



# NIAS Area Studies EUROPE MONITOR

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Europe Monitor # 13 | Vol. 02, No. 10 | October 2022  
An initiative of NIAS and KAS-India office

## Cover Story

# Elections in Europe: Sweden and Italy

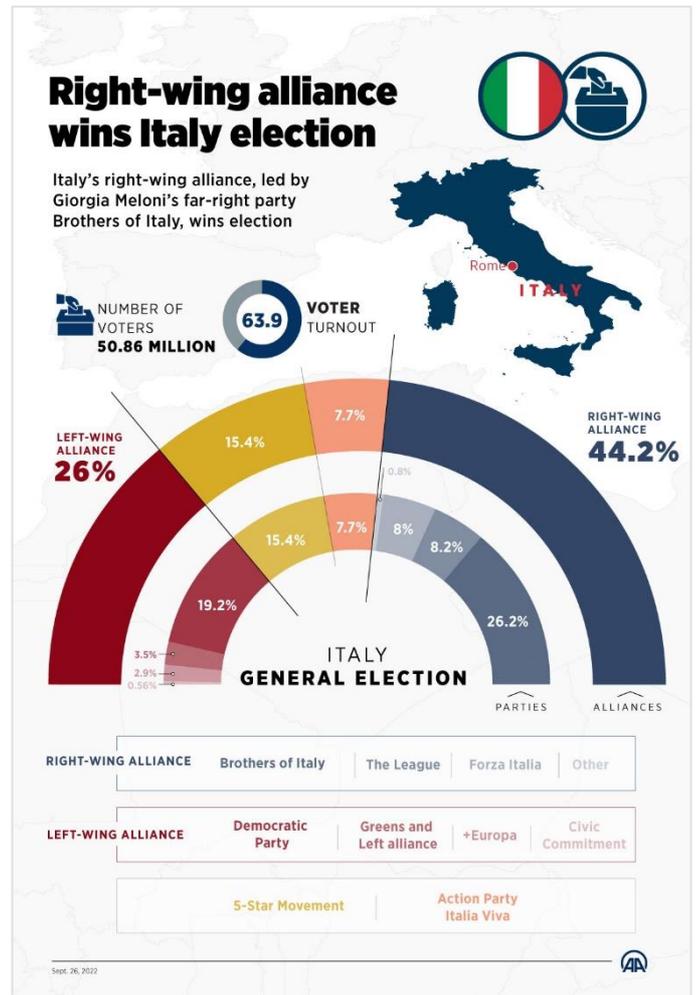
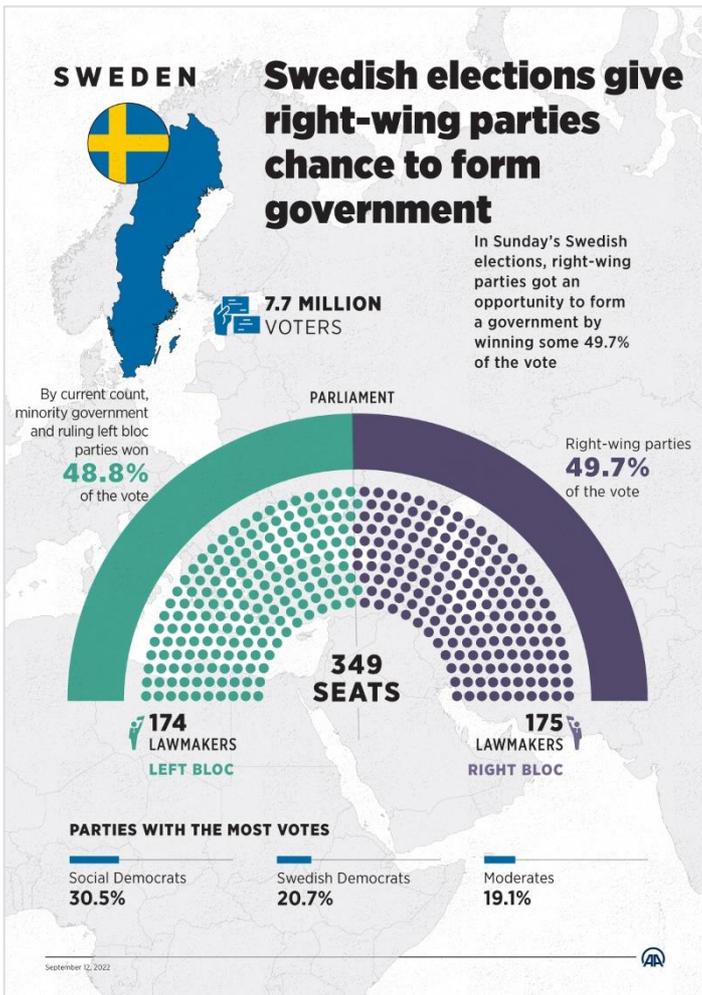


Image source: The 2022 election performance of Sweden and Italy, Anadolu Agency

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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.

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### **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.



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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.

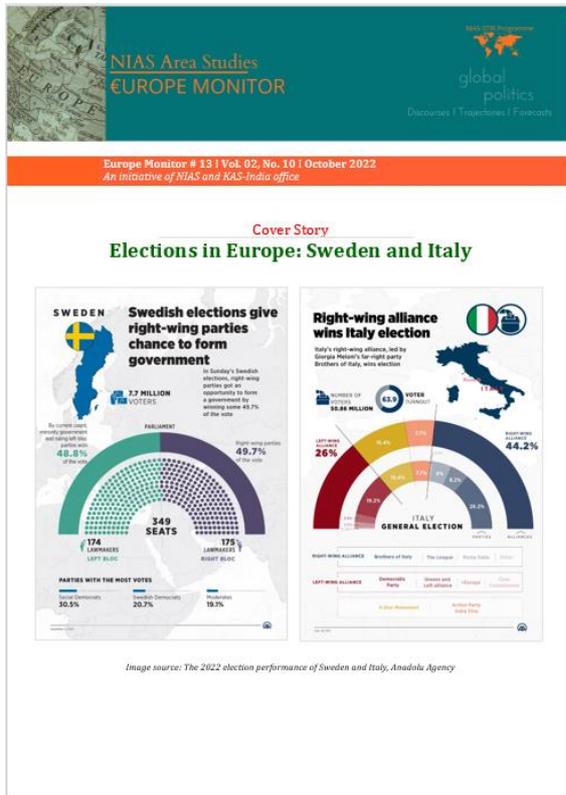
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Source: Gov.uk, Kremlin.ru, Fiona Hanson – PA Images, United Nations photo

**Europe Monitor**

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## WAR IN UKRAINE: DAILY UPDATES



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War in Ukraine section covers the everyday developments from Day 188 to Day 195 in four dimensions. First, The 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, and Sai Pranav*

## EM SHORT NOTES



Source: Sanna Marin Facebook, CNBC, European Commission, Jan Woitas/dpa/pa/Deutsche Welle, FT, Alexander Demianchuk/TASS/pa/Deutsche Welle

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*By Padmashree Anandhan, Rishma Banerjee, Sai Pranav, and Madhura S Mahesh*

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## COVER STORY

**Political Crisis in Europe: Case studies of Sweden and Italy**

Sourina Bej and Padmashree Anandhan

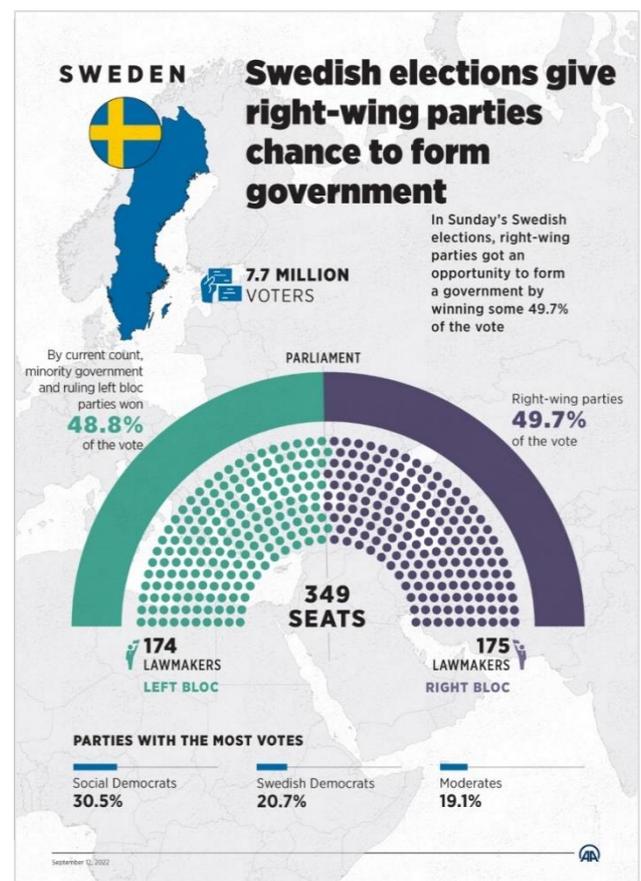
## I Elections in Sweden: Political tilt to the right routs the centrist-left predominance

On 11 September 2022, the legislative elections in Sweden marked the entry of the country's right-wing populist party, Sweden Democrats, for the first time in the Riksdag. The incumbent ruling party, the Social Democrats, received the largest percentage of votes (30.3 per cent), and the Sweden Democrats emerged as the second largest political party with 20.5 per cent of votes in their best-ever electoral performance. The largest opposition party, the Moderates, received close to 19.1 per cent votes. A statistical count of the votes indicated that no party emerged with a clear majority, seemingly implying that the right-wing Sweden Democrats could now claim a position as a coalition partner in the power-sharing arrangement in the Riksdag.

The exit polls on 10 September indicated a clear victory for the Social Democrats' centre-left coalition, which has been in power since 2014. However, as the counting of votes progressed, the right-wing bloc consisting of the Liberals, Christian Democrats, Moderates, and Sweden Democrats gained 49.5 per cent of the votes. The left-wing coalition, comprising the Social Democrats and the other Left parties tailed with 48.8 per cent of the votes. The Social Democrats Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson conceded defeat and it is the leader of the Moderates, Ulf Kristersson, who is slated to be the next Prime Minister of Sweden. On 17 October, the Riksdag voted for the centre-right Moderate Party leader Ulf Kristersson as the Prime Minister with a narrow margin. The new government will consist of the Moderates and two center-right parties but the coalition will be

supported from the outside by the Sweden Democrats.

The elections in Sweden signify the gradual coming of age of the political right at the centre stage in the Riksdag. This begs the question, do the elections mark the decline of the predominance of the traditional centre-left parties in Sweden?



### Key political parties in Sweden: Who stands for What?

#### *The Social Democrats*

The current ruling party, the Social Democrats, has been in power for the better part of the 20th century except for a few election cycles. As the architect of the folkhemmet or creating a "people's home," the Social Democrats in the 1930s were responsible for setting up much of Sweden's robust social welfare system. As one of the

traditional political parties promoting social welfare as its ideology in Sweden, the party has been leading the coalition with the Green and the other Left parties. The Social Democrats' position in the political landscape in Sweden has been relatively stable except in 2014 when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's budget proposal was unanimously rejected and criticised by the majority of lawmakers in the Riksdag. His position weakened and in November 2021 his colleague, Magdalena Andersson, was appointed as the Prime Minister to form a one-party minority government.

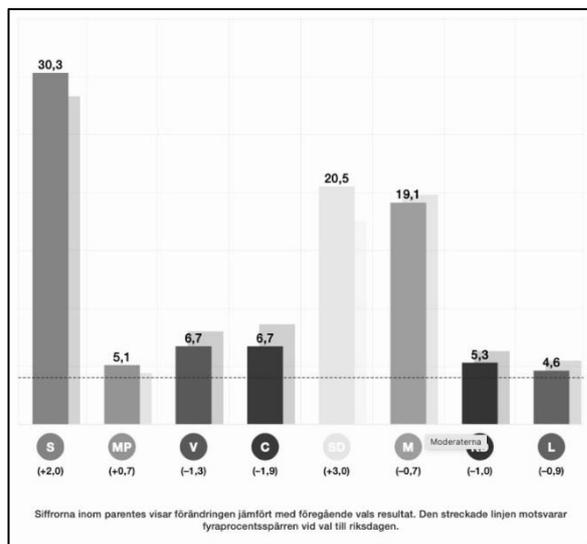


Image source: Sveriges Radio, <https://sverigesradio.se/grupp/35906>

### **The Moderates**

The second largest political party in Sweden are the Moderates, a centre-right party and the main opposition to the Social Democrats. They differ from the latter in their support for free market principles, economic liberalism, and tax cuts. From 2006 to 2014 they were the lead party in coalition with the Christian Democrats, Liberals, and the Centre Party. Yet when the Sweden Democrats became the Riksdag's third largest party in 2018, the Moderates broke their conservative alliance with the Liberals and Center Party to partner with the Sweden Democrats. The centrist conservative parties, which are the Liberals, and the Center Party then offered support to the Social Democrats, refusing to make a common cause with the Sweden Democrats to form a conservative government. Since 2018, the Moderates have steered more towards its free-market values and social

conservative approach, opposing the welfare politics of the Social Democrats. As the opposition to Left centrists, the Moderates balance the political spectrum in Sweden with their voices for Liberal market principles.

### **The Sweden Democrats**

Against the backdrop of de-industrialization, public spending cutbacks, rising unemployment, and the violent breakup of Yugoslavia that caused an influx of refugees in Sweden, the Sweden Democrats were founded in 1988. In the past four decades, the Sweden Democrats have unified the various far-right groups in Sweden and in 2005, the current party leader Jimmie Akesson ushered the party away from its far-right roots to a more populist image. Akesson, a former member of the Moderate party, aligned the political ideology of the Sweden Democrats with social conservatives thereby branding it as a people's party. Like other right-populist movements across Western economies, the party also built its narrative against a corrupt elite at the height of a global recession and adopted a gentler image by changing the party's logo from a flaming torch to the pennywort flower. The party gained six per cent votes in the Riksdag in 2010 and gained traction after the migration crisis of 2015. Sweden received the second-highest number of applications from asylum seekers, and with it, the party built a strong anti-immigrant opposition that had just begun to burden Sweden's welfare system. The party more than doubled its position in the 2014 election, gaining around 13 per cent of votes. When the centre-right Moderates agreed to cooperate with the Sweden Democrats in 2019, this set the stage for its eventual entrance to governing. In 2022, the votes for the Sweden Democrats surpassed that of the Moderates, and it has emerged as the second-largest party in Riksdag.

### **Sweden's Political Landscape: Party Shifts, Social Fractures & Welfare Chauvinisms**

#### **Swedish Exceptionalism**

The political principles governing Sweden have been off centrist consensus emphasizing humanitarianism and social

welfare. With a nationalist narrative of “Swedish Exceptionalism,” Sweden has taken pride in welcoming refugees and providing asylum since the end of World War II.

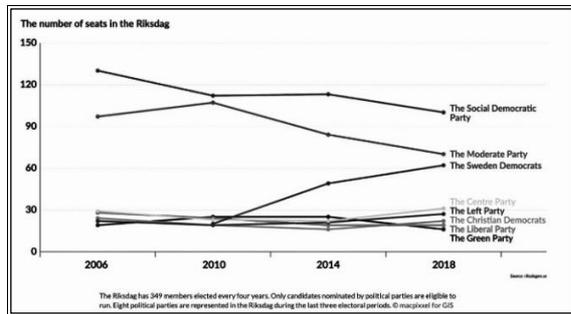


Image source: riksdagen.se

A decadal decline in vote share for Centrists

The Swedes might have guarded their ethnic homogeneity before, but with the influx of refugees, Sweden has found it increasingly challenging to be the exception. Even as other European countries has increasingly put in place strict immigration policies in the 1990s and 2000s, Sweden opened its borders to accept more applications from asylum seekers. However, this exceptionalism ended in 2015 when in November 2015 the Social Democrat Prime Minister Stefan Lufven noted, “Sweden is no longer capable of receiving asylum seekers at the high level we do today. We simply cannot do any more.” The statement marked a steady shift in the social perception towards immigrants that was echoed simultaneously in political quarters where the welcome was relative and the identity politics over access to social benefits had begun. The same year, the Sweden Democrats positioned themselves as the only party representing Swedish ethno-nationalist identity and called to curb immigration.

### **Welfare State**

The Swedish political structure and the party ideologies like the social structure are largely divided or shaped by class and labour-capital relationships. As political sociologists Lipset and Rokkan conceptualised, the socio-economic cleavages in Sweden have been periodically expressed through workers’ movements and subsequently the growth of the welfare state. As the welfare policy sought to bring in equity for all and bridge the socio-economic

cleavages after a series of workers’ movements, the 2015 migration crisis added 1,62,877 asylum seekers to Sweden’s labour class. This further compelled Sweden to spend six billion kronor on language training and facilitated jobs for the asylees who are now part of Sweden’s unemployed youth bulge. With no continuation in policy at local levels, a majority of asylum seekers in Sweden tend to be placed in rural areas which are already witnessing an economic decline.

On the other hand, the increase in taxes to fund the robustness of the welfare schemes has created a perception that unemployed migrants receive unfair benefits. This has triggered a public discourse on welfare chauvinism, further politicised by the ring-wing caveat that better social services should be the privilege of the native-born. An understanding of the intra-class divisions along identity lines was evident in the 2010 Sweden Democrats’ electoral campaign that showed a group of burqa-clad women with strollers outrunning a pensioner for government assistance.

### **Shifts in political ideology and the emergence of the majority’s minority complex**

With social fractures beginning to surface in post-2015 Sweden, the anti-immigrant narrative by the ring-wing parties boded well with constituencies who had begun to view the minority migrant communities, largely Muslims, as a liability. With low-income levels and increasing involvement of the migrant communities in violence, riots, and gang crimes, the Swedes came to see themselves as paying the price of being overtly peaceful with open borders. A growing inward-protectionist attitude within the ethnic Swedes was further captured by the Sweden Democrats when the traditional centrist parties focused only on economic class divisions and poverty concerns over larger caveats of cultural divisions. In the last decade, identity politics defined the borders of social and civic belonging, thereby impacting the party’s grouping and the public’s political participation. The political shifts were manifest in the elections of 2018 when Sweden Democrats were not only supported

by the Moderates but also received a vote share to have a legislative position.

### ***Controlled Media, and Alternative News***

Extremism and violence such as the 2008 Malmö Mosque Riots, the 2010 and 2017 Rinkeby Riots, and the 2013 Stockholm riots, have instilled a sense of fear in Sweden. Irrespective of the cause or severity of the riots in Sweden, the narrative that violence is getting worse and more grotesque because of immigrants is shaping public opinion and finding a place in political campaigns as well. This is due in part to an “alternative media” ecosystem, which allows sharing of politically slanted news primarily through Twitter and Facebook, in closed groups. The media sources, Samhällsnytt and Nyheter Idag founded by Sweden Democrats are increasingly shaping the alternate news industry in Sweden. In the leadup to the 2018 elections, Swedish Twitter users shared one link from this ecosystem for every two links shared from professional news. The news related to riots on these websites tended to report more on violence in immigrant communities and people of colour, despite contradictory reports from police sources.

## **The 2022 Elections: Issues and Concerns**

### ***Radicalisation and gang violence***

The issue of radicalisation, religious extremism, and gang violence among immigrants emerged as the primary issue addressed by most parties in their electoral campaigns. The key issue in public debate was residential segregation. The outskirts of Sweden where socially vulnerable immigrants and asylum seekers live have become associated with organised crime. Increasingly visible criminal violence and gang activity are also playing a role in strengthening Sweden Democrats’ anti-immigrant stances. Sweden saw over 100 bombings in 2019, twice that of 2018—one of the highest percentage increases for any other industrialized nation in Europe. Even though no clear connection between violence and the rise of political right could be made at this stage of analysis, public concerns over safety overshadowed the electoral campaigns in 2022.

### ***Pandemic and its economic impacts***

During the pandemic, the Left Party acted as cheerleaders for the Social Democrats government and when state epidemiologist Anders Tegnell’s herd immunity policy led to the death of thousands, it opened a space for the Sweden Democrats to pose as opponents. Social Democrats’ disastrous policies, particularly in nursing homes where the sick and elderly people were involuntarily euthanized, were another major issue for public debate. The rising cost of living, the growing energy crisis, and the importance of green transition were other cumulative concerns in the elections.

### ***Ukraine war and security concerns***

The past eight years of Social Democrat-led governments have also been characterised by a massive military build-up, with Sweden sharply increasing defence spending, reintroducing military service, and offering military aid to support the war waged in Ukraine. Further, the Social Democrats steered the country away from its traditional opposition to the NATO military alliance and led Sweden to join. The regional decision-making by the Social Democrats was also tested in this election.

## **Decoding the Election Result: More than a win for the Political Right**

The concerns in the 2022 elections ranged from domestic challenges posed by gang violence to regional challenges due to the war in Ukraine. This heavily shaped the voting patterns and also brought to light the fundamental shifts in political participation in Sweden. After the elections, a gradual political legitimacy of the far right parties in Sweden was observable and along with it five trends marking a shift in the political landscape of Sweden could also be discernible.

First, depoliticization of the traditional socioeconomic issues and increasing salience of sociocultural issues. With the social conservative bloc slated to form the ruling coalition and a simultaneous increase in vote share for the ring-wing populist party Sweden Democrats, it indicates a gradual breakdown of the political parties from the left-right milieu. Coalition politics

have long emerged as a political norm in Sweden; however, the 2022 elections have strongly positioned the right-wing conservatives in the Riksdag. The election has also resulted in an increased geographical realignment of the Swedish parties. The left bloc won most votes in large cities and university towns, whereas the right bloc overturned dozens of municipalities historically dominated by the Social Democrats. These developments could probably increase the political polarisation in Swedish politics, further.

Second, the growing convergence among mainstream parties on socio-economic cleavages. The inevitable outcome of coalition bloc politics and power arrangement has been a partial de-politicization or neglect of socio-economic issues that have helped explain the rise of radical right parties. According to political scientists Rydgren and Mair, the traditional political parties in Sweden have all argued for equitable economic interests, where differentiating the ideology of one party from another has become increasingly difficult. Along with it, coalition politics has further dwindled the ideological hold in the Riksdag. In 2018, since the Left and Green parties could not secure the Social Democrats a parliamentary majority, the then leader of the party struck a deal with the right-wing four-party alliance to stay in power. Cutting across class lines, the coalition marked a shift in the centrist way of power arrangement. The power-sharing deal involved Social Democrats agreeing to enforce strict budget discipline based on the Alliance's spending plans and anti-immigrant measures. When this predictably resulted in the Sweden Democrats gaining further ground in the 2018 election, Social Democrats moved further to the right and formalised their ties with the Centre and the Liberals.

Third, the decline of class-based voting. A dealignment of voters' relationship with the centrist parties and splits within the working-class voters themselves could be observed as an outcome in the 2022 elections. Historically, Swedes have voted along class lines. The working class has benefited from the strong welfare state supported by the Social Democrats and the

industrialised cities have benefitted from the free market principles of the Moderates. However, as in many Western European countries, the platforms of left and right parties have become more similar in economic terms. The Social Democratic party has also moved toward more libertarian positions on both social and economic issues to gain or keep middle-class votes. This has alienated its working-class voters, especially rural voters who tend to be more socially conservative. The working class shift to the right-wing occurred more when the social conservative proletariat felt threatened by cheap immigrant labour. Further dividing the working class along ethno-religious identity lines, the working class in Sweden has come to view the present economic conflict as being between the native-born Swedes and the immigrant labour rather than between labour and capital. This has been reflected in the voting patterns in 2022 when the rural regions voted more for the Sweden Democrats who took a strong position against immigrants and violence.

Fourth, the emergence of new identity-based cleavages as electoral issues. The GAL-TAN divide referring to the contrasting spectrum of views between the Green-Alternative-Libertarian and Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist attitudes dominated the election in 2022. During the pandemic, the rights of Christians, women, greens, and the LGBT community emerged as key issues along with health concerns. Simultaneously, the issue of social exclusion of the immigrants in Swedish suburbs also shaped the voting patterns. With radicalisation and gang violence, the suburbs have transformed into sites of "parallel society," that have sought to threaten the social cohesion of Swedish society. The political parties have time and again, polarised this psyche even as society fractured along identity lines. The inherent "Swedish values" are important resources to strengthen social cohesion but these particular values have also gradually become markers of difference.

Lastly, conservative regional foreign policy over internationalism. While Social Democrats have pushed the country's foreign policy away from being a 'peace

exceptional,' the right bloc could only be expected to build on this foreign policy framework. With the war in Ukraine and its implications being felt on the energy prices in Western Europe, it is only a matter of time as the Moderate led bloc charts an inward-looking regional policy over internationalism for Sweden.

In keeping with the larger trend in West Europe, where political centrism has declined as political legitimacy of the far right parties has strengthened, the election in Sweden also witnessed a similar political pattern. The Sweden Democrats will now extend an external support to the ruling coalition. The political tilt to the right marks a gradual shift in the political participation in Sweden. A decadal analysis of the election results of the Riksdag shows that on one hand the traditional centrist parties have become more politically aligned over socio-economic issues, on the other hand larger socio-cultural issues have emerged to provide new grounds for political divisions. Following the elections, three key trends define the political changes in Sweden: first, the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe has emerged as a singular event that changed the working class. The class based voters have been divided over cultural and identity grounds which also contributed to the decline in the predominance of the traditional political parties. Second, new identity cleavages now shape the election issues where existing political parties are organising behind identity issues over social-economic factors. Thereby, as the political spectrum gradually shifts towards larger legitimacy of the far right parties, a larger trend towards strong identity divisions as social blocks could also be observed, such as in Sweden.

## II

### Elections in Italy: Far-right win exposes the fragility in the coalitions

On 25 September, the right alliance, left alliance, the Five-Star Movement, the centre,

and other traditional autonomist parties contested in Italy's snap elections. Among the four coalitions, the centre-right alliance headed by Giorgia Meloni from the Brothers of Italy, and others including the League, Forza-Italia, and Nio Moderati parties emerged as the clear winner. It won with a majority of 237 seats out of 400 in the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) and 115 seats out of 200 in the Senate of the Republic (upper house). The centre-left alliance led by Enrico Letta from the Democratic Party, and including the Green, Più Europa, and Impegno Civico were able to secure only 85 seats in the lower house and 44 seats in the upper house.

#### Profile of the parties



Image source: Anadolu Agency

#### ***Lega Nord***

The Lega Nord came into being in 1989 as an alliance of six regional parties and was officially launched as a party in 1991 with the merger of few regional parties, particularly Lega Lombarda and Liga Veneta. The party's core values have been "political federalism, and regionalism," with a "socially conservative" stance. Bringing the northern Italians together in support of federalism has always been the focus of the party. In terms of regional and foreign policy, it has never had a pro-US stance, does not support the EU, takes a hard stand against illegal immigration and Muslim countries, and

strongly protects the “Christian identity.” From 2006 to 2022, the party outperformed only in the 2018 elections as part of the centre-right alliance with 183 seats out of 402 total seats won by the alliance in both houses. Since then, the party’s share has been declining after its leader Matteo Salvini came under legal controversy over kidnapping migrants.

### ***Forza Italia***

Forza Italia, formed by Silvio Berlusconi in 1993 and formerly known as “The People of Freedom,” emerged from the break-up of the coalition government “Pentapartito” due to a corruption scandal. The coalition included Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Liberals, Socialists, and republican parties. The members of the Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, and Liberal parties formed the base of Forza Italia with liberal socialism as its core value. It was a bridge to the Catholics and non-Catholics focused on social market and economic welfare as its major policies. Staunchly supporting fiscal federalism and promoting liberal conservatism, the party has been in coalition with Lega Nord since 2001. Between 2006 to 2022, its best electoral performance with 423 seats out of 518 total seats in both houses was in 2008. This marked the third term of Silvio Berlusconi as Prime Minister after 1994 and 2001. Since his 2013 tax fraud offence, the party has been on the decline.

### ***Brothers of Italy***

The Brothers of Italy, formed by Georgia Meloni in 2012, includes members from the Italian Social Movement (MSI) who were known for neo-fascist principles. Between 2013 to 2022, the party gained the most with 184 seats out of 352 as part of the far-right alliance in the lower and upper houses in the 2022 elections. The 2013 elections were won by the left alliance led by the Democratic Party, and the far-right alliance coming second. The Brothers of Italy gained their first representation in 2013 with nine seats in the Chamber of Deputies and increased it to 50 seats in the lower and upper houses in the 2018 elections as part of the far-right alliance. With the League and Forza Italia on a decline and the Five-Star Movement failing to gain support to form a

coalition the 2022 elections provided the opportune moment for the party, and the Brothers of Italy won the election with a majority.

### ***Olive Tree/Democratic Party***

The Democratic Party, formerly known as The Olive Tree, was formed in 1995 as an alliance and later consolidated into a party with the merger of the Democrats of the Left and Italian Democratic Socialists in 2007. Unlike the Lega Nord, the party is based on the principles of social democracy and the Christian left, in support of American liberalism and pro-Europeanism. Its coalition partners have mostly been the Five-Star Movement, the National Unity Government, the Communist Party, the Greens, and the Union Democrats for Europe. Between 2006 to 2022, its electoral performance in the 2013 elections was the best with 408 seats out of 468 total seats in both houses leading the left-alliance to win. Since then it’s electoral performance has been on a steady decline. Regardless, between 2013 and 2018, the Italian government was led by three successive Democratic Prime Ministers, and it continues to be the strongest opposition against the right alliance.

### ***Five-Star Movement***

The Five-Star Movement came into being in 2009. Promoting both left-wing issues and right-wing policies, it was perceived as a “post-ideological movement.” The party has been a supporter of populism, environmentalism, and anti-austerity and has a strong position on anti-immigration and is pro-Russian. It is seen as the most adapted with a varied focus on digital democracy, green economy, adoption, and LGBT issues. The party suffered a break due to a clash between its members and the withdrawal of the League and Democratic Party in 2019 and 2021 which led to the collapse of the coalition triggering a political crisis in Italy. It remains the single party to have won the maximum number of seats among its alliance partners in the lower and upper houses in 2018 elections.

## Factors influencing the political backdrop of Italy

Many factors are responsible for the current political environment in Italy.

First, continued interventions in the form of electoral reforms and a complex voting system. Since 1993, four electoral reforms have been introduced. The first reform, the Mattarellum, proposed by Sergio Mattarella, a staunch supporter of the Democratic Party, changed the parliament's proportional vote system to a mixed electoral, where 75 per cent of the Members of Parliament (MPs) were to be chosen in single-member constituencies and 25 per cent through proportional representation. This reform was mainly aimed to encourage more coalitions with defined policies to prevent fragmentation and a way of removing small parties and those with extreme positions. The outcome was, however, a decrease in the number of seats of any majority party and an increase in the number of parties joining under different coalitions. It diluted political unity further and challenged the majority party from working on its agenda.

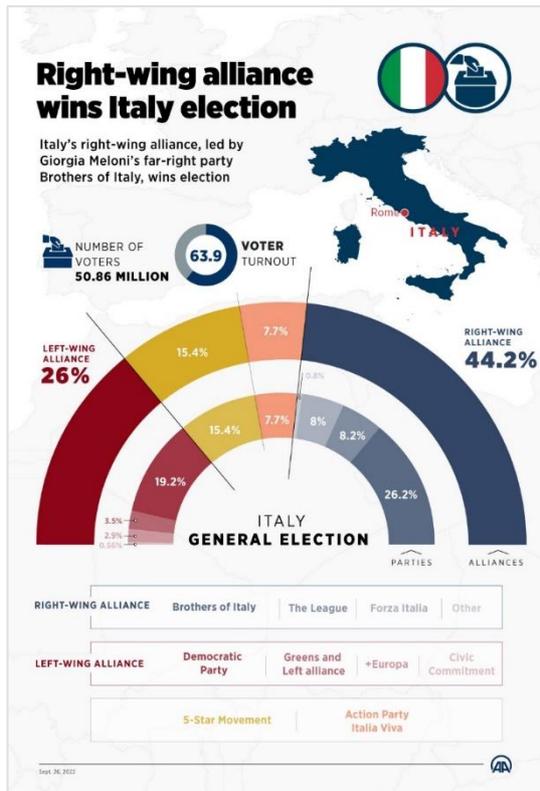
After the 1993 reform, there were two more attempts in 2005 and 2015 to roll back the effects of the previous reform. In 2005, Roberto Calderoli of Lega Nord introduced the electoral law Porcellum, where the winning coalition was assured a bonus system to get a majority in both houses, where people get to vote for the coalition and not the party. This was considered unconstitutional as it concentrated power to one party. The Italicum 2015 reform, supported by the Democratic Party, Forza Italia, and new centre-right parties aimed at bringing smaller parties under the two large coalitions, and preventing candidates from competing in many constituencies. To do this, a shortlist was introduced to make voters aware of the candidates instead of voting for the coalition. The limitation of this reform proposal was that the smaller parties might not have a voice when they are grouped within larger coalitions. With no majority in the parliament, the reform proposal was rejected. Then came the 2017 reform, Rosatellum, proposed by Ettore Rosato from the Democratic Party which

combined majoritarian and proportional voting, to promote the formation of coalitions before elections to enhance smoother governance and prevent the breaking up of coalitions. Under this reform, 62.5 per cent were to be elected through proportional representation and 32.5 per cent through a first-past-the-post basis. Out these, 12 MPs and four senators could be elected by overseas citizens. Under the new system, MPs and senators will have "multiple candidacies," where they could compete in several constituencies as a single member and as part of the coalition. This arrangement was still considered fragile as the combined voting placed power in the largest coalitions, and yet challenged their unity.

Second, fragility in coalitions. The electoral reforms were introduced to reduce post-poll complexity and ensure the smoother formation of bigger coalitions. However, every reform only resulted in widening the differences between the coalition partners. With different and often competing interests to retain power, economic and foreign policies compelled parties to withdraw from the coalition in case of conflict of interest in drafting policies, which led to easy and frequent breaking up of coalitions. The 2022, 2018, and 2013 elections came about due to such differences and withdrawals from ruling coalitions.

Third, the deterioration of religion-based voting. The left and right-wing supporters existed in Italy's electoral history but were superseded by catholic followers whose role was significant in deciding the electoral outcome. This was not replaced by the emergence of class. Among the ruling class comprising of entrepreneurs, managers, and freelancers, the Democratic Party has the major share within the wealthy and medium-high economic strata followed by the Brothers of Italy with many voters from the working class or medium-lower economic strata, and the League and Forza Italia. The Five Star Movement has attracted a group of voters who support the Democratic party through its anti-system stance. Although the 2022 election voting groups consisted of a small group of catholic

supporters for Meloni, the class-based voting turned out to be the determining factor.



## Electoral issues in the 2022 elections

### *Keeping Italy first*

In terms of energy and dealing with its financial crisis, Italy's economy is heading towards a contraction, with COVID-19-induced debt, and an energy crisis. So far EUR 66 billion have already been spent to protect its people. Promising to balance this debt by not expanding the deficit and to keep the energy prices in check by using cash to finance aid and renegotiate the EU's recovery fund to ensure clarity over payback of the borrowing rules are some unique measures that Meloni has laid out during the campaign. In terms of tackling the energy crisis, support for the EU-wide price cap is staunch but Meloni plans to reorganize Italy's energy sector to prevent burdening its debt. Especially compared with Germany which has nearly spent EUR 200 billion to protect its people and business, Meloni does not wish to grant subsidies and aggravate the deficit.

### *Fight against immigration*

One of the main reasons for the Brothers of Italy to gain a sudden majority in the 2022 elections was due to its anti-immigrant stance. Since the foundation of the party, the chant has been on restricting the flow of immigrants from middle-east and African regions. The call to bring down the asylum seeker count through domestic restrictions such as naval blockades, and the promise to bring stricter norms in migrant entry formed the core message of the campaign. The League which equally holds an anti-immigrant stance added to the Brothers of Italy's advantage in the elections. Italy experienced the worst immigrant influx from the 2015 and 2016 migrant crises which never got any policy attention from other parties, which became another advantage for Meloni to utilise the gap.

### *Stance in Ukraine war*

For the Brothers of Italy, their support for Ukraine in the war served as a boon in securing the winning majority. Although the party's origin stems from neo-fascist ideas, and their coalition partners such as the League hold a pro-Russia stance, the Brothers of Italy has managed to keep away and continued to support Ukraine and sanction Russia. Its contrarian stance from the fascist ideology to support Ukraine, accepting the Ukrainian refugees, and at the same time addressing the energy crisis induced by the Ukraine war showcased it as the one to take Italy in the right direction.

### *What does the election results mean?*

First, the rise of the right. The rise of the right actualised over one election was not entirely due to their policy agenda but due to the breakdown of other coalitions. One, the quest for power motivated the League, Forza Italia, and the Democratic Party to form big coalitions and create new electoral reforms to remain in power which only complicated the system. Two, foreign and economic policy differences such as austerity measures, tax cuts, immigration policy, pro-Europeanism, and economic equality have been on the rise. In the absence of attempts to negotiate any common agreement, it consolidated fissures in the coalitions, resulting in political chaos and questioning the very foundations of every political party.

Three, , the corruption scandals and court trials of prominent leaders from the League and Forza Italia damaged their individual reputations and brought into question the credibility of the oldest parties in Italy. All three developments provided an opportune platform for the Brothers of Italy to mobilise the right-wing parties together and lead the alliance to victory.

Second, shift in class-based voting. The voting groups can be split three ways. One, progressive-radicals, social democrats, and social Christians as identitarians; two, moderate conservatives; and three, authoritarians. With identity-based and religion-based voting in vogue since the end of the cold war, class-based voting has become the new norm in Italy. With the Democratic Party sustaining through votes largely from the social-culture groups from the highly-educated category, there has been a slight shift in the votes from the group into Brothers of Italy due to the Democratic Party's resistance to adopting radical reforms. In the case of the conservatives, authoritarians, and working class, a bulk of the lower class and youth are aligned with the Five-Star Movement, leaving the majority of the middle-aged group and working-class vote shift to the Brothers of Italy who earlier supported the League and Forza Italia.

Third, a threat to the immigrant community in Italy. With a strong anti-immigrant government in place, the measures against asylum seekers and migrants, especially Muslim migrants, are likely to be harsh, which can lead to their deportation back to their countries. These populist measures will lead to human rights violations and harsh treatment of immigrants.

Fourth, short-term stability in Italy's political landscape. With the Brothers of Italy taking the lead in the elections and heading the best coalition so far, there are lesser chances for a breakup of the coalition, thereby signalling political stability. Despite internal differences between Meloni, Salvini,

and Berlusconi, the vote difference leaves no option for the latter two leaders but to be part of the coalition. Unlike previous coalitions where there were differences in basic ideology and major policies on the economy and foreign policy front, the current coalition is deemed the least diverse compared to the last five governments. The only uncertain factor would be if either of the right-alliance party withdraws their support, which may pressure Meloni to seek support from the centre alliance or other smaller parties.

Fifth, troubled EU equation. Comparing internal and regional policies, Georgia Meloni seems to be tactical in siding with the EU for Ukraine, in sanctioning Russia and implementing the energy price cap, which is opposed by the League. While the differences over the energy crisis, debt, Russia, and neo-fascist ideology exist within the coalition, it unites over COVID-19 restrictions, human rights, and LGBT rights. For Meloni, the aim has always been to maintain the balance within the coalition to avoid political mishaps and also ensure a smooth relationship with the EU which would serve to benefit Italy's economy. However, under any future scenario which calls for prioritizing Italy or the EU, Italy's domestic prosperity will always supersede regional cooperation for the far-right group. Therefore, the upcoming government can be expected to lean towards Italy-centric policies than Euro-centric.

#### About the authors

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## COMMENT

### Russia and Eastern Economic Forum 2022: A sturdy Far East

By Padmashree Anandhan

*Putin showcases a stronger Russia and a reinforced partnership in the far East*

#### About the Eastern Economic Forum 2022

On 07 September, Russia's President Vladimir Putin gave an address at the 7th Eastern Economic Forum held in Vladivostok. The forum was conducted from 05 to 08 September under the theme "Towards a multipolar world," focusing on areas of cooperation in the Far-East regions of Russia, especially the Asia-Pacific, ASEAN countries, and international investment companies to boost economic growth.

