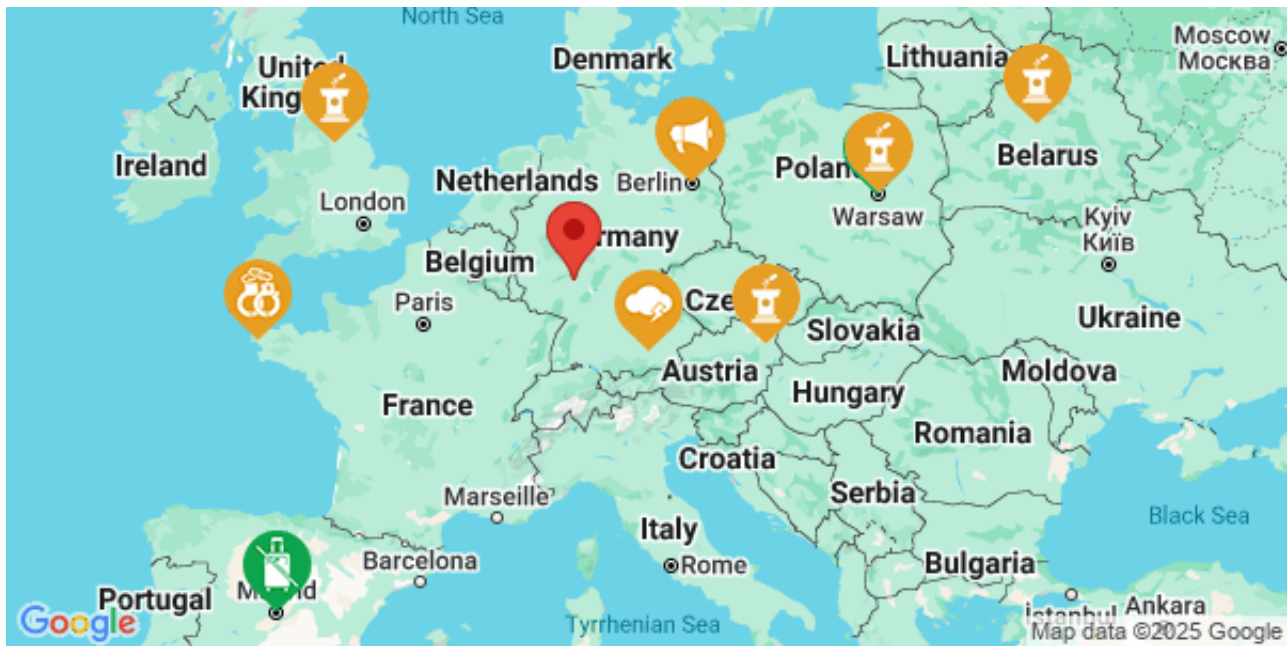




Daily



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MAX - Europe Region Daily Summary - January 5, 2025

Highlights of the Day

- **Austria:** OVP withdraws from government formation negotiations with SPO on January 4; potential OVP-FPO negotiations to be protracted
- **Europe:** Red, orange alerts for adverse weather issued in multiple countries for January 5-7; remain cognizant of authorities' updates
- **Hungary & Poland:** Warsaw excludes Budapest from inauguration of EU presidency on January 3; relations unlikely to improve
- **UK:** Government faces backlash from opposition over "grooming" gangs scandal, per January 4 reports; anti-government protests likely

Actionable Items

Europe: Red, orange alerts for adverse weather issued in multiple countries for January 5-7; remain cognizant of authorities' updates

Current Situation - Meteoalarm, Europe's regional weather service, has issued red and orange alerts, the highest and second highest on a three-tier scale, for adverse weather conditions regionwide through January 7. A red alert for black ice remains in place in the state of Bavaria and parts of Baden-Wurttemberg, **Germany** on January 5. In regions of **France, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland** and **UK**, orange alerts for snow and ice are active through January 5. In **Greece**, heavy rainfall occurred during late afternoon hours (local time) on January 4, causing floods and evacuations of residents in Rhodes. In **Spain**, orange alerts for strong winds are in effect on the north-western coast through January 5. In **Sweden**, orange warnings for heavy snowfall and strong winds are in effect in parts of southern Norrland, Jamtland County, and Dalsland and Vastra Svealand on January 6-7. Multiple airports in the region will be affected by the weather conditions. Further details are available [here](#).

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in the aforementioned countries in Europe on January 5-7 and in the coming days are advised to remain cognizant of authorities' updates regarding weather conditions. Allot for disruptions to travel and public utility services.

Source: [MAX Security Report](#)

Germany: Pro-Ukrainian protest slated outside Russisches Haus in Berlin at 14:00 (local time) on January 6; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation - A pro-Ukrainian protest will take place outside the Russisches Haus, the Russian House of Science and Culture, located at Friedrichstrasse 176-179 in Berlin, at 14:00 (local time) on January 6. The protest is being held to denounce the performance of the Russian Bolshoi Don Cossack Choir at the Russian House at 15:00 on the same day.

