



Daily



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MAX - Europe Region Daily Summary - December 22, 2024

Highlights of the Day

- **Albania:** Anti-government protest slated in central Tirana at 17:00 (local time) on December 23; maintain heightened vigilance
- **Europe:** Authorities bolster security citing Magdeburg attack on December 22; far-right protests likely due to anti-immigrant sentiment
- **Hungary & Poland:** Warsaw recalls its ambassador from Budapest on December 20; bilateral tensions to persist in near term
- **Spain:** IS supporter arrested in Barcelona for disseminating extremist propaganda online on December 19; reiterates threat from lone actors

Actionable Items

Albania: Anti-government protest slated in central Tirana at 17:00 (local time) on December 23; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation - Reports indicate that opposition parties, including the center-right Partia Demokratike (PD), will hold an anti-government protest in central Tirana at 17:00 (local time) on December 23. Former President and Prime Minister Sali Berisha will participate in the protest. Berisha stated that there will be a total blockade in Tirana. However, the exact locations of the protest are unavailable as of writing.

Assessments & Forecast - Based on precedent and social media traction, the protest is likely to witness a turnout ranging from the low to mid thousands. Given the anti-government nature of the protest, it carries an elevated potential for unrest in the form of clashes between protesters and police personnel. In addition to blockades, there is also a risk that protesters will engage in vandalism, as well as attempt to enter government buildings. Should this occur, police will likely respond with tear gas, water cannons, and arrests. Severe disruptions to vehicular and pedestrian traffic are likely in central Tirana from the late afternoon hours onwards.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Tirana on December 23 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of any protest gathering from the evening hours onwards due to the elevated potential for unrest.

Source: [Gazetashqiptare](#)

Europe: Alerts for adverse weather conditions issued in multiple countries on December 22-24; remain cognizant of updates

Current Situation - Alerts for adverse weather conditions have been issued in multiple countries across Europe from December 22-24. Meteoalarm, Europe's regional weather service, has issued orange alerts, the second-highest level, for strong winds across **Italy**, the northwest departments of **France**, and the southern parts of **Germany** through December 23. In **Greece**, a 5.0 magnitude earthquake occurred in the Western Greece Region near Paravola at 18:29 (local time) on December 21. No immediate reports of damage or casualties were recorded. Met Eireann, the **Irish** Meteorological Service, has issued a yellow snow and ice warnings for Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, and Louth. Poor visibility, temporary ice patches, and challenging travel conditions are expected in these areas on December 22. In **Poland**, IMGW, the Polish Meteorological Service, has issued heavy snowfall warnings for Lower Silesia, including Lwówek, Karkonosze, Jelenia Góra, and Klodzko counties. Strong wind alerts for Silesia and Malopolska remain in effect until 20:00 on December 22 and until 00:00 on December 23 for Podkarpacie. Meteoalarm has also issued orange alerts for heavy snowfall across **Switzerland** through December 24.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in the aforementioned countries in Europe on December 22-24 are advised to remain cognizant of authorities' updates regarding weather-related risks. Allot for travel-related disruptions arising from adverse weather conditions.

Source: [Meteo Alarm](#)

Germany: Ukraine solidarity protest slated for Russisches Haus in Berlin at 18:00 (local time) on December 23; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation - A protest in solidarity with Ukraine will take place outside the Russisches Haus, the Russian House of Science and Culture, located at Friedrichstrasse 176-179 in Berlin, at 18:00 (local time) on December 23. The protest is being held to denounce Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Assessments & Forecast - Based on social media estimates, the protest is expected to garner a turnout ranging in the mid to high thousands. While past Ukraine solidarity protests in Berlin have transpired largely peacefully, considering the expected turnout and heightened sentiments, unrest in the form of localized, low-level, scuffles cannot be ruled out. As such, a bolstered security presence is likely to be deployed in the vicinity of the Russisches Haus as a precautionary measure and to monitor proceedings. Disruptions to both pedestrian and vehicular movement should be anticipated along Friedrichstrasse from the early evening onwards.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Berlin on December 23 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of the Russisches Haus during the evening hours due to the scheduled protest.

Source: [Twitter/X](#)

Notable Events

Europe: Authorities bolster security citing Magdeburg attack on December 22; far-right protests likely due to anti-immigrant sentiment

Current Situation - Multiple countries across Europe have also increased security measures at Christmas markets and events, citing the Magdeburg attack, as of December 21. Details are available [here](#). Separately, 2,100 far-right actors protested in Hasselbachplatz, Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. Clashes were reported; many participants were masked, and some chanted slogans about "reconquering" German cities, calling for deportations.

Assessments & Forecast - Considering that over 200 people were injured in the attack, despite the enforcement of security measures, the decision to further bolster security in countries across Europe was anticipated. This is especially so, given the elevated threat of Islamist terrorism, with multiple countries already claiming to have bolstered security measures before the attack - such as Denmark, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. Moreover, considering the already elevated anti-immigrant sentiments in Germany. Large-scale anti-immigration protests driven by radical far-right groups and parties are likely to continue in the near term, especially in cities in eastern German states like Thuringia. Indeed, far-right groups and political parties are likely to capitalize on the attack and associated anti-immigrant sentiments to rally support ahead of the February 2025 snap

elections.