Two major deals signed by Russia were between Mongolia and Myanmar. First, Mongolia's "Policy of new revival" where the goal is to strike cooperation in 50 projects under six areas such as border checkpoints, energy, industry, green development, and enhancing state operations. This development goal will incorporate Russia and China's programme to involve its investors and high-performing companies. The end goal is to make Mongolia a leading country in Asia in societal, economic, and security factors. Second, Russia and Myanmar signed nuclear cooperation roadmap for 2022 to 2023. Under the agreement, Rosatom and the Ministry of Electric Power of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will draft the lines of cooperation in the nuclear sector and produce a legal framework for establishing modular reactor projects in Myanmar.

#### Putin's Statement: Three Takeaways

First, warning over grain deal. Putin highlighted the unresolved food crisis problem. Where out of the 87-grain export ships only two had been transported to Africa, comprising three per cent of 60000 tonnes, whereas the remaining were sent to European countries. Although sanctions on Russia's food and fertilizers have been removed by the West as per the deal, the restrictions over logistics, transit, money transfer, and insurance still exist challenging Russia's exports to the rest of the world.

Another drawback for Russia pointed out by Putin was the missing regulations in the grain deal over destinations of the exports. Putin stressed that, in the upcoming November negotiation where parties will get back for discussing the extension, Russia is expected to bargain on exporting to the poorest countries to prevent the rise in food prices and famine.

Second, a stable economy and an advantageous Asia-Pacific. With the widening crunch in terms of economic, financial, and technology, Putin assured Russia's stability in the market and indicated decreasing inflation. He said that despite the lowest employment rate, issues in industries, and individual industries' impact due to the withdrawal of western companies, several countermeasures have been taken to stabilize its economy. Another advantage Russia holds is the Asia-Pacific cooperation, where many states have been excluded from following the Western sanctions benefitting both economies. Some of the significant project collaborations between Russia and the Asia-Pacific have been in modern technologies, infrastructure developments, oil, natural gas, mining, geological exploration of raw materials, logistics, and the development of north-south and sea corridors. On the question of whether Russia has lost as a state in the Ukraine war and if it could still afford its expenses. Putin said: "I am sure that we have not lost anything and will not lose anything." He added that Russia will aim to reinforce its sovereignty and Russia's position at the domestic and foreign policy levels.

Third, criticism against the West. Putin accused the West of imposing its own "models of behaviour," and the dominance of the US to influence the world's economy and politics. He pointed out that despite, Asia-Pacific countries becoming the center for technological, economic, capital, and

personnel, the interference from the West has led to global inflation. Mainly through sanctions, norms, Euro-Atlantic unity, short-sighted decisions, and lack of vision of the Western elites have pushed the European economy into a troubled sphere, pushed down the quality of life for Europeans, dropdown in competitive business enterprises, and thereby price rise of food and energy products.

**“Another advantage Russia holds is the Asia-Pacific cooperation, where many states have been excluded from following the Western sanctions benefitting both economies.”**

#### **Who else took part in the EEF 2022**

Leaders from Myanmar, Armenia, Mongolia, China, India, Malaysia, and Vietnam participated in the forum. Apart from the leaders, delegations from South Korea, Japan, Kazakhstan, diplomatic corps from 25 countries, international business personnel, and experts around the world took part in the discussion.

The key address was provided by the Prime Minister of the Interim Government and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Myanmar Min Aung Hlailin, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister of Mongolia Luvsannamsrein Oyuun-Erdene, and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Li Zhanshu. While the virtual address was provided by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of Malaysia Ismail Sabri Yacob, and Prime Minister of Vietnam Pham Minh Tinh.

Min Aung highlighted the brewing issues of Myanmar in food insecurity, fuel, and

agricultural products and how the financial challenges faced by developing countries can be met through the use of rubles, yuan, and rupee currencies. He called for investors to increase their investments to push up the partnership amongst the eastern countries to avoid western influence and promote the development of ASEAN.

Oyuun-Erdene spoke on Mongolia's problem in accessing the sea and the land-locked positions which have led to many border checks and conditions limiting its economic growth. He proposed three areas of collaboration. First, the construction of a gas pipeline from Russia to China via Mongolia to keep the economies “united.” Second, more investments towards establishing an eastern vertical railway line linking Russia, China, and Mongolia. Third, energy project partnership for meeting domestic needs, exporting electricity and producing green energy through partners from Russia and China.

The representative from China agreed on the growing Sino-Russia relations and Russia's support for Xi Jinping's global development and global security initiatives. He highlighted the key economic cooperation over the Northern Sea Route which is expected to boost cooperation between Chinese firms and Russia's Far East in terms of maritime transport. Providing the trade value between China and Russia's Far Eastern Federal District, Northeast Asia has become a prime region for cooperation between both.

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## COMMENT

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### Queen Elizabeth: End of an era

By Padmashree Anandhan

*The passing of the queen brings out the underlying role of the monarchy in the UK's foreign policy and economic decisions and questions the ability of the future monarch.*

On 08 September, UK's Queen Elizabeth II who took the throne in 1952 passed away at the age of 96 in Balmoral Castle, Scotland. With the passing of the Queen, the next in line King Charles III has become the next monarch of the UK. As the head of the state for UK, 14 countries including Australia and Canada, she has reigned from the period of Winston Churchill till the appointment of Prime Minister Liz Truss, marking 70 years. Her role included "opening the new session of Parliament, granting Royal Assent to legislation, and approving Orders and Proclamations through the Privy Council." She had a specific role in the UK parliament, through audience with Prime Ministers, advice to the government and had the right to consult, encourage and warn during the audience.

#### **From a princess to the Queen: The Elizabethan era**

Queen Elizabeth was born in central London on 21 April 1926, who was only a young princess until the eldest son Edward VIII of King George V renounced the title, making her father George VI the King. Her famous lines during the first overseas tour to South Africa in 1947: "My whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and to the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong." In late 1951, during her tour to East Africa, Kenya which was a British Colony was where she immediately became Queen Elizabeth after the death of King George VI from cancer. After the coronation in 1953 which was televised for the first time, was symbolled as the post war recovery. Her tour from Bermuda to Australia as Queen was seen as a historical moment with Ghana becoming independent and India turned 10 years in 1957.

With the British empire shrinking, in 1965 Zimbabwe challenged the Queen and declared independence, followed by economic turbulence which struck the UK in 1970's. This shook the reputation and image of the monarchy, showing it as more aggressive, vulnerable to stresses. After from the economic shock, the Queen faced criticism over the personal exemption from paying income taxes. Next set of criticism arose over the split of Prince Charles and Diana in 1992, her death in 1997, followed by Charles's reveal of his relationship with Camilla Parker-Bowles. But through the difficult economic situations, and family diversions, the Queen continued to perform her duties, which became evident in 2002 with the celebration of 50 years of her reign. By 2015, Queen Elizabeth became the longest ruling monarch exceeding the period of Queen Victoria and commemorated her platinum jubilee in 2022.

*"..another important shift in the royal accession rulebook was the relaxing of gender norm and Catholic factor in 2013. The changes were, regardless of the gender, the eldest daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge can become the Queen."*

#### **Eight major decisions**

First, the 1956 Suez crisis. When Israel invaded Egypt in 1956 in the interest to capture the Western part of Suez Canal and Egypt President General Nasser nationalised one of the busiest shipping routes to free Egypt from Britain's influence. Britain and France along with Israel launched attacks as it was an important trade route to transit to its empires and a source for oil. Queen's stance on the intervention was not pro-Suez

and Britain's move was reported to be disapproved.

Second, in 1965 her first visit to Western Germany after the second world war for forming an understanding, and mend ties between Britain and Germany for the losses from the war. She also joined the Women's Auxiliary Territory Service.

Third, the dress-downs in opening of new UK Parliament. The Queen who wears the robe, comes in golden carriage, imperial state crown and a traditional Queen speech during the opening of new parliament, has so far dressed down twice. One, where former Prime Minister Edward Heath was defeated in a snap election by the labour leader, Harold Wilson in 1974. Two, after 43 years, when former Prime Minister Theresa May called for snap elections in 2017.

Fourth, the 1998 abolition of By-Elections for hereditary peers. In the 1998 speech, Queen announced the removal of traditional rights of 700 hereditary peers in the House of Lords. The hereditary members of the house were initially replaced upon death, resignation, and expulsion through "By-Elections." Upon the new bill such replacements were abolished, allowing vacancies to lapse.

Fifth, in 1999 the Queen opened the national assembly in Wales and Scottish Parliament. Despite the advice from the Home Office to the Queen in opening the Welsh Assembly,

as it felt the absence of "a clear political direction" the Queen went strong to open the Assembly. Similarly recognizing Scotland's politic and laws, the Queen opened the Scottish Parliament giving it the law-making powers.

Sixth, Queen's first visit to Ireland in 2011 since its independence in 1921 was marked historic. The hand shake was seen as new step to Anglo-Irish relations, breaking through the old past of death of Lord Mountbatten, who was killed by McGuinness party member. It marked the triumph of peace process, winning all the critics over monarchy.

Seven, another important shift in the royal accession rulebook was the relaxing of gender norm and Catholic factor in 2013. The changes were, regardless of the gender, the eldest daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge can become the Queen. Next, was the removing of the law over the marriage of future monarch from any faith, and not being specifically Catholic.

Eight, the Queen's last appointment of new Prime Minister Liz Truss replacing Boris Johnson takes place in Balmoral Castle on 06 September instead of Buckingham Palace upon doctor's suggestion to rest.

## COMMENT

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# The UK: Domestic, regional and global challenges to the new Prime Minister

By Sourina Bej

*The challenges before Liz Truss as she begins her maiden tenure as the UK's next Prime Minister*

On 6 September, Boris Johnson bid farewell to his three years tenure as the UK's Prime Minister and paved the path for Liz Truss, his former foreign secretary. On 5 September, in a close call, the UK conservative party chose Liz Truss to replace Boris Johnson for the next two years. Boris Johnson leaves behind a legacy to "get BREXIT done" yet his means to the withdrawal agreement leaves deep-rooted irrevocable impacts for the new prime minister. What are the challenges before Liz Truss as she begins her maiden tenure as the UK's next Prime Minister?

### **Domestic Challenges**

#### **Deep electoral divisions, coalition politics and splits within conservatives**

Since the 2016 referendum, the British voting pattern had remained polarized between the nationalist and the unionist voters. This great divide was reflected along partisan lines such as the nationalists swung for the political conservative right while the unionists voted for the political left. However, this faultline further deepened during Johnson's period, when he periodically evoked partisan loyalty to get policy support and the resultant has been further divisions in loyalty and fragmentation within the conservative party. Under Johnson, voters were further disconnected from the grand old political parties, thus forcing the conservatives to forge a coalition with both nationalist and unionist voters who were not left-wing supporters.

Uniting the conservative party will be a political challenge for Liz Truss and she has shown her steadfast motivation by choosing a multi-ethnically represented cabinet.

Furthermore, a culture of executive centralism revived by Johnson, is yet to transition under Liz Truss. With a coterie-style of governance, Johnson revived authoritarian populism and put several committees and strategy units under direct leadership of a few cabinet members. In choosing a strong cabinet, Truss has already shown her dependence on it for all pressing matters and she will in all likelihood have to tread a balance between authoritarian management and democratic accountability.

#### **The BREXIT economic maze to war-triggered energy crisis**

As Johnson prepared to take the country out of the economic bloc, he failed to fully make his domestic market resilient to the aftershocks from the BREXIT. Rather in his final Prime Minister's Questions session in the parliament, Johnson repeated a favorite refrain: Britain had the "fastest economic growth" among the G7. The Bank of England, today, projects that Britain will enter a recession before 2023, making it clear that Brexit may not have sunk the economy, but it was not opportune as well. In addition, the war in the Ukraine has deeply impacted the energy trade pushing the prices in the summer months. Households in the UK, today, are bracing for the energy price cap to rise by 80 per cent from October, after Ofgem, the industry regulator, confirmed the move at the end of last month.

On 6 September, the BBC has reported that Truss plans to spend up to \$150 billion on freezing energy bills for the next 18 months, by offering loans to energy companies. However, what has not featured in Truss's campaign policy are impact packages for the those affected disproportionately such as the poorer households, who typically spend a larger share of their income on basic essentials.

### **Healthcare and post COVID crisis**

The cumulative impact from the inflations and lack of welfare fiscal packages to pump in more liquid assets in the hands of the people has been unemployment, strikes and the systemic breakdown of essential services such as the healthcare. Waiting times to receive health care are at their longest in recent history in the whole of the UK. This is in part because of the pandemic putting the National Health Service under greater strain, but it is also because of staff shortages and insufficient funding. For Truss, it would be imperative to consider a national health package to ease the funding crunch and ensure return of staffers to ease the workforce pressure.

### **Regional Challenges**

#### **Revival of ethnonationalist tensions in Northern Ireland**

As much as BREXIT stoked questions on the power sharing dynamics in the Northern Ireland, it was Johnson's way of sidelining the NI protocol and trying to substitute it with a domestic legislation that alienated the pro-British unionist community. The unionist versus nationalist faultline in the Northern Ireland, rendered acute by the BREXIT referendum vote, was more divided with Johnson's constant tinkering with clauses agreed with the EU. The unionists who largely supported the BREXIT are now conservative sceptics. The next challenge for Liz Truss will be her policy stand over the Northern Ireland. Talks with the EU have halted and the bill has been heavily campaigned by Liz Truss as a foreign secretary. The Democratic Unionist Party in NI has refused to return to its power-sharing arrangement at Stormont until the protocol is changed. The key date for Liz Truss to remember will be 28 October when the deadline to restore the government at Stormont ends. In addition, on 16 September, the UK will have to respond to the legal charges brought by Brussels and Truss's hardline approach on the matter could probably volte face.

#### **The question over Scottish referendum**

The question over Scottish referendum could strengthen under Liz Truss. At a time when Nicola Sturgeon is pressing for another independence referendum, the new

government will need to seek a political arrangement on the same. In October 2022, the UK Supreme Court will consider whether Holyrood has the power to hold the referendum without Westminster's consent but with recent hard line campaign by Liz Truss, the relation between the two leaders have soured. "I feel like I'm a child of the union, I really believe we're a family and we're better together and I think the best thing to do with Nicola Sturgeon is ignore her," said Truss in her election campaign statement. Her hawkish views on both Northern Ireland and the referendum in Scotland could mean further alienation and not mitigating the ethnonationalist challenges.

### **External Challenges**

#### **Support for Ukraine**

Truss has pledged to boost defense spending to three per cent of GDP, which the analyst group the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) estimated will cost an additional \$180 billion. Like Johnson, she has also decided to continue giving military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Britain has so far pledged around \$3.8 billion. Under Johnson, Britain was an early and strong supporter of Ukraine's efforts to resist Russia's invasion. Truss, as foreign secretary, stood squarely behind Johnson's Ukraine policy, supporting the transfer of heavy weaponry to Kyiv among other measures. In all likelihood, a policy of 'strategic voice' for Ukraine will strengthen under Liz Truss, at a time when the EU's united front is oscillating between appeasement for gas and sanctions.

**"Her hawkish views on both Northern Ireland and the referendum in Scotland could mean further alienation and not mitigating the ethnonationalist challenges."**

#### **Hawkish views on China, Russia**

The support for Ukraine is equally balanced by Truss's hawkish view on Russia. She has since being a foreign secretary regarded the 2014-15 Minsk accords as a "totemic mistake." Furthermore, in a big symbolic gesture, Truss's staff had briefed The Times

last week that she would officially declare China a national security “threat” after entering Downing Street. Truss’s hawkishness on China applies to military as well as economic issues. She was closely involved in the decision to ban Chinese telecoms firm Huawei from involvement in Britain’s 5G network, over national security concerns.

### **Relation with EU**

Ending the distrust with the EU, one of the UK’s biggest trading partner, could be a challenge for Liz Truss. As she assumed office, the EU leaders have subterfuge their concern over a strong Eurosceptic as a leader. Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission chief, tweeted that the UK and EU were partners, facing current challenges together - but that she hoped as prime minister, Liz Truss would be “constructive”, respecting agreements previously reached between the two sides.

The reason for a better relation with the EU could probably ease its internal inflation. Despite BREXIT, the impacts from the EU have never ceased.

When Germany is attempting to find alternatives to Russian energy, and bids aggressively for Norwegian gas - a source the UK already relies on - it has affected the prices, and potentially will further impact supply routes as well. Next, concerns over migration remains. As foreign secretary, Liz Truss promised to be “robust” with the French authorities to stop the rising number of refugees and other migrants trying to reach the UK across the English Channel. Yet in her electoral campaign, she has never chosen to soothe her stand on the Anglo-French relation.

### **Transatlantic partnership**

As Liz Truss assumes office, the US President Joe Biden in his congratulatory message also stressed the importance of reaching an agreement with the EU over post-Brexit legislation on Northern Ireland. The transatlantic partnership could be strained if Liz Truss pushes ahead with the legislation altering the Northern Ireland Protocol and for the US president proud of his Irish roots, treading the diplomatic show will be keenly watched.

## COMMENT

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### UNGA 77: Who said what from Europe?

By Padmashree Anandhan and Rishma Banerjee

*The EU's agenda in the UNGA 77 is to discuss on keeping the UN charter, rule of law, global challenges from the Ukraine war, support to quality education, battle against climate change, global health security and helping in global digital agenda.*

On 13 September, the UNGA 77 which takes place every September opened the discussion, for 2022 the session was held under the theme of “A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges.” The agenda for UNGA 77 focused on “Ukraine war, energy crisis, climate action, COVID-19, humanitarian challenges, Transforming Education Summit, and threats to global economy.” On 14 September, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in his briefing urged the G20 countries should take the lead in addressing the climate issues, applauded the success of the Ukraine-Russian grain deal in reducing the global food prices and stressed on the importance of removal of barriers to export of Russian fertilizers. The EU's agenda in the UNGA 77 is to discuss on keeping the UN charter, rule of law, global challenges from the Ukraine war, support to quality education, battle against climate change, global health security and helping in global digital agenda.

#### Ukraine War

Russia's invasion of Ukraine took primacy in this year's general debate, with almost all states referring to it, and condemning Russia's offensive in the country. On 24 September representing the EU in its observer capacity, President of the European Council, Charles Michel said: “It is a hybrid war. It combines the violence of weapons with the poison of lies.” He pointed out several lies propagated by Russia. For example, how the west threatened Russia's security, how Russia was preventing a genocide in Ukraine, how the invasion was not a war but a “special military operation” and that Western sanctions were causing food and fertilizer shortages.

On 21 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the meeting via a pre-recorded video. He reiterated that Ukraine did not instigate the war and has conducted 88 meetings in various formats and levels to prevent escalation. He presented a peace formula with five elements- punishing the aggressor and increasing the sanctions; protecting lives; restoring security and territorial integrity; ensuring security guarantees; and maintaining the determination to keep increasing pressure on Russia.

On 24 September, Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov however denied any wrongdoings in Ukraine and said that it was a necessary step to protect Russian people. He accused the West of trying to change the narrative regarding the war against Russia to wage a proxy war against it. He criticized the West's backsliding on the promise of not expanding the NATO eastwards. The only country from Europe to support Russia was Belarus. Belarus's Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, said that the crisis is Ukraine was being exacerbated by the West's aspiration for a unipolar world, which he termed as neo-colonial.

On 21 September, UK's Prime Minister, Liz Truss reaffirmed her state's support of Ukraine and promised that they “will not rest until Ukraine prevails.” She appreciated the speedy and efficient international response to Ukraine in supplying weapons, providing financial aid and installing sanctions and other diplomatic actions. On 20 September, France's President Emmanuel Macron criticized the countries who have taken a non-aligned stance and said that they were complicit in new imperialism. He called on the member-

states to adhere to the charter, extended his support to the IAEA, and emphasised that peace in Ukraine could be brought by agreements that respect international law. On 20 September, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz highlighted that a permanent member of the UN Security Council violating international law as Russia was doing in Ukraine was unjustifiable, and a disaster for Europe and the global world order. On 24 September, Belgium's Prime Minister, drew attention to how the Crisis in Ukraine was not just affecting Europe, but also exacerbating the food crisis in Africa, Asia and Latin America and global energy crisis.

**“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.”**

On 24 September, Sweden's Foreign Minister, Ann Christin Linde defended Sweden's NATO membership by saying that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has “fundamentally changed Sweden's security environment.” On 20 September, Finland's President, Sauli Niinistö highlighted a similar viewpoints and said: “We can't accept, condone or normalize grave violations of international law and human rights.” Referring to attacks on or near nuclear power plants in Ukraine, the two Scandinavian states said that nuclear security and an arms control architecture should be brought back to the top of the international agenda again. Sweden mentioned the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament presenting the Secretary-General with ideas to promote disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Baltic States, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia also highlighted how Russia's aggression in Ukraine was threatening world peace. Latvian President, Egils Levits said: “In the twenty-first century, Russia maintains a nineteenth century ideology of imperialism, colonialism and racism.” He highlighted the migration crisis catalyzed by

the war and called on the member states to reinforce the sanctions regime to further destabilise Russia's economy. Estonia's President Alan Karis recounted the dire on-ground situation in Ukraine. He criticized the Security Council for not doing much since its 02 March resolution condemning Russia's aggression and said: “Helping Ukraine to protect its right to exist is our collective obligation.”

From central Europe, Hungary's president Katalin Novak condemned Russia's war in Ukraine saying that not only citizens from Ukraine and Russia, but people belonging to other countries like Hungary were getting stuck in the cross-fire. Like many leaders, Czech Republics Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky urged the International Criminal Court's prosecutor to open investigation into the war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine. Historically neutral, Switzerland reaffirmed their stance about the Ukraine war, criticized Russia and called for better mechanisms to hold aggressors accountable to the international community.

From the Balkan region, Bulgaria supported a comprehensive reform of the Security Council and said: “We have come to a critical juncture where further keeping the status quo is untenable.” Condemning the recent sham referenda, Albania's Prime Minister Edi Rama said: “It is an open battle between an aging cynical tyranny and a young growing democracy.” Greece's Prime Minister, Kiriakos Mitsotakis noted how Russia has weaponized natural resources to “destabilize democratically elected European Governments.” Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan highlighted Turkey's role in the mediation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, and was appreciated by several members for its contribution.

### **Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law**

On 20 September, President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö assured Finland's sturdy support to the ICC in examining the human rights violations in Ukraine and questioned “Have we done all we can to avert violence?” He urged the UN member states to unite in promoting peace and preventing

conflict. German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz highlighted how Germany has been providing humanitarian assistance being “second-biggest donor” and taking in refugees in past years. He urged for humanitarian action for those people who are ill-treated in prison camps in North Korea, Syria, Iran, Belarus. Apart from this, the plight situation of women and girls in Afghanistan was also indicated, with Scholz stressing on China to adhere to the recommendations given by the High Commission of Human Rights in Xinjiang duly. On the same, on 23 September, European Council President, Charles Michel highlighted the humanitarian crimes in Xinjiang province.

On 22 September, President of Spain, Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón focused on the gender equality and empowerment, where globally women are threatened to gain their sexual and reproductive freedom. He said how the such threats have increased in the advanced democracies and women have become the fatalities of backsliding. Pedro stated how Spain’s legislation aid in public-health service, especially women’s health. He announced to contribute EUR 100 million for three years to the organization working on gender equality. Prime Minister of Ireland, Micheál Martin highlighting the worsening humanitarian conditions, stated the increase in the aid of EUR 78 million for Horn of Africa, Yemen, Afghanistan and the Sahel, along with this, he announced an additional fund of EUR 50 million to address the child malnutrition. He repeated Ireland’s support in civilian protection and recalled “Political Declaration on the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas,” as an important milestone.

### **Nuclear Threat**

On 20 September, on the increasing challenges over international arms control, President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö expressed concern over the US and Russia’s state of nuclear weapons and how it demanded for both to take responsibility for arms control and disarmament. He urged for the continuity of the New START treaty and dialogue to target down the nuclear arsenals.

On 21 September, President of Estonia, Alar Karis indicated his fear on the situation in Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, and urged for immediate demilitarization, giving back the control to Ukraine and providing of access to IAEA authorities. He accused Russia for blocking the agreement towards “outcome document in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Review Conference. Similarly, the Czech Republic Minister of Foreign Affairs accused Russia for the attacks on the plant and also asked Iran to meet the legal standards set under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

On 23 September, Sweden’s Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke on the nuclear security where she urged to prioritize the ideas provided by the countries under Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament to put non-proliferation in international agenda.

“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.”

### **Food Crisis**

On the food insecurity, all the European countries expressed their concerns for countries which are going through food crisis, particularly, on 20 September, President of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, key highlight was accomplishing the Black Sea Grain deal and how the exports from Ukraine have helped meet the food crisis. President of Romania objected the “weaponizing of food access” and stated how Romania has helped more than four million tonnes of Ukraine grain to be exported and appreciated the Black Sea Grain deal. On the same day, President of Poland, Andrzej Duda spoke on war induced famine situation, where he highlighted the decreased capacity of Ukrainian harvests by 35 per cent and how it has become a “economic weapon.” He also said the impact the shortage is causing in Africa and Middle-

east, pushing more than 47 million people into “chronic hunger.”

On 24 September, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey V. Lavrov stated the persisting blockade over Russian grain and fertilisers despite the signing of the grain deal. He proposed for the movement of the stocked grains which weigh to 300,000 tonnes to countries in Africa without charge.

### **Peace Agenda**

On 20 September, President of Switzerland Ignazio Cassis, assured Switzerland’s commitment to peace and security. He proposed to prove in the 2023-24 Security council that “neutrality does not mean indifference,” and will stand for the promotion of peace, engaging women in peace process, civilian protection and prioritise peace agenda. On the same, President of Romania referring to frozen conflicts said that if a war is absent does not imply the presence of peace and “protracted conflicts” in Black Sea has to be responded with rapidness. He appreciated UN’s peacekeeping which acts as tool for peace and security and assured Romania’s role in it.

On 22 September, Prime Minister of Norway assured to promote involvement of women under their “Women, peace, and security agenda.” He said: We talk to all parties as we work to achieve peaceful conflict resolution. Without dialogue, we have no opportunity to influence the parties and encourage them to move in a more positive direction.” Prime Minister of Portugal, António Costa spoke on the UN’s New Agenda for Peace, where he focused on the global security, conflict prevention, and need for funding towards peacebuilding. He identified African nations, the Sahel, the Gulf of Guinea, particularly Mozambique and urged to address the growing radicalization. He reiterated Portugal’s support in four peacekeeping operations of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and thanked for the international recognition on the same.

### **Climate Change and Sustainable Development**

Macron brought up the various climatic disasters plaguing the world now, like the floods in Pakistan, the droughts in the Horn of Africa. Finland’s President Sauli Niinistö called on the international community to change its course and action plan to deal with climate change before it was too late. He pointed out that fighting climate change could also lead to creation of job and further innovation and economic growth.

Germany’s Chancellor Olaf Scholz also took a similar stance calling climate change as the “biggest challenge of our generation.” Norway’s Prime Minister, spoke about the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, and committed that Norway will aim to triple its funding for climate adaptation and resilience. Netherlands brought up the issue of water crises across the world and stated that it along with Tajikistan will host the 2023 United Nations Water Conference, to discuss in mitigation of the same. The upcoming Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) in Egypt was highlighted and member states reiterated that positive action must be taken.

### **Disputes, Integration and Partnership in Europe**

Many leaders referred to the several countries vying for EU membership and reiterated how important regional integration was, especially given the current geopolitical situation in the continent. For example, Croatia’s Prime Minister, Andrej Plenkovic supported Bosnia and Herzegovina’s EU bid on the condition that the Bosnian Croats in the country are granted equality. North Macedonia appreciated the beginning of their accession process to the EU and said that the membership was of essential importance to the country and to the EU itself. North Macedonia, along with Albania and Serbia spoke about the Open Balkan initiative, that aims to make movement of people trade and good and services easier across borders. Albania’s president referred to the dispute between Serbia and Kosovo and said that both the countries, the UN and the EU should work towards a comprehensive

peace agreement. Regarding the same issue, Serbia's president Aleksandar Vucic mentioned that he is open to a compromise, but it has to ensure long-lasting peace for the Serbs and Albanians in the region. Bulgaria's interim Foreign Minister brought forward stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans and reaffirmed his faith on the transformative power of the EU to enhance regional cooperation. Greece mentioned Turkey's efforts to destabilize peace in the eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East and the Caucasus and urged it cooperate regarding the mutual territorial disputes in the Aegean Sea. But Turkey defended this criticism by pointing out its

efforts to mediate in conflicts, like the Black Sea Grain deal, the disputes in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Armenia and Azerbaijan. On regional partnership, UK's Liz Truss said that the UK is fortifying their security alliances in Europe and NATO, and building new partnerships with countries in the Indo-Pacific and gulf regions.

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Source: NATO, ISW/BBC, Tyler Comrie/The New Yorker, Maxim Shipenkov / EPA / TASS, REUTERS/DADO RUVIC/ILLUSTRATION, Reuters/The Washington Post

## ALBANIA

## Albania Cyberattacks: State and regional response

By Madhura S Mahesh

On 26 September the Washington Post reported on the interview with Albania's Prime Minister Edi Rama on the cyberattack. He said: "Based on the investigation, the scale of the attack was such that the aim behind it was to completely destroy our infrastructure back to the full paper age, and at the same time, wipe out all our data." On 24 September in the UNGA session, President Edi Rama urged the UN and the UNSC to take stricter actions against state-sponsored cyberattacks. He also proposed to come together to build a stronger security system and resilience to ward off such attacks. On 21 September, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released a report on the cyber-attacks by

Iran against Albania's government. On 08 September, Albania became the first country to cut diplomatic ties after Iran-sponsored groups launched a cyberattack on 15 July. The Iranian government has denied any involvement and has condemned Albania's decision to cut diplomatic ties.

### The attacks

On 15 July 2022 Albanian government services and websites became a target of cyberattacks. With over 95 per cent of its services online, the attack caused a huge disruption in government infrastructure. HomeLand Justice an anti-MEK group and a network of Iranian hackers claimed responsibility, stating the attack was done to oppose Albania for hosting the Mujahideen E-Khalq (MEK), an Iranian dissident group.

The attack comes a month after MEK and Israel allegedly carried out attacks on Tehran municipality and the MEK was set to

<sup>1</sup>EM 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.

host the “Free Iran World Summit” in Albania in July. The HomeLand Justice group following the attack started to spread anti-MEK messages and leaked the hacked information on websites and social media profiles created. This continued till mid-August where it was conducting polls to let the people decide on what information should be released.

On 09 September another attack occurred where the Total Information Management System (TIMS) was shut down. This system was developed alongside the US under the Bush administration in 2005 to keep a track of those entering and leaving Albania. This led to a delay in entry at Albania’s borders and forced the officials to make an entry manually on 10 and 11 of September. Prime Minister Rama has accused Iran to be behind this attack also.

### State and regional response

First, state response. After the attack on 15 July, the Albanian government launched an investigation into this matter. With the help of Microsoft and the FBI, the government was able to conduct a thorough investigation into this matter which shaped their decision to cut ties with Iran. The results were formally published by Microsoft on 08 September and by the FBI on 21 September. It found that the attackers through splitting into four groups have collectively worked to be inside the system for 14 months. The initial entry was said to be carried out by EUROPIUM a known associate of Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) as early as May 2021. The entry was possible due to a vulnerability on the SharePoint Server.

By July 2021 the attackers had strengthened their access to the server and started exfiltrating mail from October 2021 to January 2022. Another group was said to continue to exfiltrate mail from November 2021 till May 2022. The tool used to carry this out has been identified as one that is commonly used by actors associated with MOIS. The actual attack was carried out by infecting the government websites with ransomware and then introducing malware which intended to wipe out the data.

Microsoft found that this was a method that was used by actors sponsored by Iran. Both had links to Iran and its associated groups. Other information that was uncovered was that the attackers were working from Iran and that the sectors that were attacked aligned with Iran’s interests. When the response by the HomeLand Justice Group was investigated similarities were highlighted in the way Israel and the MEK responded to the attack on Iran. The targets selected were like the ones that were attacked in Iran which suggested that it was deliberate retaliation. Simultaneously Albania was strengthening its cyber defence with the help of NATO and the US. Microsoft was also collaborating with the government for further protection and strengthening of its cyber security infrastructure.

Second, Albania has received support from NATO and its members. In a statement, NATO said that “We strongly condemn such malicious cyber activities designed to destabilize and harm the security of an Ally and disrupt the daily lives of citizens.” After the second attack, NATO is discussing if Article 5 of NATO applies to cyber-attacks. The US imposed further sanctions on MOIS on 09 September with regards to the attacks in July and is working with Albania to further strengthen its cyber defence and security.

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## ITALY

### **Italy’s far-right wins 2022 Elections: Result analysis**

*By Padmashree Anandhan*

On 25 September, the voting for Italy’s general elections took place. Amongst the four competing parties, the Right alliance emerged as the clear winner with a majority in the Chamber of Deputies and Deputies of the Senate. The Right alliance was headed by Giorgia Meloni from the Brothers of Italy, joined by League, Forza-Italia, and Nio Moderati parties winning 237 seats in the lower house and 115 seats in the upper house. Whereas the left alliance led by Enrico Letta from the Democratic Party along with the Green/left alliance, Più Europa, and Impegno Civico were able to gain only 85:44 seats in both houses.

#### **Election result analysis**

Italy’s major parties who have been part of the internal political crisis are the Five Star Movement, the League, the Democratic Party, Forza Italia (previously center-right), and the Brothers of Italy. Comparing 2013, 2018, and 2022 elections, the Brothers of Italia which began competing in 2013, with two per cent, increased to 4.3 per cent in 2018 and gained a major share of votes in the 2022 elections with 26 per cent.

Whereas, the League and Five Star Movement who have been at the center of Italy’s political crisis won a major number of votes only in the 2018 elections with 17.4 per cent and 32.7 percent. In the case of the Democratic Party, which won the 2013 elections with 25.4 per cent dropped down to 19 and has been consistent with the same proportion in 2022. Lastly, Forza Italia, which was formerly the center-right party led by Silvio Berlusconi (Four times Prime Minister) has declined from 21.6 per cent in 2013 to 8.11 in the 2022 elections.

#### **Italy’s ever-changing electoral system**

The passing of reforms has never stopped in the Italian Parliament. It began in the 1980s to bring stability to the electoral systems but had only become more complex. The 2018 elections were held under the Rosato law which was approved in 1993, where 75 per cent of the Members of Parliament (MPs) were chosen under single-member constituencies and 25 per cent under proportional representation. In the end, no majority was obtained due to close competition between the competing parties. In 2022, the elections were held under the Rosatellum bis law enacted in 2017 where 62.5 per cent will be elected through proportional representation and 32.5 per cent through a first-past-the-post basis. Out of which 12 MPs and four senators can be elected by overseas citizens and for a party to get a seat in the Parliament it has to gain three per cent and for a coalition 10. Under the new system MPs and senators have “multiple candidacies,” where one can compete in several constituencies as a single member and as part of the coalition. It also reduced the voting age limit from 25 to 18 in the 2019 reform. The latest is the 2020 reform, which reduced “the number of MPs in the Parliament from 630 to 400 in the Chamber of Deputies and from 315 to 200 in the Senate.” With the far-right claiming a clear victory, uncertainty lies if the coalition will sustain for five years or if the diverging interest will crack down on the unity and add to the continuing political chaos.

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## RUSSIA

### **Putin signs decree for partial mobilization in Russia: What has been the response?**

*By Padmashree Anandhan*

On 21 September, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree declaring “partial mobilization in Russian Federation.” The move comes after Ukraine’s counteroffensive in Kharkiv, Izyum and Kherson regions. In his speech to the Russian’s, he highlighted the freeing of residents from Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions, immediate need to protest Russia’s sovereignty, Ukraine’s claims to nuclear weapons, called the people from different ages and nationalities to unite in fighting for Russia. He said: “...talking specifically about partial mobilization, that is, only citizens who are currently in the reserve will be subject to conscription, and above all those who served in the Armed Forces, have certain military specialties and relevant experience.”

#### **What is the decree about?**

First, recruitment of people into Russia’s Armed Forces. Russians who already have the “status of military personnel serving,” those who have reached the age limit set by the military, fulfilling the health conditions recognised by the military (some who are unfit and replaceable can be excepted upon their wish to serve), and prisoners are eligible to become part of the Russian Military.

Second, role of the government in the mobilization. The decree mandates the government to establish the follow to go forward with the partial mobilization process. One, setting a threshold to pay those recruited to serve under the mobilization equivalent to those serving already in the military. Two, providing terms for dismissal. Three, to financial aid and adopt needed measures to help the partial mobilization activities such as “troops and military formations.” Four, high rank official to be involved in the recruitment process to help attain the

target number in the given time.

Third, entitlement to serve or exit the mobilisation. Those recruited will be provided contracts and are expected to serve until the “end of the period of partial mobilization.” A separate provision is allotted for the right of Deferment, if a citizen wishes to exit from the conscription from any of the Russian military organizations. As per the Decree, the category of citizens who can avail the exception and granting of rights will be reserved with the government.

#### **What has been the response within Russia?**

In response to the announcement of “Partial Mobilisation,” a set of people gathered for “anti-mobilisation” protests broke out in Russia. As of 22 September, close to 1330 people were detained across 42 cities.

#### *Mapping of the protests*

Maximum number of detained were found to be in the districts of Moscow city (539), St. Petersburg (482), Yekaterinburg (51), Permian (30), Chelyabinsk (26), Ufa (23), Krasnoyarsk (18), Voronezh (17), Krasnodar (14), Tver (13), Saratov (12), Kaliningrad and Ryazan (11), Irkutsk (9), Petrozavodsk (9), Arkhangelsk (8), Tula, Korolev, Novosibirsk, Ulan-Ude, Zheleznogorsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Volgograd, Salavat and more districts. Except, Krasnoyarsk, Yekaterinburg, and Chelyabinsk in the east-central Russia (central Siberia), the protests are found to be widespread across the north, center and south of Western Russia.

#### *Fleeing out of Russia*

Another set of Russian seeing this as a threat fled to Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Finland, Istanbul, Belgrade, and neighbouring countries to avoid joining the military mobilisation. These countries are of particular target due to non-requirement of visas, and their flexible visa rules saw a rush in their border crossings after the passing of the decree. While Germany and the EU agreed to open their border for asylum seekers who strongly object Russia, the

Baltic states and the Czech Republic said that they would restrict entry.

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## SWEDEN

### Right-wing coalition win 2022 Sweden elections: Differences and issues

*By Padmashree Anandhan*

On 11 September, under the election authority of Sweden elections to the Riksdag and municipal and regional councils was conducted. On 15 September, the vote count revealed the victory of the right-wing coalition with 176 seats out of 349 in the parliament, while Magdalena Andersson's (Social Democrats) centre-left coalition lost by margin with 173 seats. Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson resigned from her position and said: "I know that a lot of Swedes are concerned. I see your concern and I share it." Upon the right-wing's support to Moderate party leader, Ulf Kristersson will form the government. The Sweden Democrats leader, Jimmie Akesson said: "It is time to start rebuilding security, prosperity and cohesion. It's time to put Sweden first."

### Election results

The final vote count of 2022 elections showed the largest share of votes being won by the Social Democrats with 31.68 per cent followed by Sweden Democrats with 21.27 per cent, pushing the Moderates to third place with 19.1 per cent. With the Liberal and Christian Democrats winning 4.25 per cent and 5.3 per cent, totalling to 49.92 per cent whereas, the left-wing coalition including Social Democrats, center and left

parties closed 49.2 per cent. In the 2018 and 2014 elections the competition has prevailed only between the Social Democrats and the Moderates, where the Sweden slowly gained ground from 12.86 per cent in 2014, 17.53 per cent in 2018 to crossing 20 per cent in 2022.

### The differences within right-wing coalition

Since the existence of the Sweden Democrats, the Moderates, liberal and Christian parties have been in conflict with its policies. Although the Sweden Democrats hold the majority votes, their influence in fulfilling its policy agenda with the differed interest of long-standing Moderate party and Liberal party would be a challenge. Especially in terms of dealing crimes, education system, deportation of immigrants, welfare benefits, and energy needs. The balancing act will dwell upon the Moderates to negotiate the differences and bring consensus. With the removal of Social Democrats, and replacing of a four-party left-wing coalition, Sweden's political landscape is about to take the roller-coaster.

### Issues within Sweden

The steady rise of right was possible over the years 2014 to 2022 due to many reasons.

