rishma Banerjee are Research Assistants at the School of Conflict and Security Studies, NIAS.

Rashmi Ramesh is a doctoral student at the School of Conflict and Security Studies, NIAS.

COMMENT

Who will be the next UK prime minister: Liz Truss v. Rishi Sunak

By Padmashree Anandhan

The UK faces the deadliest challenge of economic shock over the leadership contest

When the contest for leading the conservative party began, there were eight party leaders from different backgrounds competing for the UK prime ministership. After three rounds of voting, former chancellor Rishi Sunak topped the list followed by foreign secretary Liz Truss. With Truss cutting close, the voting proportion has switched in favour of Truss with Conservative party member's support, where the Opinium snap poll showed the lead of 47 per cent for Truss over 38 per cent for Sunak. The candidates will now involve in the campaign and debates, while the 175000 members vote which will be declared on 05 September. When it was to compete with Penny Mordaunt or Suella Braverman, Sunak had an easy majority in polls, but comparing Truss's record and reputation within the party, the possibility of winning for Sunak hangs low.

Liz Truss

Truss, who was nowhere in the top three of the first round, has now beaten Sunak due to her growing support within the party. The reasons are, that Truss is one of the long-standing members, and her promise of immediate tax cuts has turned the winds in favour. She assures to create "low-tax and low-regulation zones," to promote more innovation. Although the decision seems to be impracticable with energy prices rising and the economy at the edge of inflation, the tax cut will only aggravate the problem. For the Party members tax cut or the economic risk is not a concern because most of them are elite or financially secured, so the changes will only impact the middle and low-income groups people. In terms of climate, Truss vows to suspend the "green levy" which is part of the energy bill paid for social and green projects. She also supports boosting UK's nuclear energy through new

reactors, and power stations and disinvesting in solar farms by cutting subsidies. On Brexit, as a keen supporter of Boris Johnson has firmly vowed to take the new legislation proposal on altering the Northern Ireland Protocol. This assures the member support of those who were under Johnson. Till now she has got culture secretary Nadine Dorries, Brexit opportunities minister Jacob Rees-Mogg and former leadership rival Suella Braverman on her side.

Rishi Sunak

Rishi Sunak, a former chancellor who started the resignation row was one of the strong candidates topping the last three rounds of the Tory leadership contest. Unlike Truss, his tax cut is conditioned on bringing inflation in control. He also promises to remove five per cent VAT on household energy upon the standard price on bills goes above GBP 3000. Apart from this Sunak also vows for increasing corporate tax to 25 per cent from 19 per cent in April 2023 and to increase UK's defence expenditure. Sunak faces a barrier amongst the party to gaining support when compared to Truss due to his poor reputation in handling the economy and climate policy. Unlike Truss, Sunak has proposed for "energy profits levy" which has to be paid by the energy firms as a windfall tax to benefit households, pensioners, and those with a disability to meet their cost of living. In terms of climate change, he vows to replace onshore wind farms with offshore wind programmes. In terms of Brexit, Sunak holds a rigid stance on restructuring the EU laws and opposes Northern Ireland Protocol, as he argues it causes to the instability for UK's economy.

"Sunak had an easy majority in polls, but comparing Truss's record and reputation within the party, the possibility of winning for Sunak hangs low."

Who might lead the Conservative party?

The quest for a new leader before the end of term is not new for the Conservatives, it is the second time in the last six years, that the leader has been removed. Comparing both Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak, both candidates lack in addressing the climate and Brexit issues, which is observed as a common practice of the Conservatives. To get through the final voting from the 1,75,000 candidates, being in favour of a party is important, keeping Sunak and Truss on the start line, Sunak's work on the employment scheme during the pandemic earned his place, but his hard-line approach to taxes and cost of living are the factors reducing his chance to victory. Whereas Truss, who does not have a workable long-term economic plan has managed to showcase herself as a convenient leader to lead the party till the next elections.

What next for the UK?

Regardless of the next leader, UK's economy is already on the trajectory of an economic downturn. The growth line began to underperform from 2010 when the Tories took over. The slow recovery rate from the pandemic and unexpected prolonging of the Ukraine war has cost UK's economy further resulting in negative growth. In the 1970s the bank interest rates shot up and now the same is expected to happen with the borrowing costs. Truss has campaigned to look into "Threadneedle Street's mandate," which is used to meet the inflation target. Here the real problem is not only the war, and pandemics but also the impending unemployment rates which cannot be settled by cutting interest rates. Therefore, whether it is Truss or Sunak, the reviving of the economy into its track will be a long game for the UK. The selected leader will face a hard time proving until the 2024 elections.

Padmashree Anandhan, is a Project Associate at the School of Conflict and Security Studies, NIAS.

EM Daily Focus¹



Source: Kay Nietfeld/dpa/Deutsche Welle/ PA, atlanticcouncil, Anne Sjöholm/Finnish Government, NATO, Sergey Kelin/Dreamstime/ SchengenVisaInfo, ERR

KOSOVO

Kosovo's new rule provokes Serbians to protest once again

By Sai Pranav

On 01 August, Kosovo imposed a new rule where Serbia-issued license plates will no longer be valid to enter Kosovo, and for the vehicle from Serbia to enter, must have a Kosovo issues license.

Along with the vehicle licensing, it also mandated that Serbians cannot enter using Belgrad passports but by availing a separate document from the Kosovar police during entry and exit. The rule invoked protests and clashes between Albanian and ethnic Serbs in northern Kosovo due to the new rule and protestors blocked the roads using trucks and heavy vehicles. With protests escalating to a skirmish between the Serbs and the Kosovar police, the Kosovar authorities closed two border intersections in Jarinje and Bernjak. After the talks with the US and the EU, the implementation of the rule was postponed by a month, and the protestors withdrew.

Three issues

First, reluctance to recognize Kosovo. After the Yugoslavia war in 1998, the Albanian separatists wanted a separate state, but it was objected to by Serbians for two reasons. One, to protect the Serbians living in Northern Kosovo, and two, a threat to national interest due to separate governance in Kosovo. Other than Serbia, Russia, China, Greece, and Ukraine are also against Kosovo's sovereignty. Russia and China being the long-time allies of Serbia, due to their economical and infrastructure interests stand against Kosovo's decision. Whereas, the EU, Greece, and Ukraine which are geographically closer, fear of rising conflict and preventing such tensions in the region have not supported Kosovo.

Second, the ethnic composition in Kosovo. The Albanians separated from Serbia in 2008 to form their own state and self-govern. According to the 2011 census, Kosovo consists of a Muslim Albanian majority. The northern part was excluded from the survey but the next largest is the Orthodox Christian Serb ethnicity. The

¹EM Daily Focus is published every evening by the NIAS Europe Monitor team on the day-to-day contemporary developments. Visit <https://globalpolitics.in/europe/> to read it every day.

other ethnic groups include the Bosniaks, the Egyptians, the Askhalis, the Romas, the Turkish, and the Goranis. Most of the minorities are Islamic, but since they lack representation in Kosovo's Assembly, they are in support of Serbia. The Albanian Muslims are the majority in Kosovo when compared to the Serbian Orthodox Christian minority wants to eliminate Serbian influence in the northern part, where the Serbian minority is present. But, the unwillingness amongst the ethnic Serbians to be under Kosovo's governance instead of Serbia is the key reason for the ethnic protests and clashes. The rule on vehicle registration and new documentation requirements are the new points of contention.

Third, regional and international response. Kosovo is backed by the US, NATO, and the EU, meanwhile, Serbia is supported by Russia and China. Russia has been on the side of ethnic Serbians in Kosovo and has voiced out the injustice and discrimination faced by Serbians in Kosovo. The US deviated from the Kosovo issue due to the Ukraine war mediated talks along with the EU to extend the implementation of the new rule to September. NATO which has a continued its presence in Kosovo since June 1999 has stationed close to 4000 NATO's KFOR (Kosovo Force) on the shared border between Kosovo and Serbia. It will enforce only upon security instability. It has been hated by Serbians since the 1999 bombings. The war in Ukraine has indirectly escalated the issue.

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MOLDOVA

Moldova: Plans to establish a cybersecurity response team

By Emmanuel Selva Royan

On 29 July, Moldova is aiming to strengthen its cyber defence to shield its vital infrastructure from growing threats. Government officials are planning revisions to establish fundamental cybersecurity institutions and standards. A new national computer emergency response team (CERT), would be established by the end of the year to deal with cyberattacks on the government and other crucial services. The plans call for new legislation to be drafted following EU guidelines as it seeks the bloc's membership. The CERT collaborates with the Center for Combating Cyber Crimes, a law enforcement organization, in the following areas: capacity building by arranging joint cybersecurity workshops and training; combating cybercrime by reporting suspected events; and raising awareness by the organization of cyber security conferences. The Center serves as the primary point of contact for issues involving cybersecurity in the Republic of Moldova.

Challenges in building a response team

First, to find cybersecurity experts. To establish a resilient and proactive team, Moldova has to recruit only the experts and experienced in the field. However, Moldova which is among the poorest countries of Europe lacks the resources and funds to establish an effective system against an anticipated threat.

Second, integrating all infrastructure for cybersecurity. Until now Moldova could only respond to attacks on the government service website and not on the critical infrastructure like electricity boards and telecommunication. It could not address the attacks on its business and corporate firms

either. Moldova's new CERT should protect all essential services and infrastructure of both private and public actors.

Third, cybersecurity is stagnant despite foreign assistance. Moldova received funds from the US, EU and NATO over the years to upgrade its cyber security infrastructure. Since 2018, the US provided USD 11 million in cybersecurity and anti-cybercrime assistance to the country. However, Moldova has failed to build the systems and infrastructure needed for its operations. The global semiconductor shortage is one of the reasons for the expensive high-quality hardware needed to monitor cyber threats. Moldova needs to receive technical knowledge and assistance from US big-techs like Microsoft and Google in addition to the funds.

International assistance

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has attracted the attention of international actors to Ukraine's neighbors. Moldova which borders south of Ukraine has been receiving war refugees from the beginning of the invasion. Perceiving Moldova as a geopolitical advantage for the west against the Kremlin, the EU and NATO has assisted the country in building strong cyberspace.

Earlier this year, NATO launched a new Cyber Incident Response Capability for the Moldovan Armed Forces. Using funding from the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Program and collaboration with the NATO Information and Communication Agency (NCIA), this capability was developed throughout a multi-year effort. Which will facilitate speedy and effective recovery, reduce any harm brought on by cyber disasters, and assist stop similar occurrences in the future.

On 03 May 2022, the EU approved EUR eight million as a crisis response package to increase the Republic of Moldova's capacity to withstand the crisis scenario brought on by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Such initiatives assist Moldova's efforts to improve its information and cyber security through the development of a strong cyber security infrastructure. Another similar initiative of the EU increases Moldova's

resistance to misinformation by assisting independent media, the Republic of Moldova Audiovisual Council, and encouraging direct answers to misinformation.

On 27 May 2022, the US relaunched the US-Moldova Strategic Dialogue in light of the war in Ukraine. The governments reaffirmed their commitment to working together to advance the media sector, support independent media, and promote rights-respecting policies to counter Russian disinformation. They also acknowledged the critical role that free and independent media play in a democracy. The significance of enhancing cybersecurity capabilities was another topic of discussion between the US and Moldova. This included cooperation to carry out Moldova's goals for government cyber modernization, to identify and safeguard vital infrastructure. As part of its crisis response, Moldovan stressed the need to strengthen strategic communication capabilities to increase resilience and combat misinformation.

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REGIONAL

Visa ban on Russia: Who imposed, what is the impact

By Sai Pranav

Which EU member states have imposed the visa ban?

On 18 August, Estonia announced the ban on entry of Russians who hold, the Estonia issued Schengen visa for purpose of tourism, business, sports or culture.

Following Estonia's visa ban, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the Czech Republic imposed restriction on Russian tourists. The reason behind Finland and the Baltic states imposing a ban is due to huge influx of Russians. Since the west sanctions levied on Russians restricting their air and rail travel, the Russians began using the bordering countries, Finland and the Baltic States as gateway to fly into Europe. Although Schengen visas provided to Russians stand invalid, the humanitarian visas given to the dissidents are another way to get into Europe. Another reason for Finland and the Baltics to levy the ban is to target the Russian oligarchs from vacationing in Europe, while the war continues.

How is the ban affecting the Russians?

First, impact on wealthier Russians. The oligarchs who were using the Schengen visas are either the supporters of Russia's president Vladimir Putin or investors of European market trying to safeguard their savings. Although the travel ban targets those who come for recreational purposes, those who want to seek refuge might be endangered due to the strict restrictions.

Second, the isolation of Russia. The remained Russian population will be ostracized by the Europeans with entry ban. With such border restrictions, Russia is now being pushed to change its national policy and reduce the intensity of war Ukraine. Such steps will make the Russians to strive against the government upon the restrictions of their freedom of expression and to move across Europe.

Why does Germany's stance differ?

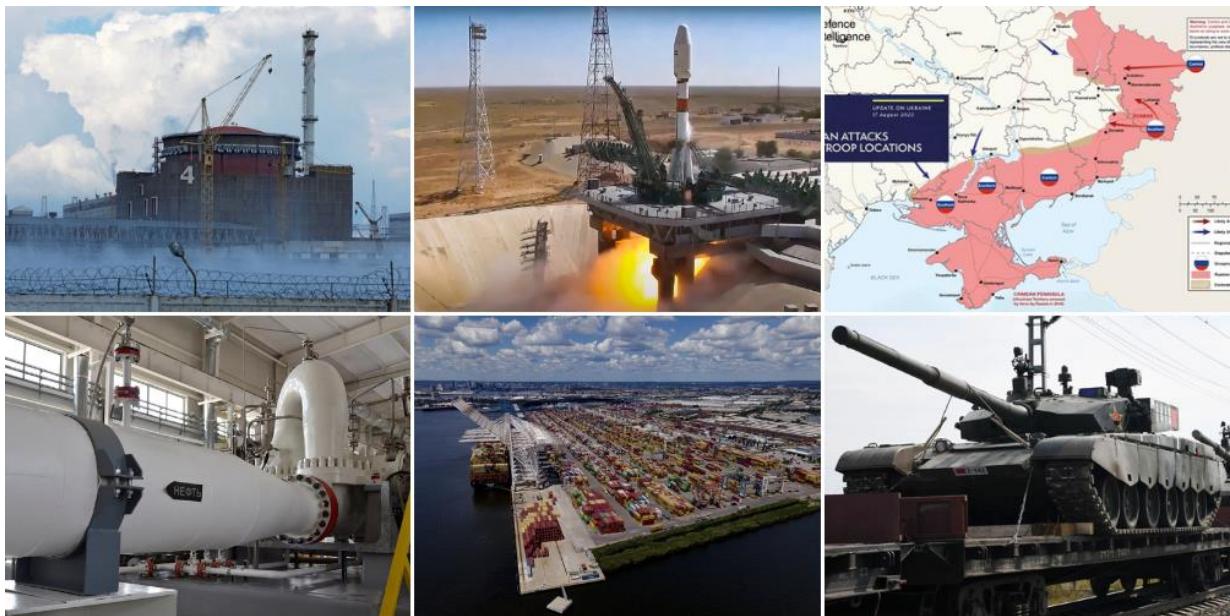
Germany which is one the major player in Europe has opposed the visa ban by Finland and the Baltics on Russian tourists. Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz stated that the ban on visas for Russians will cause more burden to those who oppose Putin's policies and the war. Since Germany considers the position of the vulnerability of the Russian people, it stands against the EU-wide visa ban.

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War in Ukraine: Daily Updates*

By Padmashree Anandhan, Rishma Banerjee, Emmanuel Selva Royan, and Sai Pranav



Source: REUTERS/Alexander Ermochenko, REUTERS/BBC, UK Ministry of Defence/Twitter, Reuters photo/Daily Sabah, AP Photo-DailySabah, Weibo/SCMP

War in Ukraine: Day 187

War on the Ground:

On 29 August, Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dmytro Kuleba asked Sweden to supply Archer artillery systems, RBS-70 air-defences to support Ukraine's artillery system. Highlighting the need in the briefing with the Sweden Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson, he thanked Sweden for granting SEK 500 million as security aid to Ukraine.

On 29 August, Ukrinform reported on the satellite image released by Maxar Technologies (US space tech company) of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. It also reported on the departure of three ships carrying grains from Odesa and Chornomorsk. In a statement released by the Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority: "Today, three ships left the ports of Odesa and Chornomorsk, with 40,000 tonnes of wheat and corn sent to the ports of Egypt, Romania, and Turkey. By the end of the day, three bulk

cargo ships are expected to arrive at the ports of Great Odesa to load wheat, sunflower, and corn." The ships which have left on 27 and 28 August are expected to head towards Libya, Spain, Italy, Israel, Germany, Egypt and Turkey with wheat, corn and oil.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 29 August, the Russian military reported on shooting down of a Ukrainian drone which was predicted to target on Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. According to the Defence Ministry, the attacks were seen as pattern to deter Russia-controlled facility. Till now the plant has been subject to repetitive artillery and drone attacks for past one week.

On the recent "counter-offensive" action of Ukraine, the Defence Ministry commented that Ukraine's offensive in the Kherson city was a failure and made no gains. As per RT's report, the Russian troops were seen to have

* War in Ukraine section covers the everyday developments from four dimensions. First, The War on the Ground: Second, The Moscow View: Third, Claims by Russia. Third, The West View: Responses from the US and Europe. Fourth, THE GLOBAL Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war. Visit <https://globalpolitics.in/europe/> to read them every day.

caused losses to the Ukraine force, with destroying 26 tanks, 23 armoured vehicles, and 560 troops.

On 29 August, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova denied the Russia talks over arranging the IAEA authorities visit to Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. She criticized the UN for being unconstructive: "Many of them are pretending to have been persuading Russia to organize this mission for weeks or pretending that they have finally broken down Moscow's resistance on this matter. It is an absolute lie, it is twisting of facts."

The Defence Ministry claimed on the continuing attacks in Novaya Kakhovka, in the Kherson region by Ukraine forces. With the shelling, the power and water supply has now been affected, with damage to hydroelectric power plant. Previously, similar attacks were reported by Russia on Ukraine using HIMARS systems to shell the city.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 29 August, Latvia's Ministry of Defense announced on further military aid to Ukraine amounting to EUR 300 million. The aid contains anti-aircraft missiles stinger, unmanned aircraft, self-propelled howitzers and anti-tank weapons. Along with the military aid, humanitarian aid is also been regularly supplied to Ukraine in the form of warm tactical clothing, footwear, and equipment for soldiers, and long-lasting food products.

On 29 August, Norwegian government proposed to provide NOK two billion for Ukraine to ensure supply of natural gas in winter. According to Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre: "Ukraine has asked Norway to take a leading role in helping to ensure that it has access to energy. We are now following this up, and plan to provide NOK 2 billion to enable Ukrainians to purchase natural gas this autumn and winter."

On 29 August, an informal meeting was held amongst the EU members in Hague Judgements Convention to discuss over "rule-based multilateral trade and

investment." The significance of joining the convention is seen as a way to boost European businesses, operate in different countries, wider trade and increased investment. Till now six states have signed the convention, with Ukraine joining the convention will serve as a base to benefit the citizens, businesses and international trade.

On 29 August, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in his address disclosed the supply of high-end weapon systems and defence equipment to Ukraine which includes "air defence equipment, radar systems, reconnaissance drones," accounting to EUR 600 million. He also mentioned the collaboration with the Netherlands on an initiative on delegating tasks to build Ukraine artillery and air defence.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 29 August, SCMP reported on the Russia's decision to launch Vostok 2022 war exercises from 01 to 07 September. The drills will involve China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Syria and many ex-soviet countries. It will mainly focus on sea communications, marine economic activity and ways to support ground troops in littoral zones.

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War in Ukraine: Day 185 & 186

War on the Ground:

On 28 August, Ukraine's Infrastructure Ministry issued a statement about the cancellation of international haulage permits with Moldova. From 01 September, transport companies in Ukraine will be allowed to enter the Republic of Moldova under new simplified rules. The Ministry said that the 'transport visa-free regime' had been introduced with EU countries earlier and Moldova was the only neighbor who had not fully canceled the permits. Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said: "... our task is to make the most of the new opportunities in order to strengthen the economies of our countries in the face of the threats posed by the Russian armed aggression and the Russian politics as a whole."

On 26 August, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry called on UNESCO for a response to Russia's threat to parents in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. The foreign ministry spokesperson, Oleg Nikolenko spoke about how Russia was issuing threats about enrolling children in these regions to schools seized and controlled by Russia. According to Nikolenko, Russian authorities said that they will strip the parental rights of those who refuse to comply with the directive.

On the same day, the Health Minister, Viktor Liashko reported on the purchase of iodine drug by the Ukraine government as a pre-emptive measure against an accident at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. The drug is seen as a way to prevent affecting the thyroid gland from radioactive fallout has been stored in nearby medical facilities.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 28 August, Russia's Defence Ministry reported that Russia's troops had hit nine Ukrainian command posts in the DPR, Zaporizhzhia and Nikolayevskaya regions.

Moreover, 52 artillery units and military equipment were also hit. The advances come after a few days of relative inactivity, where Russia's forces could not make significant headways in terms of gaining territory in Ukraine. The Ministry also reported on the Vostok 2022 strategic command and staff drills that are scheduled for 01-07 September. The drills will be conducted under the Russian General Staff, to practice for the military security within the Eastern Military District. Over 50,000 troops will be a part of the drill and 5,000 items of armaments and military hardware, in particular, 140 aircraft, 60 combat ships, gunboats and support vessels will be used. The Vostok 2022 drill will also check the military preparedness of the command centres in planning on-ground and maritime operations, providing logistical support and controlling battlegroups. Other than Russia, the countries participating in the drill are China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

On the same day, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova spoke about the visit by the IAEA inspectors to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. She claimed that Russia was hopeful about the visit provided the mission can come through "the destructive influence on this process by the Kiev regime." She also mentioned how Russia has been cooperating with the IAEA in planning the visit for months.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 28 August, Germany's Foreign Minister, Annalena Baerbock in an interview with *Bild am Sonntag*, reiterated Germany's support for Ukraine. In the eventuality of the conflict continuing for years, Baerbock said: "Unfortunately, we have to assume that Ukraine will still need new heavy weapons from its friends next summer." She also defended Ukraine's right to Crimea, referring to how the international community had not recognized the 2014 annexation by Russia due to violation of international law.

As per a document seen by the *Reuters*, Germany's ruling Social Democrats (SPD) party will propose the introduction of a discounted national transport ticket. The

proposal will promote measures to assist people to deal with the rising energy prices. Two such packages had been introduced earlier, whereby transport ticket across Europe is EUR nine. However, the new package will include a similar ticket, but as a less discounted price of EUR 49 per month. Moreover, the proposal also envisages incentives for citizens to save gas, the protection of middle and low-income households from forced evictions and expansion of renewable energies.

On 28 August, NATO chief, Jens Stoltenberg said spoke to Germany's *Welt am Sonntag* about NATO's presence in Arctic. He referred to Russia's increased military activities in the region and about it reopening their soviet-era bases to station new weapons like hypersonic missiles. On 26 August, the US too announced its plans to establish the post of a new ambassador-at-large position for the Arctic. Moreover, Stoltenberg's recent comments in Canada also indicate towards the West's aspiration to improve their geopolitical position in the Arctic region.

On 27 August, UK's Defence Ministry announced that it will be supplying Ukraine with underwater drones, to assist in clearing the mines along the coastline. These mines had been placed by Ukraine's navy as a deterrent to advancing Russian ships. Six mine-hunting vehicles which can operate in shallow waters to depths of up to 100 metres will be dispatched to Ukraine, to detect, locate and identify mines. The Royal Navy's Diving & Threat Exploitation Group in collaboration with the US Navy Sixth Fleet will be providing three-week training courses on operation of these drones.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 28 August, *Daily Sabah* reported on the status of the Black Sea grain initiative. Since August, over one million metric tonnes of Ukraine's grains have been shipped. According to the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul, 103 ships have set sail to or from Ukraine. As per the report, the WFP has also been successful in resuming wheat purchases from Ukraine to supply to the countries with the worst food security

issues. The UN Coordinator, Amir Abdulla mentioned the need for more shipments to make room in the silos for the next harvest.

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War in Ukraine: Day 184

War on the Ground:

On 26 August, Adviser to the Head of the President's office, Mykhailo Podolyak, claimed that Russia would not negotiate with Ukraine unless Soviet-era boundaries are re-established. In an interview with *Helsingin Sanomat*,

On 26 August, ISW reported on the lag in Russia's territorial advances. While Russia's troops had conducted successful ground attacks in Eastern Europe, it was seen to have failed in establishing control over any area.

Ukraine's Main Intelligence Directorate, Vadym Skibitsky said that Russia's authorities had completed the preparation for conducting referendums in occupied territories. Skibitsky however claimed that the chances of Russia successfully completing the voting process by the 11 September deadline are low due to internal friction between the administrations.

On the same day, the State Special Communications Service in Ukraine said that since the beginning of invasion, 1123 cyber-attacks have been launched against Ukraine. It reported that cybercriminals attack central and local government bodies most commonly, but commercial and financial institutions, security and defence agencies, and companies in the energy, transport, and telecom industries which are all part of the essential services, have also been targeted.

On 25 August, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke with US President Joe Biden and discussed the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Ukraine was temporarily cut from the plant's power grid and there has been a lingering threat of a nuclear fallout since there have been continuous attacks in the vicinity of the power plant. Zelenskyy thanked Biden for supporting the call to grant access to the IAEA mission to the plant. He also appreciated Biden for announcing the new USD 6 billion package through the World Bank system.

On 25 August, Ukraine's Agrarian Policy and Food Ministry released a statement on the agricultural production in Ukraine. Since February, 25.3 million tonnes of grains have been harvested, of which 18.8 million tonnes were wheat from 4.6 million and 5.5 million tonnes were barley from 1.6 million hectares. Peas, buckwheat, millets, and other grains and leguminous crops have also been harvested successfully. Despite the relentless offensive from Russia, the best

yields were seen in the Dnipropetrovsk region, Kirovohrad region, and Odesa region.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 26 August, Russia refused to agree to a statement of support for the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, after more than four hours of debate in the closing session. 151 countries had been negotiating on bolstering the arms control regime, but Russia dismissed the joint statement after four weeks of debate, over a clause about the control of the Zaporizhzhya power plant. The Russian delegation was the only one to object to the statement; they blamed the breakdown of the conference on Ukraine and its "protectors". The delegation also called the negotiation one-sided and staged a walk-out from the chamber.

On the same day, Energodar city's head of the military-civilian administration, Alexander Volga reported that there was no necessity to shut down the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Despite the continuous attacks on infrastructure facilities and storage sites around the plant, it was working as per its routine. Volga referred to the calls to shut down the plant after Ukraine was temporarily cut off from the power grid and mentioned how it was impossible to close the plant as it supplied power to the general energy system.

On 25 August, Belarus's President Alexander Lukashenko spoke about the how the warplanes in Belarus have been modified to carry nuclear weapons. He mentioned this as a follow-up of the decisions taken at a June meeting with Russia's President Putin about making Belarus's warplanes nuclear capable. Given how Belarus has been supporting Russia in the invasion of Ukraine, this was a step to not only bolster Belarus's security but also a part of enhancing Russia's influence in the region.

On 24 August, US Assistant Secretary of Energy, Kathryn Huff said that it will be difficult for US to stop Uranium imports from Russia. Speaking to *Washington Examiner*, Huff said that US sources 20 per cent of the low enriched uranium at existing US reactors from Russia. However, experts at the US

Energy Department are reported to be discussing on expansion of the domestic supply chain for Uranium, since Russia could be trusted.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 26 August, NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, in his visit to Canada, spoke about the strategic importance of the Arctic for the alliance. Alongside Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, Stoltenberg spoke about Russia's military build-up in the arctic and addressed how it is of increasing concern to NATO. Several Soviet-era military sites have been opened by Russia as they are using the region to test new weapons systems. Referring to the shifting geopolitical situation in Europe, Stoltenberg also issued a warning about a China-Russia strategic arctic partnership.

On 25 August, Hungary's foreign minister, Peter Szijjarto announced the construction of two nuclear reactors in collaboration with Russia's Rosatom as per a deal signed in 2014. Currently, Hungary has four operational reactors in Paks, outside Budapest which provide about 40 per cent of the country's electricity needs. The plant's production capacity will be doubled when the two 1200MW reactors become functional. Szijjarto heralded this development as an "important milestone" and said that this will help ensure Hungary's energy security in the long term.

On 25 August, officials from Turkey's foreign ministry met officials from Finland and Sweden in Finland. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's office said that the meeting is a step to intensify the cooperation between the countries and fight terrorism. The parties discussed ways to implement the trilateral memorandum, to further Sweden and Finland's NATO membership process. The states have decided to continue meeting frequently to discuss the security concerns raised by Turkey as a precondition to allow the Nordic countries to join NATO.

On the same day, UK's energy regulator, Ofgem announced price rise of energy in the UK by 80 per cent because of the price cap increased to EUR 3549 per year from 01

October. Energy prices across Europe are rising due to the energy crisis in the continent following Russia's war in Ukraine. Ofgem's CEO also issued a warning that price caps can rise further, thus compounding the cost-of-living pressure on households in the UK.

Belarus's Lukashenko mentioned the modification of Belarus's airplanes to carry nuclear warheads. This was decided in a meeting with Putin in June after Lukashenko expressed concerns about the increased military buildup in Poland. In June, the leader of Poland's Law and Justice Party, Jaroslaw Kaczynski had requested the US to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Poland as a measure against Russia's invasion of Ukraine and to increase the security of Eastern Europe. Putin had agreed to help modernize Belarus's Soviet-era fleet. While discussing NATO's military deployments near Belarus's border, Lukashenko mentioned how the modification process of the warplanes was "all done" and they would be ready to use in a few months.

On 24 August, a monument commemorating USSR's victory against Germany, in Latvia was taken down. The decision to demolish the Victory Park monument in Riga was taken by Latvia's parliament in May, becoming one of several countries like Poland and Estonia to remove Soviet monuments. The concrete obelisk topped by Soviet stars was built in 1985 when Latvia was still a part of the Soviet Union. After the monument was toppled, Latvia's foreign minister said that they were "closing another painful page of the history".

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 26 August, Amnesty International Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Marie Struthers released a statement on its position on Ukrainian prisoners of war. Struthers said that Amnesty is against the trials of the prisoners being conducted by the administration in the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. She also mentioned that such a procedure was "illegal and abusive," and that the Russia-backed authorities in LPR and DPR are not in a position to conduct such trials.

On 24 August, the UN Security Council convened on a proposal presented by Ukraine's envoy to the UN, Sergey Kislytsa. The proposal was to further the isolation of Russia and condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine. While representatives from several Western governments denounced Russia, only 58 ambassadors backed the proposal. In March, 73 per cent of the UN had voted for a non-binding resolution to condemn Russia.

