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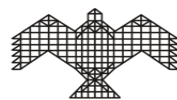
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WAR IN UKRAINE: DAILY UPDATES

By Advik S Mohan, Neha Tresa George and Padmashree Anandhan



Source: g7italy.it, Bernd Dittrich/unsplash/The Moscow Times, Institute for the Study of War, the National Guard of Ukraine, Brendan Hoffman for The New York Times, twz.com

The War in Ukraine section covers the everyday developments from Day 1006 to Day 981 in four dimensions. First, The War on the Ground. Second, The Moscow View: Claims by Russia. Third, The West View: Responses from the US and Europe. Fourth, The Global Fallouts: Implications of the War in Ukraine.

EM DAILY BRIEF

By Advik S Mohan and Neha Tresa George



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EM Short Notes provide a brief overview of the latest developments in Europe in political, economic, security, climate and maritime. The daily developments cover the UK, Western Europe, Nordic, Baltic and Balkans to the far east Russia.

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EM COMMENTS

Russia and BRICS: A multipolar approach

By Advik S Mohan

Marine Le Pen's Trial: What does this mean for RN?

By Neha Tresa George

Donald Trump wins the US Presidential Elections: What does this mean for Europe

By Advik S Mohan

Georgian Election 2024: Political chaos to continue

By Manoranjan Kumar

COMMENT

Russia and BRICS: A multipolar approach

By Advik S Mohan

Apart from short-term self-interest, Russia also views BRICS as an essential step towards a more multipolar world order.

What was agreed on the Kazan Declaration?

On 23 October, at the end of the BRICS Summit 2024, the member countries adopted the Kazan Declaration under the theme of “Strengthening Multilateralism for Global Development and Security.” One of the main points agreed in the Kazan Declaration was that the BRICS bloc would make international systems more efficient, responsive, and representative. Additionally, the bloc stated its commitment to ensuring greater accountability and legitimacy of international systems.

It called for more meaningful participation in global decision-making by emerging markets, developing countries, and least-developed countries. The Kazan Declaration also highlighted the concern over the disruptive effects of unlawful and unilateral coercive measures like illegal sanctions, on the global economy and achieving sustainable development goals. It urged reforming the existing global financial system to make it more inclusive. BRICS expressed alarm over growing tensions globally and urged quick measures for the protection of lives. The bloc took a strong stance against Israeli activities in Gaza and Lebanon, condemning the attacks on civilians and infrastructure. Additionally, BRICS called for the proper implementation of resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) which had condemned Israel. On conflicts in Africa, the Kazan Declaration reiterated the stance of BRICS that the principle of “African solutions to African problems” must be the basis for resolving conflicts in Africa. On the Ukraine conflict, BRICS urged that all states act consistently in line with the principles of the UN Charter. Overall, the Kazan Declaration emphasised on a multilateral system as an

alternative to the Western-dominated international system.

What is Russia’s agenda?

The BRICS bloc consists of developing countries with growing economies who sought an alternative through cooperation to the global economic and geopolitical order dominated by the West. Tensions between Russia and the West were high over issues like the authoritarian policies of the Russian government, and the war in Georgia. In this scenario, the Russian government promoted the bloc as a required counterweight to check the influence of the US and its close allies. The first official BRICS summit between heads of state was hosted in 2009 by Russia. Moscow prioritized maintaining cordial ties with the BRICS countries. Additionally, BRICS member states have maintained close ties with Russia economically and militarily, despite the war in Ukraine. For instance, China and Russia have expanded their ties in the past few years, while India has continued purchasing large quantities of Russian oil. Russia has also attempted to increase its influence in Africa, through business deals. Thus, Russia has an interest in BRICS as a platform to strengthen alliances with large states. For instance, the proposed alternative BRICS financing system can help Russia circumvent the traditional Western-dominated financial structures like the Swift international payment messaging system.

Apart from short-term self-interest, Russia also views BRICS as an essential step towards a more multipolar world order. Putin stated during the BRICS summit, that the dynamic and irreversible process of forming a multipolar world was underway. The collective West has faced accusations of

attempting to create a hegemonic global system, trying to increase its influence at the expense of the countries of the Global South. Russia holds the view that the BRICS bloc comprised of Global South countries will present a credible alternative to this unipolarity. The view of Moscow regarding the international system was shown in the Kazan Declaration, with an emphasis on a multilateral approach towards cooperation. Putin stated that the BRICS bloc represented the global majority, and it had a beneficial influence on global stability and security, and addressing global issues.

Where does BRICS place in the geopolitical scenario?

A key feature of the international system over the past few years has been a divide between the West represented primarily by the US and Europe, and the Global South containing most of the countries of South America, Asia, and Africa. For instance, the Global South countries like India have prioritized cordial ties with Russia and coordination in the economic and military fields even after the invasion of Ukraine. Similarly, many Global South countries have strongly condemned Israeli actions in Palestine, in contrast to the support for Israel offered by the West. Countries like China and Russia have increased their economic influence in the region through measures like infrastructure projects. In this scenario, with the hegemony of the West increasingly resented, BRICS has the opportunity to project itself as a forum showcasing a new world order. This is in contrast to blocs like the G7, perceived to be under the influence of the West. Jean-Loup Samaan, a senior research fellow at the Middle East Institute at the National University of Singapore stated BRICS presented an “alternative narrative” for countries dissatisfied with the Western hegemony. According to Steve Tsang, the Director of the Soas China Institute, the BRICS bloc provided an alternative direction of development without having to accept

conditions imposed by the Western powers.

What next for BRICS+?

A key issue that is likely to hamper the further development of the bloc is the fact that there is no core ideology that unites the various member states, unlike the ideas of democracy and liberalism which helped spur closer ties between the European states and the US. The idea of being opposed to the West also cannot be fully practical, since many of the states depend upon the West for aid. Additionally, the divergent interests of member states could hamper the development of a consensus on key issues. For instance, Iran and South Africa have been at the forefront of condemning Israeli actions in the Middle East, but India and the UAE have maintained close economic ties with Israel even after the war. Similarly, Iran, Russia, and the UAE are major exporters of oil and gas, while China and India are importers; making discussions on climate change difficult. Differences in national interests and institutions and economic models exist between the different states. This could hamper the development of a consensus between the different states, alongside claims by the BRICS countries to speak for the entire Global South. However, despite prior scepticism, the BRICS Summit made progress, as shown through the Kazan Declaration. The multiple areas focused upon in the declaration showed member states could arrive at a consensus on diverse topics like humanitarian relief, security and development; despite differing policy stances within individual states. Thus, BRICS+ could act as a forum to help negotiate disputes and resolve crises between member states.

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COMMENT

Marine Le Pen's Trial: What does this mean for RN?

By Neha Tresa George

A change of leadership would not impact the popularity of RN altogether with the far-right movements across Europe.

Since 30 September, Marine Le Pen, Rassemblement National's (RN) (formerly known as National Front) leader is facing a trial for "misappropriation of European Parliament funds." She is accused of presiding over a system from 2004 to 2016 where the paid Parliamentary assistants of MEPs were allegedly involved in RN's political activities. The Paris prosecutors Louise Neyton and Nicolas Barret have called for a five-year imprisonment and a ten-year political ban against Le Pen which would immediately come into effect if found guilty. According to them, the estimated embezzled fund of EUR seven million was used for financing the party's political activities. They have demanded the political ban to come into immediate effect leaving out the option of appeal for the defence. Apart from this, a fine of EUR two million will also be imposed on the party. 26 of RN's party associates will face a possible ban from their public offices following the trial.

What is the trial about?

The case first came up on 20 January 2014 when the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) received an anonymous tip-off over "presumed fictitious employment" in the European Parliament from the RN party and Le Pen. The investigation that followed closely watched the activities of Catherine Griset and Thierry Légier, Le Pen's chief of staff and bodyguard. The report finally revealed that Griset had a very low record of hours present at the parliament between 2014 and 2015. Legier's employment was also found to be "fictitious." Later in 2015, the former president of the European Parliament Martin Schulz noted irregularities in the salaries paid to other assistants. Around 20 assistants part of the RN party were found to be assuming key

positions in the party's organisation. In 2017, the European Parliament imposed a fine of EUR 330000 upon Le Pen for the employment of Griset and Légier. Although she paid the fine, she has refused to acknowledge the accusations against her. Marine Le Pen has condemned the French judicial system and its proceedings against her. She has refused the allegations on the claim that the assistants hired in the parliament are bound to be politically active. According to her, they pursue parliamentary jobs following their political drive. She also confirmed that there was no violation of political rules from her side.

How has been Marine Le Pen's political life so far?

Being the daughter of the RN party's founder Jean-Marie Le Pen, she took over the presidency of the party in 2011. She was also an MEP from 2004 to 2017. After her father's poor results in the 2007 election (fourth place), she contested as the presidential candidate in 2012, 2017 and 2022. She secured third place in 2012 with 18 per cent votes, second place in 2017 with 33 per cent and again second place in 2022 with 41 per cent votes. She was also re-elected to the Parliament of France following the snap elections conducted in June 2024. After Jean-Marie Le Pen's controversial antisemitic statements downplaying the Holocaust, she was fundamental in improving the party's image and making it electable. She dissociated from her father's remarks, estranging herself from him. After he repeated the remarks in 2015, Jean-Marie Le Pen was expelled from the party. Throughout the years, Le Pen has softened the party's stance on antisemitism, racism and Islamophobia. However, she stands strong against immigration and seeks the

complete expulsion of undocumented immigrants. She also wants to reduce legal immigration from 200,000 to 10,000 entries per year and limit public service access for them. She is a firm conservative who strives for the protection of France's workers. According to her, only her model of "political isolationism" and "economic nationalism" can protect "multiculturalism" and politically correct liberalism. She has also promised a referendum on Brexit and has pushed for a withdrawal from NATO. She is also set to contest for the upcoming French Presidential elections in 2027.

How can the trial impact her political career?

The Prosecutor's plea to ban Le Pen from holding office would undermine her ambitions to contest in the Presidential elections of 2027. If found guilty, the ban would come into effect with her defence unable to appeal against it. This is because of the Sapin 2 laws passed in 2016 which mandatorily banned public offices for these kinds of offenses. Since her leadership from 2011, Le Pen has managed to secure more votes in each election. She has changed the party's course with RN attaining remarkable gains of 143 seats in the 2024 Parliamentary elections. A guilty verdict could shatter her prospects of launching her Presidential campaign for the 2027 elections. The final verdict which will come later in 2025 will determine her position in the party and France's politics.

What does this mean for RN?

RN could lose its most popular figure for the 2027 elections, with Le Pen's ongoing trial. It could also lose the other 26 party representatives who were also at the risk of a public office ban. This could result in Jordan Bardella, RN's current President taking over Le Pen's position. The 29-year-

old politician had earlier contested for the position of Prime Minister in the snap election conducted in June 2024. However, he secured only the third position despite the exit polls showing a clear majority. He could be the new driving force of the RN party. According to some political analysts mentioned in France24, he seems capable of presenting himself as a more acceptable figure of the party, thus popularising the party among the people, especially young minds. He could redefine the principles and policies of party making it more acceptable among the crowds. Moreover, a guilty verdict could be used by the party to shake the trust of the French people in the judicial system which was reported to be already low. According to a survey reported in France24, fewer than one in four French people described themselves as having confidence in the EU and less than half in the country's justice system. Apart from that, a change of leadership would not impact the popularity of RN altogether with the far-right movements across Europe. It has gained more voters throughout the years not merely due to the party's figure. However, it was a question to contemplate on how Bardella would take up the role in case of a guilty verdict for Le Pen.

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COMMENT

Georgian Election 2024: Political chaos to continue

By Manoranjan Kumar

The ongoing polarization reflects the high stakes of Georgia's geopolitical position between Russian influence and Western integration goals.

On 01 December, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen reaffirmed the EU's openness to Georgia, despite a potential shift away from pro-European values. In a post on X, she expressed regret over the current government's decision to diverge from EU principles. She said: "The door to the EU remains open...The return of Georgia on the EU path is in the hands of the Georgian leadership". However, the US has suspended their strategic partnership with Georgia in response to excessive force used against the protesters and curtailing civil liberties.

On 28 November, *Reuters* reported on the European Parliament's rejection of the election results. It called for a re-election to be held in a year. It said that the voting in the Georgian parliamentary election in October was 'neither free nor fair' and was another example of democratic backsliding in Georgia for which the ruling Georgian Dream party is responsible.

On 28 November, *CNN* reported that the Georgian government came up with a policy that suspends talks on joining the European Union till 2028. Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze said his new government would remove EU talks from its agenda and refuse the EU's budgetary grants until 2028 accusing some of the bloc's leaders of 'blackmail' and 'manipulations'. This move has angered thousands of pro-European Georgians, and resulted in mass protests across the country. Also, more than 100 people have been arrested and dozens of people have been hospitalised in a clash between security forces and protestors. On 30 November, the pro-EU President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili said during an

interview with BBC, that she will not leave office when her term will end in December because the current parliament is 'illegitimate' and it has no right to elect her successor. She said "there is no legitimate parliament, and therefore, an illegitimate parliament cannot elect a new president. Thus, no inauguration can take place, and my mandate continues until a legitimately elected parliament is formed." While, Prime Minister Kobakhidze has chosen her successor.

On 26 October, parliamentary election was also controversial as all the opposition parties claimed that the election was rigged by the ruling Georgian Dream party and declined to accept the results declared by the election commission. In the aftermath, the EU has called to investigate the irregularities in the elections and withheld recognition of the incoming Georgian Dream party as a legitimate winner.

Issues at large

First, controversial parliamentary election. On 26 October, Georgia voted for its new parliament in which the ruling Georgian Dream party got almost 54 per cent votes and claimed victory. However, the opposition parties alleged that the election was rigged and it was neither free nor fair. Since the election commission declared the Georgian Dream winner, the pro-EU president, who has only ceremonial power, rejected the result claiming it fraudulent and called pro-EU supporters for protests in the capital city Tbilisi and across the country. This election was very crucial as the voters had to choose between a pro-Western opposition coalition or the ruling party whose policies are pro-Russia. However, the Georgian Dream got the massive support in rural areas in comparison with cities.

Second, the internal divide. Following incidents after the parliamentary results has create a unique situation in the South Caucasus country as the current president has announced that she will not leave the office after her terms end in December 2024. She is adamant for a re-election for the parliament due to irregularities during October election. She said while addressing the opposition leaders that “We have only one demand, which is based on the constitution. The only way to achieve stability is through new elections, there is no other way.” She said the Georgian Dream has no right to choose new President because its government is illegal. However, the Prime Minister has said that the process of formation of new government is complete after the 26 October election and outside forces are trying to destabilize the country.

Third, democratic backsliding in Georgia. In the recent years the ruling government has curtailed civil liberties in Georgia. It introduced a ‘foreign agent law’ which is similar to a Russian law that has been used to crush political dissents. This law state that it is necessary for nongovernmental groups and independent media outlets to register as ‘agents of foreign influence’. This legislation has sparked mass protests across Georgia. Another legislation called “LGBT propaganda” passed by current government to restrict the rights of this vulnerable group. The use of tear gas and water cannon in the ongoing protest, and arrests of political rivals and media persons is reflecting the decline in democratic values in Georgia.

Fourth, the anti-EU stance of the current government. The Georgian Dream party has been in power since 2012, and its policies are now more tilted towards Russia. This stand hampers the Georgian membership of the EU. However, during the election, they promised voters that the party was committed to EU membership. Almost 80 per cent of people were in favour of joining the EU, according to a poll conducted during the election in October. But after winning the

election, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze overturned their promise and suspended the talks to EU membership till 2028 and declined any budgetary assistance. This decision was seen as a reply to the European Parliament’s statement that they rejected the election result and demanded a new election within a year.

In perspective

First, political chaos to continue. The current situation in Georgia seems very serious as the confrontation between both sides the ruling government and the opposition parties is not going to end very soon. Incumbent President Salome Zourabichvili said only a re-election for parliament is the solution to the current turmoil in the country. In the wake of continued protests, moving forward it will be a challenge to the new government to overcome the crisis of legitimacy.

Second, Georgia’s ambitious path to join the EU. The road to join the European Union is still open for Georgia as European Commission President said but it seems that the Georgian ambition of joining the bloc will take more time now in the current scenario. Since achieving independence from the former Soviet Union, this South Caucasus nation intended to join the Western European bloc but the current government policies derailed this process. The reason behind Georgian Dream’s pro-Russian stance can be understood in two ways. First, the founder of the Georgian Dream party Bidzina Ivanishvili is very close to Russia. Secondly, the crisis in Ukraine has also impacted Georgian government policies. Keeping in mind the context of 2008 Russo-Georgian conflict in which Georgia lost its territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Russian centric approach of the ruling government seems realistic and strategic.

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COMMENT

Donald Trump wins the US Presidential Elections: What does this mean for Europe

By Advik S Mohan

The polarization between those favouring closer ties with Russia or the EU is likely to continue, irrespective of who wins the presidential election.

The US-Europe relationship in the first term

The European Union (EU) had a turbulent relationship with the Donald Trump administration during his first term as US President (2017-2021). Trump withdrew the US from the Paris Climate Agreement and the nuclear deal with Iran, where the EU played a key role. Additionally, Trump took an antagonistic stance towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As part of his America First foreign policy, Trump accused European countries of not contributing equally towards NATO, indicating US's large share in NATO funding. Trump called NATO as obsolete multiple times, and urged the European members to increase their defence spending as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to four per cent. Additionally, Trump criticised European trade policies as unfair, even threatening to levy a tax of 35 per cent on German car imports. In protest to a lower German defence budget, the Trump administration also withdrew about 12,000 US troops from Germany. Trump was accused of pursuing a policy of appeasement towards Russia and Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, due to alleged links between officials from his administration and the Russian government. However, the Trump tenure also saw the US sanction businesses involved in the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, and continue its antagonistic stance against Russian activities in Syria. The Director for Foreign Policy at the Centre for European Reform, Ian Bond, stated the Trump presidency caused a loss of trust in the reliability of the US, with Trump questioning the basis of NATO.

Trump's agenda for Europe

During his campaign in the 2024 presidential election, Trump stated he would

encourage Russia to do whatever it wished if European countries did not increase defence spending. The new President-elect also stated he could end the war between Ukraine and Russia in 24 hours. Through his speeches, Trump has promised to end the war in Ukraine at the earliest and ensure peace. He referred to the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, as "the greatest salesman of all time", and criticised the extent of aid provided to Ukraine. Additionally, he stated Ukraine should not be given NATO membership. As part of his America First policy, Trump stated he would impose tariffs up to 20 per cent on all imports into the US. Trump also threatened the EU would "pay a big price" for its perceived failure to buy enough American goods. The rhetoric has led to fears Trump will be unfavourable towards Ukraine, and spark a trade war with the EU.

Response of the European leaders and businesses to Trump's victory

The Secretary-General of NATO, Mark Rutte stated he was looking forward to working with Trump. Rutte also stated Trump understood the importance of deals required for joint positions. Prominent European leaders such as the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Keir Starmer also expressed their desire to work with Trump towards improving relations. However, there remains fear over how relations between the EU and the US would evolve under Trump. Macron stated the priority for the EU was defending European interests. The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy also congratulated Trump, and expressed his optimism that both countries would develop mutually beneficial political and economic cooperation. Additionally,

Zelenskyy stated that Trump's approach of 'peace through strength' was required to ensure a just peace in Ukraine. The President of Russia, Vladimir Putin stated in his congratulatory message that Trump's desire to improve relations with Russia deserved attention. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation later issued a statement that the US political elite promoted anti-Russian sentiment, irrespective of party affiliation. The ministry informed Russia would remain focused on safeguarding its national interest and achieving the objectives of the special military operation. The European far-right also congratulated Trump for his victory. Trump received significant praise from the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orban, who openly supported Trump even before the elections. Orban referred to Trump's victory as the biggest comeback in US political history.

Whereas, the business community reacted with caution. The chief economist at the ING Bank, Carsten Brzeski stated Europe's worst economic nightmare had come true. The EU fears a negative impact arising out of potential tariffs of up to 20 per cent imposed by Trump on European imports. The deputy director of *BusinessEurope*, Luisa Santos stated the tariffs would damage investment and the relationship between the EU and the US.

Potential implications for Europe-US relationship

There is fear amongst the EU over whether Trump would reduce financial aid and weapons supplies for Ukraine, based on his past rhetoric. If Trump were to reduce weapons supplies, this could push the burden of supplying aid to Ukraine to the EU. Additionally, there are doubts over the future US role in NATO. European leaders like Macron and Rutte stated Europe needed to stand up on its own, with plans to improve defence spending and create a European army. This indicates the EU is trying to reduce its military dependence upon the US. However, if Trump pushes ahead with his tariff plans and a peace agreement unfavourable towards Ukraine, this could cause further rift in the already fraught EU-US relationship. An unknown

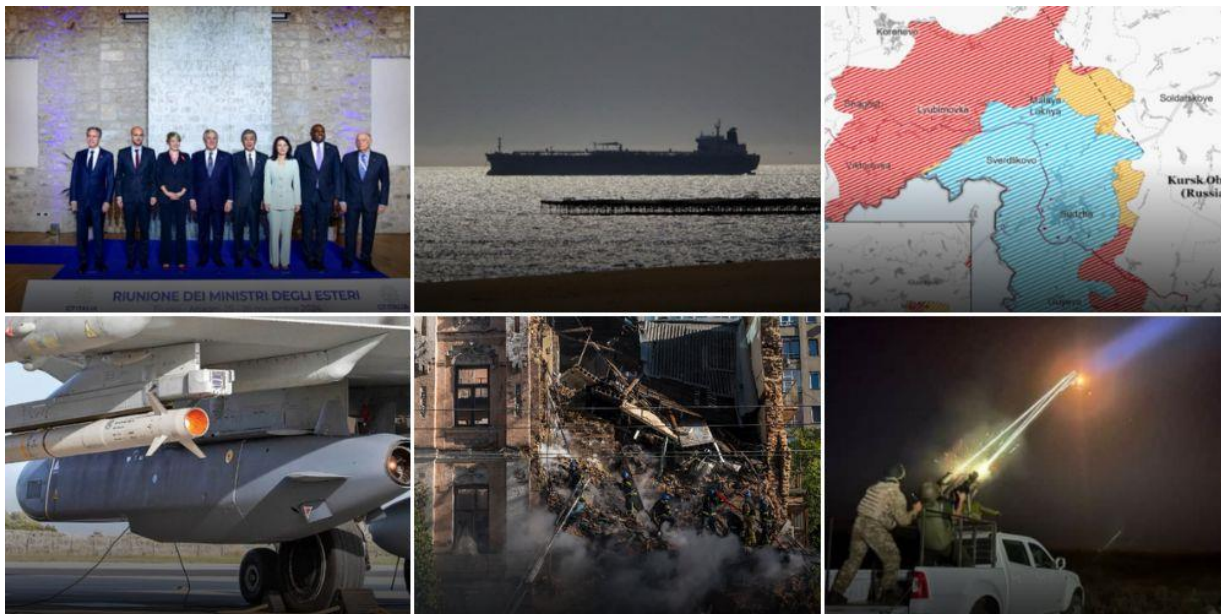
factor is whether right-wing populist leaders in the EU supportive of Trump like Orban, the Prime Minister of Italy, Giorgia Meloni, and the Prime Minister of Slovakia, Robert Fico will influence the bloc, ensuring deals supportive of Trump's objectives and policies. For instance, Fico and Orban share a similar position with Trump over continuing aid for Ukraine.

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War in Ukraine: Daily Updates*

By Advik S Mohan, Neha Tresa George and Padmashree Anandhan



Source: g7italy.it, Bernd Dittrich/unsplash/The Moscow Times, Institute for the Study of War, the National Guard of Ukraine, Brendan Hoffman for The New York Times, twz.com

War in Ukraine Day 1006:

G7 foreign minister assures unwavering support

War on the Ground:

On 26 November, *Kyiv Independent* reported on the 188 Shahed drones launched by Russia in an overnight attack against Ukraine. According to the Ukrainian Air Defence, 76 drones were intercepted while 95 were lost. It said: "During the overnight attack, Russia launched a record number of Shahed-type attack drones from the directions of Orel, Bryans, Kursk, and Primorsko-Akhtarsk in Russia."

On 26 November, *France24* reported on a meeting between ambassadors from Ukraine and NATO's 32 members over Russia's strike with the Oreshnik missile in Ukraine's Dnipro region. They were set to meet in Brussels to discuss the new development. Russia's President Vladimir Putin said that the strike was a response to Ukraine's usage of the US and UK-made ATACMS weapons

inside Russia. Ukraine is expected to get "concrete and meaningful solutions" following the NATO-Ukraine Council meeting. However, the diplomats did not develop solid solutions to the issue. Although the meeting was a platform to discuss the recent escalation in the war, the most that was expected was the re-emphasis on NATO's stance to support Ukraine amidst warnings from Russia.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 26 November, *Anadolu Agency* reported on the statements of the head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) Sergey Naryshkin at the 20th Meeting of Heads of Security Agencies and Intelligence Services of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). He said that Russia opposed "freezing the conflict with Ukraine" as it sought peace for its citizens and the European continent. He said that the Western countries now focussed on avoiding their "strategic defeat"

* 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.

rather than countering Russia. He also reiterated Russia's approval to negotiate terms based on Putin's arguments. Further, he urged the West to accept those conditions.

On 26 November, a Russian court demanded the arrest of a France24 journalist Catherine Norris Trent for illegally crossing into the Kursk region and reporting. Catherine and other reporters were allowed to report from the Ukrainian-held regions in Kursk. Russia has launched criminal proceedings against other Western journalists like CNN, RAI and Deutsche Welle as well. According to the Russian orders, the reporters would be arrested if they entered Russia.

