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## MAX - Europe Region Daily Summary - July 3, 2024

### Highlights of the Day

- **Germany:** Multiple explosions recorded in Cologne, Engelskirchen, NRW per July 1 reports; to increase concerns over insecurity
- **Netherlands:** Four-party coalition cabinet led by Dick Schoof sworn in on July 2; political instability anticipated to persist
- **UK:** Nationwide polling for general elections slated from 07:00-22:00 (local time) on July 4; remain cognizant of updates
- **Ukraine:** US Presidential candidate Trump suggests ceding territory to Russia, per July 3 reports; political changes in West to impact aid

### Actionable Items

**France:** Anti-far-right protest to be held at Place de la Republique in Paris at 18:00 (local time) on July 3; maintain heightened vigilance

**Current Situation** - A protest against the far-right Rassemblement National (RN) party is slated to be held at Place de la Republique in Paris at 18:00 (local time) on July 3. Several

civilian associations, independent media groups, rights associations, and trade unions, including the Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT) union, will participate in the demonstration.

**Assessments & Forecast** - The slated protest is expected to attract a large turnout, potentially ranging from the mid-tens of thousands to low hundreds of thousands. Similar protests are expected before the second round of general elections on July 7. Given the likely participation of far-left activists and previous unrest at anti-RN protests, the slated protest carries an elevated potential for unrest. Such unrest is likely to manifest as clashes between demonstrators and police, and with possible far-right counter protesters. In the event of unrest, authorities are liable to use tear gas, water cannons, and carry out mass arrests. Severe disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular traffic are anticipated around Place de la Republique and in central Paris, with likely road closures and public transport detours.

**Recommendations** - Those operating or residing in Paris on July 3 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of Place de la Republique due to the potential for unrest at the slated protest. Allot for associated travel disruptions near the protest from the evening hours onwards.

**Germany: WWII-era bomb defusal operation scheduled on Paul-Denis Strasse in Mainz on July 4; allot for disruptions**

**Current Situation** - Security operations to defuse a WWII-era aerial bomb, weighing 500 kg, will take place near on Paul-Denis-Strasse in the Hartenberg-Munchfeld district of Mainz on July 4 after it was discovered on July 2. Authorities have determined the precise evacuation zone, establishing a safety area of approximately 500 meters around the bomb's location, closing several roads. The public must evacuate the safety area by 09:00 (local time) on July 4. The exact timing of the defusal operation is unconfirmed, as of writing. The evacuation will impact the Bruchwegstadion, Goetheplatz Park, and the commercial areas surrounding the Mainz rail station. Public transport will also be affected, including rail services at the Mainz Station, as the tracks are included in the safety zone. Trams and buses will be affected due to the closure of streets.

**Recommendations** - Those operating or residing in Mainz on July 4 are advised to allot for travel-related disruptions near Paul-Denis-Strasse due to the planned security operations. Remain cognizant of authorities' updates regarding evacuation orders in the area.

## **UK: Nationwide polling for general elections slated from 07:00-22:00 (local time) on July 4; remain cognizant of updates**

**Current Situation** - [Nationwide polling for general elections](#) will be held from 07:00-22:00 (local time) on July 4. The elections will be held across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. While exit polls will be available by 22:00 on July 4, official results are estimated to be published by the early morning hours of July 5. According to latest opinion polls, the Keir Starmer-led center-left Labour Party is leading with a 20 percent margin, followed by the incumbent center-right Conservatives (Tories), led by PM Rishi Sunak.

**Assessments & Forecast** - Given precedent, election day is expected to remain predominantly peaceful. Political campaigns, demonstrations, and gatherings by supporters of political parties are liable to occur near polling booths, public spaces, and outside government buildings nationwide. Gatherings are liable to attract attendance in the high dozens to high hundreds and transpire largely peacefully, with the largest turnouts expected in major cities like London. Travel disruptions are likely to occur nationwide due to implemented security measures and potential demonstrations. Security cordons and pre-emptive road closures or diversions are likely to be set up to support the voting process.

**Recommendations** - Those operating or residing in the UK on July 4 are advised to remain cognizant of updates regarding traffic and security measures in relation to the polling. Allot for travel-related disruptions near all polling stations and associated roadblocks, as well as potential protests.

## **Notable Events**

### **Denmark: Police discover one tonne of explosives following explosion in Korsor on July 2; raises concerns over trade of hazardous material**

**Current Situation** - On July 2, police confirmed the discovery of nearly one tonne of explosives and chemicals at a residence in Korsor, Slagelse municipality, Zealand, following a large explosion. The resident was killed, while some 140 people in the area were temporarily evacuated. Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish security forces were involved in the operations. Preliminary investigations suggest the blast was accidental, likely linked to unauthorized fireworks manufacturing.

**Assessments & Forecast** - While preliminary investigations suggest the explosion was accidental, the discovery of nearly a tonne of explosives and chemicals, raises concerns over the possible illicit trade of hazardous materials. This is especially so given that Denmark remains a transit point for illicit goods in Europe. Indeed, criminal groups in neighboring countries are known to use incendiary devices, including fireworks, in

carrying out criminal activities such as ATM explosions, which are common in Germany and the Netherlands. The explosion itself is also highly notable, given that Korsor has low crime rates. Given this, while investigations are ongoing, the explosion was likely isolated and does not indicate any shift in the security landscape.