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War in Ukraine: Day 183

War on the Ground:

On 25 August, the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) was shut down for a few hours for the first time since the start of its operation. The power grid supply was disrupted due to a forest fire at the ash pit of the Zaporizhzhia Thermal Power Plant (ZTPP). According to the Ukrainian energy corporation, Energoatom, ZNPP's power is supplied by ZTPP and works for the restoration of the connection between the nuclear reactor's power units and the Ukrainian electrical grid was ongoing.

On the same day, Spain's ministry of defence announced that Ukraine would receive an anti-aircraft battery and missiles, 1000 rounds of field artillery munitions, 1000 tonnes of diesel fuel, various armoured vehicles and 30000 winter uniforms from their government as military aid amidst the ongoing war.

On 24 August, Ukraine's ministry of environmental protection and natural resources reported that the country suffered damages to the environment worth UAH 395 billion at the hands of Russian troops during the six months of the invasion. The damages include UAH 106.3 billion to water resources, UAH 176.5 billion from air pollution and UAH 8.8 billion to the soil.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 25 August, the chairman of the Russian State Duma Committee on Foreign Affairs and a member of the negotiating group said that his country is ready to resume talks with Ukraine if its president Volodymyr Zelenskyy accepts the invitation. He also noted that the previous talks ended in an inconclusive way due to the uncertain and inconsistent position of Ukraine.

On 25 August, Russia's president Vladimir Putin signed a decree which stated that the country's military would increase its size by 137000 troops from 01 January 2023. The decree also instructed that the armed forces will be expanded to 1.15 million soldiers and that the cabinet allocate necessary funds.

On 26 August, Russia's Federal Agency of Air Transport (Rosaviatsiya) reported that the southern and central regions of the country would face an extension of restrictions on flights at 11 airports till 04 September 2022. Russia had previously closed off parts of its airspace to civilian aircraft on 24 February 2022 to help with the special operation in Ukraine.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 25 August, NATO announced on its impact assessment of the recent breach of military documents. During the hack the military documents such as the blueprints of the weapons used by NATO were sold out by the hacker group. As per NATO's statement: "We are assessing claims relating to data allegedly stolen from MBDA. We have no indication that any Nato network has been compromised." As per BBC report, the leaked data was found to be "NATO CONFIDENTIAL" or "NATO RESTRICTED" categorised as high classified details. It contained the details of Land Ceptor CAMM (Common Anti-Air Modular Missile) and MBDA Missile Systems. Russian cyber criminals have claimed to be behind the hack and selling of the data.

France's energy company "Total Energies" has come under accusation of France's transport minister for direct sale of fuel to Russia's air force. The accusation comes after the findings of the NGO Global Witness's investigation of a liquid gas condensate in Siberia being converted into a refinery for jet fuel by Russians. Which the Total Energies company controls and holds half of the field. Although the company has denied all the allegations, close to 40000 tonnes of fuel had been sent to Russia from February to July, as per Global Witness.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who will be stepping down soon, during his visit to Ukraine, stressed on the West to "stay on the course" although the energy bills, and living cost crisis. He also announced GBP 54 million as military package, which will include state of the art drones and loitering munitions to support Ukraine in surveillance and attacks.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

Citigroup bank announced the closure of the remaining branches and end its operations in Russia. The stop of the operations will mean termination for 2300 staff and transfer of western businesses out of Russia. On 25 August, according to Citi's chief executive Titi Cole: "It's clear that the wind-down path makes the most sense given the many complicating factors in the environment." Apart from employment loss, the customer deposit accounts, investments and credit bills are set to be affected.

On 25 August, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bachelet on the six months of Ukraine war, reported that close to 5587 civilians and 1000 children had been killed. On the Zaporizhzhia nuclear developments, she urged the parties to respect the international law and called for demilitarization of the nuclear plant.

On 25 August, the UN-partnered Cluster Munition Monitor civil society group released a report the threat posed by the cluster bombs on people. It found that since 24 February, 215 civilians had been killed from cluster munitions, it brought out the practicality of the Oslo convention which banned the production, use and transfer of cluster munitions. But Ukraine war has been an exception to it. According to US Executive Director of Humanity & Inclusion, Jeff Meer: "Warring parties must immediately cease all use of cluster munitions, which have already killed or wounded hundreds of civilians in Ukraine this year. States must pressure countries that use cluster munitions to stop."

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War in Ukraine: Day 182

War on the Ground:

On 24 August, Ukraine received 800 Revolver 860 drones from Taiwan. The drone can travel up to 20 kilometres within 40 minutes. Ukraine will also receive the Norwegian Black Hornet micro-drones worth NOK 90 million as military aid from the UK and Norway.

On the same day, the Deputy Head of the President's Office, Ihor Zhovkva, announced that Ukraine would accomplish all seven recommendations the European Commission gave by the end of 2022. He emphasized that Ukraine had completed appointing two members of the Supreme Council of Justice and finalizing draft laws on media and national communities. Ukraine had even received comments on the said draft laws that the Commission has seen. Registration of the draft law on the principles of selection of judges of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine was also completed with the Verkhovna Rada.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 25 August, Belarus' Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko met with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin at Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, to sign a new agreement on

cargo transportation along transport corridors passing through the territory of the two countries. Belarus' Prime Minister said that the deal also consists of cooperation with Russia in the areas of microelectronics, electronic engineering. Russia and Belarus will also sign a deal regarding the implementation of a single industrial policy in the Union State.

On the same day, the Union of Grain Exporters estimated a 20 per cent fall in Russia's wheat export in July-August 2022 compared to 2021. Russia exported 6.8 million tonnes of wheat in July-August 2021. Several factors from the functional, transportation and financial standpoints had led to Russia's problematic export of wheat. The sanction affects wheat export even though the West says it has not placed sanctions on Russian food grains. The sudden drop in price after the unblocking of the grain corridor will lead to lower prices for wheat amid a huge harvest.

Two Ukrainian Uragan multiple launch rocket system missiles, loaded with cluster bombs, struck a Stirol factory in the city of Gorlovka, starting an electrical fire which was eventually contained. The explosions caused by the rockets started a fire at the electrical substation inside the chemical plant and on the roof of the nearby Transammak factory. Stirol director Vasily Agarkov announced that there was no chemical leakage. It was the second shelling on Stirol in August.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 25 August, *Le Monde* published an article accusing French oil firm TotalEnergies of supplying jet fuel to Russian Sukhoi warplanes. In an investigation by NGO Global Witness, it was found that the liquid gas condensate extracted from the Termokarstovoye field in Serbia and the Omsk refinery are used for Russian jet fuel jets. Both TotalEnergies and Russian company Novatek own the gas field. TotalEnergies also has shares in Novatek. TotalEnergies denied any allegation and said that it was untrue. The left, especially former presidential candidate Yannick Jadot from the Greens party, urged President Emmanuel

Macron to demand the company to pull out of Russia.

On 24 August, Norway and the UK agreed to supply Teledyne Flir Black Hornet drones. The drones are known for its “reconnaissance and target identification,” capability, costing GBP 7.4 million according to Norwegian Defence Ministry.

On the same day, Spain’s Ministry of Defence pledged to send air defence systems and armoured vehicles to Ukraine as a part of military aid against Russia’s invasion. Spain said it would transfer an anti-aircraft battery and missiles, 1000 rounds of field artillery munitions, 1000 tons of diesel fuel, several armoured vehicles and 30000 winter uniforms. Ukraine’s military and its air force will also receive training from Spain. Spain is helping Ukraine to protect its freedom and sovereignty.

On 25 August, the UK government signed a pact with Ukraine to help in the rebuilding of the country after the effects of the war with Russia. Ukraine’s Minister of Infrastructure, Oleksandr Kubrakov attended a virtual meeting hosted by the UK’s Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps. The UK promised that it would share its expert engineering knowledge with Ukraine. Shapps also promised to send five buses from the Go-Ahead Group to help Ukraine reconnect its public and repair its routes.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 25 September, South Korea signed a KRW three trillion contract with a state-run nuclear energy firm from Russia to provide components and construct a turbine building for Egypt’s first nuclear plant. South Korea confirmed it had consulted with its ally the US in advance and also it does not go against any sanctions imposed on Russia by the West and South Korea.

On the same day, Abkhaz Foreign Minister Inal Ardzinba said that Abkhazia and Syria support Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republic. He added “the support state sovereignty and international legal identity of the Donbass republics, and back the free expression of the will of other regions of

Ukraine, which have already declared that they want to freely and independently determine their destiny.”. He also said that people have the right to choose their future and develop as they want to.

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War in Ukraine: Day 181

War on the Ground:

On 23 September, Ukraine soldiers who were captured by Russian forces during the Mariupol battle were released in the prisoner exchange. The soldiers who belonged to Azov regiment, said about the harsh treatment.

The Head of Ukraine’s Armed Forces reported on death of 9000 soldiers so far from the war. On the same, the UNHR revealed on 7890 being wounded from the war between February and August.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced on the successful restoration of 22 kilometers rail link between Ukraine and

Moldova. On the same Ukraine's Infrastructure Minister said that relinking would serve as an alternative route for Ukraine instead of Black Sea Port.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 23 September, Russia criticized Ukraine's intelligence involvement in the killing of Darya Dugina. It blamed a Ukrainian woman from Azov regiment to be responsible for the death.

Russia's *Interfax*, reported on Ukraine forces attack do on the bridge in the Dniper River in Kherson using HIMARS rocket, where 15 were found dead. The bridge is important for the Russian military to keep its military supplies in place.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 23 September, US rejected Ukraine's demand on imposing a blanket ban on giving visas to Russians. The US countered stating it does not want to close its door for those who are in need of asylum or under threat of being abused. EU's Chief Diplomat, Josep Borrel on the same lines opposed to call for a complete ban.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz assured to restore Germany's gas supply. In his upcoming meeting with Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, both are expected to sign deal to export clean hydrogen to Germany.

Europe faces a new challenge with pipeline running from Kazakhstan, through Russia and into Europe faces damage. Two mooring points out of three in the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) of Black Sea terminal are observed to be incapable to export oil.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 23 September, UN Secretary-General, António Guterres urged for "nuclear sabre-rattling," indicating the threat to the rest of the world. He stressed on all countries to commit to "no-first-use," linking to the continued shelling taking place near Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

War in Ukraine: Day 180

War on the Ground:

With the 31st Ukraine Independence Day nearing, Ukraine forces in Kyiv imposed a ban on people from coming in group at large for public events. The warning was issued due to threat to rocket attacks ahead of the day.

Ukraine Southern Military Command reported on launch of five Russian Kalibr cruise missiles from the Black Sea targeting Odesa. Of which, two were taken down by Ukraine forces whereas the other three attacked the "agricultural targets." While Russia claimed the attacks to have destroyed ammunition depots of Ukraine which contained HIMARS rockets.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 22 September, the Russia's Federal Security Service blamed Ukraine's special forces for killing the daughter of Russian Nationalist. Although Ukraine denied, the car-bomb killing is viewed as act of Ukraine by Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences for the family. Russian websites claimed that it was a Ukrainian citizen from the Azov battalion was responsible for killing.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 22 September, Estonian police and border guard denied to disclose details on the entry and exit of any Russian individual. *TASS* reported on Russia's request on extraditing a suspect from Estonia, but Estonia said that no such request was received.

Former Head of the UK Army, Gen Richard Dannatt said that upon Russia's failure to attain "swift victory," he suggested for it to "recalibrate."

On 22 September, UK intelligence observed Russia's challenges in keeping its forces motivated and difficulty in adding auxiliary forces to its Donbas forces. On the same Ukraine forces had released video in social media platforms where, soldiers in LPR region were refusing to fight further.

War in Ukraine: Day 178 & 179

War on the Ground:

On 21 August, Ukraine's military reported on the continued strikes in the ammunition depots in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. While Russia attempted to improve its positions in Tavriysk and Oleksandrovka, Ukraine was successful in preventing Russia's advance. They also said that, in Bakhmut direction Russia could not make any progress despite using tube and rocket artillery seven times.

In an interview with *Ukrinform*, Ukraine's vice Prime Minister Mykhailo Fedorov reported on the total funds collected through UNITED24 platform for Ukraine. He said that more than USD 175 million had been raised from 110 countries in three months. Fedorov also mentioned that 60 per cent of the funds collected will go to the armed forces, medical assistance and the remaining for the reconstruction of the state.

On 20 August, President Zelenskyy warned Ukraine's citizens to be vigilant due to upcoming Independence Day on 24 August. He said, "We must all be aware that this week Russia could try to do something particularly ugly, something particularly vicious." As the Russian offensive is most intense in Kharkiv, curfew is expected to be till 24 August.

On 20 August, a drone strike was reported on Russia's Black Sea fleet headquarters in Sevastopol, Crimea. It was identified as SkyEye 5000 millimeters pro UAV. Ukraine refused to take responsibility for the attack. Russia-appointed Governor of Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhaev addressed the attack and said that security services in Sevastopol was ordered to operate on "high alert" mode.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

The head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov announced that the village of Sands, in Peski near Donetsk was freed from Ukraine's armed forces. He said that following the occupation, Ukraine's forces had abandoned their ammunition and left the post.

On 20 August, the Defence Ministry said that several soldiers who were on duty in Ukraine have been hospitalized with severe chemical poisoning. The troops were stationed near the Vasilyevka village in the Zaporizhzhia region. In the samples taken from the troops, traces of Botulinum toxin Type B were found. The toxin is an "organic poison of artificial origin." The Ministry said that the official confirmation about the incident will be sent to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US Deputy Treasury Secretary, Wally Adeyemo spoke to Turkey's deputy finance minister, Yunus Elitas. Adeyemo informed Elitas about how Russian individuals and organizations were using Turkey to bypass the sanctions imposed on them by the West. Elitas assured that while Turkey is interested in maintaining good political and economic relations with both Russia and Ukraine, it will not allow violations of the sanctions.

On 19 August, UK's Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that Russia does not have the "moral right" to take part in the G20 summit while it continues its aggression in Ukraine. The statement comes after Indonesia's president Joko Widodo mentioned that Russia's Vladimir Putin has confirmed his presence at the summit to be held in November, at Bali.

The Global Fallouts:

Implications of the Ukraine war

On 20 August, AP News reported on the pressure faced by IMF on the re-evaluation procedure to impose fees on the countries availing loans. Ukraine being one of IMF's biggest borrowers, there is the possibility of more countries applying for loans, given the rising food and energy prices and inflation. As the largest IMF shareholder, US can influence IMF's policy decisions and also unilaterally veto decisions.

The World Food Program (WFP) Chief, David Beasley told AP News that the US will buy 150,000 metric tons of grain from Ukraine

for an upcoming shipment of food aid. The shipment is six-times the amount of grain that the first WFP commissioned ship is carrying to the Horn of Africa. Beasley, mentioned that the destination of the grain was not confirmed yet.

On 20 August, China's General Administration of Customs announced that in July, China which has purchased 7.42 million tons of coal from Russia. The number is higher than the 6.12 tons imported in June. The sanctions by the West have created more opportunities for Asian countries, especially China and India to buy more coal from Russia at highly discounted price. For example, Russian thermal coal traded at USD 150 per ton in July, while the same quality coal from Australia's Newcastle port was priced at USD 210 per ton.

On the same day, *TOLO News* reported that according to the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI), the annual trade turnover with Russia has increased to USD 170 million. The ACCI mentioned that Russia's market was attractive for Afghanistan and was good for exports. Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign affairs said that an Afghan delegation will travel to Moscow to discuss the import of products from Russia.

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War in Ukraine: Day 177

War on the Ground:

On 19 August, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a memorandum with representatives of Eurocities. The delegation was headed by the Mayor of Florence, Italy, Daro Nardella. Zelenskyy thanked the European cities for the shelter they provide to the Ukrainians feeling the war. Nardella expressed the solidarity with Ukraine and assured to provide support to Ukraine's cities, communities and the people forced to leave the country temporarily. He also mentioned that the association will share their experience in the reconstruction of Ukraine's damaged cities. Referring to the memorandum, Nardella said: "We want to start this cooperation as soon as possible, to create the largest program of interaction between cities that we have ever seen in the history of Europe."

Presidential advisor, Mykhailo Podolyak addressed Russia's interests in conducting peace talks with Ukraine. He alleged that it was not a "sincere offer, but a trap," stating Russia does not intend to end the war, but is rather interested in strengthening its positions and territorial

gains. Podolyak accused Russia for engaging in an “energy blackmail” to create an energy deficiency and force the EU member states to lessen their support for Ukraine. He also blamed (ICRC) for not acting as a mediator in the torture and killing of Ukrainian prisoners of war in the Olenivka region.

On the same day, Ukraine’s armed forces reported on successfully repelling Russia’s attacks in the east, and stopped Russia’s forces from advancing in the Southern Buh region. Bakhmut and Kharkiv and Sloviansk regions where Russia’s offensive is most intense, were attacked with tanks, tube and rocket artillery. Shelling was reported in Zaporizhzhia, Kramatorsk and Avdiivka but the Russians could not improve their tactical positions in this region. Ukraine’s military successfully destroyed one of Russia’s satellite communication station known as Legend 2 and an ammunition warehouse in Mykolaiv.

On 18 August, *Kyiv Post* reported on the explosions in Kerch and the Belbek military base in Sevastopol, Crimea. Belbek is Russia’s largest airbase in Crimea. Ukraine is yet to take responsibility for the continuous attacks in Crimea. Russia’s authorities are still maintaining that the explosions were a result of air defence activities conducted by Russia and that there was no imminent danger. However, the self-proclaimed Governor of Sevastopol, Mykhail Razvozhaev, said that a Ukrainian drone was shot down.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 19 August, DPR head Denis Pushilin said that Russia, Belarus and Syria will send their observers to a tribunal for the trials of foreign mercenaries. Militants from the Azov and Aidar battalions are expected to be brought before the tribunal. DPR’s Foreign Ministry informed that the necessary documents are being prepared.

On the same day, President Vladimir Putin spoke with France’s President Emmanuel Macron over a phone call initiated by Macron. The leaders discussed the continuous shelling at Zaporizhzhia near the nuclear power plant and the related risks. They agreed on the dispatch of

the IAEA mission and Putin informed Macron on the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Russia’s telecom regulator, Roskomnadzor said that enforcement measures had been taken against TikTok, Telegram, Zoom, Discord and Pinterest, upon failure of them to remove false information as per Russian claims. Roskomnadzor said that the enforcement will remain until the companies align with the Russian rules.

On 19 August, Gazprom announced that they will halt gas supplies to the EU via the Nord Stream 1 pipeline. The company said that the stoppage will be from 31 August for an unscheduled maintenance. Repairs will be conducted in collaboration with Siemens and the only functioning Trent 60 gas compressor unit will thus be shut down for three days. Gazprom added: “Upon completion of work and the absence of technical malfunctions of the unit, gas transportation will be restored to the level of 33 million cubic meters per day.”

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 18 August, ICJ announced EU’s submission of information on the allegations of war crimes committed by Russia’s soldier against Ukrainians. The application was submitted by Latvia on 26 July. Ukraine’s mission to the EU thanked the EU for assisting the case of Allegations of Genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Ukraine versus Russian Federation). The information submitted by the EU was under Article 34, paragraph 2, of the Statute and Article 69, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Court of the ICJ.

On 19 August, according to a memorandum published by the White House, US President Joe Biden allocated an additional USD 775 million as a military aid to Ukraine. The new package will include munitions for HIMARS, 16 105 millimeter howitzers, 15 Scan Eagle spy drones, HARM high-speed anti-radiation missiles, anti-rocket systems and mine-clearing vehicles. As per the memorandum, military education and training is also a part of the package.

On 19 August, *POLITICO* reported that Greece and Cyprus expressed their support to Germany over the visa ban. Since Cyprus has a significant Russian-speaking expatriate community, the Foreign Minister pointed that they believe in “people-to-people contacts” and that such a move would be a “decision in the wrong direction.” Greece, being one of the top tourist destinations for Russians also said that it was not considering to change its decision. The EU Foreign Ministers are expected to discuss on the tourist ban in Prague by August.

On 18 August, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met Zelenskyy in Lviv along with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Erdogan aiming to be the mediator between Russia and Ukraine, assured Zelenskyy that Turkey firmly supports Ukraine. He said: “While continuing our efforts to find a solution, we remain on the side of our Ukraine friends.” Though he said that Turkey will assist Ukraine in their rebuilding efforts, Erdogan also reiterated that he was willing to host Russia and Ukraine for negotiation talks

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 19 August, in an interview, Indonesia’s President Joko Widodo told *Bloomberg News* that China’s President Xi Jinping and Russia’s President Putin might attend the Group of 20 summit in November. For Russia, this will be the first global summit since its invasion of Ukraine. For China, this will be the first-time Xi travels outside the country since China shut its borders at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022. Previously the US had called for the G20 member-states to remove Russia’s membership and withdraw the invitation to Putin. However, Widodo said: “The rivalry of the big countries is indeed worrying... What we want is for this region is to be stable, peaceful, so that we can build economic growth.”

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War in Ukraine: Day 176

War on the Ground:

On 17 August, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear

power plant said that Ukraine's nuclear scientists and the IAEA are in constant touch and are working towards sending the IAEA mission to the plant soon. He insisted Russia to withdraw from the plant completely to ensure safety.

Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba spoke with the US secretary of the state, Antony Blinken and discussed further arms supplies to Ukraine. Kuleba thanked for support from the US, but urged for more arms for Ukraine's forces to reduce the war intensity. He also said that more military aid would be the 'best investment' for the long-term security of Europe.

On 18 August, Russian troops launched a missile attack on Kharkiv's Slobidskyi District. Two of the missiles hit a tram depot and damaged a repair shop and a dormitory. Due to the strike, 10 civilians were killed and 18 injured. Other than in Kharkiv, Zelenskyy reported on intense fighting in the Avdiyivka and Bakhmut.

On the same day, Prozorro a state-owned company that runs transparent electronic auctions for the government sale, the CEO said that Ukraine was considering the launch of its mass privatization initiative from 01 September. As a part of the initiative, Ukraine has planned to privatize more than 100 state assets. This was due to the shift of population from Ukraine's south and east to the west, which faces a shortage of real-estate. As the government has spare property to sell in these areas, privatization of the same is expected to stimulate business activity.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 18 August, president Vladimir Putin in a phone conversation with Indonesia's president Joko Widodo. They discussed the global food security and Russia's efforts in signing the Turkey-UN mediated grain deal to stabilize the current situation.

Russia's defence ministry claimed that 53 ships from 14 countries were still stuck in Kherson, Nikolayev, Chernomorsk, Ochakov, Odessa, and Yuzhny ports in Ukraine. On the food exports, he reported that until now,

563,318 tonnes of food had been exported from Ukraine and so far more than 90 militants in Kharkiv were killed. Lieutenant general Igor Konashenkov said that a temporary base of foreign mercenaries had been hit with "a ground-based high-precision weapon," as a part of the operation.

A member of the military-civilian administration of the Zaporizhzhia region, Yevgeny Balitsky said that only one reactor at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant was operational. He alleged that while Ukraine still receives about USD one million worth of power per day from the plant, artillery bombardments still continued.

MiG-31 fighters with Kinzhal hypersonic missiles have been sent to the Chkalovsk air base in the Baltic Sea exclave of Kaliningrad. The warplanes which have a range of up to 2000 kilometres will be on round-the-clock duty. This move comes as a part of "additional measures of strategic deterrence" to improve the security in the region.

On 17 August, Russia's *Vedomosti* newspaper cited a letter sent by the Federal Trade Union of Air Traffic Controllers about the state for the air control staff in the country. The letter mentioned that over half of Russia's air traffic control staff was currently on temporary leave or had been dismissed because of the international sanction on Russia. As many western countries had closed their airspaces for Russian aircraft, leading to decreased demand for staff, pushing for lay-off or temporary leave.

The Jewish Agency, which coordinates the movement of Jews across the world to Israel said that Jews in Russia are migrating out of the state in large numbers. Since March, around 20,500 of Russia's estimated total of 165,000 Jews have left the country in fear of persecution.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 18 August, Slovakia's defence minister, Jaroslav Nad stated that Slovakia's government will continue to provide military support to Ukraine and expressed

an interest to send their MiG 29 fleet for EUR 300 million. However, a Bratislava-based think tank, GLOBSEC said that as per a survey, only half of the respondents were in favor of Slovakia sending arms to Ukraine. Nonetheless, Nad claimed that Russia's propaganda was to change the attitudes of the population to stop Slovakia's military assistance. He added: "This government certainly decided to continue in that because we need to help Ukrainians - they deserve that - and we very much understand what occupation means."

Also on 18 August, Estonia's economic affairs and communications ministry said that Estonia was subject to an extensive cyberattack in 15 years. Close to 200 state and private Estonian institutions were targeted in the attack. However, authorities could repel the attack and most websites remained fully functional throughout the day. Killnet, a Russian Hacker group claimed responsibility for the attacks and said that it was in response to Estonia removing a Soviet-era Tu-34 tank from display in Narva.

European Commission which had adopted a temporary crisis framework on 23 March 2022, later amended in July as a measure to help its member states economy affected by the Ukraine war. The framework initially aimed to compensate those companies impact from the crisis situation such as sanctions and incurring of additional cost such as electricity and gas. But due to the extremities of war, it will now provide set more schemes for increasing investments in renewable energies, such as hydrogen, biogas and renewable heat with simple processes. The new framework also covers supporting the decarbonizing of "industrial process for promoting energy efficiency. Upon Germany and Spain adopting the provision given in the framework, the European Commission approved the ammendments.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 18 August, a military spokesperson of Myanmar, Zaw Min Tun said that they had received permission to import petrol from Russia after junta chief, Min Aung Hlaing's discussion with Russia's authorities. Amidst

a growing energy crisis and rising prices, Myanmar's military government has set up a Russian oil purchasing committee to oversee the buying, importing and transporting of fuel oil, which are due to arrive from September. Min Tun said that, Myanmar will also consider joint oil exploration exercises with Russia and China.

On the same day, the Japanese foreign ministry announced to donate JPY one billion to Moldova. It is to assist the country in dealing with the massive inflow of Ukrainian refugees. It will provide extra equipment for diagnosis, surgical and artificial lung ventilation gear will be provided for five medical facilities in Chisinau.

In a trilateral meeting held between Zelenskyy, Erdogan and UN Secretary general, discussed on how UN's grain exports was helping stabilize the food crisis, and appreciated the efforts of JCC on monitoring the ship exports. Antonio Guterres expressing his concerns on tensions over Zaporizhzhia's nuclear power plant, urged for an agreement to install a civilian infrastructure and ensure no military operation took place. He announced the establishment of the fact-finding mission, to gather and analyze information and appointment of General Santos Cruz to lead the mission.

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War in Ukraine: Day 175

War on the Ground

Ukraine's forces carried out nuclear drill in the surrounding area of Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, where the fighters on the front had protective gear and performed radiation scan. The drill is expected to continue for few more days. Ukraine government reported on the arrival of five new ships in

the Chornomorsk Black Sea port to export 70,000 tonnes of grains further.

On 17 August, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy received the documents from the ambassadors of Kyrgyz Republic, Romania, Kingdom of Belgium, and Kingdom of Spain for opening embassies in Ukraine. Zelenskyy appreciated their efforts in renewing the bilateral cooperation with Ukraine and helping in reconstruction during the war. Spain's ambassador agreed to provide humanitarian and defence assistance to Ukraine, in support of its sovereignty and territorial veracity.

The head of the Office of the President of Ukraine Andriy Yermak met Secretary-General of the UNCTAD, Rebeca Grynspan, discussed on the agreements signed on the operations of Ukraine ports and on dealing the food crisis of other countries. They also discussed on steps to boost Ukraine's economy with help of international organizations and partner countries.

Ukraine's economic ministry released a statement on the status of businesses in Ukraine on the relocation programme launched. So far, 710 businesses have been shifted from the war prone area, of which 500 have already started back its operations.

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 16 August, Russia's foreign ministry refuted the allegations made by the Wall Street Journal about Russia shelling the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP) to steal Ukraine's electricity as a false news. According to the foreign ministry, the US along with Ukrainian officials are trying to spread falsified news blaming Russia for all the attacks on the power plant. Russia had presented the proof of Ukraine's involvement in the bombing of the Zaporizhzhia power plant and also accused them of attacking the Kakhovskaya hydroelectric power station, which provides the nuclear plant with cooling water, to the IAEA. The latest attack by Ukraine hit closer to breaking a container carrying used nuclear waste.

On the same day, TASS reported that the China's army will participate in the strategic command and staff exercise Vostok-2022. The exercise will be conducted in the Moscow region around 13 locations. The countries participating in the Vostok-2022 will have a week of training from 30 August till 05 September. China's defence ministry said that the training would be a friendly one among armies of all the countries in the world and does not relate to any regional or international issue that is happening at the present.

Also on 16 August, Russia's defence ministry signed a deal with Makeev Missile Centre for the production and supply of large amount of Sarmat Inter Continental Ballistic Missile. The ICBM is said to be the largest missile in the history and was boasted to tear through any missile defence system. Russia's military not only announced signing of a contract for the non interceptible missile but also S-500 Prometheus air defence system.

The rumours of change in leadership to Russia's Black Sea Fleet has been spreading after the consecutive attacks by Ukraine. The Russian administration has confirmed the change of personnel. The state-owned RIA agency said that there is a possibility of Viktor Sokolov replacing the current Black Sea Fleet commander Igor Osipov. The defeats faced by the fleet after the attacks from Ukraine in sinking their flagship Moskova last month and a hit on their base in Saki forced the defence ministry to change the leader of Black Sea Fleet.

On 17 August, research by a Russian high-tech company, GS group reported that the imports of smartphones, especially the cheaper ones have fallen down 38 per cent in the first half due to companies pulling out of Russia. The Russian invasion of Ukraine made major smartphone brands like Samsung to exit the market and firms such as Xiaomi and Realme has limited their supply. The rise in push-button phones was seen amidst the fear of supply chain disruption.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 17 August, the European Commission approved EUR 218 million as Bulgarian

scheme to help the agriculture production. The aid was sanctioned under the "Temporary Crisis Framework" to support those small, mid-sized and companies dealing in primary produce of energy, fertilizers, fruits, salad vegetables and nuts.

In its intelligence update, UK defence ministry reported on the attacks in north and centre part of Crimea, where Russia's military airfields are present and an important junction to supply resources to Russia for the Ukraine war.

On 17 August, Germany's intelligence experts predicted to evidence more "Russian propaganda and espionage" in the ongoing war. Such acts are observed to be focused to fear amongst the Germans over food and energy shortage.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

Amidst the Ukraine war, the ties are deepening between Russia and Myanmar. The sanctions imposed on both nations has brought them closer together. The partnership pledged deeper military ties and cooperation on nuclear energy. Russia has supported and supplied weapons to the military junta, that is ruling now, at the time of coup against Aung San Suu Kyi's government. As long as the junta is in power, Russia promised a friendly relations between itself and Myanmar. Russia is aiming to increase its influence over the Indo-Pacific region.