The West View: Responses from the Europe and the US

On 26 November, the G7 foreign ministers issued a statement proposing unwavering support for Ukraine. Firstly, the joint statement encouraged the Ukraine Energy Sector Support undertaken during the G7+ ministerial meeting. This would help Ukraine with early recovery and energy resilience by guarding the energy grids during winters. The ministers blamed Russia for intensifying its attacks on Ukraine and its nuclear threats. Apart from that, they condemned Russia's torture of Ukrainian prisoners of war which went against the principles of the UN Charter. They also expressed their disapproval of the deployment of North Korean troops and the use of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) to support its war with Ukraine. Finally, they concluded that they aimed to formulate a "comprehensive, just and lasting peace" as per the fundamentals of international law.

On 26 November, *Politico* reported on the statements of UK's Foreign Secretary David Lammy over the possibility of sending troops to Ukraine. He confirmed that the UK would not send troops to Ukraine. He said: "We stand ready and continue to support the Ukrainians with training particularly, but we are not committing U.K. troops to the theatre of action." These comments came amidst the visit of UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer to France. According to *Le Monde*, the UK and France "revived their discussions" on troops

during the meeting. Lammy further said that the UK would provide medical training and military presence around the embassy but not UK troops.

On 26 November, the *BBC* reported on the capture of a British man allegedly fighting for Ukraine. The man, identified as James Scott Rhys Anderson from Banbury, Oxfordshire is 22 years old and was found in Russia's Kursk region. Anderson in 2023 joined Ukraine's International Legion which was made for foreign volunteers to serve in the military. According to a Russian court, he had "participated in hostilities in the territory of the Kursk region." He was condemned for allegedly carrying out "terrorist acts and being a mercenary" which would result in his criminal prosecution. He would be sentenced to a maximum of 20 or 15 years in prison as per his charges. The court also said that the decision could be appealed. According to Anderson, he joined Ukraine's International Legion which was made for foreign volunteers to serve in the military.

On 26 November, the NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte visited Greece. He encouraged Greece to provide further support to Ukraine. Rutte praised Greece for signing a bilateral security agreement with Ukraine which would help step up training for F16 Ukrainian pilots and technicians. He called for the delivery of critical military equipment to Ukraine which could change the course of war. He added that NATO's deterrence and defence should also be kept in check through defence investment and production.

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War in Ukraine Day 1005:

UK sanctions Russia's shadow fleet

War on the Ground:

On 25 November, *Euronews* reported on a Russian daytime attack on the Kharkiv and Odesa regions of Ukraine. According to the regional governor of Kharkiv, around 23 people were injured with considerable damage to houses and an administrative building. In Odesa City, 11 people were injured as a missile strike toppled civilian infrastructure, residential buildings, vehicles and shops. Two educational institutions were also reportedly damaged.

On 25 November, *France24* reported on the updates from the Ukrainian military authority. Ukraine's Defence Intelligence struck an energy facility in the Kaluga region of Russia in an overnight attack. The governor of the Kaluga region also said that air defence systems in the region were activated while eight drones were intercepted. He also said that an industrial enterprise had caught fire. Ukrainian authorities also said that the target of the attack was an oil depot of Kaluganefteprodukt JSC claimed to be involving supporting Russia's war in Ukraine.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 25 November, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation reported on the wave of attacks carried out upon Ukraine's military and dual-use infrastructure, which included airfields and energy facilities. Russia's military used "operational-tactical aviation, drones, missiles and artillery. The Ministry added that some 138 Ukrainian military sites to deploy troops were struck.

However, it did not reveal the exact target locations. While, Ukraine said that the southern port city of Odessa and the eastern city of Kharkov were targeted. It also said that the Russians had more than 100 Geran-2 kamikaze drones.

On 25 November, *RT* reported on a Russian court verdict of two Ukrainian soldiers who were convicted of committing war crimes in March 2022. According to the Investigative Committee, both of them were Ukrainian Navy marines posted in Mariupol which is currently Russia's Donetsk People's Republic. Their commander ordered them to shoot a person in civilian clothes on speculation that he could report them to Russia. The Committee added that there was enough evidence against them for "cruel treatment of civilians during armed conflict and conspiracy to murder for political and ideological motives." The men were Valentin Kharlamov and Anton Sayun and worked for the 36th Marine Brigade of the Ukrainian army. They were convicted to 24 years and six months of prison. Investigators also revealed a video where the men are accepting their crime.

The West View:

Responses from the US and the Europe

On 25 November, *Ukrinform* reported that the UK had imposed sanctions on 30 ships in Russia's "shadow fleet" which transported more than USD 4.3 billion worth of oil and petroleum products. The UK government said: "This is the largest UK package of sanctions against the shadow fleet." The insurance companies allowing the fleet were also sanctioned. This new wave of sanctions would bring the total number of sanctioned oil tankers to 73. The announcement came against the background of the G7 foreign ministers which was attended by the UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy. He said that this move aimed to downplay Russia's funding to fight the war with Ukraine.

On 25 November, the White House officially confirmed that it had approved the use of American long-range missiles for Ukraine to target deep inside Russia's territory. White House National Security Advisor John Kirby said: "The Ukrainians are authorised to use ATACMS for self-defence when there is an

immediate necessity, and clearly, that is happening in and around Kursk.” He acknowledged that the US had changed its stance towards Ukraine on the usage of long-range weapons.

On 26 November, *Reuters* reported that German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius was ramping up support for Ukraine. He vowed to increase defence support after talks with his British, French, Italian and Polish counterparts at a meeting of the Group of Five leading EU countries in defence. Pistorius said: “Our target must be to enable Ukraine to act out of a position of strength.” The victory of Donald Trump as the US President for the next term has led to uncertainties in the support for Ukraine. Polish Defence Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz also resonated with Pistorius and called for the EU nations to work together and aim higher. Pistorius further said that a NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine mission would take up the control of Western military aid for Ukraine in January 2025.

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War in Ukraine Day 1002:

Ukraine reports ICBM attack by Russia War on the Ground:

On 21 November, Ukraine’s military reported on an intercontinental ballistic

missile attack by Russia. The missiles were observed to be launched from Russia’s southern Astrakhan region as per the report from the Ukrainian air force. However, Ukraine is yet to reveal the impact of the missile attack.

On 21 November, Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the attack by Russia using a hypersonic missile. He called it a “clear and severe escalation.” Highlighting the attack, he said that Russia had “no interest in peace...Putin is not only prolonging the war, he is spitting in the face of those in the world who genuinely want peace to be restored.” He recalled for worldwide condemnation of Russia’s action.

On 21 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on Ukrainian forces coming under pressure as Russia was observed to be making steady gains.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 21 November, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia had used a new type of hypersonic missile called “Oreshnik.” He mentioned that the attack was in response to the US and the UK’s long-range weapons grant to Ukraine. He also detailed the testing of a new ballistic missile and highlighted it being launched from a “nuclear-free hypersonic equipment.” On the same day, Russian President Press Secretary, Dmitry Peskov stated that Russia’s National Center for the Reduction of Nuclear Danger had sent a message to the US 30 minutes ahead of the launch. The same was also confirmed by Pentagon Deputy Press Secretary Sabrina Singh.

On 21 November, the Russian Defence Ministry claimed that Russian forces intercepted two UK-made Storm Shadow missiles. In a statement: “The air defence forces shot down two British-made Storm Shadow cruise missiles, six US-made HIMARS reactive missiles and 67 drones.”

On 21 November, Russia’s Foreign Ministry called the opening of the US ballistic missile base in Poland to be a “provocative step,” triggering a nuclear threat for Moscow. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson,

Maria Zakharova said: "This is another frankly provocative step in a series of deeply destabilizing actions by the Americans and their allies in the North Atlantic Alliance in the strategic sphere." She warned over increasing nuclear danger and "undermining of strategic stability." In response, the Poland government said that there were no nuclear weapons present at the base and it was only for defence. According to Poland's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Pawel Wronski: "Such threats will certainly serve as an argument to strengthen Poland's and NATO's air defenses, and should also be considered by the United States."

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 21 November, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen announced sanctions on Russia's third-largest bank. The Gazprombank along with six foreign subsidiaries were imposed sanctions in an attempt to reduce Russian military efforts. According to Yellen: "...will make it harder for the Kremlin to evade US sanctions and fund and equip its military." On the same, the US Treasury Department said that more than 50 internationally connected Russian banks, 40 Russian security registrars and 15 Russian finance officials will also be subject to sanctions.

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War in Ukraine Day 1001:

Bloomberg reports the use of UK-made Storm Shadow missiles into Russia

War on the Ground:

On 20 November, *Bloomberg* reported on Ukraine using UK-made Storm Shadow missiles into Russia. As of 2023, the UK had allowed the usage of those missiles only within Ukrainian territory. The UK has followed a pursuit after the US President Joe Biden's approval. The Storm Shadow missiles have a range of 250 kilometres and would aid Ukraine in targeting deep into Russia. Earlier, Russian President Vladimir Putin had warned on UK's supply of Storm Shadow missiles to be considered a direct engagement of NATO.

On 20 November, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy responded to the US announcement to send antipersonnel mines to counter Russian attacks. He claimed the landmines to be "very important" to improve Ukraine's defences and would also mean strengthening the Ukrainian troops. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) condemned the decision highlighting the human loss and injuries such landmines could cause. According to ICBL, in 2023, more than 5,700 were killed or injured from landmines.

On 20 November, South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS) confirmed North Korea's shipment of 170-millimetre of self-propelled artillery and long-range 240-millimetre rocket launchers to Russia. It also confirmed on active engagement of 10,900 North Korean troops in Kursk as part of Russian airborne units.

On 20 November, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry in response to the closure of many foreign embassies was reported to be underplaying the Russian attack in Kyiv. In a statement: "We remind you that the threat of strikes by the aggressor state has unfortunately been a daily reality for Ukrainians for over 1,000 days." On the same day, Ukraine's military intelligence criticised Russia for its "psychological operation" against citizens over fake bomb warnings in social media.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 20 November, Russian President Press

Secretary, Dmitry Peskov denied the claims of destroying the two telecommunications in the Baltic Sea. He said: "It's quite absurd to keep blaming Russia for everything without any grounds." This comes after European officials reported on the possibility of the cables being sabotaged.

On 20 November, the Russian Defence Ministry reported on Russian forces capturing the village of Illika in Donetsk. The village is located near the Kurakhove reservoir and in recent months, Russia has made gains in eastern Ukraine (Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts).

On 20 November, Russia's foreign intelligence service Head, Sergei Naryshkin warned that the role played by the NATO countries in missile attacks inside Russia would not go "unpunished."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 20 November, a US official reported on the supply of antipersonnel mines to Kyiv to boost its defence. This follows a discussion on US President Joe Biden asking for a commitment from Ukraine to use mines only in areas with sparse populations.

On 20 November, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico released a joint statement to "avoid actions" to deter an arms race in war. The statement comes at the end of the G20 summit in Brazil and the US's approval of Ukraine to fire long-range missiles into Russia. They said: "All parties involved to fulfil their international commitments and to prioritize dialogue and the search for peace in that region."

On 20 November, UK's Foreign Secretary, David Lammy announced the UK-Moldova defence and security partnership as Russian aggression intensified. According to Lammy: "Moldova is a vital security partner for the UK, which is why to reinforce their resilience against Russian aggression and to keep British streets safe, I am deepening cooperation on irregular migration and launching a new defense and security partnership." The pact will aim to boost cooperation and swift deport of illegal migrants staying in the UK.

On 20 November, the US State Department

spokesperson Matthew Miller confirmed the reopening of the US Embassy in Kyiv. According to him, it was closed considering the "safety and security" of the personnel and will open again by 21 November.

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War in Ukraine Day 1000:

Ukraine confirms launching US-made ATACMS missiles into Bryansk in Russia

War on the Ground:

On 19 November, a senior Ukrainian official confirmed on Ukrainian military use of the US-supplied ATACMS long-range missiles to target Bryansk in Russia. The same was confirmed in the report by Forbes. However, Zelenskyy did not confirm upfront but assured on using the missiles full-fledged.

On 19 November, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated that Ukraine might have to accept the Russian occupation as long as Russian President Vladimir Putin leads Russia. In his address in the Ukrainian parliament marking 1000 days of the war, Zelenskyy said, "Perhaps Ukraine needs to outlive someone in Moscow to achieve its goals and restore the entire national territory." He also outlined Ukraine's "resilience plan," calling for everyone to be united as the war nears a critical point. He stressed that Ukraine would not "give up its right to territories or trade its sovereignty." He also confirmed on Ukraine's plan to

produce 30,000 long-range drones in 2025 to reduce the gap in Ukraine's strike capabilities. To date, Ukraine has managed to defend Russian advances in several areas despite not receiving the promised aid from the West for its offensive. Currently, Russian forces occupy 18 per cent of Ukrainian territory and with the US Presidency about to switch to Donald Trump there are larger debates on freezing the Ukraine conflict.

On 19 November, the International Monetary Fund reached a deal of USD 1.1 billion loan for Ukraine. This will be later decided by the executive board. Once approved, the full amount will be sent to Ukraine totalling USD 9.8 billion. In a statement by the IMF: "The outlook remains exceptionally uncertain, and Russia's war in Ukraine continues to take a heavy toll on Ukraine's people, economy, and infrastructure." However, the IMF four-year programme will be more than USD 15 billion to aid Ukraine ahead of Trump's presidency.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 19 November, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Ukraine's use of long-range ATACMS missiles would be a "new phase of the Western war." During the press conference at the G20 summit in Brazil, he said: "We will be taking this as a qualitatively new phase of the Western war against Russia. And we will react accordingly." The move was seen as a clear signal of conflict escalation and added that without help from the US, Ukraine will not have access to high-tech missiles. On the nuclear doctrine, he added that lowering the threshold for the nuclear strike will be observed closely however Russia will try to avoid a nuclear war outbreak and use of nuclear weapons to the maximum extent.

On 19 November, the Russian Defence Ministry reported on Ukraine firing six US-supplied ATACMS missiles at Bryansk Oblast in Russia. According to the ministry, the Russian military destroyed five and damaged another however the debris from the blast had caused only fire. No damage or casualties were reported. On the same day, it also claimed to capture a village in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region near

Kurakhove, the settlement of Novoselydivka. This comes after continued advances by the Russian military in Donetsk where Kurakhove serves as an industrial town.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 19 November, in the G20 summit press conference, France's President Emmanuel Macron, stressed on Russian President Vladimir Putin to "listen to reason." He stated that Russia as a permanent member of the UN Security Council has responsibilities and criticised saying it was becoming "a force for global destabilization." The comment comes in response to Russia's relaxation of its nuclear doctrine. On the same day, the US, the EU and the UK condemned Russia's nuclear threats as "irresponsible" as it modified the nuclear doctrine. This was in response to the US's decision to allow Ukraine to launch ATACMS missiles further into Russia. In a statement, the US National Security Council said: "We were not surprised by Russia's announcement that it would update its nuclear doctrine." The council said that Moscow had signalled several weeks before on updating the doctrine. Whereas EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell said: "...any call for nuclear warfare is an irresponsibility." UK's Prime Minister Prime Minister Keir Starmer said: "...not going to deter our support for Ukraine. We need to ensure that Ukraine has what is needed for as long as it's needed to win this war."

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War in Ukraine Day 999:

Kyiv's use of long-range missiles will mean the direct participation of the West

War on the Ground:

On 18 November, the *Associated Press* reported on the Russian attack on a nine-story building in the Sumy region. It had led to the death of eight people and injury of several others. Following this incident, Ukraine's Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko said: "Every life destroyed by Russia is a big tragedy." Around 400 people were evacuated from the building. The rescuers were still searching for people trapped inside the building.

On 18 November, Amnesty International published a statement highlighting the condition of children in Ukraine against the backdrop of Russia's large-scale attacks. It looked at 17 strikes in 2024 that led to child casualties. According to field research, Russia's forces intentionally targeted civilians and infrastructure. The research particularly highlighted the attack on the cruise missile attack on the Okhmatdyt hospital in Kyiv. It looked at 14 images and six videos showing the plight of the people in the hospital after the attack. It had led to the death of two people and injured over a hundred others including children. According to the data published by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), the 2024 summer was comparatively "deadly" for the children. The data also points out that 89 per cent of civilian casualties have occurred in Ukraine-controlled territories. However, Amnesty could not independently verify the exact number of children reported to be dead. It called for justice and redress for the victims in the war through fair trial under

international law.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 19 November, *TVP World* reported on the statements of the Russian President's press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, on the US's permission for Ukraine to use long-range weapons deep inside Russian territory. He said that the US was "adding fuel to the fire." Although there was no official announcement from the White House, Peskov said that if such a decision were taken, it would result in a "new spiral of tension and situation concerning the US involvement in the war." The Kremlin also stated that it would be seen as a direct attack from the NATO countries. Meanwhile, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy responded that "strikes are not carried out with words" and that the "missiles will speak for themselves. The US media agency New York Times reported that the strikes would be limited to Russia's southwestern Kursk region. The US was also expected to extend permission for the ATACMS (Army Tactical Missile System), short-range missiles made by Lockheed Martin with a range of around 300 kilometers. The media reports came against the backdrop of the deployment of North Korean troops and one of Russia's biggest aerial assaults in Ukraine.

On 18 November, *RT* reported on the statements of Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova on the US lifting the ban on long-range weapons. She said that if such a decision would be taken, it would alter the "essence and nature of the conflict." She further said: "Kyiv's use of long-range missiles to attack our territory will mean the direct participation of the United States and its satellites in hostilities against Russia." She also repeated Russian President Vladimir Putin's earlier warnings over the involvement of the West in the conflict. Finally, she highlighted that Russia's response would be "adequate and tangible." On 18 November, *RT* reported on the statements of Dmitry Peskov over the reports that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was planning to push for the "freezing of the Ukraine conflict" at the G20 summit. Bloomberg, a US media outlet cited some sources and claimed that Erdogan was

planning to suggest the freezing of conflict on “current lines.” He would then convince Ukraine to delay its attempt to join NATO at least for 10 years as a concession to Russia. Besides, he was planning for a demilitarized zone in Donbass, for the international troops to supply security guarantees to Ukraine. On this Peskov said that although there were no official statements, “any kind of freezing along the line of military conflict is unacceptable for the Russian side.”

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 18 November, *Euronews* reported on the meeting of the EU foreign ministers in Brussels. They discussed the development in the war in Ukraine, particularly US President Joe Biden’s decision to lift restrictions on long-range weapons, the deployment of North Korean troops in Russia and an alleged Moscow shop in China for the manufacture of lethal drones. The EU’s foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell said that the bloc should be ready to move forward without the US’s backing. This was because the upcoming US President Donald Trump vowed to revise the financial and military assistance to Ukraine. Borrell welcomed Biden’s decision and said: “Ukraine should be able to use the arms we provide to them not only to stop the arrows but also to hit the arches. I continue believing this has to be done.” The foreign ministers of Germany and France have also backed Borrell’s position expressing their approval. Besides this, the ministers continued their investigation into the alleged Russian factory in China used for producing drones. However, China has denied its involvement saying that it “strictly” controls military exports.

On 18 November, *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty* assessed the likely impact of the US permission to use long-range weapons in the Ukraine war. The impact would be dependent on the number of ATACMS missiles and other long-range missiles supplied by the West. According to the US media outlets, Ukraine was allowed to use them in the Kursk region. Countries like the UK and France have welcomed the decision and confirmed to follow the footsteps of the US by providing their Storm Shadow and SCALP missiles. However, this would put

pressure on Germany which has refused to supply its Taurus missiles. A Canadian-based defense analyst Colby Badhwar said that although the US has about 2,400 of the long-range missiles in stock, it was apprehensive to deliver in large numbers. Meanwhile, the retired Lieutenant General Hodges of the US said that Ukraine could counter Russia’s counteroffensive in Kursk. Apart from this, the report also pointed out that the major problem faced by Ukraine was limited manpower due to its delayed recruitment.

On 18 November, *WH.GOV* reported on the speech made by US President Joe Biden at the sidelines of the G20 summit. He confirmed the US’s strong support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. He called for all the members of G20 to do the same. He further pointed out that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine had resulted in the “highest record food crisis in all of history.”

On 18 November, the EU Council decided to extend its restrictive measures against Iran’s support to Russia in the war in Ukraine. The Council prohibited the export, transfer, supply, or sale of components used in the development and production of missiles and UAVs to Iran. It also banned transactions with ports or locks that are owned and operated by listed individuals and also used for the transfer of missiles to Russia. However, the vessels for maritime safety and humanitarian purposes would be exempted from the list. It also banned the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and his director Mohammad Reza Khiabani over involvement in supplying drones. Apart from that, the Council also banned three Russian shipping companies - MG Flot, VTS Broker and Arapax reportedly transporting Iranian-made weapons and components.

On 18 November, the *Anadolu Agency* reported on the statements of Germany’s Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock condemning China for providing drones to Russia. She said that it would have consequences as the attack on Ukraine would be considered an attack against the interests of European states. Apart from that, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU’s diplomatic arm was

investigating any direct cooperation between Russia and China. If found, sanctions would be imposed. The EU diplomats claim that the drone production in China was in cooperation with Russia and Iran. However, China's foreign minister Lin Jian refuted these claims and said that China had always taken a responsible stance on the usage of drones.

On 18 November, *Politico* reported on the stance of Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz on the reports of the US lifting ban on the long-range weapons in Ukraine. According to a German spokesperson, Scholz does not want the long-range weapons to be delivered to Ukraine. He said: "There are certain limits for the chancellor. This position will not change." Although Germany was one of the biggest providers of Ukraine following the US's footsteps, Scholz seems apprehensive about the usage of long-range weapons.

On 18 November, *Folha De S Paulo* reported on the statements of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on negotiations between Ukraine and Russia. He said that Germany would never approve of a peace that would be dictated by the Russians. He added that Ukrainians should be careful of peace without freedom or justice. He also extended his support to Ukraine to self-defend. He said: "Putin needs to understand that trying to buy time will not work. We will not give up our support for Ukraine."

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War in Ukraine Days 997 & 998:

The US allows Ukraine to use missiles to target deep inside Russia

War on the Ground:

On 17 November, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated aiming to end the war by 2025 through "diplomatic means." Till now negotiations have been stalled between both and Russia has demanded Ukraine to give up on Russian-occupied territory to accept talks. On the same day, in precaution to Russian missile attacks emergency power cuts were implemented across Ukraine to prevent damage to its energy grid.

On 17 November, the UK's Ministry of Defence reported on increased pressure from the Russian forces on Kupiansk town in northeastern Ukraine. In the past week, Russian forces were observed launching four successive attacks in an attempt to capture Kupiansk. As per the ministry's report, Russia had reached the Oskil River in the south of Kupiansk barring Ukrainian lines on the east side of the river. The report added: "A Russian salient [an area of the battlefield extending into enemy territory] south of Kupiansk has gradually expanded as Russia attempts to increase pressure on Ukrainian forces in the area." Kupiansk town is considered strategic for Ukraine due to transportation and logistics for Ukrainian forces. Capturing this is expected to provide

Russia a significant boost as it links Kharkiv to Luhansk and Donetsk.

On 17 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on Ukraine being the beneficiary of Germany's arms exports. According to the report, between 01 January and 15 October 2024, Germany granted more than 4,000 export licences to equip Ukraine worth EUR 10.9 billion. This is expected to beat the 2023 record where Germany had exported EUR 12.2 billion worth of armaments.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 17 November, Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov reported on a Ukrainian drone strike. According to him, it killed one and the attack comes after a wave of drone attacks by Ukraine across the border towns including Bryansk, Kursk, Lipetsk and Oryol. No casualties were reported.

On 16 November, the Russian Defence Ministry reported on intercepting a series of Ukrainian drones across Kursk. According to the report, 15 drones were shot down in Kursk, one in Bryansk and the remaining in Lipetsk and north. Several buildings were reportedly damaged however no casualties were recorded.

On 16 November, Russia's tanker group Sovcomflot said that the Western sanctions on Russian oil tankers were restricting its financial performance. This has resulted in a fall in revenue and earnings. Earlier the US had sanctioned Sovcomflot aimed at reducing Russia's oil sales and limiting its finances to war. Sovcomflot reported on 22.2 per cent drop in "nine-month" revenue to USD 1.22 billion. It's earning before interest and depreciation had downed by 31.5 per cent.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 17 November, *The New York Times* reported based on anonymous claims that the White House withdrew restrictions on Ukraine to use US-supplied weapons to target further into Russia. Earlier, Ukraine's allies were barred from targeting deep inside Russia fearing escalation. The decision comes as the US leadership undergoes

transition. According to the report, Ukrainian forces will be allowed to use US-made ATACMS rockets up to 306 kilometres inside Russia. However, the White House is yet to confirm. Russia had warned before on lifting such restrictions to be perceived as "major escalation."

On 17 November, around a thousand protesters who were previously exiled from Russia staged a protest criticising Putin and Russia. The rally began in Potsdamer Platz moving through Friedrichstraße between east and west Berlin. The protestors held sign boards saying: "No Putin. No war," "victory in Ukraine," "Putin's downfall" and "freedom for Russia."

On 17 November, Germany's Economy Minister Robert Habeck expressed his willingness to support Ukraine with Taurus cruise missiles if elected in the upcoming elections. Habeck will take part as Green Party's chancellor in the polls and the statement comes as Germany's Chancellor, Olaf Scholz continues not to support sending of Taurus cruise missiles.

On 17 November, in response to the missile and drone attacks by Russia across Ukraine, France's President Emmanuel Macron criticised Russia's President Vladimir Putin. He said: "It's clear that President Putin intends to intensify the fighting...does not want peace and is not ready to negotiate." On France's stance, Macron stressed on continuing to equip and support Ukraine.

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War in Ukraine Day 994:

Renewed missile and drone attack in Kyiv

War on the Ground:

On 14 November, *Swissinfo.ch* reported on the mounting pressure on the northeastern front of Ukraine following an alleged Russian incursion into the Kupiansk region. Although the Russians were reported to be repelled, military analysts point out the "confusion and weakness" of Ukrainian defences in the area. They also noted that Russians could respond by stepping up their assaults around the region. Oleksandr Kovalenko, a Ukrainian military analyst said that Russia would likely repel Ukrainians from the Kursk region by the beginning of 2025. This was because both countries would be attempting to improve their territorial gains as Trump has promised to end the war. Kovalenko added that Russia would step up its operations on the southeastern front including the Zaporizhzhia and eastern Donetsk regions. Ukraine's military also confirmed Russian assaults around these areas.