First, imbalanced approach towards migrants. The Social Democrats Party promised to keep the migrants under check, to fasten the deportation process of those rejected application, and assured to thin down the count of "non-Nordic" immigrants from Somalia, China and Italy. Although the immigration policy was not a major issue until 2015 migration crisis from Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan fear began to emerge amongst the Swedes over integration. The problem is real as Sweden's one-fifth of the 10 million people were born from the Syria, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Second, law and order. Sweden which is known for its happiness index, high standard of living, women rights and liberal laws in accepting asylum seekers, when it comes to controlling gun laws it lags behind. According to The New York Times report,

the shootings increased to 273 during 2010 to 2018, and stands at 379 in 2020. Despite government's strict control over gun licensing which is given only to hunting rifles, the rise in illegal trade and smuggling has led to the stocking of firearms from Turkey, Balkan, and eastern European countries. This has led to the fall of trust amongst the people who had lived for decades.

Third, the inflation and energy crisis. The rising energy prices, falter in the welfare benefits, taxes on high earning groups and Sweden's increased military expenditure upon Ukraine war is also a major problem which the current government has to address.

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## REGIONAL

### NATO's Military Committee annual conference 2022: What was discussed?

By Rishma Banerjee

On 16 September, the NATO Military Committee met in Tallinn, an annual conference organized by Estonia. Leaders discussed on the nuanced security posture of NATO upon Ukraine war and ways to implement the decision taken during the 2022 Madrid Summit. The conference was

attended by Chiefs of Defence of all allied nations including Finnish and Swedish Defence Forces. In a statement released by the NATO, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Christopher Cavoli briefed on the present and future posture in the eastern flank and how NATO aims to establish a 360-degree security alliance. The Chair of the Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer said: "Without a doubt: a new era for global security has begun. The entire international rules-based order is under attack. And it is up to the free, democratic nations of the world to protect it. Winter is coming, but our support for Ukraine shall remain unwavering." According to Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces: "Today's discussions reflected a common understanding that we are moving in the right direction. However, we must remember that time and speed are also important."

### What was discussed?

First, Sweden and Finland's presence shows its growing interoperability with NATO. The Head of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer said that Sweden and Finland can contribute in defence planning once all the member-states ratify their accession, Sweden and Finland were invited to "get acquainted to the procedures." With Sweden and Finland's accession progressing, the pressure increases on Russia and boosts confidence of the eastern flank which could benefit from the defence forces, and weaponry from Sweden and Finland.

Second, reinforcement of NATO's 'deter and defend strategy'. The committee acknowledged the changing global security balance and reaffirmed their commitment to NATO's 'deter and defend strategy.' It is to ensure the effectiveness of NATO's rapid-deployment forces operation and establish a common point amongst the alliance military leaders to view the regional and global challenges. The strategy was observed to be in line with NATO's 360-degree approach based on an amalgamation of nuclear, conventional and missile defence capabilities, across land, air, maritime domains, and space and cyber capabilities.

The meeting clarified that the strengthening of NATO's eastern flank was not a new development since the Ukraine War, but an agenda since Russia's installation of troops near the EU border countries. The meeting reiterated its action taken to deploy "strong and combat-ready troops on the Alliance's eastern flank" and to establish four new battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia, as agreed in the Madrid summit.

Third, concern about global security issues and rising geopolitical tension. The meeting discussed how the Ukraine war and other recent developments has put the entire "rule-based order under attack." Growing China's military and threat to NATO's global security posture was highlighted in the discussion. The Chiefs of Defence discussed NATO's ongoing operations, missions and activities, including the NATO Mission Iraq and Kosovo Force, reinforcing NATO's goal of protecting the one billion allied population under its ambit from international threats.

Fourth, NATO's assured support to Ukraine. Russia's invasion, which has revitalised the global security, the need to "sustain" and "expand allied assistance to Ukraine," was important. The discussion focused on how the military assistance to Ukraine can be maintained to capitalize on the recent successful counteroffensive. Leaders in the conference reiterated their support for Ukraine, which would continue for as long as it takes, to prevent Russia from getting the opportunity to alter the current rule-based international order.

Fifth, Estonia's growing stake in NATO. Through the 2022 Military Committee Meeting, host-country Estonia is also aiming to develop a more intensive partnership with NATO, and thus bolster its own security, especially in "digital innovation." Prime Minister Kaja Kallas said that Estonia was making significant investments to increase our ammunition stocks, improve existing capabilities and develop, upgrade infrastructure to host allies and for more troop rotation.

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## European Parliament reports Hungary as "hybrid regime of electoral autocracy": Findings and recommendations

*By Padmashree Anandhan*

On 15 September, European Parliament adopted a report highlighting Hungary breach of Article 7 on protection of EU values and rule of law and EU's indecisiveness. In the voting held, 433 voted in favour while 123 voted against, and 28 abstained from voting on adopting the report. The European Parliament began monitoring the binding of Hungary of Article 7 in 2018 in 12 areas namely, functioning of constitutional and electoral system, independence of the judiciary, corruption, data protection, and freedom of academic, religion, and association. It was to relook into Hungary's accession into the EU.

On 17 September, Victor Orban's Chief of Staff, confirmed on the submission of legislation that includes establishing of "anti-corruption watchdogs" to examine the use of EU funds. The spokesperson assured to comply to EU's regulations and to negotiate on those to reach settlement with the EU.

On 18 September, the European Commission taking the European Parliament's proposal into account announced its plan to forfeit EUR 7.5 billion of EU funds to Hungary. The decision comes over concerns of breach of rule of law and misuse of the EU funds. In response Hungary's Justice Minister Judit Varga said: "The European Parliament is, by definition, a political institution, therefore it operates

with majorities of political ideologies, their political mission is to carry out a witch hunt against a country which doesn't accept having its political ideology determined by the European Parliament."

With the release of the report, it found that important provisions in the Article 2 and 7 which included democracy, fundamental rights, judicial independency had declined since 2018. As per the report: "stresses that the Hungarian Government bears responsibility for the restoration of compliance with EU law and the values enshrined in Article 2 TEU and expresses deep regret that the lack of decisive EU action has contributed to a breakdown in democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in Hungary, turning the country into a hybrid regime of electoral autocracy, according to the relevant indices."

### **Findings of the report**

The report found the breach of values mentioned in the following Articles of Treaty of the European Union (TEU) in terms of "human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law," and fundamental rights which are equal to all the member states. As per Article 2, a violation of EU's fundamental values by any member states means "an attack" on people's freedom, political and social rights. Article 4 (3) mandates the EU and its member states to help each other and obliging to the treaties of the EU. Article 19 TEU requires the following of the rule of law and imposes responsibility on the member states to ensure the application of EU law and judicial protection of individual rights under ECJ. Since the start of monitoring process from 2018, the European Parliament found that, past many year Hungary had been weary of the concerns raised by the EU showcasing a negative image on the EU's credibility on defending the breached articles. It provide four key scenarios of violation by Hungary, where it plans to reroute ECJ functioning, Hungary's resolution to limit the power of European Parliament through appointment of the member of parliament instead of elections, and its block to EU's restrictive measures towards Russia, pushing for a security

problem and dejecting EU's attempts to protect the values given in Article 2.

### **Recommendations**

First, warning to European council over checking on breach of rule of law. Raising concerns over Hungary's non-binding act on EU's values, asks Hungary to take responsibility to restore its compliance with the EU. It suggests the European Council to look into the new developments post 2018 which has further affected Hungary rule of law, and underlined that no unanimity was needed under Article 7 (1) to identify the risks of breach in the Union values, giving recommendations, deadlines and in executing the recommendations. The European Parliament warned that upon the failure to implement the recommendation would deem the council as violator of the rule of law principle.

Second, focus on the judicial independence and fund programmes. The European Parliament recommended the Council and the Commission to look into the "infringement procedures," interim measures, and to recall the Court's judgements which were not instrumentalized. Highlighting the application of the "Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation," which is a tool to Article 7 which needs to be practised by all member states. The European Parliament taking account of Hungary's misuse of the EU funds stresses the Commission to withhold or restrict fund programmes, cohesion policy leading to the misuse and to ensure enforcement of the recommendations on rule of law and judgement given by CJEU and ECHR. As an alternative to the fund allocation, it suggest the Commission to distribute funds through local governments and NGO's upon Hungary's refusal to cooperate in implementing the rule of law. At most priority being, the application of "Common Provisions Regulation and the Financial Regulation," to skim down the misappropriation of funds which are at high risk with Russia's war in Ukraine.

Third, support to civil society groups and keeping up the European identity. Last set

of recommendation revolve around increasing of support to independent civil society groups. It can be done through deploying a comprehensive civil society strategy to protect the rights, civic space in the EU. It also recalled the need to protect the European identity, its values which forms basis to the EU and to clearly state the costs of the breach of the EU fundamental values.

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## Ursula's State of the Union address: Three takeaways

By Padmashree Anandhan

### What happened?

On 14 September, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the "State of the Union" address briefed on the Commission's plan for the upcoming year. Which were formed based on the recommendations made by the citizens in the Conference on the Future of Europe. In her address she said: "Democratic institutions must constantly gain and regain the citizens' trust. We must live up to the new challenges that history always puts before us. Just like Europeans did when millions of Ukrainians came knocking on their door. This is Europe at its best. A Union of determination and solidarity."

The major plans included, EU's continued support to Ukraine by integrating into the "EU's single market." Protective measures for Europeans to deal the energy crisis, reducing EU's dependency over Russian energy, increasing renewable energy

investments such as hydrogen and EU's stance on democracy and rule of law.

### Three key takeaways

First, solidarity for Ukraine. Ursula emphasised on EU's solidarity for Ukraine and announced EU's future initiative to strengthen its domestic and economic scenario. Outlining the support given, starting from the financial aid of EUR 19 billion, education to Ukrainian children, removal of import duties, consistency in imposing sanctions, to connecting of Ukraine's electricity grid. She announced EU's plans to merge Ukraine's into EU's single market, inclusion into free roaming, and EUR 100 million to reconstruct the damaged schools.

Second, recovery measures for Europe's energy crisis. The European Commission brought in measures such as REPowerEU Plan, setting minimum gas storage limits, investments in offshore wind power, green hydrogen, solar in Denmark, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Sicily and "demand reduction targets," to address the electricity shortage, Russia's gas supply cut, increasing energy prices. In the State of the Union 2022, the Commission proposed measures, first, to reduce the electricity demand by 10 per cent to bring down the prices to five per cent. Second, to impose a temporary revenue cap of EUR180/MWh on inframarginal electricity producers, where those who produce electricity at lower cost will not charge more. For example, production of electricity from renewables, nuclear, and lignite. According to the European Commission: "These inframarginal producers have been making exceptional revenues, with relatively stable operational costs, as expensive gas power plants have driven up the wholesale electricity price they receive." Third, a temporary unified contribution from the profits of the oil, gas, coal and refinery sectors. The rule applies only to those firms which has seen 20 per cent increase in their average profits in last three years. Such excess profits will be collected by the member states and later distributed to energy consumers, "vulnerable households, hard-hit companies, and energy-intensive

industries.” Overall, the European Commission aims to raise EUR 140 billion as a backup to deal the energy crisis.

Third, economic recovery plan. the NextGenerationEU which assures sustenance of investments, employment and growth. It has been boosting investment in digital, sustainability, net-zero economy but still lacks to focus on higher public debt. The European Commission plans to disclose new measure for economic governance to bring more flexibility in debt reduction, to boost confidence in financial markets and to ensure spontaneous sync between stability and growth. As a way to boost the economy, the Commission plans to boost through lifting its business, workforce and accessibility to raw materials to meet the industry needs. It proposed “SME Relief Package,” which will contain a single set of tax regulation for all businesses in Europe called as “BEFIT.” To deter the growing unemployment rate, the Commission plans to making 2023 as “European Year of Education,” to speed up the qualification and recognition process in Europe. This is to close the gap between the unemployment and rising vacancies.

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## Feedback reports on EU’s food waste: Three takeaways

By Padmashree Anandhan

On 20 September, environmental organization Feedback EU released a report on how the EU’s food waste exceeds its imports thereby affecting the EU food security. It found that EU which had

imported 138 million tonnes of agricultural products, close to 153.5 million tonnes of food were wasted every year. To address the issue, the European Environmental Bureau which comprises 43 organizations, in 20 EU countries issued a statement urging the EU and European Commission to adopt a legal framework regulating the member states to cut down the food waste. It said: “We, the undersigned, support the below proposals, introduce legally binding targets for EU member states to collectively achieve a 50% reduction in EU food loss and waste by 2030, these legally binding targets should require 50% reduction in all food loss and waste from farm to fork, and launch a review of expanding the scope of food waste measurement.”

### Three takeaways

First, agriculture waste is a major contributor. The report has divided the actors in the food waste into five groups. One, primary production which includes the harvest waste, and post-harvest waste from the farming process, storage, transport, disease, and poor harvesting methods. The food waste from this segment was found to be the highest of all with close to 90 million tonnes from the EU farms mostly found in low-income countries than high-income countries as per the WWF-UK report 2021. Two, food waste from households marked the second highest with 32.5 million tonnes. Three, processing which involves manufacturing, transport, distribution, and packaging accounted for 15.4 million tonnes of food waste as per the Fusion 2016 report (no recent data available). Four, food services like restaurants, hotels, canteens and caterers had wasted 10.5 million tonnes of food, whereas the last group wholesale and retail, which involves food waste from supermarkets, distribution were 5.3 million tonnes as per the UNEP 2021 report. The major reasons for huge amounts of agricultural waste were a cosmetic rejection of buyers. Cosmetic conditions mean the delivery of food produced in the exact demanded size, shape and colour, but under uncontrollable weather and pest situations, farmers have no option. Such condition narrows when the price fluctuates making it

more difficult for farmers to prevent wastage.

Second, slow approach towards the food waste management framework. The report found the derail in the EU setting up a legal framework to reduce food waste. Efforts began in 2010 to set specific targets to bring down food waste by the European Commission. In 2012, the European Parliament asked the Commission to take measures to half-down the waste by 2025, upon which the Commission proposed "Circular Economy Package in 2014," but withdrew the plan since it felt it to be ambitious. After several negotiations between the European Council, Commission, and Parliament, a poor set of waste reduction targets were set at attaining a 30 per cent cut by 2025 and a 50 per cent cut by 2030. The recent initiative was in 2018 when the European Commission decided to make changes to its "Waste Framework Directive (WFD)" enforcing its member states to measure and report on waste quantity from 2020. But all the plans led to slowed down the setting of targets for years.

Third, interlinked impact on climate and gender. EU which is at its peak summers

and heatwaves, reducing the contributing factors to climate change is critical. With keeping climate effect in mind, food waste forms six per cent of the total emissions. Europe's Green Deal does target to regulate the food system to be more environmentally friendly and healthy, but the economic effect is more drastic. The report finds that eastern and northern Europe economies were most affected due to climate change. With the risk of climate change, women are most affected without access to resources, especially from marginalised communities and low-income countries. Therefore, to beat the GHG emissions, achieve SDG goals (12.3) and invent nature-based solutions, food wastage control measures or important than ever for Europe.

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## War in Ukraine: Daily Updates\*

By Padmashree Anandhan, Rishma Banerjee, and Sai Pranav



Source: Kremlin.ru, Alexander Ermochenko/Reuters, ISW/CT, Mikhail Metzel / TASS, Yves Herman/Reuters, BBC/ISW

### War in Ukraine: Day 218

#### War on the Ground:

On 29 September, Ukraine's Economy Ministry reported on the increase in its exports to the EU in the first three quarters of 2022, since 2021. Deputy Minister of Economy, Taras Kachka highlighted the measures taken by the EU such as abolition of quotas and customs duties, the European Commission establishing the "solidarity lines" and the strengthening of customs infrastructure capacities which led to the increase. However, he also mentioned that while there has been an increase in trade with the EU, the general level of Ukrainian exports has decreased to almost half of pre-war levels.

On the same day, the Head of the President's office, Andriy Yermak announced another prisoner exchange conducted between Russia and Ukraine. As a part of the exchange, Ukraine received six people- four marines and two civilians. Yermack remarked that negotiating such exchanges is "difficult work," however, Ukraine

committed to bring back all the people imprisoned by Russia. So far, 235 Ukrainians had returned from captivity in September.

On 27 September, the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK). Signed as a part of the IAEA General Conference, the understanding will facilitate cooperation on capacity building through information exchange in nuclear and radiation safety. The agreement which will be valid for five years includes the possibility of conducting joint projects, meetings, seminars, and other services. Acting Head of the State Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority, Oleg Korikov said: "We are grateful for the international support, which is so necessary for the State Nuclear Regulatory Commission to perform its functions in the current conditions."

\* 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.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 29 September, according to President Vladimir Putin's spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov the annexation of the four regions in the LPR, DPR, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson will be formalized in a ceremony. The signing ceremony to incorporate the new territories into Russia will be conducted at the Saint George's Hall at the Grand Kremlin Palace.

On the same, LPR's ambassador to Russia, Rodion Miroshnik, spoke about the annexation of LPR into Russia. According to him, LPR might become a part of Russia as a republic, such that it had autonomous rights under Russia's control. The details of the annexation, rights and duties, the system of power and leadership of these areas will be released in legislative documents once the integration process begins. On 28 September, the Russia-backed leaders of the four regions were invited to Moscow.

On 29 September, *Kommersant* reported on the increased interest in Russians to buy cryptocurrency and hardware crypto wallets. Following the partial mobilization order, demand, for the cryptocurrency pegged to the US dollar has increased. The co-founder of the ENCRY Foundation said that most of the exchanges were occurring through p2p exchanges like Binance. Crypto wallet manufacturer, Tangem confirmed the increased demand for physical crypto wallets and mentioned that daily sale of the same on the Ozon marketplace has tripled since 20 September.

On 29 September, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Maria Zakharova addressed the leaks in the Nord Stream pipelines in the exclusive economic zones of Sweden and Denmark. Referring to the areas where the leaks have been reported, Zakharova said: "That is the exclusive economic zone of Denmark and Sweden, the very NATO-centric countries that are stuffed with US-made weapons, which are fully controlled by American intelligence agencies."

On the same day, the Levada Center polling agency published poll results that indicate a drop in Putin's approval rating in Russia. While in the initial days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, 83 per cent of Russians approved of Putin's actions as president. However, in

the recent survey, conducted between 22 September to 28 September, his ratings dropped to 77 per cent.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 29 September, with rising concern about the damages to Nord Stream 1 pipelines being deliberate sabotages, NATO issued a warning. It said that if critical infrastructure of any one of the 30 member states or allies are attacked, NATO would retaliate. The warning came after Sweden's coastguards confirmed a fourth leak in the pipeline. Even though NATO did blame anyone for the damage, it said that its retaliation, if required would be "united and determined."

On the same day, in Hungary, Viktor Orban's Chief of Staff, Gergely Gulyas spoke about the eighth round of EU sanctions, proposed by the European Commission on 28 September. He said that Hungary already had done enough to bolster European unity and would not support the recent sanctions if energy is one of its components.

On 29 September, Finland announced it would be closing its borders to Russian tourists. Other than Belarus, Finland was the only state amongst those sharing major borders with Russia still allowing Russian tourists. However, Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto said that Putin's recent mobilization announcement which resulted in a surge of Russians at border crossings impacted the decision to ban tourists greatly. To visit Finland, Russians will now have to apply in advance and provide an invitation from personal or business contacts.

On 28 September, also because of Putin's Mobilization Order, the US urged US citizens staying in Russia to leave immediately. The US embassy in Russia issued a security alert regarding the same and asked the people to make independent travel arrangements 'as soon as possible' while limited transportation options were still available. Bulgaria's Foreign Ministry made a similar announcement. Additionally, it advised those deciding to stay in Russia to be extremely vigilant, avoid mass gatherings and keep a keen eye on the daily developments. Poland and Estonia also issued similar advice for

their respective citizens residing or vacationing in Russia.

On 28 September, the US Department of Defence (DoD) announced around USD 1.1 billion in security assistance for Ukraine. The new package comes under the Ukraine Security Assistant Initiative (USAI). Unlike the Presidential Drawdown Fund (PDF), which procures capabilities from the DoD, the USAI sources it from the industry. The announcement indicates US's commitment to support Ukraine in the long term. The new package will provide 18 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) and associated ammunition, 150 armoured vehicles (HMMWVs), more tactical vehicles, trucks and trailers, radars for Unmanned Aerial Systems, communications systems, body armor, and other field equipment. It will also provide funding for training, maintenance, and sustainment of Ukraine's forces.

On 28 September, a meeting of the Ukrainian Defence Contact Group was hosted. The armaments directors of the 45 member states, the EU, and NATO attended the meeting. The meeting committed their long-term support for Ukraine and outlined the approach to increase the production of long-range weapons, ammunition, and other capabilities. Smaller working groups will be established to monitor and ensure progress in these fields. Additionally, the importance of standardizing equipment, increasing sustainment capacity including repair activity, and increasing accessibility was also discussed.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 29 September, *Business Standard* published a report on the India's LNG supplies. It said that due to dwindling supplies from Russia's Gazprom, India is reaching out to Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE and the US to secure more LNG. In 2018, a subsidiary of Gazprom based in Singapore, Gazprom Marketing and Trading Singapore (GMTS) had signed a deal with the Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL) for the supply of 2.5 million tonnes of LNG for 20 years. However, since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the supply through the GMTS has been

declining, prompting India to look for other sources.

On 29 September, H&M the world's second-largest fashion retailer from Sweden, launched a SEK two billion cost-saving drive. H&M's exit from Russia contributed to about half of the profit drop for the country. In the third quarter of 2022, the company's pretax profit dropped from SEK 6.09 billion to SEK 689 million. Less than expected profits for the company, soaring input costs, and lesser consumer spending were the other reasons for the low turnover.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 217**

### **War on the Ground:**

On 28 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the UNSC and urged the international community to strengthen its response against Russia's recent actions. He said that Russia conducting the illegal referendums in Ukraine's occupied regions is violating the UN charter. In the same context, he requested the members of the UNSC not to delay action and said that Ukraine will need more support from the international community if they have to protest against the referendums. Melitopol mayor Ivan Federov alleged that only 0.5 per cent of the total residents in Zaporizhzhia had taken part in the voting process.

On the same day, Zelenskyy spoke with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He thanked him for continuous mediation efforts by Turkey, especially with regard to the recent exchange of 250 prisoners of war from Russia. Turkey's stance on denouncing the referendums was appreciated by Zelenskyy. Erdogan said that would be ready to mediate the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

On 28 September, *AP News* reported that according to Zelenskyy, referendums are seen as an additional provocation and any peace talks with Russia would be difficult if Putin is in power, trying to annex the four regions in LPR, DPR, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry called on the EU, NATO, and G7 member states to

impose more sanctions on Russia and increase military aid to Ukraine.

On 28 September, Ukraine's spokesperson to the Republic of Crimea, Tamila Tasheva, stated that 1500 draft notices were issued to Crimean Tartars, and those issued were unproportional to the population of the Tatars present and that the actual number of mobilized people from Crimea was unclear.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 28 September, on the issue of the annexation of Ukrainian territories into Russia, Senator Olga Kovitidi warned that even though the referendums were completed the entire process of annexation might take five to 10 years. She referred to how long it took for Crimea to be annexed to substantiate her claim. However, she said that some issues especially related to social support and social security would be resolved quickly. Kovitidi remarked after Russia published the results of the referendums.

On 27 September, Russia released the results of the referendums held in Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. Even though the efficacy and validity of the results have been questioned, as per data released by Russia Foreign Affairs Ministry, in the LPR, 98.42 per cent of residents and in the DPR 99.23 per cent people voted to join Russia. In the Kherson region, the percentage was 87.05 while in Zaporizhzhia it was 93.11 percent. The Ministry claimed to have conducted the referendums according to the international laws while international observers have recognized the legitimacy of the vote.

On 27 September, Russia's defence Minister, Sergey Shoigu personally inspected the training of the people called in due to the mobilization order. He supervised firing, tactical and medical training. He also advised the command to ensure hot meals and proper living conditions for the recruited.

On the same day, *The Moscow Times* reported on Russia's government portals clarifying that passports will not be given out to citizens mobilized by the armed

forces. The move comes as countless Russians try to flee the country to escape conscription amidst rising fear of travel restrictions. Currently, Russians can travel to Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan without passports.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 28 September, the European Commission proposed the eighth package of sanctions against Russia. The proposal comes as a response to the escalation of Ukraine crisis, partly caused by Russia's annexation attempts in the occupied regions. As per the proposal, the Commission will publish the 'legal Basis' for an oil price cap. This move will reduce Russian revenues and bring stability to the global oil market. As part of the package, additional Russian products such as aviation items, or electronic components and specific chemical substances will be banned which could cause EUR seven billion loss in revenue for Russian economy. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called the referendums an "...illegal attempt to grab land and change international borders by force," and said that the EU was determined that Russia would feel the consequences of its actions.

On the same day, Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic said that Serbia will not recognize the results of the referendums conducted by Russia. Citing the UN charter he said: "We are protecting our own territorial integrity, and it is in our best interest to protect the territorial integrity of other internationally recognised countries."

On the explosions at the Nord Stream gas pipelines, Lithuania's Defence Minister, Arvydas Anušauskas said that his country is willing to provide any support required by the investigations launched by Sweden or Denmark. He also said: "...it's clear who is benefiting from this, first of all, Gazprom itself."

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 28 September, *Hindustan Times* reported on India's External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar's visit to the US. He reiterated the neutral stance of India and condemned the

war, but also assured to maintain good trade ties with Russia. He said: "Beyond that what happens is in the realm of diplomacy and I can't say anything more."

On 27 September, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said that China believed in the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected and all purposes of the UN Charter should be respected. According to China's Foreign Ministry, the referendums will increase pressure on the West on how to provide necessary assistance to Ukraine.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 216**

### **War on the Ground:**

On 27 September, Ukraine's Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food, Mykola Solskyis announced the export of 50000 tonnes of wheat grain to Ethiopia and Somalia. The grains will be transported through Ukraine's Black Sea ports with the help of the World Food Programme. Solskyis reported on Ukraine's mass grain and oil crops with more than 20 million tonnes of stock, of which 70 per cent is expected to be exported.

The press service of Ukraine's State Emergency Service reported that two robots are being used to demine, areas in the Vinnytsia region. The robots cost around UAH four-and-a-half million are helping the bomb disposal experts.

Ukraine received 700000 doses of polio vaccine from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) to contain the Polio outbreak in Ukraine, which is worsening due to the Russian invasion. UNICEF provided both oral and inactivated polio vaccines to Ukraine, urging its citizens to take the polio vaccines. The US agency for International Development (USAID) and Japan's government funded the cost of the vaccines which will be for children and adults to

strengthen their immune systems against poliovirus.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 27 September, Russia's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov accused Ukraine for rejecting Russia's offer to negotiate. Russia's Defence Ministry announced that it would not force the return of Russians who have already fled to Kazakhstan, Georgia and other countries. He said that the Military, Enlistment Office, and Ministry of Internal Affairs will work together to hand out summons near the border of Georgia and target those who are currently attempting to escape conscription.

On 27 September, the State Duma adopted an amendment to the Labour Code to preserve jobs for mobilized people. As per the amendment, the people with valid employment contracts who are undergoing conscription will retain their positions and be able to resume work once their service is complete. The law also includes additional guarantees for the family members of those who receive a conscription call. Who would be given a job to sustain themselves and will not be terminated even if the employer institutes a mass lay-off.

On the same day, *TASS* reported that the process of annexation of the occupied territories into Russia will be decided the results of the recent referendums are calculated and revealed. In this context, Luhansk People's Republic's ambassador to Moscow, Rodion Miroshnik said that voter turnout in Luhansk exceeded 50 per cent and accused Ukraine for launching attacks in places where referendums took place.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 27 September, the UK's Ministry of Defence in its daily intelligence update reported on the upcoming Putin's address on 30 September, where there is a possibility to announce on the accession of the Ukrainian-occupied regions after the referendums end.

On the same day, a new pipeline connecting the Norwegian gas shelf and Poland through Denmark was inaugurated. The new Baltic pipeline will provide Poland with 15 per

cent of its annual energy needs. Russia had halted gas supply to Poland through the Yamal pipeline after Poland refused to pay in roubles. The news pipeline will thus be an alternative to Russian energy. Poland can now supply gas to the Baltics through the Gas Interconnector Poland Lithuania pipeline. It had managed to receive energy from Lithuania through the interconnector. Norway's Energy Minister Terje Aasland said, "It was an important step on the important road to Europe's independence from Russian energy."

The EU said it would impose new sanctions against Russia for conducting illegal referendums in Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine. The EU's Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, High Representative Josep Borrell said that there would consequence for people who that participate in the unlawful referendums. The next set of sanctions will contain new bans on Russian exports and imports, companies, and individuals responsible for the false referendums in the four Russian-occupied territories in Ukraine.

On 27 September, France's Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna paid a surprise visit to Ukraine as a show of solidarity. She is scheduled to visit Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, Prosecutor Andriy Kostin and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The visit displays France's support and solidarity for Ukraine and its people.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 27 September, referring to the Russian citizens attempting to flee the country, Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said, "Most of them are forced to leave because of the hopeless situation. We must take care of them and ensure their safety." According to Kazakhstan's Interior Ministry, close to 98000 Russians have entered till now after the military call by Putin.

On 26 September, Japan's Consulate General in Vladivostok, Tatsunori Motoki, was arrested by Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) for obtaining classified information for

money. He was ordered to leave the country 48 hours after his detention. On 27 September, the Japanese government protested by alleging that Russia's action was a clear violation of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. The Japanese government demanded an official apology from Russia for the actions against Motoki. This comes following a new set of sanctions imposed by Japan on Russia.

On 26 September, China and Russia's warships were spotted by a US Coast Guard ship on a daily patrol in the Bering Sea. The US Coast Guard first found a Chinese guided-missile cruiser 75 nautical miles north of Kiska Island of Alaska. Both countries were said to be participating in a training exercise within the US zone as an extension of the completed Vostok exercises. The US speculates that the Navy display was a show of solidarity between Russia and China.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 215**

### **War on the Ground:**

Melitopol Mayor, Ivan Fedorov, during a nationwide telethon, said in a statement that the Russian forces forced only 20 per cent of the current population of 60000 in Melitopol to vote in the referendum conducted in the city. Out of the 20 per cent, only ten per cent voted unwillingly in favour of Russia under pressure from the Russian soldiers' threat. The pseudo-referendums started on 23 September 2022.

According to a report posted on *Facebook* by Ukraine's Ministry of Defence's Main Directorate of Intelligence, Russia is planning to carry out a huge cyberattack on vital Ukrainian infrastructures and facilities, of energy companies in Ukraine. The attacks will be distributed denial-of-service attacks, and will also target Ukraine's allies, Poland and the Baltics. As per the report, the

Russian military also plans to conduct a missile strike on Ukrainian electrical supply facilities to slow its offensive attacks.

On 26 September, Ukraine's Prosecutor General's office reported that since the beginning of the war, Russia has committed 36281 war crimes, including violations of the laws and customs of warfare, planning or preparation or the initiation of aggressive war, war propaganda and other crimes. Ukraine's law enforcement also registered 16315 crimes against national security for encroachment on Ukraine's territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine, treason, collaborative activities, assistance to Russia, sabotage and other crimes. The total number of charges relating to the war in Ukraine amounted to 52596 crimes. Additionally, The Prosecutor General's Office also reported on a torture chamber used by Russian troops in the liberated village of Lyptsi.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, warned the citizens about the 'criminal mobilization' taking place within Russia and its occupied territories. Russia's President Vladimir Putin is using indigenous people, especially from Crimea, Siberia, Caucasus and Dagestan, for conscription into the army to fight against Ukraine. According to Zelenskyy, using indigenous people in the war against Ukraine will destroy their identities. He called the people to either flee or surrender to the Ukrainian forces to be freed from the Russian grip.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 26 September, Putin met Belarus' President Alexander Lukashenko at the Bocharov Ruchei residence in Sochi. They discussed various bilateral issues, such as the economy and security. West's sanctions on Belarusian fertilizers, the blockade on food and fertilizers and the large number of people fleeing both countries were the other issues discussed. Lukashenko said that Belarus would find a way out of the sanctions imposed by the West and grow stronger.

On 26 September, *TASS* reported that the voter turnout for the referendum in the

Zaporizhzhia region on joining Russia exceeded 50 per cent. The Chairman of the “We Are Together With Russia civil society group,” Vladimir Rogov, said that he had never seen the eagerness to vote by the local people over the years following the independence of Ukraine. He expects more of the local people to vote in the referendum which will continue till 27 September.

On 25 September, Russia’s Defence Ministry announced that it had destroyed two Ukrainian MiG-29 soviet era warplanes modified to handle US-made anti-radar weapons. The warplanes were capable of carrying AGM-88 High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles ((HARM), which are used to attack radar stations on the ground. The Ministry also reported that they destroyed 12 Ukrainian drones and 21 missiles, mainly US-made HIMARS launchers, stopped mid-air.

Russian hacking group RaHDI published data of 1500 Ukraine’s Foreign Intelligence Service employees in the public domain. The data containing a list of officers working in various embassies across 20 countries and international organizations like the EU, the UN and NATO were published on the Nemesis website. The data also included intelligence officers working in the UN, the EU and NATO offices.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

Land traffic at the border of Georgia increased following the partial mobilization decree by Putin. On 25 September, there had been a 48-hour delay to enter Georgia after Russians were seen fleeing their country. Around 3000 vehicles were queued at the frontier to cross Georgia. Prices of commodities and apartments in Tbilisi are rising due to the Russian influx, and leading to resentment in Georgia. Other than Georgia, there has been a large influx of Russians fleeing to Georgia and neighbouring Kazakhstan, Finland and Mongolia.

On 26 September, the US provided National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS) to Ukraine as military aid. Ukraine had requested for the US-made air

defence systems for a long time and was approved for shipment in August.

On 26 September, the UK’s Defence intelligence reported in its update that the first batch of men who received military conscription under Russia’s partial mobilization had started to arrive at military bases. According to the report, the men that were called up lack military training and will be sent to the front line. Russia will also face administrative and logistical challenges in providing military training for the reservists.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 26 September, Kazakhstan’s Foreign Ministry said that it would not recognize the referendums conducted in the four regions in Ukraine. The Ministry’s spokesperson, Aibek Smadiyarov, said, “As for the holding of referendums ... Kazakhstan proceeds from the principles of territorial integrity of states, their sovereign equivalence and peaceful coexistence.” Kazakhstan also denounced the annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson with Russia through the illegal referendums conducted in these regions. Kazakhstan called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

On the same day, South Korea’s government called upon 30 companies that consume large amounts of energy to discuss methods of tackling the energy supply crisis brought forth by the war in Ukraine. The government aims to sign a deal with the 30 companies such as Samsung electronics, SK Hynix and Posco in October to demand them use energy more efficiently. The government is also planning to turn off lights earlier at tourist attractions and decrease the recommended room temperature at state-funded agencies.

Orthodox Hasidic Jewish pilgrims travel to the city of Uman in Ukraine amid the ongoing war to celebrate the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashana. The orthodox Jews are followers of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century rabbi, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, whose grave is in Uman. Even though Ukraine, Israel and the US warned the pilgrims not to travel to Ukraine amidst the war, the warnings were unheeded by the pilgrims as they are flying

to Poland or Moldova to cross to Ukraine. Although the city is not on the frontline, Israel's Prime Minister Yair Lapid cautioned the pilgrims of "life-threatening danger".

On 26 September, Japan imposed new sanctions on exporting chemical weapon-related goods to Russia, adding to the existing sanctions. Japan is concerned about the possibility of threats by nuclear weapons by Russia following the announcement made by Putin about the usage of atomic weapons.

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### War in Ukraine: Day 213 & 214 War on the Ground:

On 25 September, Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council's Centre for Countering Disinformation reported in a Telegram post that Russia was forcing the Ukrainian prisoners of war (PoWs) was forced to participate in the referendum held in the Olenivka penal colony. According to Russian media sources, Ukraine's Armed Forces service men and women who are held as prisoners of war with Russian military were allegedly turned into militants who had requested passports of the proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DNR). The Centre discovered another 57 Ukrainian PoWs were forced to vote in the fake referendum.

The referendums held in Russian-occupied territories had a turnout of 15 per cent in Kherson, 20 per cent in Zaporizhzhia, 22 per cent in Luhansk and 24 per cent in Donetsk. According to the Head of the Luhansk Regional Military, Serhiy Haidai, the Russian troops forced people from Luhansk to participate in the referendum. Russian soldiers were seen holding guns near Luhansk People's Republic ballots. Russia's referenda were denounced by Ukraine and the West, calling them sham and pseudo-referendums. Three territories had more than 50 per cent agreeing to split with Ukraine, while Kherson had only 49 per cent.

Ukraine revoked the accreditation of Iran's ambassador after discovering that Iran had supplied drones to Russia. Iran had declared a neutral position but crossed its words by providing arms to Russia, causing a rift between Ukraine and Iran. Following the

attack on Odesa port by Russian who were using the Iranian made “Mohajer-6,” drones, there was a drastic reduction in the number of personnel in the Iranian embassy.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 24 September, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, “The entire territory of the Russian Federation, which is confirmed and can be further confirmed in the Russian Constitution, is certainly under the state’s full protection,” at a press conference after partaking in the 77th plenary session of the UN General Assembly. Territories such as Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, where the referendums are conducted, will be under Russia’s protection once the results are announced.

On the same day, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin signed an executive order postponing the military call-up during partial mobilization for full-time and part-time students who are studying at state educational organizations, research organizations pursuing nationally acknowledged vocational training and higher education programme and those enrolled in educational programs to a similar level for the first time.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 24 September, Institute for the Study of War, a US based think tank reported on Russia’s partial mobilisation. As per its report, the mobilisation efforts seem to be divided, complex and many violations of Russia’s Defense Minister comments were found. The reason behind the violation was observed to be due to confusion in the “chains of responsibility,” in executing the decree. According to Ukrainians, Russian forces were observed to be giving Russian passports to individuals in the Russian occupied territory and has mobilising them to participate in the referendum. The report states another possibility for Ukrainian POW to be treated in the same way.

On 25 September, the government of Finland, announced its decision to pass a resolution on imposing a ban on the entry of Russian using Finland issues visas or

Schengen visas. The resolution is expected to passed this week according to Foreign Minister. As per the reports from the Finnish Border Guards, the Russians in the border crossing has increased from 3000 to 6000 in six days.

On 25 September, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz signed a deal with UAE to export LNG, which forms part of the energy security agreement. Through the deal 137,000 cubic meters of LNG will be supplied to Germany through the new LNG terminal near Hamburg. Along with the deal, a memorandum was signed for “long-term deliveries” beginning from 2023. The move is seen as a rectification to dependency over gas from Russia.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 24 September, Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said that Iran is planning “a proportional action” against Ukraine after it decided to reduce its diplomatic ties due to Iran supplying drones to Russia. He said, “refrain from being influenced by third parties who seek to destroy relations between the two countries,”. He added that Ukraine’s decision was based on baseless rumours spread by foreign media, but he refrained from mentioning the drones.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 212**

### **War on the Ground:**

On 23 September, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed the Presidential Decree No. 661/2022, to establish a proper investigation and prosecution tribunal. According to paragraph 28 of Article 6 of the Constitution, ordering the formation of a working group to facilitate the setting up of the tribunal for crimes of aggression against Ukraine. The working group will be headed by the head of President's Office Andriy Yermak.

The exposure of the mass killings in the Izyum region was completed, where 447 bodies were recovered, of which 215 were women, 194 men and five were children. The Chief of Ukraine's National Police, Ihor Kymenko said that many of the bodies had signs of torture, and forensic experts were found to be facing difficulty in identifying the victims. Moreover, 18 torture chambers were discovered in the Kharkiv region, where Russia illegally detained Ukrainians. A National Police spokesperson said that evidences of war crimes from these sites have been collected, and a register on Russian soldiers and affected civilians was being maintained.

Following the record exchange of prisoners of war with Russia, Ukraine's military intelligence spokesperson said that many of them show signs of violent torture. While some of them were brutally tortured, some suffered from chronic malnutrition due to adverse conditions of detention.

On 23 September, Ukraine reduced its diplomatic relations with Iran, as Iran-made weapons were being used by Russia to target

Ukraine. The move comes after Russia intensified its attacks using Shahed 136 kamikaze drones in southern Ukraine the charge d'affaires ad interim of Iran has been summoned by the Foreign Ministry to provide answers about the issue. The ministry also noted that it would revoke the Iranian ambassador's accreditation and reduce the presence of diplomats at the Iranian embassy in Kyiv.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

Upon Russia's executive order on partial mobilization resulted in many military-aged men flee the country to avoid conscription. *AP News* reported a 10-kilometer queue of Russians trying to flee the country along the Russia's border with Georgia, and lines of cars at the border with Kazakhstan. Countries which do not mandate a visa for Russians, like Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Serbia, were also top destinations according to the plane tickets sold at extremely high prices.

