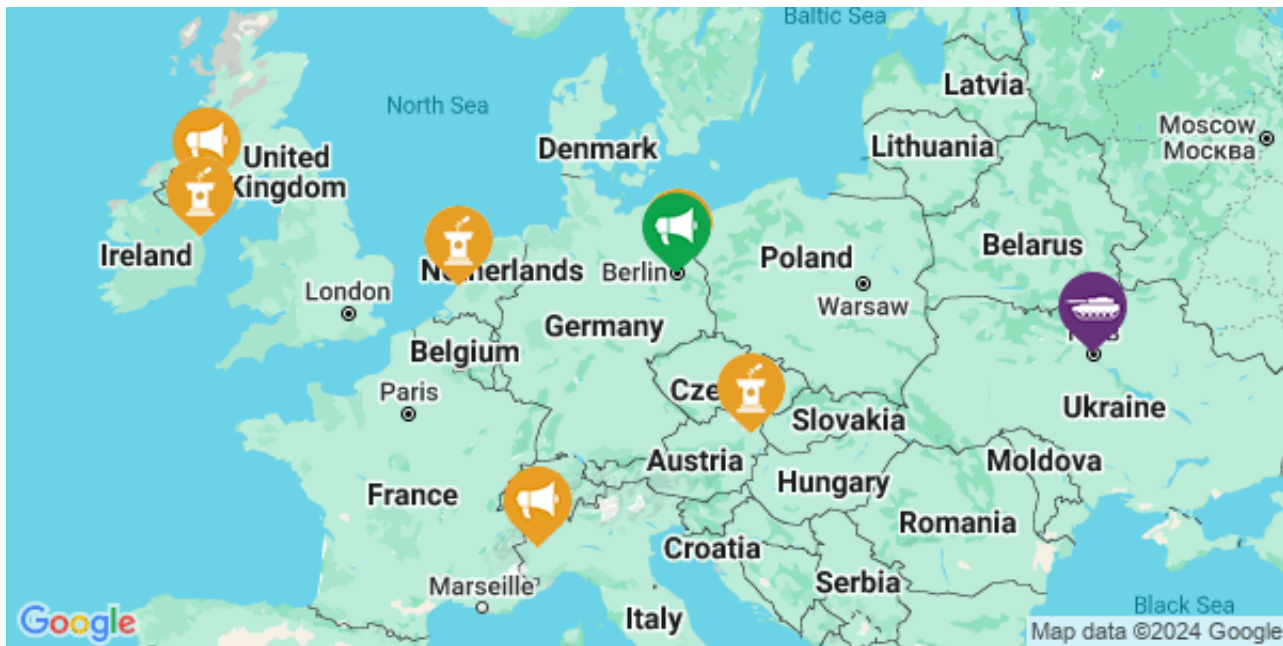




Daily



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MAX - Europe Region Daily Summary - November 17, 2024

Highlights of the Day

- **Austria & Russia:** Gazprom halts gas deliveries to Vienna in payment dispute on November 16; energy prices to increase
- **Germany:** Cyclists to stage protest at Savignyplatz in Berlin from 17:30 (local time) on November 18; allot for disruptions
- **Germany & Russia:** Scholz urges President Putin to end Ukraine conflict on November 15; likely aimed at boosting SPD's electoral prospects
- **Ukraine:** Russia carries out nationwide air strike, damages energy infrastructure on November 17; attacks on infrastructure to persist

Actionable Items

Germany: Cyclists to stage protest at Savignyplatz in Berlin from 17:30 (local time) on November 18; allot for disruptions

Current Situation - Reports indicate that cyclists will gather for a protest at Savignyplatz in Berlin from 17:30 (local time) on November 18. The demonstration is organized by cycling advocacy groups such as ADFC Berlin, ADFC City West, and Changing Cities. The protest aims to demand safer cycling conditions on Kantstrasse in Charlottenburg and throughout Berlin.

Assessments & Forecast - Based on the organizers' capabilities, coupled with similar demonstrations on the protest issue, the protest is likely to gather a turnout ranging from the mid to high hundreds. Given precedent, coupled with the nature of the protest, it is likely to transpire peacefully and without instances of unrest. Regardless, authorities are likely to deploy a bolstered security presence in the vicinity of Savignyplatz from the evening hours onwards. Localized disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular traffic are anticipated near Savignyplatz from the evening hours onwards.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Berlin on November 18 are advised to allot for travel disruptions in the vicinity of Savignyplatz due to the slated rally from the evening hours onwards.