Assessments & Forecast - Given the mobilizational capability of the organizer, the protest is expected to garner a turnout in the low to mid-hundreds. While past pro-Ukrainian protests in Berlin have transpired largely peacefully, given that the protest is being held outside the Russian House during the performance by Russian artists raises the potential for unrest. Localized, low-level scuffles between protesters and police cannot be ruled out under such circumstances. As such, a bolstered security presence is likely to be deployed in the vicinity of the Russisches Haus as a precautionary measure and to monitor proceedings. Disruptions to both pedestrian and vehicular movement should be anticipated along Friedrichstrasse from the afternoon hours onwards.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Berlin on January 6 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of the Russisches Haus during the afternoon hours due to the scheduled protest. Allot for travel-related disruption near the protest location.

Source: [X/Twitter](#)

Poland: Traffic restrictions announced ahead of Three Kings parade in Warsaw on January

6; allot for disruptions

Current Situation - The annual Three Kings Parade will start at Pomnik Mikolaja Kopernika on Krakowskie Przedmiescie Street in Warsaw at 12:00 (local time) on January 6. The parade will conclude at Plac Zamkowy, followed by a carol until 20:00. The route will be designated as a pedestrian-only zone. While vehicular traffic will be restricted, bicycles will remain permitted. Bus routes 126 and 196 will not operate on January 6, while route 193 will operate on an alternative schedule. Further details are available [here](#) (in Polish).

Assessments & Forecast - The parade is liable to attract crowds ranging in the high thousands to low tens of thousands. The events are expected to transpire largely peacefully. However, authorities are likely to heighten security deployment in the vicinity of the slated events, as well as across major roadways and squares across major cities nationwide, to monitor proceedings. Significant disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular travel can be expected in the aforementioned locations throughout January 6. Additionally, considering that several events will be taking place in Warsaw, traffic to and from the city will be affected. Overcrowding on available public transportation is expected.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Warsaw on January 6 are advised to allot for travel-related disruptions in the vicinity of the aforementioned locations due to the planned events.

Source: [Warsaw city official page](#)

Spain: Three Kings parades slated nationwide including in Barcelona, Madrid on January 5; allot for disruptions

Current Situation - On January 5, Three Kings Parades, a traditional event observed on Epiphany, will take place nationwide throughout the day. In Barcelona, the parade will start at 18:00 (local time), following a route from Avenue Marques de l'Argentera to Montjuic's Magic Fountain. Details on the protest route and restrictions can be found [here](#). In Madrid, the procession will begin at 18:00 from Nuevos Ministerios and end at Plaza de Cibeles. Traffic restrictions along the parade route will start at 15:30. Details on the route, including traffic restrictions, can be found [here](#).

Assessments & Forecast - Given precedent, the parades are liable to attract crowds ranging in the high thousands to high tens of thousands each. Madrid is expected to see the largest turnout. The events are expected to transpire largely peacefully. However, authorities are likely to heighten security in the vicinity of the slated events, as well as across major roadways and squares across major cities nationwide, to monitor proceedings. Significant disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular travel are anticipated in the aforementioned locations throughout January 5. Overcrowding is also expected on available public transportation services.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Spain, including in Barcelona and Madrid, on January 5 are advised to allot for travel-related disruptions in the vicinity of the aforementioned locations due to the planned parades.

Source: [MAX Security Report](#)

Notable Events

Austria: OVP withdraws from government formation negotiations with SPO on January 4; potential OVP-FPO negotiations to be protracted

Current Situation - On January 4, government formation negotiations between the center-right Osterreichische Volkspartei (OVP) and center-left Sozialdemokratische Partei Osterreichs (SPO) collapsed when the OVP withdrew from negotiations, citing economic policy disagreements. Following this, Chancellor Karl Nehammer announced his resignation as Chancellor and OVP party leader. OVP general secretary Christian Stocker, who has expressed strong opposition to working with the far-right Freiheitliche Partei Osterreichs (FPO), will serve as party leader in the interim.

Assessments & Forecast - With polls indicating that new elections would further favor the FPO amid declining support for the OVP and SPO, the OVP is liable to reconsider its anti-FPO stance to avoid losing seats and weakening its position. As such, the possibility of the FPO and the OVP entering negotiations cannot be ruled out, with reports indicating that a large portion of OVP legislators favor a coalition with the FPO. That said, with Christian Stocker leading the OVP, the party leadership's opposition to a coalition with the FPO is unlikely to shift, making any negotiations protracted. Nonetheless, the FPO's potential inclusion in government formation is likely to trigger mass protests, including in Vienna.

Source: [Politico](#)

Belarus: Authorities pass law allowing removal of children for political offenses, per January 3 report; reflects crackdown on dissent

Current Situation - Per January 3 reports, Belarus implemented new regulations on January 1 signed by Prime Minister Raman Halouchanka, allowing authorities to remove children from parents convicted of political offenses. Grounds include sharing opposition content, attending illegal protests with minors, or petty hooliganism. The law allegedly will target those involved in anti-governmental activities.