On 23 September, the referenda in LPR, DPR, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, which has largely been termed as "sham" by the EU and Ukraine began. The voting is scheduled to continue till 27 September. Though the logistics of the referenda remain unclear, armed Russian soldiers carried ballots to apartment blocks, and mobile polling stations were set up. RT reported that people gathered in various parts of Russia to show support for the referenda. In Moscow, the All-Russia People's Front (ONF) organized the 'We Don't Abandon Our Own' event, which saw participation from actors, pop stars and other celebrities.

On 22 September, President Vladimir Putin spoke with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. They discussed mutual cooperation in Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the role of the two states in ensuring the stability of the global oil market. Putin also appreciated Salman's efforts at mediating the prisoner exchange with Ukraine.

On the same day, Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov addressed the UN Security Council. He called the situation in Ukraine

“impunity”. He criticized promotion by the West, labelling Russia as the aggressor and instigator. Lavrov also listed human rights violations committed by Ukraine before Russia’s invasion.

### **The West View:**

#### **Responses from the US and Europe**

France conducted a meeting on food security during the UNGA on “Save Crops Operation.” The African Union, the EU, World Food Program, Food and Agriculture Organization, the IMF, WTO and the World Bank and other international organizations launched the new initiative. Export restrictions, fertilizer needs, and production bottlenecks will be mapped and addressed. Additionally, an emergency fertilizer purchase mechanism and support system for production and access will be set up for Africa.

Russia’s partial mobilization order had triggered a response from the citizens in Russia as well as the international community. As many Russians crowd the borders of neighbouring countries to escape conscription, the recipient countries are also taking a stance against them. European Council President Charles Michel said that Europe should allow the Russian citizens entry and they should maintain “...openness to those who don’t want to be instrumentalized by the Kremlin.”

On 22 September, in the US, 17 members of Congress wrote a letter to US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin urging him to hasten the review of Ukraine’s request for drones. The initial plan to sell four such MQ-1C Grey Eagle drones to Ukraine was stalled amidst security concerns in June. However, the risk assessments mitigation should not be at the cost of Ukrainian lives.

#### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 22 September, at the Security Council, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres reiterated UN’s support for Ukraine. He pointed out that Russia is unlikely to decrease its offensive in Ukraine. The latest on ground developments were “dangerous and disturbing” as per Guterres. Nuclear conflict as threatened by Putin’s recent address would be “totally unacceptable”.

Moreover, Guterres also expressed concern about the referenda being held in DPR, LPR, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. He marked that these annexation efforts would be a violation of International Law and the UN Charter.

On 23 September, *AP News*, reported on the change in narrative in the international community, regarding Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. While the West has been vocal about their position against Russia from the initial days of the war, many non-aligned countries are now coming forward to criticize Russia’s recent moves. In the UN General Assembly Summit, most of the international community spoke against Russia.

On the same day, Uzbekistan suspended the use of Russia’s Mir system. The Mir system was set up by Russia in 2015 to bypass western sanctions after the annexation of Crimea. But now, with increasing Western pressure, many countries have opted out of the system. Uzbekistan cited “technical procedures” as the reason behind the suspension.

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## War in Ukraine: Day 211

### War on the Ground:

On 22 September, On the same day, the fourth vessel chartered by the UN World Food Programme, the bulk carrier BC VANESSA, left the Odesa port to deliver 30000 tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan. So far, a total of 192 ships loaded with 4.38 million tonnes of Ukrainian crops left the Odesa port since the launch of the UN 'grain initiative'. The ships have been sent to starving countries such as Ethiopia, Yemen and Afghanistan, which face a severe food security crisis.

On the same day, at an event hosted by the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin, Ukraine President's economic advisor, Oleg Ustenko, said that Ukraine had

incurred damage of almost USD one trillion, directly or indirectly, due to the ongoing war. The estimated cost of the war is five times of Ukraine's pre-war annual GDP. The destruction of infrastructures and displacement of people has significantly impacted the fall of the country's economy. Even after drastically cutting government expenditure, and the preparedness of the West to provide financial aid to Ukraine, it has been short of USD 4.9 billion every month even after drastically cutting government expenditure.

On 21 September, Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shymhal stated that Ukraine needs international help for post-war reconstruction. Speaking at the UN Global Compact high-level event in New York, he urged foreign investors to help with the country's recovery, and said that the potential cost of the rebuilding is USD 750 billion in the years ahead.. He emphasized, "...It is the private sector that should become one of the main drivers of reconstruction," and Ukraine is creating various military risk insurance instruments. Shymhal assured that there would be transparency to the recovery process and follow the principle of "rebuilding better than it was." He also said that Russia's frozen assets should be used for reconstruction as it was the aggressor.

In a statement issued by Ukraine's General Staff of the Armed Forces on *Facebook*, it was reported that Ukraine had killed around 55510 Russian forces from the start of the war. So far, 2245 Russian tanks, 4804 armoured vehicles, 1342 artillery systems, 318 multiple launch rocket systems, 170 air defence systems, 254 warplanes, 219 helicopters, 950 operational-tactical UAVs, 241 cruise missiles, 15 warships, 3650 trucks and tankers, and 125 specialized pieces of equipment were destroyed by the Ukrainian forces. Russia has also suffered considerable losses in the Kramatorsk and the Donetsk directions.

### The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

Russia-owned defence technology corporation, Rostek, plans to increase its production speed of Su-57 5th-generation stealth jet fighters and supply the new jet

fighters to the Russian Air Force by the end of 2022. The production plan is expanding and modernizing to meet the increasing demands. The ramping up of Su-57 jet fighters' production started following the instruction of equipping more hardware for the military from Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

Following the announcement by Putin regarding partial mobilization, several protests erupted in Moscow streets without the authorities' approval. Hundreds were arrested and faced fines or prison by Moscow's authorities as the protest was deemed unauthorized. The jail term required a court hearing.

On 22 September, Russia's Senator of the Federation Council Andrei Klimov responded to the EU's head of diplomacy, Josep Borrell's announcement regarding the bloc's plan to impose new sanctions on Russia. The EU is considering the new sanctions as an answer to Russia conducting referendums in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. In this context, Klimov said that the decision to accept these regions into Russia depended on their respective authorities. He added that the territories are an integral part of Russia and that the EU should concentrate on its citizens first.

Russia's spokesperson of the President, Dmitry Peskov, rejected the claim of calling up one million reservists that were allegedly part of the classified seventh paragraph of the partial mobilization decree. He emphasized on Shoigu's announcement about calling up 300,000 people but not all at once.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 22 September, the EU foreign ministers agreed to impose new sanctions on Russia and increase its weapons supply to Ukraine following Putin's announcement of partial mobilization at the UN. Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell said that Putin's announcement of nuclear weapons usage showed his desperation and readiness to destroy Ukraine. The EU ministers will formalize the new sanctions package in the mid-October

formal meeting.

The EU condemned Russia's plan to conduct illegal referenda in DPR, LPR, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson territory. It also condemned Russia's partial mobilization call. The EU feels that Russia is violating the UN charter by conducting the referenda thereby violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The bloc also supported Ukraine and said it would increase its backing until Russia withdraws its troops from Ukraine.

On the same issue, Turkey refused to acknowledge the illegal referenda conducted in the four Russian-controlled regions. It condemned Russia's plans and said Turkey would not recognize the illegitimate referendum. Turkey has not recognized the annexation of Crimea in 2014 till now.

The Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, the UK, Germany, Italy and Ukraine and senior authorities from the US, Switzerland, and South Korea expressed their concerns about the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. They said they supported IAEA's findings and urged Russia to follow the agency's advice. The officials asked Russia to withdraw from the ZNPP and hand over the control to Ukraine.

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban said in his speech at his first external faction meeting in Balatonalmadi that the war in Ukraine will continue and Hungary should prepare its defence if the conflict spills over into the country. According to Orban, the EU's sanctions on Russia are causing economic problems, food insecurities, an energy crisis and inflation. In his closing remarks, he said that Hungary has prepared and worked hard to secure its energy supply and also that Hungary will emerge from the crisis victoriously.

As per Finland's Border Guards asylum applications for those escaping from military conscription in Russia will be processed until the Finnish leaders say they oppose it. Finland has 11 official crossing points with Russia, and on 21 September, 4800 Russians crossed the border following the announcement of partial mobilization by Putin. The final decision from the Finnish

parliament is yet to be confirmed. On 22 September, Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ann Linde, tweeted that Sweden condemns the widespread detainment of peaceful protestors in the streets of Russia by Russian authorities after the announcement of partial mobilization. She said that the protestors gained respect from Sweden.

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau condemned Putin's announcement of partial mobilization and threat of nuclear weapons usage. He added that the mobilisation order displays the failure of Putin's campaign in Ukraine to his Russian citizens.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 21 September, IAEA General Director Rafael Grossi wrote on his *Twitter* that he had a meeting with Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. Grossi and Kuleba discussed the positive and active consultation on creating a Safety and Security Protection Zone around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

On the same day, North Korea's Ministry of National Defence's Vice Director of the General Bureau of Equipment released a rare press statement that the allegations by the US against North Korea of providing arms to Russia were false. Denying the accusations, he said that the US is spreading false rumours of North Korea having weapons trade with Russia. He also added that they have never exported nor will export arms and ammunition to Russia.

Kyrgyzstan's embassy in Moscow and Uzbekistan's Prosecutor-General's Office of another Central Asian state warned its citizens who are working as migrant labourers in Russia about the consequences of joining the partial mobilization call. Both states informed their citizens about the penalty of ten years in prison if they joined the Russian army. The Kyrgyz authorities said they would deem those working for the Russian military mercenaries.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 210**

### **War on the Ground:**

On 21 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy heralded the return of 215 people imprisoned under Russia's control. Among them, 188 people are part of the Azov battalion who had been involved in the siege of Mariupol, eight of them are injured soldiers from Olenivka and the remaining are fighters from the National Guard, employees of the Security Service of Ukraine, its army and navy. Five of these combat commanders will be released from captivity in Turkey and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has guaranteed his personal protection for them, ensuring that are kept in comfortable conditions. In exchange, Ukraine also returned 55 people to Russia, which included Putin-ally from Ukraine, Viktor Medvedchuk.

On the same day, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine urged the international community not to recognize the referenda that are being organized by Russia in several occupied territories in Ukraine. The parliament specifically mentioned the referenda in LPR, DPR, Kherson region and Zaporizhzhia region to become a part of Russia. It said that the votes would be a violation of fundamental regulations, international law and the Constitution of Ukraine. The parliament also noted that the real threat from Russia currently is their continued aggression on Ukraine's nuclear power facilities. Moreover, the recent partial mobilization announced by Putin is

indicative of an escalation of criminal intentions by Russia towards Ukraine.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 21 September, Russia's President Vladimir Putin declared a partial mobilization in Russia. As per the Executive Order, citizens will be called up to provide service in the Armed Forces of Russia based on a contract and will enjoy the status of military personnel. The Order also elaborates on the duration of the contracts, monetary compensation for the citizens and grounds for discharge. Russia's Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu said that up to 300,000 reservists would be called for service as a part of the process. Putin accused the West of nuclear blackmail and alleged that they are instigating Ukraine to attack Russian territory. Putin is apprehensive that the West led by the US is also attempting to divide Russia, as they had done to the erstwhile Soviet Union during the end of the Cold War. In that context, he warned that Russia also has an impressive reserve of weapons of mass destruction that are more advanced than the ones NATO countries, and he would not be hesitant to use them if Russia's territorial integrity is threatened.

The announcement of partial mobilization brought about a widespread reaction from Russia's citizens as well as from the international community. The protests in Russia started from Siberia and the far east, where dozens were detained shortly after the rallies began. From there, the protests spread to various parts of the country, like in the third largest city, Novosibirsk, in cities across the Volga-Ural region, in Bashkortostan, in Moscow, St. Petersburg and even in the Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad too. At least 525 demonstrators have been arrested across Russia for protesting against the mobilisation.

On the same day, Shoigu provided the first official estimate of Russia's battlefield losses since March. According to Russia, 5937 Russian soldiers and around 61,000 Ukrainian soldiers were found to be killed.

Russia's state-owned defence industry giant,

Rostech will enhance its production capabilities to keep up with the growing demand for military hardware. President Putin has asked for a ramping up of the state's defence procurement and acquisition program. Thus, Rostech, which is already responsible for more than 40 per cent of all defence acquisition contracts is taking management decisions to "further increase its production capacities to meet the goals" to enable Russia to "prevail and come out as victor."

### **The West View:**

#### **Responses from the US and Europe**

Amid Putin's Executive Order regarding the partial mobilization in Russia, EU member-states, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which share borders with Russia informed that they will not allow Russians escaping the mobilisation of troops. The three Baltic countries have already restricted the entry of Russian tourists. In this regard, Estonia's foreign minister Urmas Reinsalu said that "refusal to fulfil one's civic duty in Russia" is not sufficient grounds to seek an asylum in another country, while Latvia's foreign minister Edgars Rinkevics cited security concerns and Lithuania's Interior Ministry said that each such application would be analyzed separately.

While the Baltic States and Poland have restricted the entry of Russians in their territory, Georgia, which is a country with a history of tense relations with Russia, remains a popular spot for Russian tourists. *Deutsche Welle* reported that the streets of Georgia's capital, Tbilisi are full of Russian speakers. However, it is unclear how many of them are tourists from Russia and how many of them are exiled.

On 21 September, *AP News* reported that Germany's biggest natural gas importer, Uniper would be nationalized. The deal between the government and the company marks increased state intervention due to the impending energy crisis. The deal features a government-financed capital increase of EUR eight billion. The highest stake in the company till now was controlled by Finland-based Fortum, but now the government will have a 99% stake in Uniper. Economy Minister, Robert Habeck said the

deal was necessary to because of the major role that Uniper plays in the German gas market. However, the deal needs to be approved by the European Commission, as Uniper also holds stakes in power plants like in Britain, Hungary, the Netherlands, Russia and Sweden.

### **The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 21 September, referring to Putin's recent statements about the potential use of nuclear weapons, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Russia's recent actions in Ukraine and the narrative popularized by them is a violation of the rules-based international order. Kishida, coming from the constituency of Hiroshima alleged that Putin's nuclear blackmail is "totally unacceptable" and a "serious threat to the international community's peace and safety." He urged the leaders present at the UN General Assembly's annual meeting to reform the body to effectively deal with future crises similar to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

On the same, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin reiterated China's position about the conflict in Ukraine. Even though China has maintained friendly relations with Russia, from the beginning of the conflict, it has also been supporting a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine and a negotiated peace. Wang said: "The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be observed, the legitimate security concerns of all countries should be taken seriously, and all efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully should be supported."

On 21 September, Saudi Arabia's crown prince conducted a successful mediation session with Russia and Ukraine to ensure the release of 10 international prisoners of war from Russia, as a part of the recent prisoner swap between Russia and Ukraine. The mediation was Prince Mohammad bin Salman's efforts to promote humanitarian initiatives regarding the ongoing conflict. Saudi authorities have received the prisoners from Russia and will arrange for their safe return to their respective countries. Amongst the 10 prisoners are

UK's Aiden Aslin, Shaun Pinner and Morocco's Brahom Saadoun, who had been threatened with execution after their capture. Two US citizens, Alexander Druke and Andy Tai Huynh, accused of espionage and being a mercenary were also released. The Saudi Foreign Ministry said that five of the prisoners were from the UK, two from the US and the rest from Morocco, Croatia and Sweden.

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### War in Ukraine: Day 209

#### War on the Ground:

On 19 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met the Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief to discuss the developments along the front lines. According to the Chief, the armed forces in the Kharkiv region were stabilizing by holding on to their positions. He appreciated the efforts of the National Police and the Secret Service of Ukraine for their effective work in the Kharkiv region. Zelenskyy also mentioned that the pace of the counteroffensive launched by Ukraine was important to be maintained in the de-occupied land, and in the movement of Ukraine's troops.

On 20 September, at the Global Food Security Summit, Zelenskyy spoke about how Ukraine was familiar with the idea of "food security" and has lost millions of people to Holodomors. He blamed Russia for blockading the ports of Ukraine and for preventing the establishment of new export logistics due to their continuous attacks. However, he highlighted the resumption of agricultural exports and ensured its continuity with the UN World Food Program, especially for Somalia and Ethiopia.

On 20 September, Ukraine's Minister of Digital Transformations, Mykhailo Fedorov said that Ukraine's IT Army obtained information about Russia's Wagner Private Military Company. It alleged that the group had persuaded prisoners in Russia-occupied Ukraine to sign a military contract to fight against Ukraine. Fedorov remarked that they have access to all personal data of the mercenaries and that every executioner, murderer, and rapist will be severely punished.

In an interview with *POLITICO*, the Deputy Head of the President's Office, Andriy Smyrnov reiterated the need for an independent war crimes tribunal, given the killings in Izyum. Smyrnov suggested that the trials should be modelled after the Nuremberg trials, instead of being conducted by the ICC, as it risks being influenced and controlled by Russia. The Czech Republic, holding the EU presidency backed the idea, along with the EU's Foreign Policy Chief, Joseph Borrell. However, the US, the UK and the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen expressed their support to the ICC to coordinate the trials.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 19 September, *Interfax* reported on Russia's spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov remarks, where he said that a negotiated peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine was not possible. He said: "...at the moment, such a prospect cannot be observed." Russia blamed Ukraine for the suspension of negotiations since April when Ukraine alleged that Russia had committed war crimes and stopped adhering to the peace agreement drafted by the two countries in March.

On 20 September, Russia's State Duma unanimously passed legislation that will serve jail terms of up to 15 years for military surrender. As per the bill, desertion during mobilization, war or under martial law will be punishable by up to 10 years, voluntary surrender, looting by up to 15 years, and refusing military service can also be jailed. The bill will be placed in the Federation Council on 21 September and is expected to pass before President Putin signs it into law.

On 19 September, Secretary of Russia's Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev spoke at the 17th China-Russia strategic security consultation. Held in Fujian province in China, the event was co-hosted by Patrushev and a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist party's Central Committee, Yang Jiechi. The meeting discussed future potential areas of strategic cooperation on deepening of trust and establishing a more stable environment for mutual development.

On the same day, *RIA Novosti*, cited Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov's comments regarding the referendums in the LPR and DPR. He said: "From the very beginning... we said that the peoples should decide their fate. And the whole current situation confirms that they want to be masters of their own destiny," The comments follow the appeals by the heads of the public chambers of the republics, Leonid Pasechnik and Denis Pushilin to start the referendum processes. The LPR Ambassador to Russia, Rodion Miroshnik said that while conducting the votes under wartime conditions was difficult, it was not impossible. He said that the people of LPR have shown "a clear manifested desire" to initiate the procedure of joining Russia. The voting is expected to be from 23 to 27 September. In the same context, the Deputy Head of the Kherson Region's military-civilian administration, Kirill Stremousov spoke to *TASS* and said that the people of Kherson are also prepared to ensure Russia's presence in the region forever. He said: They are ready to go to vote in a referendum, provided there are security guarantees and Russia will stay here forever."

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 20 September, Germany and Slovenia signed a deal where Slovenia will send 28 soviet-era tanks to Ukraine in exchange for 40 military trucks from Germany.

On 20 September, Germany's Economy Minister said that despite the lack of Russian gas and the impending energy crisis, Germany would meet its 95 per cent storage target by November. According to data by the Aggregated Gas Storage Inventory (AGSI), Germany's gas storage facilities are already 90 per cent full. Habeck said that if the weather is favourable, Germany would be able to get through the winter comfortably. However, he also warned that the gas reserves will be "really empty" after the winter as all the stored gas will be used up.

On 20 September, the UN General Assembly meeting marks the first international engagement of Liz Truss as the prime minister of the UK. Her office reported that

for 2023, she would pledge to exceed the USD 2.6 billion of military aid sent to Ukraine in 2022. On the same day, in an interview with *BBC*, Truss mentioned that the UK would also contribute to Europe's energy independence saying: "We cannot see Russia succeed, but we also make need to make sure we're more energy independent, and we're less dependent on those authoritarian regimes."

On 20 September, the UK Defence Ministry in its intelligence update reported about Russia's Black Sea Fleet being relocated. The report said that due to the increased long-range strike capacity of Ukraine and their counteroffensive, the command of the Black Sea Fleet has been shifted from Sevastopol in Crimea to Novorossiysk in Krasnodar Krai, southern Russia.

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting, Erdogan spoke to *PBS NewsHour* and said that Putin must return all the territory in Crimea, under Russia's control to its "rightful owners." He referred to the Crimean Tatars as rightful descendants of Turkey, when it was under a protectorate of the Ottoman Empire. Erdogan said that he has maintained this stance since 2014, but no step has since been taken in that regard. Referring to his meeting with Putin in Uzbekistan at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Erdogan said that Putin gave him the impression that Russia was "willing to end this as soon as possible," as the on-ground developments have not been in Russia's favour. He also mentioned that 200 hostages will be exchanged between Russia and Ukraine soon.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 20 September, the yearly meeting at the UN General Assembly began and it focused on the various crises the world is facing. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: "We are grid locked in colossal global dysfunction... our world is in peril — and paralyzed." Russia's invasion of Ukraine was the central theme for many speakers, especially the food security and fertilizer crisis that it has catalysed and the attacks on the nuclear power plants in Ukraine.

On the same day, Myanmar's junta spokesperson said that Myanmar was discussing the use of a Mir card for payments with Russia. The system will make the direct exchange of ruble and kyat currencies easier. He also mentioned that once the central banks of the two states signed the pact, bilateral economic cooperation is also expected to "grow sharply." The Head of the Military government, Min Aung Hlaing mentioned they were also considering replacing of the dollar with other currencies like the yuan, rupee, and ruble.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 208**

### **War on the Ground:**

On 19 September, Ukraine's state energy company Energoatom reported on the Russian attacks on Ukraine second largest nuclear power plant, Pivdennoukrainsk located in the south of Mykolaiv. As per the report the attack hit 300 meters away from the reactors, with no damage to the plant, except the power buildings. The power supply is reported to continue in all three units of the plant. On the same, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy criticized Russia for launching attacks near the nuclear plant, risking the world. He said: "The invaders wanted to shoot again, but they forgot what a nuclear power plant is," and warned of a nuclear catastrophe.

### **The Moscow View:**

#### **Claims by Russia**

On 19 September, on the global criticism over Russia on the war crimes in the Kharkiv region, Russia's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, responded stating that it was similar to Bucha incident, "a lie," and said that the ongoing war will reveal the true story. Zelenskyy had said that to prove the claim, certain assessment was being done to corner Russia on its war crimes.

On 19 September, *RT* reported on people residing in Donbas call on holding a referendum to join Russia. The Russian spokesperson said that the residents in the

DPR region had been demanding for a decision over holding a vote. On the same Head of the so-called military-civilian administration said to the residents: "...want guarantees that we will become a part of the Russian Federation."

### **The West View:**

#### **Responses from the US and Europe**

On 19 September, the European Commission reported on Germany, Slovakia, and Bulgaria receiving a support of EUR 111.5 million under the REACT-EU of European Social Fund (ESF). The fund is aimed to help the labour market, healthcare services and to attain sustainable socio-economic recovery in the face of war.

On 19 September, the German Defence Ministry issues a statement on the supply of four more Howitzers to Ukraine of Panzerhaubitze 2000's cadre. In a statement it said: "With that, the number of the systems delivered in collaboration with the Netherlands rises to 22, of which 14 are from Germany." On the same, the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte assured to collaborate with Germany to provide military support to Ukraine and promised for future initiatives. Earlier Germany had promised to give "two MARS II multiple rocket launcher systems and 50 more armored military personnel carriers known as Dingos," which are expected to be delivered soon to Ukraine.

The UK intelligence in its daily update found that Russia had lost close to four combat jets in past 10 days, totalling to 55 since invasion. It said that Russia's setback in air defence has been an exploitative benefit for Ukraine to advance. The reason for the setback was also due to the Russian air force's poor "situational awareness."

On 19 September, in response to the nuclear attack in the southern Mykolaiv, Poland began to issue iodine pills to the firefighters and people as remedial measures in case of a nuclear accident. In a statement: "This is a standard procedure provided by law, which is applied in the event of a possible (nuclear) radiation emergency."

The Baltic countries brought the temporary

ban on crossing border to enter the EU for Russian people into practice. The only exception will be for those who hold permanent residency cards in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland will be allowed. Apart from that, anyone with Schengen visas trying to enter for tourism, business, or cultural needs will be banned from entering.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 19 September, the UNGA77 started in New York, EU delegation High Representative, Joseph Borell met the UN Secretary General António Guterres. The key discussion is expected to be on transforming education, consequence over Ukraine war, measures to prevent food crisis and economic challenges.

In a report in *BBC*, covered the state of Sri Lankans under Russian forces. During the capture of Izyum city by Russia, Sri Lankan people who were under captive reported on being sent as forced labour, kept as prisoner and tortured. The group who were in Ukraine for education or work purposes disclosed on the poor conditions and the treatment of the Russians. According to one of the survivors: "They used to beat us when we went to take a shower. They didn't even allow me to meet the others. We were stuck inside for three months."

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### **War in Ukraine: Day 206 & 207**

#### **War on the Ground:**

Russia used Iran's Shahed-136 delta wing drones against Ukraine in the ongoing war. The drones called Geranium 2, have two parts, one that finds the radar system, and

the other that attacks artillery pieces. The drones compared with the US-made HIMARS and have helped revive Russia's military capacity.

On 18 September, on the mass graves found in the Izyum district, the West criticized Russia's action in Ukraine as war crimes. European Union's foreign policy chief, Joseph Borrel said: "This inhuman behaviour by the Russian forces, in total disregard of international humanitarian law and the Geneva conventions, must stop immediately." US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken and France's President Emmanuel Macron also termed Russia's actions atrocities and said that it should take responsibility for the suffering of Ukraine.

The action plan of Ukraine's Armed Forces Special Operations Forces' Information and Psychological Operations Department was published by a hacker named Beregini on Telegram. The plan was to undermine Russia and was discovered in 2014. The actions of Ukraine confirmed the authenticity of the plan. The goal was to isolate Russia from the rest of the world and create division between the regime and the people of Russia, which has been successful thus far.

On 18 September, Ukraine's Center for Anti-Misinformation reported that Russia was restricting the Crimean men from leaving the region as they test the military preparedness of the region. The decree was later removed from the official website. In the Kherson region, the Russians created their own "Novokakhovsky communal services". They ordered the local citizens to pay for all communal services. Hackers conducted cyberattacks against the Department of Education and education institutions in Melitopol after it discovered that children follow the Ukrainian curriculum rather than Russian.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

In a press conference, Defence Ministry spokesperson Igor Konashenkov said that till now, Russia had destroyed 293 aircraft, 155 helicopters, 1981 UAVs, 375 anti-aircraft missile systems, 5022 tanks, other armoured vehicles, 837 multiple rocket launcher

combat vehicles, 3397 field artillery guns and 5680 special military vehicles belonging to Ukraine.

On 18 September, Russia's forces repelled an offensive attack by Ukraine's armed forces in the Kherson region. The Russian troops resisted Ukraine's 60<sup>th</sup> infantry and 57<sup>th</sup> Motorized Infantry Brigades, backed by six tanks. The Russian Air force also attacked Ukraine's 28<sup>th</sup> Mechanized and 79<sup>th</sup> Airborne Assault Brigades with high-precision weapons.

On 18 September, on the US accusation over Russia's use of WMD weapons in Ukraine, Russia responded by saying: "In response to the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction against Russia or its allies in response to a conventional attack that threatens the very existence."

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

The Czech Republic, which holds the Presidency of the EU, condemned the actions of Russia after hearing about the gravesite that contained hundreds of Ukrainian bodies that were discovered to have been tortured near the recently freed Izyum city. The Czech requested the EU to create an international tribunal that makes Russia answerable for its war crimes. The European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen reiterated similar sentiments as the Czech Republic. The UK's Defence Ministry reported that Russia had increased its attack on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure.

Ukraine has been attempting to persuade the West and the UN to adopt a resolution that makes Russia provide reparation to it. Ukraine's Deputy Justice Minister, Iryna Mudra, and First Lady, Olena Zelenska have been lobbying with the ministers in the Council of Europe, and also with Germany, France and USA regarding the issue. Previously, reparations had been backed by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia's finance ministers.

On 17 September, Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* reported that France's state-owned nuclear energy company, EDF, would halt its export to Italy. However, France and

EDF denied any claims about stopping energy export to Italy due to its internal energy crisis. France also said it would reaffirm its commitment to energy export and reciprocate solidarity with its neighbours.

The G7 ambassadors discussed on reforming Ukraine's judicial system and anti-corruption agenda under martial law. Ukraine's Parliament's speaker, Ruslan Stefanchuk, said that the Verkhovna Rada is working on a draft law reforming Constitutional Court and its anti-corruption agenda under martial law amidst the ongoing war. These reforms were included in the seven requirements placed by the Commission for Ukraine's EU membership.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

The UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported on the resumption of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) and the flow of electricity from the national grid directly after engineers restored one of the four major external power lines. The 750-kilovolt line is providing the plant with the electricity it requires to perform essential safety functions and for cooling the reactors. The plant has been non-functional since 11 September 2022 and the six reactors in ZNPP are still in a cold shutdown. On the same day, Ukraine's energy operator, Energoatom also announced that it had sent fuel supplies to ZNPP, along with spare parts for the repair of the power lines.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 205**

### **War on the Ground:**

On 16 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke about alleged crimes conducted by Russia's forces in the Izyum region. Referring to torture chambers and a mass burial site with around 440 graves, Zelenskyy compared it to Bucha, where during the initial stages of the invasion, war crimes had been recorded. The bodies in the graves show signs of abuse like broken bones and ropes tied around their necks.

On the same day, Zelenskyy met with the President of Finland, Sauli Niinisto. He thanked him for Finland's support in the war for Ukraine and the two leaders also discussed the issue of granting visas to Russian citizens. Zelenskyy said that countries bordering Russia should consider a complete restriction of access for Russia as this issue was extremely important.

On 16 September, the Deputy Head of the Presidential Office, Ihor Zhovkva spoke on the telephone with the Czech Republic's Minister of European Affairs, Milulas Bek. The leaders referred to European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen's visit to Ukraine on 15 September

and also the steps Ukraine has to take for EU integration. Zhovkva said that in just three months, Ukraine had fulfilled about half of the recommendations made by the commission. He added that Ukraine expects full implementation of the same by November 2022. Zhovkva said: "We expect that the leadership of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU will influence the opening of a window of opportunity for the start of negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the European Union in the near future."

A report by the US-backed Conflict Observatory by Yale University's School of Public Health and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory revealed that since the beginning of the war, Russia destroyed 6.24 million tonnes of food storage capacity in Ukraine. Moreover, Ukraine's actions in the war also destroyed around 2.5 million tonnes of storage capacity. Thus, in total, around 8.5 million of Ukraine's 58 million tonne storage capacity has been invalidated, thus making it difficult for farmers to store their new harvests.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 16 September, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Putin after a meeting spoke about gas supplies by Gazprom to Turkey. The two leaders have agreed that Turkey will pay for 25 per cent of its gas supplies in rubles. Putin also mentioned that Russia was ready to increase gas deliveries to Turkey if the agreements between the two states are upheld.

Commenting on Ukraine's recent counteroffensive, Putin said that Russia was not in a hurry to bring an end to the war, and would continue as long as it does not meet its objectives. In this context, he mentioned that till now, Russia has only deployed volunteer soldiers to Ukraine. He also warned that if the situation were to continue in the same way, Russia would be forced to ramp up its military efforts in Ukraine, and make its response more "serious." On the "Kyiv Security Compact," Putin alleged that Ukraine and Russia had discussed on a set of security guarantees in March, and criticized Ukraine's shift from the same. He added that Russia was willing to wait and see how the

new draft unfolds, as Ukraine's "position on almost every issue changes almost every day."

At the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, Putin addressed the meeting with the SCO Heads of State Council. He referred to the global energy and food crisis and blamed it on "systemic errors" in the leading economies of the World. He criticized the European Commission's decision to lift the sanction for the purchase of Russian fertilizers meant only for EU member states and said that it was unfair to the developing and poorest countries. He called on the UN Secretary-General to remedy the decision to provide the world with access to Russian fertilizers.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 16 September, the parliamentary speakers of the G7 member states met in Berlin with the primary agenda of discussing Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Chairman of Ukraine's parliament, Ruslan Stefanchuk was invited as a guest to give a speech. He ascribed its recent successes on ground to the weapons received from the West and reiterated Ukraine's request for more "modern" weapons. US House of Representatives speaker, Nancy Pelosi said that while high energy prices were a concern, it was a "small price to pay" to support Ukraine. She added that Ukrainians were risking their lives to not only defend Ukraine's democracy but also the democracy of the rest of the world. President of Germany's Bundestag, Barbel Bas also reiterated Pelosi's stance and mentioned that Putin was waging a war against all liberal democracies of the world. She said: "This is a fight that he will not win."

On 16 September, the Federal Council of Switzerland agreed to suspend its fast-track the visa agreement with Russia completely. However, Russians will still be able to apply for ordinary Swiss visas. The move is in line with the EU's decision to suspend facilitated visa applications from Russia in the context of the Ukraine war. In a media release, the government said that the suspension was to adhere to the broader EU visa policy, as otherwise Switzerland will have to deal with

an increased number of visa applications from Russians looking to bypass EU decisions. The Government also confirmed that Switzerland will no longer be exchanging tax information with Russia on both automatic exchanges and spontaneous appeals for assistance.

In an interview to *BBC Radio*, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg commended Ukraine's armed forces for their counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region. However, warned that the war was expected to stretch and adequate preparation should be taken for the same. Stoltenberg said, "... we need to understand that this is not the beginning of the end of the war, we need to be prepared for the long haul."

On 15 September, Norway's opposition party leader, Rasmus Hansson said that the war in Ukraine was not a reason to raise the price of gas. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent sanctions on Russian gas and oil, Norway has become the EU's largest source of gas. With the rising price of gas, Norway has made significant profits from the export of gas. As per official estimations, it is expected to earn EUR 94 billion from the petroleum industry, which is USD 65 billion more than 2021. However, Hansson, the former leader of the Norwegian Green Party alleged that it was "morally wrong" to profit from prices which are rising primarily due to war. He said: "We think Norway is being short-sighted and too selfish... We are getting a windfall profit which is very big, but the question is does that money belong to us..."

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 16 September, on the sidelines of the SCO summit, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi told President Putin that it is "not an era of war." Modi added that democracy, diplomacy and dialogue kept the international order functional. Addressing Modi's comments, Putin said that he understands India's concerns and stance regarding the Ukraine war and that Russia will "do everything to stop this as soon as possible." However, Putin also added that the leadership in Ukraine has rejected the negotiation process and wants to achieve its

goals by “military means.”

On 15 September, IMF spokesperson Gerry Rice said that the organization is contemplating providing USD 1.4 billion in emergency aid to Ukraine and are awaiting approval from the executive board. He said that IMF officials were conducting meetings with Ukraine’s officials and to consider a “potential full-fledged program.”

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## War in Ukraine: Day 204

### War on the Ground:

On 14 September, Ukraine’s Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar released a statement about the counteroffensive by Ukraine in Kharkiv. She said that the frontline is around 2500 kilometres and active fighting is taking place within 1300 kilometres. According to Maliar, Ukraine needs more “time, strength and patience” for more success in the region. She reaffirmed Ukraine has a long road ahead of a complete win.

On 15 September, Ukrinform reported on a press release by the human resource website *grc.ua* about the condition of Ukraine’s job market. The study revealed that 40 per cent of Ukraine’s pre-war workforce had lost their jobs and only 23 per cent of employees are still receiving full wages for their work. Most of these job losses were because of the termination of the company due to the war, some because of their positions being cut and some because the company relocated to a different region.

On 14 February, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy conducted a work trip to the Kharkiv region and held a meeting on energy security issues in the region. According to the briefing presented to him by the Kharkiv Regional Military Administration Head, Oleg Syniehubov 16 communities in the region had been completely de-occupied and 7 were partially de-occupied. While before Ukraine’s recent counteroffensive, 32 per cent of Kharkiv region was under Russia’s control, now only 6 per cent still remains so. Zelenskyy emphasized the need to restore electricity and conduct swift restoration work in the region. On the same issue, the Minister of Energy Herman Halushchenko noted that the pace of repair will depend on how quickly the territories can be demined.

Ukraine’s First Lady, Olena Zelenska attended Ursula von der Leyen’s State of the Union Address at the European Commission. She wrote about the report released by the EU outlining their goals for the coming year and reiterated the EU’s support for Ukraine against Russia’s aggression. She thanked Von

der Leyen for the invitation; saying that she was honoured to represent Ukraine in the meeting which has set a precedent by inviting a foreign guest for the first time. The two leaders discussed issues like problems faced by Ukrainians abroad, the psychological rehabilitation and treatment of Ukraine's service personnel and civilians and the education for Ukraine's youth. She highlighted how Von der Leyen has commissioned EUR 100 million for the reconstruction of 74 Ukrainian schools as a part of the Fast Recovery Plan.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 15 September, *RIA Novosti* reported on President Vladimir Putin's statement on China's stance regarding the conflict in Ukraine. Speaking on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit, Putin mentioned that China's "balanced position" was greatly appreciated by Russia. He added that Russia understood the various questions and concerns regarding the same and will address them during the course of the summit.

On the same day, *TASS* reported on Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova's comments about "filtration measures" carried on in Ukraine. She alleged that these measures, taken in the de-occupied territories, indicated the killing of civilians as done by Ukraine's Special Services. She said: These people get killed... This is not a matter of doing some kind of justice. It's absolute lawlessness, which in principle, does not fit in with any norms of any humanitarian law. I emphasize once again that thousands of people, peaceful civilians, are forced through these filtration measures."

Zakharova spoke about Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to the UN General Assembly. She mentioned that Lavrov will address a session at the UNGA. He and his delegation plans to hold around 20 bilateral meetings on the sidelines. Zakharova added that in the upcoming meetings Russia will reaffirm their compliance with the UN Charter and related principles of the equality of sovereigns and non-interference in domestic affairs. Russia will be defending their stance regarding the current conflict

and look to increase the UN's role as a coordinator of International Affairs.

On 15 September, Gazprom released a report on the production and supply of gas from 01 January to 15 September as a *Telegram* post. Gazprom recorded that it had produced only 300.8 billion cubic meters of gas in 2022, which was 15.9 per cent less than in 2021. The data collected discussed the gas export to Europe, especially Germany and Ukraine. It talked about the Siberia gas pipeline connected to China. China is receiving a steady gas supply from Russia under the long-term bilateral contract between Gazprom and CNPC. The data showed that there had been a decrease in the production and supply of gas in 2022 when compared to 2021.

On 14 September, Russia's spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov said that if Ukraine wants to guarantee its own security, it should work towards eliminating the risks it poses to Russia's security. Referring to the Kyiv Security Compact, Peskov said that Russia will take steps if the security guarantees are signed. Speaking about how only the leadership in Ukraine can ensure its security, he said: "The leadership of that country should only take actions that, accordingly, will eliminate the threat to Russia. Kyiv knows perfectly well what these actions should be."

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 15 September, the European Investment Bank sent its first tranche of the EUR 1.59 billion package from the Ukraine Solidarity Urgent Response. The package was approved in July 2022 and the first tranche is of EUR 500 million. The aid, which is supported by an EU guarantee and coordinated by the European Commission, will prioritize short-term financing needs, ensure urgent repairs of damaged infrastructure like roads, bridges and railway complexes.

On 15 September, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* published an interview with Germany's Finance Minister Annalena Baerbock. She said that Chancellor Olaf Scholz should take a stand on whether to supply Ukraine with more weapons, given its

request for German Leopard-2 tanks. She mentioned that such a decision could not be taken by the Chancellor alone, but would be decided by Germany's three-party ruling coalition. Germany's Economy Minister, Robert Habeck commented on the issue and said Germany is expected to send more of the "right weapons" to Ukraine soon.