Source: [Organizer's website](#)

Notable Events

Austria & Russia: Gazprom halts gas deliveries to Vienna in payment dispute on November 16; energy prices to increase

Current Situation - On November 16, Russia's state-owned oil and gas company Gazprom ended gas deliveries to Austria's main oil and gas provider. The decision came after the provider announced that it would stop paying Gazprom to recoup losses incurred during a previous gas shut off, as indicated in the arbitration decision by the International Chamber of Commerce on November 13. Chancellor Karl Nehammer said that Austria's gas storage facilities and supply of alternative fuel is secure and sufficient to last through the winter.

Assessments & Forecast - Despite Nehammer's statement, the abrupt cessation of gas deliveries is liable to strain Austria's energy supplies, especially given that it received 83 percent of its gas supply from Russia as of July 2024. As a result, associated price increases are liable to lead to domestic backlash, with the far-right populist Freiheitliche Partei Österreich (FPÖ) likely to capitalize on public dissatisfaction with rising gas prices. Additionally, Europe's decreasing dependence on Russian energy is liable to impact the Russian economy, as oil and gas exports make up 16 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024.

Source: [Politico](#) / [OMV](#)

Germany & Russia: Scholz urges President Putin to end Ukraine conflict on November 15; likely aimed at boosting SPD's electoral prospects

Current Situation - On November 15, the Kremlin announced that German Chancellor Olaf Scholz telephoned Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed the Ukraine conflict, urging the latter to end the conflict via “lasting” peace negotiations. Scholz also denounced the involvement of North Korean troops as “a major escalation” and stated that Germany would continue supporting Kyiv. While Scholz briefed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky before and after the conversation, Zelensky criticized the call claiming it undermined efforts to isolate Putin.

Assessments & Forecast - The development is highly notable as it marks the first conversation between Scholz and Putin since December 2022. While Scholz has pushed for peace negotiations involving Russia for several months, the call's timing does suggest an attempt to boost domestic support for Scholz's center-left Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) ahead of the February 2025 snap election. This is supported by reports on increasing “war weariness” among the German public. This was also seen in state elections in Brandenburg, Saxony, and Thuringia in September, where the far-right populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and left-wing populist Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW) saw significant gains running on anti-war campaigns.

Source: [Deutsche Welle](#)

Ireland: Russian “spy ship” seen operating near critical undersea cables, per November 14 reports; raises concerns over sabotage

Current Situation - Per November 14 reports, the Russian “spy ship” Yantar was observed operating near undersea communication cables in the Irish Sea, 60 km off Dublin's east coast. Yantar, known for its deep-sea tracking and cable-tapping capabilities, had accompanied the Russian warship Admiral Golovko through the English Channel but broke away and entered the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) on November 13. Monitored by the Irish Naval Service, the Yantar briefly approached key infrastructure before leaving the EEZ.

Assessments & Forecast - This incident underscores the persistent threat of Russian destabilization activities targeting the critical infrastructure of pro-Ukraine countries. Notably, on November 7, Yantar was monitored by Norwegian authorities after observed operating near US-Norwegian military drills. Furthermore, Ireland's strategic geographical position, as a hub for transatlantic telecommunications connecting North America to Europe, makes it a key target for such operations. The incident also raises concerns over sabotage activities targeting undersea infrastructure. Indeed, according to a June 28 Western media report, NATO officials have expressed “strong suspicions” that Russia has mined critical undersea infrastructure of companies running oil and gas rigs, pipelines, and electricity connectors in Europe using explosives.

Source: [RTE](#)

Italy: Violent unrest reported in Turin during nationwide anti-government student protests on November 15; protests to continue

Current Situation - On November 15, “No Meloni Day” student protests were held across Italy, with thousands protesting the government’s education policies and arms sales to Israel. In Turin, clashes with police left 20 officers injured – 15 of whom were hospitalized after exposure to fumes from a makeshift explosive. Protesters used flagpoles to attack police vehicles, and an effigy of Education Minister Giuseppe Valditara was set on fire. Moreover, protesters harassed staff at the Museo Nazionale del Cinema staff and replaced the Italian flag with a Palestinian one.

Assessments & Forecast - The protests highlight the growing risk associated with student and pro-Palestinian protests, in part due to the presence of radical far-left actors. This was also seen on November 13, when pro-Palestinian protesters occupied the premises of an Israeli company in Turin. Further, the unrest reflects elevated anti-authority sentiments among students, raising the threat of targeted attacks on police. These elevated sentiments are unlikely to abate, with coordinated protest actions likely going forward. Such demonstrations will carry an elevated risk for violent unrest, posing a threat to bystanders – as also demonstrated by the harassment of museum staff.