On 14 November, *Ukrinform* reported on the Russian attack from the Black Sea area. According to the Ukrainian Air Force, several Shahed drones were approaching Odesa, Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi, and Pivdenne in the Odesa region. In addition, several kamikaze drones were reportedly heading towards the Mykolaiv region. The Ukrainian Air Force also spotted a new group of Shahed drones over the Odesa region later that night.

On 14 November, *Ukrinform* reported on the situation in the Kupiansk region of Ukraine, as presented by Captain Andrii Kovaliov, the spokesperson for the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. According to him, the Russian army failed to enter the Kupiansk leaving the region under Ukrainian control. He said: "All attacks by the Russian occupiers in this sector were successfully repelled." He further elaborated on the

alleged Russian incursion into the region. They were reported to have attacked by launching 15 pieces of military hardware, tanks, armored combat vehicles and a UR-77 mine-clearing vehicle. He also said that some of them were wearing Ukrainian army uniforms and condemned it to be a "violation of the laws of warfare." He added that the Ukrainian army responded "decisively" and pushed back the Russians causing losses to them. He confirmed that all the advances were repelled successfully with no further attempts.

On 14 November, *The Kyiv Independent* reported on the statements of the Russian ambassador to the UN, Gennady Gatilov. According to him, Trump's victory in the US elections would open the chances for a possible dialogue between the countries. He added that the change in government would not bring a huge change in the future relations between the US and Russia. He also accepted Trump's bid to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict overnight.

On 14 November, *The Kyiv Independent* reported on the Russian drone and missile in the Odesa region. It had led to the death of one and injured 10 others. According to the Governor of the Odesa region, Oleh Kiper, the attack damaged apartments, a church, educational institutions and vehicles. The missile also hit one of Odesa's main heating pipelines causing it to shut down. The Ukrainian officials informed that repairs were underway.

The Moscow View: Claims By Russia

On 14 November, an opinion in *RT* reported on Russia's advances in the Kursk region. To Ukraine's incursion into Kursk, Russian forces responded swiftly with a "brief but intense battle." The western flank of the Kursk "bulge" was guarded by Russian naval infantry and they managed to push back the Ukrainian forces. The opinion states that Ukraine's incursion into the Kursk backfired its primary goal, which was to force Russia to withdraw its troops from Donbass region. While the battle in the Kursk intensified, the Russian army captured areas in southern Donbass including the Ugledar city. Meanwhile, Russia's primary goal in this

operation was to retain the Sudzha region and the rest of the area from Ukrainian control. The opinion also reported on the loss and damage suffered by the Ukrainian personnel. It added that Russia was also facing personnel shortages and a lack of workers in its economy.

The West View: Responses From the US And Europe

On 14 November, the European Commission approved the second regular payment of close to EUR 4.1 billion to assist Ukraine's macro-financial stability and its public administration. If the decision is implemented, EUR 16.1 billion funds will be disbursed under the EU's Ukraine Facility in 2024. The Commission has assessed Ukraine to have fulfilled nine agreed reform indicators. These include the fight against corruption, business environment, labour market, regional policy, energy market and environmental protection. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said: "Today's positive assessment by the Commission of Ukraine's €4.1 billion payment request is further proof both of Europe's steadfast commitment to Ukraine." The transfer to Ukraine would depend upon the European Council's decision to approve the assessment of the Commission.

On 14 November, the US Department of Defence confirmed that US President Joe Biden's plan to fasten the security assistance to Ukraine would be ensured. This means that around USD 5.5 billion will have to be moved from the US military inventory to Ukraine before 20 January 2025, when the upcoming President will assume his office. Although this seems heavy, Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh has noted that the Defence Department was capable of moving things quickly. She said: "I expect that for the next coming months of this administration, you're going to continue to see those packages draw down from ... what's available in our stockpiles." She also said that the department kept track of the transfer of equipment to ensure its readiness. She added that they were committed to ensuring Ukraine's success on the battlefield.

On 13 November, the *New York Times* cited the statements of Ukrainian officials

concerned over security rather than territorial gains. A senior Ukrainian official said: "The territorial question is extremely important, but it's still the second question. The first question is security guarantees." It was assumed that Ukrainians were emphasizing "putting assurances in place to make a cease-fire hold" since the upcoming US President Donald Trump would push for an end to the conflict. Another Ukrainian official said that Ukraine would agree to a deal where Russia would retain control over the disputed areas and it would in turn gain entry into NATO.

War in Ukraine Day 994:

Renewed missile and drone attacks in Kyiv

War on the Ground:

On 13 November, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported on discussing the bilateral defence with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. During the talks, Scholz assured the delivery of IRIS-T air defence systems by 2024. Zelenskyy said: "We agreed on the importance of maintaining the 'Ramstein' format and holding the next meeting of the coordination group." Scholz affirmed on "unwavering solidarity" of Germany for Ukraine as it nears "1000 days" of war. However, his stance on not providing Taurus missiles stands the same. He refused to send Taurus cruise missiles fearing escalation.

On 13 November, Ukrainian forces reported on countering Russian troops near Kupiansk city in the northeast. According to the Ukrainian General Staff, Russian forces were observed to have struck in four waves and had deployed 15 pieces of equipment. This includes tanks, armoured vehicles and a mine-clearing system. Ukrainian forces claim to have destroyed all armoured vehicles and killed a mass number of personnel. They also observed Russian forces wearing similar uniforms of the Ukraine military which was seen as a war crime. On the same day, the Ukrainian forces also reported on renewed missile attacks by Russia on Kyiv. This involved cruise missiles and ballistic missiles from strategic aircraft.

On 13 November, the Ukrainian Air Defence Force claimed to counter two cruise missiles, two ballistic missiles, 37 drones and 90

which were targeted across Ukraine. According to the report, 47 additional drones were not traceable while two remained in space going towards Russia and Belarus. No casualties were reported in Kyiv however the increased and combined drone and missile attacks are observed to have continued for 70 days till now.

On 13 November, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), claimed to launch an attack on a Russian naval officer in Crimea. A bomb blast was reported earlier by Russia which killed a serviceman in Sevastopol city of Crimea. Russia's Investigative Committee claimed on explosive device being detonated. Whereas Ukraine claimed on killed official to be a "war criminal" responsible for launching missiles from the Black Sea at residents in Ukraine.

On 13 November, South Korea's spy agency confirmed on the presence of North Korea troops deployed by Russia in Kursk. According to the agency: "The National Intelligence Service estimates that North Korean troops dispatched to Russia have moved to the Kursk region over the past two weeks." This comes after the statement by the US State Department. It confirmed also the part of Russian troops deployed in the far west of Russia in the borders with Ukraine to disrupt the incursion by Ukraine.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 13 November, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova warned the West on allowing Ukraine to target deep inside Russia using west-supplied missiles. According to earlier reports, the UK and France are currently in the process of getting permission from the US to allow Ukraine to use storm shadow and scalp cruise missiles. Zakharova said: "If the Kiev regime gets permission for the aforementioned strikes, we will treat it as NATO de-facto entering a direct conflict with Russia."

On 13 November, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks over the phone. Both discussed issues relating to common interest and Saudi Prince expressed willingness to mediate between Moscow and

Kyiv.

The West View: Responses from The Us And Europe

On 13 November, US President Joe Biden during his meeting with Donald Trump stressed ensuring critical support of the US continued for Ukraine. According to the US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, Biden had reinforced the US's stance for Ukraine as it was also based on its national security interest.

On 13 November, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called for a "firm response" following the confirmation of the North Korean troops being deployed in Ukraine. He also highlighted his talks with NATO's Secretary General on the North Korean forces and the need for a response against the rising geopolitical questions. He also added: "President Biden fully intends to drive through the tape and use every day to continue to do what we have done these last four years, which is strengthen this alliance."

War in Ukraine Day 993:

Russia deploys 50,000 troops in Kursk Oblast says Zelenskyy

War on the Ground:

On 12 November, in his daily address, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported on Russia sending 50,000 troops to Kursk Oblast. According to the report in *Deutsche Welle*, only 11,000 troops were observed to be in the border region. Zelenskyy claimed continued defence by Ukrainian forces against the 50,000. Another report in the *New York Times* stated that Russia was not in a position to draw its troops into Kursk instead has used North Korean soldiers into Kursk.

On 12 November, the Ukrainian Defence Ministry reported that 700 Ukrainians residing in Europe plan to join the Ukrainian Legion. In early September, Ukraine announced the opening a "first recruitment office" in Poland to encourage Ukrainians living to join the legion. According to the ministry, the Ukrainian consulate held signing of the contracts to make citizens living abroad to serve in the legion. However, no details have been given on how many volunteered to undergo military

training in the Polish army base.

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 12 November, Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov reported on a Ukrainian drone attack in Oskol City located in Belgorod Oblast. According to him, the rescue workers were able to control the fire which resulted from the drone attack. The Russian military reported close to 13 drone attacks near the border zones with nine, especially in Belgorod.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 12 November, former Prime Minister of Estonia, Kaja Kallas was questioned by EU's parliamentarians ahead of the appointment to the European Commission. She called for "European unity" at the front of "global turmoil." She indicated the necessity of the EU to support Ukraine as it continues to fight Russia. She also stated that Europe and the US could not be idle while Russia, North Korea and Iran cooperate over munitions. Kallas said: "We have to make the decisions now, when we are in peace times, to be ready when the situation comes."

On 12 November, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced his visit to Brussels to meet leaders from NATO and the EU to discuss continuing support to Ukraine. He is expected to talk on ways to boost support for Ukraine. This comes as Donald Trump made earlier statements on curtailing US military assistance.

On 12 November, the EU Parliament announced hosting Zelenskyy marking 1,000 days of war in Ukraine. The plenary session will be held on 19 November which will include a special address by Zelenskyy. On the same EU Parliament President Roberta Metsola said: "Proud to announce a European Parliament extraordinary Plenary Session on Tuesday 19 November, to mark 1000 days of the bravery and courage of the people of Ukraine."

On the same day, NATO Secretary General, Mark Rutte called on the Western allies to increase their support to Ukraine in the Russian invasion. On North Korean troops

joining, he stressed raising more support for Ukraine to balance the authoritarian help received by Russia. He also vowed to promote Europe, North America and global partners' unity to keep the alliance strong. He raised concern over Russia working with Iran, North Korea and China which has created a threat to Europe's peace and security. This comes as he held a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron. On the same, Macron said: "Nothing should be decided about Ukraine without the Ukrainians nor about Europe without the Europeans."

War in Ukraine Day 992:

Drone attacks continue in Kyiv, Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia

War on the Ground:

On 11 November, military experts in Ukraine warned of probable disaster in Donetsk as Ukrainian forces face the threat of being taken over by Russian troops after causing severe damage to the Kurakhove Dam. Regional Governor Vadym Filashkin said: "We continue to monitor the water level in the river and are prepared for any developments." In June 2023, on the Kakhovka Dam destruction, several were killed despite intense fighting in southern Ukraine.

On 11 November, Ukrainian military commander General Oleksandr Syrskyi reported on Russian troops making advances in Kursk Oblast in the areas controlled by Ukraine. He confirmed the accumulation of thousands of Russian soldiers in Ukraine's borders and their attempts to take control.

On 11 November, the Ukrainian Air Force announced a high alert following the reports of a bomber sorties launched from a Russian territory. According to the report in *Deutsche Welle* this was the first time such a large number was targeted on parts of Kyiv resulting in power cuts, and residential buildings damaged. According to the Air Force: "The air alert is related to the launch of cruise missiles from Tu-95MS strategic bombers."

On 11 November, governors of the Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia reported on Russian air

strikes. Following the strikes, five were reported dead and 19 injured. Apart from the casualty, residential buildings were destroyed. Both oblasts witnessed drone and air attacks resulting in the announcement of air raids.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 11 November, *RT* reported on Ukraine's choice of directing its military sources into Kursk rather than strengthening its positions in Donetsk. According to the report, the servicemen fighting in Kursk Oblast mentioned that there were a few shortages in weapons and equipment however no issues at the personnel level. Ukraine has two "regiments" till now in Kursk Oblast and holds assault brigades and equipment such as German Leopard and American Abrams tanks. It has come under criticism on usage of elite forces in Kursk battle by military experts.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 11 November, in an address, Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock warned Russia to not take advantage of change in the US's political atmosphere. Donald Trump's re-election as president has added pressure across the EU member states to pledge continued support for Ukraine. She highlighted increasing the long-term defence funding and stated the two per cent benchmark of NATO would "no longer enough." She stressed quick transition as spring nears as Trump's support to Ukraine remains "ominous." She added: "We now need, in addition to the measures at the European level, more financial resources in the [German] budget." Baerbock also cited the recent drone attacks as "deliberate attacks" and the "new dimension" in the war making it a mandate to strengthen Ukraine's air defences.

On 11 November, Donald Trump who recently won the US elections, held a call with Russia's President Vladimir Putin on ending the war in Ukraine. The report was published in the *Washington Post*, indicating Trump's willingness to have more conversations on the "resolution" of the war. However, Russia denied reports of the phone

call.

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War in Ukraine Days 990 & 991: Ukraine and Russia exchange drones overnight

War on the Ground:

On 10 November, a wave of drone attacks was reported in Odesa city. The attack was observed as the biggest since 2022. According to the report in *Deutsche Welle*, one was killed, nine were injured and seven residential buildings were damaged. The same was confirmed by Odesa's mayor on witnessing several drone attacks. On the same, Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, stated that 145 drones were launched by Russia making it the largest overnight attack since the war began. According to him, 800 guided bombs, 600 drones and close to 20 missiles were targeted against Ukraine. He recalled more support from the West for increased defence.

On 10 November, Ukraine's Military Commander, Oleksandr Syrskyi reported on North Korean troops preparing for combat along with Russian forces in Ukraine. He indicated reports from the ground stating the "signs of escalation" in the frontline

sections of the war against Russia.

On 09 November, Syrskyi reported on the Ukrainian military destroying more than 52,000 Russian drone strikes in October. These included, 129 Russian artillery systems, 221 Russian radio systems and 4,000 Russian soldiers killed or injured.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 10 November, Russia's President Vladimir Putin signed the defence pact with North Korea. The Russian parliament published the ratified treaty on signing into law. The treaty requires Russia and North Korea to provide military support "without delay" under an attack. It also pledges to deter Western sanctions and coordinate at the UN forum.

On 10 November, the Russian Defence Ministry reported on Russian forces capturing Vovchenko, a village in eastern Donetsk, five kilometres from Kurakhove, an industrial city and Vovcha River. The industrial city was captured in May 2023 similar to Bakhmut. According to the ministry: "Units of the Centre armed group have liberated the town of Voltchenka." On the same day, it also claimed to have struck 70 Ukrainian drones across six areas of Russia. This includes, Tula, Bryansk, Kaluga, Oryol and Kursk.

On 10 November, Russian President Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov observed "positive signals" from the US elections. Highlighting Donald Trump's campaign where he pledged to a deal toward peace, Peskov said that it was positive since it was not about bringing "strategic defeat" and was about peace. He also said that it would be hard to predict: "...to what extent he's going to stick to statements that he made on the campaign trail."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 10 November, White House's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan stated that US President Joe Biden would lobby the next administration to continue US's support to Ukraine. Biden and Donald Trump are expected to meet in the Oval Office to discuss

the transition. Sullivan said: "The President will have the chance to explain to [President-elect] Trump how he sees things, where they stand." Over the next 70 days, Biden can frame a case to ensure the next government continues to support Ukraine. He also revealed the White House's plan to spend an additional USD six billion ahead of the transition.

On 10 November, the UK's Chief of Defence, Admiral Tony Radakin stated that close to 1,500 were dead and injured every day in Ukraine as of October. It was seen as the worst month of casualties. Whereas in Russia, 700,000 were reportedly killed or wounded since the war. Radakin said Russia was making gains while the losses were "enormous" and risking the economy due to high defence spending.

On 09 November, Poland's Prime Minister Donal Tusk announced arranging talks among the allies in Europe and NATO to discuss transatlantic cooperation and war in Ukraine post-the US elections. This comes as Trump often criticised the US funding to Ukraine and pledged to end the war. Tusk highlighted the critical challenge to the war following the latest political landscape and affirmed dialogue between cooperating countries on "geopolitical and transatlantic situation."

On 09 November, EU's Foreign Policy Commissioner Josep Borrell visited Kyiv for the last time before the power transition. He said: "We have been supporting Ukraine since the beginning, and on this my last visit to Ukraine, I convey the same message: we will support you as much as we can." He stated the uncertainty over the changed political atmosphere in the US and insisted on building a united and stronger Europe to support Ukraine. According to the report in Deutsche Welle, the EU has been the major contributor to Ukraine however faces the drawback of not having an independent military and being limited to giving wide assistance to Ukraine creates uncertainty among the individual EU countries on who would replace the US share. Till now Europe has given EUR 125 billion to Ukraine with EUR 40 billion from the EU. Whereas the US

has given EUR 90 billion exclusively making it the most crucial supporter.

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War in Ukraine Day 989:

NATO calls for collaboration with the US and Canada over threat from North Korea

War on the Ground:

On 08 November, *The Kyiv Independent* informed 14 individuals were killed and 88 injured in a single day of Russian attacks in Ukraine. An aerial bomb attack on the city of Zaporizhzhia by Russia killed 10 individuals including a one-year-old child, and injured 41. The Governor of Donetsk Oblast Vadym Filashkin, informed Russian forces killed two individuals and injured six others in an attack in the Kramatorsk district of Donetsk Oblast. The Governor of Odesa Oblast, Oleh Kiper, confirmed a Russian mass drone attack in Odesa Oblast killed one individual and injured eight. Russian missile attacks and shelling also targeted the Kyiv Oblast, Kharkiv Oblast and Kherson Oblast. One resident in Kherson was killed in the attacks and 25 residents in Kharkiv were injured by

an aerial bomb attack on a residential building.

On 08 November, Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said that it would be unacceptable for Russia to receive concessions after its invasion of Ukraine. Earlier, Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, stated that Ukraine needed to accept territorial losses as a precondition for peace talks. Zelenskyy informed the concessions were unacceptable for Ukraine and for Europe. The Ukrainian President also urged European leaders to provide him with sufficient weapons, instead of encouraging compromise with Russia. Additionally, he stated the demand by the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orban, for a ceasefire was dangerous and irresponsible. After the victory of Donald Trump in the US presidential elections, doubts have increased over whether the US will provide future assistance to Ukraine.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 08 November, *RT* reported on the meeting between the delegations from the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Ukraine in Belarus. The Commissioner for Human Rights of Russia, Tatyana Moskalkova, informed the meeting with the human rights commissioner of Ukraine involved discussions on the exchange of bodies of victims. During the meeting, Russia handed over the bodies of 563 soldiers and received 37 bodies from Ukraine. Moskalkova stated further humanitarian cooperation in assisting civilians, the location and reunification of families, and mutual visits to prisoners were also discussed during the meeting.

On 08 November, *RT* reported on the Government of the Russian Federation statement on demands by Ukraine to dismantle the Crimean Bridge were absurd. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the UN, Gennady Kuzmin, stated that the Crimean Bridge was built to resolve the economic and humanitarian problems the Crimean peninsula faced, after a blockade by Ukraine. Kuzmin also stated the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait where the bridge was located were historically Russian

territory and not international waters as claimed by Ukraine. Additionally, Kuzmin stated the bridge did not negatively impact the marine environment, contrary to Ukrainian claims. Kuzmin said that the Ukrainian government showed its lack of concern for the environment and safety of navigation by attacking the bridge repeatedly.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 07 November, Secretary-General of NATO, Mark Rutte provided his views on key issues. According to Rutte, Russia was working with partners like North Korea, China, and Iran against the future of Europe. The Secretary-General also stated the US would face the threat of new technological developments, due to Russia providing technology to North Korea. Rutte warned this scenario made it essential for the European part of NATO, the US, and Canada

to work together within the Indo-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic. Rutte stated the European members of NATO would send a capability and spending target, of over two per cent.

On 08 November, a video published in The Guardian reported on the US Government's pledge to continue providing military aid for Ukraine. The White House Press Secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, informed the US Government had increased aid to Ukraine, after an announcement in September by the President of the United States, Joe Biden. Jean-Pierre stated the US Government understood the importance of supporting Ukraine, and the recent surge in aid would continue. She also informed the US Government had taken actions to strengthen the air defences and battlefield capabilities of Ukraine to combat Russia.

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War in Ukraine Day 988:

Putin accuses NATO for creating security imbalance in Valdai forum

War on the Ground:

On 07 November, *Ukrinform* reported on the meeting between the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Keir Starmer. The meeting held on the sidelines of the European Political Community summit involved the implementation of the prospective victory plan by Ukraine. Another key point from the meeting was the discussion of support for the Ukrainian defence industry. Zelenskyy thanked Starmer and the UK for their support for Ukraine.

On 07 November, *Ukrinform* reported on the head of the Centre for Countering Disinformation, Andriy Kovalenko report on deployment of North Korean troops on the contact line in the Kursk Oblast of Russia. Kovalenko, who heads the Centre at the National Security and Defence Council informed North Korean troops were embedded in Russian units fighting on the Lyubimovka-Novoiwanovka line, and near Pogrebki. Kovalenko also stated the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy had confirmed combat casualties amongst the North Korean troops.

On 07 November, *Ukrinform* reported on Zelenskyy's discussion on military aid to Ukraine with the President of France, Emmanuel Macron. Zelenskyy said that he discussed military assistance, training and long-range capabilities with Macron during the meeting. The Ukrainian President also thanked Macron for French participation in coalitions and support for the Ukraine Victory Plan. Zelenskyy stated that European unity was essential to support Ukraine.

On 07 November, *Ukrinform* reported on Zelenskyy's statement that the US President-elect, Donald Trump wanted a quick end to the war. According to Zelenskyy, Trump wanted a quick fix, and Ukraine needed to prepare for any decision. Zelenskyy stated Ukraine wanted a just end to the war, and a quick end implied losses. The Ukrainian President said he had good conversations with Trump in the past. However, he stated the conversations needed to be more substantive.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 07 November, *RT* reported on Russia's President Vladimir Putin views on several global issues. At the annual Valdai Club forum in Sochi, Putin congratulated Donald Trump for his victory in the US presidential election. Putin referred to Trump as courageous and capable and stated he was ready to open dialogue with the US government under Trump. Additionally, Putin accused NATO of being an anachronism which incited conflicts. The Russian President also accused NATO of creating security imbalances which destabilized Eastern Europe through its expansionist policies. Putin also stated that neoliberalism was a totalitarian ideology responsible for enforcing uniformity and curbing national sovereignty and traditional values. Additionally, Putin informed the global order needed to become a multipolar one, rather than a unipolar one which served only a small number of powerful elites. The Russian President also stated that Western sanctions on Russia had backfired, as Russia withstood the economic impact.

On 07 November, an op-ed in *RT* reported on how the victory of Donald Trump in the US presidential election was a defeat for the left-liberal globalist agenda. The op-ed informed the return of Trump was a failure of the propaganda campaign by the Democratic Party to project him as a criminal. According to the op-ed, right-wing nationalist forces in Europe gained a powerful ally from the victory of Trump, and liberal globalism faced a rollback. The op-ed further noted Trump would take a stricter foreign policy towards US allies, such as shifting the burden of military and financial

expenditures. Additionally, it stated countries viewed as US adversaries like Iran and China would face greater pressure economically and diplomatically under a Trump administration. Another key point mentioned in the op-ed was that it was difficult to expect the Trump administration to initiate a substantive dialogue along the issues of the new territorial positions in the Ukraine war, and the military-economic status, potential and nature of a future government in Ukraine. According to the op-ed, the US government was unlikely to take the core interests of Russia into account, even if it agreed to a dialogue. The op-ed concluded the only positive from the victory of Trump was a reduction in military aid to Ukraine. According to the op-ed, this would increase the prospects of peace.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 08 November, the *Financial Times* reported on the worries over the trajectory of the European gas market this winter. Due to its diversification to liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Russian gas after the Ukraine war, the European energy market is now more globally connected. LNG accounts for 34 per cent of all European gas supplies, and its global supply is tight. This means that Europe competes with Asia during periods of high demand. Due to this, traders selling gas are incentivized with high gas prices. Mild temperatures and winters allowed Europe to reduce its LNG demand, and end winter with record levels of gas left in storage. However, a partner at Rystad Energy, Sindre Knutsson informed the market was taken into account, and this winter would be normal. This would increase gas demand compared to previous winters. Additionally, the gas transit contract between Ukraine and Russia which accounts for 5 per cent of the annual gas imports of the EU expires on 31 December. Analysts and traders estimate Europe will end the winter with gas storages about 45 to 55 per cent full. This is less than the previous two winters. Storage levels could drop to 35 per cent full if Europe experienced a colder winter.

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War in Ukraine Day 986:

Zelenskyy reports the clash with the North Korean troops

War on the Ground:

On 05 November, *Ukrinform* reported that the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy had stated the international community needed to ensure the deployment of North Korean troops to Ukraine in support of Russia was a failure. Zelenskyy stated the first battles with North Korean soldiers opened a new page of instability in the world. Zelenskyy also stated sufficient counteraction was needed to prevent the terror of the war from spreading and to make the deployment a failure for both North Korea and Russia. Additionally, Zelenskyy expressed his appreciation for allies who reacted to the deployment of North Korean troops and undertook actions for the defence of Ukraine.

On 05 November, *Ukrinform* reported that two Iranian satellites were placed in orbit by a Russian rocket. The Soyuz-2.1 launch spacecraft lifted from the Vostochny Cosmodrome carried 53 satellites, including two Ionosfera-M satellites from Iran. The 430 kilogram satellites are part of a space monitoring system for the ionosphere of the Earth. They operate at an altitude of 820 km.

There are plans to launch two more satellites in 2025.