On 17 August, prime minister Denys Shmyhal had thanked Justin Trudeau and Canada in a tweet for providing CAD 450 million assistance for purchasing fuel for the winter. He also showed gratitude for the support and solidarity for Ukraine in their resistance to Russia's invasion.

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War in Ukraine: Day 174

War on the Ground:

On 16 August, *Kyiv Post* reported that Ukraine's forces had attacked the Antonovsky bridge for the second time with HIMARS. Russia's bridge-repair tools were also destroyed in the strike. The Antonovsky bridge is the main bridge connecting the two sides of Kherson across the Dnieper river. As a result of the destabilization of the bridge, thousands of Russia's troops have been trapped and cut off in the occupied parts of Kherson.

Also on 16 August, Ukraine's military said that they have repelled several attacks by Russia in the Donbas region. Ukraine military's general staff claimed that Russia attempted to attack the northern Kharkiv regions, in the Kramatorsk direction, and on Bakhmut, but were unsuccessful in their efforts. Russia was also found to be using tanks, tubes and rocket artillery to attack in the Sloviansk direction but according to the general, Ukraine's armed forces were successful in pushing them back. On the attacks in Crimea, a key advisor to president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Mykhailo Podolyak said that there could be similar

attacks in the "next two or three months." Though Ukraine had not officially claimed responsibility for the attacks, Podolyak said that the explosions could be viewed as "demilitarization in action."

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 16 August, president Vladimir Putin addressed the participants of the 10th Moscow conference on international security and spoke about how "Western globalist elites" have been hampering the "sovereign paths of development." He also criticized the west for destroying the European security system and the NATO bloc for their eastward expansion. Putin justified Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine citing the presence of neo-nazi ideology and numerous murders of inhabitants in Donbas. He also accused the US of prolonging the conflict and of interfering in the matters of a sovereign country as it had done in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Russia's defence minister, Sergei Shoigu in a phone conversation with UN secretary general, Antonio Guterres to discuss the operational safety of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. On the issue of nuclear weapons, Shoigu said that targets in Ukraine did not require a nuclear strike. He insisted that the claim about Russia using nuclear weapons did not coincide with Russia's guidelines of using nuclear power only in emergencies. He also mentioned that Russia using chemical weapons in their offensive in Ukraine was an "absurd" idea as it destroyed its chemical weapons stockpile in 2017. Shoigu said that it was worse than during the Cold War, blaming NATO and its expansionist policies. He also said that the 'myth' surrounding the greatness of "superweapons" supplied by the US was being dispelled as all the weapons were easily being "ground up in battle." On 16 August, explosions were reported in the elite military unit in Dzhankoi in Crimea. On the blasts in Crimea, Russia's defence ministry said that it was a clear "act of sabotage." At least two civilians were wounded and over 3000 people have been evacuated from the area around the weapons depot.

Russia's embassy in the US said that the US functions with no regard for the security and interests of other countries, thus increasing the risk of nuclear attacks. It revealed that the US has withdrawn from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and the 1992 Treaty on Open Skies, while Russia "faithfully fulfills its obligations as a nuclear-weapon state." The embassy said: "The [US'] steps to further engage in a hybrid confrontation with Russia in the context of the Ukrainian crisis are fraught with unpredictable escalation and a direct military clash of nuclear powers."

On the same day, the Tagansky district court fined the popular video streaming service, Twitch, RUB two million for not removing a video with false information about Russia. The video in question allegedly promotes false news about the events in Bucha, where hundreds of civilians were murdered by Russia's armed forces.

Roscomnadzor (Federal agency in charge of communications and IT) has said that the measure will be in place till the violations are removed by the platform. The same court also issued a RUB four million fine on Messaging App Telegram. The fine was because Telegram refused to remove a bot that reveals the personal details of Russian servicemen involved in the offensive in Ukraine. Both the platforms have been found guilty under Part 2 of Article 13.42 of the code of administrative offenses.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 16 August, Germany's chancellor Olaf Scholz refused to back the EU-wide ban on granting tourist visas to Russia grew. His reluctance to ban Russian tourists comes after several EU countries discussed on allowing Russian tourists in their countries, given the invasion of Russia. Scholz said that the war is Putin's responsibility and the Russian people should not suffer for it. At a press conference in Norway, Scholz also said that the dissidents fleeing Russia must be kept in mind.

However, individual countries are taking steps to implement the ban. Finland's foreign ministry issued a statement saying that from 01 September, the number of visas issued to Russians will be slashed. It will cut

down Russian visa application appointments from 1000 to 500 per day, of which only 100 will be tourist visas. This move was due to Russians using the Helsinki-Vantaa airport as a major entry point into Europe and as a gateway to European holidays.

The UK defence ministry, in its intelligence update said that Russia's Black Sea Fleet is struggling to control the sea effectively. Patrols were generally limited to waters near the Crimea coast. It added that the fleet's limited effectiveness undermines Russia's amphibious threat to Odesa.

On the same day, *AP News* reported that five Europeans captured in Russia as mercenaries are on trial in Russia backed Donetsk since 15 August. Matthias Gustafsson from Sweden, Vjekoslav Prebeg from Croatia, and John Harding, Andrew Hill and Dylan Healy from the UK all pleaded not guilty to their charges. However, if found otherwise, they might face the death penalty under the laws of DPR. Their next hearing is scheduled for October.

As reported by the Joint Communication Centre (JCC), in August, 563,317 tonnes of agricultural products have been shipped from Ukraine through the grain corridors set up by the Black Sea grain initiative. As per Turkey's TRT Haber, in the first fifteen days of August, 21 outgoing ships departed from Ukraine's Odesa, Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi ports and 15 inbound ships had reached Ukraine.

The Global Fallout:

Implications of the Ukraine war

On 16 August, UN spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric on the IAEA visit to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, said that the UN had the logistic and security capacity to facilitate the visit. But due to difficulty to reach the plant, the mission will have to cross the frontline at Kyiv mentioned by the Russian spokesperson has challenged in making the visit possible.

Also on the same day, Dujarric announced that Turkey's president Recep Tayyip and Erdogan and Antonio Guterres will meet Zelenskyy in Lviv on 18 August. The leaders are planned to discuss the situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant to find a

solution to the Ukraine war. Guterres is also expected to visit the Joint Communication Centre in Istanbul on 20 August.

On 16 August, as per satellite images from *Planet Labs PBC*, the first ship to have left Ukraine, Sierra Leone-flagged Razoni has been docked at the Tartous port in Syria. The ship which set sail on 01 August which was supposed to unload at Lebanon has not set sail since the original buyer refused the shipment.

Also on 16 August, the first maritime shipment of Ukrainian wheat grain for humanitarian operations run by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) left for the Horn of Africa. WFP director, David Beasley lauded the effort and said: "It will take more than grain ships out of Ukraine to stop world hunger, but with Ukrainian grain back on global markets we have a chance to stop this global food crisis from spiraling even further."

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War in Ukraine: Day 173

War on the Ground:

On 14 August, ministry of digital transformation of Ukraine reported that Ukraine's IT army had blocked over 600 online resources from 01 August conducting four significant attacks on Russia. The IT army disrupted the postal services of Russia with a powerful cyberattack rendering them useless, and the revenue flow of posts was stopped. Another major attack was in the form of withholding pensions of dead or living Russian soldiers from their relatives who participated in the war. Online banking was also meddled with by the IT team of Ukraine. Customers of numerous Russian banks were denied online transactions with their smartphones. The last crucial attack was on Russia's video conference platforms which were blocked from Russian users.

On the same day, Ukraine's arms forces spokesperson claimed that Russia-funded Wagner mercenary group was attacked by Ukraine's Armed Forces (UAF) using a long-range HIMARS precision-guided artillery rocket. UAF confirmed that an abandoned apartment in the Donbas town of Popasna

was the headquarters of the Wagner group through a photo published by a pro-Russian reporter, Sergei Sreda. 10 mercenaries were reported to be killed during the attack in an unconfirmed Ukrainian military news feed. 20 more were injured due to the attack—Russia's president Vladimir Putin's former personal cook. Yevgeny Prigozhin, the leader of the Wagner group, was present during the attack but was not confirmed to have been injured or dead in the reports.

On 13 August, according to Mariupol's mayor, Ukrainians forced to move out from Mariupol due to the invasion were again deported from the Russian city of Pskov to the port city in Ukraine. The Mariupol residents were becoming a nuisance to the local authorities of Pskov. They were sent to Rostov-on-Don in a trailer. The Donetsk People's Republic authorities would then transport them to Mariupol. Many Mariupol residents live in abandoned buildings as the war-ravaged city has been destroyed, and the water, gas or electricity supply is fluctuating.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 15 August, Roscosmos, Russia's space agency, revealed for the first time, its new orbital station following its news of leaving the International Space Station after 2024 earlier this year. Russian Orbital Station was on display during the Army 2022 International Military-Technical Forum. The deployment of the space station was decided to be in two stages.

On 15 August, Putin and North Korea's supreme leader Kim Jong-un discussed ways to strengthen their bilateral relations. To enhance the security and stability of the Korean peninsula. North Korea said that there would be a possibility of it sending its workers to help in the construction of the two Russia supported regions in eastern Ukraine and also for other labours.

On the same day, Russian authorities confirmed that Lithuania's Šiauliai bank's denial to work with rouble accounts would not affect the transit payment as they were initially paid in euros. The bank's Kaliningrad transit operations with Russia

will halt from 15 August and in all currencies from 01 September.

On 15 August, *Lenta* reported that Police and FSB discovered Alexander Dus, a resident of Valuyek in the Belgorod region, in possession of an RGD-5 and seven F-1 grenades, a Kalashnikov assault rifle, and 500 rounds of ammunition. Upon investigation, Dus revealed on the procurement of weapons from a Russian soldier. Some of the arms were already sold by Dus to civilians. An investigation to find the seller from the defence ministry is underway. For the illegal sale of weapons Dus and his friend were criminally charged for storing explosives and placed under house arrest.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 14 August, Switzerland's energy minister Simonetta Sommaruga informed *SonntagsBlick*, a Swiss newspaper, assuring that it would match its energy-saving plans with the EU to fight the upcoming winter. The EU's emergency plan to cut gas usage by 15 per cent to save energy for the winter due to uncertain Russian supplies came into effect on 12 August. Sommaruga warned the Swiss citizens to stock up on candles in case of electricity blackouts during winter. She also said heating would be turned down in public buildings.

In an interview with *Deutsche Welle*, Lithuania's finance minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said that the country's implementation of a visa ban for Russian tourists should be followed as an example by the EU states. He also said that those who are being persecuted should only be provided humanitarian visas, and all recreational visas for Russians should be banned.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 15 August, the Philippines had discontinued its deal with Russia to buy 16 Mi-17 military transport helicopters worth PHP 12.7 billion due to fear of crossing the US sanctions. Manila is expecting to purchase heavy-lift Chinook helicopters

from the US. As per Philippines the cancellation of the contract was due to Ukraine war and also because of the sanctions imposed by the US on Russia.

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War in Ukraine: Day 171 & 172

War on the Ground:

On 14 August, Ukraine soldiers destroyed a self-propelled howitzer and a T-72 tank and were reported to have killed nine Russian soldiers. However, Russia was successful in shelling eight communities in the Sumy and Chernihiv regions. Ukraine's state border guard service said that the Russian attack was done through mortars, MLRS, tube artillery, grenade launchers, and heavy machine guns. Around 150 explosions were heard, and civilian infrastructure was also damaged.

On the same day, Ukraine's defence minister, Oleksiy Reznikov requested the Ukraine

Defense Contact Group member states to delegate experts in military justice to work on cases of Russian war crime in Ukraine. He said the goal was to create international groups which will analyze the data and decide how war crimes should be punished. Additionally, Reznikov appealed to the President of the European Court of Human Rights, Robert Spano to account the state of Ukraine's prisoners of war under Russia's control.

On 13 August, Russia's troops tried to advance in Kharkiv, Kramatorsk, Novopavlivka, and Pivdennyi Buh directions but were repelled by Ukraine's forces. *Ukrinform* reported that in Avdiivka, Russia's forces were found to be trying to break through the enemy line and Ukraine's forces have continued to attack the Russian ground lines of communication. It is to trap and destabilize the Russian attacks along the Dnipro River while launching a counterattack. By targeting the bridges to Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant, and the Antonivsky bridge, Ukraine has attempted to cut off the transfer of supplies to the Kherson Oblast, forcing Russia to use pontoon bridges to transfer their supplies. Which will be a challenging task for Russia.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 14 August, Russia's spokesperson, Mikhail Ulyanov, stated how Russia has been regularly updating the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) about the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. He announced the agency's upcoming visit to the site, which would help in finding the responsible party for the plant shelling. Ulyanov later asked Ukraine to stop attacking the plant to facilitate a visit from the IAEA mission. Ulyanov said: "An international team cannot be sent to work under continuous artillery shelling. This is the main obstacle."

On 13 August, In the interview with *TASS*, Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson, Alexander Darchiev said that US's influence on the Ukraine war has been on an increasing trend. He said: "Apart from the large-scale military and financial aid, and also the moral support for the (Ukrainian

President Vladimir) Zelensky regime, the Americans are increasingly becoming a direct party to the conflict." On US participation in the war, Darchiev suggested convincing Zelenskyy to initiate negotiations with Russia and that the US should respect the stance taken by Russia and the warning issued by Lavrov. He also mentioned that the US will need to respect Moscow's interests and statements before bilateral relations between the two countries can be improved. He added that Russia was reacting calmly and not going out of its way to seek peace talks.

According to the report released by *Rosstat* showed that in the second quarter of 2022, the GDP dropped by four per cent in the first full quarter since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In the last three quarters of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022, Russia reported sizeable GDP growth. Although *Rosstat* did not analyze the reasons behind the drop, it found that wholesale trade had dropped by 15.3 per cent and retail trade had contracted by 9.8 per cent.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 14 August, a European operator's group, GIE reported that on 12 August, Germany's gas storage facilities were over 75 per cent full. Germany which is in the second phase of a three-stage emergency plan has 23.3 billion cubic meters of underground gas storage, which is slightly increased from one-fifth of the country's gas usage in 2021. On 13 August, Hungary's foreign ministry said that Gazprom has ramped up gas supply to Hungary via the TurkStream pipeline. This comes after Hungary, which is 85 per cent dependent on Russia for gas, firmly opposed the EU sanctions and also lobbied to be exempted from the same. In July, foreign minister, Peter Szijjarto met with Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov to seek an additional 700 million cubic meters of gas, along with the long-term supply deal with Russia.

The *Institute for the Study of War* (ISW) reported that Russia is attempting to attention away from Ukraine's counteroffensive action in southern Ukraine by renewing its focus on north-eastern Donetsk Oblast. While relying heavily on

artillery barrages of surrounding settlements, Russian forces had scaled back offensive actions east of Siversk and conducted sporadic and limited ground attacks. However, recently, Siversk has seen an increase in Russian ground attacks. The continued assaults toward Bakhmut may be intended to attract Ukraine's attention to the Bakhmut-Siversk line in north-eastern Donetsk Oblast to divert Ukraine's attention from critical areas in the South, where Ukrainian troops have conducted effective counterattacks and which could set the stage for an offensive.

On 13 August, Czech Republic's pipeline operator Mero claimed that oil supply from Russia has been resumed on 12 August. This comes after oil delivery to Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic had been stopped via the southern branch of the Druzhba pipeline because of payment-related issues. On 12 August, Czech Republic's foreign minister Jan Lipavsky said that his government will look to secure a consensus about the EU-wide ban on visas for Russian citizens. Holding the EU rotating presidency, the Czech Republic backed the call by some Baltic States for the move but it has gained little traction otherwise. German chancellor Olaf Scholz however said that he will not support it.

Scholz also spoke about the gas crisis in Europe and said that the continent needed an interconnection linking the Iberian Peninsula with central Europe. Portugal and Spain supported this. Portugal's prime minister, Antonio Costa said that Europe was considering an alternative project for a pipeline linking Spain to Italy, to bypass France, which has objected on environmental grounds.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

The Ukraine war has skyrocketed the prices of oil and gas, the Saudi Arabian oil giant Aramco has broken its profit records. With a 90 per cent year-on-year increase, the company had a USD 48.4 billion profit in the second quarter of 2022. The world's largest energy exporter however announced that it would keep its dividend the same as before at USD 18.8 billion.

On 14 August, Pope Francis addressed the food security crisis, and the problem of world hunger and referred to the issues in the Horn of Africa. He spoke about Somalia and said that the war in Ukraine had taken away the attention from the looming famine in the country.

Earlier in August, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization said that a famine might officially be declared in eight regions in Somalia if livestock continued to die and amidst commodity price rise, humanitarian assistance failed to reach the people who needed it.

The UN resident coordinator in Ukraine Denise Brown also addressed the issue and said that the UN chartered ship, Brave Commander will leave from Pivdennyi for Ethiopia in Africa with 23,000 metric tonnes of wheat. Brown said: "Since the war began, the UN and our humanitarian partners have been prevented from sending supplies to areas temporarily beyond the control of the Government of Ukraine. The partnership between the UN and Government of Ukraine is key to doing more."

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War in Ukraine: Day 170

War on the Ground:

On 12 August, Ukraine's minister of foreign affairs, Dmytro Kuleba, discussed the global consequences of Russia's aggression and ways to counter them with the Dominican Republic's foreign minister Roberto Alvarez. San Domingo and Ukraine agreed to improve their bilateral relationship. Kuleba appreciated the support of the Dominican Republic amid the war, including within the UN.

On 12 August, two draft laws were introduced by Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the extension of general mobilization and martial laws in Ukraine. The contents of the draft are yet to be made available for the public.

On 11 August, Ukraine's Main Military

Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on Russia's attempts to discredit the name of president Zelenskyy. Russia's president approved the information attack initiated to create a foundation in the name of Zelenskyy targeting foreign aid institutions and focusing on a multi-level marketing scheme to recruit European states. The Russians had already designed websites and social media pages for the foundation and have circulated fake photos and comments. The defence ministry urged people to be cautious about rumours and fake news.

The GUR also reported on Russia's industrial mobilization of its defence firms. In Companies such as Rostec, the employees were banned from taking a vacation by Kremlin. Russia's president Vladimir Putin heading the country's Military-Industrial Commission was reported to be planning to change the state defence order program by September. Russia was found to be trying to enlarge its operations in the military-industrial complex.

Ukraine's nuclear energy company Enerhoatom announced that there were damages to many radiation sensors in the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant complex, and grasses were on fire nearby. No injuries were reported. IAEA concluded that if the reactor were to be shelled, the world would face a nuclear disaster that was much worse than Chernobyl in 1986.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

According to Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson, Alexander Darchiev, the war over the visa ban is expected to sustain upon continuity of the US action against Russia. This would negatively impact diplomatic workers and make it difficult for Russian citizens to attain US visas. He also said that if the US declares Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism, the US will cross a point of no return, which will degrade or even break their bilateral relations leading to severe damages.

As per Russia's statistics agency, Rosstat, the economy has diminished by four per cent in the second quarter, on a year-on-year basis. The GDP of Russia which increased to 3.5

per cent year-on-year in the initial three months of 2022, is not set to face recession upon the effect of western sanctions on its energy and banking sectors.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 12 August, the UK's defence ministry intelligence reported on the Crimean blast. It found that, although the exact cause of the blast in Saky was unknown, a Russia-controlled military airfield in the western part of Crimea. The eyewitness sighted a giant mushroom cloud, where at least five Su-24 FENCER fighter bombers and three SU-30 FLANKER H multi-role jets were either destroyed or damaged. The damage to Russia's Black Sea Fleet significantly degraded the quality of Russia's naval and aviation capabilities.

The joint acquisition of Triton Power of Jersey by SSE Thermal of the UK and Equinor New Energy Limited of Norway was approved by the European Commission under the EU Merger Regulation. The Commission explained that Triton Power's electricity generating firm had no activities in the European Economic Area, so there would be no concern for the acquisition.

On 12 August, Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan returned to Turkey after he met with Putin in Sochi. The Confidential meeting between the two leaders drew the attention of the West. Turkey and Russia have decided to deepen their relationship and expand their cooperation in the economic and energy sectors. The EU has expressed its concerns over the relations between Turkey and Russia, and opened the possibility of imposing secondary sanctions on Turkey.

On the same day, the European Space Agency (ESA) started its initial dialogue with Elon Musk's SpaceX to use its launcher temporarily after access to Russia's Soyuz rockets was blocked by the war in Ukraine. The private space firm will be an important choice for ESA to close the gap between itself and Japan and India in terms of launching the delayed Ariane 6 rocket.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

Kazakhstan is expected to supply its crude oil through the pipeline of Azerbaijan as an alternative route to the one Russia threatened. Before the Ukraine conflict, crude oil from Kazakhstan was provided through the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) line to Russia's Black Sea port of Novorossiisk, which was threatened to be shut down by a Russian court. Currently, Kazakhstan is trying to supply through the Azeri pipeline in Azerbaijan to circumvent Russia's threat.

Ukraine's nuclear energy company Enerhoatom announced that there were damages to many radiation sensors in the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant complex, and grasses were on fire nearby. No injuries were reported. IAEA concluded that if the reactor were to be shelled, the world would face a nuclear disaster that was much worse than Chernobyl in 1986. The recent shelling has caused concerns to IAEA and it required immediate access to the power plant.

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War in Ukraine: Day 169

War on the Ground:

On 11 August, in a conference with the Northern European defence ministers, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant shelling, where Russia was found to be increasing the risk of a nuclear disaster. He alleged Russia for not taking responsibility for the attacks. Zelenskyy said that in all the years of operation of the plant, it was the first time, people's lives were endangered and if the attacks further, it might lead to using of tactical nuclear weapons.

Zaporizhzhia's regional military administration governor Oleksandr Starukh, said that Russia's provocations and its continued shelling has destroyed the power grid of the plant, increasing the risk of fires and emergency situations. Thus, creating the need for the readiness of fire units, medical personnel, national police and the evacuation plan. He said: "We must be prepared for any situation, even the worst one. In this case, exercising excessive vigilance is better than allowing risks due to negligence."

On the same day, the head of Luhansk, Serhii Haidai said that since the capture of Lysychansk by Russia, Ukraine army has not forwarded in the Donetsk region. Haidai mentioned that Russia had tried to penetrate Ukraine's defences but the progress was minimal. On 11 August, When Russia tried to

storm into eight settlements on the borders of Donetsk and Luhansk, was repelled successfully by the Ukraine's army.

On 11 August, satellite images taken by Planet Labs on 10 August of the Saky airbase in Crimea was released. The images show the charred remains of around nine to 11 Russian warplanes and large areas of scorched earth. While Ukraine has refused to formally accept responsibility for the attack nearly 110 km away from the frontline, the defence ministry tweeted a cryptic message warning tourists it was not safe to travel to Crimea. A presidential advisor to Ukraine said that the blasts were either caused by Ukrainian-made long-range weapons or by guerrillas operating in Crimea.

On August 10, the major general of Ukraine's armed forces, Dmytro Marchenko said that Ukraine's troops will be able to liberate Kherson by 2022. He said that Ukraine was launching strikes on the Kakhovka bridge in the occupied Kherson region to hamper the transfer of Russia's military equipment. Marchenko also claimed that once Kherson is freed, the active phase of the war will end, with continuation of local military clashes.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 11 August, following another shelling at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Russia's foreign ministry blamed Ukraine and said that it was an "act of terrorism" which could instigate a disaster worse than the 1989 Chernobyl incident. The foreign ministry deputy spokesperson, Ivan Nechaev said that if a nuclear disaster occurs due to Ukraine's actions, radiation will not only hit Ukraine and Russia but also harm the neighbouring countries, risking million lives. He said that Russia was looking forward to a mission by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has been seeking access to the plant.

Ivan Nachayev on the Russia's issue with Switzerland's neutral status, said that since Switzerland had implemented several anti-Russia sanctions, it cannot be considered as neutral. This follows a request by Switzerland to represent Ukraine in Russia and vice versa to facilitate a negotiation

between the two.

The first deputy chairman of the State Duma committee on international affairs, Alexey Chepa responded to Latvia recognizing Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. He said this accusation along with suspension the cross-border deal with Russia, denying entry to Russians with Schengen visas and not issuing visas for travel and should make Russia reconsider ending all relations with the country. Moreover, he said, "It is necessary to take maximum economic steps that should put significant pressure on this country."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

Denmark's defence minister, Morten Bodskov reaffirmed his commitment to support Ukraine at a Copenhagen conference attended by 26 countries. He said that the group will pledge EUR 1.5 billion to Ukraine's armed forces. Bodskov specified that the money will be used to supply weapons, missiles and ammunition, train Ukrainian soldiers, and also de-mine war-torn areas in Ukraine. The UK announced that an additional EUR 300 million including multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) and precision guided M31A1 missiles will be given to Ukraine.

On 11 August, Turkey's defence ministry reported that there was a delay in the departure of a ship scheduled to leave from Ukraine's Chornomorsk port. According to the ministry, the bad weather conditions was the reason for the delay. So far, 12 ships have been successful in departing from Ukraine with grains, under the UN-brokered deal between Ukraine and Russia, mediated by Turkey.

On the same day, Sweden extradited the first person demanded by Turkey as a part of the negotiations for the approval of Sweden and Finland's NATO membership. The person in question is a Turkish citizen who had sought asylum in Sweden in 2011 and then protection status in 2022. However, Sweden's migration agency had rejected both applications and instead detained him. The 30-year-old had been convicted in Turkey for bank fraud related offences in

2013 and 2016, and faces a sentence of 14 years in prison. However, he denied the charges saying that he was framed from converting from Islam to Christianity, having Kurdish roots and also for refusing the compulsory military service.

In Bulgaria, hundreds of protestors gathered in front of the presidential building in Sofia to demonstrate the fear that the interim caretaker government in Bulgaria might revert back to their bonhomie with Russia. The protestors demanded more transparency from the government as many are concerned that due to its anti-West positioning Bulgaria might approach Gazprom for gas supplies, disregarding the EU sanctions.

On the same day, Germany's chancellor Olaf Scholz said that Germany is set to face severe challenges in the upcoming winter months. In a conference, Olaf highlighted the measures already adopted by the government for the smooth procurement of energy supplies, to secure alternative sources of supply and to ease the financial hardship of the citizens. Scholz said: "Citizens can count on us not to abandon them." he expressed his regression towards Germany's dependency over Russian oil.

On 10 August, EU implemented the ban on Russia's coal for the foreseeable future. The ban forms part of the sanctions package that was announced by the EU in April. Member states were given time from April to August to secure alternate sources and to increase domestic production.

The Global Fallouts: implications of the Ukraine war

On the same, Germany's energy company Uniper announced its shift from receiving LNG from the US to Australia's Woodside to boost supplies in Europe. Woodside and Uniper have a 13-year deal from 2021, for one million tonnes of LNG per year, which is expected to increase to two million tonnes from 2026. However, the switch, which comes due to the energy crisis in Europe is expected to reduce delivery time by at least 10 days, and also reduce shipping cost. The company's spokesperson said that they will attempt to bring in the LNG that is currently

in the Atlantic and is destined for Asian buyers in China, India and Japan.

On 11 August, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres addressed the increased military activity and controversy at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. He said: "Regrettably, instead of de-escalation, over the past several days there have been reports of further deeply worrying incidents that could, if they continue, lead to disaster." In a statement Guterres called on Russia and Ukraine to immediately cease all military activity in the region and emphasized on the prevention of further deployments of military forces.

The interim UN Coordinator at the Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) in Istanbul, Frederik Kenney, said that they were expecting a "big uptick" in transit applications for grains export from Ukraine. He also mentioned that since now the safe passage of ships has been established, the JCC will do a review of the procedures in the coming weeks to further smoothen the process. Kenney said: "The goal of getting between two and five (million) metric tonnes is achievable."

In an interview to TASS, China's ambassador to Moscow Zhang Hanhui backed Russia and accused US to be the "initiator and instigator" of the war in Ukraine. He said that the US promoting NATO's expansion and supporting Ukraine's EU membership has forced Russia into retaliating.

On the same day, in Moldova, the director of Moldovgaz, Vadim Ceban warned that Moldova will not be able to pay its dues for August. While the company has money to pay for their July supply, Moldovgaz, a subsidiary of the Russian Gazprom, will have to pay USD 18 million for August, that it has not been able to procure yet. While the 20 August deadline approaches, Ceban informed that only USD 14 million has been arranged so far. Gazprom had said earlier that it will not make concessions to Moldova; however, Ceban said that Moldovgaz has already requested for a payment delay.

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War in Ukraine: Day 168

War on the Ground:

On 11 August, Ukraine's armed forces reported that the first stage of Russia-Belarus joint operational-tactical training with live fire is planned will be held in Volyn and Polissya directions. It observed that attacks with tanks, tubes, and rocket artillery continue in Kharkiv, Siversk, Slovyansk, Kramatorsk, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Novopavlivsk, Zaporizhzhia and Southern Buh. There has been a vigilance on the two Kalibr sea-launched cruise missile carriers in the Black Sea. According to the Ukraine army, Russia's forces was found that despite its offensive position, it has lost and has been retreating in Vetarynarne-Udy, Novoluhske-Spirne, Volodymyrivka-Yakovlivka and Striapivka-Soledar. Apart from that, Russian troops have not faced losses in the Donetsk-Pisky while continuing its offensive attacks.

On 10 Aug, Ukraine's agricultural ministry announced that the country's export of oilseed and vegetable oil rose to 22.7 per cent in July when compared to June by 2.66 million tonnes due to increased shipment of wheat and barley shipments after the block on the Black Sea ports were removed. The ministry mentioned that the overall export of grains decreased by 52 per cent with 2.2 million tonnes till now. The grain harvest also decreased from 86 million tonnes in 2021 to 50 million tonnes in 2022 due to the loss of land to Russian invaders.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 10 August, Lenta reported that Russia has been using merchant ships to transport military equipment through Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, bypassing sanctions placed by Turkey in February. The US and

the EU intelligence discovered that through the Black Sea, merchant ship Sparta II which arrived at Novorossiysk from the Tartus port in Syria was seen carrying 11 military equipment. Upon which the US and the EU have demanded the Turkish officials for not stopping the transportation and asked Turkey to end its deal with Russia over purchase of F-16 fighter jets.

On the same day, *Lenta* reported that Russia has been using merchant ships to transport military equipment through Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, bypassing sanctions placed by Turkey on Moscow due to its invasion of Ukraine in September. The US and the EU intelligence discovered that through the Black Sea, merchant ship Sparta II which arrived at Novorossiysk from the Tartus port in Syria was seen carrying 11 military equipment. Authorities from the EU and the US demanded that the Turkish officials explain why they did not stop the transportation. They were also told to end the deal that Turkey had with Russia in purchasing F-16 fighter jets.

Also on the same day, Russia's Novatek, a second largest gas producer in Russia, announced its plans to purchase a floating power plant from the Turkish energy company Karpowership for the first line of the country's huge Arctic LNG 2 project. Baker Hughes, US's largest oil field service company, which was supposed to be supplying LNG and electricity to the Arctic LNG 2 project has backed out due to the sanctions placed on Russia. The Karpowership is one of the largest operating floating power plants in the world and Russia is expected to continue with the application of the second and third line of the project if the method of ship-mounted gas-fired power plants is used.

