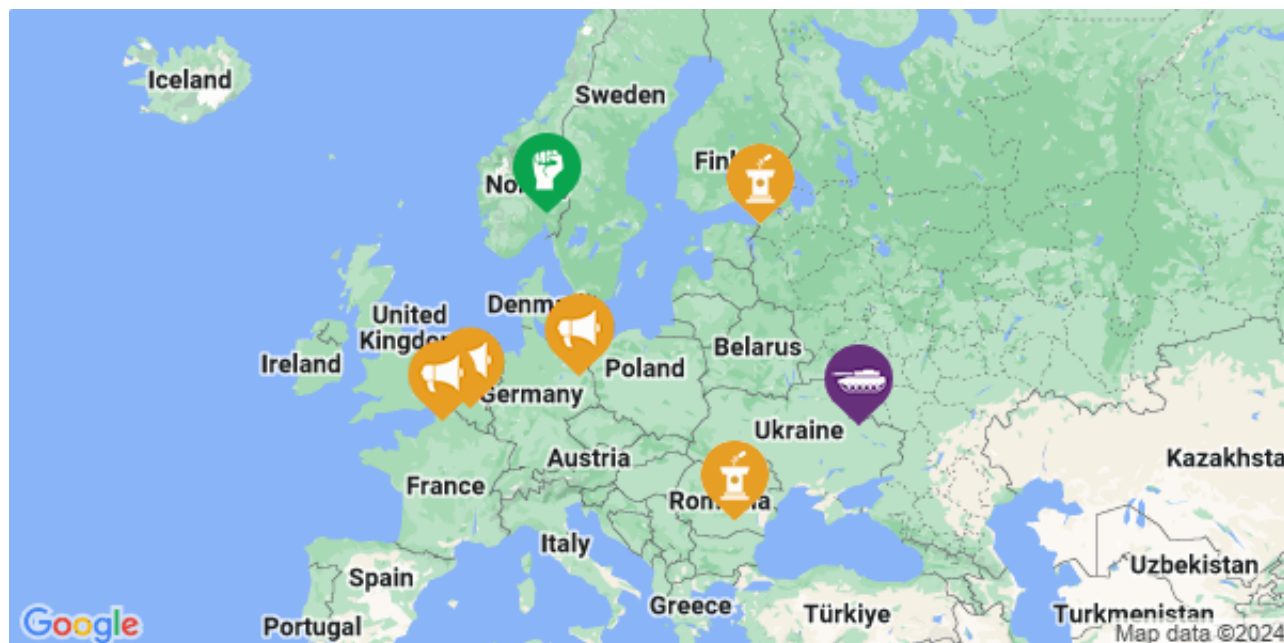


Daily



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MAX - Europe Region Daily Summary - May 26, 2024

Highlights of the Day

- **Belgium:** Dairy farmers to demonstrate at Place du Luxembourg, Brussels at 12:00 (local time) on May 27; maintain heightened vigilance
- **Europe & Russia:** EU denounces Moscow's removal of Estonian buoys marking border on Narva River on May 24; relations to further deteriorate
- **France:** 58 arrested following clashes with police at climate protest in Gennevilliers on May 25; further protest likely in near term
- **Ukraine:** Russian Strike on Kharkiv hardware store kills 14 on May 25; further strikes on Kharkiv civilian areas expected

Actionable Items

Belgium: Dairy farmers to demonstrate at Place du Luxembourg, Brussels at 12:00 (local time) on May 27; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation - Dairy farmers associated with the European Milk Board (EMB) will demonstrate at Place du Luxembourg in Brussels at 12:00 (local time) on May 27. The EMB has not asked farmers to join the demonstration with tractors but stated that the presence of the same cannot be ruled out. It has also requested protesters bring cow statues. Brussels police announced that the protest will lead to traffic disruptions in the Brussels region, especially in the European Quarter, from the morning hours onwards.

Assessments & Forecast - Based on precedent and reports, the protest is expected to witness a turnout in the mid-to-high hundreds. Given heightened sentiments surrounding the protest issue, the demonstration carries a latent potential for unrest in the form of clashes between farmers and the police. As such, a bolstered security presence is expected near Place du Luxembourg. In the event of escalating unrest, authorities are expected to resort to the use of forcible crowd dispersal methods, including conducting arrests. Significant disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular traffic are anticipated in central Brussels from the morning hours, with road closures expected near Place du Luxembourg.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Brussels on May 27 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance due to the latent potential for unrest arising from the slated protest. Allot for associated travel disruptions in central areas from the morning hours onwards.