On 05 November, *Ukrinform* informed that the Government of Ukraine had warned Russia was stockpiling military equipment and intensifying its infantry attacks in the Kharkiv Oblast. A spokesperson for the Kharkiv Operational Tactical Group, Yevhenii Romanov, informed Russia was building up its resources through the transportation of ammunition, equipment, food, warm gear and fuel for the winter. Additionally, Romanov informed Russia had increased the intensity of its aerial attacks, with ten aerial bombs launched on Ukrainian positions in a single day. The spokesperson also stated Ukraine was aware of Russian plans, and preparing to combat them.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 05 November, *RT* reported on the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, had warned NATO against launching aggressive actions against Russia. Lavrov stated allowing the Armed Forces of Ukraine to use long-range weapons supplied by the West for strikes inside Russia would be treated as an escalation. The defence minister informed the Government of the Russian Federation would undertake retaliatory measures in compliance with the right to self-defence in the UN Charter, in case of an attack on Russia. According to Lavrov, Ukraine would require NATO specialists and intelligence data through NATO satellite systems to operate the weapons, meaning NATO countries would be openly at war with Russia. Lavrov further stated that NATO had designated Russia as the biggest threat to its security.

On 05 November, *RT* reported on a Ukrainian drone targeting a residential building in the Belgorod Oblast of Russia. The Governor of Belgorod Oblast, Vyacheslav Gladkov informed the drone attack injured one individual, and caused a fire which spread across three apartments in the building. Gladkov stated the incident was a Ukrainian military attack against a civilian target. Additionally, Gladkov informed the extent of the damage was being clarified,

amidst reports multiple civilians were injured.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 05 November, the Government of Sweden had donated two aid packages worth nearly EUR nine million to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. The Minister for Civil Defence of Sweden, Carl-Oskar Bohlin informed of the two packages after a briefing with the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, Ihor Klymenko. The packages include the transfer of two vessels and equipment by the Swedish Coast Guard to improve maritime security. Bohlin further informed the second aid package was the transfer of nearly 40,000 protective respirator masks to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. Bohlin also stated the visit by the Swedish delegation showed its commitment to support Ukraine. Meanwhile Klymenko thanked Sweden for the support shown towards Ukraine. He also stated the meeting showed the common desire of both countries to have a productive partnership to combat joint threats.

On 05 November, the Government of Ukraine and the Government of Lithuania discussed initiatives towards improving cooperation in the defence industry. The Minister for Strategic Industries of Ukraine, Herman Smetanin, signed a memorandum on the joint production of UAVs, ammunition and EW equipment with the Minister of Defence of Ukraine, Rustem Umerov, and the Minister of National Defence of Lithuania, Laurinas Kasciunas. The two countries discussed the growing capabilities of the Ukrainian defence industry and the development of high-precision long-range weapons. Smetanin informed cooperation between Ukrainian defence companies and Lithuanian manufacturers was mutually beneficial, as Ukrainian arms manufacturers shared their expertise and experience with allies.

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War in Ukraine Day 985:

Massive drone attacks reported in Kyiv:

War on the Ground:

On 04 November, *Ukrinform* reported on Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, meeting with the Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. The meeting involved a review of recent developments on the frontline in the Ukraine war with the Pokrovsk, Toretsk, Kupyansk, and Kurakhove directions given priority. Additionally, a report of the ongoing Ukrainian incursion into the Kursk Oblast of Russia was provided. Zelenskyy also informed partner and artillery supplies to the frontline improved, under support packages. The increased domestic production of unmanned systems was also mentioned. Zelenskyy informed approved delivery plans of Ukrainian-made drones for the Armed Forces of Ukraine were being implemented.

On 04 November, *Ukrinform* reported on Zelenskyy's discussion with Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. Zelenskyy expressed his gratitude towards Trudeau for the successful hosting of the thematic conference on the point of the Peace Formula of Ukraine relating to the release of prisoners and deported persons. Zelenskyy further informed he discussed the organization of the Second Peace Summit with Trudeau and the possible involvement of countries from the Global South. Additionally, the Ukrainian President stated Canada would send the first NASAMS air defence system to Ukraine by the end of the year. Other topics discussed by

Zelenskyy and Trudeau during their meeting included continued defence support for Ukraine, the involvement of North Korea in the war and continuing cooperation amidst the upcoming G7 presidency of Canada.

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 04 November, RT reported that the Government of the Russian Federation carried out airstrikes on targets like energy infrastructure in Ukraine. The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation informed the Russian Armed Forces had targeted energy facilities and an oil refinery used by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Additionally, the Ministry stated that Russia targeted UAV workshops and storage sites for unmanned boats, and Russian forces used tactical aviation, drones, missiles and artillery in strikes. It was also informed that Russian air defence systems shot down launch rocket systems, guided aerial bombs and UAVs launched by Ukraine.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 04 November, Federal Foreign Office reported on Germany's Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock visit to Ukraine. Baerbock stated Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia was waging a war of attrition against Ukraine. She announced EUR 200 million to aid Ukraine for the third winter against Russia. The fund is aimed to strengthen infrastructure, continue energy supplies and humanitarian aid such as insulation, winter clothing, blankets and cash. According to Baerbock, the air strikes on the heat and power plants and water infrastructure of Ukraine intended to break the country. However, Baerbock praised the citizens of Ukraine for remaining resilient despite the pressure, with their rebuilding of schools, hospitals, and energy infrastructure. The Foreign Minister also informed her visit would be an opportunity to send a message to the citizens that Europe continued to support them, despite Russian attempts at division. It was also aimed to identify specific areas for the international community to support Ukraine.

On 04 November, an article in *The Korea Times* informed Josep Borrell, the High

Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy had stated Ukraine needed to be supported in all aspects. Borrell expressed concern over the deployment of North Korean troops to Ukraine in support of Russia. Additionally, Borrell stated that the escalating military cooperation between North Korea and Russia showed the Russian war in Ukraine posed a threat to global security. Borrell also voiced his interest in coordinating efforts between the EU and the Government of South Korea towards peace in Ukraine. He also informed a Strategic Dialogue between the EU and South Korea would be launched, and the two sides would sign a security and defence partnership.

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War in Ukraine Days 983 & 984:

Massive drone attacks reported in Kyiv

War on the Ground:

On 03 November, the attacks on Kyiv continued. The same was confirmed by Serhiy Popko, head of the Kyiv military administration. According to Popko, the military reported on using air defences to repel the attack and as per preliminary report, all the drones were destroyed. As a result of the debris, residential buildings and offices were damaged.

On 02 November, General Alexander Syrsky, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed

Forces of Ukraine had informed Ukrainian forces faced a powerful Russian offensive. According to Syrsky, the offensive was one of the most powerful launched by Russia, since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Additionally, he stated that Ukrainian units had a constant demand for the replenishment of resources. Syrsky's complaint added to constant complaints by Ukrainian officials that delays in shipment of Western arms and restrictions on weapons usage contributed to recent losses suffered by Ukraine.

On 02 November, Business Recorder reported on the Kyiv being targeted with a heavy drone attack. The Ukrainian Air Force stated it shot down 39 out of 71 drones fired from Russia, which targeted Kyiv Oblast around the capital, alongside Sumy, Kirovograd, and Poltava Oblasts. The Kyiv Regional Military Administration informed six districts of Kyiv witnessed falling debris from drones shot down. The Administration further informed that fallen debris damaged cars and flat blocks, and started several fires in buildings. The missile strikes also injured a policeman and another woman in Kyiv Oblast. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the President of Ukraine stated the terrorist attacks by Russia showed the pressure on Russia and its accomplices was not enough.

On 02 November, an article in *Deutsche Welle* News informed Russian drone attacks caused widespread damage across the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. Serhiy Popko, the Head of the Kyiv Regional Military Administration informed falling drone debris caused damage to the entrance and windows of at least five buildings in the districts of Holiivskyi and Shevchenkivskyi, including a hostel. According to the Administration, buildings, roads, and power lines were damaged by the drone strikes. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian Air Force informed Russia had launched 96 attack drones and one X-59/69 missile at Ukraine.

On 02 November, Ukraine's top military official indicated increase in Ukraine's production of mortar shells. However he indicated the shortage in global explosives. He said: "The main problem we have now

are powders and explosives. However much explosive comes into Ukraine, that's how many shells we will have."

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 02 November, during joint talks with Sergei Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister, Choe Son Hui, North Korea's Foreign Minister said that it will support Russia until victory. She said that North Korea had no doubt in Russian leadership and will "Achieve a great victory in their sacred struggle to protect the sovereign rights and security interests." On the same day, Lavrov confirmed on establishing "close contacts" Russia and North Korea militaries.

On 02 November, Dmitry Medvedev, the former President of Russia statement on Western countries had the false assumption Russia would never use nuclear weapons. Medvedev stated Western leaders made a miscalculation, that Russia would never cross the red line of using nuclear weapons. According to Medvedev, this failed to take into account the willingness of Russia to defend its existence using all means at its disposal. Additionally, Medvedev stated that current Western leaders like Emmanuel Macron, the President of France, and Olaf Scholz, the Chancellor of Germany lacked the acumen and subtlety of mind present amongst their predecessors.

On 02 November, *RT* reported on a Russian missile strike on a police building in the city of Kharkov in Ukraine left at least one individual dead. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine informed a Russian S-400 missile targeted an unspecified facility which housed police officers. The Ministry further informed that a 43-year-old police officer was killed, and 30 police officers, a first responder, and nine civilians were wounded in the attack. Oleg Sinogub, the Governor of Kharkov Oblast stated that 20 apartment blocks and individual houses were damaged by the S-300 missile attack. According to Boris Rozhin, a Russian military blogger, the police headquarters in Kharkov was targeted. The Government of the Russian Federation made no remark on the recent strikes.

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War in Ukraine Day 981:

Ukraine allots 26 per cent of GDP for defence and military in 2025 budget

War on the Ground:

On 31 October, *ABC News* reported on the Russian attack in the Saltovskiy district of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city. The guided aerial bomb struck a residential building in the city which led to the death of three people and injury of 36 others. According to Ihor Klymenko, the Internal Affairs Minister of Ukraine, the attack injured almost 35 people while others could still be inside the rubble of the building. Oleh Syniehubov, the regional head said that dead people suffered from severe head injuries.

On 01 November, *The Kyiv Independent* reported on the rise in Russian drone strikes in Ukraine, recorded in October. According to the General Staff of Ukraine, among the 2023 drones launched by Russians, 1,185 were downed, 738 were "lost," and 29 flew back out of Ukraine's airspace. There was no information on the remaining 71. Since January 2024, Russia has launched 6987 strike drones. This estimate suggests that 29 per cent of it was launched in October. According to some experts, this escalation could be the preparation for an "unprecedented mass attack."

On 31 October, *The Kyiv Independent* reported that Ukraine's 2025 budget had passed its first reading in parliament. It allocated 26 per cent of the country's GDP to defence and military spending. Denys Smyhal, Prime Minister of Ukraine said: "The priority of next year's budget will also be security and defense." He added that the tax collected would be used to strengthen the country's military capabilities. Military and defence spending is expected to grow by Hr 46 billion (USD 1.6 billion) compared to 2024, reaching over Hr 2.2 trillion (\$53.4 billion). Ukraine's state budget depended upon "war bonds, IFI loans, and bilateral loans and grants" amid economic decline. The budget would go for additional rounds before receiving the final assent.

On 31 October, *Reuters* reported that Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine expressed his condemnation of the West's poor reaction to the alleged deployment of North Korean troops in Russia. He blamed them for their "zero response" to the situation. He warned that with this weakened reaction, Putin would plan to accept more North Koreans to work for Russia. These statements came amidst NATO's confirmation of the troops. However, the Western countries have not yet announced any retaliatory measures in response to this act.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 31 October, *ARAB NEWS* reported on the statements of Sergei Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister on the defence treaty set to be signed with Iran. He said: "The treaty on a comprehensive strategic partnership between Russia and Iran that is being prepared will become a serious factor in strengthening Russian-Iranian relations." He confirmed that the agreement was in preparation to be signed in "the near future." He also expected Masoud Pezeshkian, Iran's President, to visit Moscow by the end of 2024. He said that the agreement would affirm greater cooperation in defence, peace and security at the regional and global levels. However, he did not elaborate on the defence ties between the countries. The growing relationship between Iran and

Russia amid the wars in Ukraine and Palestine raises speculation, particularly among the West.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 01 November, CNN reported on the statements made by Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State along with Lloyd Austin, the US Defence Secretary and their South Korean counterparts on the alleged deployment of North Korean troops in Russia. They said that the troops had been given training in “artillery, UAVs, basic infantry operations, including trench clearing.” They announced that almost 8000 troops were expected to enter the war in Russia’s Kursk region. On this, Blinken warned that these troops who would engage in the war would become “legitimate military targets.” He added that the US would deliver additional military support to Ukraine in the coming days. Meanwhile, Austin said that the Ukrainians were capable to hold the territory even with the additional North Korean troops deployed. He cited Moscow’s losses in the war and said that

these additional troops were “pales in comparison” to the casualties recorded regularly in Russia. Blinken and Austin further said that they were discussing with China on ways to curb this escalation.

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EM Daily Brief*

By Advik S Mohan, Samruddhi Pathak and Neha Tresa George



Source: Marton Monus/REUTERS, Irakli Gedenidze, Reuters, AP Photo/Christophe Ena, Eva Manez/REUTERS, South China Morning Post

BELGIUM

Energy Minister condemns the President of Azerbaijan for praising fossil fuel reserves

On 15 November, Belgium's energy minister Tinne Van der Straeten condemned the statements of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev which "glorified fossil fuel reserves." She referred to it as "inappropriate" for a country that was hosting COP29, an international climate conference. In his opening speech at the COP29 summit, Aliyev referred to the country's oil and gas resources as a "gift of God." In response, Van der Straeten noted that as a president, Azerbaijan must be an honest broker as most of the representative countries faced climate consequences due to fossil fuels. She added that this would undermine the chances of reaching an agreement on "financing climate action." She also praised French Ecological Transition Minister Agnès Pannier-Runacher, who cancelled her trip to Baku after Aliyev condemned France and the

Netherlands for holding overseas territories. (Zia Weise and Suzanne Lynch, "[Azerbaijan leader's fossil fuel praise an 'abuse' of COP29, Belgium says](#)," *Politico*, 17 November 2024)

France and Azerbaijan face tensions on overseas crimes

On 15 November, *Euro News* reported on the simmering political tensions between France and Azerbaijan against the backdrop of the COP29 summit. In his opening remarks, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev condemned France for carrying out "crimes" in its overseas territories. He said: "The lessons of France's crimes in these so-called overseas territories would not be complete without mentioning the regime's recent human rights violations." According to experts, they were at odds due to France's unwavering support to Armenia in its territorial conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. They refer to these tensions as "political" as France had provided diplomatic, financial, and even

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military aid to Armenia. In retaliation, France has accused Baku of meddling in the affairs of its overseas territories, especially New Caledonia. The experts claim that the “Baku initiative group” promote the independence aspirations of some pro-independence groups in the world. A report from France’s agency for monitoring foreign digital interference, VIGINUM pointed out Baku’s disinformation campaigns against France in social media. It also accused Baku for worsening the already problematic situation in New Caledonia. However, Baku has denied its involvement in these campaigns. ([“Why are Azerbaijan and France at odds?”](#), *Euro News*, 15 November 2024)

Rampant growth in its environment sector post pandemic

On 03 November, *The Brussels Times* reported that Belgium post pandemic has witnessed a growth in its environment sector with regards to “productivity, employment and exports.” Waste Management contributes 35 per cent of the entire produce and hires 37 per cent of the people working in the environment sector. Energy resource management which closely follows the waste management has 34 per cent share in exports. The two divisions have more than 50 per cent contribution in the Environments goods and services sector. The rise of the environment sector, though is behind in export of goods than the rest of the economy, has expanded more swiftly than the entire economy. (Ellen O’Regan, [“Significant” growth in Belgium’s environmental sector since the pandemic](#),” *The Brussels Times*, 03 November 2024)

Right wing parties on upsurge owing to the changing demographics in Belgium suggests an editorial in *Politico*

On 03 November, an editorial titled [“Brussels is bursting out of its borders. That’s helping the rise of the right”](#) discussed how the increase in non-Belgian population is propelling the Dutch speaking nationals of Belgium to fall in the ambit of right-wing parties. Flanders which was traditionally predominated by the presence of Dutch speaking nationals is witnessing an

influx of foreign population. Dutch speaking nationals had previously fought against the influence of French in Belgium in the 1980s for protecting their language. Flanders has been the first choice of the immigrant population and houses twice the number of foreigners in comparison to Wallonia which is dominated by the French speaking population. The editorial notes that the changing demographics has led to the victory of Far right parties such as Vlaams Belang that witnessed electoral gains in the cities surrounding Brussels. The party had secured 23 per cent votes in Belgium’s National elections in 2024. The New Flemish Alliance Party (N-VA) which got 24 per cent votes in the national elections stressed on learning Dutch and had introduced laws such as repealing the “school bonus” if parents and their children fail to pass Dutch language test. (Sonya Angelica Diehn [“Brussels is bursting out of its borders. That’s helping the rise of the right](#),” *Politico* 03 November 2024)

DENMARK

Joins Artemis Accords to strengthen space exploration and boost ties with the US

On 13 November, a signing ceremony was held in Copenhagen marking Denmark’s entry as 48th country into Artemis Accords. According to NASA Administrator Bill Nelson, Denmark as a founding member of the European Space Agency had contributed to space explorations for several years. This included collaboration with NASA on Mars explorations and on signing Denmark can further its international cooperation in space. Minister of Higher Education and Science, Christina Egelund provided remarks on how Denmark aims to strengthen its strategic partnership with the US for both science and industry. According to him, the signing of the Accords aligned with its space research and boost ties with the US to advance its scientific breakthroughs and development in space sector. The Artemis Accords and its signatories helps in advancing the implementation of principles for a sustainable space exploration. ([“NASA Welcomes Denmark as Newest Artemis](#)

Accords Signatory.” *NASA.gov*, 13 November 2024)

Government publishes a framework to help EU states comply to AI Act

On 14 November, government of Denmark published a framework to help the EU member states to use generative AI to comply with EU’s latest AI act. The alliance majorly supported by Danish corporates launched: “Responsible Use of AI Assistants in the Public and Private Sector” stating on how firms can support its employees in utilising the AI systems in regulated scenario. The document also aims to promote the delivery of “ecure and reliable services” from businesses to consumers. It also lays basis for AI deployment in society and adhering to the AI Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), data storage and training staff. EU’s AI Act was enforced in August which takes a risk-based approach to monitor AI and its technologies based on risk levels. Despite the act is in place, the lengthy processes to implement is expected to delay the act from coming into practise. Denmark’s Minister of Digital Affairs Caroline Stage Olsen said: “It is absolutely vital for the competitiveness of our businesses and future progress of Europe that both the private and public sector will succeed in developing and using AI in the years to come.” (Ryan Browne, “Denmark launches landmark framework for using AI under EU rules — with Microsoft backing,” *CNBC*, 14 November 2024))

Danish company to invest USD two billion in Pakistan’s maritime industry

On 11 November, *The Express Tribune* reported that the maritime industry of Pakistan is all set to receive funding of USD two billion from Maersk Line which is a Danish shipping firm. Minister of Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh is optimistic that the funding would boost the development of “port infrastructure” and build up “logistics” capacity. Members of Maersk Line expressed content with the enterprise of the government. The Minister hopes that the development would further lure other companies to invest in the maritime industry of Pakistan which would

play a part in its growth. It is anticipated that the funding would generate new employment opportunities and provide a boost to the economy of the country. (Earlier published in Pakistan Reader Alert 12 November 2024) (“Pakistan secures \$2b investment from Denmark in maritime sector,” *The Express Tribune*, 11 November 2024))

FINLAND

Tops in the World Happiness Report 2024 for the seventh time

On 16 November, Finland was ranked first in the World Happiness Report of 2024 for the seventh time. An article in *Deutsche Welle* tries to find the reasons behind it. The country has five Happiness Ambassadors hired by the Finland Tourism Board. They are responsible for giving insights into the Finnish way of life in their own professions. Finland has a remarkable way of living conditions. The people have decent incomes and benefit from the welfare state and freedom. They have high levels of trust in government as there is little corruption. It was also found that the Finnish mindset “sisu” plays a great role in keeping up their happiness. It is the mentality to face things how they are positively and to not give up. These were some of the reasons found to have accounted for Finnish happiness. (“Why is Finland such a happy place?,” *Deutsche Welle*, 16 November 2024))

Constructs biogas plant with a capacity to produce “125 GWh of Liquefied Biogas”

On 11 November, *gasworld* reported that “a biogas plant” is being built in “Kiuruvesi, Finland” that would use “cattle farm manure and agricultural byproducts” to generate “Liquefied biogas.” The biogas plant which is scheduled to be completed in 2026 is being constructed by “Suomen Lantakassu Oy.” The plant after completion would have the capacity to generate “125 GWh of Liquefied Biogas” which would be sufficient to power “250 heavy-duty vehicles” each year. The “Upper Savo biogas complex” which would be comprised of the newly constructed biogas plant is estimated to have a total funding of “EUR 100 million.”

Finland aims to achieve its objective of producing “four terawatt-hours of biogas” by the year “2030.” It has stressed utilizing “agricultural waste” to generate “biogas” which could be used to power heavy-duty vehicles. (Anthony Wright, “[Suomen Lantakaasu to build EUR 100m biogas plant in Finland](#),” *gasworld*, 11 November 2024)

WMO reports witnesses a warm October

On 05 November, the *World Meteorological Organization* stated that the countries in the month of October unexpectedly experienced soaring temperatures. Reportedly, the temperatures were 1 to 2.5 degrees higher than the mean temperatures in 1991 to 2020. In areas of “Gulf of Finland” mean “temperatures” were recorded at all time high which was because of the increasing temperatures of the “seawater.” On 11 October, the country experienced its maximum temperature of “15.9 degrees and” on 31 October the lowest temperature of “-15.1 degrees” was noted for the month. In terms of rain in the country, the Gulf of Bothnia topped the list with the maximum amount of rain. In terms of sunshine, the majority of the country experienced a marginal bit of more sunshine than normal. (“[October was unusually warm throughout Finland](#),” *World Meteorological Organization*, 05 November 2024)

Blames global south for not reaching an agreement on biodiversity preservation

On 05 November, *Helsinki Times* reported that Finnish delegation was unable to lobby other countries that were participating at COP-16 Biodiversity conference hosted by Columbia to decide on the parameters on which biodiversity loss is to be calculated. Another objective where Finland failed to build a consensus was to provide economic support to developing countries so that they can put an end to “biodiversity loss.” Finnish government itself was unable to come up with a final plan regarding biodiversity loss, however, it had earlier committed to do so in the last Cop meeting in Canada. Minister of Climate and Environment Kai Mykkänen had put the blame on big countries from the global south which he claimed were demanding

setting up new funds, a proposition which did not go well with other countries. (“[Results of Cop-16 met mostly with disappointment in Finland](#),” *Helsinki Times*, 05 November 2024)

Exports snow preserving mats to the ailing ski resorts affected by Climate Change

On 01 November, *The Guardian* reported that Finland has gone back to using its traditional method of ice preservation as climate change has lessened winters to save its Ski resorts. Alpe du Grand Serre which used to be a ski resort in France had to shut down because of its inability to be operational throughout the year. Finland, by using their traditional technology of utilizing sawdust to prevent melt, have now come up with snow-saving mats. The mats are being used in countries like Switzerland, Norway and Spain. (Miranda Bryant, “[Finland exports snow-saving mats to ski resorts hit by climate crisis](#),” *The Guardian*, 01 November 2024)

FRANCE

Prime Minister Barnier warns of fiscal deficit if the government collapses

On 26 November, *Politico* reported on the statements of French Prime Minister Michel Barnier on the uncertainty of the French government and economy. He said: “There’s likely to be a serious storm and serious turbulence on the financial markets if the government collapses.” The proposed budget by Barnier has been debated for weeks. The budget includes EUR 40 billion in spending cuts and EUR 20 billion in tax hikes. This was intended to reduce France’s deficit which is estimated to come in at 6.1 per cent of GDP in 2024. However, upon the budget, the left lawmakers of the coalition were planning to pass a no-confidence motion. National Rally’s leader Marine Le Pen also threatened to withdraw her support if the higher taxes on electricity were not removed from the budget. Barnier reminded that France would face a fiscal deficit amidst a worsening German economy and a possible trade-war with the US. (Joshua Berlinger, “[French PM Barnier: A ‘serious storm’ is on the horizon if the](#)

French government falls,” Politico, 26 November 2024)

Marine Le Pen awaits the date of her judgment day

On 27 November, *Politico* reported that National Rally leader and upcoming Presidential candidate Marine Le Pen was set to be revealed. She along with 26 of her party members are the convicted of an ongoing trial over the embezzlement of EU Parliament funds. The Prosecutors have asked for five years of imprisonment, fines and a political ban for at least five years for Le Pen which could destroy her political career. (Victor Goury-Laffont, “Marine Le Pen to learn verdict date in trial that could destroy her political career,” Politico, 27 November 2024)

President Macron commemorates the Strasbourg liberation in WWII

On 23 November, *Euronews* reported on the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of Strasbourg’s liberation during World War II. France’s President Emmanuel Macron remembered the day by attending various ceremonies. He examined troops and paid his respects to General Philippe Leclerc, who headed the French troops into the city in 1944. As part of his memorial tour, he also visited Bruche Valley and the Natzweiler- Struthof concentration camp near Strasbourg, the only Nazi camp in France. He also called for honouring the victims of the Second World War. (“Macron marks 80th anniversary of the liberation of Strasbourg during WWII,” Euronews, 24 November 2024)

Protesting farmers lift a blockade after discussions with Prime Minister Barnier

On 20 November, *Le Monde* reported that the French farmers had lifted a blockade after discussions with Prime Minister Michel Barnier. Hard-line farmers’ union Coordination Rurale (CR) lifted its roadblock for heavy trucks on the A9 motorway, which links southwestern France with Spain’s northeast. They were protesting for decent pay and a prospective FTA between the EU and some of the Latin American countries. Their decision to maintain the blockade was altered by

