

# EURASIA DIGEST

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## **Germany's Scholz Spoke With Putin For First Time In 2 Years**

President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz spoke over the phone on 15 November. Scholz said he was interested in talking with Putin about possible solutions to end the war in Ukraine, which is nearing the three-year mark. The two heads of state last spoke in December 2022 when the German Chancellor urged Putin to withdraw his troops from Ukraine.

## **Russia Lowered Threshold For Using Nuclear Weapons In Updated Doctrine**

President Vladimir Putin approved changes to Russia's nuclear doctrine on 19 November, expanding conditions under which nuclear weapons could be used, including in cases of attacks by non-nuclear states supported by nuclear powers. The doctrine identifies threats such as "the deployment by a potential adversary of missile defence systems, medium and short-range ballistic missiles, precision non-nuclear and hypersonic weapons, strike drones and directed energy weapons" as grounds for potential nuclear retaliation.

## **Russia Fired Experimental Hypersonic Missile At Ukraine In Response To Western Long-Range Missiles**

President Vladimir Putin said, on 21 November, that Russia had launched an experimental hypersonic ballistic missile, "Oreshnik", at Ukraine in response to Kyiv being permitted to strike Russia with US and British long-range missiles. Putin emphasised that combat testing of the Oreshnik missile system was done directly in response to "NATO's aggressive actions against Russia," saying that Russia was

"justified in using weapons against military targets in those countries that allow their weapons to be used against our facilities."

## **Turkey Sought To Increase Trade With Russia**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said, on 24 November, that he wants to expand trade between Ankara and Moscow. While swiftly condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Turkey had declared a neutral stance in the war and has not match Western sanctions imposed on Moscow. Erdogan has justified the position due to Turkey's reliance on Russian oil and gas.

## **Kremlin Said Migrants Essential To Counter Russia's Labour Shortage**

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, on 22 November, that Russia needs migrants to address its declining domestic workforce. He stated "we live in the largest country in the world, but there aren't that many of us" adding that labour migration is vital for economic development. Anti-migrant sentiment is widespread in Russia, particularly against labourers from Central Asia, who fill crucial roles in sectors like construction and agriculture. In 2023, Russia's fertility rate was estimated at 1.41 births per woman, far below the 2.0 replacement level, according to the state statistics agency Rosstat.

## **Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan And China Established Joint Cargo Terminal In Baku**

On 12 November, Azerbaijan, China, and Kazakhstan signed an agreement to establish an intermodal cargo terminal at the Alyat seaport in Azerbaijan. The project aims to enhance Kazakhstan's integration into international transportation routes. It

will increase container train volumes along the China-Europe-China route via the Transcaspian International Trade Route, reducing delivery times, transportation costs and trans-shipment delays.

### **Kazakhstan, Hungary And China Established Cargo Terminal In Budapest**

On 20 November, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ), L.A.C. Holding (Hungary) and Xi'an Free Trade Port Construction and Operation Co. (China) signed a memorandum of cooperation to establish a joint inter-modal cargo terminal in Budapest. The terminal will enhance multimodal transportation in Europe with an annual capacity of 2,30,000 TEU. It aims to boost container train traffic between China and Europe, particularly along the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), and is expected to reduce delivery times and transportation costs.

### **Iran-Azerbaijan Held Araz-2024 Tactical Exercises**

On 25 November, special forces of the Azerbaijani Army's Ground Forces and Ground Forces of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) participated in a joint tactical exercise Araz-2024 in Iran's Ardabil province. The exercises included precision strike practices, reconnaissance and using UAVs.

### **Polish President Visited Azerbaijan**

On 26 November, Poland's President Andrzej Duda visited Yerevan to meet with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The two leaders highlighted the deepening of ties between Armenia and Poland and discussed developing political, economic, tourism, cultural and humanitarian cooperation. The

Polish President stressed that bringing Armenia closer to the European community was of great importance under Poland's presidency of the EU Council.

### **India-Italy Unveiled Joint Strategic Action Plan (2025-29)**

On 18 November, PM Modi and Italian PM Meloni unveiled the Joint Strategic Action Plan (2025-29) at a meeting on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. India and Italy will boost collaboration on maritime infrastructure for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) and work on negotiating a defence industrial roadmap. The plan also focuses on joint initiatives in areas such as connectivity, defence, emerging technologies and clean energy.

### **India-EU Held Review Meeting**

On 22 November, India and the EU held a review meeting in Brussels to strengthen cooperation and reaffirm their commitment to the Indo-Pacific. The meeting assessed the implementation of the detailed commitments set out in the 'India-EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025' agreed upon during the 15<sup>th</sup> India-EU Summit in 2020.

### **European Parliament Approved Von der Leyen II Commission**

On 27 November, six months after the European elections, the new EU commission was approved. 27 Members of the European Parliament were authorised to work with its President, Ursula Von der Leyen. The delay was mainly due to political infighting among the bloc's left and right-wing groups. The new commission will start working on 1 December and will continue for the next five years.