On 14 September, both Democratic and Republican Party senators in the US introduced a new legislation. The new law, if approved will label Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. One of the sponsors of the bill, Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal, cited Russia's invasion of Ukraine and continued aggression as a reason for the designation. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said that such a designation would send a strong signal to US allies to support Ukraine too. However, previously President Joe Biden had denounced the possibility of labelling Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. Russia too maintains that diplomatic ties would be significantly damaged and could also be broken if it is added to the list of State Sponsor of Terrorism, which currently includes Iran, North Korea, Cuba and Syria.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 15 September, World Bank's Managing Director of Operations, Axel van Trotsenburg said that the World Bank is prepared to grant up to USD 30 billion to combat the global food shortage. Russia's invasion of Ukraine was blamed for catalyzing the crisis. He expressed solidarity with Ukraine, referring to the disbursement of around USD 10 billion of the USD 13 billion financial aid pledged by the World Bank.

On 14 September, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres spoke to Putin about the UN's efforts for the smooth implementation of the Black Sea grain deal. He mentioned how the Secretariat and other UN agencies were working to remove all obstacles to ensure the supply of grains and fertilizers to the international market. The situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant was also discussed and Putin indicated that Russia was prepared to cooperate with the assessment of the IAEA delegation.

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### **War in Ukraine: Day 203**

#### **War on the Ground:**

On 13 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Izyum in the Kharkiv region. He raised Ukraine's flag and congratulated the soldiers. The Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar and commanders of forces who captured Izyum back took part in the ceremony. Referring to other occupied territories, he said that Ukraine will aim to regain control over all

the temporarily occupied territories, including Crimea. He recalled the people in Crimea as Ukraine's own called Russia's 2014 occupation a "terrible tragedy" and promised to free the region.

On 14 September, Ukraine's Armed Forces General Staff said that 5000 servicemen from the Ukrainian military had completed their training in the UK. The training was provided by instructors from Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Ukraine and the UK. The General Staff said that basic military knowledge, skills, engineering, live-fire, psychological and tactical training, running basic offensive and defensive missions and knowledge about tactical medicine remained the key aspects of the training. The combined military training was given under the program launched by the UK government called Operation INTERFLEX. The operation is expected to expand in terms of training course, intake capacity and duration.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 14 September, Russia's spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov spoke on the publication of the Kyiv Security Compact in collaboration with former NATO chief, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Peskov said that the document made it more important for Russia to carry on its "special military operation," as it further asks for security guarantee from the US and its allies. Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova suggested that as per the terms of the Compact, EU countries will "end up hellishly enslaved." According to her the expensive sponsorship of Ukraine's war efforts will affect their economies, making it difficult for them to recover in the long-term.

On 13 September, Peskov reiterated President Vladimir Putin's earlier comments on how the unipolar world order will become obsolete and a new world order will be established. He addressed Russia's growing friendship with China and said that both the states agree that a "new reality" will be established, instead of a unipolar world.

On the same day, the Chairman of Russia's State Duma, Vyacheslav Volodin addressed

the parliament said that Ukraine is pushing the world to the "brink of a nuclear catastrophe" by their continuous attacks on the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). He also mentioned how unlike the West, Russia is concerned about preventing a disaster at the plant, which can cause irreversible damage to Ukraine and other European NATO countries. According to Volodin, the UK and the US should speak up about the possible threat and take action against the same. On the same issues, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) mission, headed by Director-General Rafael Grossi said that both Ukraine and Russia were "interested" in a ceasefire and establishing a security zone around ZNPP.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 14 September, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen delivered her annual State of the Union speech, which outlines the main political priorities of the EU in the coming year. Von der Leyen reiterated the EU's support for Ukraine's war efforts and said that international sanctions imposed on Russia would be continued. She highlighted the EU's need to de-couple from Russian energy and also reduce EU's dependence on fossil fuels.

On 13 September, Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz in phone call with President Vladimir Putin urged to withdraw his troops from Ukraine given the widespread military losses and far-reaching consequences of the war. He appealed for the treatment of the prisoners of war as per the Geneva Conventions, for cessation of attacks around the ZNPP and for better implementation of the Black Sea grain deal.

On 13 September, *Reuters* reported on US's grant on visas to Russia's foreign minister and his delegation to attend the upcoming UN annual gathering of world leaders. However, applications for 56 visas, submitted by Russia, only 24 stand approved. Lavrov's flight crew were amongst the ones who have not received visas; thus, Lavrov and his delegation might avail commercial airlines to reach New York. A Senior Research Associate at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-

Proliferation, Hanna Notte spoke about how Azerbaijan is using Russia's preoccupation with the invasion of Ukraine to provoke conflict with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. She said that testing how much a conflict can be escalated, while Russia dedicates its military diplomatic and political bandwidth to Ukraine, is in line with the strategy generally adopted by Azerbaijan.

On 13 September, Defence Minister of Denmark, Morten Bodskov in his visit to Kyiv spoke to the Danish news agency Ritzau. He said that Ukraine's soldiers will also receive training in Denmark. Similar to the UK's INTERFLEX programme, Denmark will be training inexperienced military recruits.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On the same day, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) Director General António Vitorino met Zelenskyy in Kyiv. In the statement released after his meeting, he spoke about how "deeply affected" he was by the unimaginable conditions in Ukraine as more than 5700 civilian deaths have been recorded and over 8200 people have been grievously injured. The leaders discussed the ways in which the IOM could provide humanitarian assistance, "support sustainable livelihoods" and "promote community stabilization." Vitorino also applauded the on-ground workers of coordinating the IOM efforts in Ukraine.

On 14 September, ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting is scheduled to be held between 15-16 September, Russia's presidential aide, Yuri Ushakov addressed the issue of trade with India. He reiterated Indian Ambassador to Moscow Pavan Kapoor's earlier statement about growing India-Russia trade. Ushakov said: "Our relations are actively developing, the trade has also increased significantly with supplies of Russian oil, coal and fertilizers increasing." He mentioned that the trade turnover between the two states have increased by 120 per cent in 2022. India and Russia are currently deliberating on approving each other's interbank systems and Russia's Mir and India's RuPay payment

cards.

On the same day, *Financial Times* reported on how the UN is attempting to pressurize Russia into resuming its ammonia exports through Ukraine. Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a pipeline from Russia's Volga region pumped ammonia to Odessa port in Ukraine. The UN official in charge of the task force, Rebeca Grynspan said that they are trying for Russia and Ukraine to agree on a suitable deal. She said: "Talks are moving in the right direction and every effort is being made by all parties at every level to ensure a positive outcome." The talks are being conducted to ease the fertilizer prices as ammonia is a major ingredient in nitrate fertilisers.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 202**

### **War on the Ground:**

On 13 September, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed that close to 8000 square km were captured back by the Ukraine forces in the northeastern region of Kharkiv and "Stabilization measures" have half progressed.

On 12 September, according to Ukraine's General Staff's report, the success of Ukraine's counteroffensive made the Russian forces command delay in deploying newly formed units. The recent losses had lowered the troop's morale, and has led to distrust amongst the Russian command by the soldiers. The report said that the hesitation in deploying the newly formed units might give Ukraine a chance to recover and push the offensive.

On 13 September, Ukraine's Head of the President's Office, Andriy Yermak, and NATO's 12th Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen presented a recommendation for security guarantees in Ukraine. It involved various countries aligning themselves with Ukraine to create a strong military force that would enable Ukraine to win the war against Russia. The security guarantees also include intensive collaborative training with the EU and NATO. The joint framework document on strategic partnership will be called as Kyiv Security Treaty.

On the same day, Ukraine's Ministry of Defence, Main Directorate of Intelligence reported that Russian occupiers from Crimea and southern Ukraine were seen suddenly vacating the region after the losses from Ukraine's counteroffensive. The Main Directorate of Intelligence stated: "... representatives of the occupation administration of Crimea, FSB employees and commanders of some military units are secretly trying to sell their homes and

urgently evacuate their relatives from the peninsula." It observed that Russian authorities were also trying to hide information on their loss of Ukraine.

On 13 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with Denmark's Defence Minister, Morten Bødskov and Estonia's Defence Minister, Hanno Pevkur. He thanked both countries for their financial, humanitarian and military aid. Estonia which had given 0.8 per cent of its GDP to Ukraine as aid, and Denmark helped strengthen Ukraine's defence and provided various other assistance.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 13 September, Russia's Presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov called out Ukraine's forces for conducting violent acts against civilians in the Kharkiv region. He said that the people in Kharkiv region had faced torture and harsh treatment from Ukrainian army after Russia withdrew from the region. He added that Russian teachers who were affected by the Ukraine forces, were rescued back to Donetsk and Luhansk People's republics by Russia. On the mobilization of the army, Peskov said that it was not on the current agenda of Russia's special operation.

On the same day, Russia's military and the Russian Air Force conducted multiple massive strikes on east, north and south Ukraine, resulting in 800 casualties on the Ukrainian side in a single day. The Defence Ministry of Russia declared, "As a result of the strikes, the losses among Ukrainian service members and foreign fighters exceeded 800 people killed and wounded,". The Russian government also confirmed that until the objective of the special operation is completed, Russia will not leave Ukraine.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 13 September, the UK's Defence Ministry reported in its daily update that the Russian force that withdrew from Kharkiv Oblast was the 1st Guards Tank Army, which comes under the Western Military District (WEMD). The 1 GTA is a specialized unit whose purpose was to protect Moscow against a

possible attack from NATO. 1 GTA suffered severe losses in the initial battle and never recovered, even during the Ukrainian counteroffensive. According to the UK's Ministry of Defence, Russia's weapons against NATO are severely weakened.

On 13 September, in the press conference, when question on Ukraine's counteroffensive, US President Joe Biden said: "It's clear the Ukrainians have made significant progress. But I think it's going to be a long haul." The US intelligence reported on Russia's secret fund transfer of USD 300 million to many political parties, organizations and two dozen countries to influence the political landscape and elections. It also accused Russia for posing "spurious allegations," and spread of misinformation on operating biological weapons in Ukraine by the US.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 12 September, The UN High Commissioner for human rights, Nada Al-Nashif, said that the suffering of the Ukrainian people continues as the war progresses. She also highlighted that the grain ships leaving Ukraine's port ensure they are reaching countries suffering from food insecurities. She also said that war should not let countries backtrack to using fossil fuels in times of fuel crisis. She urged all countries to consider the climate change factor and act appropriately.

On 13 September, the US banking giant Goldman Sachs forecasted that the gas prices in Europe would fall in the winter of 2022. The analysts in Goldman Sachs said that Europe will have stored 90 per cent energy for the winter by the end of October, exceeding their goal of 80 per cent storage on 01 November. Europe had reached out to other sources following Gazprom halting Nord Stream 1 indefinitely. According to Goldman Sachs, the advanced storage for winter will drop the gas price.

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### **War in Ukraine: Day 201**

#### **War on the Ground:**

On 12 September, Ukraine's Minister of Finance, Serhiy Marchenko, gave an online speech at the International Monetary Conference 2022, which was held in Munich, Germany, on the topic "Ukraine's recovery needs". In his speech, Marchenko stated that Ukraine's economy had quickly recovered from the COVID-19 crisis before the invasion of Russia. He talked about the devastation caused by the war on the state, its economy and its people. Marchenko also discussed Ukraine's immediate need for USD 105 billion to survive the winter, repair critical transportation, support the next cropping season, social conditions and demining. Marchenko added that Ukraine's government relies on foreign investments to help them in their time of need.

On the same day, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in an interview with *CNN* that Ukraine will deny negotiation with Russia unless it withdraws its troop entirely from the country. He added that discussing diplomacy, lifting sanctions, reparation and payment from Russia's side would be possible only after the war's end. The involvement of any international leaders or institutions will also be possible only after Russia fulfils the de-occupation of Ukrainian territories.

On 12 September, Ukraine forces reported on winning eight offensives out of the nine launched against Russia in Kharkiv region. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Ukraine had gained back 3000 square kilometers, which is close to 1,158 miles of territory. As per the report from the Ukraine military, Russia has tried to disconnect electricity and water supply to counter Ukraine's offensive in Kharkiv city. On the Russia confirmed on the retreat from the areas of Izyum and Kupiansk which are considered the gateways to Sloviansk and Kramatorsk in the Donbas. While Ukraine is observed to be advancing on the front in north-eastern part of Kharkiv, the possible challenges listed by *BBC* are, the increased risk of being captured in bulk in the front line by Russia and costly intervention in terms of equipment, ammunition and troops. Zelenskyy said: "From the beginning of September until today, our warriors have already liberated more than 6,000 square kilometers of the territory of Ukraine - in the east and south. The movement of our troops continues."

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 12 September, Russia's President Vladimir Putin held a meeting with Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and various Ministers and Governors to discuss the state of Russia's economy. He also discussed the draft budget for 2023-2025.

Putin mentioned that Russia was not in danger economically as the government had implemented various protective measures to ensure they did not go into recession. According to Putin, Russia was confident in handling external pressure. He also added that inflation dropped from 17.8 per cent in

April to 14.1 per cent in September, calculated till 05 September. The government believes that inflation will drop to 12 per cent by the end of 2022.

On 12 September, Russia's Defence Ministry reported on the attacks launched using Russian Aerospace Forces, 113<sup>th</sup> Territorial Defence Brigade and 93<sup>rd</sup> Mechanised brigade to neutralise the Ukraine forces near Kupyansk and Izyum. It also disclosed on launching high-precision attacks, operational tactical and army aviation on the military bases of Ukraine.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 12 September, the governments of France and Romania signed an agreement on allowing more grain exports from Ukraine through rivers, seas and roads to reach other parts of the continent and developing nations. The deal occurred after Putin threatened to limit grain export through the Black Sea because he claims that most grains that leave Ukraine do not reach starving countries but instead feed the EU States. The UK's Ministry of Defence debunked Putin's claims stating that the UN statistics show that 30 per cent of the grain arrived at low and middle-income countries.

On the same day, the Czech Republic's President said that the country could not be a mediator between Russia and Ukraine as it is an "...interested party and a participating country" in the ongoing war. He also said that countries like China, Turkey and Israel should be better candidates for being a mediator between Russia and Ukraine to stop the war. The Czech Republic had been a strong ally of Ukraine. There were also mass anti-government protests demanding the Czech government take a neutral stance due to the rise in energy prices and inflation in the country. Prime Minister Petr Fiala ignored the protest stating that they were fanned by Russia.

Spain's national gas grid operator released a data on how Spain's natural gas suppliers had changes in the last year. The largest supplier to Spain being the US, where liquefied natural gas has been provided to Spain through maritime tankers. Till now

Spain has brought 97,000 gigawatt hours from the US, after which Algeria which was the second largest supplier with 40 per cent to Spain stopped upon crack in relations between Morocco and Algeria. At present only one pipeline is under operation to transport gas into Spain. The Ukraine war did not cut Spain from buying gas from Russia, which accounted for 23 per cent gas exports to Spain. To divert its gas shortage, Spain has increased its imports from Nigeria and alternatives such as coal, solar and nuclear energy to meet its energy demands.

On 12 September, Germany's Defence Minister, Christine Lambrecht urged the government to increase its role in the Ukraine war as a global player, including providing military support. With Germany rethinking its defence strategy and Europe facing challenges due to the impact of war, she urged to increase the defence budget to two per cent of its GDP and the need to meet the NATO target post the EUR 100 billion funds. Lambrecht said: "The war in Ukraine has shown everyone, even us Germans who are used to peace, that states need armed forces as a last resort — that is, whenever an enemy is determined to use invasion, destruction, murder and forced displacement."

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 12 September, International Monetary Fund (IMF) discussed measures to be taken to keep the soaring food prices in check with its executive board members. The measure allows IMF to help countries impacted by the war in Ukraine. A formal vote for the fund is expected to occur before the IMF's annual meeting in October. The fund would allow countries to borrow an additional 50 per cent of their IMF quota, increasing their access limit. IMF is also working closely with Ukraine to provide any necessary help. In March, IMF approved USD 1.4 billion in an emergency fund for Ukraine under the RFI instrument to help Ukraine meet its urgent demands and needs. The war affected the global trade, production and consumption of goods that, gave rise to record high prices.

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### **War in Ukraine: Day 199 & 200 War on the Ground:**

On 10 September, Ukraine's counter offensive in the north-east, south, has led to the retreatment of Russian forces in the Kharkiv region. On 10 September, the Ukraine forces reported on gaining back the control of rail hub of Kupiansk, and Iziurm which served as the base for Russian forces. The same was observed when Russian officials confirmed on the movement of its troops from Balakliia and Iziurm to meet its efforts in Donbas. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his address declared on winning back 2000 square kilometres from the counter offensive against Russia. One of the residents from Iziurm stated: "Russian occupying forces

were rapidly withdrawing, leaving ammunition and equipment behind.”

Izium is seen as strategic points in war due to its dual geographic link with Donbas and Black Sea, allowing Russian forces to launch attacks in Donbas region. With the distractive southern offensive, Ukraine captured back more than third of Kharkiv region.

On 10 September, Ukraine’s Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal asked the country’s foreign partners to increase their cooperation with International Monetary Fund during his speech at Yalta European Strategy Annual Meeting held in Kyiv. According to Shmyhal, IMF has been significant in Ukraine’s financial development from the 2014 Crimean invasion until Russia’s attack in 2022. He said that Ukraine needs IMF aid to go through the war. In the meeting, he added that Ukraine was set to fulfil all seven criteria required to become a member of the EU by the end of 2022. Ukraine intends to become a full-fledged EU member in two years.

On the same day, Minsk in Belarus and Sevastopol in Russia-occupied Crimea signed an agreement on cooperation on the export and import of goods, urban economy, in the fields of education, culture, science, youth policy and patriotic education. The agreement was signed by Mayor Vladimir Kukharev and Russian-appointed governor of Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev. Although Belarus has not recognized the Russian-annexed Crimean territory, the self-proclaimed Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko acknowledges the sovereignty of the region.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 09 September, President Vladimir Putin met the permanent members of Russia’s Security Council. He thanked them for participating in the Eastern Economic Forum, saying that it has yielded “good results.” He referred to the criticism to his comments about Ukraine’s grains not going to the poorest countries and said that the Foreign Ministry will contact its partners about the issue. Putin alleged that most of

the grains from the UN-brokered deal were going to the EU, while only two ships with only three per cent of the total grains exported have been sent to the poorest countries like Yemen and Djibouti. Putin said: “We believe it to be right to ramp up deliveries to the poorest countries.” He also expressed readiness to supply fertilizers to the poorest nations free of charge.

On the same day, the sixth reactor of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant was switched off due to a continued attack on the plant by Ukraine, RT reported. Due to the risk of an accident, Ukrainian state-owned company Energoatom said it has cold shut down the last unit, forcing the nuclear facility to halt.

On 10 September, the Russian military and the People’s Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk troops were seen withdrawing from Izyum and Balakleya in the Donetsk region. The withdrawal comes after Ukraine conducted a counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 10 September, the European Commission called the member states to revalue their regulations based on origin and risk factor in providing visas to Russia tourists. According to EU home affairs commissioner: “We should not be naive, Putin’s aim is to destroy the EU and he would like to attack us where we are weakest.”

On 11 September, France President Emmanuel Macron, and Putin exchanged accusations over the increasing threat of Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Russia released a statement saying, it only withdrew attention on the Ukraine attacks on the plant, while the Macron administration, in its statement accused Russia for posing a nuclear threat and urged the Russian forces to remove heavy and light weapons from the nuclear plant zone and to follow the safety recommendations given by IAEA.

The UK Defence Ministry in its intelligence update, reported on the Russian forces movement post Ukraine’s counteroffensive. It stated that Russia’s prediction on

Ukraine's southern offensive served as a distraction for Ukraine to advance in the north of Kharkiv.

On 09 September, the Wall Street Journal reported on the range of Howitzers and artillery received by Ukraine so far from US, its allies and NATO. Starting from Soviet-era artillery, German Panzerhaubitze which are one of the high-end howitzer model with ability to aim with precision, and automated loading, France's Caesar howitzer which can travel 600 kilometres without refuelling, US's 155mm self-propelled howitzer, Austria's M109A5Ö which was supplied by Latvia, and UK's M109A4BE. Apart from this Poland and Czech Republic have also given 2S1 Gvozdikas artillery systems to Ukraine.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 11 September, (IAEA) Chief Rafael Grossi warned over the growing concern of new set of attacks in Zaporizhzhia. He said: "Shelling has caused a complete blackout in Energodar (town) and compromised the safe operation of the nearby Zaporizhzhia (plant)." Expressing objection over, he disclosed that close to 200 people were detained by Russia and were ill-treated.

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### **War in Ukraine: Day 198**

#### **War on the Ground:**

On 09 September, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met the CEO of Turkey's defence company Baykar, Haluk Bayraktar. Zelenskyy thanked the contribution of Baykar in Ukraine's fight against Russia and presented Bayraktar with an Order of Merit, first class. The two parties discussed further cooperation and strengthening the defence capabilities of Ukraine's forces. On the same day, the President of Latvia, Egils Levits, Poland's Prime Minister of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki, and former Deputy Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński, Czech Republic's Prime Minister, Petr Fiala and Slovenia's former Prime Minister of Janez Janša were honored on the Alley of Courage on Constitution Square in Kyiv. Zelenskyy thanked the leaders and their countries for the continuous support to Ukraine. Levits too presented Zelenskyy with the highest military award of the Republic of Latvia – the Order of Viesturs. The decision to honor Zelenskyy was due to his steadfast defence

of his state.

In a *Telegram* post, Zelenskyy said that Ukraine has an army with one of the largest numbers of women serving in the ranks. He released a new video titled "Fight for Freedom" by *United24 Media*, which pays respect to the women defenders, their dedication and decision to be on the frontlines of the war. Zelenskyy said that more than being man or woman, protecting freedom was the driver behind so many women joining the forces.

On 09 September, *Critical Threats* reported on Ukraine's counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region. So far, an estimated 2,500 square kilometers have been recaptured by Ukraine. Forces are advancing from Kupyansk and the Oskil River to Izyum. They will be successful in collapsing the Russian positions in the region if they can disrupt the major Russian ground lines of communication (GLOCs). As response to this counteroffensive, Russian Ministry of Defense published footage of Russian military convoy enroute the Kharviv City-Izyum line. The forces had been redeployed from this region to the Donetsk region to strengthen Russia's hold in the Southern Axis.

On 09 September, the Ukraine government, World Bank and the European Commission released a report on costs incurred by Ukraine due to Russia's invasion. Till June, Ukraine had suffered over USD 97 billion in direct damages and lost approximately USD 252 billion through disruptions to its economic production and supply chains. Due to the war, it is estimated that Ukraine's poverty rate will rise to 21 per cent from two per cent before the war. As of June, Ukraine's reconstruction efforts will require USD 349 billion, which is around 1.6 times the country's GDP in 2021. The report mentioned that the numbers were preliminary and likely to increase as the war continues. It said: "The impact of the invasion will be felt for generations, with families displaced and separated, disruptions to human development, destruction of intrinsic cultural heritage and reversal of a positive economic and poverty trajectory."

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 09 September, President Vladimir Putin met the permanent members of Russia's Security Council. He thanked them for participating in the Eastern Economic Forum, saying that it has yielded "good results." He referred to the criticism to his comments about Ukraine's grains not going to the poorest countries and said that the Foreign Ministry will contact its partners about the issue. Putin alleged that most of the grains from the UN-brokered deal were going to the EU, while only two ships with only three per cent of the total grains exported have been sent to the poorest countries like Yemen and Djibouti. Putin said: "We believe it to be right to ramp up deliveries to the poorest countries." He also expressed readiness to supply fertilizers to the poorest nations free of charge.

On the same day, *RIA Novosti* reported a three to four kilometer line of refugees near the Logachvka checkpoint on the border between Kharkiv and Russia. This is in response to the increased attacks in Kharkiv, where Ukraine launched a major counteroffensive. The Russian head of the Kharkiv region, Vitaly Ganchev also appealed to residents to evacuate if their homes fell in the war zone. He said the border service of Russia would arrange for all necessary assistance, if they cross into the country.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 09 September, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg welcomed the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken to the NATO headquarters for the North Atlantic Council meeting. Stoltenberg appreciated how the US is leading the way in terms of aid to Ukraine. He thanked the US for the recently announced USD 2.7 billion package of additional support. In his address, Stoltenberg referred to the decisions taken by the US-led Ukraine Defence Contact Group in Ramstein, and reiterated the ramping up and continuing the military support for Ukraine.

On 09 September, EU finance ministers and Central Bank governors met with the European Commission and the European

Commission Bank at an informal meeting in Prague. The finance ministers discussed on the impact of the war in Ukraine on their economies and supported the new assistance package worth EUR five billion. The EU energy ministers met at an emergency meeting in Brussels and asked the European Commission to propose broader price caps on revenue from non-gas energy producers. They said that this would help the firms survive. However, they could not take any concrete decision on a cap for Russian gas prices. The commission is expected to release its recommendations on 13 September.

On 08 September, Latvia's Cabinet passed and adopted the decision to impose travel restrictions on Russian citizens. This is to prevent Russians from using Latvia as a transit point for tourism into other areas in Europe. A similar stance has been taken by Lithuania, Latvia and Poland too. The decision takes effect from 19 September 2022. On the same issue, the EU also suspended the visa travel agreement that they had with Russia, thus making it more difficult and expensive for Russian traveling into the Schengen Area. The suspension will take effect from 12 September.

Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said that Ukraine is ready to help Poland with the reduction of coal use for power generation. Ukraine will also be ready to supply Poland with electricity. Morawiecki thanked Zelenskyy for his willingness to provide the necessary assistance in a short notice, given the energy crisis across Europe. The two leaders also discussed the ways in which traffic flow at the border can be controlled better, since there is a significant backlog of trucks waiting to cross the border on both sides

On 08 September, *The New York Times* reported on the comments by the head of US's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), William Burns at a conference in Washington. Burns alleged that Putin had underestimated the Ukrainian resolve to defend itself when invading Ukraine in February. According to Burns, as Ukraine still continues its counteroffensive, Putin's invasion can be deemed as a failure. He said:

"Not only has the weakness of the Russian military been exposed ... but there is going to be long-term damage done to the Russian economy and to generations of Russians."

### **The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 09 September, the Head of the UN human rights mission in Ukraine, Matilda Bogner spoke at a press briefing about the human rights situation in Ukraine. Joining from Odessa, she said that 14,059 civilian casualties have been corroborated, though actual numbers are estimated to be higher. On the issue of prisoners of war, Bogner claimed that Russia is not allowing access to the prisoners held at facilities controlled by them. She said UN monitors had found evidences of torture and ill-treatment of the prisoners, alleging that some of the torture could amount to war crimes. Specifically, she mentioned a penal colony in Olenivka, where the prisoners were suffering from infectious diseases like hepatitis A and Tuberculosis. Similar situations were also noted in government controlled territories and places controlled by Russia's armed forces too. Bogner said that the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine will continue to document the human rights situation in Ukraine and the next report is expected to be released on 27 September.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 197**

### **War on the Ground:**

On 08 September, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that the Ukraine's budget for 2023 would be a war budget. He outlined five issues that the new budget will be looking at. First, around USD 27.4 billion will be dedicated to military and security spending. Second, it will aim to ensure all of Ukraine's social obligations like providing pensions. Third, the new budget will look to reduce all non-critical state expenditures to "withstand difficult times and ensure financial and social stability." Fourth,

economic relations within the country will be intensified to help businesses, save jobs and attract new employees. Fifth, the new budget will look into the establishment of a special recovery fund at the expense of Russian assets that have been confiscated.

Zelenskyy spoke about the Ukraine's counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region. Ukraine's Army General Staff referred to the same and said that a massive operation was underway. He urged citizens and service personnel to not release details of the counteroffensive. Ukraine's Armed Forces have advanced 40 kilometers into the occupied territories in Kharkiv. Three to four armoured brigades, with T-72 tanks, artillery pieces and rocket artillery systems have been stationed in the Kharkiv centre to carry on the counteroffensive.

On the same day, *Ukrinform* reported on a statement released by the Main Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine's Defense Ministry, warning citizens of fake online platforms discrediting Zelenskyy. The ministry said that these platforms were in use in Western Europe and contained fraudulent fundraising options claiming to be for aid to Ukraine. The press service said: "The project resembles a classic Ponzi scheme. We call on Ukrainians and the international community not to trust Russian fakes and to take into account information exclusively from the official platforms of the President of Ukraine and the Office of the Head of State."

On 08 September, Ukraine's Infrastructure Ministry said that 43.9 per cent of Ukraine's agricultural imports are going to Asian countries. The Ministry informed that that around 2.37 million tonnes of agricultural products have been exported so far, of which around 1.04 million tonnes have been sent to Asia. Around 0.47 million tonnes have been sent to Africa. However, additionally two ships chartered by the UN World Food Programme has left for Yemen and Ethiopia to provide aid the critical food security conditions in the two states. Ukraine's Agrarian Policy and Food Minister, Mykola Solskyi addressed the import of grains, saying that a monthly increase of 20-30 per cent has been reported in export volumes.

On 07 September, Ukraine's Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories said that Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk will head the newly formed coordination headquarters for "deoccupied territories." The main function of this headquarter will be the restoration of territories liberated from the enemy and the reconstruction of civil infrastructure in these areas.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 08 September, Russia's Prime Minister, Mikhail Mishustin said that Russia's federal budget for the next three years would be under stress. However, he assured that the main tasks of the state would be fulfilled successfully. The head of the Cabinet, Mishustin said this in an interview aired on Rossiya-24 TV channel to commemorate the 220th anniversary of Russia's Ministry of Finance. While he issued the warning about how forming the budget would be difficult because of the international sanctions against Russia, he said: "We will certainly cope with these tasks and emerge from this crisis stronger, more professionally prepared. We will succeed."

On the same day, Russia's Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Polina Kryuchkova spoke about the existing apprehension that Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resultant sanctions would affect the economy severely, resulting in a 10-20 per cent fall. However, she assured that by the end of 2022, the Russian economy is expected to shrink by not more than three per cent. Deputy Prime Minister Andrey Belousov reiterated Kryuchkova's statement. According to him, Russia's GDP will lose 2 per cent in 2022 and in 2023 the decline will be limited to one per cent.

On 08 September, the head of the International Centre for Joint Initiatives, Alexey Kalachev said that the Western sanctions on Russia will give an impetus for a better relation between China and Russia. Speaking on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF), Kalachev highlighted that due to the existing sanctions, Russia is now looking to establish greater contact with China in spheres like

farming, car manufacturing, IT technology and construction. At the EEF, several deals have been signed between Chinese companies and Russia. For example, the largest construction company in the world by revenue, China State Construction Engineering Corporation signed a deal with Russia, for the development of sites in Moscow and St. Petersburg by 2024. Deals were inked with resources developer NFC and Sunny Machinery Factory. Kalachev, whose company was set up to coordinate deals between Russia and foreign firms under sanctions, estimates that while the trade turnover in 2021 between the two countries reached USD 146 billion, if the current pace of cooperation is maintained, it might reach USD 200 billion by 2024.

On the same issue, *Kommersant business daily* reported that China had increased the import of Russian energy and raw materials, while their imports for tech exports have not seen a similar growth. Between January to August 2022, China imported USD 72.9 billion worth of goods, which marks a 50 per cent increase from the same period in 2021. *Kommersant*, said that among all of Russia's trading partners, China's import structure was one of the least diversified, thus hinting at more scope for collaboration.

The Secretary-General of the ruling United Russia Party, Andrey Turchak proposed a new date to hold referendums in territories occupied by Russia in Ukraine. He suggested that fixing Russia's Day of National Unity on 04 November to hold the votes would be "right and symbolic." On the issue of reunification, Turchak said: "Donetsk, Luhansk and many other Russian cities will finally return to their home port. And the Russian world, now divided by formal borders, will regain its integrity."

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 08 August, NATO members and other Western delegates conducted a US-led Ukraine Conference at the Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Participants discussed the sustenance of military and financial aid to Ukraine. NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg warned that the participating countries must be prepared for the

upcoming winter months, keeping in mind that Russia is unlikely to give up its "goal of taking control of Ukraine," soon. He pointed out that the winter will be tough for Ukraine, as with the increase in Ukraine's army, there is an increased need for winter uniforms, electricity generators and other equipment like tents. On providing assistance to Ukraine, Stoltenberg said: "NATO will pay a price but we must stay the course on Ukraine." German Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht promised that Germany will deliver these materials to Ukraine. Lambrecht with Netherland's Defence Minister, Kajsa Ollongren announced that they will train Ukrainian soldiers on mine detections and clearing. The participants at the Summit praised Ukraine's army for the on-ground defence.

At the same conference, US Defence Secretary, Lloyd Austin announced a new package of USD 675 million in military assistance to Ukraine. The new round of supplies will include more MLRS, ammunition, military vehicles and anti-tank systems. Commenting on the new assistance, Austin said: "Just looking around the table, I can see our unity of purpose... We must evolve as the fight evolves." The new military assistance is a part of the larger USD 2.7 billion approved by US for long-term assistance for Ukraine as investments. This is expected to increase the security of Ukraine and 18 more neighboring countries against the risk of future Russian aggression.

On the same day, Poland announced that they will join Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in restricting the entry of Russian citizens into its territory. In a statement, the government said: "It is unacceptable that, while people in Ukraine are being tortured and murdered, citizens from the aggressor state (Russia) can travel freely within the EU." The measure will enter into force from 19 September is aimed to prevent Russians from using these countries as transit points to travel further into Europe.

On 07 September, Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan alleged that the West was provoking Russia. Erdogan believes that the war is unlikely to end "anytime soon" and thus it was imperative for countries not to

underestimate Russia. In a press conference with Serbia's president, in Belgrade, Erdogan said: "I can clearly say that I do not find the attitude of the West [toward Russia] right"

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 08 September, Japan and India agreed to expand their military cooperation. In the same context, Japan's Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi referred to Russia's war on Ukraine, increasing assertive actions from China, especially about Taiwan and the nuclear threats from North Korea. Hayashi thus pointed out an increasing need for India and Japan to ramp up their security cooperation. The Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers of the two countries met in Tokyo to discuss the same. In a statement released after the meeting, the four ministers said that India and Japan will collaborate on the development of unmanned ground vehicle technology and will further discuss areas of future cooperation in defence equipment. Both reiterated their commitment to establish a "free and open Indo-Pacific vision," to counter China's aggrandizement efforts in the region

On 07 September, India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi said that despite international ostracization, India will improve their ties with Russia. In an online address at the Eastern Economic Forum, Modi praised the "Act Far-East Policy" launched by India in collaboration with Russia. He indicated to a "special partnership" between the countries, especially on energy and coking coal. India's Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri put forward a similar stance in an interview with *CNBC*. He said that India will consider the proposal to set a price cap on Russian oil, but there were no moral obligations for India to sign it. He said: "No, there's no conflict. I have a moral duty to my consumer. Do I as a democratically elected government want a situation where the petrol pump runs dry?"

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## War in Ukraine: Day 196

### War on the Ground:

On 07 August, Ukraine's nuclear operator, Energoatom, said that it supports the deployment of UN peacekeepers in the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Which has been under Russia's control since March. The attacks have sparked the fear of nuclear disaster, and thus Energoatom Chief Petro Kotyn welcomed a peacekeeping contingent at the plant. Kotyn also reiterated "...the immediate establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone," as mentioned in the IAEA report, and called for withdrawal of Russian troops. He also welcomed the two members of the 14-member IAEA team who are to remain in Zaporizhzhia permanently to monitor the plant's safety.

Ukraine's Agrarian Policy and Food Ministry signed a memorandum with Poland on building a cross-border pipeline to transport vegetable oils from Ukraine to Gdansk in Poland. A working group will be set up soon to work on technical details for the construction of the pipeline and the two terminals.

On 07 September, *Ukrinform* reported on 'How to Ensure a Military Campaign in 2023: Ukrainian Perspective' by the Commander-in-Chief of Ukraine's Armed Forces, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, and a representative of the Verkhovna Rada, Lieutenant General Mykhailo Zabrodskiy. Where, Zaluzhnyi and Zabrodskiy speak about how the war in Ukraine has moved beyond a medium-intensity conflict in terms of military forces involved, types of weapons used, duration of the conflict, and other spatial indicators. They also mentioned the various directions that Russia's offensive has

taken. From establishing control till the administrative border of the Donetsk Region, advancing in the Zaporizhzhia direction, and making another attempt to seize Kyiv would be Russia's main goals from the war. Zaluzhnyi and Zabrodskiy named the problems that Russia might face in their offensive like international isolation, economic pressure due to the sanctions, difficulties with general mobilization, and the lack of modern weapons and equipment. Although Zaluzhnyi claimed responsibility for attacks on Russian air bases in Crimea. Till now, Ukraine had just hinted on its involvement in the Crimea strikes. However, the senior military chief has now accepted over Ukraine's strikes, including those at Saky military facility, were conducted "... to physically transfer hostilities to Crimea."

### The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 07 September, Russia's President Vladimir Putin addressed the plenary session of the Eastern Economic Forum. In a speech, Putin expressed his delight in hosting business leaders, experts, politicians, public figures, and members of government from countries across the world. He spoke about various political and economic issues that Russia is dealing with. Referring to the sanctions, Putin criticized the West for how they were attempting to "extinguish the sovereignty" of other countries and trying to popularize the Western narrative. He said that the US's dominance in the global economy and politics was waning, and Europe was also wasting its development and growth due to these sanctions. Putin mentioned how the sanctions have triggered global inflation but how Russia's inflation rate was declining, unlike the Western countries. He referred to the diminishing trust in the dollar, euro, and pound sterling. He added Gazprom and China's agreement to switch to 50/50 transactions in rubles and yuan for gas payments.

With regards to Ukraine, Putin said that Russia has made gains from Ukraine and that he does not intend to lose anything in their operation. On the proposal to cap oil and gas prices, he said that Russia would not supply gas, oil, coal, or heating oil if price caps were introduced and did not suit Russia's

interests. On the visa restrictions against Russian citizens, Putin maintained that they should act in a way that serves their interests. His advice was not to get involved in reciprocating the visa ban but to expand the practice of visa-free entry to Russia for more tourist groups, as that would benefit Russia.

On the same day, Russia's permanent representative to the UN, Vassily Nebenzia, claimed that the grain deal with Ukraine, allowing Russia to deliver fertilizers and food products to global markets, had failed. Nebenzia said that no Russian vessels had left ports in Ukraine with grains, despite the agreement. He also hinted that since their provisions are not being fulfilled, Russia could refuse to extend the deal, with ends in November.

On 06 September, Russia's spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, spoke about US President Joe Biden's comment opposing Russia's identification as a state sponsor of terrorism. Peskov said that Biden's sentiment was a "good thing." However, he found that Biden being asked such a question was "horrendous" and "very difficult to wrap one's mind around." Peskov warned that such statement was not an indication of a softer stance by the US.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 06 September, Liz Truss, after assuming the Office of the UK's Prime Minister, spoke to the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. She reiterated her support for Ukraine's freedom and democracy and said that Zelenskyy would have her full backing. The leaders discussed the need to strengthen global security and Putin's attempts to weaponize energy.

On the same day, the European Commission proposed to suspend the EU's Visa Facilitation Agreement with Russia entirely. If the proposal passes, Russian citizens will not be able to access the EU easily and will have to follow a more protracted and expensive visa application process. They will also lose the privilege of multiple entry visas in the Schengen area and must submit more documentary evidence when applying for a

visa. The Commission has also presented a proposal not to recognize Russian passports issued in the occupied areas of Ukraine. Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson said that this move was necessary as Russia continues to violate international laws, which breaches the principles of the Visa Facilitation Agreement.

On 07 September, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia agreed to ban the entry of Russian citizens from Russia or Belarus to enter their countries. Exceptions will be made only for humanitarian and family reasons, lorry drivers, and diplomats. The announcement comes after several weeks of deliberations by EU countries regarding the increased Schengen Visa application from Russian tourists. On the increasing border crossing by Russians, Latvia's Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics said, "...This is becoming a public security issue; this is also an issue of a moral and political nature."

On the same day, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen spoke about the EU's gas market and prospects. She outlined three major steps decided by the EU. First, the demand reduction of gas, which had been a success with joint storage of 82 per cent, has already been created. Second, to diversify away from Russian fossil fuels, which the EU has been working hard to implement. Third, to refocus on investing in renewables. However, Von der Leyen said that Russia's manipulation of the gas market was having a spillover effect on the electricity market, which was compounded by other factors like heatwaves and droughts. She thus outlined immediate measures that the EU could implement. First was the smart saving of electricity, whereby a mandatory target would be set to reduce electricity use at peak hours. Second, a price cap would be placed on revenues of energy-producing and fossil fuel companies so that consumers can benefit from the low costs of energy sources. Third, liquidity support will be facilitated for Member states to help the companies deal with the volatility of the markets and fourth, lowering the cost of gas by cutting Russia's revenues. In this context, Von der Leyen mentioned that the EU was succeeding as at the beginning of the war, 40 per cent of the imported gas was from

Russia, while the number now is down to nine per cent.