Barnier’s expression of support to them. He confirmed that he understood their side and was working to uphold his commitments towards them. The farmers were earlier protesting for the low prices of their produce and environmental regulations. It was then triggered by the prospected Mercosur-EU deal. (“French farmers lift border blockade,” Le Monde, 20 November 2024)

Farmers protest against EU-Mercosur FTA

On 18 November, farmers across France protested against the EU-Mercosur trade deal. According to them, the deal risks their livelihoods by allowing cheaper South American agricultural produce under lesser environmental limits. They fear unfair competition and burdening regulations which could impact their income. Arnaud Rousseau, head of France’s main farmers’ union said: “We are against the conclusion of an unbalanced treaty likely to destroy part of the French agricultural sector.” The protests are expected to continue till 19 November in front of government buildings extending till mid-December. The union calls it a “agricultural revolt” in southwestern France. France’s President Emmanuel Macron’s stance has also echoed the same against the deal as it will replace the home-grown products with Brazil and Argentina’s beef, chicken, sugar and maize affecting the farmer income. The debate over pesticides, hormones and land use regulation have long been protested by farmers in Europe. (“French farmers protest EU-Mercosur trade deal,” Deutsche Welle, 18 November 2024)

President Macron visits Argentina amid G20 summit

On 17 November, *Politico* reported on French President Emmanuel Macron’s visit to Argentina. According to an official from the Elysee Palace, Macron intended to convince Argentina’s President Javier Milei to adhere to “the priorities of the G20” and contribute to the international consensus.” President Milei was reported to be restricting talks on the final G20 communique for the summit scheduled to be on 18 and 19 November. This followed

Argentina's withdrawal from the COP29 climate talks in Azerbaijan. On the meeting, Macron said that he would talk about "trade, agriculture and the G20 summit with Milei." Besides, he would discuss "the defence of farming and farmers" about the "Mercosur mega trade deal between the EU and South American nations" which France opposes. Milei has always favoured an alliance with the US and becomes the first foreign leader to visit Donald Trump since his success in the elections. Argentina also announced that it was considering withdrawing from the "Paris Climate Agreement." (Clea Caulcutt and Joe Stanley-Smith, "Macron in Argentina to soothe would-be G20 wrecker Milei," *Politico*, 17 November 2024)

Protests stem against the EU-Mercosur free trade agreement

On 16 November, *Le Monde* reported on the EU- Mercosur agreement between the EU and the South American trade bloc which includes Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia. The agreement if signed would be the most significant trade deal between the parties as it nullifies all the custom duties on trade. With this, the EU aims to increase the exports of European goods which face high tariffs in these countries. The deal also includes substantial beef import quota. Although it was concluded in 2019, several countries have criticised it leading to a delay in its implementation. However, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is keen to push for its implementation in 2024. Meanwhile, the French farmers have expressed their discontent with the deal. The unions were mobilising their people for protests across all regions. The main point of contention is the duty-free South American goods, especially beef which would result in massive competition in the market. The farmers termed it as "unfair" as the farms in South America are larger, the health and environmental standards are less strict and the labor costs are lower. Besides the farmers, the French political party members have also pointed out that the agreement failed to meet "the democratic, economic, environmental and social criteria set by the

Assemblée Nationale and the Sénat." Although Macron was in support of the agreement initially, he altered his stance later in retaliation to the environmental policies of Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's then-president against climate change. To veto the agreement in the EU, France would need the approval of at least four member states together, blocking the majority. Besides, countries like Germany and Spain have been pushing for the deal. ("EU-Mercosur: Why the French have opposed this free trade agreement," *Le Monde*, 16 November 2024)

Marine Le Pen pushes for "judicial leniency" amid trials against misappropriation of funds

On 17 November, an editorial in *Le Monde* reported on the trial against the Rassemblement National (RN) party's leader, Marine Le Pen. She had been launching an intense communication campaign against the judiciary since the prosecutor's request was granted. Five years' imprisonment, of which three years would be a suspended sentence, an EUR 300,000 fine; and a five-year ban on holding office have been requested against her. On this, Le Pen said: "It's a political death sentence." The 27 defendants in the case were not able to contest the charges of misappropriation of public funds by party co-founder Jean-Marie Le Pen, and then by his daughter Marine from 2004 to 2016. With her political capital, Le Pen is trying to influence the justice system. The verdict is expected to be announced in early 2025. However, the primary question was over the immediate enforcement of the ban on holding office. This would in turn prevent Le Pen from contesting in the 2027 elections. ("Far-right fake jobs trial: Marine Le Pen's malign offensive," *Le Monde*, 17 November 2024)

Uncertainty looms over Marine Le Pen's political career as prosecutor calls for five year ban

On 13 November, *Euronews* reported that Marine Le Pen who leads the National Rally party and stood for Presidential elections in 2017 and 2022 against Emmanuel Macron, is under scrutiny for using "EU

parliamentary funds” to remunerate “party staff”. If the charges against her are substantiated, she could face five years of prison time and might have to pay fines up to EUR 1 million. Also, if proven guilty, she would become ineligible to contest for presidency in 2027. She, however, maintains that the charges are “politically motivated” and that the duties of “parliamentary aides” also consist of engaging in “political activities.” (Oman Al Yahyai, [“Marine Le Pen denies EU funds misuse as 2027 presidential ambitions remain uncertain.”](#) *Euro News*, 13 November 2024)

MPs reject the proposed draft budget for 2025 due to new taxes and fiscal battering

On 12 November, *Le monde* reported on the rejection of the draft budget bill proposed by Prime Minister Michel Barnier’s government. It was a heavily amended bill with new taxes by the opposition. There were 362 votes against the budget from the Assemblée Nationale. The Budget Minister Laurent Saint-Martin said: “A majority of MPs rejects both fiscal battering and the impossibility of France living up to its European commitments.” The lawmakers had altered Barnier’s earlier EUR 60 billion plan to correct the public finances with 40 billion in spending cuts and 20 billion in new tax receipts. The rejection would call for another revised budget. ([“French MPs reject massively amended 2025 budget.”](#) *Le Monde*, 12 November 2024)

GEORGIA

Protests gather outside the parliament against the election results

On 25 November, *Euronews* reported that the Georgian protestors gathered in front of the Georgian parliament before the first session of the newly-elected parliament. The opposition party members also expressed their discontent and boycotted their parliamentary activities. The leader of the Unity National Movement coalition, Khatia Dekanoidze said that the ruling of the Georgian Dream Party did not have the legitimacy to govern the Georgian people. The ongoing protest is due to the claim that

the election results were rigged to promote a pro-Russian government. The people condemn the party to be increasingly authoritarian and pro-Moscow. The President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili also rejected the election results and intended to move to the constitutional court. ([“Georgian protesters rally in Tbilisi ahead of first session of newly-elected parliament.”](#) *Euronews*, 24 November 2024)

Police destroys protestors camp in Tbilisi

On 19 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that the police destroyed a tent camp in Tbilisi, set up the protestors against the recent results of the recent parliamentary elections. The Georgian Dream Party’s re-election to the parliament was seen by the citizens as against the country’s aspirations to join the EU. They claim that the results were the result of a vote fraud influenced by Russia. However, the Party’s leaders have refuted these claims with the Central Election Commission saying it won 54 per cent of the vote. President Salome Zourabichvili has filed a lawsuit against the election rejecting the results. She said that the elections had “widespread violations of voting universality and ballot secrecy.” The Georgian opposition party members also refused to enter the Parliament calling the results as “illegitimate.” The leader of the opposition Akhali party, Nika Gvaramia explained that many of the party activists were injured or detained in the protests. Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry warned the protestors to leave and not to disturb the daily lives of people. ([“Georgia: Police break up election protest camp.”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 19 November 2024)

Leader of Abkhazia resigns amid protests over the pro-Russian bill

On 19 November, the *BBC* reported on the resignation of Aslan Bzhania, leader of Georgia’s region of Abkhazia following large-scale protests over a controversial pro-Russian bill. According to Bzhania’s office: “He resigned to maintain stability and constitutional order.” The protestors who barged into the parliament in Sukhumi were asked to leave on condition of his resignation. The bill encouraging legalised

Russian investment and land ownership was also withdrawn. Bzhania's office further said that his deputy would become the acting leader following the dismissal of the current Prime Minister. However, Abkhazia's opposition has not yet commented on his resignation. Abkhazia is a country located along the Black Sea and Caucasus mountains. It declared its independence in 1999 and Russia recognised its sovereignty in 2008. Although it is separated from Georgia, most countries consider it part of Georgia. However, according to Georgia, Abkhazia is "occupied" by Moscow. (Jaroslav Lukiv, "[Abkhazia: Leader of Georgia breakaway region resigns](#)," *BBC*, 19 November 2024)

Thousands protest against Georgian Dream Party

On 12 November, *France 24* reported that more than 1000 demonstrators in Tbilisi protested against Georgian Dream party which was supposedly helped by Russia in winning the elections. The demonstrators carrying EU and Georgian flags had assembled in front of the "Georgian parliament." They called for a re-election which must take place under "international supervision" and an enquiry into the supposed rigging of elections. As per the election results, the Georgian Dream party secured 54 per cent of the total votes cast and the party has dismissed speculations of election rigging. President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili has asked the US and EU to provide support to the protesters. Officials of the US and Belgium have also called for enquiry into the election fraud whereas Russia has dismissed the claims of being involved in influencing the elections. ("[Thousands rally in Georgia to demand new election and push for EU integration](#)," *France 24*, 12 November 2024)

Georgian Dream party adamant about not cooperating with the EU

On 11 November, *Politico* reported that the Georgian Dream party criticized leaders of EU countries who raised suspicion over its victory in the elections held in October. A delegation from "France, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Finland and Baltic countries

arrived in the capital city of Georgia, Tbilisi, however, "chair of Georgia's parliament declined to hold talks with it. Michael Roth who heads the "Foreign Affairs" of Germany alleged that elections were not conducted in a "free and fair" manner and that his visit was to showcase support to those Georgians who wish to integrate in the EU. The "Secretary General of Georgian Dream," Kakha Kaladze termed the European dignitaries as "ordinary pests." Further, opposition parties in Georgia have demanded that the EU must not accept the current government in the country as legitimate. (Gabriel Gavin, "[Georgian government blasts European delegation amid call for election investigation](#)," *Politico*, 11 November 2024)

Western Pollsters skeptical over the unusual voting results in Georgia says BBC

On 01 November, the *BBC* reported that the two US agencies Harris X and Edison Research who are involved in carrying exit polls expressed their inability to provide any explanation for the results seen in the Georgian elections. This further strengthens the claims of the opposition parties who have alleged that rigging took place in the elections. The winning party Georgian Dream however dismissed the claims and stated that elections were conducted in a "free and fair" manner. Edison Research claimed serious manipulation in rural areas and hinted of an incongruity of 8 per cent votes. Both the pollsters had predicted that the four opposition parties would be winning the elections. Observers in Georgia claim to have witnessed the buying of votes and seizing of voter IDs ahead of the voting, however, the Election Commission have completely rejected the accusations and stated that it was not possible to cast votes more than one time. (Paul Kirby, "[Georgian vote result makes no statistical sense - Western pollsters](#)," *BBC*, 01 November 2024)

GERMANY

Expected to face a 10 per cent contraction in workforce, says a study

On 26 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on a study conducted by the Bertelsmann Foundation on the shrinking workforce in Germany. The study said that Germany's workforce would reduce by 10 per cent by 2040 without "substantial immigration." It would drop from 46.4 million to 41.9 million in 2040 without at least 288000 skilled foreign workers per year. According to Germany's migration experts, the demographic shift needed immigration. For this, they suggested better reforms and removal of restrictions for immigrants. Some of the migrants reported to have faced discrimination and rejection in their work environments. This reduction in workforce was expected to affect North Rhine-Westphalia, Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt and the small state of Saarland on the French border. ("Germany: 288,000 foreign workers needed annually until 2040." *Deutsche Welle*, 26 November 2024)

Plans to convert buildings into bunkers amid international threat

On 26 November, *Euronews* reported that Germany was planning to convert a number of public and private buildings including car parks and underground train stations into bunkers. An app to locate the bunkers and emergency shelters was also planned for the citizens. According to a spokesperson from the Interior Ministry, citizens were also encouraged to turn their own basements and garages into shelters in case of an emergency. Germany's tabloid BILD said that this plan was to counter any incoming threat to Germany. It came amidst increasing international threat in the wake of Russia's war against Ukraine. On this, German authorities said that the project will be time-consuming with the involvement of several authorities. Civil protection organisations have also called for the expansion of shelters and bunkers. Germany has currently 579 bunkers. (Tamsin Paternoster, "Germany plans to turn buildings into bomb shelters." *Euronews*, 26 November 2024)

Government faces difficulty as Volkswagen warns of shutting down outlets

On 27 November, *Politico* reported on the

struggle faced by Germany's politicians amidst the economic downturn and labour protests. Volkswagen, Germany's biggest carmaker warns of shutting down outlets for the first time in its 87-year history. With this, "labour frustration and massive strikes" is expected to happen in the future. However, the German government is facing this challenge amidst the collapse of the government and a worsening economy. With the upcoming US President Donald Trump, Germany is set to face new tariffs which will turn downgrade the economy. Since the automotive sector is responsible for 11 per cent of manufacturing jobs in Germany, its decrease would affect the economy harder. (Nette Nöstlinger, "Germany's industrial bloodbath leaves politicians fumbling for answers." *Politico*, 27 November 2024)

Business confidence ratings drop with the fall of the government

On 25 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that the Ifo business climate index of Munich had calculated confidence in the German business world in November to be lower than that of October. This could push Germany's economy as the worst performer among the G7 in 2024. Germany's rating slipped from 86.5 in October to 85.7 in November. The index was calculated on the basis of 9000 companies in Europe. The president of the company Clemens Fuest said: "The German economy is lacking strength." However, the business expectations had decreased from 87.3 to 87.2 which was remarkable given the collapse of the government. The index also pointed out that the incoming Trump administration would further impact Germany's economy, especially trade. ("The German economy is lacking strength." *Deutsche Welle*, 24 November 2024)

SPD confirms the nomination of Scholz for the 2025 federal elections

On 22 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that the Social Democrats (SPD) were set to confirm the nomination of Olaf Scholz as the lead Chancellor candidate in 2025 federal elections. The party's co-leader Lars Klingbeil said: "We want to go into the next

election campaign with Olaf Scholz.” This announcement came after Defence Minister Boris Pistorius informed the SPD that he would not stand for the position of chancellor. He said that it was entirely his decision. He also praised Scholz for being the Chancellor with “reason and prudence” and managing the coalition through the biggest crisis in decades. The other party members have also welcomed this decision and expressed their support for Scholz in the upcoming elections. (Germany: Olaf Scholz to be nominated as SPD candidate, *Deutsche Welle*, 22 November 2024)

Scholz meets Chinese President Xi Jinping at the G20 summit

On 19 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the talks held between Chancellor Scholz and China’s President Xi Jinping. At the sidelines of the G20 summit, they discussed trade and economic relations and the war in Ukraine. Scholz said: “It is important that we ensure that a level playing field accompanies the economic activities of companies on all sides, that is central to the conditions for future work.” In response, Xi also stressed the development of a “strategic” and “long-term” relationship with Germany. The leaders also hoped for a peaceful negotiation and dialogue with the EU over the “tit for tat tariffs on electric vehicles” as it has impacted the German economy. Besides this, Scholz also brought up the matter of its support to Ukraine. He also expressed his disapproval over China’s delivery of weapons to Russia. (Germany’s Scholz, China’s Xi hold talks at G20, *Deutsche Welle*, 19 November 2024)

SPD leaders contemplate the decision on the upcoming Chancellor

On 19 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the meeting of senior leaders of Germany’s centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) to discuss the Chancellor candidate for the snap elections in February 2025. With the collapse of the three-party coalition headed by Chancellor Olaf Scholz and his decreasing popularity, SPD is bound to change their campaign. On the upcoming elections, Scholz said: “It’s completely clear that we want to stand together. We want to

be successful together.” Meanwhile, many of the regional SPD leaders preferred the current defence minister Boris Pistorius over Scholz. They said that they noted a lot of support for Pistorius from their constituencies. Former SPD leader Sigmar Gabriel also warned that the party would end up polling less than 15 per cent if no changes were made. However, Scholz enjoys some support within the party. This is because some of the SPD leaders described Scholz as the “right person for the job.” Against the backdrop of the summit, Scholz also said that he felt “clear support” from the party. (Scholz or Pistorius: Germany’s SPD to discuss candidates, *Deutsche Welle*, 19 November 2024)

Chancellor looks for opportunity to seal FTA deal in G20 summit with Mercosur group

On 18 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on Germany’s Chancellor Olaf Scholz agenda in the G20 summit, Brazil. According to the report, there is more possibility for Scholz to strike a deal with Mercosur states which includes Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The negotiations for a free-trade agreement between the EU and Mercosur states have been ongoing for 25 years yet has been unsuccessful. According to Foreign Policy head of the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Volker Treier: “This free-trade agreement would be liberating for the German economy. It’s almost impossible to imagine a more difficult situation geopolitically — we have to use this opportunity.” However the larger reasons for the EU stressing on signing the agreement at present is due to three reasons. First as a proactive step against the upcoming US protectionism. Second, the raw materials of Latin America has been lucrative for EU’s green transition plan and third to prevent China’s expansion in the region. The deal would help European businesses from paying EUR four billion as export tariffs and this especially benefits Germany’s car, electronics and mechanised goods export which is subject to 25 to 30 per cent tariff. Opponents to this deal have been majorly farmers and environmentalist who fear unfair competition and impact on

small-mid sized firms. ([“At G20 summit, Germany looking for trade allies,” Deutsche Welle](#), 18 November 2024)

Faces a shortfall of childcare workers; a bilingual day care centre offers a solution

On 17 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the kindergarten crisis faced by Germany. According to a survey by the Paritätischer Gesamtverband, an association of organizations dedicated to promoting parity, the shortfall of childcare staff in Germany is at 125,000. Currently, there is a shortage of 430,000 daycare spots in Germany. The condition was reported to be exacerbating in western Germany with North Rhine-Westphalia forced to reduce 3,600 times of services in September 2024. The crisis is also affecting Germany's economy with EUR 23 billion in damage. Against the backdrop of this crisis, a nursery school teacher from the northern German city of Rostock Katja Ross formed the petition Every Child Counts. Being the largest movement signed by 220,180 people, it demands “better working conditions in early childhood.” However, a bilingual daycare centre in Cologne city is hiring trained childcare workers from abroad. According to the director of the kindergarten, many trained childcare workers in Spain or Latin America were not able to find work in their field. This could be a possible solution for Germany to meet the shortage of childcare workers in Germany. (Oliver Pieper, [“Germany relies on immigrants to ease child day care crisis,” Deutsche Welle](#), 17 November 2024)

Volkswagen enters into a joint venture with the US EV company Rivian

On 13 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the joint venture between German car manufacturer Volkswagen and the US EV manufacturer Rivian. The value of the venture was estimated at USD 5.8 billion. It was expected to be based on Rivian's “advanced software and electric vehicle technology.” At the launch of the venture in California, VW Group CEO Oliver Blume said that the first models were expected to be produced in 2027 followed by rollout with Audi, Scout, Porsche, and other brands.

These companies aimed to “create next generation software-defined (SDV) platforms.” Its operations will be primarily in Palo Alto along with Europe and North America. However, both VW and Rivian are facing challenges due to their losses recorded in this year. ([Germany's VW and Rivian launch joint electric car venture,” Deutsche Welle](#), 13 November 2024)

President Steinmeier approves the early election timeline

On 11 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier agreed to the early elections following the collapse of Olaf Scholz's three-party coalition. He said that the election timeline on 23 February was “realistic.” A statement from the President's office read: “The head of state “welcomes the fact that the parliamentary groups have agreed on a roadmap towards a vote of confidence” on December 16” and “considers February 23, 2025, to be a realistic date for new elections.” In addition, Steinmeier confirmed that he would dissolve the Parliament if Scholz failed to win the confidence vote. Apart from that, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) announced that it would prepone its national party conference to January rather than March following the early elections. ([“President calls German early election plan 'realistic',” Deutsche Welle](#), 11 November 2024)

Paper industries dismiss the election commission's claim that shortage of paper could result in the delay of elections

On 11 November, *The Guardian* reported that the owners of paper industries dismissed the claims put forth by the national election commission that a shortage of paper might cause a delay in conducting elections. Another cause of worry about early elections which was expressed by Ruth Brand who leads the election commission was elections being conducted near Christmas time for which she said “Nobody will be in the mood for electioneering or for listening to politicians' elections bids at that time.” The probability

of an early election has further increased after the Green party which earlier had partnered with the Olaf Scholz-led government, joined the opposition and conveyed that they do not want to wait much for the elections to take place. (Kate Connolly, "[German paper industry denies claims paper shortage could hinder election](#)," *The Guardian*, 11 November 2024)

Chancellor Scholz confirms preparedness to undertake a confidence vote in 2024

On 11 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that German Chancellor Olaf Scholz had confirmed that he was prepared to undertake a "vote of confidence" in 2024 provided that it was acceptable to all the key parties. He earlier was looking at holding a confidence vote in January which would have paved the elections in March. The three-party coalition which headed the government saw a breakaway when Chancellor Scholz fired Federal Democratic Party Leader Christian Lindner. The opposition parties have warned that they will not allow the passing of any law by the present minority government. ("[Germany's Scholz says he is ready to hold confidence vote this year](#)," *Deutsche Well*, 11 November 2024)

"Germans love their discounters when they are buying from them and not selling them," says an editorial in *Politico*

On 11 November, an editorial in *Politico* discussed how discounters such as Lidl and Aldi through their dominant role in the market coerce the food suppliers into selling their produce for "dumping prices." It also highlights how procuring food produced at cheaper rates from the suppliers impacts the working conditions and rights of the labourers. It mentions Jorge Acosta who is the head of the "banana workers' union" in Ecuador stating that cheap prices of food products give an excuse to the discounters for not paying heed to the "rights of the workers." In addition to that, the cheap prices offered by the discounters are also impacting sustainable produce as the customers walking in these giants would not prefer to

buy the costly food products that are produced through sustainable methods.

"Uncomfortable three-way coalition was pulled apart by two different visions of how to stimulate German economy" points out an editorial in *BBC*

On 09 November, an editorial in *BBC* discussed the breakaway of the three-party coalition that led the government and what could be the possible implications. The editorial points out that the three coalition parties had divergent views regarding how the shrinking German economy must be fixed. Christian Lindner who is from the Free Democratic Party (FDP) had insisted upon reducing the taxes, postponing the "environmental targets" and reducing government expenditure on social welfare. However, this was not acceptable to Chancellor Scholz's Social Democratic Party (SPD) for which he fired the FDP leader from the government. Chancellor Scholz now would have to garner backing from the opposition parties to pass the budget for 2025. The Chancellor plans to go through a "vote of confidence" on 15 January, thus the new elections will take place somewhere in March. However, the opposition party Christian Democratic Union's Friedrich Merz insists on announcing elections in January for which the vote of confidence must take place immediately. The editorial mentions fears of people who see the instability caused by coalition collapse could lead to the rise of fight parties such as Alternative for Germany (AfD) and far-left parties such as Shara Wagenknecht Alliance(BSW). Further, the editorial highlights how a change in the US presidency might lead to an increase in import duties in the US, thus creating another hurdle for the German economy. (Damien McGuinness, "[Germany engulfed by political crisis as Scholz coalition falls apart](#)," *BBC*, 09 November 2024)

Chancellor Scholz faces pressure to call for an early "vote of confidence"

On 07 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that Christian Democratic Union(CDU)'s Friedrich Merz held a meeting with President Steinmeier after the former did not achieve any results with his earlier

meeting with Chancellor Scholz regarding early elections. Sources hint that when Friedrich Merz met with Chancellor Scholz, the former said to him that a “lame duck chancellor would not even get a meeting with US President-elect Donald Trump.” Chancellor Scholz had earlier confirmed that a “vote of confidence” would take place in January 2025. However, the opposition parties are demanding that the “vote of confidence” must take place immediately. A survey also indicated that 65 per cent of the people in the survey would want to see an early election. It also predicted that the opposition CDU would have a 34 per cent vote share in the next elections followed by Alternative for Germany (AfD) which would have 18 per cent while Chancellor Scholz’s Social Democratic Party (SPD) would receive 16 per cent votes. This has prompted CDU’s Merz to pressure the government to call early elections. On the breakaway of a coalition, a spokesperson from the Foreign Ministry of Russia argued that the reason for it was the government not using gas from Russia which has led to a downfall of the German economy. (“[German opposition wants confidence vote now](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, 07 November 2024)

Tussle between the ruling coalition continues

On 05 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that disagreements between the Free Democratic Party (FDP) Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Green Party regarding the proposition of budget has caused uncertainty on the continuity of the coalition. The tussle between the three parties began when the court ruled against the proposition of using the reserved budget which was earlier agreed upon to spend on combatting the impact of COVID-19, but later was decided to be spent on combatting climate change, thus reducing the Government’s budget by USD 65 billion. Post that, the economy of the country deteriorated which had put further pressure on the government’s budget.