On the same day, Russian forces reported that, Germany supplied Gepard anti-aircraft systems was found to be used by the Ukraine's Armed Forces in the Mykolaiv region were destroyed by Moscow's troops, according to Russia's defence ministry. The ministry claimed that it had destroyed three Ukrainian warplanes in the Mykolaiv region and seven HIMARS missiles in the Kherson region.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 10 August, Estonia's ministry of foreign affairs reported that a Russian Mi-8 helicopter was sighted in the country's aerospace which did not hold a permission. The ministry summoned the Russian ambassador in Estonia on the same to discuss on the violation that took place in the Koidula border crossing. Estonia condemned Russia's attack on Ukraine strongly from the start, and has found the incident to be regrettable and unacceptable. Russian aircraft was also reported to be violating Finnish aerospace according to Finland's ministry of defence.

According to Denmark's defence ministry, it stated that Copenhagen would send 130 soldiers to train, instruct and educate the Ukrainian Territorial Defence Force in the UK. For the training in the UK, Denmark has allocated DKK 100 million. Apart from this Finland and Sweden announced its plan to send its soldiers to help training the Ukraine's force.

On 09 August, Slovenia's president Borut Pahor spoke at the 13th Ambassadors Conference in Turkey's capital, Ankara. He said that despite Russia and Slovenia had a good relation before the war, at current scenario Ljubljana has to be cautious towards Russia. He also said that Slovenia was not threatened by Russia, but observed that Europe would see formation of new divisions and blocs. Pahor predicted that most of the European states will unite against Russia and the possibility of peaceful negotiations was possible only upon shift in Russian policies.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 10 August, IAEA evaluated the situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant following shelling affecting the infrastructure of the complex. It said that there is no immediate threat to the plant but it warned about the war jeopardizing the nuclear safety and security of Zaporizhzhia. It also said that a team should be sent to stabilize the nuclear safety and security of the plant.

On the same day, the G7 countries demanded Russia to hand over Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and other atomic reactors as well to Ukraine as Russian presence harms the power plants which in turn causes safety concerns. It condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and asked Moscow to withdraw its troops and urged Russia to respect the sovereignty and territorial

integrity. According to G7: "we demand that Russia immediately hand back full control to its rightful sovereign owner, Ukraine, of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant as well as of all nuclear facilities within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders to ensure their safe and secure operations."

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War in Ukraine: Day 167

War on the Ground:

On 09 August, in an interview with the *Washington Post*, president Volodymyr

Zelenskyy urged the West to consider a blanket ban for Russian travellers. He argued that the current sanctions were weak and have to be furthered to exert more pressure on Russia's president Vladimir Putin. Zelenskyy said that Russians should "live in their own world until they change their philosophy."

After explosions were reported in a military airport in Crimea, Zelenskyy said that the war with Russia "began with Crimea and must end with Crimea." Though he did not claim responsibility about the blasts, he said that Crimea rightfully belonged to Ukraine. He added that while they did not know when the liberation of Crimea might occur, Ukraine was taking necessary steps in that regard.

The deputy chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on national security, defence and national intelligence, Yuriy Mysiaha reported that the armed forces of Ukraine had received 50 new Kirpi armoured vehicles from Turkey. The vehicles were equipped with a machine gun, a fire extinguishing system and a mine protection system and can carry 12 military personnel and crew. Another batch of 150 is scheduled to arrive soon.

On 08 August, Ukraine's ambassador to Turkey, Vasyl Bodnar, announced the construction of a new Bayraktar factory in Ukraine. He said that the parent company from Turkey, Baykar had already bought the necessary land and established a company in Ukraine. He also noted that the project for the manufacturing plant had been approved.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 09 August, blasts were reported at the Saki military airport, near Novofedorovka city in Crimea which killed one person and injured a few. Initially neither Russia, nor Ukraine claimed responsibility for the blasts, but later Russia's defence ministry said that the explosions resulted from the detonation of aviation ammunition. The claim has not been verified yet. However, if it is revealed that it was an attack by Ukraine, it might lead to further escalation, as this is the first explosion in Crimea, which has been under

Russia's control since 2014.

The defence ministry spokesperson, lieutenant general Igor Konashevko spoke about the mercenaries involved in the fight in Ukraine. He said that around 2,000 foreign mercenaries were fighting in Ukraine. Konashevko mentioned that due to the offensive launched by the armed forces and the people's militias in the LPR and the DPR, the number had reduced from 2,741 to 2,192 in the past month.

In response to Zelenskyy's request of a blanket travel ban, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that it was irrational on Russians. He also questioned if Europe should consider the request and added: "This can only be seen extremely negatively. Any attempt to isolate Russia or Russians is a process that has no prospects."

On 09 August, Russian pipeline monopoly Transneft said that the supply of crude oil to three EU members states had been suspended by Ukraine from 04 August. It was due to Ukraine's UkrTransNafta, which controls the part of the Druzhba pipeline in Ukraine, had refused payment sent by Transneft via the sanctioned Gazprombank. The stopping of supplies will affect Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic, who were most reliant on the Druzhba pipeline for oil. Hungary's energy firm MOL said that it has enough reserves till September, after which it will consider importing oil via the Adria pipeline that connects the Hungary with Croatia. Slovakia's options are more limited as it will have to import from Hungary. Whereas for Czech Republic it can import oil from the Trieste in Italy via the Transalpine pipeline, but it is confident over resumption of supply from Druzhba pipeline.

On 08 August, Russia's communications watchdog, Roskomnadzor reported that they have censored around 138,000 websites since Russia's invasion of Europe in February. Prosecutor general Igor Krasnov said that the move comes after over 300 requests came from prosecutors to combat "fake news" against Russia. He also said: "After the start of the special military operation, we have strengthened our counteraction to the spread of calls for

extremism and terrorism, mass riots and fake news on the internet."

On the same day, Russia's foreign ministry announced that Russia will temporarily withdraw from the inspection regime as mandated by the START nuclear disarmament treaty, until the "existing problematic issues" are resolved. The ministry claimed that the US was getting undue advantage as the Western sanctions were preventing Russian inspection on American sites. The ministry also reiterated that Russia was fully committed to the provisions of the start treaty. In a statement, the ministry stated: "We would like to emphasize that the measures we have taken are temporary. Russia is fully committed to complying with all the provisions of the START Treaty, which in our eyes is the most important instrument for maintaining international security and stability."

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 09 August, Estonia's prime minister Kaja Kallas called on the Schengen area countries to stop issuing tourist visas to Russian travellers. She said that travelling to Europe was a privilege and not a human right. The foreign affairs ministry announced that Estonia had temporarily stopped issuing tourist visas to Russia. On 08 August, a similar stance was taken by Finland's prime minister Sanna Marin, claimed that this issue will be discussed during the upcoming European Council meetings, and her position will be to introduce a travel restriction for Europe.

On the same day, Turkey's defence ministry reported that two more ships carrying grains from Ukraine left from the Chornomorsk port, Ocean Lion which is the largest ship to leave will take corn to South Korea, while Rahmi Yagci will carry sunflower meal to Istanbul. So far, 12 ships have been granted a safe passage as per the deal signed by Ukraine, Russia, Turkey and the UN.

On 09 August, the EU's emergency gas plan came into force. As per the plan, the member states will have to reduce their gas consumption by 15 per cent by March 2023.

The plan also entails 'savings targets' which could be made mandatory if there is a supply emergency. It aims to save 45 billion cubic meters of gas but also has several opt-out options available for individual countries as well. In Germany, the head of the federal agency responsible for electricity, gas, rail, mail and telecommunications, Klaus Muller said that the plan could help stop the rising prices of gas.

Germany's economy ministry claimed that none of the Russian individuals sanctioned by the EU have declared their assets to Germany's authorities, as mandated by sanctions law. Around EUR 4.28 billion belonging to the sanctioned oligarchs have been frozen in Germany. If they do not declare their assets, they might be fined or may be sentenced to a year in prison.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On the same day, Russia launched the Iranian Khayyam satellite from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. Concerns have been raised about whether Russia will use the satellite for surveillance of military targets in Ukraine. However, the Iranian Space Agency confirmed that they would be controlling the satellite "from day one", and no third country will be able to access the information sent by the satellite to its encrypted algorithm. The Agency also clarified that the satellite will be used to improve productivity of the agriculture industry, preempt and manage natural disasters, survey water resources, monitor deforestation, mining explorations and border areas. The Communications and Information Technology Minister Issa Zarepour said that the launch will enhance the strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia in the space industry.

China to meet the global food security crisis, has been preparing for agricultural self-sufficiency. The ministry of agriculture and rural affairs released the "national seed industry formation" list of 69 breeding companies and institutions in the crop sector; 86 firms in the livestock and poultry sector; and 121 companies in aquaculture. Such companies will be given more

resources technology and capital to create an independent seed industry.

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War in Ukraine: Day 166

War on the Ground:

On 08 August, an ammunition depot of Russia along with its special troops were eliminated by Ukraine's National Guard and Armed Forces using aerial reconnaissance and artillery strikes along with tanks.

Ukraine struck the depot located north of the Kharkiv region. Soldiers conducting reconnaissance discovered a Russian base and also sighted the unloading of artillery weapons. The National Guards shared the coordinates of the Russian forces with the army. Russia and its troops were forced to retreat from the Snake Island due to constant firing by Ukraine's forces which was recorded by a UAV camera. Later, Ukraine demilitarized Russian artillery ammunition and the depot.

On the same day, the city of Sloviansk near the Donetsk region experienced a severe water shortage due to damage on water infrastructures from war. The people of Sloviansk in the Donbas region are concerned about the water shortages during winter. Since gas has been cut off from the city, only one source water pump is available. Hence, the fear of acute water shortage during winter is evident and Ukrainian officials are trying to evacuate.

Also on the same day, two more ships from Ukraine's Black Sea ports departed carrying corn and soybeans. A total of ten ships left the Black Sea ports of Ukraine after the block was removed by Russia following the grain export deal. The Sacura ship which was carrying 11000 tonnes of soybeans left the Pivdennyi port and headed to Italy. Meanwhile, Arizona departed Chornomorsk carrying 48,458 tonnes of corn to Iskenderun in southern Turkey. The grain export is smoothly run even though the attacks on Ukraine by the Russian forces continue.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 08 August, Russia's former president Dmitry Medvedev claimed that the West was trying to eliminate Russia by launching an aggressive geopolitical process. He believes that the conflict between Russia-Georgia in

2008 and Russia-Ukraine in 2022 are related in a way that the west had a part in staging the disputes. He said that the US is a common player in both the conflict by providing funds, training of the army and also weapons to both Georgia and now Ukraine.

On 08 August, Ukraine's army attacked the Antonovsky Bridge over the Dnepr River overnight. The bridge is a connection between the Russian-controlled Kherson region and the rest of southern Ukraine. The bridge was attacked in a similar fashion earlier where US-made HIMARS multiple-launch rocket systems were used to strike launch artillery attacks.

On the same day, 700 representatives of the Zaporizhzhia region in Ukraine approved holding a referendum to accede to Russia. The regional forum for a plebiscite to be held in the city of Melitopol was signed to be organized, where the administrators suggest the referendum to place by mid-September.

Russia's defence ministry blamed Ukraine for the shelling of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant which resulted in damaging high voltage power lines and forcing the power station to reduce its output. Kyiv in turn blamed Russia for the attack and denied its part in the shelling. Russia asked the western countries that influence Ukraine to tell Kyiv to stop attacking the nuclear plant.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 08 August, a report by the UK's Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) discovered that Russia would be unable to continue its warfare if the west decides to tighten export controls. Most of Russia's high-tech weapons and communication systems were dependent on west-made microelectronics. Moscow had circumvented all the sanctions and export controls to obtain said parts but if the west were to close the loophole, Russia's military power would be degraded. RUSI had discovered many west-made components in Russian weaponry through examining Russian military systems that were destroyed or captured. It said that some of the major parts were manufactured in the US, Germany, the UK, France and

Switzerland. Tightening the export control will damage the Russian military as well as communication systems.

Also on 08 August, Ukraine acquired three German Gepard self-propelled anti-aircraft systems for the first time from Berlin. The anti-aircraft systems are planned to be used to defend important infrastructure facilities in the country. The air defence systems that are operated by three-man crews, can hit targets up to four kilometres. The anti-aircraft systems were the first to be given by Germany to Ukraine.

On 08 August, the US announced another USD one billion aid to Ukraine. The Biden administration pledged that it would deliver rockets, ammunition, artillery weapons, and other arms directly from the department of defence stocks for Ukraine's army. Announcement comes after the Russian military movement was observed in the direction of the southern port cities of Ukraine to fight back Kyiv's counteroffensive. The aid includes HIMARS, thousands of artillery rounds, mortar systems, javelins and other armaments. So far, the total US aid comes to USD nine billion since the war.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 08 August, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres prompted countries with nuclear weapons to commit to their no-first-use rule. He warned the nations not to use their atomic arsenal as the nuclear arms race has resumed due to rising global tensions. Guterres appreciated the works of the IAEA to stabilize the situation in Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant after attacks on the same facility. He also said that the money used in the arms race should be spent on other pressing issues such as climate change, poverty, and addressing the needs of international communities.

Also on 08 August, Ukraine demanded that the zone around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant should be deemed demilitarized under the control of foreign peacekeepers. The shelling near the power plant had destroyed some of the structures in the complex resulting in a warning about

nuclear disaster risk from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). 500 Russian soldiers and 50 pieces of military equipment were seen to be deployed at Zaporizhzhia. The plant was noted to be deteriorating in recent days. Both Ukraine and Russia traded blame for the attack on the nuclear plant. Russia's state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported that Moscow is ready to allow a visit from IAEA inspectors to check on the power plant.

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War in Ukraine: Day 164 & 165

War on the Ground

On 07 August, President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy said Ukraine will not cooperate for negotiation or bilateral talks if Russia decides to carry out referendums in the occupied areas in Ukraine. He reiterated: "Our country's position remains what it always has been. We will give up nothing of what is ours." Zelenskyy mentioned that the shelling at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and spoke to European Council Charles Michel about the same and also urged the international community for a "principled response" to the same. Both Ukraine and Russia are exchanging blame over the shelling at the plant. According to Energoatom (Nuclear power company), Russia's shelling has seriously damaged a station containing nitrogen and oxygen, and an auxiliary building, and also forced the shutdown of one of the reactors.

On the same day, Russia's forces launched attacks in the South Buh, Kramatorsk, Bakhmut, and Sloviansk directions. However, Ukraine's forces were able to neutralise the threats in these regions. According to the General Staff of Ukraine, Russia is concentrating their efforts in eastern Ukraine, and consolidating their control over Kherson, parts of Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhya and Mykolaiv regions.

On 07 August, Ukraine's general staff reported on Russia's continued supply of forces, technology and equipment to Belarus's air defence. Russia was observed to have used radio-electronic warfare to cause trouble to the aerial inspection in southern and eastern regions of Ukraine. The general staff added: "Ukrainian aviation and missile and artillery units continue to fire at concentrations of manpower, military equipment of Russian occupiers, and warehouses with ammunition."

On 06 August, Zelenskyy created an ad hoc working group to be chaired by the head of the president's office, Andriy Yermak, consisting of representatives from the cabinet ministries, Ukrainian and foreign specialists on international law. The commission will develop and implement the compensation mechanism by considering applications seeking for damages caused by the war.

Also on 06 August, Ukraine's digital transformation ministry reported that over 344,000 Ukrainians were using the eVorog chatbot. The application was designed to help Ukraine's army destroy Russia's military equipment and resources.

According to the ministry, in July more than 2000 tips were received on the chatbot about potential enemy collaborators, which were then verified and sent to the Security Service of Ukraine.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 07 August, Russia's Energodar's military-civilian administration said that the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant was shelled by Ukraine's troops. Ukraine's units allegedly used a 220 millimeter rocker of the Uragan multiple rocket launching system. In the press release, the administration mentioned that they the strike damaged a part of a storage facility and a computer-assistance monitoring station.

On 05 August, Russia's delegation to the UN Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference, Andrey Belousov said that the allegations against Russia about their possibility of using nuclear weapons is "untenable and baseless." He referred to Russia's doctrinal guidelines and said that hypothetically nuclear weapons can only be used under emergency situations like as a response to weapons of mass destruction or where the existence of the state is threatened. Belousov clarified that none of the hypothetical situations mentioned in their guidelines apply to the situation in Ukraine. He mentioned that warnings given so far about nuclear war voiced by Russia were directed against NATO members to deter further aggression by Western countries.

On 07 August, the Russian embassy in the US urged the media to stop spreading "Russophobic fabrications," following the West's accusation of Moscow attacking the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant. On 05 August the embassy also condemned Kiev for launching artillery strikes near the power plant and the city of Enerгодар.

On 07 August, Russia's president Vladimir Putin met the head of Chechnya republic, Ramzan Kadyrov following the discussions with Turkey's president Recep Tayyip.

Kadyrov stated that Russia appreciated the contribution of Chechen special forces during the operation in Ukraine. Putin acknowledged the growth of the republic and inquired on the investment opportunities for the development of a tourist destination.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 07 August, Turkey's defence ministry and Ukraine's infrastructure minister, Aleksandr Kubrakov, reported that four ships left ports in Ukraine for inspection by the Joint Communication Centre at Istanbul. Three of them left from the Chornomorsk port and one from Odesa. Two ships are carrying corn to Turkey, one ship with sunflower oil is heading for Italy and the other the other one is transporting sunflower seeds to China.

On 07 August, the UK defense intelligence reported that Russia might have dismissed six commanders since the start of the war for their poor performance. general-colonel Aleksandr Zhuravlev who commanded the western region for five years was absent on Russia's Navy Day in St Petersburg held on 31 July. He is likely to have been replaced by general-lieutenant Vladimir Kochetkov. The intelligence claims that the change is leadership is likely to impact Russia's military performance against Ukraine.

On 06 August, Ukraine's presidential advisor, Mykhaylo Podolyak thanked North Macedonia for the military aid and said: "No matter what the size of your country or the volume of GDP, it matters where your heart is." North Macedonia will send supply soviet-era tanks and planes to Ukraine. North Macedonia's defence ministry clarified that this decision does not violate the combat readiness of the country. It also mentioned that the tanks had originally been purchased from Ukraine in 2001, to fight against the ethnic insurgency launched by Albanians seeking greater autonomy in North Macedonia.

On 07 August, the US secretary of state visited South Africa by starting his three-nation tour of Africa. The move comes following Russia's attempts to gain support from African countries. South Africa is

neutral regarding the war in Ukraine and refusing to join the west to condemn Moscow for its aggressiveness.

On 06 August, the US defence ministry released a video of humanitarian aid cargo meant for Ukraine being loaded on an aircraft at Dover Air Force base in Delaware. The operation was conducted during a foreign military sales. In the the video, the ministry reaffirmed its "steadfast commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty & territorial integrity in support of a secure & prosperous Ukraine."

The Global Fallouts:

Implications of the Ukraine war

On 07 August, Amnesty International said that it "deeply regrets the distress and anger" that their recent report has created. The report was released on 04 August and accused Ukraine's military of endangering civilians by setting up bases in schools and hospitals, and heavily populated residential areas. It also alleged that Ukrainian forces were violating international law by exposing civilians to Russia's offensive. However, even though the organization stands by the findings in the report, it clarified that nothing justified Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

On the same day, the first ship carrying Ukraine's grains under the deal between Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and the UN, was supposed to reach Lebanon. Data from *Marine Traffic* showed the Seirra Leone flagged ship off the Turkish coast. Though a new arrival date has not been announced, the vessel's bill of lading expects the arrival date at Tripoli to be on 09 August. However, Lebanon's transport, agriculture and economy ministers have said that they do not have any information on who will purchase the grains being carried by Razoni.

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War in Ukraine: Day 163

War on the Ground:

On 05 August, Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke with Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera for the first time in the history of their bilateral ties. They spoke of increasing the interaction

between the countries and guaranteeing food security in the region.

On 05 August, the head of the Ukrainian president's office, Andriy Yermak spoke on the phone with Jacob Sullivan, the national security adviser to the US president on Ukraine's pressing problems and requirements to bolster its stability and defence capacity to fend off a full-scale Russian invasion.

On 05 August, in his address Zelenskyy spoke on contributions from 110 different countries who have raised more than UAH six billion for charity. Professional military drones were dispatched to the front lines as a result of the platform's functioning; this was one of the initial acquisitions made as part of the "Army of Drones" initiative. Twenty Fly Eye 3.0 drones, two Warmate complexes with forty kamikaze drones, and a total of 78 Matrice multi-copter drones were purchased from the funds.

On 05 August, three more ships transported tons of corn from Ukrainian ports. Following the first grain cargo to cross the Black Sea since the beginning of the war are ships headed for Ireland, the UK, and Turkey. Earlier, a ship bound for Lebanon passed through, marking the start of the groundbreaking agreement between Russia and Ukraine and Turkey.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 05 August, Russia's foreign ministry declared 14 Bulgarian diplomats as persona non grata. The move comes following when Bulgaria expelled 70 Russian diplomats on suspicions of spying and imposed a limit on the number of Moscow's representatives as the once-close alliance between the two countries deteriorated over Ukraine.

On the same day, Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov during his visit to Cambodia stated that Russia is ready to discuss the exchange of prisoners with the US, but only through the channel, negotiated by Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Joe Biden. He said that Russia was prepared to discuss the exchange of detainees with the US.

On 05 August, Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan during his visit to the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi, spoke with Russian president Vladimir Putin on gas delivery. Russian deputy prime minister Alexander Novak said: "...the Presidents agreed during negotiations that we will start partial gas supplies and payment in rubles." Turkey received around 26 billion cubic meters of natural gas yearly from Russia. Furthermore, they also discussed the construction of Akkuyu and Turkish stream nuclear power plants.

Also on 05 August, Russia's investigative committee reported that Kiev bombed the Yelenovka detention center of Ukrainian prisoners of war by NATO's long range weapons which includes HIMARS. The report states: "The accuracy and the density of rocket hits, and also other circumstances confirm that these were deliberate and planned actions by the Ukrainian side that used NATO long-range artillery guns, in particular, the HIMARS multiple launch rocket system."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 05 August, the US ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield spoke about the impact of the Ukraine war on the global food crisis. She warned that Russia's invasion will affect around 40 million people in the Sub-Saharan Africa. She also said: "Regardless of how you feel about Russia, we all have a powerful common interest in mitigating the impact of the war in Ukraine on food security."

On the same day, three more ships left from ports in Ukraine to carry corns to Ireland, the UK and Turkey. One Turkey-flagged ship carries 12,000 tons of corn from the Chornomorsk port for Karasu, Turkey and a Malta-flagged ship carries more than 13,000 tons of corns left for the UK. Another Panama-flagged ship left from Odesa port for Ireland with 33,000 tons. These vessels are being accompanied by Ukrainian pilot ships to navigate the mine-infested waters and the shipment will be monitored by the Joint Coordination Centre set up by Ukraine, Russia, Turkey and the UN.

As per Eurostat's report, Poland accepted the

most number of refugees fleeing the Ukraine war in June, followed by Romania, Ireland and Bulgaria. It granted 'temporary protection' status to 60,125 people. The report stats that there were 1.2 million Ukrainians residing in Poland under the scheme currently. While the majority of the people seeking asylum were from Ukraine, 405 Russians also received such status in Poland. 2400 Nigerians and 410 Moroccans have also applied for temporary protection in Portugal.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 05 August, the National Nuclear Energy Generating Company Energoatom's office reported that Russian forces shelled the Zaporizhia nuclear power plant. As per the report, three rounds were fired towards the plant's location, close to one of the power units where the nuclear reactor is situated. There are concerns over hydrogen and radioactive substance leakage.

On 05 August, in response to the press release issued by Amnesty International on 04 August accusing Zelenskyy of endangering civilians by basing military troops in residential areas, the organization's Ukraine Head Oksana Pokalchuk tendered her resignation. She mentioned that Amnesty International had not taken into account the information sent by the Ukraine office about Russia's offensive.

On the same day, at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, the UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres referred to the war in Ukraine which was exacerbating the nuclear threat in the world. In a solemn gathering, Guterres urged the members to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to work on eliminating stockpiles of nuclear weapons. He also called for disarmament for the member states as the only plausible option to preserve peace.

Also on 05 August, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported that food prices in July has fallen for the fourth consecutive month, following a record high since Ukraine war. The FAO chief economist Maximo Torero however said that while this

was a welcome change, high fertilizer prices and currency movements still pose threats to food security.

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War in Ukraine: Day 162

War on the Ground:

On 04 August, Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy convened a meeting of the Supreme Commander Headquarters. Security issues like the general mobilization for the war efforts, provision of necessary weapons, military equipment for Ukraine's defence forces and the implementation of the combined territorial defence plan were discussed.

On 04 August, the general staff of the armed forces said that Russian forces suffered the most losses in the Bakhmut and Donetsk regions. A command post of the 22nd Army Corps of the Coastal Troops of Russia's Black Sea Fleet was also destroyed. The general staff further stated that around 41,500 soldiers from Russia had been eliminated in Ukraine since the beginning of the offensive in February. So far Ukraine has also destroyed 1789 tanks, 4026 armored vehicles, 2960 motor vehicles, 182 cruise missiles and 260 MLRS among other Russian military equipment.

Ukraine's ambassador to Lebanon, asked the ship docked at the Tripoli port in Lebanon to be stopped from leaving. The Syria flagged Laodicea which arrived at the port on 28 June was alleged by the Ukraine's government for carrying contains grains stolen from Ukraine. Lebanon's customs officials denied the claims stating the vessel's papers were inspected and were in order. Even though Ukraine called on Lebanon to reverse its decision, the Laodicea, green signalled to sail outside Lebanon's territorial waters. Ukraine's foreign ministry expressed its disappointment for its position being neglected. Though its final destination is unclear, the ship has moved out towards the Syrian coast.

On the same day, the Center for Strategic Communications and General Command of the Ukraine's Armed Forces reported that five people were killed and 11 were wounded due to continued shelling by Russia's forces. Intensive shelling was also reported in Maryinka and Krasnohorivka in the Donetsk region, including industrial

facilities in Chuguyiv, Kharkiv, and Izyum districts. In the Luhansk and Kherson regions, three rockets and five missiles were fired in the Luhansk region, where the attack was supported by mortar, tank fire and explosions were reported.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

The head of the Radiation, Chemical and Biological Protection Troops (RCBZ) of the Russian Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov accused the Pentagon of hiding the development of bio-weapons in Ukraine. He alleged that a company called "Labyrinth Ukraine" and the US international development agency, USAID had taken part in the US military biological program.

Kirillov said that USAID was thus being used by Pentagon as a front to avoid suspicion. On the same day, Kremlin spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov referred to Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. He said that this move was to artificially provoke tension and was a "completely unnecessary trip." Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also spoke about the issue and said that Pelosi's visit risks "undermining regional stability and security."

Khimki City Court in Russia, found US basketball star, Brittney Griner guilty of bringing in cannabis-infused vape cartridges to Russia, the substance being illegal, she was sentenced to nine years in prison and fined Griner RUB one million. The ruling, comes after a lengthy and publicized trial, might pave the way for a high-stakes prisoner exchange. On this issue, US National Security spokesperson, John Kirby urged Russia to accept its proposal of exchanging convicted arms trafficker Viktor Bout for Griner and marine Paul Whelan who has been imprisoned for espionage charges.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 04 July, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that Russia's invasion in Ukraine was the most dangerous moment in Europe since World War Two. He also said that to serve the interest of Europe, Russia must not be allowed to win. He mentioned that while the conflict between Russia and Ukraine was bad, it would have been worse

had it between Russia and NATO. He said, "If President (Vladimir) Putin even thinks of doing something similar to a NATO country as he has done to Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine, then all of NATO will be involved immediately." He also mentioned that the invasion is not just an attack on Ukraine, but an attack on the values and the world order that NATO believes in.

On 03 July, US Intelligence officers told The Associated Press, that Russia was trying to plant false evidence regarding the attack on the Olenivka Prison that left 53 dead. They warned that Russia might blame Ukraine and the weapons supplied by the US for the same.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 04 July, the WHO said that Ukraine is and will be facing a worsening health emergency if Russia's invasion continues for long. WHO says that this will be due to a combination of burnt-out staff, increased shelling and the upcoming harsh conditions in the winter months. A WHO tracker also reported that out of the 615 attacks on healthcare facilities in 2022, 434 have been in Ukraine. Ukraine emergency coordinator Heather Papowitz for WHO said that she was most concerned about the active fighting like the eastern Donbas region or Kherson.

On the same day, Amnesty International accused Ukraine of voluntarily endangering civilians by concentrating their troops in residential areas. They said that establishing military bases in residential areas were not only putting civilians at risk but also violating the laws of war. Zelenskyy responded to the report saying that Russia's aggression in Ukraine cannot be justified in any way. He also said that the report was similar to propaganda and disinformation tactics used commonly by Russia.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) head, Rafael Grossi said that they were attempting to gain access to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is currently under Russia's control, but was being operated by Ukrainian technicians. He said: "We can't afford faulty communication with the plant in areas relevant to safety..."

Frankly, if I don't have access, I can't determine that. There are contradictions between the accounts of the Russian and Ukrainian sides."

On 03 July, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said that they did not guarantee the safety of the fighters captured from the Azovstal steelworks by Russia. In a statement, the ICRC said that it did not have the jurisdiction to intervene once the prisoners of war were already in enemy hands. It clarified that the ICRC had only played the role of an intermediary to facilitate the safe passage of the captured fighters from out of the Azovstal plant. Referring to the Olenivka penal facility to investigate, ICRC is yet to get the access.

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War in Ukraine: Day 161

War on the Ground:

On 03 August, Ukraine's prosecutor general Andriy Kostin and US Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink met to discuss the cooperation on efforts towards war crime investigation, anti-corruption, and justice reforms. According to Kostin: "Effective coordination on the part of the prosecutor's office is key both for intensifying the work of the law enforcement system and for projects of international partnership support."

In the daily address, Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked Estonia's foreign minister, Urmas Reinsalu for agreeing to support the reconstruction process to start back schools. Ukraine will be building back the destroyed schools, kinder gardens, and universities in the Zhytomyr region with help from the Estonian government. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal who also visited Ukraine confirmed on the inclusion of arms supply to Ukraine as part of its budget and appreciated the long-standing efforts of Ukraine in the war.

On 03 August, Ukraine's intelligence directorate released a statement on the findings of the treatment of the prisoners of war. It reported that the POWs were tortured, went through physical humiliation, and were psychologically demoralized to make them confess the war crimes of Ukraine.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 03 August, the Russian defence ministry accused Ukraine of torturing, starving, and

cutting off medical supplies. Deputy Defense Minister Alexander Fomin blamed the West for holding Ukraine accountable for it. He said that Russia has been taking measures to align with the Geneva Conventions when it came to the treatment of POWs, he also claimed that Russia had held 40 weekly meetings with the UN and ICRC.

Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov reported on the draft agreement that was framed in the Istanbul meeting to settle the differences between Russia and Ukraine. He said: "Russia is ready [for a peace deal], the Ukrainian side is well-aware of our terms. One way or another, they will be fulfilled."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 03 August, the US Senate held a vote to approve Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO. In the voting, two-thirds of the majority voted in favor of the ratification of the accession process. According to US President Joe Biden: "This historic vote sends an important signal of the sustained, bipartisan US commitment to NATO, and to ensuring our Alliance is prepared to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow." So far France, Germany, Canada, and Italy have already green-signalled the accession.

The first ship which left from Ukraine port of Odesa on 02 August was green-signaled by Turkey to continue its route to Lebanon. At the same Zelenskyy was skeptical about the continuation of the grain export due to potential intervention from Russia. The Razoni ship carries 26,527 tonnes of corn which first entered the Bosphorus strait to get clearance from Turkish inspection.

On 03 August, an intelligence update from the UK ministry of defence, observed that Ukraine's recent attack on Russia's train in Kherson will make it challenging for Russia to re-do its railway links and force it use the Crimean route to transport its supplies. It said: "It is likely we will see an increase in civilians attempting to flee Kherson and the surrounding area as hostilities continue and food shortages worsen. This will create pressure on transport nodes and routes, likely resulting in measures to control movement being implemented."

Germany's chancellor, Olaf Scholz said that the turbine (40 feet) which was sent for repairs to Canada was now ready to be shipped back to Russia, but Russia has conditioned that it will receive the shipping only after assurance that the turbine will not be applicable to western sanctions. Therefore, the repaired turbine remains stranded in the Siemens Energy factory.

On 03 August, Switzerland's federal council adopted a new set of sanctions on Russia to align with the EU's sanctions on gold products. It also reiterated its support for fighting against the global food crisis and assured us that measures against Russia would not affect the trade lines for agricultural and food products. The federal council also announced on measures relating to technical and linguistic adjustments to the existing regulations as part of the alignment package.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 03 August, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced the launch of a "fact-finding mission" to look into the attacks that took place in the Olenivka prison where more than 40 prisoners of war were killed.

On 02 August, USAID Deputy Administrator, Isobel Coleman held a meeting with the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Europe, Hans Kluge where both announced a joint support package of USD 1.8 million to Ukraine for monitoring any spread of infections or disease. Till now USAID has given USD 15.5 million as health support to Ukraine.

On 02 August, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) announced a new package of USD 40 million to address the war-induced grain shortages. The project is funded by Canada and will ease the stored grains through providing technical equipment. Director of the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience said: "FAO is responding immediately to this situation while taking a longer-term view and looking to invest in durable solutions that build on sectoral capacity, in coordination with the Government at national and local levels."

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War in Ukraine: Day 160

War on the Ground:

On 01 August, Verkhovna Rada's chairman Ruslan Stefanchuk said that the Ukrainian parliament is involved in enforcing six of the seven requirements that were put forward by the European Commission and European Council in regards to its EU membership candidacy. He also added that Ukraine's parliament should adjust its legislation to that of the EU. According to Stefanchuk in the process of EU candidacy, the interaction between lawmakers of the European Parliament and Verkhovna Rada was

essential. European integration bills were found to be around 49 for Ukraine to reform its policies.

On 02 August, the dry cargo ship that carried corn and grain from Ukraine, "Razoni," arrived on the Turkish shores. The ship was anchored at the entrance to the Bosphorus Strait in the Black Sea. It had left Odesa port on 01 August following the grain corridor but its arrival was postponed due to weather conditions.

On the same day, the Russian forces launched a missile attack on Ukraine in the Lviv region. A military unit in the Chervonohrad district of the Lviv region was struck down by the missile attack resulting in two explosions. According to the press service of the general staff of the Ukrainian army, eight X-101 type cruise missiles were launched by the Russian military from the Caspian Sea region. Seven out of the eight missiles were shot down by Ukraine's air force out of which six were destroyed by the anti-aircraft missile units and one by a fighter jet.

Also on 02 August, Ukraine's first lady Olena Zelenska signed a memorandum of understanding with UNICEF to implement educational reforms in the country which was ravaged by the war. They discussed providing children with safe, accessible and quality education for children and young people who are suffering due to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. According to Zelenska, resuming the obstructed education of the children is necessary for the country. The partnership also would like to provide psychological help to those affected by trauma due to the war.

On the same day, Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a telephone conversation with the NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg. Zelenskyy requested the military alliance to provide more heavy weapons to counteract the Russian invasion. He also requested faster delivery of non-lethal military aid that would be financed by Ukraine. Stoltenberg congratulated Ukraine's president on dispatching the first grain ship from Odesa port. Zelenskyy invited Stoltenberg to

participate in the online Crimea platform summit on 23 August.

Also on 02 August, president Zelenskyy met with the chairman of OSCE and Poland's foreign affairs minister, Zbigniew Rau. He thanked the president and the government of Poland for their help and support during the war. He also showed gratitude for Poland's assistance with forcibly displaced Ukrainian citizens and how Kyiv is returning the favour to the Polish citizens regarding their special status. He also thanked them for their defence assistance.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 02 August, Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said that the statement issued by the representative of Ukraine's Main Directorate of Intelligence of the ministry of defence, Vadim Skibitsky, confirmed the direct involvement of the US in the Ukraine war. She said that Skibitsky acknowledged that Ukraine consulted the US before launching a strike and the US had veto power over military decision-making. He refused to comment on who commanded the selection of targets for the US-made HIMARS multiple launch rocket systems. The confirmation of direct involvement of the US through the Ukrainian Armed Forces questions the credibility of the promise made by the US to avoid boots on the ground.

On 02 August, Russia's Supreme Court deemed the Azov regiment a terrorist group. They were to be tried under anti-terror laws and were to be sent to prison for 20 years. They were recognized as a fascist group by the Russian government for their far-right and ultra-nationalist roots. They are primarily from Mariupol. The Azov battalion said that Russia was looking for justifications for their war crime of bombing the prison with Ukrainian prisoners of war in Olenivka by painting them as an extremely radical group. They urged the US state department to designate Russia as a terrorist state.

On 03 August, Russia's foreign minister will meet with top diplomats and the leader of Myanmar after he arrives at Naypyidaw. He

is set to travel to Phnom Penh in Cambodia to attend the Russia-ASEAN format foreign ministers meeting and is expected to hold several bilateral meetings.

On the same day, a representative of the Russian foreign ministry at the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference, Alexander Trofimov, said that Ukraine would violate its obligation to the agreement as a result of acquiring nuclear weapons. The aggressive nationalism and chauvinism in Ukraine will threaten international security, according to Trofimov. He also mentioned that the west was the reason for destabilizing its territorial integrity and not Russia or its commitments to the NPT.

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Also on 03 August, the former employees of the special unit "Kord" of Ukraine's ministry of internal affairs were detained in Kherson. They were found along with weapons and explosive devices were hidden in the location. The weapons and explosive devices were suspected to be utilized for future sabotage and terrorist activities by the Ukrainian special service.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 01 August, US secretary of state Antony Blinken after the nuclear non-proliferation talks condemned Russia's actions and attacks around Ukraine's largest nuclear power plant as irresponsible and criticized Moscow for using it as a "nuclear shield" to assault Ukrainian soldiers.

On 02 August, the US sanctioned Russia's president Vladimir Putin's rumored mistress and other Russian proxies. Alina Kabaeva, a

former gymnast has been added to the list of those who have been sanctioned by the United States department of the treasury. Russian proxies/ agents Volodymyr Saldo and Kirill Stremousov in the Kherson Oblast and Kostyantyn Ivashchenko in Mariupol are among the other 12 individuals who have been sanctioned.

On the same day, the UK government announced further sanctions on Didier Casimiro and Zeljko Runje, two former board members of the oil major Rosneft, were subject to further sanctions. The sanction list stated that as a result of "obtaining a benefit from or aiding the government of Russia through acting as a management of a government of Russia-affiliated firm," both are now subject to an asset freeze.

On 01 August, the UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres praised Turkey for its efforts in leading and mediating an agreement between Ukraine and Russia for the movement of grain exports. Guterres stated that the departure of the dry cargo ship Razoni, which was sailing under the flag of Sierra Leone, signified a "essential beginning point" for the deal. The first of many commercial ships that will offer assurance and comfort to the world's food markets, he added.

On 02 August, the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen announced that the EU has fully supplied Ukraine with the first tranche of fresh emergency macro-financial support for EUR One billion. She stated: The funds will help Ukraine address its immediate financial needs following the unprovoked and unjustified aggression by Russia. The EUR one billion will help strengthen Ukraine in a crucial phase."

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 02 August, prices of cooking oil, poultry, and eggs increased in Singapore as a result of COVID-19, the supply-chain crisis, and the conflict in Ukraine. Many of Singapore's hawkers were forced to raise their prices, which has harmed individuals with lesser incomes who depend on this type of food. One of the hawkers, Lie stated that: "In all

my years of doing this, I don't remember things becoming so expensive so quickly. But I have to keep going on. This was my father's business and I want it to last for as long as possible," expressing worry about the crisis caused by the Ukraine war.

On the same day, amid tensions over the invasion of Ukraine and worries about China's expanding aspirations in the area, foreign ministers from Southeast Asia and other world powers are convening in the capital of Cambodia to discuss the violence that is still present in Myanmar. Susannah Patton, director of the Southeast Asia Program at Australia's Lowy Institute stated that the Russian invasion of Ukraine, its effects on world food and energy prices, and the increasing tension between China and the US are of great concern to the ten ASEAN countries.

On 02 August, *the Asahi Shimbun* reported that Japan's shipments of used cars to Russia have grown threefold since May, despite the economic sanctions that Japan and several Western countries have placed on Moscow as a result of its invasion of Ukraine. In June, the port of Vladivostok in Russia was crammed with new and used automobiles coming from South Korea and Japan, many of which were SUVs, minivans, and enormous luxury vehicles.

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War in Ukraine: Day 159

War on the Ground:

On 01 August, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed new laws. One, to provide safety and protection to journalists working in hostile areas. Two, to remove the

bureaucratic barriers to easily provide assistance to internally displaced people. Three, on handling emergency situations and hostilities, and four, for thermal modernization of buildings and simplifying the process of restoration of the residential sector.

On the same day, Mykolaiv and Kharkiv were shelled amidst air raid sirens. Russia used tanks, barrels, and jet artillery in this region. Tube and rocket artillery was also fired in the Siversky direction, in the Chernihiv and Sumy regions. Sloviansk was also under the fire, but there was a decrease in Russia's offensive in the Kramatorsk direction or in Zaporizhzhia, where their troops were seen regrouping. Russia's offensive is observed to increase in southern Ukraine, and is seen to be bringing more territory under control and consolidating the Southern Buh region and the Kryvyi Rih direction. The Army's General Staff said that Belarus has deployed additional e-warfare systems in the parts of the border shared with Ukraine, like in the Volyn and Polissya direction. On 01 August, the first ship carrying grains from Ukraine, under the joint safe passage agreement left the port of Odesa. Carrying 26,000 metric tonnes of maize, the Sierra Leone-flagged ship, Razoni, is destined for Tripoli in Lebanon. UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres applauded the effort and expressed hope that this is the first of many such ships. Guterres also said that the World Food Programme intends to "purchase, load and ship an initial 30,000 metric tonnes of wheat from Ukraine in an UN-chartered vessel," in the following days. Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba said that it was a "relief for the world," and the Kremlin called it a "very positive development." Moreover, Ukraine's infrastructure minister Oleksandr Kubrakov informed that 16 more vessels will be shipped soon carrying 600,000 tonnes from the Odesa port.

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 01 August, Russia's deputy prime minister Marat Khusnullin spoke in an interview about the reconstruction efforts in Mariupol. He mentioned that the first buildings in the town will be ready by September, and hospitals and a center for

the emergency ministry will also be set up. About the Azovstal steelworks, Khusnulin said that it will not be rebuilt as per its previous capacity, where it employed around 12,000 people. He also said that Russia is trying to create more jobs to make the city more self-reliant. A technology park with elements of the landscape will be established to re-initiate the economy in the region.

Russia's foreign ministry alleged that NATO members were supporting Ukraine to recruit foreign mercenaries to assist its war efforts. The head of the department of new challenges and threats at the ministry, Vladimir Tarabrin reported on the involvement of the NGO members in the operation, but Russia is seen to be of the recruitments and has been monitoring. The department alleges that 7000 foreign mercenaries have come to Ukraine so far, with the most being from Poland, followed by Canada, the US, Romania, and the UK.

Russia's courts announced that they will release hundreds of Ukraine's citizens stuck in detention camps. The Moscow branch of Russia's Federal Court Marshals Service said that they have not been allowed to cross the border due to the war. Moreover, the migrants without documentation face a similar fate as the closed consulates are unable to process their files. The court marshals service added, it will now consider filing appeals to stop the forced expulsion orders against these migrants.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 01 August, NATO members Germany, Hungary, and Italy took over the policing of the airspace over the Baltic region, as a part of NATO's air policing mission. Four JAS-39 fighter aircraft and around eighty personnel from Hungary will lead the mission out of Šiauliai air base in Lithuania. They will be joined by four German Eurofighter aircraft, flying out of Amari, Estonia, and Italian Eurofighters based in Malbork, Poland. The new force will replace the Belgian, French, and Spanish units that have been patrolling the Baltic airspace since April. Regarding the operation, NATO spokesperson Oana Lungescu said: "At a time when European

security has been fundamentally altered by Russia's war against Ukraine, NATO fighter jets remain ready around the clock to protect Allied airspace. We are always vigilant."

In their effort at a crackdown on Russia's oligarchs and elites, the UK will now require foreign companies with property in the UK to record the details of their owners in a new register. Termed the "Register of Overseas Entities," this is a part of the economic crime law enacted this year. The register is to stop the illegal flow of cash into London, as this will prevent criminals from hiding behind chains of shell companies.

The white house released a statement, renewing its commitment to a responsible nuclear arsenal, at the tenth review conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The month-long conference was slated to be held in 2022 but has been delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic. President Joe Biden said that he is prepared to pursue a new nuclear arms deal with Russia and urged President Vladimir Putin to act in "good faith". Putin reiterated, saying that there will not be any winners if nuclear warfare breaks out. The US announced a fresh package of aid to Ukraine. The new package is the seventeenth drawdown from the US and will send up to USD 500 million in arms and equipment from the US department of defense (DoD) for Ukraine's war efforts. The DoD has promised more HIMARS and 155-millimeter artillery systems that Ukraine's forces are already using on the battlefield. With the new package, the total military aid from the US to Ukraine will come to about USD 8.7 billion.

On 01 August, Latvia suspended the border-crossing arrangement that allowed travel between Russia and Latvia. The agreement had been signed between the two countries in 2010. Latvia's government has cited the closure of Latvia's consulate in Pskov, Russia as the main reason behind freezing the agreement. The consulate in Pskov was the only Latvian mission that issued papers to Russians for traveling to Latvia, But Russia's ordered the closure to retaliate against Latvia's support of Ukraine.

On the same day, the European Commission

disbursed USD 500 million of the USD one billion Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) operation for Ukraine. The remaining amount will be sent on 02 August. The MFA is part of the extraordinary effort by the EU to assist Ukraine in its war efforts and to address its urgent financial needs.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 01 August, the New Zealand government introduced a fresh set of sanctions on Russia. The new list includes branches and independent arms of the Russian armed forces especially logistical support units and the defense entities responsible for providing weapons and equipment. The insurance company SOGAZ, the Russian Railways, and defense entities that research, produce and test military hardware for Russia's army have also been included under the new sanctions.

Australia's Governor-General David Hurley met Poland's President Andrzej Duda in Warsaw and both the leaders reiterated their support for Ukraine. Duda thanked Australia for their contribution to Ukraine's war efforts, especially for the provision of Bushmaster infantry mobility vehicles. Hurley, on his first visit to Poland, thanked Poland for accepting the refugees from Ukraine.

On the same day, Iran's foreign ministry reiterated its neutral position in the Ukraine war. The foreign minister, Kani Chafi said that Iran will not take part in any initiative that risks aggravating the conflict for any side. He said that Iran will be choosing "peace and support" to resolve the crisis and will be making efforts in that direction.

The Vatican announced Pope Francis's scheduled to visit Kazakhstan in September. *Reuters* reported on the possible meeting between Francis and the Russian Orthodox patriarch Kirill to discuss Ukraine. While patriarch Kiril had backed Russia's actions in Ukraine, Pope urged Russia and Ukraine to resolve the crisis peacefully. In May, the pope had said that Kirill "cannot become Putin's altar boy," which was criticized by the Russian orthodox church.

A new study conducted by the Network

Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) found that Twitter accounts which previously dealt with conspiracy theories and the anti-vaccination movement were increasingly focused on spreading disinformation about the global food crisis. According to the research, the Twitter accounts were mirroring Russia's official position. It is to push the idea that the sanctions by the western countries on Russia are responsible for the food insecurity and cause to the interruption of grain exports from Ukraine.

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War in Ukraine: Day 157 & 158

War on the Ground:

On 29 July, the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) released the rate of unemployment in the country. The unemployment rate quarterly was 35 per cent. NBU expects the rate to fall to 28.9 per cent by the new year. According to a poll released by the Ukrainian Rating Group, 39 per cent were unemployed whereas only 34 per cent of Ukrainians said that their work was unchanged. NBU predicts that even though the nominal wage will grow rapidly in 2023 and 2024, the real wage might decrease due to the impact left by the war. Ukraine is also suffering from food insecurity due to the war. One in every three individuals in Ukraine is suffering from a shortage of food, according to the United Nations World Food Programme.

Also on 29 July, a bill that allowed the government to confiscate properties during the period of martial law forcibly passed its first reading in Ukraine's parliament, the Verkhovna Rada. The law dictates that properties would be seized by the government if it is deemed to be useful in the national defence. The owners of the seized properties would be compensated from the state budget in less than five following budget periods. Later the properties would be transferred to the Asset Recovery and

Management Agency.

On the same day, the Russian Su-25 armored attack aircraft was struck down with an Igla MANPADS system by Ukraine's 25th Separate Airborne Brigade of the Sicheslav Airborne Assault Division. The assault division had shot down 29 Russian aerial weaponry including warplanes, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

On 30 July, Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the attack on Olenivka prison by Russia a war crime. The assault on the prison that contained 50 Ukrainian prisoners of war held in the prison including the neo-nazi Azov battalion was denounced by Zelenskyy as an intentional mass murder by Russia. The Red Cross had involved itself in treating the injured prisoners who were left behind after the attack. Meanwhile, the Russians claim that Kyiv had attacked the prison with the US-supplied HIMARS rockets. According to Ukraine's security agency, the blast had taken place inside the building and the Russians might have done it to hide the heinous tortures and murders it committed on the prisoners.

On 30 July, the Ukrainian Armed Forces exposed Russian reconnaissance and made the group retreat in the Kramatorsk direction. The Russian army opened fire from tubes, rocket artillery and tanks in the direction of Kharkiv, Slovyansk, Siversky, Bakhmut, and other regions as well. Both military and civilian infrastructures were destroyed by the Russian attacks.

On 30 July, the Russian army opened fire on 17 settlements across the Donetsk region. The Russian forces attacked the settlements with aviation, R-500 Iskander-K missiles, artillery, and Grad MLRS. The attack resulted in civilian casualties and the destruction of 52 civilian objects such as residential buildings, hospitals, railway stations, and other things.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 30 July, a maritime doctrine was signed by Vladimir Putin stating that the world ocean should not be in the control of NATO or the US. The new doctrine highlights how

NATO poses threat in the maritime sphere for Russia. It also mentions the need to expand the Russian maritime influence on the World Ocean as well as in the Arctic region. Upon the doctrine, Russia will deploy "Zircon" hypersonic missiles in its Navy and establish a new ferry line to Kaliningrad. The doctrine ensure Russia increased participation in the north-western sea and a permanent position in the Mediterranean Sea.

On 30 July, Russia imposed sanctions on 32 individuals from New Zealand who were accused of having Russophobic agenda in the country. Their entry into the Russian Federation would be closed indefinitely according to the sanction. These citizens of New Zealand are representatives of the armed forces, journalists, and municipal bodies.

Also on 30 July, Gazprom ceased its supply of gas to Latvia stating that the country broke the terms for the extraction of gas. Latvia is speculated to have refused to pay in rubles for the gas. According to the statement by Russia's president Vladimir Putin in March, unfriendly nations would be cut off from gas supply if they do not transact their payment through rubles.

On 29 July, Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov's four-nation African tour yielded great results for Africa. He visited Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda and Congo-Brazzaville. These nations lean on Russia for their food security had welcomed him with open arms. Lavrov wanted to refute the west's claims of Russia exporting hunger in Africa during his visit. He blamed the west for imposing sanctions on Russian grains which in turn gave rise to food insecurities in Africa. Both the west and Russia are fighting to get the attention of the African nations.

Also on the same day, Russia and Ukraine failed to provide evidence for the cause of the deaths of Ukrainian POWs at the Olenivka prison. They also failed to produce evidence of the perpetrators of the attack. Russia released the official list of losses but Ukraine's officials were unable to verify the list and called for an international investigation.

On 31 July, Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Kosovo and its backers the US and the EU to respect the rights of ethnic Serbs in the country. The Albanian ethnic in Pristina are trying to expel the Serbian population from Kosovo. She said that if Kosovo and its supporters, the US, and the EU did not respect the Serbian population, the consequences of it would escalate into a war between Pristina and Belgrade. Kosovo's prime minister announced the restriction of the Serbian licence plates and identification in the country and also will be conducting a ban on the said items.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 31 July, there has been a possibility of Finland's export industries being forced to shut down due to increasing gas prices. Although Finland's industrial sector consumes less natural gas when compared to other European countries, it still faces the consequences of the Russian gas supply disruption. The country's forestry and chemical sectors are concerned about the looming winter. The sectors rely on natural gas, so it won't be easy to go through the winter. To compensate for the natural gas that was cut off by the Russians, Finland is looking toward LNG terminals as an alternative solution.

On 30 July, Poland showed its backing of the proposal by the authorities of Estonia to ban Russian tourists EU-wide. This ban will be a part of the sanctions imposed on Russia due to its invasion of Ukraine. The Schengen visa provided by the EU countries is asked to be banned by Estonia. But the EU has not reached a final decision on the matter.

On 29 July, Norway donated 14 Iveco LAV III armoured vehicles to Ukraine. The government of Norway is considering donating more and further expanding its support to Ukraine. Norway has already donated other military equipment such as artillery, portable anti-aircraft defence weapons and much more.

On 31 July, Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan's spokesperson said that the first-grain exporting ship would leave the

Ukrainian port in the Black Sea on 01 August 2022. The ships would leave the port at the latest as soon as the documents are signed. The agreement by Russia and Ukraine lets the safe exit of grain ships that were blockaded from the Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 29 July, South Korea supplied weapons to Poland in its biggest ever arms deal, bringing it closer to the Ukraine war. The deal involved 1600 tanks and howitzers and nearly 50 fighter jets. Both countries' officials signed the framework of the deal on 27 July 2022 in Warsaw. The war in Ukraine has risen the South Korean arms industry and increased its cooperation with Europe.

On 01 August, the secretary general of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Haitham al-Gais announced that it would not compete with Russia. He called Moscow a major player and an influencer in the global oil market. He pointed out that the price of energy was increasing even before the war in Ukraine and the same was not the cause for the rise. He also said that the presence of Russia was important in the global petroleum market.

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EM Short Notes*

By Padmashree Anandhan, Rishma Banerjee, Emmanuel Selva Royan, and Sai Pranav



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BELGIUM

Belgium Energy Minister warns over hike in gas prices

On 29 August, Belgium's Energy Minister cautioned that the upcoming winters for next 10 years for the EU will be worst with increasing gas prices. Since the Ukraine war, the EU member states are challenges due to price hike in energies. The energy minister called for a EU-wide cap to prevent the rise in prices. While Germany is racing to complete filling its gas reserves before winter by 85 per cent before October, the set target is expected to be reached by September. (Alys Davies, "EU faces awful winters without gas cap – minister," BBC, 29 August 2022)

CYPRUS

Cyprus's newly discovered hydrocarbon well can ease Europe's energy crisis

On 22 August, Cyprus's energy minister, Natasa Pilides announced the new natural gas discovery off the southern coast of the country. The Cronos-1 well is 160 kilometers

off the coast, in 2287 meters of water, inside Cyprus' exclusive economic zone. It is estimated to have 2.5 trillion cubic feet of hydrocarbons. The discovery was done in collaboration with Italy's Eni and France's Total. While the Eni-Total consortium has not confirmed the exact amount of gas in the Cronos-1 well, it said: "The gas discovery of Cronos-1 can unlock additional potential in the area and is part of Eni's successful effort to provide further gas supply to Europe." The new discovery is expected to aid Europe's energy crisis that has been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the sanctions imposed by the West on Russian gas. (Menelaos Hadjicostis, "Cyprus says new gas discovery aids Europe's energy search," AP News, 22 August 2022)

FINLAND

Trial commences for three journalists in Finland in unprecedented press freedom case

On 25 August, *Helsingin Sanomat* began the trial for three journalists. Who have been

* EM Short Notes are notes published along with Daily Focus on Europe, every evening by the NIAS Europe Monitor team. The short notes provide a brief overview of the latest developments in Europe, and provides the sources from which they are compiled. Visit <https://globalpolitics.in/europe/> to read them every day.

charged with publishing classified defence information and the prosecutor has demanded a minimum of an 18 month suspension if found guilty. The two journalists and their former editor had published a report titled "Finland's most secret place" in 2017. It has been alleged that the report revealed national defence secrets like the location and tasks of an intelligence unit of the defence forces. The chairwoman of the Finnish Journalists Union, Hanne Aho said that this kind of trial was unprecedented in Finland, which is among the top countries in the global press freedom ranking published annually by Reporters Without Borders. The editor-in-chief of Helsingin Sanomat, Laius Niemi supported the journalists and said that they had not broken any law. (Anne Kauranen, "[Three Finnish journalists go on trial in rare press freedom case](#)," *Reuters*, 25 August, 2022)

Coalition differences lead Finland to cancel equal-pay legislation

On 15 August, Finland's equality minister, Thomas Blomqvist released a statement addressing the cancellation of the equality legislation. The legislation had been to reduce the pay-gap between men and women, but the five-party centre-left coalition government in the parliament could not reach consensus. Finland currently has a 16 per cent average pay gap and was positioned 38th in an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report published in 2021. The discussion on pay transparency was promised by prime minister Sanna Marin's programme when she took office in 2019. However, Blomqvist assured: "The work to prevent gender-based pay discrimination and advancing pay equality will continue in other government actions supporting equal pay." ("[Finland scraps equal pay legislation amid coalition differences](#)," *Reuters*, 15 August 2022)

World's first nuclear waste dump site in Eurajoki

On 11 August, a municipality in Finland agreed to allocate space for a nuclear waste dump nearby. The western Finland town named Eurajoki campaigned against several cities having the disposal site for nuclear waste from Olkiluoto nuclear power plant.

