



## Daily



**08**  
DEC  
14:57 UTC

## MAX - Europe Region Daily Summary - December 8, 2024

### Highlights of the Day

- **Europe:** Farmers to hold protests in several countries on December 9-11; maintain heightened vigilance
- **Greece:** Unrest, arrests recorded at far-left protests in Athens, Thessaloniki on December 6; anti-police protests possible in coming days
- **Moldova:** Government to request state of emergency due to power supply crisis starting December 16; power supply disruptions anticipated
- **Ukraine:** Kyiv announces domestic long-range weapons amid reports of UAV strikes, sabotage on December 6; strikes on supply lines to continue

### Actionable Items

**Europe: Alerts for inclement weather issued in multiple countries through December 9; remain cognizant of authorities' updates**

**Current Situation** - Meteoalarm, Europe's regional weather service, has issued red and orange alerts, the highest and second-highest levels on a three-tier scale, in multiple countries through December 9. In Croatia, red alerts for heavy wind are in place in the Kvarner i Kvarneric coastal region, with orange alerts for wind in effect in other coastal regions. In Italy, orange alerts for heavy wind have been issued nationwide through December 9. Moreover, in parts of the northern regions of Spain, red alerts for heavy snowfall, coupled with orange alerts for a coastal event along the northern coastline, are in effect through December 9. Separately, severe weather warnings are in place until the evening hours (local time) of December 8 in parts of Ireland and the UK due to the passage of Storm Darragh. In Ireland, two individuals have died due to the storm as of writing, with hundreds of thousands reporting power outages nationwide. Significant disruptions to public transportation are ongoing in the west and northwestern regions of Ireland. Travel disruptions are also ongoing in Northern Ireland (NI) as of December 8.

**Recommendations** - Those operating or residing in the aforementioned countries in Europe on December 8-9 are advised to remain cognizant of the authorities' updates regarding weather-related risks.

Source: [Meteoalarm](#) / [BBC](#) / [Sky News](#)

### **Europe: Farmers to hold protests in several countries on December 9-11; maintain heightened vigilance**

**Current Situation** - Reports indicate that farmers will protest in several countries from December 9 to 11. The protests are held to denounce the proposed free trade agreement between the EU and Mercosur countries. In France, nationwide protests will take place from December 9-10. In Poland, farmers will block roads in southeastern Poland near the border to Ukraine on December 10. Exact protest locations have yet to be announced. In the UK, farmers will hold a protest using tractors at Whitehall in London, at 10:00 (local time) on December 11.

**Assessments & Forecast** - Based on past farmers' protests, the protests are expected to witness turnouts in the low to high hundreds each, with protests in London and Paris likely garnering higher attendance. Given that farmers in the UK have announced plans to deploy tractors during the protests, coupled with Polish farmers announcing road blockades, the protests carry a latent potential for unrest, including clashes between farmers, police, and disgruntled commuters. Similar tactics are expected in France. A bolstered security deployment is likely near the planned protest locations. Significant disruptions to travel are likely.

**Recommendations** - Those operating or residing in France, Poland, and the UK on December 9-11 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance near any planned or spontaneous farmers' protests due to the potential for unrest. Allot for associated disruptions to travel near all protests.

Source: [Francebleu/ Topagrar/ X/Twitter](#)

## **Italy: Unionized freight, rail workers to hold labor actions on December 9-11; allot for disruptions**

**Current Situation** - Unionized freight transport workers will stage a 48-hour nationwide strike from 09:00 (local time) on December 9 through December 11. Multiple trade unions, including Federazione Italiana Lavoratori Trasporti (FILT) and Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (CISL), support the strike. The purpose of the action is to push for progress in negotiations over the renewal of the National Collective Labor Agreement for Logistics, Freight Transport, and Shipping, which expired in March 2024. Separately, unionized rail workers will hold an eight-hour strike across the Emilia-Romagna region starting at 09:00 on December 9.