In October, Chancellor Olaf Scholz avoided calling both Economy Minister Robert Habeck from the Green party and Finance

Minister Christian Lindner who belongs to the FDP to his meeting with trade unions and entrepreneurs at an industry conference. Economy Minister Habeck later called for a debt financing worth EUR one billion, however, it was rejected by FDP on grounds of further increasing deficit. Finance Minister Linder had also proposed to cut tax on companies which was dismissed by SPD and the Green party. On 06 November, members of the coalition party would finally sit for a meeting which has come after weeks of deliberation. This comes amid when the draft budget is still falling short of funds and the actual budget is scheduled to be passed in late November. To compensate for the shortage of funds in the budget, Christian Linder suggested using the reserved EUR 10 billion that was supposed to fund a “new intel chip company.” Green party’s Robert Habeck had expressed his assent to the plan stating that it displayed the “compromising” capability of the party. (Sabine Kinkartz, “[German government descends into crisis mode](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, 05 November 2024)

Iran terms shutting down embassy in Germany as ‘sanction’

On 01 November, *DW* reported that Iran sees Germany’s act of shutting down of former’s consulates as imposing sanctions. Germany had ordered that three Iranian consulates in Frankfurt, Hamburg and Munich would be shut down in response to the execution of Jamshid Sharmahd who was also a citizen of Germany. Iran claimed that Sharmahd was found guilty of being involved in the 2008 attack on a mosque. Germany had again stressed its earlier call for all German nationals to leave Iran and advised them not to travel there. (“[Iran condemns consulate closures in Germany as ‘sanction’](#)”, *DW*, 1 November 2024)

GREECE

Prime Minister Mitsotakis faces criticism over attempt to normalise relations with Turkey

On 21 November *Politico* reported on the rows within the ruling conservative New Democracy party over the betterment of relations with Turkey. Both Greece and

Turkey had tensions over “Cyprus, maritime boundaries and overlapping claims to the continental shelf” since decades. They were at the verge of starting a war in 1987 and 1996. The now ruling government led by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis’ made several attempts to improve the relations between the countries. However, he was facing criticism from within the nationalist factions of his own party. It reached its peak when Mitsotakis dismissed one of his predecessors, Antonis Samaras, from the party. Samaras constantly criticised the diplomacy carried out with Turkey. He condemned and called for the dismissal of Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis for allegedly giving in to the Turkish demands in ongoing bilateral talks. He also said that Mitsotakis was leading a party that did not associate with the principles of the New Democracy party. Mitsotakis is now faced to appease the right-wing nationalist faction of the New Democracy Party. ([Turkey rapprochement sparks rift in Greece’s ruling party.](#) *Politico*, 21 November 2024)

Labour unions protest against the rising cost of living and meagre wages

On 20 November, *The Guardian* reported on the strike carried out by employees from the public and private sector in Greece. The nationwide 24-hour strike aimed to put pressure on the government led by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis against the increasing cost of living. The labour unions asked for “dignified wages” against the backdrop of increasing consumer costs and increasing income inequalities. The strike was expected to affect the functioning of government offices, schools, hospitals and public transport, including train services and island ferries. The union leaders have blamed the government for its failure to contain the increasing inflation thereby pushing the people to low standards of living. According to the leader of the main private sector union GSEE, Yannis Panagopoulos: “The cost of living is sky high and our salaries rock-bottom, while high housing costs have left young people in a tragic position.” Although Mitsotakis has recently increased the minimum wage from EUR 900 to 950, the labour unions claim that it was not enough. The living standard

crisis faced by Greece was in contrast to its economic progress in this decade. (Helena Smith, [“Greece faces general strike as workers protest cost of living squeeze.”](#) *The Guardian*, 20 November 2024)

HUNGARY

Blood Plasma centres exploit the deprived population, says The Guardian

On 25 November, *The Guardian* reported the plight of the vulnerable population, whose means of living has become plasma donation. This new economy based on blood was particularly in north-eastern Hungary. For the poor and deprived population, especially gypsies, donating plasma was becoming a way of life. Over the past few years, over 40 new plasma centres have been established across the country. These centres which operate six days a week collect blood plasma of about 2600 litres a week. As per the law, donors are entitled to a payment of 7,500 forints (EUR 15.30) in cash. Since there are no regulations on bonuses and other incentives, the plasma centers have exploited this by offering points, bonuses, and lottery entries for frequent donations. There was no regulation in place to track how often the donors came although Hungarian law only allowed twice a week. The people travel long distances and visit different centres to maximise their income. It was also alleged that the medical centres did not verify the basic health requirements to increase the donors. ([Hungary’s most deprived people donate blood plasma to survive – photo essay.](#) *The Guardian*, 24 November 2024)

Shenzhen Airport opened in Budapest

On 21 November, *Hungary Today* reported that the Shenzhen Airport had opened its second European air cargo handling centre known as the Budapest Exclusive Overseas Terminal at Budapest. It is operated by the China-Europe Trade and Logistics Cooperation Park and has 11,000 square meters of warehouse space with the capability of handling 40000 tons of goods per year. This represented 20 per cent of the air cargo handled by the Budapest airport in 2023. It was reported that the Shenzhen Airport intended to help the

companies' operations in catchment areas to enter the central and Eastern European markets. ("[Shenzhen Airport Opens Cargo Terminal in Budapest](#)," *Hungary Today*, 21 November 2024)

Investment in agriculture pays off in exports

On 04 November, Hungary today reported that the country witnessed a significant growth of 6.4 per cent in the first six months of 2024 has been seen in comparison to the whole year of 2023 with regard to exports of agricultural products. In the years from 2022 to 2024, Hungary has invested HUF 400 billion for improving their livestock farms, around HUF 100 billion in horticulture, HUF 230 billion in increasing the capacity for food yield and HUF 180 billion transforming present agricultural practices to "precision farming". The majority share of exports of its agricultural products were to all European countries namely "Germany, Italy, Romania, Austria and Poland." The positive side of this success story was that there is significant growth (62 to 74.2 per cent in 2023) observed in the exports of processed materials while exports of raw materials went down. ("[Dynamic Growth in Agricultural Exports Continues](#)," *Hungary today*, 04 November 2024)

ICELAND

Melting glaciers increases the possibility of Volcano explosion

On 10 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that the probability of volcano outbreaks might have gone up due to the "melting of glaciers" that has led to the formation of a greater amount of magma beneath Iceland. In 2021, it was reported that due to the piling up of "44 million cubic meters of magma" Askja volcano has enlarged by 4 inches in a span of a very short duration. Iceland could be an interesting place to test the hypothesis of whether melting glaciers increase the chances of volcanic explosions, Iceland has both glaciers and volcanos and there has been limited research on the same. (Nele Jensch, "[Is climate change increasing Iceland's volcanic activity](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 10 November

2024)

IRELAND

Elections scheduled for 29 November

On 06 November, *Politico* reported that elections are to be held in the country on 29 November. The opinion polls predict Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris's party Fine Gael along with its coalition partners Fianna Fail and Green Party could possibly form the next government as well. The three-party coalition led current Irish government includes Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Green party. Prime Minister Harris has declared that he would dissolve the current government on 8 November. This seems to be an apt time to call for elections to take advantage of infighting in the opposition Sinn Fein party and the goodwill earned by the government by giving a "cash bonus" to the public. The next elections in Ireland would be contested on 174 seats instead of 160 in 43 constituencies instead of 39. (Shawn Pogatchnik, "[Ireland faces a snap election on Nov. 29](#)," *Politico*, 06 November 2024)

ITALY

Education Minister comments on illegal immigration sparks controversy

On 25 November, *Euronews* reported on the widespread condemn sparked by the comments of Italy's education minister Giuseppe Valditara on illegal immigration. He said: "We must not overlook the fact that the rise in incidents of sexual violence is somehow linked to forms of marginalisation and perversion stemming from illegal immigration." These comments were made at the launch of a foundation honouring the 22-year-old Giulia Cecchetin who was kidnapped and murdered by her Italian ex-boyfriend in 2023. On this, Giulia's sister responded and said that her sister was killed by an Italian man. Valditara was also criticised by Italian politicians, by pointing out the data from the Interior Ministry which showed that more than 80 per cent of femicides were done by Italian citizens. Data from Istat, Italy's national statistics agency also showcased that there was an increase in the number of deaths in 2023 from 2022, the majority of which were

committed by Italians. (James Thomas, [“Fact check: Is illegal immigration to blame for rising sexual violence in Italy?” Euronews](#), 25 November 2024)

MOLDOVA

“Continuing efforts to attract overseas firms” says an editorial in BBC

On 07 November, an editorial in the *BBC* titled [“Moldova cleans up its act to attract foreign businesses”](#) discussed the Moldovan government’s efforts in the IT sector to improve the economy and lure foreign businesses to come to the country. The editorial mentions “Moldova IT Park” (MITP) started by the Government in 2018 to give a boost to its IT sector which also welcomed IT companies around the world to join virtually. Companies operating in the park had to pay a mere 7 per cent “corporate tax rate.” In addition to that, firms operating in MITP do not have to worry about “employer social security contributions” and the people working in those companies are not liable to pay “income tax.” MITP forms a significant component of the Government’s plan to further advance the economy to be eligible to join the EU in 2030. The “standard corporate tax” in Moldova is a mere 12 per cent is less than half of what it is in the UK (25 per cent) and the Netherlands (25.8 per cent). The editorial points out that despite the incentives, many issues are inhibiting the growth in the country such as the rate of people leaving the country is considerably at a “high” level. The editorial highlights another factor for the reluctance of Western IT companies to operate in Moldova is the ‘Russia-Ukraine war’ that sparks concern for the safety of their invested money. (MaryLou Costa, [“Moldova cleans up its act to attract foreign businesses,” BBC](#), 07 November 2024)

Maia Sandu wins; Mutual recriminations continue

On 03 November, *Duetsche Welle* reported on the win of Maia Sandu in the presidential run-off with 54.7 per cent votes. In response, mutual accusations were witnessed from both the Presidential candidates amid the second round of

elections in Moldova. Maria Sandu who is the former President and is known to be tilting towards the European Union accused her opponent Stoianoglo of working in the interest of Russia. The pro-votes were however more in number (50.35 per cent). Stoianoglo on the other hand had criticized the pro-European stance of Sandu and claimed her politics caused a divide among people owing to the fact that Moldova has a sizable population of Russian speaking people. Also, the police had taken measures so that the previous occurrence of buying of votes observed in the first round does not happen again. ([“Moldova votes in tense president runoff,” Duetsche Welle](#), 03 November 2024)

NORWAY

Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Equality finds 13 per cent pay gap between men and women

On 14 November, the Norwegian Equality Minister reported on the pay gap between men and women as “completely unacceptable.” According to her, men earned 13 per cent more than women in Norway. As per report of the European Commission the gender pay gap was at 12.7 per cent in 2021 and changed minimally over decade. The report published by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Equality found that since 2015 there was only little difference in the work performed by men and women. Culture and Equality Minister Lubna Jaffery said: “I find it completely unacceptable that women and men who have the same job, the same experience and the same competence, end up with different salaries.” One of the reasons was both working in different parts of labour under different wage levels and women had longer education compared to men. ([“Men earn more than women in egalitarian Norway, report finds. But it's on par with Europe,” ABC News](#), 14 November 2024)

“A staggering 96.4 per cent of new car registrations in Norway in September are for electric cars” says an editorial in rfi

On 06 November, an editorial in *rfi* titled [“Norway speeds ahead of EU in race for](#)

fossil-free roads” discussed the policy decisions taken by the Norwegian government to encourage the purchase of EV cars. From 2025, Government of Norway would only allow the sale of zero emission cars, thus achieving the EU’s deadline of getting rid of petrol and diesel cars by 2035 much earlier. The editorial mentions tax relief on EV cars which made them much cheaper and allowing EV cars to use public transport lanes were the two popular measures taken by the government to reduce the sale of fossil-based cars. Despite the challenging conditions for EV cars such as low temperatures and the need to travel “long distances” in Norway, the country has succeeded in phasing out fossil-based cars. (“Norway speeds ahead of EU in race for fossil-free roads,” rfi, 06 November 2024)

POLAND

Law and Justice Party announces historian Nawrocki as presidential candidate

On 24 November, *Euronews* reported that Poland’s conservative Law and Justice party chose Karol Nawrocki as its candidate for Presidential elections scheduled to be held in August 2025. Nawrocki is a 41-year-old historian who has led the Institute of National Remembrance since 2021, a state body that stores archives and researches the crimes of World War II and the communist era. He said: “I am ready to become your president. I am ready because I have been with you all my life. I am next to you I know Poles and I understand your needs. Yes, I am one of you.” The party chose him over popular politicians like former Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. If the party had chosen others, the corruption scandals during their time could have been a major threat to their election campaigns. The Law and Justice Party was trying to regain their position after they lost to the Civic Coalition of Prime Minister Donald Tusk. Meanwhile, Tusk announced that Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski would be his party’s presidential candidate. (“Polish opposition party chooses historian Karol Nawrocki as presidential candidate,” Euronews, 24 November 2024)

PORTUGAL

Demonstrators “protest” in Lisbon and Porto against low “minimum wages”

On 10 November, *Euronews* reported that more than a thousand demonstrators rallied in Lisbon and Porto to register their dissent against low wages and demand better “housing and healthcare.” The protests were led by the General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers (CGTP) whose Secretary General, Tiago Olivera pointed at hardships of the working class in accessing costly “housing” and “healthcare” as the main causes of worry. Portugal is placed in 12th position in terms of “minimum wage” in the European Union. The “minimum wage” for a month was highest in Luxembourg which is “EUR 2204” followed by Ireland and Netherlands which have set “EUR 1840” and “EUR 1829” as “minimum wages” respectively. Portugal has set its “minimum wage” per month as EUR 820.

(“Thousands protest in two cities in Portugal to demand higher wages and pensions,” Euro News, 10 November 2024)

ROMANIA

Far-right candidate leads the Presidential runoff with 22.94 per cent

On 24 November, Calin Georgescu an independent candidate defeated Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu in the first round of the presidential election with 22.94 per cent of votes. He is then set to face center-right opponent Elena Lasconi, leader of the opposition Save Romania Union who attained 19.18 per cent of votes, in the second runoff scheduled on 08 December. The results were unexpected as the pre-election polls showed Ciolacu as the forerunner. Georgescu, a former member of the far-right Alliance for Uniting Romanians party has been against the relationship with NATO. He claims that Romania’s best interests lay with “Russia’s wisdom.” However, he has not explicitly accepted his support to Russia or his extreme stances. He has portrayed himself as “completely dedicated to Romanians.” Meanwhile, Lasconi aims to point out her pro-western stance and support for NATO. (“Romania set for right-wing runoff after PM eliminated,”

Deutsche Welle, 24 November 2024)

Gears up for the presidential elections

On 22 November, *Politico* reported on the Presidential elections in Romania scheduled on 24 November and 08 December. In the first round, the people had to choose two from 13 candidates who would then go to the second round. The top five candidates are Marcel Ciolacu, Romania's current prime minister and leader of the centre-left Social Democratic Party (PSD). George Simion was the leader of the far-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians and a first-time member of the parliament. Elena Lasconi, the leader of the centrist liberal Save Romania Union. Mircea Geoană, a former NATO deputy secretary-general and a former PSD leader, running as an independent and Nicolae Ciucă, a retired general and former center-right prime minister, leading the Romanian Senate. The primary question was whether the right-wing candidate George Simion would win. He has vowed to take a stronger stance to protect Romania's national interest. The relations with Moldova and Ukraine would also come to a standstill. He was expected to shift the country's policies to more conservative and right-leaning. The other candidates would continue the same foreign policy itself. (Victor Jack and Carmen Paun, "[How to watch the Romanian election like a pro.](#)" *Politico*, 22 November 2024)

RUSSIA

Supplies North Korea with million barrels of oil since March 2024 says BBC

On 21 November, *BBC* reported on the alleged supply of Russian oil tankers to North Korea. According to an analysis from the Open-Source Centre, a non-profit research group based in the UK, Russia has supplied North Korea with more than a million barrels of oil since March 2024. UK Foreign Secretary, David Lammy claimed that the oil was the payment for the weapons supplied by North Korea. He said: "To keep fighting in Ukraine, Russia has become increasingly reliant on North Korea for troops and weapons in exchange for oil." He further said that this was having an impact on the security in the Korean

peninsula, Europe and the Indo-Pacific. The satellite images shared with *BBC* showed several North Korean oil tankers reaching an oil terminal in Russia's Vostochny Port over 43 times since March. This alleged move violates the UN sanctions as the countries were banned from providing oil to North Korea. This was to prevent North Korea from developing more nuclear weapons. Russia's foreign ministry has not yet responded to these allegations. (Jean Mackenzie, "[Russia gives North Korea a million barrels of oil, report finds.](#)" *BBC*, 21 November 2024)

"The New Russian church could be used by Russia for covering future intelligence or sabotage operations" claims an editorial in Politico

On 11 November, an editorial in *Politico* titled "[New Russian church raises suspicions in Swedish town](#)" discussed the distrust raised over the newly built "Russian Orthodox Church" in Vasteras, Sweden. The editorial highlights the proximity of the church to a "strategic airport", "energy" firms and "water treatment works" as the key reasons that have put the church in the ambit of suspicion of potentially housing spies who are involved in collecting sensitive data. The "Russian Embassy in Stockholm" has stayed silent on the issue while the church and members of the church have dismissed the speculations of their potential connection with Russian security agencies. The editorial mentions multiple instances such as the "arson attack" in UK's "warehouse" in April for which European countries have blamed Russia for infiltrating spies in their respective countries. The editorial mentions the opinions of the experts who have advised that the authorities dealing with sensitive information and which are in proximity of the church must see the latter as a "significant vulnerability." (Charlie Duxbury, "[New Russian church raises suspicions in Swedish town.](#)" *Politico*, 11 November 2024)

Indonesia seeks closer ties with Russia; Hold first joint naval exercise

On 04 November, Russian and Indonesian navies jointly conducted their first military

drills in the Java Sea. The recently sworn President of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto has vowed to strengthen defence relationship with Russia owing to the component of “non-alignment” in their foreign policy. The current President who was formerly a Minister of defence had put efforts to resist cancelling the USD 1.1 billion defence deal with Russia under the threat of US sanctions in 2019. Before he was sworn in as President, but had already won the elections, he met President Putin in July 2024 and expressed willingness to further deepen the relationship between two countries. (“Indonesia and Russia hold first joint naval exercises,” Deutsche Welle, 04 November 2024)

Sanctions remain ineffective and easy to dodge says an editorial in *Le Monde*

On 03 November, an editorial in *Le Monde* titled “Western sanctions on Russian oil have too many loopholes” discussed how the sanctions against Russia imposed by EU countries and USA have remained unfruitful. The editorial mentions a trading firm called “Coral Energy” which is Geneva and Dubai based and an old partner of Russia has assisted the latter in selling its oil illegitimately. Big oil companies such as France based TotalEnergies were involved in the purchase of the illegal oil. The editorial states that the capping put on the price of oil prices remains to be ineffective as 70 per cent of oil purchases are above the cap price. The editorial blames EU countries for the ineffectiveness of sanctions against Russia as countries like Greece were involved in supplying tankers to Russia in 2022 which were used by the latter to obscure the origin of the oil products. The editorial puts the blame on suspicious oil companies and banks in Europe that continue to trade with Russia for the ineffectiveness of sanctions in addition to the administrative failures to keep a check on the violations and inadequate resources possessed by the EU. Also, the repercussions faced by companies that violate the sanctions are minimal. (“Western sanctions on Russian oil have too many loopholes,” *Le Monde*, 03 November 2024)

SERBIA

Arrests begin after the protests over the partial collapse of Novi Sad station

On 22 November, the *BBC* reported on the arrests that followed the protests in Serbia over the collapse of a part of the railway station in Serbia, Novi Sad. The Prosecutors have called for the questioning of 11 people in connection with the collapse of the facility. It happened at the beginning of November leading to the death of 15 people. As a response, 20,000 people started protesting marking the biggest protest in the city in decades. They protested with the slogan “corruption kills.” They condemned the government’s policies which favoured a few contractors while leaving the people’s lives at risk. Serbia’s former construction minister Goran Vesic was also arrested. However, he denied his involvement in the case. He said: “I cannot accept guilt for the deaths.” Following the arrests, Serbia’s president, Aleksandar Vucic announced warnings against the people responsible for the disaster. His flagship infrastructure project at this railway station was also at stake. Vucic had declared this as the “way to modern Europe” with the “high-speed line from Belgrade to Budapest.” Meanwhile the opposition parties in Serbia argued that “nepotism and a culture of impunity” were the reasons behind the collapse. They said that his policies were invalid as it was unsafe for people. (Guy Delauney, “Fury over Serbia station tragedy prompts first arrests,” *BBC*, 22 November 2024)

Minister of Construction Goran Vesic announces to resign over collapse of train station roof

On 04 November, Serbia’s Minister of Construction Goran Vesic had announced that he would be quitting his office after the city of Novi Sad witnessed death of 14 people due to the falling of a “train station roof.” The Serbian Minister however did not held himself guilty for the tragic incident. The reasons for the collapse of the train roof still remains unclear. On 4 November, several protesters had come out to mark their dissent against the Government failure and threw red paint on construction ministry’s edifice. (“Serbia: Minister to resign over train station roof”)

collapse. *Deutsche Welle*, 05 November 2024)

SLOVAKIA

New amendment to forbid use of minority languages in public

On 13 November, *Euronews* reported that an amendment that would forbid on using minority languages in public has been proposed in the Slovak parliament. The amendment if becomes a law would forbid using of minority languages such as Hungarian in places like “public transport and post offices.” People who fail to comply would be liable to pay fines that could go up to EUR 15000. Previously, in 2009, the Slovak parliament passed a “similar amendment” which made Slovak compulsory for “civil servants.” The same led to a diplomatic tussle with Hungary who in the past had raised concerns on the treatment of people who speak Hungarian in Slovakia. Eight per cent of the population in Slovakia is Hungarian and forms Slovakia’s largest minority. The opposition parties and members in Slovakia have predicted that the proposed legislation might draw condemnation from the EU, bring down its competitiveness and incur losses to businesses. ([“Slovakia’s draft language law sparks fears over rights of Hungarian minority.”](#) *Euro News*, 13 November 2024)

SPAIN

Protestors demonstrate against spiking housing rents in Barcelona

On 24 November, *Euronews* reported on the protests happening in Barcelona over the surge in housing rents. The protestors took to the streets by holding sign boards saying: “Fewer apartments for investing and more homes for living” and “The people without homes uphold their rights.” They were demanding a 50 per cent cut in the rents. According to the protestor’s organization, over 126000 participated while police claimed it to be 22000. The protestors also threatened to go on a “rent strike” and stop paying their rent if no measures were taken. Earlier, the Spanish government led by Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez organised a “housing summit” with government officials

and real-estate owners which was boycotted by Barcelona’s Tenants Union boycotted. The latest development undertaken by the government was a rent cap mechanism that could be applied to areas branded “highly stressed.” The government has also promised to remove the city’s 10,000 “tourist apartments” by 2028. The housing crisis in Spain was peaking with Spaniards spending 40 per cent of their income on rent compared to the EU’s estimated average of 27 per cent. ([Tens of thousands protest high rents in Barcelona.](#) *Euronews*, 24 November 2024)

Tennis legend Rafael Nadal retires at 38

On 20 November, Spain’s tennis legend Rafael Nadal retired at the age of 38. His professional tennis career ended as Carlos Alcaraz of the Netherlands defeated him in the Davis Cup quarter-finals. He seemed emotional during the Spanish national anthem amidst thousands of fans cheering for him. He said: “I was having an emotional day, nerves before what could be my last singles match as a professional.” He is a 22-time Grand Slam champion. However, he was down with injury for years. His participation in the game was only confirmed after captain David Ferrer said that he would play in the first singles rubber of the opening finals clash. After the game, he admitted that he was not in the “rhythm of competition.” He added that although he had dreamt of winning the last Davis Cup, he conveyed that he won’t be hard on himself as this was all he had. ([“Rafael Nadal glittering tennis career over after Spain’s Davis Cup defeat.”](#) *France24*, 20 November 2024)

Government under criticism for slow response

On 14 November, an opinion published in *Euronews* looked at the impact of the floods in Spain and the government response. According to the report, two weeks after the floods, the management was heavily criticised by the public especially in Valencia. 216 have been reported dead and 16 missing, however response in Andalusia was seen more proactive with swift response from the authorities in warning the public ahead of

flooding. A political science professor at Carlos III University, Pablo Simón said: "It is the responsibility of the autonomous community to issue public alerts and assess risks to the population." As per the Statutes of Autonomy, an emergency alert must have been issued by Valencia's President but the alert was observed to be issued after many areas were submerged. On the same, the Popular Party also raised concern against the Minister of Ecological Transition, Teresa Ribera for poor management. According to the scientists, global warming, environmental degradation, and late warning by regional government were the cause to larger impact. (Roberto Macedonio Vega, "What went wrong with Spain's flood response?," *Euronews*, 14 November 2024)

Rain alert in Barcelona; Protesters angry at King Felip VI

On 04 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that post heavy rains in Barcelona, State Meteorological Agency had put the city under high alert. The flights arriving to and departing from Barcelona Airport were "cancelled delayed and diverted." Classes in educational institutes were also cancelled. On 04 November, inhabitants of Valencia, the, criticized the Spanish king, calling him "murderer" and questioned why appropriate measures were not taken to save their city. ("Spain floods: Barcelona on high alert amid Valencia searches," *Deutsche Welle*, 04 November 2024)

SWEDEN

Ambassador to India calls for expansion and investment in Tamil Nadu

On 13 November, Sweden's Ambassador to India Jan Thesleff announced on four Swedish companies including Trelleborg Marine Services, SAAB, Camfil, and IKEA plan to set base in IKEA. According to him, 70 Swedish companies are currently in Tamil Nadu with 25,000 employed. He said: "We are not happy with this, and want to do more." Apart from the four, the existing companies would be expanding their operations with additional plants in Chennai, and Coimbatore. In a meeting held with Industries Minister TRB Rajaa, each company had explained on requirements to

expand in the state. He added that India was perceived as not only growing market but as a "hub for exports." Thesleff also expressed his stance against China plus one strategy and stated the importance of China for many companies. ("Four Swedish companies, including IKEA, looking to set up base in Tamil Nadu: Swedish Ambassador to India," *The Hindu*, 13 November 2024)

Demonstration held in Valencia against the futility of authorities in coping with floods

On 10 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that roughly 130,000 people held demonstrations in Valencia to express their anger over the authorities' failure to combat floods. There were also reports of skirmishes between a group of protesters and police. Demonstrators demanded that Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and the regional head Carlos Mazon resign from their offices. Previously, Valencia also witnessed a group of demonstrators who threw "Mud on Mazon and Spanish king Felip VI" to mark their dissent. Valencia accounted for 212 deaths out of a total of 220 deaths in the country. Roughly 80 people are still not found in the search operations. ("Spain: Thousands protest in Valencia over floor response," *Deutsche Welle*, 10 November 2024)