### **Germany: Multiple explosions recorded in Cologne, Engelskirchen, NRW per July 1 reports; to increase concerns over insecurity**

**Current Situation** - On July 1, at 05:00 (local time) an explosion was reported in the entrance area of an apartment building in Engelskirchen-Loope, North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). Police believe this is connected to three explosions recorded on June 29 and June 30 at residential buildings in Cologne-Mulheim. The detonations were carried out using pyrotechnic devices and resulted in property damage, with no injuries reported.

**Assessments & Forecast** - Considering police statements, a criminal link cannot be ruled out - especially as such explosions are often used for extortion or intimidation purposes. However, considering explosions are uncommon compared to neighboring Belgium or the Netherlands, a militant far-right motive is also possible. This is supported by one explosion taking place on Keupstrasse, an area with a large Turkish community, where a neo-Nazi nail bomb attack occurred in June 2004. Amid growing far-right and anti-migrant sentiments, concerns over insecurity are expected to increase, with authorities liable to bolster security measures in affected areas in the immediate term. However, the possibility of a mass casualty far-right terror attack manifesting remains limited, with most far-right activity manifesting as protests and incidents of threats or intimidation.

### **Germany: Two arrested after one killed in stabbing attack at Kottbusser Tor, Berlin, per July 1 report; reiterates threat of knife crime**

**Current Situation** - As per July 1 reports, two suspects, aged 18 and 23, were arrested for fatally stabbing a 26-year-old man at the Kottbusser Tor metro station in Berlin on June 22. While police are yet to confirm the suspects' motive, local media reports indicate the incident is linked to a dispute between drug trafficking networks. The 23-year-old suspect was reportedly arrested when the police were questioning members of a group suspected of engaging in drug trafficking.

**Assessments & Forecast** - Reports indicating the attack was linked to a drug trafficking-related dispute are likely credible, as Kottbusser station is a known hub for drug dealers. While the latest attack was targeted in nature, such drug gang-related violence can pose risks to bystanders when they occur in crowded public locations, such as metro stations. Moreover, the incident will raise concerns about the threat of knife crime in Berlin, with 3,482 cases reported in the city in 2023. Given this, authorities are likely to maintain

bolstered security measures near crime-prone areas in Berlin, with Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG), the city's transport company, announcing such measures to curb drug-related crime in May.

### **Netherlands: Four-party coalition cabinet led by Dick Schoof sworn in on July 2; political instability anticipated to persist**

**Current Situation** - On July 2, the new cabinet, led by non-partisan Prime Minister Dick Schoof, was sworn in following seven months of negotiations. This four-party coalition consisting of the right-wing Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV), center-right Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD) and Nieuw Sociaal Contract (NSC), and agrarian BoerBurgerBeweging (BBB). Schoof, former head of the Dutch national intelligence agency, was reportedly picked by the PVV, which also holds asylum, infrastructure, and healthcare portfolios. The VVD holds finance and defense, the NSC manages foreign affairs, and the BBB handles housing and agriculture.

**Assessments & Forecast** - Despite the new government, concerns over political instability are anticipated to persist, amid reports of continued inter-coalition tensions over key ideological and policy issues, including finance. Indeed, appointing a non-partisan PM further reflects the entrenched distrust among coalition partners, contributing to protracted government negotiations. Additionally, the coalition lacks a majority in the Senate, the upper house, posing further challenges in passing key legislation. With the PVV, known for its anti-Islam and anti-immigrant stances, holding the asylum portfolio, backlash from left-wing and pro-immigration groups is likely, as evidenced by protests on July 1-2.

### **Ukraine: US Presidential candidate Trump suggests ceding territory to Russia, per July 3 reports; political changes in West to impact aid**

**Current Situation** - According to July 3 reports, US presidential candidate Donald Trump suggested the potential of ceding part of Ukraine's territory to Russia to end the conflict. Trump is also contemplating a deal where NATO would agree not to expand eastward, specifically to Ukraine and Georgia. However, Andriy Yermak, the head of the Ukrainian President's Office, stated that Ukraine is not willing to compromise with Russia or relinquish any territory.

**Assessments & Forecast** - The development highlights the potential for reduced support for Kyiv amidst political changes within Western governments. This is further supported by Jordan Bardella, Prime ministerial candidate of the French political party Rassemblement National, stating that France will refrain from supplying long-range missiles or military equipment to Kyiv. Although Trump's statement is not an official

position of the US, the development is expected to exacerbate widespread concerns among EU leaders over the USA terminating aid to Ukraine, with opinion polls for the November US elections predicting a Republican win. With that, EU leaders are likely to pressure Kyiv to consider peace talks moving forward, as evidenced by Hungarian President Viktor Orban urging Kyiv for a ceasefire on July 3.

## Other Developments

- On July 1, a group of German individuals physically assaulted LGBTQ+ volunteers of a charity group and shouted homophobic slogans following an altercation in Milan, **Italy**. The development reflects the risk of sporadic incidents of assault targeting members of the LGBTQ+ community in the country.
- Per July 2 reports, nine members of a clan were arrested for smuggling cocaine through shipments of food-related items in Madrid and Malaga, **Spain**. This development reiterates the threat of organized crime in Spain, as well as the risk of infiltration of such criminals into shipping companies.

## Notable Dates

**9** Spain Holiday: Community Day  
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**12** Serbia Holiday: Remembrance Day  
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**12** Spain Holiday: National Day  
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**13** Belgium Politics: Local elections  
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**13** Lithuania Politics: First round of parliamentary elections  
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**14** Moldova Holiday: Chisinau Day  
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