**Assessments & Forecast** - Given precedent and the mobilizational capabilities of the unions involved, the labor actions are anticipated to be widely adhered to. Rail services in Emilia-Romagna are expected to face significant disruptions, resulting in increased demand for alternative public transportation options. Given that freight workers are striking, temporary disruptions to supply chains nationwide can be anticipated. Although no associated protests have been announced, striking workers are likely to hold peaceful protests near transport hubs and government buildings in urban centers.

**Recommendations** - Those operating or residing in Italy on December 9-11 are advised to allot for temporary disruptions to supply chains nationwide due to the slated labor action. Those operating in Emilia-Romagna on December 9 are advised to allot for disruptions to travel due to the slated rail strike.

Source: [Ministero delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti](#)

## **Netherlands: Temporary border control measures to be enacted from December 9; remain cognizant of authorities' updates**

**Current Situation** - On December 9, the Ministry of Asylum and Migration will temporarily reinstate border controls with Belgium and Germany until June 8, 2025. The measures aim to tackle irregular migration and human trafficking. Due to limited resources, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee will only be able to deploy up to 50 officers at border locations, meaning checks will only be able to be held at five border crossings simultaneously. Patrols will focus on major border crossings, with spot checks on selected vehicles, international trains, and flights. Officials have warned some delays may occur.

**Assessments & Forecast** - The decision to expand border control measures, implemented by the right-wing anti-immigration Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) party, underscores a shift towards stricter immigration policies. Nonetheless, given the limited resources, disruptions at borders are unlikely to be significant - especially given that the Netherlands has more than 800 border crossings. That said, disruptions, especially longer processing times for non-EU nationals, are still possible. Moreover, as border checks will impact cargo transport across land borders, this raises the potential for supply chain disruptions in various sectors.

**Recommendations** - Those intending to travel to or from the Netherlands from December 9 and in the coming six months are advised to remain cognizant of authorities' updates regarding border checks and entry restrictions. Ensure photo identification and a copy of travel plans are readily accessible.

Source: [Marechaussee](#)

### **Spain: Protest in support of fishing sector slated near European Commission headquarters in Madrid on December 9-10; allot for disruptions**

**Current Situation** - Activists associated with the civil society group Federacion Nacional de Cofradias de Pescadores will hold a protest in support of the fishing sector in front of the European Commission headquarters in Madrid at 13:00 (local time) on December 9-10. The protest is being organized to denounce the EU's decision to reduce fishing days by 66 percent, allowing only 26 days per year per boat.

**Assessments & Forecast** - Based on the mobilizational capabilities of the organizer, the protest is likely to attract a turnout in the low hundreds. Considering the nature of the protest issue, the protest is likely to transpire largely peacefully. Regardless, a bolstered police presence is expected to be deployed near the European Commission headquarters in Madrid to monitor proceedings. Disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular movement should also be anticipated in the vicinity of the protest location during the afternoon hours.

**Recommendations** - Those operating or residing in Madrid on December 9-10 are advised to allot for disruptions to travel near the European Commission headquarters during the afternoon hours due to the slated protests.

Source: [Facebook](#)

## **Notable Events**

### **Greece: Unrest, arrests recorded at far-left protests in Athens, Thessaloniki on December 6; anti-police protests possible in coming days**

**Current Situation** - On December 6, clashes broke out between protesters and police in Athens and in Thessaloniki following commemorative protests marking the 16th anniversary of Alexis Grigoropoulos' death in Athens' Exarchia neighborhood in 2008. In Athens, some 5,000 police were deployed across the city ahead of the protest. In both cities, protesters threw Molotov cocktails and stones at riot police, prompting authorities to use tear gas and stun grenades. Elevated levels of unrest were reported in Exarchia. In Thessaloniki, 70 protesters were arrested, while in Athens, 36 individuals were preventively detained ahead of the march.