Government sends reinforcement forces to combat damage caused by floods; Public dissatisfied

On 03 November, Pedro Sanchez, Spain's Prime Minister and king Felipe VI visited the affected towns of Spain from floods. However received a harsh response from the public through pelting with mud and objects over delayed government response for the floods and aid delivery. In response, Sanchez stated that he understands the "anguish and suffering" and said that the violence was unacceptable. On 02 November, *Deutsche Welle*, reported that 5000 more soldiers and 5000 additional policemen were called upon in Valencia to combat the damage caused by the flash floods and boost the rescue operation. Prime Minister Sanchez had assured the citizens that all the necessary resources in

the hands of the Government would be put in use. Interior Minister of Spain Fernando Grande-Marlaska pointed to the possibility of casualty numbers going further up. The catastrophe also led to a postponement of the football matches which were scheduled to take place on 02 November. ([Spain sends 10,000 more troops, police to flood-hit Valencia](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 02 November 2024)

More than 200 dead due to floods

On 01 November, *DW* reported that more than 200 people lost their lives in Spain's eastern regions which witnessed heavy rains and floods. Valencia saw the most amount of destruction with more than 202 people losing their lives. The Defence Ministry of Spain has called upon 500 soldiers in addition to the existing 1200 in the affected regions for "search, rescue and logistics" operations. Emergency workers and volunteers showed great determination in helping the affected population which also got applause from Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. On another note, MotoGP races that were scheduled to take place in Valencia are cancelled. MotoGP would instead assist Spain by contributing in the relief funds. On 31 October, *DW* reported that Prime Minister of Spain Pedro Sanchez had asked people to not leave their homes and cautioned that there might be more incoming storms. This has reportedly been one of the worst disasters that had hit Spain since 1973. On 31 October, it was reported that many of the houses did not have access to electricity and drinking water. PM Sanchez offered his sympathies to the people affected by the disaster and vowed to employ all required resources so as to ensure speedy recovery. King Felipe VI expressed his desolation and offered sympathies to the people whose family members fell victim to the disaster. The disaster has also led to postponement of all the football matches that were supposed to be played in Valencia. ([Death toll from floods in Spain is now over 200](#)," *DW*, 01 November 2024; [Spain floods: Death toll climbs as rescuers seek survivors](#)," *DW*, 31 October 2024)

SWITZERLAND

Residents prepare to evacuate from Brienz village amid landslide risks

On 16 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the evacuation of the village of Brienz near Davos in the Swiss Alps following warnings of a landslide. Geologist Stefan Schneider said a 1.2 million cubic meters could hit the valley and bury the village. He added that in case of rainfall or rockfall, the speed could increase to 80 kilometers per hour (49.7 miles per hour) or more. The head of the military and civil protection office for the canton of Graubünden asked the people to prepare themselves as early as possible. He told them to take their valuables and evacuate from the village. Meanwhile, the villagers have expressed their fear and concern over evacuation. The majority of them, especially farmers with livestock were finding it difficult to make their own arrangements. The residents would receive insurance only in case of total loss. They complained that they lacked "emotional and existential security" with the ground beneath the village sliding down into the valley at the rate of 2.4 metres per year. Recently, it was also found that climate change was not the sole cause of this erosion. The Brienz village also had an earlier experience of landslide risk back in May 2023. (Jeannette Cwienk, [Amid landslide warning, Swiss village prepares to evacuate](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 16 November 2024)

Carbon budget for 2020-2050 to exhaust earlier

On 11 October, *Swiss info* reported that the Government of Switzerland plans to emit "660 million tonnes of Co2 equivalents" which is 0.13 per cent of the world's "carbon budget" for 30 years from 2020. Switzerland has pledged to cut emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 and be completely free of "CO2 emissions" by 2050. However, experts have pointed out that Switzerland 2024 is left with just 50 per cent of the total budget that was decided in 2020 for 10 years. Another unpublished study by ETH Zurich reports that the country would be left with a mere "280 million tonnes of Co2 equivalents" for the

coming 30 years. ([“Government estimates for the first time Switzerland’s carbon budget up to 2050,”](#) *Swissinfo*, 11 October 2024)

Frequency of wet avalanches to go up in Switzerland due to climate change

On 07 November, *Swissinfo* reported that from 2100 Switzerland due to the perils of climate change would see a spike in wet avalanches however, the count of dry avalanches would go down. It is also predicted that avalanches would not pose a threat in valleys, but would increase the same at “higher altitudes.” The frequency of life-threatening snowfalls is also likely to go up. ([“Climate change tipped to alter Swiss avalanche patterns by 2100,”](#) *Swissinfo*, 07 November 2024)

International Computation and AI Network intends to intensify the access to AI across developing countries

On 07 November, *Swissinfo* reported that the International Computation and AI Network (ICAN) would work towards connecting science-related projects in the global south to AI to reduce the inequality in access to AI. Katharina Frey who leads the “digital foreign policy” in the foreign office of Switzerland conveyed that a larger proportion of people across the world do not have access to state-of-the-art supercomputers that are available in the developed world. ICAN is involved in two programs in Africa with assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The programs have been allowed to access the use of supercomputers and AI specialists. ICRC has maintained that it must be permitted to have total authorization from ICAN over the collected data so that it is not disclosed at any stage. Swiss government has also conveyed that it does not wish to have a grip on the workings of ICAN and would rather serve as a self-dependent “legal entity.” (Matthew Allen, [“How a Swiss-led global network fosters greater access to AI,”](#) *Swissinfo*, 07 November 2024)

“China generally makes less use of free trade agreement than Switzerland” highlights an editorial in *Swissinfo*

On 02 November, an editorial in *Swissinfo* titled [“Why Switzerland seeks deeper ties with China”](#) discussed the mutual benefits reaped by China and Switzerland by increasing their bilateral trade. Swiss companies marked huge gains through the free trade agreement with China as they saved millions by not having to pay duties. The watch industry topped the list of the Swiss companies that benefited from the free trade agreement which in 2022 saved USD 133 million as unpaid duties. The Pharmaceutical sector which is Switzerland’s largest exporting industry did not benefit immensely through the free trade deal as it managed to save a mere USD 1.4 million as unpaid custom taxes. This was because the import duties on pharmaceutical goods in China are low on its own and Swiss companies had to reveal their formulas if they wanted to benefit from the trade deal. With regards to the benefits reaped by China, the editorial highlights how trade with Switzerland led it to be acknowledged on the world stage as a “market economy”. The EU still does not consider China as a market economy. China also managed to save CHF 213 million as unpaid duties in 2022 which actually is much more than what Switzerland saved. The editorial also hinted at the possibility of China pushing Switzerland to issue more visas for its citizens to work in the latter. However, it would be difficult for the Swiss Government to put a strong case in front of the public for the same to happen. (Balz Rigendinger and Pauline Turuban, [“Why Switzerland seeks deeper ties with China,”](#) *Swissinfo*, 02 November 2024)

“Profit dictating their relationship with China are over with Switzerland as an exception” argues an opinion in *Swissinfo*

On 01 November, an opinion in *Swissinfo* titled [“Switzerland wants more trade with China despite US-Chinese tensions”](#) discussed Switzerland’s present trade position with China. The author mentions how amid the current scenario where China would seek a withdrawal from liberal trade practices, Switzerland might form an exception owing to its free trade agreements, thus safeguarding its interests.

China is already experiencing tensions in its relations with the US and Europe, with both the US and Europe trying to minimize their dependence on China. The author highlights how Switzerland could use its position to further the issue of human rights and climate change with China since the latter needs a free trade deal at this juncture. The author highlights the dependencies of Switzerland on China with the former exporting CHF 40.6 billion worth of goods to the former. Electronics, Pharmaceutical and Chemical industries in Switzerland are also hugely dependent upon China with more than 50 per cent of the companies not having any plans to reduce their dependence on China. The author is skeptical of how Switzerland would manage its trade with both China and US and highlighted a case where a Swiss company supplied software to a Chinese crane company and the crane was further sold to the US. According to the report, the US was apprehensive of whether the software installed would transfer data back to China. (Samanta Siegfied, "[Switzerland wants more trade with China despite US-Chinese tensions](#)," *Swissinfo*, 01 November 2024)

THE NETHERLANDS

Government diffuses tension overs alleged anti-racist remarks

On 16 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that the ruling coalition of the Netherlands had calmed their tensions over alleged anti-racist remarks by the government ministers. The comments were made on the violence between Ajax Amsterdam and Maccabi Tel Aviv teams after the Europa League football. The far-right Party for Freedom's leader Geert Wilders condemned Moroccans for the attack on Israeli fans. He said: "We saw Muslims hunting Jews." He added that the accused people should be deported and "prosecuted for terrorism." Besides, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands Dick Schoof said that the Dutch Moroccans had failed to integrate into the country. Amid these comments, the state secretary for benefits and customs at the Ministry of Finance Nora Achahbar of the centrist New Social Contract (NSC) party resigned for what she saw as polarisation

and derogatory comments about immigrants. However, the government has diffused the tension in the coalition after her resignation. Schoof said: "There was and is no racism in the government." The government would have lost its majority in the parliament if NSC had left. ("[Dutch coalition survives crisis talks over offensive remarks](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 16 November 2024)

Government to introduce land border checks from 09 December

On 11 November, *Euronews* reported that the Netherlands government, following the footsteps of Germany, is planning to put more "land border checks" to manage the problem of "irregular migration." Netherlands Migration Minister Marjolein Faber confirmed that border checks would be put in place from 09 December. Previously, the migration minister also conveyed to the EU that it did not want to remain a party to the "EU refugee obligations." The EU permits its member nations to put up border checks temporarily if there is a "serious threat." However, checks should be introduced only if no other option is available and should not remain for an indefinite period. ("[Netherlands joins Germany in implementing extra border checks](#)," *Euronews*, 11 November 2024)

Major relief for Shell as court reverses its 2021 ruling

On 12 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that the Dutch Appeals court has reversed its 2021 verdict that compelled Shell to reduce its 2019 level "emissions by 45 per cent" by the year 2030. The court noted that though it is in agreement with the previous ruling that "protection from dangerous climate change is a human right," nevertheless, Shell can independently decide on how it would do the reductions. Friends of Earth that had filed the case against Shell expressed disappointment with the recent court ruling. However, it also noted the positive that companies which are responsible for pollution could be brought under the ambit of law. Previously, in 2021, Shell was ordered by the court to reduce its emissions by 45 per cent which

included the firm's "own emissions" and the emissions generated from the combustion of its products (oil and gas). The 2021 verdict was supposed to prevent Shell from increasing its "extraction" levels of oil and gas. Friends of Earth Netherlands, however, asserted that Shell gave assent to a minimum of 20 "new oil and gas extraction assets." (Stuart Brown, "[Shell wins appeal against order to cut emissions](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 12 November 2024)

Skirmishes in Amsterdam between police and pro-Palestinian demonstrators

On 10 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that there were skirmishes between the police and pro-Palestinian demonstrators in Amsterdam. The former arrested 50 people. Previously, the government had imposed a "temporary ban" on pro-Palestinian demonstrations after the city witnessed skirmishes between football fans of Israel and the local population. Amid the skirmishes in Amsterdam, Israel has cautioned its citizens who are planning to see the football match between France and Israel. The National Security Council of Israel has recommended that Israeli citizens must refrain from going for sports events. The Police chief of Paris Laurent Nunez has however warned that the authorities would not stand any acts of violence in the venue of the match. ("[Amsterdam police break up banned pro-Palestinian rally](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 10 November 2024)

THE UK

USAF reports three unidentified drones over air bases

On 24 November, the United States Air Force (USAF) reported on the identified drones identified over the three air bases in the UK. It said that between 20 and 200 November, "small UAVS" were detected over Royal Air Force (RAF) Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall in Suffolk, and RAF Feltwell, in Norfolk, eastern England. However, the aims of the drones remained unclear. USAF said: "The UASs were actively monitored and installation leaders determined that none of the incursions impacted base residents or critical infrastructure." It also

assured to monitor their airspaces and continue working with other countries to confirm the safety of air spaces.

("Unidentified drones seen over UK airbases — US Air Force," *Deutsche Welle*, 24 November 2024)

Ambassador to UNGA vouches for enlargement of UNSC membership

On 11 November, in a speech to the UN, the UK Ambassador stressed bringing reforms to reinforce the "multilateral statement." He pointed out the conflicts that are currently going on around the world namely Gaza and Ukraine and thereby the role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) becomes vital. He stated that the UNSC need to undergo reforms to reinforce it so that it can face current and future confrontations. He further stated that the UK backs the enlargement of the UNSC both in terms of permanent and non-permanent members up to somewhere around 25 members in total. He conveyed UKs support for Brazil, Germany, India and Japan to have a permanent seat in addition to "permanent African representation." (Archie Young, "[The UK remains a strong supporter of UN Security Council reform: UK statement in the UN General Assembly](#)," *GOV.UK*, 11 November 2024)

Prime Minister sets 81 per cent reduction in its emission as a target for 2035

On 12 November, the *BBC* reported that UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has set a target of 81 per cent reductions in the emissions generated in the country by 2035.

Previously, the Conservative government had targeted to reduce 78 per cent of emissions generated in the country by 2035. PM Starmer stated that he is not interested in directing people on what they should do, however, the set target for crucial for the UK's "future prosperity and energy security." PM Starmer was among the seven G-20 heads of state who decided to attend the conference. He also vowed to give GBP 11.6 billion towards "climate finance until March 2026." The UK also asked other nations to go for a similar target after the UN predicted that without reductions in emissions, the world might

see an increase of 3.1 degrees Celsius rise in the average temperature. (Jennifer McKiernan and Mark Poynting, "Starmer: New UK target for 81% emissions cut by 2035." *BBC*, 12 November 2024)

Prime Minister Keir Starmer visits Paris to commemorate "Armistice Day"

On 11 November, *Euronews* reported that the British Prime Minister was in Paris to celebrate the "106th anniversary of the Armistice" with his French counterpart Emanuel Macron. The celebrations are a tribute to remembering the time when "Allied" soldiers defeated the Nazi forces to free the occupied French land. The meeting between the two leaders symbolizes friendly relations between the two countries. The two leaders are anticipated to deliberate the Russia-Ukraine war, Israel-Palestine conflict and other key "foreign policy" matters. British Prime Minister Starmer informed that the UK government has set aside GBP 10 million to be spent on celebrating 80 years since the allied forces achieved "victory" in the continent and thereafter Japan conceding in the second world war. ("Armistice Day: Starmer and Macron celebrate Franco-British relations in Paris." *Euronews*, 11 November 2024)

"UK wants to sell itself as a global environment leader, but it got a BP problem," says an editorial in Politico

On 11 November, an editorial in *Politico* titled "Britain hugs oil giant BP while preaching climate action" discusses the proximity in the relationship between British Petroleum, the Azerbaijan government and the UK government. The editorial mentions that COP-29's host Azerbaijan receives maximum "foreign investment" from British Petroleum. The latter had put in efforts in Azerbaijan and played an instrumental role in creating capital generated from "oil and gas." British Petroleum is uninterruptedly surveying drilling options in Azerbaijan and is estimated to invest a mammoth USD 11 billion by 2050 in new drilling areas. British Petroleum is also known to play a crucial part in the diplomacy of the UK. As per some analysts, British Petroleum has placed itself in an important position from where it

can have cordial financial relationships with both UK and Azerbaijan. The editorial states that Azerbaijan's need to move towards renewable energy sources is delayed by its close ties with British petroleum and the latter's "fossil fuel interest" in the region. (Charlie Cooper, "Britain hugs oil giant BP while preaching climate action." *Politico*, 11 November 2024)

TURKEY

Bids to chair COP31 in 2026 amidst Australia's attempts

On 20 November, *The Guardian* reported on the contest between Australia and Turkey to hold the UN climate talks in 2026. Australia is planning to hold the COP31 along with the Pacific nations that were most affected by climate change. At COP29, Australia was attempting to play a primary role along with Egypt by mediating the complex negotiations over the final deal. Australia's climate change minister, Chris Bowen said that he was respectful of Turkey's attempt to chair the COP31 but mentioned the prospects of involving the Pacific nations who were excited about the upcoming opportunities. Australia has the support of 23 out of 29 countries out of a Western European countries group. Meanwhile, Turkey has reasserted its bid in recent days. According to a media outlet based in Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had told the Australian prime minister, Anthony Albanese that Turkey would not withdraw the candidacy. (Adam Morton and Fiona Harvey, "Australia and Turkey in standoff to be host of crucial 2026 climate talks." *The Guardian*, 20 November 2024)

Foreign Economic Relations Board aims surpass USD 10 billion bilateral trade in 2025 with Saudi Arabia

On 04 November, *Daily Sabah* reported that Foreign Economic Relations Board of Türkiye (DEİK) arranged a "joint forum" where business owners from Türkiye and Saudi Arabia came together to strengthen their bilateral engagement. The Commerce Minister of Saudi Arabia Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi who also attended the forum stressed on exploring cooperation in

sectors such as “mining, health care and tourism.” He also invited businesses from Türkiye to collaborate with the Saudi Government’s initiative “Vision 2030”. Trade Minister of Türkiye Omer Bolat who represented the Turkish side at the forum expressed his optimism towards bypassing the USD 10 billion bilateral trade by 2025. He highlighted the success of Turkish contractors to secure USD 2.3 billion worth of contracts and further stated that talks related to the GCC-Türkiye free trade agreement were on track. (“[Türkiye, Saudi Arabia expected to surpass \\$8B in trade this year](#),” *Daily Sabah*, 04 November 2024)

Kemi Badenoch becomes the first black woman to lead Conservative party

On 02 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that Kemi Badenoch won elections to lead the Conservative party by securing 53,086 votes, thus defeating Robert Jenrick’s 41388 votes. Badenoch, who is 44 and has Nigerian heritage, became the first black female to lead Conservative party. Badenoch would be looking to question the Labor party led Government on key issues such as economy and migration. She also vowed to bring back conservative voters who shifted to Nigel Farage’s Reform UK. (“[UK Conservative Party elects Kemi Badenoch as new leader](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, 2 November 2024)

Spike in employer National Insurance contribution caused worry among GPs and care homes

On 01 November, *BBC* reported that General Practitioners (GP) and care homes are not happy with the increase in employer National insurance contributions. The employees in the National Health Service (NHS) and public sector, however, do not fall under the ambit. The move is set to increase the employer’s contribution from a previous 13.8 per cent to 15 per cent from next spring but only for workers who earn wages above GBP 175. Chancellor of the Exchequer of the UK, Rachel Reeves argued that though the spike in National Insurance is not going to be easy, however, it remains crucial for sustaining public services such as the NHS. The Chancellor had laid out plans to provide GBP 22.6 billion worth of funds and recruit 1000 more GPs in the

NHS. (Kate Whannel, “[GPs and care homes fear impact of National Insurance rise](#),” *BBC*, 01 November 2024)

REGIONAL

Number of women experiencing sexual harassment has barely improved from 2014 says EIGE

On 25 November, *Euronews* reported on the survey submitted by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), the European Gender Equality Institute (EIGE) and Eurostat. According to the data, around 50 million in the EU still experience sexual and physical violence at home, workplace and in public. FRA Director Sirpa Rautio said that nothing had changed from 2014 as the percentage of women (18-74 years) experiencing sexual violence has not gone down much. The number of women reporting cases increased in 14 member states while it decreased in 11 and remained the same in two. Finland, Sweden, Hungary, Denmark and Luxembourg have the highest reported cases of violence due to open discussions on these issues. Data on sexual harassment at work and home have also not changed, especially for women aged 18-29. Rautio noted the lack of implementation of rules in states and insufficient funding for shelters, services and data collection which worsened the situation. (Paula Soler, “[Violence against women as 'worrying' in the EU as a decade ago](#),” *Euronews*, 25 November 2024)

EU states stall Serbia's accession process

On 25 November, *Euronews* reported that Serbia’s accession talks with the EU under the recommendation of Hungary were stopped. A group of EU countries like Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden refused the move proposed by Hungary. They highlighted Serbia’s track record on fundamental rights, problematic relations with neighbouring Kosovo and reluctance to impose sanctions on Russia. Hungary, being a strong supporter for Serbia’s accession to the EU tabled the proposal to bring it closer to the Cluster 3 of the accession process, covering eight chapters related to competitiveness and economic

growth, such as taxation, monetary policy, employment, customs union and scientific research. Serbia's free trade agreement with China was also one of the main points of contention. Although Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić expressed his commitment to join the EU, he confirmed to maintain good ties with Russia. (Jorge Liboreiro & Aida Sanchez, "[Hungary's push for Serbia EU accession talks stalls.](#)" *Euronews*, 25 November 2024)

EU Foreign Policy Chief announces support of EUR 200 million to Lebanon

On 24 November, *Euronews* reported on the visit of the EU's Foreign Policy chief Josep Borrell to Lebanon amidst wars in Gaza and Lebanon. Borrell said that the EU was set to provide EUR 200 million to help the Lebanese military deploy additional troops to the south of the country. Upon speaking with the Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, he also called for a ceasefire and more pressure on Israel and Hezbollah. He said: "As the European Union we are supporting the Lebanese people, the Lebanese army and the Lebanese institutions." A prospective agreement between the countries would require the withdrawal of Hezbollah and Israeli troops from southern Lebanon according to the principles of the UNSC resolution. Borrell also expressed his support for the ICC's arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defence minister and Hamas' military chief for the war in Gaza. ("[EU to allocate over €200mln to Lebanese military as ceasefire talks continue.](#)" *Euronews*, 24 November 2024)

Storm Bert affects Ireland and the UK causing outage in 60,000 houses

On 23 November, winter storm Bert hit regions across the UK and Ireland causing strong winds, heavy rain, snow and ice. The weather forecasters referred to it as a "multi-hazard" event. The weather led to airports, roads, ferry and train routes being closed. It also led to the death of two people in southern and northern England. The heavy rains causing flood made some roads impassable. The storm also led to an electricity outage in some 60,000 properties

overnight. Extreme snow was also reported in Scotland and northern and central parts of England. ("[Storm Bert wreaks havoc across UK and Ireland.](#)" *Deutsche Welle*, 23 November 2024)

Undersea cable sabotage undergoes thorough investigation

On 20 November, *CBS News* reported on the investigation of the sabotaged undersea cables in the Baltic Sea. A maritime tracking service Vessel Finder showed a Chinese-flagged cargo ship called the Yi Peng 3 in the vicinity of the area where the cables were damaged. Since the ship was docked in Danish waters, the military also confirmed its presence near the vessel. Vessel Finder tracking data showed a Danish navy patrol ship close to the anchored cargo vessel. On the sabotage, Dmitry Peskov, Press Secretary of the Russian President denied any Russian involvement in it. He said that it was "quite absurd to continue to blame Russia for everything without any grounds." Peskov added that Ukraine could be the reason behind the sabotage. Since Finland and Germany have also confirmed the damage of a cable between the countries, a thorough investigation was being carried out. A Swedish company Arelion also confirmed that one of its subsea cables were damaged. They are in constant communication with the Swedish authorities and military regarding the issue. (Emmet Lyons, "[Undersea cables cut or damaged, leading European nations to investigate possible sabotage.](#)" *CBS News*, 20 November 2024)

Marine Le Pen condemns judiciary over her trial

On 20 November, *Politico* reported on the statements made by Marine Le Pen on her trial and the 2025 budget. She condemned the prosecutors for sentencing her to "political death." She claimed that her trial was being politicized to prevent her from contesting in the 2027 French Presidential elections. This is because if found guilty, she would face five years imprisonment along with a ban on holding public office for at five years. She said: "There's real outrage ... the public prosecutor's office has created a disturbance of the peace with its demands."