The bedrock in the town is also compatible and stable to host atomic waste inside as it is two billion years old. The home of three reactors and the Onkalo repository has residents approving the waste site as they trust their leaders. Sweden and Germany take the Onkalo repository system as an example to dump their nuclear waste. Many expect that rest of the European member states to follow Finland's style of using nuclear energy. ("Teri Schultz, "[Finns say yes to nuclear waste](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 11 August 2022)

Helsinki prepares to shut the eastern border with Russia

On 01 August, the Finnish government was compelled by the public and political parties to completely shut its eastern border with Russia to avoid escaping the sanctions imposed. Until July, there have been around 176,000 border crossings recorded. Russians contribute the most to shopping tourism in the southeast regions of Finland. The opposition parties have called on the government to stop issuing tourist visas to the Russians. However, around 100,000 Russians already hold Schengen tourist visas given by Finland and other countries. The chairperson for the National Coalition Party stated that: "The main challenge is that closing the opportunity for Russians to come here might create anger towards us, whereas our aim is to create anger towards Putin's regime and the war." (David Mac Dougall, "[How a sanctions loophole is letting Russians enter the EU](#)," *euronews*, 01 August 2022)

FRANCE

Data protection watchdog investigates Twitter after whistleblower's complaint

On 24 August, France's data protection agency, Commission Nationale de l'informatique et des Libertés, CNIL issued a statement about an investigation of a complaint by Twitter's former head of security, Peiter Zatko. The complaint claims that Twitter has misrepresented info about its security measures to international regulators. *The Washington Post* first reported on Zatko's accusation about the tech company violating settlement terms with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. The complaint also mentioned that "egregious and ongoing misrepresentations to the FTC,

French and Irish regulators," has also been made. CNIL in the statement said that it is studying the complaint. If the accusations are correct, then legal proceedings will be taken or sanctions will be imposed on the company. (Peter O'Brian, "[French data regulator investigating Twitter security allegations](#)," POLITICO, 24 August 2022)

Firefighters bring the wildfire under control leading to reopening of highway

On 13 August, firefighters stopped France's wildfires from spreading. With the help of Europe's reinforcements, the local firefighters stopped the advance in the smoldering fire in the Gironde region's forests. More than 20000 hectares of forests were burned in July in France causing 40000 people to be temporarily forced out of their houses. Storms are expected to bring down the temperatures raving in Europe. European providing firefighters and waterbombing aircraft have helped curb the wildfires tremendously. The halted fire has made the reopening of a stretch of highway possible. ("[France halts spread of "monster" wildfire, reopens highway](#)," Reuters, 14 August 2022)

France extends waiver for five nuclear power plants to function

On 08 August, Reuters reported that French Nuclear Safety Authority (ASN) has extended their temporary waivers to Bugey, Saint Alban, Tricastin, Blayais and Golfech power plants. As per the waiver, these power stations will be allowed to discharge their hot water into rivers as the country prepares for the fourth heatwave in 2022. In a statement ASN said: "The government considers that it is a public necessity to... maintain the production of these five power stations until Sept. 11 despite the exceptional weather conditions." ("[France tweaks rules to keep nuclear plants running during heatwave](#)," Reuter, 08 August 2022)

Rescuers doubtful of the Beluga whale's safe return due to its failing health

On 07 August, French rescuers and scientists were pessimistic about the return of the beluga whale to its arctic habitat from the river Seine. The whale was first sighted in the river Seine on 02 August 2022, 70 kilometers from north of Paris. The whale

has visible signs of malnutrition and does not accept the food offered by the rescuers. The response to the rescuers trying to help the whale to swim to its territory has been poor from the mammal. Small spots have been sighted on the whale's skin, which made the officials conclude that it is either reacting to the freshwater of the Seine or is having its health decline slowly. The whale has been reported to behave jitterily by scientific observers after it is seen rising to the surface briefly and emitting fewer whale songs than expected. (Leo Sands and George Wright "[France whale: Hopes fading for lost mammal stuck in River Seine](#)," BBC, 07 August 2022)

Water shortages have been seen all over France

On 05 August, 100 municipalities in France faced a water shortage due to the heatwave in the country. The office of the prime minister said that it was the worst drought that France has ever seen. Water usage is being regulated in 93 regions. France's government set up a crisis team to combat the drought. The drought conditions are expected to prolong for at least two weeks. The dry conditions have affected the crop yield adding more to the already existing food crisis caused by the Ukraine war. The nuclear energy output at some plants was reduced by the state energy company due to the unavailability of cooling water as the river temperatures are high. July marked the lowest level of rainfall since March 1961. ("[France drought: Parched towns left short of drinking water](#)," BBC, 05 August 2022)

Nuclear plants reduce outputs due to the rise in temperature in the rivers

On 03 August, France's largest nuclear energy supplier, Électricité de France (EDF), said that it would temporarily reduce the energy output in the nuclear power stations near Rhone and Garonne rivers. The 84 per cent state-owned energy company is forced to decrease its energy output due to heatwaves increasing the temperature of the rivers. The rise in river temperature results in limitations on the usage of river water to cool down power plants. According to EDF, there won't be a complete cut-off of energy production but rather a minimum level is maintained to keep the grid steady. Half of

EDF's 56 nuclear plants are offline due to planned maintenance and repair corrosion. The Ukraine war has increased the energy prices resulting in an energy crunch in France in turn rising the market price for electricity. (Julia Kollewe, "EDF cuts output at nuclear power plants as French rivers get too warm," *The Guardian*, 03 August 2022)

The national assembly approves a new package to fight inflation

On 03 August, the centrist alliance, Renaissance under France's president Emmanuel Macron managed to push forward a EUR 20 billion package to counter the cost of living crisis in the country. Although the conservative Republicans and the far-right National Rally supported the package in the national assembly during the final vote, the left coalition, NUPES, was against it. The package looks to combat inflation in the country that was increased by rising food and energy prices. Such measures enable a boost in pensions and particular welfare programs by four per cent and a cap on rent increases by 3.5 per cent. The package also permits private companies to offer annual tax-free bonuses of up to EUR 6000 which was increased from EUR 1000. It also allows the installation of a floating Liquified Natural Gas terminal in the port city of Le Havre. ("French lawmakers endorse €20 billion anti-inflation package," *Deutsche Welle*, 03 August 2022)

GERMANY

Germany collaborates with Denmark for link to Baltic Sea wind hub

On 29 August, Germany's energy ministry announced that it had secured a power link to a planned offshore wind hub in the Baltic Sea. The Bornholm Energy Island that comes under Denmark's part of the Baltic Sea will generate at least three gigawatts of power and will be connected to Germany through a 470-kilometer power cable. According to the energy ministry, the power generated in the hub would be enough to power 4.5 million German households and also reduce Germany's energy dependence on Russia. Investment and future profits from the hub will be shared equally between Germany and Denmark. This project will come under Denmark's Energy Vision 2030, whereby it plans to increase domestic offshore wind

power production five times, by 2030. ("Germany secures link to planned Baltic Sea renewable energy island," *Reuters*, 29 August 2022)

Chancellor Scholz outlines reforms to support future expansion of the EU

On 29 August Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz gave a speech at Charles University in Prague. He highlighted the EU's need to consider reformation in its structures before allowing more memberships. On the EU's expansion, Scholz predicted the member states count to increase from 27 up to 36. For which he insisted three ways on a unified EU. First, the EU decision making process should be over majority of votes instead of unanimous voting. Second, to ensure the number of deputies in the European Parliament does not exceed 751. Third, the European Commission, which currently has 27 commissioners must be kept constant. Scholz suggested that when the next members join, they share a portfolio with another commissioner, instead of introducing new ones. ("German leader outlines vision for bigger, more coherent EU," *AP News*, 29 August 2022; Laurenz Gherke, "Scholz pitches major EU enlargement — with reform," *POLITICO*, 29 August 2022)

Germany introduces new energy-saving measures

On 24 August, in an effort to save energy and combat rising energy prices, the German government adopted a bylaw. The new legislation will regulate the heating of public buildings and outlaw lit advertising hoardings. The law, will take effect in less than a week and at first last for six months. It will prohibit the heating of public structures like town halls and train waiting rooms to temperatures higher than 19C (66.2F). It will also require the turning off of radiators in hallways, foyers, entrances and exits, and technical rooms. The actions are a part of a national initiative to preserve energy to lessen Germany's dependence on Russian gas. The economy minister, Robert Habeck hailed these measures as crucial for Germany's energy security and said: "We want to free ourselves as quickly as possible from the vice of Russian energy imports." (Kate Connolly, "Germany approves limits on

[heating public buildings to save energy.” The Guardian, 24 August 2022\)](#)

High producer prices add more trouble to Germany's economy

On 19 August, Germany's finance ministry announced that the economic prospect looked sombre for the country due to soaring energy costs and longer-than-expected supply chain disruption. The producer prices also went high due to energy price rises. The August report by the ministry stated that the month was looking to be highly uncertain. Other factors such as the war in Ukraine, China's zero-COVID policy and lower supply of gas from Russia have also contributed to the 8.5 per cent inflation in the month of July. The energy prices had increased up to 105 per cent in July when compared to 2021. As a countermeasure for the increased energy price, taxes on gas was reduced from 19 per cent to seven per cent. ([“Record jump in German producer prices adds to gloomy outlook,” Reuters, 19 August 2022\)](#)

Germany's commission reveals annual report on discrimination

Germany's anti-discrimination commissioner Ferda Ataman, disclosed a report on Germany's persisting problem of discrimination. The report revealed a highest record of cases in the last 12 months since 2006 with 5,617 cases last year. As per the split, 20 per cent were found to discriminated because of gender, 10 per cent due to age, nine per cent based on religion and four per cent on sexual identity. Ataman urged the government to give more opportunities to those affected to claim their rights, and better legal framework. ([“Germany: Discrimination a continuing problem, report shows,” Deutsche Welle, 16 August 2022\)](#)

German families to see rise in gas bills under new gas surcharge

On 15 August, the Germany organization in charge of coordinating the gas market announced that a surcharge has been imposed at EUR 2.419 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) for homes and businesses. The levy will be in effect from 01 October and will continue till April 2022 to help gas importers of the country deal with the

soaring gas prices. Because of the tax, on an average, households with a family of four will have to pay an additional tax of about EUR 480. On this issue, economy minister Robert Habeck said: “The alternative would have been the collapse of the German energy market, and with it large parts of the European energy market.” However, economists have warned that this step might accelerate the inflation in Germany, which is already elevated at 8.5 per cent. The chief economist at Commerzbank, Jeorg Krämer, said: “This could cause the inflation rate to exceed 9% in October and November... it significantly lowers customers' purchasing power.” (Markus Wacket and Rachel More [“German families face 480 euro rise in gas bills under new levy,” Reuters, 15 August 2022\)](#)

Windfall taxes will not be collected: Christian Lindner

On 14 August, Germany's finance minister Christian Lindner stated that the country should not tax surplus companies during an economic and energy crisis. Taxing windfall levies would interfere with market forces. Germany has decided not to levy excessive taxes on energy companies, unlike Italy and the UK. He said Germany has to stick to tight fiscal spending to keep inflation in check. Lindner has published his initiative to try and waive the value-added tax on a new gas levy to spread the extra energy costs more evenly to the EU, which Germany will announce on Monday. The different opinions of the members of the three-party coalition where economy minister Robert Habeck and the greens are opposed to the decision, while chancellor Olaf Scholz of Social Democrats had mentioned that imposing windfall taxes would be challenging. ([“Germany's finance minister says he opposes taxing 'excessive' profits,” Reuters, 14 August 2022\)](#)

German industries suffer due to low water levels in Rhine River

On 08 August, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the problems being faced by Germany because of the low water levels in the Rhine River. As the Rhine is an important shipping route for raw materials like grains, chemicals, minerals, coal and oil products, the low water levels have hampered

industries and their production. The transport minister Volker Wissing has called for the river to be dredged to facilitate the passage of ships. Previously, Wissing had campaigned for the deepening of the Rhine between St. Goar and Mainz but now given the disruptions in the supply chain, the project might be undertaken soon. (“[Rhine's low water levels hit German shipping, minister touts dredging](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, 08 August 2022)

Gerhard Schroder survives expulsion from party due to pro-Putin ties

On 08 August, an internal Social Democrats (SPD) arbitration committee rejected an appeal to expel the controversial ex chancellor, Gerhard Schroder. The committee said that he has not been found guilty of violating any party rules. 17 branches of the SPD had submitted their request to oust Schroder, citing his ties to Russia as damaging for the party. *POLITICO* reports that Schroder who did not appear for the expulsion proceedings, met with Putin twice, since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While this committee has found him not guilty, the decision can be appealed at a superior arbitration committee in the SPD within two weeks. ([Wilhelmine Preussen, “Gerhard Schröder survives move to boot him from Germany's Social Democrats”](#), *POLITICO*, 08 August 2022)

Berlin resumes coal-powered plants to generate energy for the winter

On 01 August, a coal power plant whose operations were paused concerning pollution and climate change received emergency permission to restart and run until April 2022. The economy minister, Robert Habeck called the move a necessary evil and accepted that it was a setback to address climate change. The decision was taken to prepare the country for the upcoming winter and attempts to replace Russian gas as it has completely halted its Nord Stream 1. Germany has also restricted the heating of public buildings and swimming pools. (“[Germany puts coal power plant back on network after gas supply cut](#),” 01 August 2022)

Amidst gas shortages, tensions in Germany rise regarding its ongoing nuclear shutdown

On 31 July, Germany's finance minister Christian Lindner urged the economy minister Robert Habeck to refrain from using gas to generate electricity. Instead, he suggested that the climate-friendly nuclear power plants can be used till 2024 to generate electricity and compensate for the gas shortage. This comes in light of a growing debate in Germany about the scheduled closure of three nuclear power plants by the end of 2022. The main opposition Union bloc and ruling coalition partner Free Democrats have been advocating for the extension of the power plants. However, a similar stance is difficult for the two other coalition partners- Olaf Scholz's center-left Social Democrats and the environmentalist Greens, as opposition to nuclear power has been the main foundation of their parties' mandates. (Geir Moulson, “[Germany argues over nuclear shutdown amid gas supply worries](#),” *AP News*, 31 July 2022)

Unidentified toxic liquid creates dangerous fumes in Manheim

On 23 August, a toxic liquid spill was reported in an industrial premise in Manheim, Germany. Local newspaper *Mannheimer Morgen* said that the 150-meter-high gas plume was explosive in nature was caused irritation to the respiratory system. Even though the fumes injured at least 16 police officers, it has since receded. City authorities asked residents within a 1.3-kilometer radius of the spill to remain indoors and keep their doors and windows closed. Adjacent roads were closed and trains were diverted. (“[Germany: Toxic gas plume injures several in Mannheim](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, 23 August 2022)

GREECE

Inquiry commission set up to investigate wiretapping scandal

On 29 August, 142 out of 300 Greece's parliamentarians voted in favor to set up an inquiry commission to investigate the phone tapping of an opposition leader by the National Intelligence Service, the Ethniki Ypiresia Pliroforion (EYP). Leader of the socialist party PASOK, Nikos Androulakis,

whose phone was tapped for three months and targeted with Predator spyware, requested the inquiry commission. This incident has exerted pressure on Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis who took charge of the EYP from the interior ministry in 2019. He however said that he was not aware of the occurrence of phone tapping, and as a response to the mounting pressure fired his chief of staff, Grigoris Dimitriadis, and Greece's spy chief, Panagiotis Kontoleon. (Helena Smith, "[Greek 'Watergate' phone-tapping scandal puts added pressure on PM](#)," *The Guardian*, 28 August 2022; George Georgopoulos, "[Greek parliament sets up inquiry commission to probe phone tapping scandal](#)," *Reuters*, 30 August 2022)

Boat with migrants capsizes in Greece leaving 29 missing

On 10 August, a coast guard spokesperson in Greece, Nikos Kokkalas, reported that more than a dozen migrants were missing after the boat carrying them capsized in the Aegean Sea. However, 29 migrants were rescued by the coastguards. The boat sank in the southern Aegean off the Karpathos island, and the rescue mission was carried on amid strong winds. The rescued migrants, belonging to Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq said that their boat was carrying 60-80 people. They also mentioned that they had set sail from Antalya in Turkey and had the objective of reaching Italy. ("[Dozens missing after Greece rescues 29 migrants from capsized boat](#)," *Reuters*, 10 August 2022)

Greece exits EU's surveillance programme after 12 years

On 10 August, the European Commission confirmed that Greece will exit the EU's surveillance programme after 12 years. In 2010, Greece requested an international bailout to prevent the complete collapse of its economy. From 2010 to 2015, the EU in collaboration with the IMF had given Greece more than EUR 260 billion, instead of significant economic reforms. In 2018, the third bailout agreement came to an end after which Greece entered the enhanced surveillance framework to facilitate the monitoring of the reform process. However, on 02 August, European Commission said that Greece had shown effective reform implementation even under challenging

circumstances like the COVID-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The letter also mentioned that maintaining enhanced surveillance on Greece would no longer be justified because it had already delivered on most of its policy commitments. ("[Greece 'turning a page' as it exits enhanced surveillance programme 12 years after bailout](#)," *Euronews*, 10 August 2022)

General secretary and National Intelligence Service chief resign over involvement with Predator spyware

On 05 August, Greek officials resigned from prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' administration over allegations of being involved in hacking the opposition leader's phone. The general secretary, Grigoris Dimitriadis, and Greece's National Intelligence Service chief, Panagiotis Kontoleon, were accused of their involvement in the attempted taping of the mobile phone of opposition party Pasok's leader MEP Nikos Androulakis with spyware named Predator. Androulakis' phone was not only tapped twice with the Predator spyware but also was legally hacked by the Greek intelligence agents upon request from an allied nation. The prime minister said that he was uninformed of the legal wiretapping and would have stopped it if he had heard of it. Androulakis found that his phone was attempted to be hacked by Predator during an inspection by the European Parliament cybersecurity service and immediately filed a complaint to top Greek prosecutors after learning about the bugging. Few reporters were also hacked with the same spyware. (Nektaria Stamouli, "[PM Mitsotakis feels the heat as two top Greek officials quit in spy scandal](#)," *POLITICO*, 05 August 2022)

HUNGARY

Hungary fires National Meteorological Service chiefs for false weather warning

On 22 August, Hungary's innovation minister Laszlo Palkovics fired the National Meteorological Service (NMS) head, Kornelia Radics and her deputy, Gyula Horvath from their duties. The NMS had forecast thunderstorms and wind gusts on 20 August, leading to the cancellation of the elaborate fireworks display to celebrate a national holiday in Budapest. Around 40,000 fireworks were to be launched from 240

points in a 5 kilometer stretch along the Danube, in a display usually watched by around two million people. As a result of the warning, the celebrations were postponed. As the predicted storms missed the capital, the NMS issued an apology on 21 August. However, it proved to be too late and the miscalculation led to the firing of the organization's chiefs. (Nick Thorpe, "[Hungary's weather chief sacked over wrong forecast](#)," BBC, 23 August 2022)

ICELAND

Volcanic eruption near the Keflavik international airport

On 03 August, Fagradalsfjall mountain, near the capital Reykjavik in Iceland, was seen to pour out smoke and lava from its side. The volcano near the capital's Keflavik international airport erupted following a series of earthquakes. The same mountain saw an eruption last year that lasted for six months. A code red alert was declared by the government but will be lowered to code orange if it seems to be an eruption like last year. There was no immediate risk or damage to any infrastructures and planes were prohibited from flying over the site. It was harmless when compared to the 2010 Eyjafjallajokull volcanic eruption that disrupted 100000 flights and forced evacuations of residents due to smoke and ash in the atmosphere. (Nikolaj Skydsgaard and Terje Solsvik, "[Volcano erupts near Iceland's capital in seismic hot spot](#)," Reuters, 03 August 2022; "[Iceland: Volcano erupts near key Keflavik airport](#)," Deutsche Welle, 03 August 2022)

ITALY

Democratic Party-led left coalition collapsed as a centrist party withdraws

On 07 August, the Italian centrist party Azione decided to withdraw from the centre-left alliance headed by the Democratic Party. According to Carlo Calenda, the leader of the Azione party, the Democratic Party signed a separate electoral agreement with the radical left-wing party Sinistra Italiana and the green group Europa Verde was unacceptable to him. Both Sinistra Italiana and Europa Verde were the ones that did not support Mario Draghi, former prime minister. Calenda said that he doubts the left coalition will stand together for a longer

duration with opposing ideals. The rift in the left had caused the right-wing coalition led by Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy to come on top in the recent polling's. (Angella Giuffrida, "[Election boost for Italy's far right as centre-left alliance collapses](#)," the Guardian, 07 August 2022)

New aid package approved for rising energy costs

On 04 August, the caretaker government of Italy approved a recent aid package worth EUR 17 billion to assist businesses and families from rising energy and conspiracy prices. The caretaker prime minister Mario Draghi stated: "This package is aimed at protecting Italy's economic recovery in the face of a worsening international environment." Similarly Rome also extended present measures to cut energy bills for low-income families under the recent package. It will be extending the cut in excise duties at fuel pumps. (Giuseppe Fonte, Angelo Amante and Giselda Vagnoni, "[Italy unveils new \\$17.4 billion package against inflation](#)," Reuters, 05 August 2022)

Rome to establish semiconductor facility with the US firm Intel

On 04 August, Italy will be negotiating a deal worth EUR five billion with the US semiconductor manufacturer Intel to build an advanced semiconductor package and assembly line. Intel's larger plan is to invest around EUR 88 billion across Europe after the semiconductor shortage crisis of 2020. Where Europe was largely dependent on Asian markets particularly from Taiwan. A final decision on the location of the facility is yet to be made. (Giuseppe Fonte and Giulio Piovaccari, "[Exclusive: Italy, Intel close to \\$5 billion deal for chip factory](#)," Reuters, 04 August 2022)

Italy's Democratic Party allies with centrist Arizone to compete against the rising right

On 02 August, Italy's Democratic Party forged an alliance with the centrist Arizone party to try to prevent a right-wing triumph in the upcoming elections scheduled in September. Recent polls have shown that the conservative alliance of far-right Brothers of Italy, the rightist League, and the relatively more moderate Forza Italia party are leading

the race with 45 per cent. If they win, the Brothers of Italy party is slated to be the largest single party, with Georgia Meloni as the potential prime ministerial candidate. The Democratic Party and Arizone are currently polling at 30 per cent. On this issue, Democratic Party leader Enrico Letta said that they are trying to strengthen their opposition by further inviting alliances for other groups in the fragmented political landscape in Italy. (Angelo Amante, "[Italy's centre-left sees open electoral race after pact with centrists](#)," *Reuters*, 02 August 2022)

Protests erupt after the murder of a Nigerian migrant

On 29 July, a Nigerian migrant street seller, Aliko Ogorchukwu was killed in the Civitanova Marche town. This was following requests by Ogorchukwu to sell handkerchiefs for "pocket change." The suspect for the murder, a 32-year-old man from Salerno was arrested. Even though the incident was witnessed by onlookers, nobody tried to help Ogorchukwu. Hundreds of Italians and the people from the Nigerian community in Italy protested the incident, criticizing the far right parties in power in the Marche region. They also protested against their xenophobic tendencies and their rising popularity on a national level. Giorgia Meloni of the ruling Brothers of Italy party and Matteo Salvini from the far-right Northern League party have denounced the killing and urged for maximum possible punishment for the perpetrator. (Lorenzo Tondo and Angela Giuffrida, "[Killing of Nigerian street seller causes outrage in Italy](#)," *The Guardian*, 31 July 2022)

KOSOVO

Pristina suspends its border measure after Serbs outrage

On 01 August, Kosovo decided to delay its new border measure on vehicle license plates and identity cards which provoked outrage among minority Serbs. Following the decision to postpone the measure, Serbs removed barricades that they had put up before. Serbia's foreign minister Nkola Selakovic claimed that Kosovo made unacceptable unilateral moves to target the minority Serb population. He stated: "It is not only about ID cards and registering vehicle plates. It is about the way of

behavior." The EU in response to the tensions invited both the countries for talks in Brussels." The EU foreign affairs spokesperson Peter Stano reiterated that all open issues between Serbia and Kosovo have to be addressed only through the EU's dialogues. ("[Kosovo delays border measures amid Serbia tensions](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 01 August 2022)

Rise in protests forced authorities to close two border crossings with Serbia

On 31 July, amid rising tension with Serbia, Kosovo closed two border crossings and postponed the implementation of two border rules. The police closed down Berinjak and Jarinje border crossings due to protests about the new rules, according to which, all people with Serbian IDs entering Kosovo would have to replace the IDs with a temporary document. Moreover, cars with Serbian license plates will also have to change them with license plates issued by Kosovo. The implementation of the rules has now been postponed to 01 September, after consultation with EU and US ambassadors. NATO also announced that they are prepared to intervene, if the protests escalate and "stability is jeopardised." ("[Kosovo closes two border crossings with Serbia amid rising tensions](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 31 July 2022)

NORTH MACEDONIA

Low subsidies and insufficient regulation affects the solar thermal projects

On 26 August, *Deutsche Welle* reported that North Macedonia is falling short of solar thermal technology. North Macedonia boasts of experiencing 280 days of sunlight. But due to certain factors like lack of subsidies, there has been reduced usage of solar thermal technology. The investment in a combined solar thermal and photovoltaic system would show results after three to four years. The usage of solar energy and conversion to renewable energy would make North Macedonia have free power. There has been a push for renewables in North Macedonia even though the country faces problems. (Daniela Trpcchevska, "[Sunny North Macedonia falls short of solar thermal expectations](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 26 August 2022)

NORWAY

Data protection authority rallies for fines against Meta Platforms for illegal data transfers

On 22 August, *POLITICO* reported on Norway's stance on illegal data transfers by Meta Platforms. As per a partially redacted document seen by *POLITICO*, Norway's data protection authority, Datatilsynet said that Meta Platforms should be fined for not acting in accordance with the EU's data transfer laws. The stance taken by Norway comes as a response to the Irish Data Protection Commission's draft decision ordering Meta to cease its use of the standard contractual clauses (SCCs) to transfer data across the Atlantic from July. Norway's objection terms Meta's actions as "particularly serious" as it violates the Schrems II judgment and the General Data Protection Regulation. (Vincent Manancourt, "[Norway wants Facebook fined for illegal data transfers](#)," *POLITICO*, 22 August 2022)

PORUGAL

Firefighters struggle to control wildfire close to Lisbon

On 31 July, huge blazes were reported in Portugal, where the ongoing European heatwave is exacerbating the active wildfires. 400 firefighters along with 123 vehicles and water bombers struggled to contain a fire that had erupted in the Mafra municipality near Lisbon. Several roads were thus blocked by the authorities, and the residents in a nearby care home were evacuated. Many locals also left their homes in fear. More blazes were also reported in the Ourem municipality. Portugal's weather agency, the IMPA has also issued red alerts for three districts in the north for extreme heat on 01 August. ("[Hundreds of firefighters battle blaze near Lisbon](#)," *Reuters*, 01 August, 2022)

POLAND

European Judges associations sue European Council over Poland's recovery plan

On 28 August, four associations representing judges in Europe sued the European Council, in the EU's General Court, regarding Poland's recovery and resilience plan. In June, the European Council approved Poland's access to EUR 35 billion as a part of the COVID-19

recovery fund. However, the Association of European Administrative Judges (AEA), the European Association of Judges (EAJ), Rechters Voor Rechters and Magistrates Européens pour la Démocratie et les Libertés (MEDEL) challenged this move saying that Poland's replacement of the controversial disciplinary chamber for judges falls short of the rule of law "milestones" that the EU requires. The associations said that since their legal action does not invalidate the Council's decision, they would seek suspension of the disbursement of funds via interim measures. ("[European judges challenge EU approval of Poland's recovery plan](#)," *Reuters*, 29 August 2022)

Poland finds more dead fish in the Oder River

On 17 August, Poland firefighters removed 100 tonnes of dead fish from the Oder River which runs between Germany and Poland. The national firefighter press office spokesperson confirmed the operation, where 1000 of fish were found in the 520 mile stretch of the river. Although the reason behind the death is yet to be discovered, the Polish prime minister said: "Probably enormous quantities of chemical waste was dumped into the river in full knowledge of the risk and consequences." ("[Poland pulls 100 tonnes of dead fish from Oder river after mystery mass die-off](#)," *The Guardian*, " 17 August 2022)

Poland's authorities pledged to investigate the reason behind the dead fish in River Oder

On 11 August, at least 10 tonnes of dead fish were pulled out from a 200-kilometre stretch in the river Oder which flows along Poland and Germany's border. The agency managing the Polish national waters, State Water Holding, has warned people not to enter the water. The head of the agency, Przemyslaw Daca has called the situation an ecological catastrophe. Regional environmental protection authorities said that water samples from the Oder taken on 28 July showed it had an 80 per cent possibility of containing a toxic substance called Mesitylene, but it was not present in samples taken after 01 August. Poland's government which has been under pressure about the handling of this issue has pledged

to investigate the source and nature of the possible contamination. (Marek Strzelecki, "[Dead fish in River Oder on Polish-German border spur contamination probe](#)," *Reuters*, 12 August 2022)

Jaroslaw refuses to make any further concessions to unlock COVID-19 recovery funds

On 08 August, *POLITICO* reported that Poland's leader, Jaroslaw Kaczynski said that his government will not attempt to meet the European Commission's rule of law demands any further. Kaczynski said that Poland had met its side of the deal, but the EUR 35 billion of Poland's COVID-19 recovery funds have not been unlocked yet, even after showcasing "maximum goodwill." However, commission president, Ursula von der Leyen maintains that the legislation passed by Poland last month to change its court system is not enough for the commission to disburse the funds. Kaczynski further accused the commission of trying "to break Poland and force it into full submission to Germany," and said that they will not fit into the "German-Russian plans to rule Europe." (Jan Cienski, "[Poland warns it will turn cannons on the EU in rule of law dispute](#)," *POLITICO*, 08 August 2022)

RUSSIA

Former soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev passes away

On 30 August, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev passed away at the age of 91. Gorbachev, who took power in 1985 and was largely credited for bringing the Cold War to an end. As the general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party his policies sought to revitalize the Soviet society. His policy of 'perestroika' to introduce market-like reforms to the state-run system and 'glasnost' promoted openness and criticism in the government. Even though he failed to prevent the collapse of the USSR, his impact on the global order was profound. Gorbachev had been suffering from a long and serious illness and in June 2022, he was admitted with a serious kidney ailment. However, the cause of his death has not been announced. World leaders like Russia's President Vladimir Putin, US President Joe Biden, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and EU president Ursula von der Leyen hailed his

legacy and expressed their condolences following Gorbachev's demise. (Matt Murphy & Robert Greenall, "[Mikhail Gorbachev: Last Soviet leader dies aged 91](#)," *BBC*, 31 August 2022)

SPAIN

Spain's waning climate disasters

On 16 August, Spain's ministry for the Ecological Transition reported record-high temperatures in Spain since 1961. The recorded temperature was more than 44 degrees Celsius, with the average ranging from 25.6 Celsius and an increasing trend of 2.7 degrees from 1981 to 2010. In response, the government has installed climate shelters in libraries, sports centres, museums and schools mainly to help the old, children, and people with chronic disease. In terms of forest fires, close to 265,000 hectares have been destroyed, for which the government signed a decree to propose plans to control such fires. Apart from the high-temperatures, and wildfires, drying of water reserves and rising sea temperatures is also occurring in different parts of Spain. As immediate protective measures, Spain has restricted its water supply, and few activities such as swimming pool, washing cars and showers in the beaches. It has also called for the amendment of the regulations over coastal development. ("[How Spain is coping with the heat](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 16 August 2022)

Spain announces new energy saving measure to deal with the potential energy crisis

On 02 August, Spain's government announced new energy-saving measures, which will come into force next week. According to the decree, public buildings, shopping centers, cinemas, rail stations, and airports will be required to stick to a certain limit on air conditioning. To tackle the potential energy crisis and to reduce their dependence on Russia's oil and gas, the measure mandates that heating should not be set above 19 degrees Celsius and air conditioning should not be set below 27 degrees Celsius. The measures were published in the official state gazette and will be valid till 2023. Moreover, Spain's environment minister, Teresa Ribera, has also suggested public administrations and

big companies encourage work-from-home provisions to save energy on transport and in buildings. (Sam Jones, "[Spain puts limits on air conditioning and heating to save energy](#)," The Guardian, 02 August 2022)

THE NETHERLANDS

Workers' strike destabilizes Dutch rail network

On 30 August, most of the trains in the railway network of the Netherlands were halted due to worker strike. The workers in labor unions who have been affected by the rising inflation and staff shortages and demanded improved working conditions and better pay, called for the strike. It follows the breakdown of negotiations on a new collective labor agreement. As the staff at the railway company Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS) quit work in the central Netherlands which is a hub for all train lines, they successfully destabilized the entire network. AP News reported that the Utrecht Central station, which is Netherland's biggest rail hub was deserted, but NS said that international trains operated by Thalys and Eurostar were running. ("[Almost all Dutch trains halted by strike around Utrecht](#)," AP News 30 August 2022)

Prime minister Mark Rutte becomes the longest serving office-holder

On 02 August, prime minister Mark Rutte became the longest serving prime minister of the country. He has been in office for 12 years. Rutte came to power in October 2010. Leading the largest party in Dutch politics, the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), Rutte is currently in charge of his fourth coalition government. However, his tenure has been rife with scandals too. Thousands of families were plunged into debt after being wrongfully accused of child benefit fraud, which led to the resignation of his third coalition. In the EU, he is the second longest-serving elected leader after Hungary's Victor Orban. On this milestone, Rutte said: "It's the greatest job in the world, an unbelievable honour... For me, the decisive factor is: Do I have the ideas, the energy? Is my mouth watering on Friday morning when the Cabinet meeting starts to begin solving problems? As long as I have that, I would like to continue." ("[Teflon](#)

[Mark': Dutch PM Rutte reaches key milestone](#)," Euronews, 02 August 2022)

Overcrowding in refugee camps leads to concerns: Dutch officials

On 26 August, the Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte was horrified by the handling of hundreds of asylum seekers who have been forced to sleep outside a refugee reception centre due to overcrowding inside. More than 700 refugees were sighted to be camping outside the Ter Apel asylum centre with nothing but a bedsheets and a makeshift tent. The delay in processing asylum claims and lack of housing for those who have been approved are some of the factors that had a large number of people overcrowding the place. The Dutch officials are concerned over health issues between the asylum seekers and the spread of diseases. The government is trying to open an alternative refugee centre nearby at a military base to ease the crowd and also restrict the number of asylum seekers entering the country.