**Assessments & Forecast** - The unrest was largely anticipated considering the heightened sentiments, as evidenced by the deployment of 5,000 police in Athens. Moreover, the elevated levels of unrest in Exarchia align with previous years, including in 2023. This is largely due to the neighborhood's profile as a hub for anarchist and far-left activity in Athens. The preventative detentions and arrests also raise concerns over far-left protests denouncing alleged police brutality in the immediate term. Consequently, authorities are expected to maintain heightened security measures in the vicinity of Exarchia in the coming days.

Source: [tovima](#)

**Moldova: Government to request state of emergency due to power supply crisis starting December 16; power supply disruptions anticipated**

**Current Situation** - On December 5, President Maia Sandu dismissed Energy Minister Victor Parlicov for not adequately addressing the energy crisis. Prime Minister Dorin Recean also called for the resignation of two other senior energy officials. Moreover, the government plans to ask the parliament to enact a state of emergency starting December 16 due to Ukraine's decision to end its gas transit agreement with Russia after December 31.

**Assessments & Forecast** - With Ukraine's gas transit agreement with Russia expiring, Moldova is at the risk of gas shortages, potentially leading to rolling blackouts and disruptions to electricity supply. Indeed, Moldova is especially at risk, given that most of its energy is transported via Transnistria - which depends on Russian gas. The government's request for a state of emergency is expected to result in measures such as energy rationing, restrictions on electricity exports, and prioritization of power for essential services. While Chisinau is expected to turn to the EU for energy, the lack of stable energy supply is likely to cause severe disruptions, leaving many households without heating during the winter months and exacerbating the impact on businesses and the population.

Source: [reuters](#)

**Poland: Three Ukrainians targeted in xenophobic attack in Gdansk, per December 6 reports; underscores growing trend of xenophobic assault**

**Current Situation** - As per December 6 reports, a 42-year-old individual was arrested on December 3 for assaulting three Ukrainians at a store in the Jelitkowo district of Gdansk. The assailant struck one victim and spat on and verbally abused the others, making xenophobic remarks. He later returned to the store to continue the harassment and damaged the victims' vehicle. The assailant has been charged with xenophobic insults, threats, and property damage, with a potential sentence of up to five years.

**Assessments & Forecast** - The recent incident reflects the growing trend

of xenophobia, particularly against Ukrainians, in Poland. This is highlighted by an increase in hate crimes, with 59 cases of violence or threats against Ukrainians recorded between January and August 2023. The potential for physical violence is evident in the above incident, as well as in the September 2023 incident in Zyrardow, when a group of 30 individuals attacked Ukrainians at a workers' hostel, engaging in physical violence and vandalism. Considering reported 'war fatigue' among local populations, including in Germany and Poland, anti-Ukraine sentiments are unlikely to abate, with targeted physical and verbal assaults likely going forward.

Source: [wyborcza](#)

### **Poland & Russia: Kremlin announces closure of Polish consulate in St Petersburg on December 5; similar tit-for-tat retaliation to persist**

**Current Situation** - On December 5, Russia's Foreign Ministry announced the closure of the Polish consulate in St. Petersburg and declared three diplomats operating at the consulate as personae non gratae. The ministry attributed the move as a response to Poland's November 30 closure of the Russian consulate in Poznan for alleged hybrid warfare attempts, including sabotage. The Polish consulate in St. Petersburg has been officially instructed to terminate operations by January 10, 2025, with the diplomats also ordered to leave Russia by the same date.

**Assessments & Forecast** - Given Moscow had warned the closure of the Poznan consulate would elicit a "painful response," the above was largely expected and reiterates the tit-for-tat diplomatic measures adopted by the Kremlin and the West, including Poland. Nonetheless, the announcement is liable to exacerbate already heightened Poland-Russia bilateral tensions. Further, as the closure limits operational Polish diplomatic missions in Russia to the Embassy in Moscow and two consulates in Irkutsk and Kaliningrad, the development is anticipated to hinder consular services available to Polish nationals within Russia from January. Similar restrictions and diplomatic expulsions targeting countries Russia perceives as "hostile" will persist.