According to her, the prosecutors' demand in her case was a "political act" as they were not independent. She added that ineligibility to conduct for the upcoming Presidential elections would have irreparable repercussions on her political career. She also warned French Prime Minister and his government over the budget. She argued that the demands of her National Rally Party were not taken into consideration. She threatened him that her party would withdraw its support to the government. Barnier needed RN's support to remain in control. (Victor Goury-Laffont, "[Marine Le Pen accuses prosecutors of trying to sentence her to 'political death,' calls her trial 'politicized'.](#)" *Politico*, 20 November 2024)

The EU is at risk of economic slowdown and debt sustainability, warns ECB

On 20 November, *Politico* reported on the warnings issued by the European Central Bank (ECB) over the weak growth of the EU's economy amidst tariffs imposed by the US. It has expressed its concern over "debt sustainability" and "policy uncertainty" in the light of current conditions. The major countries in the EU like France and Italy are faced with low growth with their public finances already stretched. ECB also noted that several business companies were going bankrupt with the low growth rates coupled with rising interest rates. The US Presidential elections have also complicated the economic condition of the EU countries. The upcoming President of the US Donald Trump has promised to impose tariffs of 20 per cent on all the exported European goods. ECB fears that such a move would push the EU into a prolonged economic slowdown. (Carlo Boffa, "[Lack of growth threatens revival of eurozone debt crisis.](#)" *ECB warns*, *Politico*, 20 November 2024)

Ford aims to cut jobs in the EU amidst significant losses in recent years

On 20 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the new job cuts proposed by the US automotive company Ford company in the EU. Due to the significant losses in recent years, the company plans to cut 4000 jobs in Europe by 2027. It said that it would cut 14 per cent of its European workforce with

some 2,900 job cuts in Germany by the end of 2027. Another 800 jobs are due to be cut in the UK and 300 in other EU nations. The company's European vice president for transformation and partnerships Dave Johnston said that difficult yet decisive decisions had to be made in light of the economic competition and CO2 regulations faced by Europe's automakers. The companies are facing competition from China's cheap EVs. Moreover, they are at risk of billions of fines if failed to meet the new carbon regulations of the EU, set to be implemented in 2025. Ford is also putting pressure on the German government to improve the market conditions for the promotion of European EVs. ([Ford looking to cut thousands of jobs in Europe.](#)" *Deutsche Welle*, 20 November 2024)

The EU Parliament approves the final list of executives

On 20 November, *Politico* reported that European Commissioner Ursula von der Leyen's executive was set to function from 01 December with the Parliament approving the list of the commissioners. Von der Leyen had selected six executive vice presidents (Estonia's Kaja Kallas, Italy's Raffaele Fitto, Romania's Roxana Mînzatu, France's Stéphane Séjourné, Spain's Teresa Ribera and Finland's Henna Virkkunen) to manage the "regular" commissioners. The selection of Fitto from the European Conservatives and Reformists of Italy was condemned by the Socialists and Democrats group in the bloc. However, they gave in at the end and approved the list. (Gregorio Sorgi, "[Von der Leyen eyes major reshuffle to boost control over EU budget.](#)" *Politico*, 20 November 2024)

The EU gears up for more defence cooperation; EU Countries demand long-term certainty

On 19 November, *Euronews* reported that the EU sought longer-term certainty despite a 17 per cent increase in turnover. The leaders are set to cooperate on missile defence which is a next-generation combat vessel. However, some of the European governments prefer military spending through a set of decisions that would be formulated in the EU defence ministers

meeting in Brussels. They needed long-term certainty to defend against the threats from the war in Ukraine and Trump's second Presidency in the US. Meanwhile, the defence manufacturers have welcomed this cooperation. They further said that the consortium rules on "eligibility and access to funds" had to be clarified. Micael Johansson, CEO of Saab, one of the EU's defence manufacturers said that drone capability, small technologies, and integrated air and missile defence systems were lacking in the EU. (Jack Schickler, ["Europe's landmark new missile, warship projects get cautious industry thumbs-up,"](#) *Euronews*, 19 November 2024)

Finland and Germany warn over undersea cable sabotage

On 19 November, *Politico* reported on the warnings of Finnish Defense Minister Antti Häkkinen over the threats faced by the undersea cables. He said: "NATO and [the] EU have to do a lot more to protect this critical infrastructure." His comments came amidst undersea an investigation of a damaged internet cable C-Lion1 connecting Santahamina, near Helsinki, to Rostock, Germany. Sweden's Civil Defense Minister Carl-Oskar Bohlin also reported on the damage of a second undersea cable. Germany's Defense Minister Boris Pistorius on Tuesday referred to the damage as "sabotage. Germany's foreign minister Annalena Baerbock assured that the EU would remain united. She also said that these can't be coincidences. Häkkinen further said that they were aware of Russia's capability and willingness to do sabotage in Europe. In response to the incident, the foreign ministers of Germany, France, Poland, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom had declared a joint statement warning against "Moscow's escalating activities." Meanwhile, a Swedish outlet SVT reported on the presence of a Chinese ship around the areas where the cables were damaged. This also marks the second damage in a year sparking security concern. (["Finland urges NATO, EU to shield critical networks after undersea cables damaged,"](#) *Politico*, 19 November 2024)

Politico lists out the hypothetical

outcomes of the new European Commission

On 19 November, *Politico* reported on the possible outcomes of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's new Commission. Although she hoped the Commission to start its functions on 01 December, the Parliament did not approve the final six executive vice-presidents and Hungary's Oliver Várhelyi. The Parliament is facing fights between the political factions such as the liberal group Renew and the Socialists and Ursula's European People's Party (EPP) over the nomination of Raffaele Fitto, for executive vice president who is a hard-right from Germany. In response, the EPP had launched an offensive against the Socialists' candidate, Teresa Ribera over the floods in Valencia. *Politico* has listed some of the possible hypotheses. Following the negotiation, if the seven pending commissioners are passed with a two-third majority, then the MEPs would vote on the 27 commissioners including Von der Leyen. If the commission get a simple majority before 28 November, the executive shall be set up on 01 December. Apart from this, if the seven pending commissioners do not get a majority at first, then the evaluation committee will vote on individual nominees through a secret ballot. If they do not pass, then there would be no commission until 2025. (Max Griera and Giovanna Coi, ["Von der Leyen's final hurdle: How to get her new Commission started by Dec. 1,"](#) *Politico*, 19 November 2024)

Uncertainty looms over climate finds at COP29

On 19 November, *Politico* reported on the stance of smaller countries at the COP29 held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The primary question at the summit was over funds. While the smaller countries pushed for trillions for clean and sustainable energy, the US and the EU refused to give in to their demands. Some of the African countries have highlighted that their societies and economies were caught at the grip of climate change and their consequences. According to some of the representatives from these countries, the USD 200 or 300 billion discussed by the EU was "underwhelming" considering their needs,

especially island countries. Although the EU and the US agree on the trillion-dollar funds needed for climate change, they claim that it could only be supplemented with the help of private capital, as the budgets could not be stretched too much. The deal concluded at the end of the summit would impact the world for decades. (Sara Schonhardt, Zack Colman, Zia Weise and Karl Mathiesen, ["Underwhelming': Poor countries push for way more climate funding than the EU is floating."](#) Politico, 19 November 2024)

EU foreign ministers deny on pausing diplomatic dialogue with Israel

On 18 November, the EU foreign ministers held a meeting in Brussels to discuss on diplomatic dialogue with Israel. EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell called for a pause in the dialogue with Israel, stating it could add pressure on the government which has ignored the international laws. However, the ministers denied support. He highlighted 44,000 deaths in Gaza and 70 per cent being killed to be women and children and his move was seen as "parting shot" before he left the office. The proposal which needs the vote of 27 member states was opposed as several think it was necessary to "remain in dialogue" as part of the EU-Israel Association Agreement which helps in strengthening the partnership. Spain and Ireland have agreed to review this agreement while several other EU members argue of not suspending the partnership even if the dialogue is stalled. Borrell has also proposed for a ban on imports from Israeli settlements. (["EU ministers reject suspending dialogue with Israel."](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 18 November 2024)

Underwater cable between Germany and Finland damaged

On 18 November, authorities in Finland held a investigation on broken underwater cable in the Baltic Sea located in southwest to Germany. According to the state-owned service Cinia, the fault has been found in the C-Lion1 cable. Due to this, the communications on the "C-Lion1 submarine cable are down." The Finnish Broadcasting Corporation YLE also cited the same confirming the damage. According to Samuli Bergström, communications chief at the

Finnish National Cyber Security Center Traficom: "The reasons are under investigation. Disturbances occur from time to time and there can be various reasons. For example, they are susceptible to weather and damage caused by shipping. The essential thing is that the problems are identified and corrective measures are taken." The C-Lion1 cable is close to 1,200 kilometers, connecting the German port city of Rostock to Helsinki. It is the only communication cable between the Nordic and central Europe. (["Undersea data cable between Germany and Finland broken."](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 18 November 2024)

Germany and France at risk of facing budget freeze

On 17 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the uncertainties faced by the German and French governments over their budgets. France's lower house rejected the first part of draft budget for 2025 which proposed a wealth tax on billionaires, a tax hike on "super-dividends" from large corporations, a tax on multinationals and higher taxes for digital companies and a new tax for particularly loud motorcycles. In case of Germany, a supplementary budget for 2024 ahead of the snap elections is necessary as the government faces shortage of money. It needs EUR 3.7 billion for additional expenses covering Citizen's Allowance, and EUR 10 billion to promote renewable energies. In case of failure to arrange the money, it would face a budget freeze. (Andreas Noll, ["Germany, France struggle to secure budgets, risk uncertainty."](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 17 November 2024)

Lightweight plastic bags usage on rise despite steps to reduce

On 18 November, *Euronews* reported on number of lightweight plastic bags bought by the EU to be close to 30 billion in 2022. The report found that the usage rate was declining and traced countries which used eco-friendly bags. EU states were observed to be taking steps since 10 years to reduce the usage of plastic bags through imposing additional charges and promoting biodegradable products. However, the measure have proven ineffective and at present the EU citizens buy 30 per cent

lesser weight plastic bags compared to 2018. Although, the overall purchase remains high. As per 2022 reports, 30 billion lightweight plastic bags were used which was 66 bags per person above average. Any lightweight plastic bags that are less than 50 microns thick have been used for carrying small quantity of groceries. They are considered to have larger environmental impact and breaking into microplastics impacting human and animal health. (Alessio Dell'Anna, "Which EU country is the biggest consumer of lightweight plastic bags?," *Euronews*, 18 November 2024)

Politico reports on new global fund target to be set by the EU for climate change at COP 29

On 18 November, the EU countries at the COP 29 have decided to set a global funding target of USD 200 billion and USD 300 billion to help poorer countries to counter climate change. The closed discussions held gave the possibility for a funding deal for rich countries. Till now western government have denied to disclose the exact figure while it also argue China and other Gulf countries to contribute to the funding. According to one of the EU official: "There's no common EU position for now but ... I think that's realistic." The move comes as the fresh deal would replace the current target of USD100 billion per year. (Zia Weise, "EU zones in on \$200B to \$300B target for global climate fund." *Politico*, 18 November 2024)

META fined for using Facebook Market Place to distribute its ads

On 14 November, the European Commission imposed a fine of EUR 797.72 million on Facebook's META for using its position for prioritising its online classified ads with personal social network. In a statement: "Facebook users automatically have access and get regularly exposed to Facebook Marketplace whether they want it or not." It added that due to such activity, competitors could be prevented while Facebook Marketplace can have the advantage to distribute its ads. This enables the users to buy and sell from the Facebook market place. The EU also found

evidence of the META imposing unfair trade rules on Facebook and Instagram platforms from the generated data to benefit its marketplace. According to the EU, META will be given 60 days to adhere with the Commission's decision and must provide choice for the users. In response, the META has said that it will challenge the decision. It added: "Platforms like eBay, Leboncoin in France, Marktplaats in the Netherlands, Subito in Italy, Blocket in Sweden and Finn.no in Norway are formidable competitors and the market leader in many member states." (Peggy Corlin, "EU slaps Meta with €797 million fine for breaching antitrust rules." *Euronews*, 14 November 2024)

Meeting held between European leaders and Adani on renewable energy initiatives

On 12 November, EU, Belgium, Denmark and Germany envoys visit Adani's Khavda, Mundra businesses, Gautam Adani hosted representatives from EU, Belgium, Denmark and Germany in Gujarat. The discussion involved renewable energy initiatives and energy mix for sustainable future for India. World's largest renewable energy plant at Khavda acts as a centre for rapid global decarbonisation and India's sustainable efforts. Spanning across 538 square kilometres, on completion is expected to meet India's energy need through several renewable energy sources and help in reducing dependency over conventional sources. ("EU, Belgium, Denmark and Germany envoys visit Adani's Khavda, Mundra businesses, Gautam Adani says "It was a privilege." *ANI News*, 12 November 2024)

The EU delay to implement Deforest Regulation law sparks concerns

On 13 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported on the delay in implementing the landmark EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) law. It was a means to counter the forest reduction due to the cutting and degradation of trees as propounded by a study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The law was based on the idea that the EU importers would have to prove that their supply chains for products

like coffee, chocolate, leather, paper, tires and furniture would not lead to deforestation in any other parts of the world. Companies that failed to meet the requirement had to face fines up to four per cent of their turnover. The law was part of the European Green Deal and was adopted by the Parliament in 2022. However, the EU was considering to delay its implementation to 2025. Some MEPs have expressed their dissatisfaction over this delay. According to some of the studies in the EU, a delay for another year would lead up to the loss of about 2,300 square kilometres. Meanwhile, agriculture and environment ministries of Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden have approved of this delay citing various reasons. Some of them were the unreadiness of the companies and the unavailability of digital tools to implement this law. Nevertheless, Ghana and Ivory Coast being the world's largest cocoa producers were ready for the law. In response to the delay, about 120 Ghanaian and Ivory civil society along with some farmer organisations wrote a letter to the EU, citing their concerns. The final decision on the implementation of the law would only be taken on 14 November by the European Parliament. ("Why the EU might delay a law to slow deforestation." *Deutsche Welle*, 13 November)

European Commissioner concerned over usage of Chinese infrastructure in critical telecom

On 13 November, the new European Commissioner Henna Virkkunen expressed her dissatisfaction over the usage of China's Huawei and ZTE as part of critical telecom infrastructure by several EU member states. According to her: "The majority of communication in Europe is transmitted through high-risk applications. A few countries have imposed rules on the high-risk vendors." She added that this would be met with a revision of the Cyber Security Act in 2025, following a discussion with member states. Along with that, she warned the member states to take the issue seriously as these telecom companies were considered to be high-risk. (Cynthia Kroet, "New EU tech chief to discuss 5G

security measures with national governments." *Euronews*, 13 November 2024)

Major world leaders skip attending COP29

On 11 November, *Euronews* reported that major world leaders such as US President Joe Biden and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen did not attend the Conference of Parties(COP)-29. Some other leaders decided not to attend the conference amid the recent outcome of the US elections where Donald Trump clinched the victory. US climate envoy John Podesta expressed unhappiness over the outcome of the US elections. He mentioned that the US President considers "climate change" a "hoax" and predicted that the incoming government would reverse the "climate policies" formulated by the current US President. He claimed that "work" dedicated to fighting climate change would go on in the US with "passion, commitment and belief." UN Climate Chief Simon Stiell stated that the focus should be on the "quality of outcomes" rather than the quantity and that there are important "decisions" that must be undertaken during the conference. Separately, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) stated that 2024 was all set to be the hottest year. It further mentioned that data points towards an increase of 1.54 degrees Celsius from "pre-industrial levels" for the months from January to September. United Nations stated that the agreement on not surpassing 1.5 degrees Celsius remains intact as it takes a mean of several decades. ("COP29: From finance to agenda fights, what happened on day one of the UN climate conference?" *Euronews*, 11 November 2024)

New climate and tax commissioner determined not to push "EU climate targets"

On 07 November, *Euronews* reported that the newly chosen "EU's climate and tax commissioner" Wopke Hoekstra confirmed that the discontinuation of "petrol and diesel" cars would be achieved by 2035. On the issue of imposing tax on "aviation fuel and air travel," he stated that he was ready

to hold a meeting with stakeholders who are prepared to deliberate upon it. On COP-29, he stated that the EU must be decisive in terms of demanding other countries such as the US and China to reduce their emission as the EU itself emits a mere 6 per cent of the “global emissions.” When faced with an argument from Alternative for Germany’s leader Anja Arndt who refuted claims of climate change, Hoekstra stated that “Europe is heating up twice as quickly as the world average.” Proponents of climate action had expressed satisfaction with Hoekstra’s intention to not alter “EU climate targets.” (Robert Hodgson, “[EU climate chief gets green light for new Commission](#),” *Euronews*, 07 November 2024)

The EU divided initiating “joint debt” in ‘New Competitiveness Deal’

On 08 November, *Euronews* reported that the “New European Competitiveness Deal” which is referenced from former Prime Minister of Italy Mario Draghi’s analysis, has received patronage from leaders of the EU countries which aims to fix the dire state of economy in the region. It recommends that to increase the bloc’s competitiveness against the US and China. First, more investment in small and medium industries and new “start-ups”. Second, reduction in bureaucratic hurdles. Third, enhance the “single market.” Fourth, invest not less than 3 per cent of the GDP in Research and Development. Draghi advocated for the initiation of “joint debt” because the bloc needs an extra EUR 800 billion per year to maintain its competitiveness. Germany and the Netherlands have however dismissed the measures in the deal which propose to introduce “joint debt” and alternatively suggested emphasising already prevailing frameworks such as the European Investment Bank and the bloc’s “multiannual budget.” (Jorge Liboreiro and Aida Sanchez, “[EU leaders endorse ‘New Competitiveness Deal’ but skirt around joint debt](#)” *Euronews*, 08 November 2024)

EU Foreign Policy head insists on not delaying climate action

On 11 November, *Euronews* reported that the EU’s Foreign Policy Head, Josep Borrell

called for immediate action on climate change. He stated that the world must not delay its actions to fight the threat of climate change despite the change in the presidency of the United States. Azerbaijan would be hosting Cop-29 where the EU delegation would be led by “climate commissioner” Wopke Hoekstra whose objective is to promote the use of renewable energy sources in developing countries. The EU conducts roughly 25 per cent of the world’s funds on climate finance. The emissions from EU countries have gone down by 08 per cent in 2024 from the previous year and thus the bloc would be hoping to cling to the “leadership role” in fighting against climate change. It is predicted that the EU would not showcase high high-profile “presence” in Cop-29 unlike in Cop-28 which took place in Dubai. (Robert Hodgson, “[World cannot wait on Washington for climate action, Eu foreign policy chief warns](#),” *Euronews*, 11 November 2024)

Mario Draghi recommends steps for the EU to take to compete against US and China

On 09 November, Mario Draghi presented a plan in a meeting with the European ministers on what steps the EU must take to compete with China and the US. The plan recommends five measures. First, the EU must infuse Euro 800 billion in “Research and development, infrastructure and defence.” This would account for 27 per cent of the EU’s GDP, an increase of five per cent. Second, the EU must form a common “capital market” and “regularize the issue” of “common bonds.” Third, the EU should look into ways to decrease its reliance on “Chinese Supply chains.” Fourth, the EU must facilitate the growth of “new tech companies” and “industrial firms” by increasing the ease of doing business. Fifth, it EU must take steps to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and smoothen the pathways involved in “decision-making.” (Bernd Riegert, “[How can EU compete with US, China and other?](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, 9 November 2024)

EU summit in Budapest focuses on future

of the US-EU and Ukraine war

On 08 November, an informal European Council Summit was held by Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban in Budapest. At the summit, the European leaders agreed to boost the EU's competitiveness. In the press briefing, they set: "to make Europe great again," as a common aim. The leaders discussed on EU's future economy and competition with the US and how the EU can manage its equation with Donald Trump. Orban announced the Budapest Declaration stated that the war in Ukraine to change after the reelection of Trump to more towards "peace." He added: "The situation at the front is obvious, there is a military defeat" for Ukraine. On the same day, France's President Emmanuel Macron and Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk issued a statement assuring "unwavering support for Ukraine and Ukrainians." Whereas Germany's Chancellor, Olaf Scholz said: "...continue to work well with the future American president," expressing willingness to work with the US. EU's Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen called on the implementation of "economic reforms" and also proposed a "clean industrial deal" to back up decarbonization of the Europe's economy. ("EU vows stronger economy, defense at Hungary summit," *Deutsche Welle*, 09 November 2024)

"Hoekstra has won hearts and minds in the parliament" with his approach to combat climate change claims an editorial in Politico

On 06 November, an editorial in *Politico* titled "EU climate chief's pitch: Adam Smith will save the planet" deliberated upon the EU climate action commissioner Wopke Hoekstra's "market based approach" to reduce the use of fossil-based energy resources. Hoekstra's focus has been on increasing duties for the use of fossil-based resources and "carbon pricing." He envisions making the use of fossil-based resources costly so that people automatically shift towards using renewable energy resources. Some legislators are, however, reluctant to adopt this approach as they do not want to upset voters with increased prices of oil and gas.

Hoekstra's approach has created a rift even in his own European People's Party (EEP) such as Member of European Parliament (MEP) from Bulgaria Radan Kanev termed it as "recipe for political revolution in Europe." He also has received support for his approach from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The editorial mentions Bulgaria's MEP Radan Kanev who opined that though Hoekstra's proposed measures would bring down the rate of emission, however, this would ultimately lead spike in the prices of goods for the end consumer. The editorial further argues that though costly use of fossil-based resources might discourage consumers from using it, however, this might not be enough to save them in case of a climate calamity. (Zia Weise, "EU climate chief's pitch: Adam Smith will save the planet," *Politico*, 06 November 2024)

"As Brussels gears up to challenge Beijing in funding and construction, many of the projects it is funding are being built by Chinese state-owned companies" says an editorial in Politico

On 08 November, an editorial in *Politico* titled "Brussels' global infrastructure plan isn't challenging Beijing - it's relying on it" discussed the increasing number of projects which are funded by the EU, however, are built by Chinese companies. It mentions how China-based firms were able to secure contracts that amounted to EUR 1 billion which were financed by European Investment Bank (EIB) in non-EU countries such as Senegal and Senegal since 2019. In 2019 and 2024, Chinese companies had more contracts with EU firms which were financed by EIB. The editorial focuses on the lack of a "level playing field" for the EU countries. It mentions how there were no European firms to be seen in the "Belt and Road Initiative" projects which are funded by China. The projects often are given to China-based companies without even issuing a "tender" notice. The editorial mentions Frank Kehlenbach, director of European International Contractors who expressed dismay over competition from Chinese companies which he alleged are financed by the Chinese government. ("Brussels' global infrastructure plan isn't

challenging Beijing – it’s relying on it” Politico, 08 November 2024)

Waste plastics from the EU continue to be dumped in Malaysia

On 03 November, *Deutsche Welle* reported that Malaysia saw a spike of 35 per cent in its import of plastic waste in 2023 from the EU countries amounting “8.5 million tons of paper, plastic and glass.” EU dumps 10 per cent of its waste in third countries while the majority is treated in the bloc countries itself. Plastic imports to Malaysia continue to grow amid its need for financial resources and its own recycling sector, nevertheless, most of it being not suitable for using it again. EU has however pledged to reduce the waste exports to third countries by 2026 which does not include textile waste. Malaysia and EU have to deliberate upon the exports through illegitimate route taken by some companies of Europe to dispose off their waste. (David Hutt, “Malaysia struggles to halt European plastic waste imports,” *Deutsche Welle*, 03 November 2024)

Ukraine receives assistance from UNDP, EU and Denmark to counter the spike in violence against women

On 31 October, UNDP reported that in order to counter the spike observed in domestic violence and violence against women in Ukraine post the beginning of the war, nine vehicles worth USD 391,854 have been given to the National Police of Ukraine. The contributors who assisted Ukraine in the purchase included the EU, Danish Government and United Nations Development Programme(UNDP). Kateryna Pavlichenko who is the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine thanked the donors for supporting them and stated that the added vehicles would help Police to reduce the response time for assisting survivors. (“EU, Denmark and UNDP transfer vehicles for National Police to strengthen mobile teams to combat domestic and gender-based violence,” *UNDP*, 31 October 2024)

EU countries should not only aim to achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases but also tackle the

problem of rapid urbanization” says an editorial in *Le Monde*

On 02 November, an editorial in *Le Monde* titled “Spanish floods demonstrate urgent need to adapt and protect” discussed the horrific implications of global warming that could lead catastrophes such as the current floods in Spain. The editorial mentions how Europe, which for long had remained an exception, has also fallen under the ambit of experiencing global warming induced catastrophes such as the floods seen in Germany and Belgium and the recent one in Spain. The editorial suggests that EU countries should not only aim to achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases but also tackle the problem of rapid urbanization in river valleys and “subdivision of farmland” that restricts the flow of rain water on the ground. It also mentions a study done by “NGO Parlons Climat” which reports that the reason why people refuse to believe in climate change is because of the view that combatting the same would require a change in their norms and life routines. The editorial serves a reminder to the political elites to work towards fighting global warming through initiating “sustainable policies.” (“Spanish floods demonstrate urgent need to adapt and protect,” *Le Monde*, 02 November 2024)

Excess profits used by the EU defence companies are observed to be increase share prices argues an editorial in *Politico*

On 30 October, an editorial in *Politico* titled , “European defense companies are making a lot of money – and that’s a problem” discussed the dilemma between the need for the European countries to invest in defence amid the recent security challenges and to keep a check on the high profits earned by the big arm manufacturers. The editorial notes how the arms manufacturers such as France’s Thales, Sweden’s Saab and Italy’s Leonardo among many others have seen a spike in their sales and profits in 2024. It further mentions how the excess profits are being used by the defence companies for stock repurchase and thus increasing their share price. The editorial directs towards the examples of other

countries such as the US which levied special duties during world wars on defence companies thus showing how governments taxing arm manufacturers is not new and could be done. The editorial in the conclusion suggests to integrate the European defence market which at the present had been fragmented. An integrated defence market would ensure more competition which would automatically lead to a decrease in profit margins of the defence companies. (Jacopo Barigazzi, ["European defense companies are making a lot of money – and that's a problem,"](#) *Politico*, 30 October 2024)

EU suggests funds to be used for flora and fauna restoration in poor countries

On 02 November, *Politico* reported that talks during United Nations COP16 biodiversity which is hosted by Cali, California remained inconclusive as the richer nations are unwilling to establish a new fund to assist the poorer countries. This does not come as a surprise as EU countries had already objected to the establishment of a new fund. The fund was proposed to be used by poorer countries to introduce measures for restoring the lost flora and fauna. Richer countries included Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the EU countries and the poorer nations belonged to Africa and Latin America. (James Fernyhough, ["COP16 fizzles out as rich countries block global nature fund,"](#) *Politico*, 02 November 2024)

Differences in policy preferences of the two US Presidential candidates

On 01 November, an editorial in *DW* titled "What the 2024 US election outcome could

mean for Germany" discussed the differences in policy preferences between the two US presidential candidates and what implications it could have on Germany. The editorial points to the difference in the policy preferences of Kamala Harris and Donald Trump about support for Ukraine in its war against Russia. On one hand, Kamala Harris would likely support Ukraine's armament, on the other hand, Donald Trump would look for an early exit from the war. Concerning support in NATO, Kamala Harris seems supportive of the continual support to the multilateral security arrangement, whereas Donald Trump is viewed as reluctant to provide funds to the organization. The editorial also mentioned the analysis of Nico Lange who strongly advocates that European countries should do more instead of depending upon the US. In terms of economy, Germany closely views the policy changes in the US. If Trump manages to win the elections, the tariff on goods from Germany is set to increase by 20 per cent. The editorial notes that this might not be good news for German firms, however, they do not expect any liberalization from either of the Presidential candidates. On Climate change, Trump is seen as critical of Germany's climate policies with the former claiming that the latter had been constructing one power plant per week that would be run by coal. The German Foreign Ministry had however dismissed such claims. Kamala Harris, on the other hand, is seen as supportive of measures that would combat climate change. (Christoph Hasselbach, ["What the 2024 US election outcome could mean for Germany."](#) *DW*, 31 October 2024)

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