Germany: Anarchists to protest outside Amtsgericht Tiergarten in Berlin at 12:00 (local time) on May 27; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation - On May 27, activists associated with the Anarchistische Federation will hold a solidarity protest outside Amtsgericht Tiergarten, the district court, in Berlin at 12:00 (local time). The protest is being held to show solidarity with the start of court procedures for two members who were arrested in a tunnel in Berlin-Adlershof on February 16, 2023, on charges of "conspiracy to commit a crime."

Assessments & Forecast - Considering the mobilization capabilities of the organizing group, coupled with social media estimates, the protest is likely to witness a turnout ranging in the low-to-mid hundreds. Given the heightened sentiments over the trial, the protest carries a heightened risk for unrest in the form of clashes between protesters and the police. With that, a bolstered security presence will likely be deployed near Amtsgericht Tiergarten to monitor proceedings. In the event of escalating unrest, authorities are liable to use forcible crowd dispersal methods, including arrests and tear gas. Disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular travel are anticipated near the protest location during the afternoon hours.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Berlin on May 27 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance near Amtsgericht Tiergarten due to the potential for unrest. Allot for disruptions to traffic near the protest location during the afternoon hours.

Norway: Unionized police personnel, educational workers to stage nationwide strike on May 27; allot for disruptions

Current Situation - Reports indicate that police personnel and education workers associated with the union UnioNorge will stage a nationwide strike on May 27. The strike is being organized to demand improvements in wages. Media reports indicate that around 1,600 employees will participate in the strike.

Assessments & Forecast - Given the mobilizational capabilities of the organizing union, the nationwide strike is expected to be widely adhered to. As such, disruptions to police services and educational services are expected throughout the duration of the strike. However, emergency police services are unlikely to be affected. While no associated protests have been announced, there is a latent potential for pickets outside the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and Ministry of Education and Research in Oslo. Such protests are expected to transpire largely peacefully, without any instances of unrest. Protests are likely to see turnouts in the high dozens to low hundreds.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Norway on May 27 are advised to allot for disruptions to public educational services and police services due to the slated labor action.

Notable Events

Europe: Clashes between rival fans recorded in France, Germany on May 24-25; raises concerns over hooliganism ahead of UEFA Euro 2024

Current Situation - On May 24, in Pas-de-Calais, France, clashes occurred after rival football fans arrived at the same toll booth. 20 people sustained minor injuries and one bus was set on fire. The same day, outside the Uber Arena in Berlin, Germany, Turkish fans attacked Greek fans. On May 25, clashes were reported at Prenzlauer Allee S-Bahn station in Berlin after 100 masked individuals armed with baseball bats attacked Greek basketball fans. 12 people were injured – three seriously and one critically.

Assessments & Forecast - The developments point to the continued threat of violent unrest at various sports events, with instances of hooliganism recorded in multiple countries both in Eastern and Western Europe in recent weeks. The incident at the S-Bahn station also indicates the threat of premeditated attacks targeting rival groups, given that the assailants were masked and armed. Moreover, the clashes at the Uber Arena highlight how underlying ethnic and/or political tensions can escalate sports-related unrest.

Further, the public nature of the incidents highlights the persistent threat posed to bystanders and raises concerns over the security landscape ahead of the UEFA Europe 2024 tournament in Germany.

Europe & Russia: EU denounces Moscow's removal of Estonian buoys marking border on Narva River on May 24; relations to further deteriorate

Current Situation - On May 24, the EU denounced Russia's removal of 24 buoys that marked the border with Estonia on the Narva River. Josep Borrell, the EU's top diplomat, said the incident is "part of a broader pattern of hybrid actions by Russia, including on its maritime and land borders in the Baltic Sea region." Since 2023, Russia has opposed the positions of Estonian buoys, which both Tallinn and Moscow place to mark the border along the river each spring. In 2024, Russia opposed the locations of half of Estonia's 250 border buoys.

Assessments & Forecast - Considering that Moscow has yet to respond, it is unlikely to take responsibility for the incident, instead claiming that Tallinn is not upholding international law given its opposition to the buoys' placements. This will further deteriorate relations between Moscow and Tallinn, as well as Latvia and Lithuania. It also raises concerns over similar Russian provocations on the borders of the Baltic states, as well as with Finland and Sweden's Gotland. With that, NATO is liable to further expand its military presence in the Baltic Sea region as a deterrent.