("[Netherlands to restrict number of migrants amid 'inhumane' conditions](#)," Deutsche Welle, 26 August 2022)

THE UK

UK Government releases proposal on social house rent cap

On 31 August, UK's government launched a consultation to ask housing tenants and landlords for the most favorable rent cap as a part of the Direction to the Regulator of Social Housing. In the UK, the government controls the rate at which social housing rents can increase in a year, and is currently set at the consumer price index (CPI) rate plus one per cent. According to recent Bank of England forecasts, the potential increase next year will be 11 per cent. As per the proposal, an increase of the rent cap of three per cent, five per cent, or seven percent is being considered. The new cap will help support the most vulnerable households, saving tenants approximately EUR 300 per year. The proposal comes as an addition to other existing support measures like the EUR 37 billion support package, including a EUR 150 council tax rebate, and EUR 400 discount on energy bills. ("[Rent cap on social housing to protect millions of tenants from rising cost of living](#)," gov.uk, 31 August 2022)

Government reaches agreement to revolutionize London's transport system

On 30 August, UK's government reached a settlement with the integrated body responsible for London's transport system, Transport for London (TfL). As per the settlement, projects worth EUR 3.6 will be supported, and it includes EUR 1.2 billion of upfront funding. The network will also be protected against the uncertainties arising from the post-pandemic demand and will aim to facilitate projects that revolutionize travel across London. For example, GBP 80 million every year will be given to active travel schemes; driverless trains will be introduced on the London Underground, and walking and cycling infrastructure will be developed to reduce pollution and congestion. The Mayor and the TfL will be working in collaboration to set out sectors in which changes can be implemented and accelerated. The settlement will also ensure that the TfL becomes financially sustainable by 2023. ("Future of London's transport network secured with government's multi-billion pound settlement," *gov.uk*, 30 August 2022)

Labour party demands a freeze on energy costs

On 18 August, the UK government's opposition, Labour Party, requested to recall the parliament to discuss energy price caps as the country deals with the worst cost-of-living crisis with the winter looming ahead. The Labour party asked the government for freezing the energy coast and not let them rise any further. It promised to do the same if it was in power and would compensate for the expense by extending a windfall tax on oil and gas companies. Johnson faced criticism over his leadership guiding the country through the surging energy costs. The UK's citizens are concerned over a lack of nationalised plan to avoid poverty hitting them. ("UK opposition Labour Party wants parliament recalled over energy price cap," *Reuters*, 19 August 2022)

Truss and Sunak to commence campaign in Scotland to swing voters in their favour

On 16 August, the prime ministerial candidates from the Tory party will head to Perth, Scotland for their respective campaigns. Even though both candidates

have set their proposals to appeal to Scottish conservatives, in terms of mobilising the Scottish vote, no clear frontrunner has emerged. Rishi Sunak is promoting greater political scrutiny with Scottish and Welsh civil service leaders answering to the UK parliament annually and also more visibility of UK ministers in Scotland. Meanwhile, Liz Truss has suggested giving members of the Scottish parliament the "parliamentary privilege" to be more robust. Out of the six Scottish Conservative MPs, two former parliamentary aides to Truss, Andrew Bowie and John Lamont are backing Sunak. Ruth Davidson also supported Sunak, but there has also been a growing preference for Truss's premiership due to her dismissive attitude towards the first minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon. (Esther Webber and Andrew McDonald, "With the Union in peril, Scottish Tories hedge their bets," *POLITICO*, 16 August, 2022)

Wales secretary switched from Sunak to support Truss for the Tory leadership

On 12 August, Wales secretary Sir Robert Buckland became the second person to publicly switch his Tory leadership endorsement from Rishi Sunak to Liz Truss. Initially, Buckland had backed Sunak's "clear thinking," but after the change in his stance said: "It is time for positive politics, time to come together, and time for Liz to lead." He said that while he has worked extensively with both the candidates, as the campaigns progressed, he found Truss's policies of economic management as the right way to take the UK forward. Buckland appreciated Truss's commitment to a British bill of rights that overrides the power of Europe's human rights courts, her supply-side reforms, and her positive politics. (Sarah Haque, "Tory leadership: Buckland first in cabinet to flip support from Sunak to Truss," *The Guardian*, 13 August 2022)

Boris Johnson addresses the cost-of-living crisis in his letter to Nicola Sturgeon

On 12 August, the UK's prime minister Boris Johnson replied to Scotland's first minister Nicola Sturgeon regarding her letter on 08 August. He addressed the issues that were placed by Sturgeon in her letter. He mentioned that GBP 15 billion was allocated

for providing low-income households with support for the cost-of-living crisis. The tax has been reduced and there have been concessions on energy bills up to GBP 400. As assistance to vulnerable households, the government is providing GBP 1200 this financial year. The aid to the Scottish government has also been assured by Johnson to Sturgeon. (["Prime Minister's letter to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon: 12 August 2022," uk.gov](#), 12 August 2022)

Foreign individuals removed to Albania

On 11 August, the UK government extradited 20 foreign criminals on a charter flight to Albania. The offenders were convicted of crimes including possession of an unlicensed offensive weapon in the public, supply of A class, and production of B class drugs. They were sentenced to prison for a combined time of 46 years. According to home secretary Priti Patel, the individuals committed heinous crimes and some were of the offense of failing to produce asylum claims. The Nationality and Borders Act will further deter any illegal entry of foreign individuals into the UK. (["Foreign criminals and illegal entrants to the UK removed to Albania," uk.gov](#), 12 August 2022)

Rise in energy price leaves households in debts

On 09 August, BBC reported that households in the UK are facing debts with their energy companies as opposed to 2021. The average debt of a household was found to be EUR 206 when the comparison site Uswitch surveyed 2000. Energy experts believe that the prices will be even higher in October. The government is advising its citizens to tell if they are unable to meet the energy prices. Plans to help out the people of the UK have been put forward by the government. The government is concerned about over eight million people who would not be able to afford to pay energy prices during winter. It has set out plans to protect every household during winter by providing EUR 400 to help with the rising fuel bills. There is also EUR 650 for the eight million low-income households and EUR 150 for disabled people. Pensioners also get an additional EUR 300. (["Households already in debt as energy bills rise," BBC](#), 09 August 2022)

Unite union strike after the negotiation fail

On 08 August, workers at Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company turned down the offer of EUR 500 in addition to a seven per cent wage increase after talks with the organizations. The Unite union will take strikes due to the failure of the negotiations. The Union said that the Felixstowe dock is a hugely profitable business but does not pay enough to its employees. The union had rejected the proposal and did not put it to its members. Due to the higher cost of living, the workers have asked for an increase in wage which was met with a poor response from the company. (["Felixstowe port workers to strike after talks fail," BBC](#), 09 August 2022)

Penny Mordaunt backs Liz Truss

On 01 August, eliminated Tory leadership candidate Penny Mordaunt announced to support Liz Truss who is in the front run of the race with Rishi Sunak. Mordaunt stated that she backed Truss for her "graft, her authenticity, her determination, her ambition for this country and her sense of duty," and called her as the "hope candidate." Mordaunt was eliminated in the fifth round of the leadership race. A poll by YouGov shows Truss at an 18-point lead over Sunak. (["Boost for Liz Truss as ex-rival Penny Mordaunt backs her Tory leadership bid," POLITICO](#), 01 August 2022)

SLOVAKIA

Slovakia's hydrogen future looks bright with successful pilot project

On 24 August, *Euractiv* reported on a pilot project of mixing hydrogen with natural gas in Slovakia. The pilot project, undertaken in the Slovak village of Blatna nad Ostrovom has yielded positive results and is a pioneer in showcasing how hydrogen can be safely used and effectively distributed through the pipelines that already exist. The project was launched by the state's gas distributor in mid-June and the trials will continue till September. If the results continue to be positive, the distributor will start mixing 5 per cent of hydrogen with natural gas by 2025. The Economy Minister, Richard Sulik said that he wants to invest EUR 1 billion to boost hydrogen production and use in various sectors. This project also falls under

the European Commission's plans to use green hydrogen to decrease dependence on Russian energy. This plan is in sync with EU's REPowerEU package, which has set aside EUR 200 million of additional funding for hydrogen research and hydrogen transportation. (Michal Hudec, "[Slovakia takes first step into hydrogen future](#)," *Euractiv*, 24 August 2022)

TURKEY

Turkey's president assures Palestine of his support

On 23 August, Palestine's President, Mahmoud Abbas met Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara. Erdogan promised to enhance the relations between Palestine and Turkey and continue his country's support for Palestine. Since Abbas's visit was only a week after Turkey and Israel announced the restoration of full diplomatic relations, Erdogan assured Abbas that the reconciliation efforts with Israel will not affect their relationship with Palestine. He said: "The steps taken in our relations with Israel will in no way reduce our support for the Palestinian cause... On the contrary, our Palestinian brothers also express that these steps will contribute to a solution to the Palestinian issue." Abbas did not refer to the rapprochement between Turkey and Israel but thanked Erdogan for Turkey's unwavering support for the Palestinians. ("[Turkey's Erdogan promises continued support for Palestinians amid reconciling with Israel](#)," *Euronews*, 23 August 2022)

A new drilling ship is sent to the eastern Mediterranean by Ankara

On 09 August, Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan inaugurated Ankara's new drilling ship, Abdulhamid Han, the country's largest undersea hydrocarbon drill ship. In his inaugural address, he said that the ship would be sent to an area in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, northwest of Cyprus. The ship would begin drilling in Turkey's southwestern Antalya province off the coast of Gazipasa, at the Yorukler-1 well. The ship is named after an Ottoman sultan. Erdogan said that the ship would become a symbol of a new vision for Turkey in the area of energy. It will reduce its dependency on Russian energy. He also said that Turkey has the right to do its business on its border

and does not need any permission from Greece or Cyprus. Turkey has a conflict with Cyprus and Greece over maritime borders and the drilling is likely to spark a new dispute. ("[Turkey sends new drill ship to eastern Mediterranean](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 09 August 2022)

REGIONAL

Czech Republic's EU presidency to push Western Balkan agenda

On 31 August, in an interview for the *Euractiv Czech Republic*, Czechia's ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ivana Hlavsova spoke about Czech EU Presidency goals for the Western Balkans. One of the most important terms of the agenda is the freeing visas for Kosovo as it had already met the conditions provided by the EU. Czech Republic also aims to eliminate the several bilateral issues in the West Balkans. Hlavsova mentioned how the plans for the same are already underway, with the unblocking of the dispute between Bulgaria and North Macedonia. She also referred to Bosnia and Herzegovina's membership application and said that the country's problem was unlike that of Bulgaria and North Macedonia. Hlavsova said that onus of achieving at least some of those tasks is now on Bosnia and Herzegovina whose accession talks can proceed only after they make the necessary changes successfully. The European Commission which made an assessment of its readiness in 2019 and given 14 major tasks to start accession talks. (Ondřej Plevák, "[Czechia to push for Kosovo visa liberalisation during presidency](#)," *Euractiv*, 31 August 2022)

Members of the European Parliament release a new blueprint for EU reform

On 30 August, *Euractiv* reported on a blueprint for EU reform released by a group of Members of the European Parliament (MEP). The "Federal Europe: Sovereign, Social and Ecological," manifesto was prepared by the federalist MEPs in the Spinelli group. The blueprint suggests an expansion of the EU's competencies on health and tax policy and calls to make the European Pillar of Social Rights legally

binding. Because of the rise in energy and food prices, it proposes "compensatory transfers" to households and small businesses, and to make the "EU Recovery Plan" permanent. Additionally, the proposal also calls for increased defence and security presence by the EU, including the setting up of the EU military headquarters and the establishment of a 5000-strong Rapid Reaction Force. On the blueprint, a green MEP and the president of the Spinelli group, Daniel Freund said: "We need a strong Europe to solve the big issues of our time: climate, security, protecting democracy and our values. The European Parliament agrees, citizens agree and civil society agrees. Governments need to deliver." (Benjamin Fox, "[EU army and support fund for energy crisis among new treaty reform proposal](#)," *Euractiv*, 30 August 2022)

Poland and Czech Republic agree to protect the airspace of Slovakia

On 27 August, Poland and the Czech Republic consented to protect Slovakia's airspace as it withdrew from using Soviet-made MiG-29 jets from its airforce. The agreement to support Slovakia was signed by the Defence Ministers of Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia. Similar to the trio programme, air policing is in practice for Baltic states to deter Russian aggression. The MiG's which are 11-year old will have to be renewed and estimated to be EUR 300 million which will help Slovakia to renovate its military. ("[Poland, Czechia to protect Slovak airspace as Soviet-made jets retired](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 27 August 2022)

Serbia-Kosovo dispute settled over EU mediation

On 27 August, EU Foreign Policy Chief, Joseph Borrell announced the settlement agreement signed between Serbia and Kosovo over ethnic tensions on authorizing the identity documents. Borrell said: "Under the EU-facilitated Dialogue, Serbia agreed to abolish entry/exit documents for Kosovo ID holders and Kosovo agreed to not introduce them for Serbian ID holders." With the signed agreement, now "all citizens" will be able to enter Kosovo using their existing documents. ("[EU announces settlement in Serbia-Kosovo ID dispute](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 27 August 2022)

European Environment Agency reports a 34 per cent drop in emission rates in the EU

On 25 August, *Euronews* reported on a study conducted by the European Environment Agency analysing the EU's greenhouse gas emissions over the last 30 years. According to the report, the EU lowered GHGs by 1,546 million tonnes over thirty years, which is around 34% from 1990 levels. Although the 2020 goals were reached, experts argue the rate at which emissions are being cut, the 2030 objective will not be attained at the present rate of decline. By 2030, the EU has promised to cut emissions by 55% below 1990 levels, and by 2050, it hopes to achieve climate neutrality. The report says: "... substantial efforts across all the sectors of the economy will be needed to achieve a climate neutral economy." As the EU is the world's third largest emitter after the US and China, it has thus asked the member states to drastically reduce emissions ahead of COP27. ("[EU emissions drop 34% since 1990, but experts warn it's not enough](#)," *Euronews*, 25 August 2022)

EU registers new citizen's initiative on creating tobacco-free generation

On 24 August, the EU registered a new European Citizen's Initiative (ECI) named "Call to achieve a tobacco-free environment and the first European tobacco-free generation by 2030." As per the Lisbon Treaty, organizers of the ECI will be required to collect signatures from a minimum of one million citizens from at least a minimum of seven EU member-states to bring about action from the commission. As a part of this initiative, the sale of tobacco and nicotine products will be banned for citizens born after 2010. A European network will be created to ensure national parks are cigarette butt-free. The initiative will also aim to stop tobacco advertising and its presence in audio-visual productions and social media. (Amalie Holmgaard Mersh, "[Calls to lower use of tobacco increase, as Commission registers new citizens' initiative](#)," *Euractiv*, 24 August 2022)

Fresh EU-mediated talks between Serbia and Kosovo results in disagreements

On 18 August, the EU-mediated negotiations

between Serbia and Kosovo in Brussels ended up as a failure. According to the EU foreign policy head Josep Borrell, the discussion between Serbia's president Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo's prime minister Albin Kurti to reach a solution over the current disputes about the licence plate and northern Serbian minorities in Kosovo was not the end. He said that their talks would continue after a few days. Serbia's state media confirmed that their president is thinking of holding an emergency meeting with leaders of the Serbian minority from Kosovo in Belgrade. ("[EU-mediated talks fail to settle tensions between Serbia, Kosovo](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 18 August 2022)

NATO's "Thracian Viper" joint flight training exercise commences

On 16 August NATO reported that from 08 August to 19 August, a joint flight training exercise called the "Thracian Viper" is being conducted. Greece, Canada, Romania, and the US are participating in the training exercise that has been conducted annually since 2010. Specific air defence tasks with increasing complexity are being performed. The objective of the exercise is to prepare for the joint participation in coalition operations. Bulgaria is operating from the Graf Ignatievo Air Base, Bezmer Air Base, and the Krumovo Air Base, and will focus on aeromedical evacuation. Canada and Romania is operating from Romania's permanent base, while Greece conducts its drills from its own base. US air force is coordinating its operations from the Elena training area. ("[Joint flight training Thracian Viper 2022 started](#)," *NATO*, 16 August 2022)

NATO begins protection of Iceland's airspace

On 17 August, Denmark's F-16s began flying air policing units from Keflavik Air Base in Iceland, as a part of their mission to protect Iceland's airspace. The Keflavik Air base is controlled by the NATO Control and Reporting Centre at Keflavik and NATO's northern Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC). The Danish detachment will work with Iceland's coast guards. These units, which is the fifth deployment of Danish fighter aircrafts will be on standby until mid-September. The head of the CAOC certification team, colonel Wilhelm May

mentioned that this marks the third time in 2022 that the team has conducted the certification of NATO fighters to conduct air policing above Iceland. He said: "The Royal Danish Air Force F-16 detachment have demonstrated again that they master the tactics, techniques and procedures to safeguard the skies." ("[Fifth royal Danish air force deployment to Iceland: Ready to secure the high north](#)," *NATO*, 17 August 2022)

Poland accuses Germany of having grand designs on polish territory and controlling the EU along with France

On 17 August, German newspaper *Die Welt* published an op-ed by Poland's prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki. In the article Morawiecki alleges that the EU is democratic only in name, and the real power is wielded by Germany and France. He claims that the EU is functioning like a de-facto oligarchy and the member states should decide how to prioritise EU action and policies instead of the EU institutions. He said: "Europe finds itself in its present situation not because it is insufficiently integrated, but because it refused to hear the truth." Additionally, Poland's central bank chief, Adam Glapinski also warned that Poland must keep in mind Germany's designs on their former lands which now fall within Polish borders. He aimed his criticism at Civic Platform's leader Donald Tusk accusing him being a stooge for Brussels. He said: "For a year it's been said that the task set by Brussels for Tusk is not only for him to overthrow Poland's existing government and put our country on course for the Eurozone." He added that once these tasks are accomplished, Tusk will become the head of the European Commission and accelerate an effort to build a European state." ("[Poland says Berlin and Paris running EU as an 'oligarchy'](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 16 August 2022; Jan Cienski, "[Poland's central bank chief warns of German designs on Polish territory](#)," *POLITICO*, 17 August 2022)

NATO chief meets leaders of Kosovo and Serbia

On 17 August, NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, met both president of Kosovo and Serbia on the recent clash in the northern Kosovo. The issue began after Kosovo ruled that the Serbian license plates

and it's will no longer be valid to enter Kosovo. Since then protests and roadblocks by Serbians have been continuing. NATO's chief during the visit, he insisted the Serbian president Aleksandar Vučić, to value the rights of the communities and start a dialogue to settle the dispute. Whereas to Kosovo's leader Aleksandar Vučić, asked to "engage constructively" and assured to support under NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) to guarantee peace to all communities. He said: "KFOR's neutrality is central to its mission success.. and KFOR is ready to intervene if stability is jeopardised" (["NATO Secretary General meets with Albin Kurti of Kosovo," nato.int](#), 17 August 2022; ["NATO Secretary General meets with President Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia," nato.int](#), 17 August 2022; ["Stoltenberg: NATO ready to intervene if Kosovo tensions escalate," Deutsche Welle](#), 17 August 2022)

Sweden overtakes France to become the largest net power exporter

On 10 August, energy analyst firm EnAppSys reported that Sweden has overtaken France as Europe's largest electricity exporter in the first part of 2022. While historically France exports more power than it imports, this year, France's issues with its nuclear fleet and high gas prices exaggerated France's net importer status. Sweden's electricity mostly comes from nuclear, hydro, and biofuels, and increasingly from the wind too. In 2022, it has exported 16 terawatt-hours, primarily to Denmark and Finland, thus making it Europe's biggest net exporter. (["Sweden tops France as Europe's largest net power exporter," Reuters](#), 10 August 2022)

Eurostat reports on the EU's new residence permits in 2021

On 09 August, Eurostat reported that new residence permits issued in the European Union reached pre-pandemic levels since COVID-19. In 2021, permits issued to non-EU citizens jumped 31 per cent to 2,952,300. Poland recorded the highest number of permits granted at 1.3 million, where employment and education were the main drivers. Poland was followed by Spain, France, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands and these countries made up about three-quarters of all the permits granted in 2021. Ukrainians sought the most number of

residence permits at 30 per cent, followed by citizens of Morocco and Belarus accounting together for 10 per cent. (["New residence permits in EU rose to approach pre-pandemic levels in 2021," Euractiv](#), 10 August 2022)

Italy and Slovenia fight for balsamic vinegar

On 09 August, Italy's government initiated an infringement proceeding against Slovenia to defend its popular and geographically protected balsamic vinegar. Slovenia informing the European Commission about its plan to standardize its vinegar production, merchandising wine vinegar mixed with concentrated fruit juice as balsamic vinegar in 2021 angered Italy causing a rift between the two nations. Aceto balsamico di Modena (balsamic vinegar of Modena) is a term that can be used only by producers in Modena and the Emilia-Romagna region. The Mario Draghi administration authorized the continuation of the proceedings, which requires consultation with the Commission and taking the case to the court of justice of the EU (CJEU) if necessary. Italy perceived Slovenia's action as an illicit attack on the country's food and agricultural industry and would do everything to defend the nation. Italy has already lost a legal battle with a German company regarding the term balsamico. The CJEU ruled the case in favour of the company as the terms were non-geographic. (["Angela Giuffrida, "Sour grapes: Italy takes Slovenia to court over balsamic vinegar," The Guardian](#), 09 August 2022)

Deadline extended for the UK to respond on the Northern Ireland protocol

On 08 August, European commission confirmed that the deadline for the UK to respond to the legal action by the EU has been extended by one month upon request. The EU relaunched legal action on the protocol after it found non-disclosure of data relating to exports from Northern Ireland to the UK and failure in implementation of agreed Brexit conditions on VAT, EU customs, and alcohol excise rules. European Commission clarified that it will not accept the unilateral changes to the protocol by the UK, since the EU believes overriding parts of the deal would break international law.

(Jayne McCormack, "NI Protocol: UK given extra time to respond to EU," BBC, 08 August 2022)

Wolf population across Europe rises exponentially

On 08 August, a Swiss-based wolf-protection association Gruppe Wolf Schweiz (GWS) reported that the population of wolves in the Alps has grown by 25 per cent in a year. As compared to the 250 packs observed in 2021, more than 50 additional packs have been reported in 2022. Describing the growth as exponential, the group estimated that in the next five years the number of packs can rise from 300 to 800. GWS said: "Increased wolf population control, both preventive and reactive, will not change this reality at all... Due to the species' mobility, there would be no wolf-free areas." (Darko Janjevic, "Wolf packs spreading rapidly across the Alps, activists say," Deutsche Welle, 08 August 2022)

Polish pilgrims die in Croatia while travelling to Bosnia

On 06 August, 12 Polish pilgrims died in an accident in Croatia. The bus carrying the pilgrims, organized by the Brotherhood of St. Joseph Catholic group, had veered off the road while travelling to Medjugorje, a Catholic shrine in Bosnia, which ended up in a ditch. 32 survived the accident of which 19 are in critical condition. Warsaw prosecutors were ordered to launch an investigation by Poland's justice minister and prosecutor general. Croatia's prime minister Andrej Plenkovic expressed his condolences to the family of the victims of the tragedy. ("Adam Easton and Elsa Maishman, "Croatia bus crash: Twelve Polish pilgrims killed and 32 injured, BBC, 07 August 2022)

EU to look into the Airlines' complaints over compensation rules

On 05 August, the Czech presidency of the EU is planning to resuscitate the discussion on the EU's air travel compensation rules. The airlines are complaining about the unfair compensation to the consumers for more than three-hour delays in flights. According to the 2013 proposal, any five-hour delay with reasons for extraordinary circumstances will have the airline not pay out the compensation, though the meaning

of extraordinary circumstances remains ambiguous. Airlines complained that the claims agencies take up a lot of their money by moving the consumer cases to court. Claims agencies were created mainly because the airlines didn't do their job of handling compensation suitably. The airline companies are also looking toward Sweden, which is next in line for the EU presidency, to sort the problem as consumer rights are important to the Nordic countries. (Mari Eccles, "Under-pressure airlines push for end to big payouts for delayed passengers," POLITICO, 05 August 2022)

Russian oligarchs exploit UK's business system to escape sanctions

On 04 August, an investigation by the *BBC* and *Finance Uncovered* have revealed evidence affiliating a number of English Limited Partnerships (ELPs) to fraud, terrorism and money laundering. In an ELP an individual can invest capital into a company but does not play an active role in its management. ELPs were not included in the UK's transparency laws of 2016 and 2017, which obligated companies to identify their real owners. Since then, many ELPs were established to exploit the system's loophole in order to dodge anti-money laundering laws. The investigation has found that among those who exploited the loophole are Putin's close allies, Arkady and Boris Rotenberg. It is revealed that they have used a network of shell companies worldwide to evade US sanctions imposed after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. (James Oliver, Nassos Stylianou, Will Dahlgreen, Steve Swann, "Banned Russian oligarchs exploited UK secrecy loophole," BBC, 04 August 2022)

CLIMATE CHANGE

France accuses the UK for violating environmental commitments

On 25 August, three MEPs from France claimed that the UK was neglecting environmental commitments by directing their raw sewage into the English Channel and the North Sea. The MEPs who are from the En Marche party, called for legal and political action from the European Commission on the issue. They said that UK's action was threatening marine life, the oceans and violating the terms of the UN

conventions on protecting shared waters. The UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs spokesperson however denied the charges. He said that since Brexit, the environment law in the country has been made even more stringent and thus it was "untrue" that the UK was not holding itself to water quality targets. (Elsa Maishman, "Sewage in sea: French appeal to EU over UK discharges of waste," BBC, 25 August 2022)

Since 1930s, Switzerland's glaciers have halved in mass

On 22 August, the Polytechnic university ETH Zurich and the Swiss Federal Institute on Forest, Snow and Landscape Research announced the results of their study on the topographical changes in Switzerland's glaciers. To ascertain the level of glacial melt, the study traced 1400 glaciers in Switzerland and analyzed around 21,700 pictures of glacial areas since 1931, from the Terra image archive. According to the findings of the study, the glaciers have lost half their volume from 1931 to 2016. From 2016, the glaciers have further receded by 12 per cent. The study also found that in 1920s and 1980s there was a sporadic growth in glacier mass, but it was invalidated by the general trend of decline. ("Switzerland: Glaciers have shrunk by half since 1930s — study," Deutsche Welle, 22 August 2022)

Europe reeling under extreme heat and extensive drought conditions

On 12 August, the European Commission Joint Research Center (EC-JRC) warned that the current drought conditions prevailing in Europe could be the worst in 500 years. The centre mentioned that as the situation is ongoing, it has not yet been fully analyzed, but also predicted that the drought might reach 47 per cent of the continent. Two-thirds of the European Union area has issued drought warnings. A senior researcher from the centre, Andrea Toreti who announced the news, also said that this drought has the potential to be worse than the crisis in 2018. As of now, Italy's Po River, Germany's Rhine River and the UK's Thames are recording extremely low levels of water, while southern France and large areas of Spain and Portugal have also been affected. (Zia Weise and Antonia Zimmermann, "Starving

hedgehogs, dry rivers, parched farms: The toll of Europe's worsening drought," POLITICO, 11 August 2022; Thomas Blade, "Europe's drought could be the worst in 500 years, warns researcher," Euronews, 10 August 2022)

The EU sends more firefighters to counter France's wildfire

On 11 August, the European Commission announced that firefighters were being sent from Germany, Greece, Poland, Austria, and Romania to France to douse the wildfire in the south of Bordeaux, which had been reignited even though it was brought under control earlier. France had also requested firefighters' assistance from the EU and data from the bloc's Copernicus satellite on charred areas. France is also set to receive four firefighting aircraft in Greece and Sweden. Around 6800 hectares of land have been destroyed, and 10000 firefighters have been battling fires across France. Climate scientists warn that extreme temperatures are expected in the future as the Earth gets warmer due to emission of greenhouse gases by human activities. Not only France but also Spain and Portugal are battling wildfires across their nation. ("European firefighters rush to France's aid as wildfires rage," Deutsche Welle, 11 August 2022)

Wildfire reignites in France while the UK issues drought warning

On 10 August, around 10,000 people were evacuated from the Gironde region in southwest France, after wildfires, reignited again after July. So far, due to the wildfires, around 40,000 people have been evacuated from the region. The previous blazes in Gironde had destroyed more than 20,000 hectares of pine forests. The French authorities increased the number of firefighters deployed to the region to 1,000 who were supported by water-spraying planes. Moreover, due to the heat, water restrictions have been implemented in all 96 of their mainland departments to deal with the 'historic' drought in France. On the same issue, to deal with yet another wave of extreme heat and the resultant drought conditions, UK's meteorological agency issued an amber alert. Thames Water, the largest water supplier in the UK also issued a warning about imminent water restrictions like a hosepipe

ban. ("Thousands evacuated as smouldering French wildfire reignites," *The Guardian*, 10 August 2022; "UK meteorologists, water firms issue warnings as extreme heatwave looms," *Euractiv*, 10 August 2022)

Intense heatwaves exacerbate drought conditions and melts glaciers in Alps across Europe

On 08 August, a report by the BBC elucidated how Europe is reeling under the effects of extremely high heat. The report said that due to the rising temperatures water levels in rivers are falling thus causing drought conditions. This is leading many countries to introduce rationing measures for water usage. In Netherlands, stretched of the Waal River bed has emerged. In Spain, water-rich agriculture of avocados and olives is facing a crisis, as is also the case in Slovenia, where the drought is taking a toll on agriculture. In Italy, due to the drying up of the Po River in parts, a World War Two bomb emerged, which was then detonated in a controlled environment. Moreover, the glaciers on the Alps are also melting faster than expected. BBC reports that if greenhouse gas emissions rise further, the glaciers on the Alps are expected to lose 80 per cent of their current mass by 2100. (Laurence Peter, "In pictures: Drought hits Europe's rivers and crops," BBC, 08 August 2022; "Climate change: Alps glaciers melting faster as heatwaves hit," BBC, 08 August 2022)

NATO and the EU assist Greece to settle the wildfire

On 05 August, NATO Support and Procurement Agency supplied 40 firefighting aircraft to Greece amidst raging wildfires. The deployed aircraft include 29 firefighting helicopters and 11 firefighting aeroplanes. The aircraft were deployed to 20 different locations and this was the 11th time that NSPA supplied Greece. The EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) also lends its aid to Greece by pre-positioning 204 firefighters who were borrowed from the member states. The ERCC's 12 reserve firefighting aircraft, which are loaned from member nations, are also deployed to various European countries such as Albania, Portugal, Spain, France, the Czech Republic and Slovenia which are also battling wildfires. The wildfires are caused

due to the intense heatwave rolling throughout Europe. ("NATO deploys record 40 firefighting aircraft to Greece," *euronews*, 05 August 2022)