Source: [MAX Security](#)

Hungary & Poland: Warsaw recalls its ambassador from Budapest on December 20; bilateral tensions to persist in near term

Current Situation - On December 20, Poland recalled its ambassador to Hungary, citing Budapest's decision to grant political asylum to Marcin Romanowski, the former Polish deputy justice minister. Romanowski faces charges of corruption and misuse of public funds during his term in the previous government, led by the right-wing populist Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc(PiS). Poland has filed a European arrest warrant (EAW) with the EU against Romanowski.

Assessments & Forecast - Despite Poland's decision to file an EAW, Hungary is unlikely to comply with the request, with Hungarian PM Viktor Orban stating that the government was using the "rule of law" to "settle scores with political opponents." The development will further strain bilateral relations between Budapest and Warsaw, amid growing tensions over the former's pro-Russia stance. While Budapest may respond with tit-for-tat measures, such as summoning Poland's ambassador, they are unlikely to call back their own ambassador from Poland. Further, Warsaw is likely to follow through on threats to request the European Commission to initiate proceedings against Budapest over the refusal to comply with EAW obligations in the coming weeks.

Source: [BBC](#)

Italy: Authorities conduct 12 raids nationwide targeting neo-Nazi individuals on December 20; similar raids likely to recur

Current Situation - On December 20, police conducted 12 searches nationwide under Operation "Genus Album," targeting individuals accused of promoting propaganda related to far-right, white supremacist, and neo-Nazi movements through social media platforms. Authorities reported that 12 people, including a minor, are under investigation. Additionally, authorities seized several weapons, including firearms, flags adorned with Nazi and fascist symbols, and propaganda leaflets.

Assessments & Forecast -The development underscores the ongoing crackdown on far-right, neo-Nazi groups, evidenced by the December 4 arrests of 12 members of the neo-Nazi group [Werwolf Division](#), who were planning an attack on PM Giorgia Meloni. While it remains unclear whether the aforementioned individuals were actively planning an attack, the confiscation of several weapons, including firearms, indicates they posed a credible threat. Regardless, the development also reiterates the continued use of online forums by radicalized far-right extremists, who are known to operate on encrypted channels. That one minor was arrested is also in line with youth radicalization trends, with teenagers particularly vulnerable to such content. Given that this is the second nationwide raid in

December, similar operations are likely in the near to medium term.

Source: [Postal Police](#)

Netherlands: Government approves draft legislation limiting asylum process on December 20; to face challenges in parliament

Current Situation - On December 20, the coalition government voted in favor of three draft pieces of legislation aimed at limiting immigration. They include introducing a “two-tier system” for asylum seekers to categorize asylum seekers based on the likelihood of them receiving protection, limiting residence permits to three years, and limiting family reunification. Ministers from all coalition parties approved the legislation. The proposed measures will be presented to the Council of State, which will provide a verdict in February 2025, on whether the bills can be implemented legally.

Assessments & Forecast - Considering that the Council of State has already voiced concerns over Immigration Minister Marjolein Faber’s bills, it is liable to advise against the measures. Regardless, given that the cabinet approved the bills following months of internal negotiations, the cabinet is still expected to move forward with the process and introduce the bills to parliament. However, given significant criticism among the opposition, they will likely be rejected. As such, the government will likely need to amend the bills. Separately, left-wing and human rights activists are liable to organize protests denouncing the measures, including in Amsterdam and The Hague.

Source: [Euronews](#)

Spain: IS supporter arrested in Barcelona for disseminating extremist propaganda online on December 19; reiterates threat from lone actors

Current Situation - On December 19, Ministerio del Interior, Spain’s Interior Ministry, reported the arrest of an individual in Barcelona for engaging in Islamist militant activities, including using encrypted messaging platforms to express support for the Islamic State (IS) terror group. The suspect disseminated Islamist propaganda through online platforms and also interacted with other radicalized individuals who were arrested in Melilla in July 2024. Additionally, the suspect researched different chemical substances online and previous attacks that involved the use of poison.

Assessments & Forecast - The arrest reiterates continued efforts by Spanish law enforcement to identify lone actors, who are known to pose a considerable security threat. This is evidenced by multiple such arrests carried out nationwide in recent months, including the October 2024 arrest of two suspects in Melilla. The suspect’s activities further highlight the sustained threat emanating from online radicalization and the easy access to extremist content on online channels. Further, while stabbing continues to remain the primary modus operandi for lone actors, threat actors are likely to be increasingly inclined to explore other modes of attack considering the scale of

surveillance regionwide.

Source: [Ministerio del Interior](#)

Other Developments

- On December 18, a member of the **Dutch** royal family was targeted in a burglary at her residence in Amsterdam. The assailants stole jewelry, with the value not released. This incident underscores the continued targeting of high-profile individuals in European cities, with similar burglaries and robberies reported regionwide in recent months.
- On December 20, **Switzerland** and the EU announced a deal to overhaul their trade ties, addressing issues like immigration, state aid, and freedom of movement. This agreement marks a significant step forward in strengthening bilateral relations, although opposition in Switzerland remains over immigration controls and concerns about sovereignty and wages.

Notable Dates

24 Europe Holiday: Christmas Eve
DEC

25 Europe Holiday: Christmas Day
DEC

26 Europe Holiday: Second day of Christmas
DEC

31 Europe Holiday: New Year's Eve
DEC

1 Europe Holiday: New Year's Day
JAN