NATO and Allied forces are maintaining a military presence in the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea and the Mediterranean Sea to monitor Russian warships. So far, they have three Russian naval ships- Slava-class cruiser Marshal Ustinov, the Udaloy-class destroyer, and a support ship. Regarding the activity, Admiral Stefan Pauly from Germany, a commander with NATO's surface forces, said: "It creates overall maritime awareness and contributes to the safety of navigation for the international maritime community."

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

After the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) mission visit to Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, called for a demilitarised zone around the plant. In an address to a UN Security Council session, he supported the recommendations put forward by the Director of the IAEA, Rafael Mariano Grossi. Guterres urged Russian and Ukrainian forces to cease military operations near the plant.

On 07 September, Myanmar's military leader, Min Aung Hlaing, reported that Myanmar would be buying petroleum products from Russia. Hlaing mentioned they were expecting the first diesel delivery in a few days. He also confirmed that Myanmar would pay Russia in whatever currency they accept to ease the supply for both states.

On 07 September, the Prime Minister of Mongolia, Luvsannamsrein Oyun-Erdene, met Putin at the Eastern Economic Forum. Putin welcomed Oyun-Erdene and spoke about how Mongolia and Russia have a long diplomatic relationship. The leaders discussed the logistics of supplying Russian gas to China through Mongolia at the forum. They also spoke about their collaboration in several infrastructural projects like the Ulaanbaatar railway, which runs through areas rich in mineral resources and metals.

On the same day, the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) issued a brief

statement on the agreement with Russia's gas company Gazprom. According to the agreement, China will pay Gazprom half in Roubles and half in Yuan for Russian gas supplies through the Power of Siberia Pipeline. The move is an extension of the 30-year contract signed between Russia and China for the supply of 10 billion cubic meters of gas per year. The CNPC Chairman, Dai Houliang, met Gazprom Chairman Alexey Miller to figure out the details of the transaction. Miller noted that this arrangement would be a "mutually beneficial, timely, reliable and practical decision". Gazprom, however, said that the technical parameters of the arrangement had not been discussed yet.

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## **War in Ukraine: Day 195**

### **War on the Ground:**

On 06 September, the advisor to the Head of the Ukrainian President's office, Mykhailo Podolyak, said in his tweet that for 40 days of the attack on Olvenivka prison, accused Russians for not letting the UN and the ICRC visit the site. He blamed the Russians for planting the attack on the Azovstal defenders at the Olenivka prison in the Donetsk region.

On the same day, during the nationwide telethon, Natalia Humeniuk, Head of the Joint Coordination Press Centre of the Defence Forces of South of Ukraine, said that the Ukrainian Armed Forces are improving their position along the front line and are impeding the Russian army, especially their logistics. The UAF keeps Russian transportation arteries under check and exposes any movements in the active region, which has made it difficult for the Russian army to redeploy troops.

On the same day, *Kyiv Post* reported that Ukraine's Black Sea port city, Odessa, was preparing for a harsh winter fueled by the Russian invasion and rising energy prices. Odessa Regional Military Administration announced on 30 August that it was ready for heating in the winter season by 80 per cent. Kyiv Electric Networks which has been renovating 900 energy facilities in the region had repaired 600 kilometers of power transmission lines of various voltage levels. The houses without meters are now found to be facing difficulty in paying for the heating as their electricity bill are very expensive. Another problem in Odessa is the growing consumer debt before the winter season. The debt had already

exceeded UAH one billion, and the government had forbidden the collection of debts from citizens for housing and communal services under martial law during the summer.

### **The Moscow View:**

#### **Claims by Russia**

On 06 September, upon UN releasing the report on Zaporzhzhia nuclear power plant Russia's permanent representative to the UN, Vassily Nebenzia expressed regret over IAEA's. He accused it for not disclosing the responsible party for shelling the nuclear plant despite Ukrainian General Staff's claim on targeting Energodar, which is located in the north-western area of the plant.

Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov pointing to the grain deal, said that the western countries had not withdrawn the sanctions yet on Russian grain and fertilizers, which was part of the negotiation of the grain deal. He blamed the West for not fulfilling the promises made during the signing of the grain deal. Russia issued a warning stating it will not start back the oil supply through Nord Stream pipeline unless the sanctions are lifted. Till now the energy prices have soared in UK, England, Wales and Scotland.

On 06 August, *TASS* reported on the poll conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center. A survey was held to know the public support for Russia in its special military operation in Ukraine. In the poll, 1600 Russians were picked randomly where the support was found to be high ranging from 70 -73 per cent. According to the people, 39 per cent viewed it as a defence for Russia, and as a preventive strategy to keep the NATO's military base away.

### **The West View:**

#### **Responses from the US and Europe**

The NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg is scheduled to attend the Ukraine Defense Contact Group meeting held in Germany. The meeting is being organized by the US Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin, to discuss on the Ukraine crisis and security threats to NATO and its allies.

On 06 September, the European Commission

reported on the results from the 2022 Standard Eurobarometer survey. As per the findings, the EU citizens trust over EU's response to Russia was observed to be increased. Especially in terms of investments in renewable energies, reducing dependency from Russia, and approval rate of the Euro. But there was a high concern towards the deteriorating economic situation amongst the citizens. At the national level, issues relating to inflation, cost of living, and energy supply were high per centile concerns.

On 06 September, BBC reported on the crisis faced by Russia in keeping up its military hardware due to cornering sanctions. As per report from the US, Russia is expected to purchase millions of rockets and artillery from North Korea due to severe shortages. It predicts that with increasing sanctions and export restrictions Russia's military, training operations were affected.

On 06 September, The US Defence department's spokesperson said that Russia was trying to request ammunition and missiles from North Korea and Iran. Brigade General Pat Ryder added that Russia is desperately searching for ammunition to withstand the war in Ukraine. The information obtained by the US suggests that the Russian army is facing difficulties in the ongoing war and is reaching out to what the US deems rogue nations like North Korea and Iran due to a severe supply shortage. Russia has already bought drones from Iran and aims to strike a deal to get artillery rounds from North Korea.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 06 September, IAEA released its report on the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). The report said that the Russian occupation of the power plant had caused continued destruction to the complex, hindering emergency response from the staff. Although the report does not indicate the perpetrator of the attack. It provides safety guidelines for the ZNPP and advises establishing a nuclear safety and security protection zone immediately to avoid any nuclear disaster. A team of IAEA experts led by Director General Rafael

Mariano Grossi had gone down to the ZNPP to check up on the atomic reactor after the shelling by both Ukraine and Russia.

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### **War in Ukraine: Day 194**

#### **War on the Ground:**

On 05 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy participated in the opening ceremony of the New York Stock Exchange. He spoke about the situation in Ukraine and its goal to ensure that all Ukrainians enjoy freedom in its "different manifestations." He mentioned Ukraine has already started to renovate critical infrastructure destroyed due to Russian aggression. He said: "We will tell the world why Ukraine is a place for good investments and financial opportunities... Invest in

Ukraine! This will be your victory and a new success story for your companies.”

On the same day, *ISW* reported that Ukraine’s counteroffensive was hampering Russian logistics in the occupied southern region. Ukraine is aiming to conduct precision strikes to chip away at both Russian tactical and operational level capabilities. However, military officials said that more Russian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) in Central Kherson were destroyed, but did not elaborate further on the progress of Ukraine’s counteroffensive.

Also on 05 September, Ukraine’s nuclear company Energoatom revealed that because of continuous shelling near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant facility, the sixth and final transmission line was disconnected. The reactor was supplying power to the plant’s own power requirements. On this issue, Ukraine’s Energy Minister said that repair of the power line was impossible because of the “fighting ongoing around the station.”

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 05 September, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin approved a 31-page foreign policy document that outlines the broad aims to project what he called the values of the “Russian World.” The document promotes the strengthening of the global perception of Russia, promoting Russia’s traditional culture and values and improving ties with Eastern European Slavic states, countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, along with Asian countries like India and China. According to the document, Russia also aims to bolster its image as a democratic state in the international arena, “to form a multipolar world and preserve its cultural and civilizational diversity.”

According to *ISW*, Putin praised the DPR and LPR forces from the first and second Army Corps. He appreciated their actions in the Donbas region and said that they were fighting better than the professional Russian soldiers. Putin’s comments along with the insinuation that he is unhappy with the

Defence Ministry’s performance, are expected to promote recruitment and force generation in the LPR and DPR.

On 05 September, Russia responded to the increasing list of US sanctions imposed on Russian citizens. It retaliated by imposing sanctions on 25 US citizens, including members of the US Congress, high-ranked officials, businesspersons, and cultural figures. According to the list published by Russia’s Foreign Ministry, famous personalities from Hollywood like Sean Penn and Ben Stiller, who visited Kyiv on humanitarian missions were also among the sanctioned.

On the same day, the deputy head of Kherson’s military-civilian administration said that the region was prepared to conduct a referendum on its annexation to Russia. However, the process had been put on hold due to security concerns. He justified the postponement by saying that their primary concern was “to feed people and to ensure their security.” He reiterated that despite Ukraine’s Deputy Prime Minister Irina Vereshchuk’s threats of 12 years in prison and confiscation of property for participation in the referendum, Kherson’s residents were ready for the referendum. On its annexation into Russia, he said: “...people are ready to rush to the referendum to become a full-fledged region of the big country, which can protect them.”

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 06 September, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said that US President Joe Biden had decided against designating Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. According to Jean-Pierre, such a label would delay food exports and delay the movement of goods through the Black Sea. Ukraine has been lobbying to tag Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism, but Russia has warned that such a move would irreparably damage US-Russia bilateral ties.

On 05 September, Recep Tayyip Erdogan remarked on Europe’s impending energy crisis and said that it resulted from the sanctions imposed by the EU on Europe. Turkey has been attempting to negotiate

between Russia and Ukraine and has thus ramped up its diplomatic efforts with both countries. He alleged that Europe's attitude towards Putin is catalyzing such a reaction from him; thus, natural gas is being used as a weapon by Russia as a measure against the West.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine War**

On 05 September, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released an update regarding the casualties in Ukraine because of the war in August. As per the report, 1162 civilian casualties had been recorded in Ukraine of which 294 were killed, and 868 were injured. 74 per cent of the total casualties had occurred in regions under Ukraine's control, while 26 per cent were in areas controlled by Russian armed forces or affiliated armed groups. From the beginning of the war on 24 February, 13,917 civilian casualties have been recorded by OHCHR so far.

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### **War in Ukraine: Day 192 & 193**

#### **War on the Ground:**

On 04 September, Mykolaiv governor reported on Russia's strikes in residential areas which were targeted at hospitals, education facility, hotel and a museum.

In Zaporizhzhia, Russia was reported to have attacked using "multiple-launch rocket systems, near the plant. The issue has gained criticism from the UN, IAEA and international against Russia.

On 04 September, Ukraine's Prime Minister, Denys Shmyhal visited Germany to discuss on the Ukraine and Germany equations to ensure smoother supply of military aid.

#### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 04 September, the Russian officers reported on the disconnection of power line of the Zaporizhzhia power plant. This means the plant will operate under reserve line.

On the same day, the Russian energy firm, Gazprom announced the readiness of the Siemens Energy to fix the broken equipment of the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline. It also stated that the gas supply will not resume as per schedule.

On 03 September, before the G7 statement, Russia's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov warned that imposition of price cap would result in "Russian retaliation," and destabilize the international oil market.

#### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 04 September, Sweden announced its decision to give liquidity guarantees to energy companies in the Nordic and Baltic region to avoid financial crackdown arising from European energy cut.

On 04 September, Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan volunteers to Russia's President Vladimir Putin to be a mediator to settle the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant issue.

On 03 September, the UK Intelligence, reported on Russian forces. It stated that the military was challenged due to “morale and discipline issues,” apart from the high casualty rate and combat fatigue.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine War**

On 03 September, IAEA Head, Rafael Grossi after his visit to Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant stated that a team of six from the IAEA would stay to continue with the inspection. The inspection report is expected to be released in a week’s time. On the Russian force present in the area, he said that the team was allowed to carry out since the forces withdrew.

On the same day, the G7 leaders are expected to announce a price cap against Russian oil. The details of the measure is yet to be revealed but, the it is seen as a way to bring down Russian revenue and its ability to proceed in war.

### **War in Ukraine: Day 191**

#### **War on the Ground:**

On 02 September, Krymr.Realia reported that a huge convoy of Russian military equipment was sighted on the Tavrida highway in Crimea. Eyewitnesses point out that on 01 September, many URAL Russian military trucks were seen crossing the Kerch Bridge to go toward the Ukrainian mainland. The eyewitnesses recorded a video showing that the truck envoy was followed by Russian state inspection cars with flashing beacons.

Ukraine’s General Staff of the Armed Forces on Facebook said that Russia was removing military equipment from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant’s (ZNPP) region ahead of the expert mission by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA mission was headed by Director General Rafael Grossi, who saw that the weapons were being spread across nearby villages.

On 02 September, Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in the annual meeting of Ambrozetti Forum that the sanctions against Russia are weakening it and, at the same time, strengthening his

country. He added that Ukraine’s ally had loosened their sanctions against Russia. He also said that they must tighten their sanctions with strict measures to ensure peace and support for Ukraine.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 01 September, the Vostok-2022 military exercise began. It is held at seven training ranges of the Eastern Military District and the coastal zones of the Sea of Japan and Okhotsk sea. 50,000 army personnel from 14 countries attended the exercise, including China, India, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

On 02 September, TASS reported that Ukraine’s General Staff of the Armed Forces had admitted to being responsible for attacking the area around ZNPP in its briefing. It also announced that it would move its troops to the west due to the arrival of IAEA officials. Russia denied the allegations that it was the one that was responsible for shelling the area around the ZNPP.

On the same day, Russia’s Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu said in a conference call with the ministry that Ukraine was struck down with heavy casualties during its counter-offensive in the southern part of the country. He went on to allege that Zelenskyy orchestrated the counteroffensive as an illusion to show Ukraine’s allies that it could push back. He also claimed that Ukraine’s counter-offensive in the Kherson region had failed miserably.

### **The West View:**

Responses from the US and Europe  
On 02 September, the US think tank ISW reported that the Russian support for the war slowly declined, and the citizens were changing their attitude toward Russia invading Ukraine. It also reported that Russia is trying to spread false claims about Ukraine’s counter-offensive in Kherson Oblast. The Russians claim that Ukraine suffered high casualties in the counter-offensive.

On the same day, Gazprom indefinitely halted the supply of gas through Nord Stream 1 pipeline due to leaks and services.

Germany has stored gas to survive the Russian supply cut-off, however, they are doubtful whether they can fully sustain the consequence of the supply disruption. The halting of gas has already increased soaring gas prices and Europe is suffering from an economic crisis. The EU said that Russia's President Vladimir Putin is weaponizing energy and is playing an economic war with Europe.

On 02 September, the group of seven countries, the UK, the US, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Canada, agreed to impose a price cap on Russian oil to disrupt Russia's flow of funds. The finance ministers of the G7 countries have agreed that importers, shipping companies and insurance firms have to adhere to the price cap on Russian oil transportation. The decision was taken after a meeting of the finance ministers in Washington. The price cap would reduce the flow of funds that Russia gets from its oil export which ultimately fuels the war.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine War**

On 01 September, Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev said in a statement before his election campaign that the country is moving away from Russia and is looking toward the West for its support. Kazakhstan had promised to join the West with its sanctions against Russia and is also aiming to supply oil to Europe through a route bypassing Russia. The US also has helped in funding the defence budget of Kazakhstan.

On 02 September, the International Committee of the Red Cross announced that it would increase its humanitarian aid in Mariupol. The ICRC has already distributed 1,500 sets of humanitarian assistance but seeks to increase the volume. The organization will continue its aid to the country and its war-torn cities.

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### **War in Ukraine: Day 190**

#### **War on the Ground:**

On 02 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy took part in Europe's economic forum called Ambrosetti Forum held in Italy. At the Forum, he provided on the on-ground situation in Ukraine and blamed Russia for the continuous shelling near the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). He criticized Russia for hindering the International Atomic Energy Agency's attempts to reach the plant. Addressing the delegates present at the Forum, Zelenskyy said that as long as Ukraine's international partners provide the promised military and financial support on time, it will reinstate peace in the region.

On 02 September, Ukrinform reported on the Economy Ministry's press service's updates about Ukraine's fuel imports. The Economy Ministry Yulia Svyrydenko said that despite Russia's continuous attacks on Ukraine's fuel infrastructure, it has increased fuel imports by 12 times. He mentioned favorable conditions like abolition of the

excise tax on fuel prices and the reduction of VAT from 20 per cent to seven per cent contributed to creating “favorable conditions” to intensify imports. While in March only 58,800 tonnes of fuel was imported, in May it increased to 380,000 tonnes and in August to 709,500 tonnes.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On September 02, Russia’s energy company, Gazprom said that it would not resume the supply of natural gas through the Nord Stream pipeline. It said that the pipeline requires urgent maintenance and repair work in key components. The pipeline had been shut for regular maintenance since 31 August and was supposed to resume supply on 02 September.

On 02 September, the head of the Zaporizhzhia region’s military-civilian administration, Yevgeny Balitsky spoke about the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) mission to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. He said that all details regarding the security of the plant had been submitted to the mission and that they had no further questions.

ISW reported on a survey conducted by an independent Russian polling agency called Levada. The organization published the results on 01 September and said that while the majority of Russians still supported the military operation in Ukraine, public support for the war was gradually decreasing. In March, 53 per cent of the respondents strongly supported Russia’s offensive in Ukraine, while in August the number fell to 46 per cent. However, ISW says that this is a minor deterioration and will not affect the on-ground situation in Ukraine.

On 01 September, Russia’s foreign minister Sergey Lavrov warned against any danger to Russia’s peacekeeping contingent in Moldova’s Transnistria region. He said: “...any kind of actions that will raise a threat to the security of our servicemen will be considered in accordance with international law as an attack on the Russian Federation.” Following Lavrov’s remarks, Moldova’s Foreign Ministry summoned Russia’s charge d’affaires for further “clarification.”

### **The West View:**

#### **Responses from the US and Europe**

On 02 September, the US released a press briefing about President Biden’s stance on Ukraine. The US has reaffirmed its support to Ukraine and requested USD 11.7 billion in financial and military aid and an additional USD 2 billion to mitigate the impacts of the war on the energy supply.

On 02 September, the G7 countries decided to implement a price cap for Russian oil. The decision was announced in a joint statement by the Finance Ministers of the grouping. A price cap is expected to slash Moscow’s overall revenues and will be implemented when European Union’s sanctions on Russian oils become functional from 05 December.

On 01 September, a British Army regiment ended their six months tour in Estonia. The tour culminated in a four-day, large-scale military multilateral military exercise, led by The Royal Welsh unit, of the NATO enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) Battlegroup. Other than Britain, troops from France and Denmark joined the exercise. Estonia’s Minister of Defence, Hanno Pevkur hailed the exercise and referred to its importance given Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, in Estonia’s immediate neighborhood. He said that the eFP would also convey the message to Russia that any attack on Estonia would be an attack on the entire NATO forces.

On 31 August, Euronews reported that the EU has decided to fully suspend the 2007 visa agreement with Russia. While the decision does not advocate an outright ban, it will significantly hinder the visa application process, making it more expensive, complicated, and time-consuming. EU’s foreign policy chief, Josep Borrel mentioned that the number of visas granted will also be reduced.

On the same issue, Finland’s Foreign Minister, Pekka Haavisto announced that it will drastically cut the number of tourist visas issued to Russia. Visa applications from Russia will be restricted from only Moscow, St. Petersburg, Murmansk, and Petrozavodsk, and will be allowed only once a week. Finland’s government also proposed

EUR 1.3 billion in appropriations to the Foreign Ministry.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 02 September, the UN Refugee Agency released a flash update on the situation in Ukraine. According to the recent Internal Displacement Report, between July and August, the estimated number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine has from 6.645 million to 6.975 million.

On 01 September, *AP News* reported on North Korea's deliberation on sending construction workers to Russia-occupied territories in Ukraine. North Korea's Moscow ambassador met envoys from DPR and LPR and was optimistic about cooperation regarding labor migration. Though it would violate the sanctions imposed on North Korea by the UN Security Council sending workers to the war would benefit North Korea in two ways. First, boost North Korea's economy affected by pandemic-led border closures and years of international sanctions. Second, it would help in strengthening North Korea's cooperation with ideological allies like Russia and subsequently China. The tripartite cooperation would then contribute to reducing US's interests in the Indo-Pacific.

On 01 September, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) head, Rafael Grossi said that the agency will consider establishing a continued presence at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). Before heading to the plant with his team for the inspection, Grossi said: "There has been increased military activity including this morning... (But) we are not stopping."

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### **War in Ukraine: Day 189**

#### **War on the Ground:**

On 31 August, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba met with Georgia's Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili at the informal EU Foreign Ministers meeting in Prague. In the meet they discussed eastern partnership and bilateral relations between Ukraine and Georgia.

On the same day, the employees of the Ukrainian energy firm that looks after Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. Energoatom, welcomed officials from the IAEA who arrived at Zaporizhzhia for an inspection of nuclear plant. The energy company wants the IAEA push Russia for

demilitarization of the ZNPP area. It also wants IAEA to notice all the violations the Russian troops have caused in the complex.

On 31 August, Ukraine's Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence reported that the Russian Defence Ministry is recruiting conscription officers from Moscow and Leningrad regions. The mobilization of soldiers from Buryatia, Tuvan, the republics of the Caucasus, and other unfavourable parts of Russia is seen to be exhausted. To replenish the troops in Crimea, Russia is trying to recruit from Moscow and Leningrad regions. The recruitment also extends to private armies and mercenary soldiers like the Wagner group.

### **The Moscow View: Claims by Russia**

On 30 August, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko said that the country would retaliate against the EU's decision to suspend the bloc's visas to Russians except for humanitarian purposes. He also said that there would be consequences to the EU's withdrawal from the visa facilitation agreement. The EU would open its arms to the citizens of Russia who are against the government's decision to invade Ukraine.

On 31 August, the strategic command post exercises Vostok-2022 began with an opening ceremony at the Sergeyevsky training ground in the Primorsky Region in Russia. Fourteen countries will participate in the training, including India, China, Azerbaijan and others. The exercises are focused on improving the military capabilities of the forces of each country that takes part in it. The exercises will be held from 01 to 07 September.

On the same day, saboteurs who had intentions of conducting a terrorist attack on the inspectors from the IAEA, who had come to Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant to check up on it after shelling the region, had been apprehended by the Russian officials who resided in the invaded area. Arms and ammunition were discovered with them.

Also, on the same day, Russia banned the entry of 55 high-ranking Canadians as a reply to the sanctions imposed against it by the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The 55 officials were permanently barred from entering Russia. The actions by Russia were also retaliation for the Russophobic behaviour of Canada.

### **The West View: Responses from the US and Europe**

On 31 August, EU Foreign Ministers gathered to discuss the visa ban for Russians and the eighth set of sanctions. With ambiguity still remaining over countries like Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Finland which share border with Russia unclear, imposing a blanket ban on Russians is still a challenge for the EU. According to Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky, EU's executive council will look ways to find solution for the already issues 12 million Schengen visas. But France and Germany stand against the decision. In a joint memo: "We caution against far-reaching restrictions on our visa policy, in order to prevent feeding the Russian narrative and triggering unintended rallying-around the flag effects and/or estranging future generations." The UK's Ministry of Defence reported on how the Ukrainian Armed Forces pushing back the Russian military. It also highlighted on Russia attempts in replenishing its troops in Ukraine.

### **The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war**

On 30 August, Syria received S-300 anti-aircraft missiles from Russia. According to an Israeli satellite company, the supply of the missiles is viewed as a way to boost the air-defences against Ukraine. Russia which has held its military in Syria since 2015, continues to use Turkiye straits to ship its weapons through civilian ships into Syria.

On 01 September, The Wall Street Journal reported that the Finance Ministers of the G7 countries will agree on price cap on Russian oil and petroleum products on 02 September. The final mechanisms of the restriction are expected to take place by December.

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## War in Ukraine: Day 188

### War on the Ground:

On 30 August, as part of the EU - Ukraine accession process, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed two laws agreeing to two conventions given in the association agreement after the parliament adopted the laws. As per the report in Ukrinform the Ukraine parliament adopted the law no.0166 "On Ukraine's Accession to the Convention on the Common Transit Procedure." Through this adoption, the European transit rules will now be

applicable for Ukraine, with which enterprises can now use "single customs declaration and single guarantee" to transport the goods.

Zelenskyy met IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi, where both discussed on the possible explosion risks in Zaporizhzhia power plant. Main stress by the President was on laying of demands by the UN to demilitarize the zone and to urge the Russian military to leave the unit. In his address, Zelenskyy remarked that US's HIMARS missiles were helping the force change the course of action through targeting down numerous Russian ammunition depots, and bridges.

Intense fighting has been observed in Kherson between Ukraine and Russian forces, the key reason behind the tight hold on Kherson is due to three reasons. As reported in BBC, the strategic position of Dnipro River, helps to protect the Black Sea ports to continue the grain exports and a closer proximity for Russia and Crimea.

### The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 30 August, Russian Defense Ministry, Lieutenant-General Igor Konashenkov claimed the total Ukraine military loss during the offensive in Nikolayev-Krivoi Rog. He said: "In the past 24 hours, in their effective operations the Russian forces eliminated 48 tanks, 46 infantry fighting vehicles, 37 other combat armored vehicles, eight pickup vehicles with large-caliber machine-guns and over 1,200 Ukrainian servicemen."

Over the US accusation of importing Iranian combat drones Mohajer-6 and Shahed-series to Russia, has been denied by both Iran and Russia. Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that the relation between Iran and Russia are becoming dynamic and continue to be. He said: "We've seen no indications of any sort of actual delivery and/or purchase of Iranian drones by the Russian Ministry of Defense."

On 30 August, Gazprom announced its complete shutdown and stop of gas supply from 31 August to 03 September for maintenance. Till now the pipeline has been

functioning under reduced capacity, although no serious malfunction is noticeable, the repairs are left to be done to restart the supply.

**The West View:  
Responses from the US and Europe**

On 30 August, with risk over the Zaporizhzhia power plant heightening, the EU announce on providing five million “anti-radiation tablets” to prevent the body from getting affected by radioactive iodine. Till now people residing within 50 kilometres have been given potassium iodide tablets on a protection basis.

On 29 August, the NATO Military Committee visited Germany, where representatives from Finland and Sweden joined to discuss on the future security challenges, NATO’s deterrence, defence posture and recalled the decisions taken during NATO Madrid Summit.

**The Global Fallouts:  
Implications of the Ukraine war**

OECD Secretary General Mathias Cormann during the cooperation discussion with Ukraine, assured on supporting Ukraine from corruption risks especially in the “post-war reconstruction process.” OECD which has been an active partner for Ukraine since 2014 will bring international countries closer in helping with the rebuilding of institutions and strengthen the anticorruption reforms.

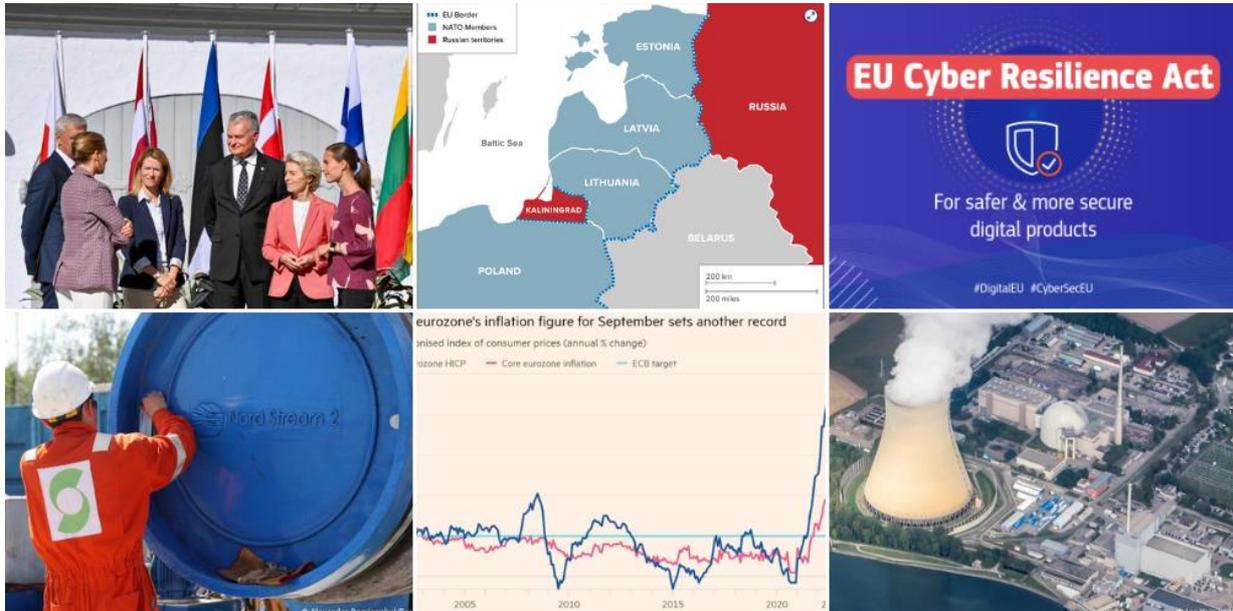
On 30 August, first grain shipment from Ukraine was unloaded in Djibouti. The ship, MV Commander contained 23000 tonnes of wheat from Ukraine as food aid to Ethiopia. Given the quantity, it is expected to be a supply for 1.5 million people. According to the WFP spokesperson: “We really need to see increased shipments coming from Ukraine, Russia and others in support of what is a very dire situation today in the Horn of Africa and across the region.”

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## EM Short Notes\*

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Source: Sanna Marin Facebook, CNBC, European Commission, Jan Woitas/dpa/pa/Deutsche Welle, FT, Alexander Demianchuk/TASS/pa/ Deutsche Welle

**ALBANIA****Albania makes progress on wind power production**

On 12 September, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the status of Albania's wind power industry. Even though Albania is geographically rich with locations for onshore and offshore wind power generation, till date, no turbines and plants have been set up. However, steps are being taken, while a project to set up turbines had been initiated in 2008, faced roadblocks. In April 2022, the government has given Biopower Green Energy and Marseglia Group, an Albanian-Italian venture as an approval for onshore wind project. The plant is expected to produce 235 megawatts from 39 turbines, covering about one per cent of its electricity needs. ("The truth about Albania's non-existent wind power industry," *Deutsche Welle*, 12 September 2022)

**BELGIUM****Protests over the financial crisis**

On 21 September, protests grew in Brussels due to rising cost of living crisis. The soaring energy and food prices and vexation towards local, national and European politicians and employers made 10000 people gather in Brussels to protest. People demanded their politicians to address the financial crisis. A law from 1996 on workers' well-being was asked to be altered so that trade unions could negotiate a pay rise. They urged the government to look for measures instead of blaming the problems on geopolitics. (Méabh Mc Mahon, "Thousands protest in Brussels over cost of living crisis," *Euronews*, 21 September 2022)

**BULGARIA****Opinion polls for the upcoming Bulgarian election released**

On 29 September, the results of the opinion polls for the upcoming elections on 02 October was released. The opinion polls reflected the political turmoil of Bulgaria

\* 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.

with a prediction of a coalition government involving more than six parties. With a 24 per cent chance, the Citizens of European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) leads in the opinion polls, but predictions show that this is not enough to establish a majority. GERB is led by former Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and his scandal, and corruption-filled tenure is the reason for Bulgaria's political crisis. This is the fourth election in 18 months and was called after Prime Minister Kiril Petkov and his government were ousted in June 2022. The people of Bulgaria are now asked to choose a government that will lead the country through the harsh winter and be able to face issues such as inflation, high energy prices and the Ukraine war. (Alexander Andreev, "[Bulgaria's election: What's in store ahead of a difficult winter?](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 29 September 2022)

## CYPRUS

### **Cyprus receives funding for the fisheries programme**

On 28 September the European Commission allotted EUR 38.8 million from the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) Programme to Cypriot Programme Fisheries 2021-2027 of Cyprus. This funding will be used to apply the EU Common Fisheries Policy and other priorities from the European Green Deal and help Cyprus to transition its fishing and aquaculture sector into a sustainable through innovation and digital growth. The fund is also aimed towards marine protection and boosting profits. The Commission also looks to invest in superior fishing vessels which have good safety, efficiency, and working environment and improve decarbonisation. Cyprus will now be able to comply with the landing obligation as the fund also looks to advance IT tools and their use. ("[European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund 2021-2027: Commission adopts €38.3 million programme for Cyprus](#)", *ec.europa.eu*, 28 September 2022)

## THE CZECH REPUBLIC

### **Receives fund to cutdown coal usage**

On 26 September, European Commission announced "Just Transition Fund (JTF)" programme, under which the Czech Republic will get a grant of EUR 1.64 billion to phase

out from using coal by 2033. The fund is also aimed to help in transition of the country to climate neutrality. The programme is also expected to maintain the 21,000 jobs which is dependent on carbon-intensive industries. According to Vice-President for the European Green Deal: "Czechia is a country with a rich industrial tradition and a promising future. Together with the Modernisation Fund, the Czech Just Transition Plan will help deliver a fair transition to climate neutrality, especially for the people in Karlovasky, Ustecky, and Moravskoslezsky regions." ("[EU Cohesion Policy: €1.64 billion for a just climate transition in Czechia](#)," *European Commission*, 26 September 2022)

### **Government survives no-confidence motion**

On 02 September, Czech Republic's ruling coalition government survived a parliamentary no-confidence motion. The motion had been called by the opposition MPs accusing the government of not taking adequate steps to help people and businesses cope with high prices of electricity and natural gas. 84 parliamentarians voted for the motion, but it fell 17 votes short of the majority required. The Prime Minister, Petr Fiala defended the government's move to provide each household an average of EUR 612 in the upcoming winter months. He mentioned that the government was working on further steps to mitigate the rising prices. Fiala also said that an emergency EU meeting would be called to discuss a more united solution to the crisis. ("[Czech government survives no-confidence vote over energy crisis](#)," *Euronews*, 02 September 2022)

## ESTONIA

### **Estonia's defence budget to exceed 2.7 per cent of its GDP says Defence Minister**

On 21 September, *ERR* reported on the remarks on Gross Domestic Product, Defense Minister Hanno Pevkur on defence spending. In his recent interview, Pevkur said that Estonia's defence spending which was at 2.7 or 2.8 per cent was expected to increase. He said that there was no immediate need for anti-ballistic missiles, but in the future Estonia will improve its air defence with anti-ballistic missile capability. ("[Minister:](#)

Defense spending to rise to at least 2.7 percent of GDP in 2023," *ERR*, 21 September 2022)

### **Estonia's energy production incapable of meeting domestic demand, says Eesti Energia**

On 13 September, Estonia's state-owned energy company Eesti Energia said that during peak hours, Estonia is incapable of producing enough electricity to meet its domestic demands. This contradicts electricity and gas system operator, Elering's previous statement about how Estonia can cover its own needs. The Deputy Chancellor for energy at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications had also previously guaranteed that Estonia can take care of its own energy requirements. Currently, Estonia needs approximately 1600 megawatts of energy, while its production capacity is 1700 megawatts. The chairman of Eesti Energia, Andres Vainola said that even if Estonia's total production is greater than its consumption, all stations producing at maximum capacity is unrealistic. However, Vainola also mentioned that this shortage may not be a major concern for the country as they remain connected to the Nordic electricity market. ("Eesti Energia: Estonia cannot produce enough electricity during peak hours," *ERR*, 14 September 2022)

## **FRANCE**

### **2023 Budget to be released**

On 26 September, the French Finance Minister is expected to reveal the 2023 budget. The promise of the ruling administration is to bring the government budget down by three per cent by 2027. For which spendings have to be increased to provide subsidies for energy bills and keep customers away from inflation, to do that government aims to keep the energy price limited to 15 per cent. French President Emmanuel Macron is expected to increase the retirement age from to 62 to 65 which might trigger strikes and protests. The budget will be a decider for France's economic performance. ("The world in brief," *The Economist*," 26 September 2022)

### **France to extend deadline to construct overdue renewable projects**

On 23 September, France changed its rules on biogas projects, regulated tariffs for inflations and extended deadlines for the construction of the projects to deal with arrears of farm investments. France's President Emmanuel Macron promised to ensure the renewable projects start quickly to counter the energy crisis induced by the war in Ukraine. Even though France is the EU's largest agricultural producer, the development of farm biogas using crops and animal manure has been slow due to local environmental concerns and administrative delays. France has 920 biogas projects in total under development, four per cent of the which is its annual demand. The extension of another 18 months and subsidized tariff benefits will be given to renewable developers as announced in the decree. ("France tries to ease farm biogas backlog in renewable energy push," *Reuters*, 23 September 2022)

### **France inaugurates first offshore wind farm**

On 22 September, France's President Macron visited Saint-Nazaire, to inaugurate its first offshore wind farm. The farm has 80 turbines and is the first of the 50 such facilities that France aims to build by 2050. In comparison to other European states, France has been lagging behind in terms of energy production as it tries to become more independent with their electricity production. While around 67 per cent of France's electricity is produced by nuclear power, France is also aiming to increase its share of energy from renewable sources to 23 per cent by 2023. Currently, France has managed to reach only 19 per cent putting it in 17<sup>th</sup> position in the EU, where the average of the 27 member-states is 22 per cent. ("Macron opens France's first offshore wind farm amid European energy crisis," *France 24*, 22 September 2022)

### **SNCTA air traffic control union strike pushes French airlines to call off the flights**

On 17 September, important airlines of France, Ryanair, EasyJet, Air France and British Airways announced the cancellation of flights upon the SNCTA air traffic control union strike. Upon dissatisfaction over wages, increasing cost-of

living and recruitment, the union launched strike which brought thousands of passengers to halt from travelling. Ryanair operations director, Ryanair operations director said: "It is time that the European Union step in and protect overflights so that European passengers are not repeatedly held to ransom by a tiny French air traffic control union." The French Aviation authority is expected to take help from European air travel regulator Eurocontrol to prevent the airline from using the its air space to ensure the proceedings of Queen's ceremonial procession. ("[French air traffic control strike affects thousands of passengers](#)," *BBC*, 16 September 2022)

### **France's influential director in 1950's Jean-Luc Goddard passes away**

On 13 September, one of the world's most iconic directors, Jean-Luc Godard, passed away at 91. He was a cinematographer, against the tradition of formulaic storytelling. Starting his career as a movie critic, Godard started directing movies in 1954 with "Operation Concrete" His movie, "Breathless" rejected conventional styles of narration, using frequent jump-cuts that mixed philosophical discussions with action scenes. His work was uncompromised to left-wing political views and has influenced some of global cinema's greatest directors like Quentin Tarantino, Bernardo Bertolucci, Brian De Palma, and Jonathan Demme. Godard, passed away in Switzerland, where he was born and brought up. The medical report released in a statement by his family said that the director had "multiple invalidating pathologies" and had died by assisted suicide, which is legal in Switzerland. The president of the Swiss Cinematheque, Frederic Maire said: "There's a bit of Godard in nearly all films today," while Cannes Film Festival Director, Thierry Fremaux said: "...sad, sad — immensely so." France's president Emmanuel Macron also expressed his condolence, saying: "We have lost a national treasure, the eye of a genius." (Jamey Keaton and Thomas Adamson, "[Iconic French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard dead at 91](#)," *AP News*, 13 September 2022)

### **National debate launched to legalize euthanasia**

On 13 September, French President Emmanuel Macron launched a national debate on the possibility of legalising euthanasia. The debate to broaden end-of-life options comes after the state's National Consultative Ethics Committee (CCNE) ruled that "active assistance in dying" could apply to France if done under certified guidelines. A body of citizens will now be commissioned to coordinate with health care workers; local debates will be organized in several French regions. The government will also hold parallel discussions with parliamentarians from all political parties to find the broadest consensus, it will deliver its findings in March 2023, leading to a vote or a referendum in the parliament. While euthanasia is legal in Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, and Switzerland, under certain conditions. As per a law passed in 2016 in France, doctors are allowed to keep terminally ill patients sedated but assisted death is not yet legal. ("[France launches national debate on legalising euthanasia](#)," *Euronews*, 13 September 2022)