Source: [wwlp](#)

Netherlands: Coalition survives resignation of Finance State Secretary on November 16; ideological divisions continue to hinder governance

Current Situation - On November 16, Prime Minister Dick Schoof announced that the ruling coalition, led by the far-right Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) party, survived a potential collapse after an emergency crisis meeting. The coalition retained its majority despite the November 15 resignation of Nora Achahbar, the State Secretary for Finance and a member of the centrist Nieuw Sociaal Contract (NSC) party. Achahbar cited “polarizing manners” within the cabinet following discussions over the attacks on Israeli soccer fans on November 7 in Amsterdam.

Assessments & Forecast - While the government retained its majority, the development raises concerns over growing political instability. This is supported by disagreements within the coalition over emergency asylum measures proposed by PVV, which nearly led to a government collapse in October. While PVV agreed to scrap the measures after reaching a compromise with its coalition partners, these disagreements highlight fragility within the government due to ideological divisions. Although it is unlikely that the government will collapse in the immediate term, as all parties have shown willingness to work together, these divisions will continue complicating decision-making on contentious policies such as immigration and climate regulations.

Source: [Reuters](#)

UK: Clashes recorded at pro-Palestinian protest against Hillary Clinton in Belfast per November 15 report; threat of unrest to persist

Current Situation - According to November 15 reports, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) launched an investigation into public disorder during a large pro-Palestinian protest at Queen's University Belfast on November 14. The protest was held to denounce a visit by former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was attending an innovation summit. Reports indicate that clashes broke out after protesters attempted to breach security lines. Multiple police officers were injured, as well as three members of university staff. Four individuals have since been charged for resisting arrest, obstruction, and assault. They are due to appear at Belfast Magistrates Court on December 12.

Assessments & Forecast - The unrest highlights the threat of escalating violence at pro-Palestinian demonstrations in the UK. This threat is particularly elevated during student protests, as seen during the mass student encampments regionwide in the spring of 2024, and during visits by high profile politicians and other figures. Moreover, the court hearings in December are likely to trigger additional protest in Belfast. Finally, authorities are likely to increase security at future events involving high-profile figures to prevent further disruptions.

Source: [The Irish Times](#)

Ukraine: Russia carries out nationwide air strike, damages energy infrastructure on November 17; attacks on infrastructure to persist

Current Situation - On November 17, Russia launched 120 missiles and 90 unmanned aerial vehicles across Ukraine, including in Kyiv and Lviv. Authorities indicated that 120 of these were intercepted by air defenses. Seven deaths and multiple injuries were reported in the Lviv, Odesa, Kherson, and Mykolaiv regions. Explosions were heard in nine other regions. The strikes targeted energy infrastructure, damaging thermal power plants, and caused temporary energy blackouts. Russian officials claimed that strikes targeted military-related facilities.

Assessments & Forecast - The strikes reiterate Moscow's ongoing efforts to target critical infrastructure facilities, with Ukraine's largest private energy provider indicating that thermal power plants have been targeted by airstrikes more than 190 times since the beginning of the conflict. Additionally, the strikes on Ukraine's western regions of Lviv and Volyn are notable, as they highlight Moscow's increasing targeting of Ukrainian territory far from front lines. Given that the strikes on these Western regions prompted Polish and allied forces to scramble fighter jets, the incident underscores the heightened risk of spillover violence in countries neighboring Ukraine. Ahead of the winter months, attacks on energy infrastructure are expected to increase in frequency.

Source: [Unian.ua](#)

Other Developments

- On November 17, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, announced that within a few days, Russian diplomats would leave the consulate in Poznan, **Poland**, which will likely be replaced by a Ukrainian consulate. This move is expected to further increase tensions with Russia.
- As per a November 15 report from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 50 percent of Muslims in the **Netherlands** experienced discrimination in 2023. This statistic highlights the need for stronger diversity and inclusion initiatives and stricter enforcement of anti-discrimination measures to mitigate reputational and legal risks.
- On November 17, activists in Novi Sad, **Serbia** protested the November 1 canopy collapse at the Novi Sad station that killed 14 people, blocking the intersection in front of the Railway Station for 12 to 18 hours. The protest highlights growing public frustration with the lack of accountability and concerns over safety and the treatment of demonstrators.

Notable Dates

24 Romania Politics: Presidential elections
NOV

25 Bosnia and Herzegovina Holiday: Statehood Day
NOV

28 Albania Holiday: Independence Day
NOV

29 Albania Holiday: Liberation Day
NOV

30 Romania Holiday: Feast of St. Andrew
NOV

1 Romania Holiday: National Day (Ziua Uniunii)
DEC