Acute water shortage in England

On 03 August, the UK was concerned about heading toward drought due to an acute shortage of water. The rainfall was down by 76 per cent in July according to the Met Office and the average flow of the rivers was said to be below normal levels. With heatwaves, added overconsumption of water has reduced the groundwater level in the country. Water companies are considering banning hosepipes in the UK. The drought has brought forth dry land which resulted in wildfires and the loss of crops and shortages. The government has advised its citizens to reduce the consumption and wastage of water and took measures for the impending drought. ("Is the UK heading for a drought and will there be more hosepipe bans?," BBC, 03 August 2022)

Po River's rising salinity affects crops and fisheries around the delta in Italy

On 02 August, Associated Press published a report on the worsening condition of agriculture and fisheries due to the increasing salinity of Italy's Po River. While deltas are where exchange between fresh and saltwater occur, due to the reduced amount of water in the upper courses of the Po River, the flow is becoming unidirectional. In 1960, the inland penetration was reported at two kilometres while in 2022 it has increased to 38 kilometres. This imbalance is affecting the rice cultivation along the river basin and also killing the double valve clams common to this area. Referring to the ecosystem which includes the Po Delta Park and the neighbouring part of Veneto, a UNESCO recognized biodiversity reserve, the director of the Po River Basin Authority said: "It is evident that there is an entire system with an ecology that will have permanent problems." (Luigi Navarra and Luca Bruno, "Italy's salty Po Delta hurting agriculture, fisheries," AP News, 02 August 2022)

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European Commission approves Germany's new green heating project

On 02 August, the European Commission approved Germany's EUR three billion scheme to support renewable energy and district heating programs based on waste-heat. The scheme will assist in setting up an annual heat-generating capacity of 681 megawatts and cover 40 per cent of the investment costs of relevant projects. The scheme will also offer government grants till 2028 to the new heating network that runs on at least 75 per cent renewable energy. Each district will have to establish heating grids in their cities, which is slated to reduce fossil-fuel dependency and emissions by a considerable margin. ("[EU approves €3 billion German green heating scheme](#)," Euractiv, 02 August 2022)

Rigorous risks of climate change undermined and unassessed

On 01 August, an analysis published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Science argued that the results of global heating beyond three degrees Celsius are undermined. The climate scientists warn that the risk of societal collapse has been "dangerously underexplored," and called the situation the "climate endgame." The analysis suggested a research agenda on

famine, extreme weather, war, and disease. The scientists stated that a rigorous risk assessment on how threats spread, interact, and evolved had not yet been attempted. It also warned that climate breakdown might trigger other catastrophic threats, including wars or disease outbreaks, and worsen poverty, drought, and crop failures. (Damian Carrington, "[Climate endgame: risk of human extinction 'dangerously underexplored'](#)," The Guardian, 01 August 2020)

ECONOMY

Despite Greece's exits from bailout monitoring, economic problems continue

On 16 August, Greece announced the stepping out of the bailout-monitoring which has raised reactions from the government and investors. Greece which was in bailout from 2010 to 2018, which was under the help of the EU to prevent going bankrupt will be out of the scheme from 20 August. According to Greece's Finance Minister, the economic difficulty faced by Greece was over and it can now draft its own economic policy. During the crisis, Greece's unemployment rate was at 28 per cent, which has now reduced to 12.5 per cent. Although the inflation stands, the GDP has boosted by 8.3 per cent. Few problems still remain such as the "chronic tax evasion," dependency over large businesses, and a poor sovereign debt rating. (Nektaria Stamouli, "[Greece exits bailout monitoring, but austerity pain lingers](#)," POLITICO, 16 August)

Bank of England raises interests and predicts inflation to reach 13 per cent

On 04 August, the Bank of England raised interest rates for a sixth successive time to 1.75 per cent and predicted an inflation reaching above 13 per cent. Threadneedle Street had to increase its lending costs by 0.5 percentage points. The Bank's governor stated: "If we don't act now to prevent inflation becoming persistent, the consequences later will be worse, and will require larger increases in interest rates," and added that reducing the inflation to two per cent remains its primary objective. The Bank's monetary policy committee (MPC) predicts an increase in the energy prices cap to about EUR 3,500 in October which will lead to rise in inflation to 13.3 per cent. (Larry Elliott, Phillip Inman and Heather

Stewart, “[Bank of England hikes rates as it predicts 13% inflation and long recession](#),” *the Guardian*, 04 August 2022)

ENERGY

European Commission president indicates “emergency intervention” in fixing electricity market

On 29 August, in the Bled Strategic Forum in Slovenia, European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen spoke about the rising energy prices in Europe and called for an “emergency intervention.” Which is required to bring the soaring prices down. Von der Leyen claimed that the current electricity market design which functions on the basis of marginal pricing had become obsolete in the current times. The soaring prices were thus exposing its limitations. She criticized how the price of gas often sets the final price of electricity. Referring to the electricity market’s restructuring, von der Leyen said: “That is why we, the Commission, are now working on an emergency intervention and a structural reform of the electricity market. We need a new market model for electricity that really functions and brings us back into balance.” (Jorge Liboreiro, “[Energy crisis: Ursula von der Leyen calls for ‘emergency intervention’ in electricity market](#),” *Euronews*, 29 August 2022)

Wind farm to be established in Estonian Island of Saaremaa by Swedish firm

On 01 August, the Switzerland-based firm Deep Wind Offshore is preparing to establish a wind farm in the Swedish exclusive economic zone northwest of the Estonian island of Saaremaa. The wind farm would have around 200 turbines and a total capacity of 6,000 megawatts. The deputy secretary general of the Ministry of the Environment, Kaupo Heinma inquired the Saaremaa rural municipality on whether Estonia should be included in the cross-border environmental impact assessment. In response, the head of the environmental department of the municipality stated that international cooperation in energy is necessary and relevant specialists should be involved in the discussions. (“[Swedish company planning large offshore wind farm northwest of Saaremaa island](#),” *The Baltic Times*, 01 August 2022)

GENDER

Government calls off the Serbian LGBTQ march

On 27 August, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic cancelled the “Pan-European LGBTQ Pride” march which was scheduled in Belgrade, stating the country is midst of economic problems, far-right extremist threats and tension with Kosovo. The EuroPride event was to be organized by the European Pride Organizers Association (EPOA) from 12 to 18 September. As far as the LGBTQ lobby in Serbia, has been supportive of the individuals except the opposition party, who stand against the LGBTQ rights. But till now the pride marches in Serbia have taken place only with complete police guard. (“[Serbia cancels EuroPride parade citing far-right threats](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, 27 August 2022)

Femicides on the rise in Italy

On 15 August, *The Guardian* reported on the rise of femicide in Italy. The report mentions that according to official data published by the interior ministry, 125 femicides have been recorded between 01 August 2021 to 31 July 2022, which shows a 16 per cent rise. In the previous cycle, 108 women had been murdered. Of the 125, 108 were killed in a family context and 68 were killed by their partners or former partners. Italy’s coordinator for the global network against violence against women called One Billion, Luisa Rizzitelli expressed concern about the failure of institutional policy in this regard and said: “The thing which I believe is very terrifying, is that we never been to be able to change direction... There are always around 100 or more femicides each year, and this, in a civilised country, is unacceptable.” (Angela Giuffrida, “[Italy records a big increase in femicides over the past year](#),” *The Guardian*, 15 August 2022)

Paris to establish ambassador’s for LGBTQ rights awareness

On 04 August, France’s prime minister Elizabeth Borne announced the creation of an ambassador’s post to promote LGBTQ rights worldwide. The ambassador, who will be appointed by the end of the year, will campaign for the decriminalization of homosexuality and trans identity. She also announced EUR three million fund to finance

ten new LGBTQ centers in France. The announcement comes after a minister of her party made stigmatizing comments on homosexuality and LGBTQ community. Borne further mentioned that there will be "no ambivalence" among the members of president Emmanuel Macron's administration on their commitment to LGBTQ rights. ("[France to appoint LGBTQ ambassador to promote rights abroad](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 04 August 2022)

France accused for discriminating against a Muslim woman for wearing a hijab

On 03 August, the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled that France had discriminated against a Muslim woman who was prohibited to attend vocational training in a public school while wearing a hijab. Naima Mezhoud was prevented from entering the school by the head teacher for wearing a Muslim head scarf in 2010. UNHRC ruled that France had committed religious and gender-based discrimination by refusing Mezhoud participation in the vocational training due to wearing a hijab. France did not respond to the UNHRC decision and is unlikely to comply with it. France follows strict secularism. President Emmanuel Macron argues that Islamism has jeopardized secularism in France while the Muslim community complains that their rights are targeted and chipped away by the government. The ruling stated that France has to compensate Mezhoud financially for six months and to offer the vocational course if she wishes. It also warned France to make sure that this never happens again. (Juliette Jabkhiro, "[France discriminated against hijab-wearing vocational trainee -U.N. document](#)," *Reuters*, 03 August 2022)

MIGRATION

Greece asks for assistance from Turkey to transport migrants from the Evros river islet

On 11 August, Athens requested Ankara's assistance in providing medical aid to the 40 migrants abandoned on a river islet inside a restricted military zone at their border earlier. A report states that the Evros river islet is outside Greece's sovereignty. The authorities asked the Turkish officials to take necessary action to rescue the stuck migrants from the islet. Although police do

not have trace of the migrants, despite the consecutive reports stating on their existence in different locations of the islet. Rejection by Greece and Turkey from entering their respective country pushed the migrants to the Evros river Islet. (Costas Kantouris, "[Greece asks Turkey to help migrants reported stuck on islet](#)," AP, 11 August 2022)

MARITIME

UK's new maritime strategy counter threats to the marine environment

On 15 August, a new maritime strategy was introduced in the UK to strengthen its capabilities, technologies, and security. The five-year strategy will guide the UK government to approach the threats and risks both domestically and internationally. The new strategy ensures a free, fair, and open maritime domain that has checks on any illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and anything that harms the environment. Immediate addressing of maritime security threats. The seabed mapping technology and the shipping industry are also under focus of the maritime strategy to advance UK's port facility. ("[New maritime security strategy to target latest physical and cyber threats](#)," *gov.uk*, 15 August 2022)

Seabed mining argument at a stalemate after three-week discussion

On 10 August, *the Guardian* reported that the negotiations on opening the world's first deep sea mines ended in a stalemate on 04 August. The three-week discussion took place at the International Seabed Authority (ISA) headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica. The ISA discussed a two-year rule in the meetings, triggered by Nauru declaring its plan to mine the seabed. The two-year government gave the ISA council to finalize a rulebook that governs all seabed mining activities. Countries like Spain, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Chile asked ISA to stop the race toward deep-sea mining as it would cause detrimental effects on the environment. ("[Deep-sea mining talks end with no agreement on environmental rules](#)," *the Guardian*, 10 August 2022)

Expedition finds 350-year-old rare jewels from the seabed in the Bahamas

On 31 July, *The Guardian* reported that an

expedition headed by Allen Exploration along with marine archaeologists from the US and the Bahamas explored the Little Bahama Bank region. They have discovered jewellery dating back 350 years, from the wrecks of the 'Nuestra Señora de las Maravillas', an old Spanish sailing ship that had sunk in 1656. The ship had been carrying treasures from Havana to Spain when it hit a reef, leaving behind only 45 survivors out of the 650 people on board. Led by Carl Allen, the expedition is using cutting-edge science to figure out how exactly the Maravillas were wrecked and how far the debris might have been scattered. They are also collecting data on the reef health, seafloor geology and plastics pollution in the oceans. Allen said: "The colourful coral that divers remembered from the 70s is gone, poisoned by ocean acidification and choked by metres of shifting sand. It's painfully sad. Still lying on those dead grey reefs, though, are sparkling finds." (Dalya Alberge, "[After 350 years, sea gives up lost jewels of Spanish shipwreck](#)," *The Guardian*, 31 July 2022)

Fall in the Rhine water levels causes problems for EU shipping

On 07 August, it is estimated that the water levels on the Rhine are extremely low to transport materials across the river due to less rainfall this year. Europe's major inland river that connects major countries such as Germany, France and Switzerland is having the problem of lower levels of water which poses a problem to the EU's plans to increase goods transportation through waterways and decrease the usage of costly and inefficient land movement. The low water level also threatens the transportation of coal to the power plants thus reducing its energy outputs in Germany. The decline in water level also decreased industrial activities because of transportation problems. Experts say that climate change had caused the plunge in the water levels of the Rhine this summer as well as the high-level last year. (Joshua Posaner and Hanne Cokelaere, "[Deep trouble for EU shipping push as Rhine River runs dry](#)," *POLITICO*, 07 August 2022)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

AI finds thousands of undeclared pools in France

On 30 August, *BBC* reported on how artificial intelligence (AI) was used to discover over 20,000 illegal swimming pools constructed in France, amounting to approximately EUR 10 million in revenue. The software developed by Capgemini spotted pools on aerial images of nine French regions. Pools result in higher property taxes as they increase the value of the property. Under French law, they must be declared as an asset, and an average-sized pool of 30 square meters is taxed at around EUR 200 per year. The Deputy Director General of Public Finances, Antoine Magnant said that the software will be further used to detect undeclared home extensions, especially patios, gazebos, and verandas. Europe-Ecology Greens party's National Secretary, Julien Bayou, said that a ban on new swimming pools might be considered, given the persistent drought conditions in the region. ("[Undeclared pools in France uncovered by AI technology](#)," *Reuters*, 30 August 2022)

Moderna sues Pfizer and BioNTech over COVID vaccine patent infringement

On 26 August, pharmaceutical company Moderna filed a case against another firm, Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech for patent infringement of the first COVID-19 vaccine approved in the US. Moderna accused Pfizer that they had copied the vaccine technology that Moderna had developed before the pandemic. The lawsuit was filed in the US district court of Massachusetts and also the regional court of Duesseldorf in Germany. Moderna is seeking compensation for the undetermined monetary damages and also to protect the innovative mRNA technology platform that they developed. Pfizer and BioNTech said that they are confident in their intellectual property and would defend against the lawsuit put forward by Moderna. (Daniel Trotta, "[Moderna sues Pfizer/BioNTech for patent infringement over COVID vaccine](#)," *Reuters*, 27 August 2022)

Twitter sued over failure to report on its internal complaint mechanism

On 18 August, *EURACTIV* reported that Twitter was discovered to be violating

Germany's content moderation rules by a German non-profit organization called HateAid. HateAid filed a complaint to the Federal Office of Justice that Twitter failed to report on its internal complaint mechanism as required by the Network Enforcement Act. Its lack of transparency in implementing countermotion procedures can make users forcibly complain about an account for a second time after 100 users had already reported the same account. The complaint against the social networking provider was a precursor of how to behave when the Digital Service Act comes into effect. (Laura Kabelka, "[Twitter accused of violating German content moderation rules](#)," EURACTIV, 18 August 2022)

UK initiate a consultation with the EU to settle the dispute over access to scientific information

On 16 August, the UK government began a formal consultation with the EU to address the delays in accessing EU's scientific research. Through the consultation, the UK and the EU will settle the dispute through the norms set in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). Although the negotiations to access the information began in 2020, the EU has been the blocking UK which has now led to serious constrain to the research and development industry of the UK. While UK is a leader in science, technology and research concentrated, EU's research community has supported the decision to collaborate with the UK. It is to mainly, benefit collaborative research and resolve societal and economic challenges. ("[UK launches formal consultations with EU over access to scientific programmes](#)," Gov.uk, 16 August 2022)

Brussel's flower carpet display adapts to heatwave

On 12 August, the flower carpet display in Brussel's changed its style and showcased heat-resistant blossoms and pot plants to adjust to the heatwave spread across Europe. Flowers like begonias were replaced with Belgian dahlias that contain more water. The 1971 Arabesque shapes inspired the display at the Brussels Grand Palace. The usual cut flower design was changed to potted plants due to its adaptation to the heat and its sustainability in being planted

afterward. Volunteers from all around the world spent more than six hours arranging the flower carpet. The flower display is a temporary art show that takes place every two. ("["Brussels' flower carpet blooms despite heatwave," Euractiv](#), 13 August 2022")

The EU protects Meta from being shut down in Europe

On 10 August, POLITICO reported that the EU had rejected the Irish draft to shut down meta from Europe because it shared European data with the US. Ireland's private regulators wanted to block Facebook's parent company, Meta, from using the last legal mechanism called standard contractual clauses (SCCs) to transfer vast amounts of data like family images and direct messages to the US. Ireland's decision was made after the European Court of Justice ruled that significant data flows between Europe and the US illegal due to the exposure of Europeans to the Washington government surveillance risks. Many regulators of other EU states are opposed to the Irish draft after being reviewed. Ireland has to form another draft to block the data transfer, but it might take a lot of time to come into effect in the EU. In the meantime, companies such as Meta will be able to use the new EU-US data deal. (Vincent Manancourt "[Europe staves off Facebook blackout — for now," POLITICO](#), 10 August 2022)

Parliament closes its TikTok account over suspicion of sharing data with China

On 05 August, the UK government ceased operations of its TikTok account after concerns over user data falling into the hands of the Chinese Communist Party. The parliament had created a TikTok page to educate the younger audiences in British politics. But the concern over TikTok's parent company, Bytedance, a Chinese tech company, might share the user data with the Chinese government upon request according to the National Intelligence law that has made the UK parliament shut down its account. According to leaked recordings of TikTok's 80 internal meetings, the user data can be accessed by employees of Bytedance in China and it already has been obtaining information about the users in the US for several months. The possibility of the app being used as spyware made the UK

parliament shut down the account. The company denies the accusations saying that it stores data in the US and Singapore and not in China and also wants to debunk any misconceptions about the app. It further said that it will now keep all user information in the US. (Rebekah Daunt and Sophia Khatsenkova, "[UK Parliament shuts down its TikTok account after MPs flag data security risks](#)," *euronews*, 05 August 2022)

SPACE

European Space Agency collaborates with NASA for Artemis I mission

On 24 August, the *European Space Agency* reported that it will assist NASA's Artemis I mission, which is set to launch on 29 August. Along with the Orion spacecraft, 10 CubeSats will also be launched. These satellites will prepare for the return of the astronauts to the lunar companion. ESA with the help of its deep space antennas and the Goonhilly Earth Station will be tracking and monitoring six of these small CubeSats. ESA's Estrack stations will determine the trajectories of the CubeSats and also ensure that the data collected by them reaches the relevant department. ("[Europe to support Artemis CubeSats in return to Moon](#)," *European Space Agency*, 24 August 2022)

INTERNATIONAL

UN IGC fails to reach the global oceans treaty for fifth time

The UN Intergovernmental Congress fifth session concluded with no progress. The attempt by the UN to make its member states sign the Global Ocean's treaty failed due to differences persisting over establishing marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments, finance, capacity building and sharing of marine genetic resources. Other key discussions also took place on deep-sea mining, fishing activities and shipping routes. IUCN's Senior High Seas Advisor said: "What happens on the high seas affects our coastal communities, affects our fisheries, affects our biodiversity - things we all care so much about." Therefore, the next session will be the next standing chance for closing the gap in signing the treaty. (Esme Stallard, "[Efforts to pass global ocean protection treaty fail](#)," *BBC*, 27 August)

Humanitarian aid provided to Pakistanis afflicted by flash floods by the EU

On 26 August, the EU allocated EUR 1.8 million as humanitarian aid to Pakistan. Sind, Balochistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces of Pakistan are being affected by flash floods. According to an assessment on the ground, more than a million people had lost their homes to the dangerous flood. The EU fund will contribute to providing emergency shelters, food, clean water, cash transfers, and primary healthcare services. The current EU assistance comes in addition to the EUR 350000 funding to the people of Balochistan province who were affected by the floods earlier. ("[Daily News 26 / 08 / 2022](#)," *ec.europa.eu*, 26 August 2022)

Kenya's communities sue UK government at the European Court of Human Rights

On 24 August, representatives for the Talai and Kipsigis from Kericho county in Kenya filed cases at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) against the UK government. The cases are regarding the theft of land in the highlands of the Rift Valley, where the communities lived before being forcefully evicted and sent to detention in a valley near present-day Lake Victoria. Their lands were taken over by tea firms. After Kenya's independence in 1963, the survivors left the detention camp and returned to their ancestral lands. However, they were not able to reclaim it and have lived alongside the tea estates as squatters ever since. The representatives alleged that the UK had violated the European Convention on Human Rights by avoiding engagement with the communities for redress. They also said that this step was a result of many years of efforts to engage with the UK government. ("[Kenyans seek to sue UK for alleged colonial abuses](#)," *BBC*, 24 August 2022)

President Macron visit Algeria with the French delegation

On 25 August, France's president Emmanuel Macron arrived in Algeria for a three-day visit. The agenda will be to mend France's ties with Algeria, through the French delegation comprises 90 people, including seven ministers from his cabinet and several business leaders. Algeria being Africa's biggest gas exporter, coincides with France's

efforts to secure more gas for itself before the winter months. Algeria's president Abdelmadjid Tebboune and Macron will also discuss the issue of Russia being Algeria's top weapons supplier and the withdrawal of French troops from Mali. (Hugh Schofield, "[France's Emmanuel Macron to mend Algeria ties as energy crisis bites](#)," *BBC*, 25 August 2022)

Spain offers to host peace talks for Colombia

On 25 August, Spain's prime minister Pedro Sanchez announced to host talks to secure peace. Sanchez recounted Spain's longstanding relation with Colombia and referred to the historic 2016 deal between the government and the FARC guerrilla group. Through this visit, Sanchez is expected to renew the dialogue with the ELN guerrillas that was stopped by Ivan Duque's government and to resume negotiations with the FARC and the Gulf Clan paramilitary group. Sanchez said: "We offer ourselves to the Colombian government to help in everything that I think is common sense to achieve peace... Spain would be willing and offers to host them." (Fernando Heller, "[Spain offers to host Colombian peace talks](#)," *Euractiv*, 26 August 2022)

Palestine president's "holocaust" comment sparks outrage

On 16 August, Palestine's president Mahmoud Abbas made a controversial statement in Germany at a joint press conference with Germany's chancellor Olaf Scholz. Abbas was asked by a journalist whether he wanted to apologise for the deadly attack on Israelis by Palestine's militants in the 1972 winter Olympics. He said: "If we want to dig further into the past, yes, please, I have 50 massacres that were committed by Israel... 50 Holocausts." On 17 August, Germany's chancellor Olaf Scholz criticized the statement and expressed outrage about Abba's comments. The statement has drawn criticism from Israel too. Israel's ambassador to Germany, Ron Prosor said that 'holocaust denial' in Germany should not be tolerated. (Philip Oltermann, "[Uproar after Mahmoud Abbas in Berlin accuses Israel of '50 Holocausts'](#)," *The Guardian*, 17 August 2022)

EUs first step to becoming a global leader in digital regulation

On 16 August, *the world economic forum* reported on the EU's decision to open a new office in San Francisco, which is known as California's Silicon Valley. The initiative is taken under the EU's digital diplomacy to not only directly connect with US's leading tech companies. It is also to act as a regulator of such tech giants overseeing their global implications. Through which EU's digital policies, governance models and cooperation will strengthen with the US. Such trans-Atlantic cooperation reflects the shift from where countries had nuclear proliferation treaty to control other countries possessing of nuclear weapons, similarly the ongoing digital transformation insists for prevention of digital proliferation. (Spencer Feingold, "[Why the European Union is opening a Silicon Valley 'embassy'](#)," *weforum.org*, 16 August 2022)

Iran asks for clarifications about renewal of EU-mediated nuclear deal with the US

On 15 August, at an extraordinary meeting of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, a detailed report on the draft deal to renew the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was discussed. Iran also sent EU their answer to the draft, focusing on outstanding questions about the future of implementation of sanctions and guarantees around economic engagement. However, Iran's reply does not have further queries about the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) investigation about the origin of traces of nuclear material found in several sites in Iran. The response submitted by Iran suggests that it wants to continue their negotiations on certain aspects of the deal and does not confirm whether Iran has or will accept the tabled draft. US chief negotiator, Special Envoy Robert Malley also addressed the proposed draft and said: "We are considering the text very carefully to make sure that it lives up to the president's very clear guidance that he would only sign up to a deal that is consistent with U.S. national security interest." (Stephanie Liechtenstein and Nahal Toosi, "[Iran delivers deadline response to draft nuclear deal](#)," *POLITICO*, 15 August 2022)

EU's proposal to renew the 2015 nuclear deal weakens US sanctions on Iran

On 12 August, *POLITICO* reported that the EU's proposal to renew the nuclear deal between the US and Iran will weaken the sanctions imposed by the US on Iran's Revolutionary Guards. The terms of the proposal will also enable Iran to avoid the scrutiny of the atomic sites. Initially, the terms of the draft submitted by the EU suggested that the Biden government is ready to make greater concessions to secure the deal, but U.S. special envoy for the Iran talks, Rob Malley has since refuted the claim. Malley said: We have not engaged in any negotiation about changing due diligence, know-your-customer, or other U.S. sanctions compliance standards for sanctions... Any report to the contrary is flat out wrong." (Matthew Karnitsching, "EU proposes lifting pressure on Iran's Revolutionary Guards to revive nuclear deal," *POLITICO*, 12 August 2022)

Germany pulls troops from Mali amidst accusations of increased interference from the Mali government

On 12 August, Germany suspended its military mission to Mali. The German deployment in Mali is a part of a United Nations mission called MINUSMA, to observe peacekeeping in the country where terrorists and Russia's mercenaries continue to destabilize peace. However, relations between Germany and Mali's military junta have been deteriorating for some time due to Mali's increasing belligerence towards the West. Mali's government has also imposed several restrictions like denial of overflight rights. The decision to freeze the deployments comes after the failure to rotate 140 soldiers in Gao. Germany's defence minister Christine Lambrecht said: "Camara's actions speak a different language than his words. Therefore, we must take action and suspend the operations of our reconnaissance forces and transport flights, until further notice." (Ilya Gridneff, "In unstable Sahel, Germany pulls troops out of Mali," *POLITICO*, 12 August 2022)

China-backed East Europe forum becomes 14+1 after Latvia and Estonia withdraw

On 12 August, Latvia and Estonia reported

that they will leave a China-backed cooperation framework of central and eastern European countries and China. The forum had been set up to strengthen relations between China and EU member states and Serbia. The additional objective is to further the Belt and Road Initiative and construct bridges, railways, power plants, and other infrastructure across the Eurasian continent. Both Latvia and Estonia's governments said that they will continue to strive for bilateral relations with China, but are withdrawing from the 17-country grouping. The move comes after China launched economic and diplomatic retaliation against Lithuania, for strengthening ties with Taiwan. ("Latvia, Estonia leave China-backed East Europe forum," *AP*, 12 August 2022)

EU submits "final text" of the 2015 nuclear deal to the US and Iran

On 08 August, the European Union submitted a "final text" to restore Iran's 2015 nuclear deal. EU's foreign policy chief Joseph Borrel said that an agreement is likely to take place soon. The EU mediated talks between Iran and the US, attended by China, Russia, France, Germany and the UK, focused on technical adjustments to the text suggested by Borrel on 21 July. He said: "... behind every technical issue and every paragraph lies a political decision that needs to be taken in the capitals. If these answers are positive, then we can sign this deal." The deal now has to be signed by Iran and the US. While the former's initial reaction was cautious, US described the tabled draft as the "best and only basis on which to reach a deal". (Patrick Wintour, "EU team submit 'final text' at talks to salvage 2015 Iran nuclear deal," *The Guardian*, 08 August 2022)

China's military exercise upsets the West and regional nations

On 05 August, China assembled European diplomats in the country to protest statements issued by G7 nations and the EU regarding its military exercises near Taiwan. China conducted a military exercise dispatching navy ships and warplanes and also launched missiles into the Taiwan Strait as a response to the US House of Representatives speaker, Nancy Pelosi

visiting Taiwan. Five missiles fired by the Chinese military landed in the Exclusive Economic Zone off Hateruma island which belonged to Japan. Japan's prime minister Fumio Kishida said that the Chinese military exercise directed at Taiwan will threaten regional peace and security. Pelosi's visit was seen as blatant political manipulation and China said that it responded accordingly. ("[China summons European diplomats over statement on Taiwan](#)," *euronews*, 05 August 2022)

The EU urges Baku and Yerevan to have peaceful negotiations

On 03 August, the EU demanded an immediate end to the fight between the armies of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Three people were reported to have died from the

skirmish where one was from the Azerbaijan force and the other two were from the Karabakh army. The conflict has endangered the delicate truce between the two countries. Azerbaijan alleged that it was just retaliating against a terrorist attack by the illegal Armenian militant forces. The Armenian foreign ministry urged the international community to take action against the aggressive attitude of Azerbaijan. The EU implored both parties to go into negotiations rather than turn toward violence. Russia's defence ministry accused Azerbaijan of breaching the ceasefire that Moscow brokered in 2020. Russia declared that it was taking measures to stabilize the situation between Azerbaijan and Armenia. ("[Nagorno-Karabakh: Azerbaijan, Armenia trade blame over renewed clashes](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 03 August 2022)

About the authors



Emmanuel Selva Royan

Mr Emmanuel is a Research Assistant at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. As part of the NIAS Europe Studies, he looks into developments of the Baltic states, Southern European countries, and follows developments in the Ukraine war. His larger research interests include climate change, maritime and sustainable development.



Padmashree Anandhan

Ms Anandhan is a Project Associate at the National Institute of Advanced Studies. As part of the NIAS Europe Studies, her research focuses on issues relating to politics, protests, Brexit, economy, maritime and NATO's operations. Her larger research interest includes studying peace, conflict and global initiatives taken towards the ocean in Europe.



Rishma Banerjee

Ms Banerjee is a Research Assistant at the NIAS Europe Studies under the Area Studies initiative at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. Her research interests are in conflict and the geopolitics in the Eastern Europe. Currently she is tracing the war in Ukraine.



Sai Pranav

Mr Pranav is an undergraduate scholar from the Department of History at Kristu Jayanti Autonomous College, Bengaluru. He is currently a Research Scholar at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. His research interests include the history of Europe, energy, and European conflicts.



Sourina Bej

Ms Bej is a doctoral candidate and KAS-EIZ scholarship holder at the University of Bonn. Her research for the Europe Studies at NIAS includes studying political populism, protest movements, migration and social inclusion, and religious extremism in Western Europe. Her research interest also includes understanding the socio-political conflicts in post-BREXIT Europe. She is currently working on a commentary on the lone acts of terror and radicalisation in Western Europe.

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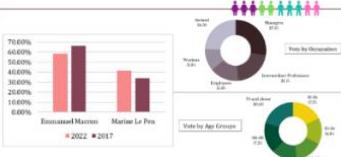
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Special Focus
 Map representation depicting Russian offensive on ground. From left to right, shown on 31 March, 30 April, and 31 May. Image source: Institute for the Study of War / Critical Threats, 21 May 2022

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Special Focus
 Map represents members of the EU and NATO in comparison to the area controlled by Russia. Image source: The Economist, 12 February 2022

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 Will Russia's latest attack on the Odessa port, undermine the grain deal with Ukraine?
 France: Uber Suez, and Bennett's mistake
 Italy's political instability: Three times
 Headlines source: Foreign Affairs editor's response



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