### **GERMANY**

#### **New measures introduced towards helping electricity production from renewable energy resources**

On 27 September, the European Commission approved three new measures to aid electricity production from renewable energy sources in Germany. The three measures are, first, change to sliding market premium in the payment structure for innovation tenders. Second, financial incentives for consumers to invest in small rooftop solar photovoltaic installations. Three, additional round of ground-based and rooftop solar photovoltaic tenders in 2022. These measures add-on to the German Renewable Energy Act and help towards realising Germany's environmental targets and the EU's objectives with respect to the European Green Deal. Assessed under the EU State aid rules, the commission observed that the aid is necessary and fitting to promote the use of renewable energy sources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The aid is observed to be balanced and that the positive effects of the measures offset its negative effects. ("[Commission approves additional German measures to support electricity production](#)")

from renewable energy sources , *ec.europa.eu*, 27 September 2022)

### **Leak reported in Germany's nuclear power plant**

On 19 September, one of Europe's largest energy network operators, E.ON informed Germany's Federal government that the Isar 2 nuclear power plant has a leak at the site in Bavaria. The leak will not affect civil society or public safety. However, it is one of the plants that the German government plans to keep on standby beyond 2022, due to the impending energy crisis. The Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection Ministry said that they were confident that Isar 2 would be able to contribute to Germany's power supply after 31 December, if a weeklong maintenance period in October was successfully conducted. ("German nuclear reactor leak poses no safety threat but complicates plans," *Deutsche Welle*, 19 September 2022)

### **Germany acquires a subsidiary of Rosneft to ensure gas supply**

On 16 September, Germany took control of the Russian oil company Rosneft's subsidiary following fears of supply disruption due to sanctions placed on Russia. German Rosneft is one of the largest oil processing companies in Germany. It refines the crude fuel that Germany gets from non-Russian sources. To ensure the future of German Rosneft and to address the energy supply security, the company is placed under the "trust administration" of the state regulator to ensure the future of German Rosneft and address the energy supply security. The government aims to take the MiRo refinery in Karlsruhe and the Bayernoil site in Vohburg under its control. (Charlie Cooper, "Germany takes over Rosneft subsidiary to secure fuel supplies," *POLITICO*, 16 September 2022)

### **Germany's EUR nine travel ticket scheme comes to an end**

On 31 August, Germany's EUR nine transit scheme for internal travel ended. From June, people in Germany who used regional or local public transport as many times as required, at a fixed rate. A total of 52 million tickets have been sold due to this scheme. Introduced to support

citizens with the rising prices fuel and transport prices, the tickets cost the federal government over EUR 2.5 billion in subsidies. Though the German Transport Association said that the scheme would lead to a reduction of 1.8 million tonnes in carbon dioxide emissions, the estimation remain to be disputed. However, the move was a political and social success as in August, 17 per cent of users switched from personal to public transport. (Jenny Hill, "Germans say goodbye to summer of €9 travel tickets," *BBC*, 31 August 2022)

### **GREECE**

#### **Greece signs a deal with Total Energies for gas supply in winter**

On 29 September, Greece's largest gas utility company, DEPA Commercial, signed a deal with the French energy firm Total Energies, to receive LNG from France, in the upcoming winter if any need arises. The agreement states that Greece will receive two LNG cargoes monthly for five months. As per the agreement, Greece would buy the LNG at a benchmark price. The deal is Greece's measure toward decreasing Russian gas dependency as it receives Russian gas through the Turk Stream pipeline. According to the Greek Energy Ministry, Greece would receive ten terawatt-hours of energy for five months and has the right to reject the purchase, after paying the cancellation fee. ("Greek utility DEPA clinches winter LNG deal with TotalEnergies," *ekathimerini*, 29 September 2022)

#### **Prime Minister aims to keep communication lines with Turkey open**

On 11 September, Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that Greece aimed to keep communication channels with Turkey functional, even after "unacceptable" comments by Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Earlier, Erdogan accused Greece for occupying few demilitarized islands in the Aegean Sea, which has been a historic point of contention between the states. He also said that Turkey was ready to take necessary steps against Greece, when it saw fit. In response, Mitsotakis took a more moderate stance whereby he did not foresee an escalation of the conflict into an armed one. He said: "I don't believe this will ever happen. And if, God forbid, it happened,

Turkey would receive an absolutely devastating response. And I think they know it very well... the competence of the Greek [armed] forces." ("Greek PM wants to keep channels with Turkey open despite "unacceptable" comments," *Reuters*, 11 September 2022)

### **Germany to keep two nuclear power plants functional**

On 05 September, Germany's Economics and Climate Protection Minister, Robert Habeck said that Germany will keep two nuclear power plants on standby to prevent an energy shortage in the winter. Germany had originally committed to phasing out the power source by the end of this year. However, the situation in Ukraine and Russia's responses to the sanctions have increased Germany's risk of an energy shortage. The announcement came after a stress test was conducted on the country's electricity grid, following the summer droughts, the nuclear power problems faced by France, and the current crisis of the energy market in Europe. After the test, Habeck informed that while there was no imminent danger of major shortages, Germany will keep the Isar 2 and Neckarwestheim plants open to prevent a crisis in the winter. ("Germany to keep two nuclear power plants on standby in case of energy shortage," *Euronews*, 06 September 2022)

## **HUNGARY**

### **Hungary introduces stricter abortion laws**

On 13 September, Hungary's government tightened its abortion rules. The new rules will require pregnant women to listen to the fetus's heartbeat or other valid signs of life before having an abortion, thus making the process of pursuing a termination more bureaucratic. Doctors will have also to submit a report confirming that this has been done before issuing abortions. The new rules will come into effect from 15 September. Hungary's government has blamed the low birth rates in the country on increased rates of women in higher education. The stricter abortion law is thus in keeping with the promotion of traditional family values as forwarded by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's right-wing

government. (Malu Cursino, "Hungary decrees tighter abortion rules," *BBC*, 13 September 2022)

### **Hungary to introduce anti-corruption body to unlock EU funds**

On 06 September, in the government's official gazette, Hungary said that it will create an anti-corruption authority and a network of non-governmental organizations to supervise the spending of European Union funds. The European Commission, which has been withholding funds allocated to Hungary as a part of their COVID-19 recovery plan because of deadlocks on issues like corruption, migration, LGBTQ rights, and democratic standards. As a response, the anti-corruption body will be set up. The government will introduce the bill in parliament by 30 September and expects the body to be functional by 21 November. Prime Minister Viktor Orban's Chief of Staff, Gergely Gulyas said that through this body, Hungary will install a "stricter than ever" and transparent system for the use of EU funds. ("Hungary to set up anti-corruption body in bid to unlock EU funds," *Reuters*, 06 September 2022)

## **IRELAND**

### **Finance Minister reveals Irish budget for 2023**

On 27 September, Ireland's Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe presented the Budget for 2023 where he outlined tax giveaways. The surplus was a result of increased tax collection from corporations, especially from American tech companies. 2023 budget is aimed towards helping families and businesses as they face the cost-of-living crisis from the Ukraine war and COVID-19. With the passing of the budget, the citizens will be subject to pay 40 per cent more if the income exceeds EUR 40,000. In exchange, electricity credits, increase in social welfare, reduction of childcare fee, and a business support scheme to protect from the increase of energy prices. He said: "As one of the most open economies in the world, we benefit when things are going well internationally, but when they reverse, we are also one of the most exposed." (Shane Harrison, "Irish budget: Finance minister unveils tax 'giveaways'", *BBC*, 27 September 2022)

### **Ireland begins payment scheme for artists affected by the COVID-19 pandemic**

On 11 September, Ireland's government begun the scheme of paying 2000 artists, musicians, writers and performers EUR 325 per week. The move comes after the government plans for the Basic Income for the Arts scheme which was announced in January 2022. Recommended by the Irish Minister, Catherine Martin, the scheme is to mitigate the "unprecedented damage" caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 9000 people applied for the scheme of which 2000 were selected anonymously. The selected people will also be eligible for social welfare payments and other income sources as the scheme is not means tested. Which will be spent by the government of approximately EUR 25 million on the scheme, giving a breakdown of which Irish county the 2000 people reside in. Dublin recorded the highest number of recipients followed by Cork and Galway. (Robbie Meredith, "Covid-19: Irish government pays 'basic income' to artists." *BBC*, 11 September 2022)

### **ITALY**

#### **Final campaign of the right-wing coalition ends**

On 23 September, the conservative parties held a final campaign to solidify their victory before the elections in Italy. Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy, Matteo Salvini's League and Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia joined hands in the campaign, increasing their supporters among Italian voters. They discussed anti-abortion and blocking migrants. The supporter of Meloni stated that her unwavering nature and coherence are the characteristics that the voters trust. However, the Five Star Movement Party saw its revival in Southern Italy in the later part of the election. The support for the Five Star Movement has increased by 15 to 16 per cent in Southern Italy. Northern Italy still supports Meloni and the right-wing coalition. (Angela Giuffrida and Lorenzo Tondo, "Italian rightwing coalition makes final push before election." *The Guardian*, 23 September 2022)

#### **Italy's upcoming elections likely to witness a revival of the Five Star**

### **Movement**

On 22 September, *Euronews* reported on the likelihood of the revival of the Five Star Movement in Italy, after Giuseppe Conte's resignation as Italy's prime minister in 2021. Criticized heavily for the way Conte handled Italy's COVID 19 response, he also was a hardliner on issues like security, immigration and trade. In Italy's upcoming general elections, Conte is leading the Five Star Movement, having taken over the party's presidency from Luigi di Maio in 2021. As the Five Star Movement forms a minor party in the election race, Conte hopes to win over the electorate with mandates like scrapping the regional business tax and introducing a minimum wage. ("Giuseppe Conte: Italy's ex-PM bids to revive Five Star Movement." *Euronews*, 22 September 2022)

#### **Floods in Italy due to high temperatures and drought conditions**

On 15 September, Italy experienced "torrential rain" which resulted in flooding of rivers and streams into the coastal towns near capital of Ancona. According to the report from the local, rescue workers have been searching and carrying out operations to secure those caught in the floods. Till now 10 are reported to be dead, 50 injured with hypothermia and 180 firefighters are present in the rescue operations. The cause of such extreme weather was found to be due to increasing temperatures and persisting drought conditions. ("Italy: Floods and rain kill at least 10 overnight – officials." *BBC*, 16 September 2022)

#### **Meloni and Salvini clash over energy crisis measures**

On 15 September, the rift within the right-wing coalition (conservative alliance) between Giorgia Meloni of the Brothers of Italy Party and Matteo Salvini of the Lega Nord Party became apparent over energy crisis debate. While Salvini proposed on borrowing of EUR 30 billion to help Italy's low-income households and businesses struck from soaring energy prices. Meloni argued that Italy being the second most debt-ridden country in the Eurozone and further borrowing would put the next generation under financial stress. She also said that the energy crisis had triggered temporary market speculation and would

remain temporary pass over. The support for Meloni's Brothers of Italy party due to her straight forwardness and her stand to not join Prime Minister Mario Dragi. (Crispian Balmer, "[Italy's Meloni clashes with ally Salvini over energy crisis](#)," *Reuters*, 15 September 2022)

### **Industrial compound outside Milan catches fire**

On 07 September, a massive fire broke out at the Nitrolchimica company, a chemical plant outside of Milan. The company deals with solvent recovery and hazardous waste disposal and has liquid solvents in large quantities, which is suspected to be the fire's origin. Three people were seriously injured, and 15 suffered minor injuries. The smoke emerging from the fire could be seen 10 kilometers away from the burnt site. Fire brigades were called to the area. During the initial investigation, there were no signs of environmental hazard but the situation is expected to change depending on the speed of the clean-up and the weather. (Elizabeth Schumacher, "[Italy: Major fire, injuries at chemical plant outside Milan](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 07 September 2022)

## **LATVIA**

### **Riga houses will have reduced heating temperatures to cut cost and energy usage**

On 17 September *ENG.LSM.lv* reported on the measures taken by Latvia's housing industry to tackle the rising prices and scarcity of energy. The Rigas Namu Parvaldnieks (RNP), which manages most apartments in Riga said that it will reduce heating temperatures for the buildings by one to two degrees Celsius. The reduction is expected to save costs by five to ten per cent. Current regulation stipulates that heating temperatures cannot be lesser than 18 degrees. However, a board member of the Jurmala City District Heating Company, Valdis Vitols alleged that given how outdated the heating systems in most of these buildings are, it will be difficult to ensure a uniform temperature in all buildings. ("[Many Riga residents will have cooler homes this winter](#)," *eng.lsm.lv*, 17 September 2022)

### **Latvia installs border-fence with Belarus to prevent illegal crossings**

On 14 September, the State Real Estate of Latvia announced the border fence being constructed on the Latvia-Belarus border to prevent the illegal border crossing. Till now, five kilometers of the fence has been erected and construction work in 28.1 kilometers of the 57 kilometers long deforested border has been completed. It is expected that as the deforested areas increase, the rate of building the fence will also increase to up to one kilometer per day. Additionally, four bridges have also been built over several shared rivers that run along the border and the technical specifications for the third phase called Daugava is being developed. ("[Five kilometers of fence constructed on Latvia-Belarus border](#)," *eng.lsm.lv*, 14 September 2022)

## **MOLDOVA**

### **Protests erupt in Moldova over high energy prices; demands resignation of government**

On 18 September, Moldovans gathered in Chisinau to protests against the high inflation and rising prices of energy. *Reuters* reported the number of people in the city's main square to be around 20,000, but the police estimated 6,500 people. The protest was primarily against the resignation of the pro-Western President Maia Sandu and her government. It accused Sandu on failing to tackle the rising energy prices, which increased by 50 per cent in August and by an additional 29 per cent in September. Inflation rate in Moldova is at 34.3 per cent and interest rates are 21.5 per cent. A member of the opposition Sor Party, Dinu Turcanu said: "Moldova is now in clinical death, to which the current authorities have brought it." (Alexander Tanas, "[Thousands take part in anti-government protest in Moldova](#)," *Reuters*, 19 September 2022)

## **MONTENEGRO**

### **Demands foreign consultants to solve murder and attack cases on journalists**

On 22 September, a minister without a portfolio in Montenegro, Zoran Miljanic said that they have asked foreign help to solve the old cases of attacks on journalists. Miljanic informed that experts from the US

and the UK, especially from intelligence services like the FBI will consult with Montenegrin authorities to solve these cases. Montenegro has historically faced an issue with establishing an environment conducive for investigative journalism and media freedom. The European Commission's 2021 progress report and US State Department's March report on human rights also pointed this problem out. Miljanic said that the first case to be discussed would be editor-in-chief and owner of the daily newspaper Dan, Dusko Jovanovic's murder in 2004, which has still not been closed.

### **FBI team to look into Montenegro cyberattack**

On 31 August, Montenegro's Internal Affairs Ministry announced that a team of FBI cyber experts will come to the country to investigate the massive, coordinated attack on the government and its services. A combination of ransomware and distributed denial-of-service attacks were conducted on Montenegro's government services and state infrastructure. Because of the attack, the online government services remained unreachable, and the state's electrical utility switched to manual control; water supply systems and transportation services were also affected. The Director of the Directorate for Information Security, Dusan Polovic, mentioned that 150 computers were infected with malware, at a dozen state institutions. A cybercriminal extortion gang that included Russian speakers claimed responsibility for part of the attack. They said that a ransomware called Cuba was used. The Agency for National Security in Montenegro blamed the attack on Russia, though it did not provide any evidence. However, officials maintain Russia has motive for the attack, as Montenegro, a former Russia-ally, joined NATO in 2017. It also joined the western sanctions against Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. (Predrag Milic, "[FBI's team to investigate massive cyberattack in Montenegro](#)," *AP News*, 31 August 2022)

### **NORTHERN IRELAND**

#### **Census reveals more Catholics than Protestants for first time**

On 22 September, Northern Ireland released data from the 2021 census saying that for

the first time, Catholics outnumber Protestants in the state. According to the census, 43.4 per cent of the population are from Protestant or other Christian background, while 43.48 are Catholic or from a Catholic background. Protestants are the group that support the unionist sentiment and want to safeguard Northern Ireland's connection with the UK, while the Catholics, who are pro-Irish want to unite with the Republic of Ireland. While the difference between the two groups is not major, it might influence the results of a referendum, if one is conducted. (Rory Carroll, "[Catholics outnumber Protestants in Northern Ireland for first time](#)," *The Guardian*, 22 September 2022)

### **POLAND**

#### **Polish activists help the abandoned non-Ukrainian refugees near the border with Belarus**

On 21 September, *Deutsche Welle* reported that Poland is pushing back refugees other than Ukrainians. The Afghans, Syrians, and Iraqis who fly to Belarus get stuck in the Bialowieza Forest, near the Polish border, due to Poland's police and military force pushing back the refugees. These refugees are forced to cross the border illegally due to the government's strict rules against them. The local human right activists from the town of Hajnowka near the forest that borders Belarus has been trying to help out the asylum seekers stuck in the forest by providing them with necessary food, healthcare, warm blankets and legal aid to the refugees. However, the government and other Polish criticize the efforts undertaken by the activists and harass them for their work with the migrants. (Jacek Lepairz, "[Poland's border wall hasn't stopped the flow of migrants from Belarus](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 21 September 2022)

### **RUSSIA**

#### **School shooting in Izhevsk claims at least 15 lives**

On 26 September, Izhevsk in Russia, witnessed a school shooting. At least 15 people were killed and 24 were wounded. This adds to the rising cases of school shootings in Russia over recent years. Authorities have reported that of the 15 dead, 11 victims were children and 4 were

adults. According to *Deutsche Welle*, the shooter has committed suicide and his body has now been found by the police. He was reportedly a student at the school and was armed with two pistols and significant ammunition. Investigations are underway to determine the motive and if he harbored neofascist views and the Nazi ideology. ("Russia: Children killed in shooting at school in Izhevsk," *Deutsche Welle*, 26 September 2022)

## SERBIA

### Police arrests activists after clashes reported in EuroPride

On 17 September, Serbia's police made over 64 arrests from the people who were taking part in Belgrade's EuroPride march. The event, which is the pinnacle of the EuroPride programme, was banned by Serbia's interiors ministry due to security concerns. However, LGBTQ+ activists said that they would conduct the march unofficially, even after right-wing groups threatened to hold protests. Despite the ban, the demonstrators marched from the constitutional court to a nearby park, which was a much shorter route than the original route planned by EuroPride. Other than the sporadic clashes between the demonstrators and the police, the march took place without any serious altercations. ("Serbian police arrest dozens as Belgrade EuroPride marchers defy ban," *The Guardian*, 17 September)

### Thousands protest in Belgrade to ban EuroPride

On 11 September, thousands of religious and right-wing activists marched through Belgrade seeking a ban on EuroPride, which is scheduled to be held in Serbia. Homosexuality is legal in the state while same-sex marriages are banned and LGBTQ+ people face discrimination, harassment and antagonistic behavior. While the march was canceled by Aleksandar Vucic's government, the organizers of the event have planned to still go ahead. The head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Porfirije said: "They want to desecrate the sanctity of marriage and the family and impose an unnatural union as a substitute for marriage." (Alice Taylor "Thousands march in Belgrade against EuroPride," *Euractive*, 12 September 2022)

## SPAIN

### Wealthiest to be taxed one percent to ease inflation

On 22 September, Spain's government announced a temporary tax on the one per cent of the wealthiest of Spain's population. The tax is a part of the various measures taken by the government to help citizens deal with rising inflation, like providing stipends to students to stay in school, making public transport free and subsidizing petrol. Finance Minister Maria Jesus Montero said that it was important for the government to finance aid to ease the pressure of inflation on the "middle class and workers." However, Montero or her ministry has not yet furnished the details of how much the tax rate would be. ("Spain plans temporary wealth tax amid high inflation," *Deutsche Welle*, 22 September 2022)

### Spain's Mar Menor lagoon gets personhood status for increased protection

On 21 September, Europe's largest salt-water lagoon in Spain, the Mer Menor lagoon was granted personhood status. The World Wildlife Fund marks the lagoon as a home to various species of fish, seahorse and the endangered European eel. However, periodic die-offs of marine life in the lagoon has been common for many years because of poor sewage systems, fertilizers, and discharge from mining activities. Thus, over 640,000 people supported a petition to safeguard the lagoon by granting it personhood status, and the Spanish Senate ratified it. The personhood status codifies that the lagoon has a right to "to exist as an ecosystem and to evolve naturally", and to its protection, conservation and restoration. Caretakers who work in the area, including local officials, citizens and scientists, will now represent the 1600 square kilometres of the lagoon. ("Endangered Mar Menor lagoon in Spain granted legal status as a person," *The Guardian*, 21 September 2022; Angela Symons, "Spain makes history by giving personhood status to salt-water lagoon, thanks to 600,000 citizens," *Euronews*, 22 September 2022)

### Majority vote against creating windfall taxes on energy firms

On 13 September, Spain's People's Party, along with the Vox and Ciudadanos, voted in Congress against levying windfall taxes after the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, announced that all EU countries must collect taxes from profiting energy companies and looking after the needs of low-income households with the same money. The left agreed with von der Leyen's statement, whereas the People's Party disagreed with her saying that it doubts the funds would go to the needy. The PP is against the idea of filling the pockets of Spain's President Pedro Sanchez. Sanchez responded that the tax would only be levied on the large companies and said, "We govern for the majority, and when you did, you put all the institutions at the service of a powerful minority,". The Spanish Congress is against creating new taxes and will follow the Iberian exception to meet the energy crisis. (Xose Hermida, "[The European right amends the plan to the Feijóo PP for the tax on energy](#)," *El Pais*, 14 September 2022)

### **Famous novelist Javier Marias passes away at 70**

On 11 September, one of Spain's most prolific writers, Javier Marias passed away at the age of 70. He was ill with pneumonia, after contracting a bout of COVID-19 earlier. His publisher, Alfaguara announced the news in a brief statement. Born in 1951, Marias was touted by many as a candidate for the Nobel Prize for Literature. He has penned 16 novels and was also a member of Spain's Royal Academy and an international member of the UK's Royal Society of Literature. However, unwilling to be favoured by any particular government, he refused Spain's EUR 20,000 national narrative prize for his novel, "The Infatuations," in 2012. Condolences for the author poured in after his passing. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez hailed Marias as "one of the great writers of our time." Fellow writers like Rosa Montero, Eduardo Mendoza and the editor-in-chief of *El Pais*, Pepa Bueno also expressed their condolences about Marias's passing. ("[Spain: Award-winning author Javier Marias dies aged 70](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 11 September 2022; Sam Jones, "[Spanish novelist Javier Marias dies at home in Madrid aged 70](#)," *The Guardian*, 11 September 2022)

### **SWEDEN**

#### **Moderate Party's Ulf Kristersson to form a new government**

On 19 September, the Speaker of Sweden's parliament, Anders Norlen said that the Moderate Party's leader, Ulf Kristersson will try to form the next government, after the left-wing secured the majority in the general elections. The coalition of the Moderates, Sweden Democrats, Christian Democrats and Liberals narrowly edged past the centre-left by winning 176 out of 349 seats in the Parliament. Norlen said that a deadline has not been set yet for Kristersson to conduct his deliberations and conclude the mandate he has been given. However, he expects the process to take lesser time than in 2018 when it took 134 days to establish a new government. (Leila Nezirevic, "[Swedish parties begin talks on government formation](#)," *Anadolu Agency*, 19 September 2022; "[Sweden's Moderate Party leader gets nod to try form a new government](#)," *Reuters*, 19 September 2022)

#### **Rise of the far-right in Sweden causing concerns among its citizens amid internal problems**

On 09 September, the recent polls in Sweden showed the rise of the far-right Sweden Democrats. The people are afraid that the far right might win even though the left-wing Social Democrats are at the lead currently. The right-wing parties, the conservatives, liberals, and Christian-Democrats, are seen backing the far-right Sweden Democrats. The major worries that the people of Sweden in their country are climate change, increasing gang violence and tough immigration policies. The anti-immigrant attitude that the Sweden Democrats have is also concerning to the people. Due to slow integration, there have been a lot of gangs and gun violence in the country. The polling is set to occur on 11 September. (Priyanka Shankar, "[Swedish elections: What's at stake](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 09 September 2022)

### **SWITZERLAND**

#### **Retirement age limit extended for women**

On 25 September, in the voting held by the government the people voted in favour for the reform in government's pension plan. With the majority of votes of 50.57 per cent, the retirement age will be pushed from 64 to

65 in line with men. Earlier voting attempts failed when held on in 2004 and 2017, upon criticisms from trade-unions, and left-leaning political parties argument on discrimination of women. From the recent voting, major share of votes came from German speaking residing in Switzerland. ([“Swiss voters support increase in women's retirement age,” Deutsche Welle](#), 25 September 2022)

### **Switzerland proposes to install nuclear waste storage facility near Germany's border**

On 10 September, Switzerland's National Cooperative for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste (Nagra) proposed the setting up of a nuclear waste storage facility on the border with Germany. The Federal Office of Energy said that Nördlich Lägern, to the north of Zurich has been suggested as the site for the facility. Nagra, which comprises of representatives of power plants and the government deals with the issue of disposal of radioactive wastes. According to an official at Nagra, Patrick Struder, the waste, sourced from five Swiss nuclear power plants will be stored in opalinus clay and lowered several hundred metres underground. However, the storage facility which will be a deep geological repository for spent nuclear fuel and other radioactive waste will need to be approved by Switzerland's government and parliament, after Nagra submits a planning application by 2024. Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment has expressed concerns about the proximity of the repository to the German border. A representative from the German coordination office for the planned waste facility said that nuclear safety and uncontaminated drinking water supply must be looked into before the site is set up. ([“Switzerland plans controversial nuclear waste storage facility near German border,” Deutsche Welle](#), 10 September 2022)

### **THE NETHERLANDS**

#### **The number of asylum applications equals the levels of the 2015 migrant crisis**

On 28 September new data was released on the number of pending applications before the Immigration and Naturalisation Service

(IND) which reflected the 2015 data. Around 30,000 applications have been received in the Netherlands, which are yet to be responded. The lag was due to lack of funds to IND resulting lay off of staff. The main reasons for this crisis is from Netherlands housing crisis and refusal of some localities to house migrants for the same. There has been a call for a review of the asylum-granting system of the Netherlands and the preferential treatment of Ukraine asylum applicants. ([“Backlog for Dutch asylum applicants as high as during the 2015 migrant crisis”](#), *euronews*, 28 September 2022)

### **THE UK**

#### **The UK celebrates World Maritime Day**

On 29 September, the UK celebrated World Maritime Day. Three developments were announced by the Transport ministry regarding the celebrations. First, the winners of the second round of competition were announced where GBP 12 million was divided between 121 UK corporations. Second, the third leg of the competition was launched by the Transport Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan. GBP 60 million for the same and will start from April 2023 and go on till March 2025. GBP 60 million for the same and will start from April 2023 and go on till March 2025. The competition is held to encourage innovations in maritime technology with a focus on emission-free technology and comes under UK's plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Third, an additional GBP 206 million was given to support the UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (SHORE) project which aims to increase maritime jobs and zero emission sailing. ([“UK marks World Maritime Day with £60 million boost for clean shipping,” gov.uk](#), 29 September 2022)

#### **Bank of England intervenes to prevent economic fallout but Treasury reject the move**

On 28 September the Bank of England intervened in the financial market to prevent a financial crisis. The Bank announced that it will buy the necessary amount of government bonds to maintain interest rates and return orders in the markets. The tax cuts amounting to USD 45 billion announced on 23 September created panic among investors as the government planned to

borrow funds to finance the budget leading to fall in the pound value and increased borrowing costs. The Bank's plan of buying bonds is to prevent an economic fallout and to avoid increase in interest rates to protect the pound and curb inflation. These uncertainties are said to hit homeowners greatly as they will be paying more mortgages in the coming days. The Treasury rejected the bank's move and said that the government will still go forward with the budget as it deems to result in economic benefit. ("Bank of England intervenes to avert credit crunch, economic fallout", *Washington Post* & "Bank of England steps in to calm markets", *BBC*, 28 September 2022)

### **Pound hits record low against the dollar**

On 26 September, Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng, announced sweeping tax cuts as the pound sterling hit a record low close to USD1.08. The fall which comes at a time when there is growing concern about the increasing strength of the dollar will not only increase the cost of imports like oil which are pegged to the dollars oil but also have a raise inflation rates. The market has reacted by speculating an emergency increase in borrowing interest rate up to 5.5 per cent with reports of increasing costs of the UK government. UK's Prime Minister Liz Truss, the chancellor, and the Bank of England have refused to comment on the same. ("Pound hits record low after tax cut plans", *BBC*, 26 September 2022)

### **Kwarteng to keep cutting taxes to boost economic growth**

On 26 September, Kwasi Kwarteng announced the intention to cut more taxes to boost UK's economic growth. Kwarteng also proposed tax cuts across the board and emphasised the intention to review the tax system to make it simpler. The biggest package of tax cuts in 50 years was presented to the parliament, and marked as a "new era" of the UK economy. Kwarteng believes that a major change of direction was needed to revive economic growth. According to the plan, income tax and stamp duty on house purchases will be cut and planned rises in business tax will be scrapped. The cuts are introduced as measure against the recession in UK's

economy. (Tom Espiner, "Kwasi Kwarteng: I want to keep cutting taxes", *BBC*, 26 September 2022)

### **Fracking to be resumed due to energy crisis despite environmental concerns**

On 22 September, the UK government lifted the ban on fracking. The suspension was introduced in 2019 after fracking was linked to earth tremors and minor drilling. The decision to revoke the ban is accompanied by a review published by the British Geological Survey (BGS) which says that the understanding about the impacts of such drilling on tremors is limited. The move has triggered the activists and locals who had campaigned against fracking, who said that the government was willing to throw communities under the bus by forcing them to accept a higher degree of risk. Given the impending energy crisis, the Business and Energy Secretary Jacob Rees-Mogg responded to the allegation and said: "... tolerating a higher degree of risk and disturbance appears to us (the government) to be in the national interest given the circumstances." (Esme Stallard, "Fracking ban lifted, government announces", *BBC*, 22 September 2022)

### **London sees largest police operation due to Queen's funeral**

On 19 September, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the extensive police presence in the UK to coordinate Queen Elizabeth's funeral. The event, dubbed by the police as "Operation London Bridge is Down" is being attended by VIPs, members of royal families across the world, Commonwealth leaders, and several heads of state like US President Joe Biden and is the biggest single police operation in London's history. The Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Stuart Cundy said that the event was unprecedented. Helicopters and sharpshooters were dispatched and over 20,000 police officers are on duty to ensure the funeral runs smoothly. Nearly every police horse was also drafted to pay one last respect to the Queen. Cundy also asked the public to be vigilant and report any untoward incident to the police. He assured, "... All response will be proportionate and balanced, and [the police] will only take action when it's absolutely necessary." ("The

funeral of Queen Elizabeth II: An unprecedented police operation in London, *Deutsche Welle*, 19 September 2022)

### **Government plans to hand out North Sea oil and gas exploration licenses**

On 07 September, according to two sources, the UK government is expected to announce the issuance of dozens of North Sea gas and exploration licenses to increase domestic energy production. One source could not confirm the number of licenses, while the other speculated the total to be around 130. Liz Truss, the UK's newly appointed Prime Minister, had said in the leadership campaign that the solution to the rising energy prices was to boost domestic production. The decision to issue licences will be taken on 08 September 2022. The exploration will span around five to 10 years before the production starts, which does not seem to be a immediate relief to the rising energy prices. ("Exclusive: UK to announce dozens of new North Sea oil and gas licences -sources," *Reuters*, 08 September 2022)

### **Energy subsidy plan introduced by Liz Truss**

On 07 September, Prime Minister Liz Truss, announced the final details of her plan to tackle rising energy bills. The new plan is likely to cool the inflation but would increase the borrowing of the country up to GBP 100 billion. Her plan to ease the economic conditions of households and businesses that are likely to face a recession next year will make the UK take a loan. The tax cut promised is deemed to cost the UK government around GBP 179 billion. But Truss remains firmly against windfall taxes from profiting energy companies. The Sterling dropped down for the first time since 1985 due to economic hardships in the country. (Alistair Smout and David Milliken, "New UK leader Liz Truss finalizes huge power subsidy plan," *Reuters*, 08 September 2022)

### **Liz Truss takes over from Boris Johnson as UK Prime Minister**

On 06 September, Liz Truss took over the office of the UK's Prime Minister from Boris Johnson. She is the 56<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of the UK and the third female to do so. After the

transfer of responsibilities, Truss appointed a top team diverse in gender and ethnicity. Kwasi Kwarteng is appointed as the first Black Chancellor of the Exchequer; James Cleverly is the Foreign Secretary, and Suella Braverman, the Home Secretary. Therese Coffey is also the first female deputy prime minister. Truss inherits a series of tasks from Johnson, like curbing soaring prices, especially energy, and fixing the national health care system that is burdened by long waiting lists and staff shortages. She has also promised to boost the economy and ease the labor unrest in the country. After assuming office, Truss spoke to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and US President Joe Biden. Truss's office said that she spoke about the Ukraine war and defense cooperation with both Zelenskyy and Biden, and with Biden, she also discussed economic issues and maintaining the British-Irish Good Friday Agreement. (Danica Kirka and Jill Lawless, "New UK PM Truss vows to tackle energy crisis, ailing economy," *AP News*, 07 September 2022)

### **BBC released report on Boris Johnson's pledges**

On 31 August, *BBC* released an analysis about UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's time in office and if he has been able to deliver on his pledges. First, Johnson had pledged the recruitment of more police, nurses, and general practitioners (GP). In terms of recruitment of police officers, the government is two-thirds of the way to its goal, with one year to go. In terms of nurses, almost half the total number pledged has been reached, while for GPs, numbers have actually decreased by 314. Second Johnson had also pledged to increase the number of hospitals by 40 and also add 30,000 more homes per year. Of these 40 hospitals, 22 were rebuilding projects, 12 were new wings, three were the renovation of urgent care units and 3 were new hospitals. One of the 40 hospitals opened for patients in 2021 and six projects are under construction. In terms of houses, 242,700 dwellings were added in 2019-20, while the number fell to 216,490 in 2020-21. Third, the Brexit. Which has been achieved, but many issues like the Northern Ireland protocol and various financial services still remain unresolved. Fourth, Johnson had promised

to introduce the Australian-style points-based immigration system. This system has been installed, but the process has not been smooth-sailing. Fifth, economic reforms. No rise in rates of income tax, National Insurance, or VAT were some promises that Johnson made, but this manifesto was broken. The triple lock system for pensions has also been suspended. Only 0.5 per cent of the 0.7 per cent pledged gross national income has gone to international aid. Sixth, granting of full fiber broadband to all homes. While this manifesto was scaled back, there has been considerable progress on this with gigabyte coverage increasing from 10 percent in 2019 to 70 per cent. Seventh, in terms of dealing with COVID-19, the UK was the first country to approve a COVID-19 vaccine and had the fastest vaccine program until May 2021. In terms of growth in the G7, Johnson had promised to make the UK the fastest growing economy. While he managed that in certain timeframes, overall, the UK is in third place with 0.7 per cent growth. ("Boris Johnson resignation: Did the outgoing prime minister meet his pledges?," *BBC*, 31 August 2022)

## TURKEY

### **Turkish police attacked by Kurdish militants**

On 26 September police in the Mezitli district of Mersin were attacked by two alleged Kurdish militants who later killed themselves by discharging suicide bombs. A police officer and a civilian were wounded while a second police officer was killed. The two women militants were identified as associated with the outlawed Kurdistan Worker's Party. Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu while talking to the reporters said that the civilian hit by a stray bullet and the wounded police officer were not seriously hurt. The militant group is yet to respond. ("Kurdish militants attack Turkish police, kill themselves," *apnews*, 27 September)

### **Opposition parties create coalition amidst search for charismatic leader**

On 14 September, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the Turkey's opposition forming a successful coalition ahead of the 2023 Presidential elections. The name of alliance, translates to "Table of Six" and consists of six political parties- Republican People's Party

(CHP), the nationalist Good Party, the conservative Islamist Felicity Party, the Future Party, the Democracy and Progress Party and the Democrat Party. The coalition will aim to challenge the dominance of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development (AKP) Party and to reverse the state's presidential system, back to a parliamentary system. After the coalition, the Table of Six are the second-largest opposition in the country. CHP's head, Kemal Kilicdaroglu and two of CHP's winning mayors, Ekrem Imamoglu and Mansur Yavas are being nominated as the presidential candidates. However, against the wide popularity of Erdogan, the charisma and influence of these leaders are not enough to shift the electoral mandate. (Burak Ünveren, "Turkey's opposition desperately seeks an electable leader," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 September 2022)

## REGIONAL

### **Cheaper electric costs in Spain deemed unfair by the French aluminum industry**

On 29 September, *EURACTIV* reported on the French aluminum industry's complaint about the energy price cap in Spain being unfair for the rest of the European nations. Spain and Portugal had agreed with the European Commission to be an exception by creating a temporary energy price cap till 31 May 2023, thereby reducing consumer costs. As per the agreement, energy price was capped at EUR 50 per megawatt-hour. The move has been deemed unfair by the French aluminium industry as the rest of the continent is going through a hike in energy prices. They called for anti-dumping measures that do not let the exporters import large amounts of a product and flood the domestic industry with it. On this issue, a delegate from Aluminium France Federation, Cyrille Mounier advocated a gas price cap for all the countries, to establish a level playing field and to prevent French consumers from going to Spanish sources for supply. (Paul Messad and Vlad Makszimov, "French aluminium industry wants 'anti-dumping' measures over Spain's cheap electric," *EURACTIV*, 29 September 2022)

### **Slovakia helps Hungary with border protection against illegal migration**

On 28 September, Slovakia's Interior Minister Roman Mikulec said that his

country would help strengthen the Schengen borders in Hungary and Serbia to stop the entry of illegal migrants. He also said that if such backup is provided to Hungary and other European countries, Czech Republic and Austria would be able to lift the newly placed border controls on the Slovakian border. Additionally, he mentioned that if all Schengen countries act in a similar fashion, secondary migration into the EU can be curbed. However, the EU and the European Commission has ignored illegal migration issue, refusing to fund border protection with barbed wires and walls. ("Slovakia to Strengthen Border-protection Cooperation with Hungary," *Hungary today*, 29 September 2022)

### **The EU to monitor Greece for violation of the rule of law and wiretapping scandals**

On 28 September, the EU expressed concern about Greece's government wiretapping the opposition, thus harming the country's democracy. Greece's main opposition SYRIZA-PS party leader, Alexis Tsipras met with the European Commissioner for Values and European Transparency, Vera Jourova, and the President of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament, Juan Lopez Aguilar, in Brussels to discuss illegal surveillance done by the Greek government. The EU noted that Greece had not followed rule of law which is one of the main pillars of the EU's values. Earlier, in August, Greece's Prime Minister Kiriakos Mitsotakis admitted that the country's intelligence was wiretapping the opposition PASOK party leader Nikos Androulakis but denied having any knowledge about the same. . However due to the breach, the European Parliament and the Commission are closely monitoring the developments in the scandal and violations of the rule of law. (Ahmet Gencturk, "EU shares Greek opposition's concerns over wiretapping, worsening rule of law in country," *Anadolu Agency*, 29 September 2022)

### **Leaks in the Nord Stream pipeline found to last for a week**

On 27 September, new leaks were identified in the Nord Stream pipeline 1 and 2. According to the Danish and Swedish authorities, underwater attacks in the Baltic

Sea had resulted in damaging the pipelines leading to leakage of gas. They have predicted the leak to continue for "at least a week." Maritime agencies of Sweden and Denmark have issued fresh instructions for ships in this area and have also included warnings to aircraft flying over the Danish and Swedish economic zones in the Baltic Sea. Speculations have risen that Russia caused this leak by initiating underground explosions as a form of aggression towards the EU and intended as sabotage for the upcoming winter. While it is too early to say what caused these leaks, these speculations are not being dismissed by European leaders as they are of the view that multiple leaks could not be a coincidence. ("Nord Stream: Explosions recorded prior to discovery of major gas leaks," *euronews*, 27 September 2022)