Source: [Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

### **UK: Authorities confirm closure of 261 County Lines in England, Wales on December 6; increasingly localized drug trafficking expected**

**Current Situation** - On December 6, authorities confirmed that police arrested 1,660 criminals and closed down 261 County Lines used for drug trafficking in England and Wales between November 25 and December 2. During the operation, police seized 557 weapons, including 75 firearms and 377 bladed weapons, three million GBP worth of drugs and two million GBP in cash. Authorities safeguarded 1,434 people, nearly half of whom are children, and visited 853 addresses used by gangs in a practice called "cuckooing," where criminals exploit vulnerable individuals' homes as drug trafficking bases.

**Assessments & Forecast** – The operation reflects the continued crackdown on county lines, which authorities consider one of “the most violent and exploitative models of drug supply.” This is in part due to the exploitation of children by gangs, with figures from the National Crime Agency’s County Lines Bulletin indicating the involvement of 2,888 children in county lines between April 2023 and March 2024. With county lines estimated at 5,500-6,500, large-scale police operations are expected in the coming months. Nonetheless, given reports that gangs are utilizing localized county lines to limit police detection, drug trafficking will not abate.

Source: [NPCC](#)

### **Ukraine: Kyiv announces domestic long-range weapons amid reports of UAV strikes, sabotage on December 6; strikes on supply lines to continue**

**Current Situation** – On December 6, President Volodymyr Zelensky announced the delivery of Ukraine’s first domestically developed “rocket drones” to the Ukrainian military. The weapon, called Peklo, has a range of 700 kilometers, more than twice that of Western-supplied missiles. On the same day, Russian aerial and naval defenses intercepted Ukrainian strikes targeting the Zalyv shipyard and the Kerch Strait bridge, which connects Crimea to mainland Russia. Additionally, the Ukrainian ATESH partisan group reportedly carried out a sabotage operation disrupting a railway carrying supplies from Moscow to the Kursk front lines.

**Assessments & Forecast** – The introduction of Ukraine’s new “Peklo” weapon underscores Kyiv’s strategic focus on enhancing its long-range strike potential, with Zelensky confirming its successful use on five occasions. Furthermore, the targeting of the Zalyv shipyard and the Kerch Strait bridge underline ongoing Ukrainian efforts to disrupt military operations and supply lines to Crimea amid reports that Russia has ramped up defensive preparations in the region. Combined with sabotage operations conducted by partisan groups such as ATESH, further such attacks targeting supplies of fuel, military equipment, and medical supplies lines are likely to destabilize Russian front-line logistics.

Source: [KyivPost](#)

## **Other Developments**

- On December 4, during the first sitting of **Bulgaria’s** 51st National Assembly, elected on October 27, lawmakers failed to elect a speaker. This development underscores the ongoing instability and polarization within the assembly, raising concerns about a prolonged political stalemate.
- On December 6, the far-left populist political party Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht – Für Vernunft und Gerechtigkeit (BSW) approved the coalition agreement negotiated with the center-left Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) in Brandenburg state in **Germany**. This is likely to raise concerns over the growing influence of populist parties in state and federal politics.
- As of December 5, **Iceland** has authorized whale hunting for the next five years. This decision is

expected to trigger protests from ecological activists across Europe, potentially employing disruptive tactics such as sit-ins, road blockades, and picketing.

- Per December 5 reports, hundreds of illegal migrants have been detained in Northern Ireland, attempting to enter the **UK** from **Ireland**. Media reports claim criminal gangs are promoting this option as a safer alternative to crossing the Channel from France. This development underscores persistent concerns about illegal immigration and the exploitation of the Ireland-UK border by smuggling networks.



## Notable Dates

**24** Europe Holiday: Christmas Eve  
DEC

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**25** Europe Holiday: Christmas Day  
DEC

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**26** Europe Holiday: Second day of Christmas  
DEC

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**31** Europe Holiday: New Year's Eve  
DEC

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**1** Europe Holiday: New Year's Day  
JAN

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