France: 58 arrested following clashes with police at climate protest in Gennevilliers on May 25; further protest likely in near term

Current Situation - On May 24-26, climate activist groups, including Soulevement de la Terre and Extinction Rebellion (XR), called for protests against the construction of a logistics warehouse in Gennevilliers, a Paris suburb. On May 25, clashes between police and protestors occurred at a protest march by climate activists held from Gennevilliers to l'Île-Saint-Denis. Police used tear gas, flash balls, and blast balls to disperse protesters. No injuries were reported, with 58 activists arrested as of writing.

Assessments & Forecast - The development is likely to raise already heightened concerns regarding the overuse of force by French police during protests and may also lead to allegations of police brutality. This is also supported by similar allegations against police following the removal of pro-Palestinian student encampments at Sorbonne University in Paris on April 29. Given this, coupled with the arrest of 58 people, calls for protests by left-wing and climate associations are expected in the coming days and weeks in solidarity with the arrestees. Such protests are likely to focus on factories or logistic warehouses previously targeted by climate groups, including in Gennevilliers, and carry a

risk of similar unrest.

Romania & Russia: Bucharest expels Russian diplomat, arrests citizen for spying for Moscow on May 24; tit-for-tat expulsions likely

Current situation - On May 24, the Romanian government announced the expulsion of an unnamed Russian diplomat and the arrest of Romanian national Dorin Alexandru Pisan, on charges of espionage for Russia. According to the Romanian government, Pisan is accused of collecting military information on Romanian and/or NATO military objectives located near the municipality of Tulcea for the Russian Embassy in Bucharest since 2022. In response, Russia threatened retaliatory measures.

Assessments & Forecast - The incident reiterates the elevated threat of Russian espionage targeting Ukraine's Western allies due to their sustained aid and cooperation with Kyiv amid the ongoing conflict. This is supported by the May 21 arrest of nine individuals in Poland over an alleged Russian sabotage plot. The development also points to EU and NATO members' heightened intelligence efforts aimed at detecting Russian espionage networks, with further arrests likely amid continued intelligence sharing. Considering Moscow's statements, tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions are highly likely in the immediate term - as evidenced by similar measures taken against other countries expelling Russian diplomats. Further, destabilization campaigns targeting Bucharest are likely to intensify amid increasing tensions, including cyberattacks and disinformation.

Ukraine: Russian Strike on Kharkiv hardware store kills 14 on May 25; further strikes on Kharkiv civilian areas expected

Current Situation - On May 25, during the afternoon hours (local time), a Russian strike using two guided bombs targeted a large hardware store in residential Kharkiv, killing 14 people and wounding dozens more, according to Ukrainian officials. Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov condemned the attack as terrorism, noting that about 120 people were in the store at the time of the strike.

Assessments & Forecast - The timing and target of the attack suggest a deliberate strategy by Russia to exert maximum pressure on Ukraine by targeting civilian-populated areas. This tactic aims to exploit Ukraine's lack of comprehensive air defenses and force a Ukrainian withdrawal from Kharkiv. This pattern of targeting civilian infrastructure has been observed in other cities like Bakhmut and Mariupol, suggesting Russia will continue targeting civilian areas in Kharkiv. Zelenskiy's appeal for increased air defenses is likely to resonate with Western allies, potentially leading to enhanced support for Ukraine. This could hinder Russia's ability to conduct future strikes. Moreover, the arrival of US aid is expected to further challenge Russia's control of airspace over Ukraine and impact the

security of bordering Russian cities like Belgorod.

Other Developments

- In **Austria**, climate activists associated with Letzte Generation disrupted Governor of Upper Austria Thomas Stelzer's speech at the inauguration of a flood-protection project on May 25. Similar disruptive protests, including targeting political officials, are expected going forward.
- In Gottingen, Lower Saxony, **Germany**, a Die Gronen parliamentary group member, Marie Kollenrott, was physically assaulted at a campaign event on May 25. This incident highlights the threat of political violence in Germany ahead of the European Parliament elections.
- In Galatsi, **Greece**, unknown assailants threw Molotov cocktails at a metro construction site on May 25, damaging machinery. Given the target and modus operandi, anarchist actors likely carried out the attack, given opposition to such projects.

Notable Dates

1 AUG	Switzerland Holiday: National Day
2 AUG	North Macedonia: Republic Day
4 AUG	Iceland Holiday: Commerce Day
4 AUG	UK Holiday: Summer Bank Holiday
5 AUG	Croatia Holiday: Victory and Thanksgiving Day
15 AUG	Europe Holiday: Assumption Day