### **Renewed checks at Czech border amidst a new migrant wave**

On 27 September, the Czech government announced new round of checks at the border shared with Slovakia which will be effective from 29 September. The checks will be conducted at 27 border crossings between the two countries for at least 10 days by 560 police and customs officers. These checks are to prevent people from crossing the border at any point except for farmers, foresters and fishermen working at the border areas. The Czech Interior Ministry said that it was necessary after 12,000 illegal migrants and 125 human smugglers in Czech territories were caught. The ministry identified most of them to be illegal migrants were from Syria and that the Czech Republic is viewed as a gateway to the West. Slovakia's government accepted this decision but has asked for a larger discussion at the EU level. ("Czechs to renew border checks amid new migrant wave," *apnews*, 27 September 2022)

### **The EU President pledges funding for food security, fighting diseases, biodiversity and women and youth rights**

On 26 September, after a week of discussions with world leaders and international partners, President Ursula von der Leyen pledged additional funds to fight

against the socio-economic challenges that have aggravated because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and rising climate and natural crisis. To step up the fight against diseases. EU has pledged EUR15 million to the Global Fund for fighting AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, EUR600 million for the global food security crisis, EUR45 million over 6 years to support sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide. ("Global Gateway: President von der Leyen announces funding for women and youth's rights, food security, fight against disease, and biodiversity," *ec.europa.eu*, 24 September 2022)

### **Poland becomes a target of Belarusian propaganda**

On 26 September, *Deutsche Welle* reported that the authoritarian regime under President Alexander Lukashenko was Poland in its latest propaganda by bringing up historical resentments. He believes that Warsaw-based media outlet, Nexta, founded by the Belarusian activist Stsiapan Putsila is behind the protests that erupted in August 2020 against his elections. Polish journalist Michal Potocki alleges that Lukashenko views the Polish ruling class Polish ruling class as exploitative and demands for reparations from when parts of Belarus were under Polish rule during the Soviet era. The Belarusian government has also taken steps to suppress any Polish organization in Belarus and has also shut down Polish schools. Moreover, any Belarusian citizen holding an identity card issued by the Poland has been ordered to report to the Belarusian authorities. (Tatiana Gargalyk, "Belarusian propaganda targets Poland," *Deutsche Welle*, 25 September 2022)

### **Nord Stream 2 pipeline leaks into the sea off the Danish coast**

On 26 September, the Danish maritime traffic agency suspects a gas leak overnight from the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. A large bubble field was spotted near Bornholm and the pressure in the pipeline dropped from 105 bars to seven bars. Ships have been asked to steer clear of a five-nautical mile radius off of Bornholm. Completed in late 2021, the pipeline was never in use but was filled with gas for technical operation. The

reason behind the drop in pressure has not yet been provided and an investigation is underway regarding the same. ("Nord Stream 2 pipeline leaks gas into sea off Danish coast," *Deutsche Welle*, 26 September 2022)

### **Germany pledges EUR 60 million to Moldova to tackle the energy crisis**

On 23 September, Germany promised EUR 60 million in funds to Moldova to elevate the energy crisis in the country. Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz met with Moldova's President Maia Sandu in Berlin to discuss supporting the economically affected Moldova. Moldova received praise from Germany's Development Minister Svenja Schulze for tackling reforms needed for the country's accession to the EU. The country is facing one of the worst economic crises in Europe, with inflation at 34.3 per cent and interest rate at 21.5 per cent. The West supporting President Sandu was blamed for the high inflation and soaring energy prices. Moldova is one of the victims of the effects of war in Ukraine, with the gas price surging twelvefold. ("Germany promises Moldova help with energy crisis," *Deutsche Welle*, 23 September 2022)

### **Modernization of the EU's electricity grid requires EUR 584 billion**

On 23 September, the European Commission aims to publish a plan to digitalise Europe's energy system and modernize the energy grid. The EU also plans to increase its renewable energy to be free from Russian gas dependency. The EU needs EUR 584 billion by 2030 for electricity grid investments. It supports electric vehicles, renewable energy, heat pumps and transitioning from fossil fuels. The EU also aims to meet its climate goals by reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55 per cent and having 45 per cent renewables by 2030. The draft of the plan stated that the EU needs 30 million zero-emission vehicles by 2030 and solar panels in every new home by 2029 to eliminate reliance on Russian fossil fuels and achieve the EU's climate targets. The digitalized energy grids will be flexible enough to adapt to renewable resources. (Kate Abnett, "EU's green shift depends on mammoth investment in energy grid,"

document says," Reuters, 23 September 2022)

### **European Commission report on importance of culture for sustainable development**

On 22 September, the European Commission published a report titled "Stormy Times: Nature and humans: Cultural courage for change", ahead of the UNESCO's World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development, scheduled from 28 to 30 September 2022. The report was prepared by 50 experts from 25 EU member-states who worked under the Open Method of Coordination under the European Commission. First, the report says that human development should factor in all facets of culture; second, it formulates a set of recommendations to better relations between humans and nature and use cultural imagination to develop a liveable, sustainable future. Third, it also mentions that future generations must be mobilised to meet this goal. ("Experts put forward recommendations on how to harness the power of culture for sustainable development," *ec.europa.eu*, 22 September 2022)

### **European Commission and France pledge donations to global funds**

On 22 September, at the UN General Assembly Summit, the European Commission announced that it would be donating EUR 715 million to Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It marks the largest donation to ever be given by the Commission. The amount has been allocated for the 2023-25 period and is an addition to the EUR 150 million already given by the commission to the Global Fund in 2022 for COVID 19 responses. Part of the donation will be reserved to promote research and development of new treatment, vaccines and mitigation of other transmittable diseases. Additionally, France's President Emmanuel Macron announced that France would give EUR 300 million to the Global Fund separately. (Clara Bauer-Babef, "EU to donate historic €715 million to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria," *Euractiv*, 22 September 2022)

### **EU's privacy supervisor sues European Parliament over Europol reform**

On 22 September, *POLITICO* reported on European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) filed a legal challenge with the Court of Justice of the EU. In January 2022, Europol was ordered by the EDP to delete data on individuals with no criminal records or links, after it had allegedly misused their personal data. However, in June, the MEPs enacted a mandate which legalized these practices the EDPS had deemed illegal. Thus, suing the European Parliament, the EDPS said: "The contested provisions establish a worrying precedent... rule of law and EDPS independence under threat." No response from the European Council or the Parliament has been received so far. (Vincent Manancourt, "EU privacy watchdog sues lawmakers over new Europol mandate," *POLITICO*, 22 September 2022)

### **Europe's parliamentarians urge the Commission to "make haste" with the EU-Taiwan investment deal**

On 21 September, 35 parliamentarians from Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark and Ukraine and the European Parliament wrote a joint letter to the EU's leadership like the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council European Commissioner for Trade and Foreign Policy Chief. The letter urges the Commission to kickstart the EU-Taiwan Bilateral Investment Agreement. The parliamentarians say that stronger ties with Taiwan would be beneficial in many regards. The letter says: "To deepen our relationship with our democratic Taiwanese friends would not only be mutually beneficial but also of great geo-economic importance, as the EU is greatly dependent on highly advanced semiconductors produced in Taiwan." Even though the EU follows the "One China" Policy, it maintains commercial relations with Taiwan, which is the EU's 12<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner in 2021. (Jorge Liboreiro, "European lawmakers issue joint appeal calling for EU-Taiwan investment deal," *Euronews*, 21 September 2022)

### **ECJ rules Germany's internet and phone service providers to stop retaining customer data**

On 20 September, the ECJ judged stating

Germany was not abiding the data retention rule of the EU. It ruled that Germany's internet and service providers were barred from storing customer information without reason and it can only save the info only under "severe threat to national security." German Justice Minister Marco Buschmann welcomed the rule and said that it would help it to bring new regulations to remove the "unjustified data retention" from Germany's Telecommunications Act, which mandated the service providers to store customer data. ("German data retention rules not compatible with EU law, says top court," *Deutsche Welle*, 20 September 2022)

### **European Council and Australia adopt a framework to boost political, security and economic partnership**

On 20 September, the European Council adopted a decision on concluding a framework agreement between the EU member states and Australia. The framework aims to boost the partnership between both in terms of democratic principles, human rights, rule of law, and international security and engage in matters relating to security policy, climate change, and trade. This is mainly targeted to establish links between governments, leaders, businesses, and civil society. ("EU-Australia: Council adopts decision for the conclusion of a framework agreement," [consilium.europa.eu](https://consilium.europa.eu), 20 September 2022)

### **Sweden and Finland participate in NATO's military committee meeting for the first time**

On 16 September, the NATO military committee met in Tallinn, Estonia to discuss on the deterrence and defence activities decided in the 2022 Madrid Summit. The meeting marked the first time that defence forces from Sweden and Finland were invited to take part. However, the head of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer said that Sweden and Finland can contribute in defence planning after all the member countries have ratified He mentioned that Sweden and Finland had been invited to "get acquainted to the procedures." On the same issue he added that with Sweden and Finland's accession, NATO will get more territory to defend and also have a longer border with Russia. He

said: "... But we also get Finland and Sweden's armed forces that are very capable to help guard that territory and longer border. Russia will get a longer border with NATO without extra troops." ("NATO Military Committee chair: New era in global security," *ERR News*, 18 September 2022)

### **Sweden considers contributing to defence capacity and security of Baltic region after NATO accession**

On 17 September *ERR News* published about a report issued by Sweden's defence forces about contributing to the security and defence of the Baltic region, once its accession procedure is complete. The report also mentioned that the planning of Sweden's post-accession activities have progressed "quite far." To maintain the security of the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Sweden can play a major role. It can contribute to NATO's Baltic Air Policing Mission based in Estonia and Lithuania. Moreover, it can also contribute to NATO's naval and ground forces stationed in the region. ("Portal: Sweden may contribute to Estonian defense once NATO member" *ERR News*, 17 September 2022)

### **Hungary to propose new law amidst EU's plan to suspend funding**

On 17 September, Victor Orban's Chief of Staff, Gergely Gulyas told reporters that Hungary will submit legislation to the parliament in the coming week to tackle corruption and a lack of transparency in government spending. The legislation will be to unlock the funding for Hungary from EU's cohesion fund. Gulyas said that in some areas, the government has accepted the European Commission's recommendations. In other areas, it has reached a compromise with the Commission that is suitable for both parties. Gulyas also mentioned that if approved by the Parliament, the legislation could become valid from November 2022. However, on 18 September, the Commission recommended that the EU should suspend EUR 7.5 billion of Hungary's funding over persistent rule of law issues, violations of fundamental rights and possible mismanagement of EU money. The EU Budget Commissioner Johannes Hahn spoke about how despite Hungary's proposals to address the deficiencies, no concrete action

had been taken. (["Hungary presses forward with anti-corruption plan to secure EU cash," Deutsche Welle, 17 September 2022;](#) Gabriela Baczynska and Gergely Szakacs, ["In a first, European Union moves to cut Hungary funding over damaging democracy," Reuters, 18 September 2022\)](#))

### **Europe and China impacted the most due to extreme temperatures reports BBC**

On 17 September, *BBC* reported on the record of global drought condition in 2022. The prime question it placed was whether 2022 was the driest year so far. Drawing data from Europe, China, Africa, and West of the US, the scientists found that highest temperatures were recorded in Europe and China, while Africa was affected by dry conditions leading to increased starvation, and west of the US continues to experience low rainfall. The latest summer in Europe and the draught was recorded the "worst in 500 years.' In China, the high temperatures have prolonged for more than two months beating the record since 1960's, and reduction in rainfall by 60 per cent in the Yangtze River as per China's Meteorological Administration. (["China, Europe, US drought: Is 2022 the driest year recorded?," BBC, 17 September 2022\)](#))

### **The EU adopts new rules for media freedom**

On 16 September, the European Media Act, a new set of regulations to protect media freedom and pluralism in the EU, was adopted by the European Commission. The rules will free media from political interference in editorial decisions and protect it from surveillance. It also addresses the freedom and stable funding for public service media and transparency of media ownership. The sources are also protected under the act. The European Board for Media Services, a new independent body consisting of national media authorities, will also be created as a watchdog of European media freedom. (["European Media Freedom Act: Commission proposes rules to protect media pluralism and independence in the EU," ec.europa.eu, 16 September 2022\)](#))

### **The EU's new rules allow recycled plastic to be used for food packaging**

On 15 September, new rules were taken up

by the Commission regarding the usage of recycled plastic in the packaging of foods across the EU. It aims to increase overall sustainability in the food sector and to fulfil the objectives of the "Circular Economy Action Plan." It has deemed the usage of recycled plastic in food packaging as safe. The new rules will also help the EU to reduce its plastic waste and boost the market for recycled plastic. More sustainability towards food packaging leads to protecting both environment and people will also be possible with the new rules. The recycling industry can also find new ways to make recycled plastic safer for food packaging. (["Circular economy: new EU rules to allow use of recycled plastics in food packaging," ec.europa.eu, 15 September 2022\)](#))

### **Latvia accused for poor sustainable resource management**

On 15 September, European Commission criticized Latvia for its incapability of utilizing the fund offered by the EU to solve environmental problems. Latvia was unable to implement sustainable management of the environment and resources. Mainly in terms of biodiversity management, circular economy, productivity of resources and the quality of water. The governments postponed the task of sustainable resource management several times and the inability to use the Latvian Fund for Nature and funds provided by the EU. While it had good progress only in waste management. (["European Commission criticizes Latvia for inability to implement sustainable management of resources, improve situation with natural habitats," The Baltic Times, 15 September 2022\)](#))

### **The EU's leaked policy on forced labour receives criticisms**

On 14 September, a new policy proposal was leaked on banning forced labour in the EU. The policy focuses on finding proof of the existence of forced labour and thereby prohibits the goods resulting from the labour. Experts have found that the policy has a major flaw with the ban on goods involving forced labour in the market. Goods are banned only after the existence of forced labour is established with enough proof and not when they are suspected. The EU wants

a high standard of evidence which makes banning a suspected firm that practices forced labour very difficult. (Sonya Angelica ODiehn, "EU ban too feeble to fight forced labor, groups say," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 September 2022)

### **WHO says 17 million people in Europe affected by long COVID**

On 13 September, WHO's new study finds that at least 17 million people in Europe were affected by "long COVID" in the first two years of the pandemic. The research was conducted by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington's School of Medicine. It pertains to WHO's Europe region, spanning 53 states and with a population of approximately 900 million people. The study found that around 10-20 per cent of all COVID-19 cases resulted in effects that lingered for at least three months with symptoms ranging from brain fog and breathlessness. It also found that women are twice more likely to be affected by "long COVID" than men. WHO announced an official partnership with a network called "long COVID" Europe that comprises 19 patient associations in member states across the European region. The two organizations will be addressing three goals. First, recognition of "long COVID" and knowledge sharing to equip all services. Second, to reduce the gap in research and reporting and third, rehabilitation based on evidence and effectiveness. ("At least 17 million people in the WHO European Region experienced long COVID in the first two years of the pandemic; millions may have to live with it for years to come," *who.int*, 13 September 2022)

### **EU ready to negotiate with the UK over Northern Ireland Protocol clash**

On 12 September, the EU's chief negotiator, Marcos Sefcovic, spoke to *Financial Times*, on the Northern Ireland Protocol. Sefcovic mentioned that the EU was ready to work in an open and constructive way with the UK. He said that customs checks for goods travelling across the Irish Sea could be reduced to only when there were reasonable grounds for suspicion. Earlier, Prime Minister Liz Truss had also elucidated her stance on the Protocol. Even though a negotiated solution was something she

hoped for, she said that an acceptable solution would have to include all the policies in the government's Northern Ireland Protocol Bill. ("Maroš Šefčovič says physical checks across Irish Sea could be cut," *BBC*, 12 September 2022)

### **Experts accuse the EU for not taking measure to maintain the marine protected areas**

On 12 September, a group of 200 scientists and conservationists issued an analysis about the harmful effects of disruptive fishing in marine protected areas (MPAs). The analysis reported that bottom trawling, which is the most harmful and fuel-intensive fishing practice was done in 59 per cent of EU's MPAs, depleting vulnerable and endangered species. According to the report, EU's waters were observed to be in a "dismal" state and only one-third of the total fish population studied are in good condition. They recommended, first a transition to low-impact fisheries and the protection of 30 per cent of EU's water as MPAs by 2030 as a key mandate of use biodiversity strategy. Second, of the 30 per cent, 10 per cent should be demarcated as strictly "no-take zone" in order to replenish depleted fisheries. (Karen KcVeigh, "EU slammed over failure to protect marine life from 'destructive' fishing," *The Guardian*, 12 September 2022)

### **Taxi drivers across Europe protest against Uber in Brussels**

On 08 September, taxi drivers across Europe gathered in front of the European Commission's Berlaymont building in Brussels to protest against the ride-hailing platform Uber. The protests are a fallout from the Uber Files investigation that gained ground in July, documenting how Uber evaded regulations to increase its presence in many European cities. The company had collaborated with France's president Emmanuel Macron to expand its business. The protestors came from Spain, Switzerland, Italy, and other countries, citing how due to Uber, taxi drivers across Europe were suffering. Due to a lack of response from their own governments, the protestors are demanding that the EU take the necessary action. In terms of EU's response so far, the Council of the EU and the

European Parliament are investigation a proposal by the European Commission to reclassify up to 4.1 million workers, including Uber drivers, as employees instead of as independent contractors. (Hanne Cokelaere, [“European taxi drivers block Brussels in Uber Files protest,” POLITICO](#), 08 September 2022)

### **Copernicus reports the hottest summer ever recorded in 2022 for Europe**

On 08 September, the European climate observation service *Copernicus* reported that the June to August of 2022 was the hottest to be recorded in Europe. The rise in average temperature was noted in the frequent heatwaves and the extensive drought conditions across the continent. In terms of increase from 2021, the average temperature was more by a margin of 0.4 degrees Celsius. As compared to 2018, August was hotter by 0.8 degrees Celsius. August was drier than average across most of Western and Eastern Europe, while Scandinavia and parts of south and south eastern Europe experienced more rainfall than average. (Antonia Zimmermann, [“Summer 2022 was Europe’s hottest on record,” POLITICO](#), 08 September 2022)

### **North Atlantic Council promises to support Albania against future cyberattacks**

On 08 September, the North Atlantic Council released a statement regarding the cyberattack against Albania. The council acknowledged Iran as the perpetrator of the attack and condemned the efforts to destabilize the security of any member-states or allies. It promised to assist Albania in strengthening its cyber defence capacities so that they can overcome such attacks in the future. The Council said that they promote a free, open, peaceful and secure cyberspace and thus will support each other to defend and counter the “full spectrum of cyber threats.” ([“Statement by the North Atlantic Council concerning the malicious cyber activities against Albania,” NATO](#), 08 September 2022)

### **France preparing to supply gas to Germany in exchange for power for the upcoming winter**

On 06 September, representatives from the energy ministry said that France will

reactivate a disused pipeline in the northeastern Moselle administrative department, to supply gas to Germany. This pipeline was originally built for east-west flows, but will now deliver up to 20 terawatt hours (TWh) of gas, over the winter to Germany. Germany has also agreed to provide France with power if the supply gets narrowed. France’s state-run power company EDF (EDF.PA) is grappling with a record number of nuclear reactor outages that are aggravating the energy crisis. Germany also is apprehensive that the low volumes of Russian gas can lead to severe winter shortages. The collaboration comes after the sanctions on Russia are exacerbating the energy crisis in Europe. The reopening of the Moselle pipeline is thus an effort to present a united front against Russia’s actions. (Elizabeth Pineau and Caroline Pailliez, [“France preparing disused pipeline to supply more winter gas to Germany,” Reuters](#), 06 September 2022)

### **European Commission adopts new rule to promote biological plant production products**

On 31 August, the European Commission adopted new rules regarding plant production products. As per the new rules, availability and access to biological plant protection products will be increased. Micro-organisms will be approved for use as active substances and farmers will be introduced to new sustainable tools to replace chemical plant protection products. Though 60 microorganisms have been approved by the EU so far, stakeholders say that they are unable to access them due to maladapted regulation. The new rules will facilitate better scientific risk assessment of the microorganisms leading to faster authorization and usage. The move comes under the bloc’s flagship food policy called the Farm to Fork strategy, which aims to cut the use of chemical pesticides in half by 2030, thereby also improving the organic sector. The EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides hailed this new development and said: With these new rules, we will ensure that biological alternatives can reach our farmers even faster... facilitate this process by increasing the biological and low-risk alternatives on the market”. (Natasha Foote, [“Commission](#)

adopts new rules to fast-track approval of biological pesticides,” *Euractiv*, 31 August 2022)

### **Baltic countries and EU officials take part in Sea Summit to decide on increasing offshore wind capacity**

On 30 August, European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen and Commissioner for Energy, Kadri Simson too part in the Baltic Sea Summit in Copenhagen. Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland, and Sweden took part in the summit and signed the Marienborg Declaration. According to the declaration, the countries commit to increasing the offshore wind capacity of the region by seven times up to 20 gigawatts by 2030. Von der Leyen gave her remarks about the summit and said that it was yet another effort to cut their dependence on Russia’s fossil fuels and also become climate neutral. If the targets set at the meeting are met, it will cover the energy consumption of six million households by 2030. In this regard, Von der Leyen mentioned it would exceed the total households in Denmark, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia combined and hailed it as “amazing.” (“President Von der Leyen and Commissioner Simson participated in the Baltic Sea Summit,” *ec.europa.eu*, 31 August 2022)

### **Amidst looming energy crisis, Open Balkan Summit ask for EU’s help**

On 02 September, leaders from Serbia, Albania, North Macedonia Turkey and Montenegro met at the Open Balkan summit in Belgrade. The controversial regional collaboration was to seek the EU’s support for the upcoming “difficult winters”. Serbia’s President Aleksander Vucic said that the region was trying their best to mitigate the energy crisis, but partial assistance would be required by the countries to survive the winter. Albania’s prime minister said that the upcoming winter would potentially be the hardest faced by Albania. The country produces 100 per cent hydropower, but does not have storage capacity. Thus, when demand is high, it has to purchase energy from its neighbours, the cost of which is very high now. Referring to EU’s COVID 19 pandemic response, Rama said: “The EU should not do the shame it did during the pandemic with us. They all remember very

well how the Balkan countries were forced to run to China, Russia, and Turkey to start the rescue operation of nurses and doctors for vaccination.” The leaders also signed several agreements during the summit on food security, cooperation in mining and energy production, operational plan for civil emergencies and on regional cinematography. (Alice Taylor, “Open Balkan leaders call for EU help with looming energy crisis,” *Euractiv*, 02 September 2022)

### **NATO deploy peacekeepers to patrol the Kosovo-Serbia border**

On 01 September, Kosovo announced that it would go ahead with the rule to have the ethnic Serbian change their car license plates to Kosovar ones. The cars were expected to switch their license within two months, and motorists were given until 31 October. Kosovo’s Prime Minister Albin Kurti stated the reason for the decision, “...nothing more or less than an expression of the exercise of sovereignty.” He also added that those who register will receive financial benefits and tax cuts. The US sent dozens of NATO peacekeepers to maintain harmony between the ethnic Serbs and ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. NATO looks to dispel any form of violence that might erupt in the region. (“Kosovo pushes ahead with car licensing rule resisted by Serbs,” *Reuters*, 01 September 2022)

## **CLIMATE**

### **Global Fossil Fuel registry launched**

On 19 September, Carbon Tracker and the Global Energy Monitor announced the launch of the Global Registry of Fossil Fuels. The database, which is a first of its kind, will record data regarding oil and gas reserves and production and emission details from over 50,000 fields across 89 countries. This database will cover 75 per cent of global fossil fuel production and reserves. The Global Energy Monitor said that data would be collected from various sources like governments, state-owned and private companies, media reports, NGOs and other on-the-ground contacts providing first-hand information. The launch of the Registry also coincides with the climate talks at the UN General Assembly in New York and the upcoming COP27 meeting in November 2022. (“World’s first fossil fuel registry

launches," *Deutsche Welle*, 19 September 2022)

### **Droughts in the EU could be the norm by 2050 says European Drought Observatory**

On 27 September the Members of the European Parliament were warned that the droughts plaguing Europe can become a norm by 2050 if measures are not taken to mitigate them. Andrea Toreti, a member of the European Drought Observatory briefed the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public health and Food Safety (ENVI) on the same. He said that the climate crisis that hit Europe last summer was going to occur every year if mitigation measures are not introduced. Currently, 64 per cent of Europe is experiencing drought conditions in varying degrees, where agriculture, transport and energy sectors are facing problems due to this drought. Harvest has rapidly decreased and key waterways are reported low levels. Toreti proposed a European approach to deal with this which will not only focus on Europe but look at mitigating at the global level with greater cooperation. Parallel extreme events have contributed greatly to the worsening situation in Europe and that immediate measures are required to deal with the fallout to prevent the worsening of the situation in the future. (Alice Tidey "Severe droughts 'could be the norm' in the EU by 2050, experts say", *euronews*, 27 September 2022)

### **Soodla reservoir drying up due to climate change**

On 26 September, *ERR News*, cited the findings by the Tallinn University Institute of Ecology regarding the drying up of the Soodla water reservoir. The drying up is the effect of climate change on rainfall. While Estonia is known for heavy rainfall, in 2022 precipitation dropped to 300 millimetres from the usual 500 millimetres. The timing of the rainfall has also affected the water retention of the reservoir. These led to a lessening of water flow from the Soodla river which feeds the reservoir.. A professor of eco-hydrology at the University, Jaanus Terasmaa said that the dryiong up is of great concern as water is becoming increasingly scare. She also mentioned that newer ways of conservation should be considered.

("Tallinn Soodla water reservoir drying up due to climate change," *new.err.ee*, 26 September 2022)

### **Wildfires contribute to degrading air quality says WMO**

On 07 September, *Deutsche Welle* explained a new report by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on wildfires. The report mentions that wildfires worsen air quality, and the consequences for human health and the ecosystem were labeled as "climate penalty." Phenomenon of climate penalties is declining air quality due to the wildfires caused by prolonged and intense heatwaves and drought. The WMO report focused on wildfire smoke in 2021 when wildfires across western North America and Siberia increased the particulate matter, which is harmful to humans. According to the report, climate change has caused the degradation of air quality by the emission of greenhouse gases during wildfires. It also suggested that the key to reducing heatwaves and wildfires is through worldwide carbon neutrality and urged the developed countries to fund better air quality than having large budgets for fossil fuels. ("Stuart Braun, "Extreme wildfires pollute the air people breathe," *Deutsche Welle*, 07 September 2022)

## **ECONOMY**

### **IMF rebukes new budget plans**

On 28 September the IMF issued a statement criticizing the new tax plans introduced by the government. As per IMF cuts would increase the cost-of-living crisis and existing economic inequality. After these criticisms, the pound fell to USD 1.06 after it reached a low of USD 1.03. One of IMF's key role is to help member countries through early economic caution. This indicates the need to address the larger concern of other member states which is likely to be affected due to UK's crisis. Adnan Mazarei, an ex-deputy director of the IMF said that it was rare for the organization to comment on risky policies of the G7 countries. In a statement, the IMF asked that the UK government to re-examine the tax measures in the 23 November budget. ("IMF openly criticises UK government tax plans", *BBC*, 28 September)

### **European Central Bank raises interest rates again to tackle inflation**

On 08 September, the European Central Bank (ECB) announced a rise in Eurozone interest rates. The ECB raised all its key rates by three-quarters of a percentage point and warned that rates could rise again later in 2022. The first rise in interest rates in the last 11 years was in July. These rapid rises in rates are to combat the rising inflation in the Eurozone, which has been due to the coronavirus pandemic and then Russia's war in Ukraine. ECB president Christine Lagarde said that since they cannot control the high energy prices, rising the interest rates was one of the only ways to encourage people to borrow and spend less and thus save more money. ("[Eurozone interest rates in record rise to fight inflation](#)," *BBC*, 08 September 2022)

### **Eurozone fights inflation by rising 0.75 per cent point**

On 08 September, the European Central Bank increased its cost of borrowing rate by 0.75 per cent totaling 1.25 per cent to keep inflation in check. Inflation of the Eurozone rose from 8.9 per cent in July to 9.1 in August. The ECB is predicted to have stagnant growth during the winter ahead but might avoid recession, according to the central bank's President Christine Lagarde. Each national bank is set to take measures to control the growing inflation and the impending Recession. The Bank of England has increased its points rise by 0.5 per cent making the base rate at 2.25 per cent. The meeting to confirm the rise is postponed to 22 September to honour the Queen's death. (Philip Inman, "[Eurozone interest rates must continue to rise, says European Central Bank](#)," *The Guardian*, 09 September 2022)

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **Litigation against AI simplified**

On 29 September, the European Commission announced the AI Liability Directive, a litigation process against harm caused by artificial intelligence (AI) products. As per the act, the litigation process for any injuries caused by drones on other products using AI will be more straightforward. The Directive will include a clause known as "presumption of causality" by which connection between the AI link of the product and the accident caused must be established. This will not

only help people get compensation but also set a liability factor for such products. The products under this include voice assistants, self-driving cars and search engines, all of which heavily depend on AI technology and are an integral part of their functioning. If the Directive is adopted, it will supplement the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act, a one-of-a-kind act which sets boundaries on the use of AI systems. (Liv McMahon, "[EU Commission to make it easier to sue over AI products](#)," *BBC*, 29 September 2022)

### **NATO researchers succeed in making QKD and PQC communications secure**

On 27 September NATO released updates on ongoing projects on quantum technology to improve communication and security. NATO researchers under its "Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme" achieved success in an exercise conducted to test two methods, quantum key distribution (QKD) and post-quantum cryptography (PQC). QKD is a quantum communication method where decryption keys will be sent through quantum means while the encrypted message is sent via traditional means. PQC is a way to transmit information securely using cryptography and mathematical functions. These two methods are introduced to prevent hacking by quantum computers and other emerging disruptive technologies. The tests were successful in creating a secure communication bubble between participants and also proved to be secure even for long distant communication. Further, the SPS will look at integrating both to protect information infrastructure in the best way possible for NATO. ("[Using quantum technologies to make communications secure](#)," *nato.int*, 27 September 2022)

### **EU proposed new Cyber Resilience Act in the annual address**

On 15 September, the European Commission shared a new proposal for a Cyber Resilience Act to strengthen and protect consumers and businesses from products with inadequate security features. The cyber resilience act will be the first introduced in the EU legislation. It will ensure all digital products, both hardware and software, have mandatory cybersecurity requirements that should be fulfilled throughout their entire life cycle. Making digital products more

secure and beneficial to consumers across the EU is also one of the act's objectives. The act also makes the manufacturers and sellers of digital products more responsible, providing security assistance, and patching up any identified vulnerabilities with software updates. Vice President Margaritis Schinas presented the Cyber Resilience Act, and Commissioner Thierry Breton introduced the Cyber Resilience Act in the morning press conference. ("State of the Union: new EU cybersecurity rules to strengthen the security of computer software and hardware," *ec.europa.eu*, 15 September 2022)

### **The General Court fines Google EUR 4.125 billion for violating antitrust laws**

On 14 September, the General Court in Luxembourg ruled against Google for the forceful and unlawful imposition of their software in Android. Google was slammed with an antitrust violation by the European Commission for dominating android devices and illegally restricting competition in the market. It was asked to pay a fine of EUR 4.125 billion by the General Court for the violation. The Commission imposed EUR 4.34 billion fine on Google in 2018, which the General Court reduced. Google wants to challenge the General Court's rulings. ("Google: EU court confirms record €4 billion antitrust fine," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 September 2022)

## **SPACE**

### **Change of command in the International Space Station**

On 28 September Samantha Cristoforetti, an Italian astronaut assumed the command of the International Space Station (ISS) from Oleg Artemyev. She is the first female and the fifth European astronaut to take command. In her statement, despite tensions on land, astronauts have worked side by side in the ISS which Cristoforetti hopes to continue. In her stint as commander, she will be working with the members of Expedition 68 and will undertake operations with them. She will also be in contact with the team on Earth to ensure operations smoothly. ("Commander Cristoforetti: International Space Station is a 'beacon of hope'", *Deutsche Welle*, 28 September 2022)

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **EU to provide EUR 1.5 million as humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka**

On 27 September, the European Commission approved EUR 1.5 million as humanitarian aid to address the socio-economic crisis in Sri Lanka. This aid will fulfil in terms of cash interventions, address basic needs of the people such as health, food, protection and education. EU's Commissioner for Crisis management highlighted the hardships, shortage in resource and food insecurity faced by Sri Lankans. ("Sri Lanka: EU releases €1.5 million to respond to growing humanitarian needs" *ec.europa.eu*, 27 September 2022)

### **Republic of Korea's mission to NATO approved**

On 26 September, the North Atlantic Council approved the Republic of Korea's mission in Belgium to NATO upon its request. Korea has been an active partner of NATO and has forged a strong alliance on shared values since 2005 and part of the new strategic concepts NATO has welcomed new strategic partners mainly to expand its activities in the Indo-Pacific. Apart from this, the other areas of collaboration are non-proliferation, civil preparedness, disaster relief, counter-terrorism, cyber defence and security-related civil science projects. ("Alliance agrees the Republic of Korea's Mission to NATO", *nato.int*, 27 September 2022)

### **Estonia submits a declaration of intervention concerning claims of Russian genocide**

On 24 September, Estonia submitted a declaration of intervention to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), regarding Russia's non-compliance with the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. US, UK, Germany and Sweden are amongst other nations who have filed an intervention at the ICJ regarding the same. Justifying the reason behind the submission, Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu said: "Russia's aggression on the pretext of preventing and punishing genocide has seriously undermined the meaning of such a horrible crime as genocide." ("Estonia submits ICJ declaration

over Russian genocide in Ukraine," news.err.ee, 24 September 2022)

### **Australia closer to acquiring a nuclear-powered submarine**

On 23 September, marking one year of the AUKUS pact, the UK's Prime Minister Liz Truss, the US President Joe Biden and Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement that Australia made notable strides in acquiring a nuclear-powered submarine. AUKUS was created to keep China in check in the South China Sea region and aims to provide nuclear-powered submarines and technologies to Australia. They also made improvements in the areas of hypersonic weapons, cyber, electronic warfare and additional undersea capabilities. ("U.S., UK, Australia leaders: progress made in Australia getting nuclear-powered sub," Reuters, 24 September 2022)

### **Biden and Truss discuss safeguarding the Belfast agreement**

On 21 September, the UK's new Prime Minister, Liz Truss, met with US President Joe Biden for the first time since she took office. They discussed the topics of the Belfast agreement and the war in Ukraine. Biden asked Truss not to change anything to the Good Friday Agreement, and the peace in Northern Ireland should not be disturbed. He emphasized keeping the Northern Ireland Protocol by the UK, saying that it was important to maintain peace. (Steve Holland, "Biden, UK's Truss commit to protecting Northern Ireland deal," Reuters, 22 September 2022)

### **The West raises concerns over traces of Uranium found in Iran**

On 14 September, The US, The UK, France and Germany demanded Iran explain the existence of traces of Uranium in three undeclared sites in the Board of Governors quarterly meeting of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency. The West asked IAEA to act immediately on Iran's possession of Uranium. They made a joint statement with the support of 23 out of 35, asking Iran to fulfil its legal responsibility and adhere to IAEA's guidelines. After clearing western sanctions, the incident had put a dent in Iran's nuclear revival talks. ("Two-thirds of IAEA board backs Western statement

pressuring Iran," Reuters, 15 September 2022)

### **Namibia demands renegotiated genocide deal with Germany**

On 13 September, Namibia's Ovaherero Genocide Foundation (OGF) chairperson, Nandiasora Mazeingo gave an interview to *Deutsche Welle*. He criticized Germany's decision to not renegotiate the joint declaration with Namibia, on the genocide of the Herero and Nama people during the German colonization of Namibia. On the same issue, Namibia's leader of the opposition party, the Popular Democratic Movement (PDM), McHenry Venaani also spoke to *Deutsche Welle* about his open letter to German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. However, the Foreign Affairs Ministry has said that while they respect Namibian society and politics, as a matter of principle, they do not respond to open letters. Both Mazeingo and Venaani are demanding a clear, legal recognition of the genocide, as they consider the existing aid deal worth EUR 1.1 billion to be paid over 30 years as an insult. (Jasko Rust, "Namibia genocide: Opposition demands new deal with Germany," Deutsche Welle, 13 September 2022)

### **UAE rejects extradition of suspect in Danish tax fraud case**

On 12 September, a court in the UAE rejected the extradition of hedge fund trader, Sanjay Shah to Denmark. Shah from the UK is the main suspect in a Danish dividend tax fraud case. Known as "Cum-Ex" trading, this scheme was used by Shah to submit applications to the Danish Treasury on behalf of investors and companies for dividend tax refunds in a way such that they made double tax reclaims. Danish authorities say that Shah was the mastermind behind the USD 1.7 billion tax scheme that ran for three years. Denmark's Justice Minister Mattias Tesfaye said: "I understand that today's decision in the extradition case is not final and that the prosecution in the United Arab Emirates has the opportunity to appeal the decision." Tesfaye mentioned that he would initiate contact with UAE's prosecution office. Shah was arrested in Dubai in June, and an extradition agreement had been signed between the two countries.

If extradited, he faces up to 12 years in jail. ("Cum-Ex: Dubai court rejects extradition of British suspect in Danish fraud case," Deutsche Welle, 12 September 2022)

### **UN Human Rights chief calls on EU to stop "backtracking" on climate goals**

On 12 September, the UN's acting human rights chief, Nada Al-Nashif delivered a speech in the Human Rights Council. In the speech, she called on EU member states to stop "backtracking" on their climate goals, despite the looming energy crisis. Due to the possibility of gas shortages in the winter, several EU member states have restarted coal-fired plants and other fossil fuel-based energy production. Al-Nashif pointed out that locking in more fossil fuels now would have adverse long-term consequences. Referring to the ongoing climate crisis, she said: "It is essential to accelerate the development of energy efficiency projects and renewables." ("EU countries must avoid 'backtracking' on climate goals, UN says," Euronews, 12 September)

### **WHO European member to commence annual meeting**

On 12 September, the 72<sup>nd</sup> session for the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC72) began. In the 3-day session, ministers of health and high-level public health experts from the 53 member states of the WHO will be taking part. The event is being hosted in Tel Aviv by the Health Ministry of Israel, but will follow a hybrid format. The delegates will discuss the progress made since 2020 and will cover issues like "empowerment through digital health, health promotion through behavioural and cultural insights, addressing health worker shortages and access to affordable medicines." They also aim for a consensus on the updated regional action plans like ending cervical cancer, reducing alcohol consumption, pushing for accelerated action to tackle tuberculosis, HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections. Commissioning more research and diagnostics on people suffering from long COVID, the current monkeypox outbreak and the health impacts of the war in Ukraine is also part of the agenda.

("Countdown to the annual meeting of ministers setting the health agenda across the European Region," who.int, 10 September 2022)

### **Navalny's treatment by Russian authorities is concerning says the US**

On 09 September, the US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said that the US is concerned about the treatment of the Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny who is currently in prison. Navalny was said to be placed in solitary confinement, even for minor violations. Navalny is the major opposition to President Vladimir Putin and the most vocal critic inside Russia. Navalny said that he was imprisoned on false charges, which was done to suppress dissent and destroy his political ambitions. The prison authorities also stripped him of his attorney-client privilege and let him communicate through double plastic glass with bars inside. ("U.S. 'deeply concerned' by Russia's treatment of jailed opposition leader Navalny," Reuters, 10 September 2022)

### **Iran found guilty of hacking Albanian government websites**

On 07 September, Albania cut ties with Iran after an investigation of July cyberattacks on the country's digital infrastructure revealed that it was state aggression and not carried out by an individual or independent groups. The staff of the Iranian embassy in the capital city of Albania, Tirana, were given 24 hours' notice to leave the country. A group known as HomeLand Justice claimed credit for the attack initially. The investigation involving Albania, Microsoft and the FBI discovered that the attack on the Albanian government's digital services and websites being temporarily shut down was the works of four groups the Iranian government was sponsoring. Since 2013, Albania has been hosting the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, an organization that opposes the current Iranian regime. The two countries have clashed since then. ("Albania breaks diplomatic ties with Iran over major cyberattack," Euronews, 07 September 2022)

## About the authors



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Image source: [SWP/CT](#)

Map representation: Germany: Russian invasion in progress. From left to right: Ukraine since 17 March, 30 April, and 13 May. Image source: Institute for the Study of War / CSIS/CFR Threats, 23 May 2022

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By June 10th 2022  
1,000 7,500  
Source: [Reuters/Associated Press](#)

European Union and NATO membership, 2022  
EU and NATO members  
EU only  
NATO only  
The Balkans

Map represents members of EU and NATO in comparison to the area controlled by Russia. Image source: The Economist, 20 February 2022

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