Assessments & Forecast - The new law reflects Minsk's intensified efforts to suppress opposition in anticipation of the January elections. This law specifically appears to be a deliberate tactic designed to instill fear and compel self-censorship among dissenting

households. The government is likely implementing such measures to limit the risk of pre-election anti-government protests seen in 2020. Reports indicating that Minsk takes “orphaned” children, including those whose parents are in custody, to summer camps “at bases of structures and units of the armed forces”, run by veterans, mercenaries, and active-duty personnel, is likely to further intimidate parents from protesting. While exiled opposition activists publicly condemned the laws, this is unlikely to have any on-ground effect. Ahead of the elections, additional harsh measures aimed at limited dissent are expected – including arbitrary arrests.

Source: [TVPworld](#)

France: Two Algerian nationals arrested for inciting attacks on social media on January 3; anti-migrant backlash likely

Current Situation – On January 3, two Algerian nationals were arrested in Brest and Echirrolles on charges of condoning terrorism and inciting attacks via the social media platform TikTok. One suspect posted videos on December 31 to his 400,000 subscribers calling for mass violence directed at those celebrating the New Year Holiday. The second suspect then posted a video in support of the former and called for the “killing” and “raping” of anyone opposing the Algerian regime. It received over 800,000 views.

Assessments & Forecast – The fact that the suspects are charged with condoning terrorism and called on attacks on those celebrating a major western holiday, suggests they may have been exposed to radical Islamist propaganda. Moreover, the incident highlights the continued risk of actors inciting attacks on social media platforms like TikTok. Given this, coupled with growing concerns over the platform’s use in disseminating extremist and violent content among youths, calls for bans or restrictions targeting TikTok are likely in the near term. Separately, given the suspects’ background, there is an elevated risk of anti-immigrant backlash from right-wing and anti-migrant groups in the immediate term.

Source: [AP](#)

Germany: Authorities call for crackdown on illegal fireworks, per January 3 reports; risk unlikely to abate during NYE in coming years

Current Situation – Per January 3 reports, officials, including Berlin’s head of police and Berlin’s Interior Senator Iris Spranger, are calling for a crackdown on the illegal import of fireworks. These calls come after mass arrests and unrest recorded nationwide on New Year’s Eve (NYE), with five deaths recorded due to pyrotechnics. In Berlin, over 400 people were arrested, and 30 police officers were injured.

Assessments & Forecast – Officials’ calls for tighter restrictions on fireworks are likely directed toward the use of Kugelbomben, homemade “firework bombs” imported from Poland and the Czech Republic, which were increasingly used this year. These

pyrotechnics were reportedly directed at officials, indicating an intent to cause physical harm. In addition to stricter border controls and the implementation of greater security checks for those purchasing pyrotechnics, harsher sentences are likely to be imposed on rioters who targeted security personnel to disincentivize repeat offenses. Nonetheless, the risk associated with illegal firework use is unlikely to abate during NYE celebrations in the coming years, with the threat to police and other emergency personnel to increase as such entities are increasingly targeted.

Source: [Euronews](#)

Germany: IT outage causes large-scale airport disruptions on January 3; reiterates vulnerability of critical infrastructure systems

Current Situation - On January 3, an IT disruption to systems used in airport immigration procedures caused severe delays to travel in several airports, including Frankfurt Airport (FRA), Berlin-Brandenburg Airport (BER), and Dusseldorf Airport (DUS). The IT disruption, which also impacted backup systems, led to manual passport and visa checks, leading to long wait times and backlogs to travelers from countries outside the visa-free Schengen Area. On January 4, the Interior Ministry stated that hacking was not suspected to be the cause of the issue, with authorities working to resolve it.

Assessments & Forecast - Despite officials' statements, the possibility that the disruptions were caused by a cyberattack cannot be ruled out, especially considering that airports have previously been targets of such attacks by hostile actors. This includes pro-Russia hackers and other cybercriminal networks, as evidenced in cyberattacks targeting airports in the Czech Republic on December 17 and Italy on December 28, which caused disruptions to online administrative services. Regardless of the cause of the outage, the incident reiterates the vulnerability of critical infrastructure systems, with calls for strengthened cybersecurity measures likely to increase.

Source: [DW](#)

Hungary & Poland: Warsaw excludes Budapest from inauguration of EU presidency on January 3; relations unlikely to improve

Current Situation - On January 3, the Polish government excluded Hungarian Ambassador Istvan Ijgyarto and Prime Minister Viktor Orban from the official inauguration of Poland's presidency of the Council of the European Union. This decision followed Hungary's granting of political asylum to Marcin Romanowski, a former Polish deputy minister facing corruption allegations.

Assessments & Forecast- The development reiterates the continued tensions between Warsaw and Budapest following Budapest's granting of asylum to Marcin Romanowski, as evidenced by a December 27 report in which Warsaw stated that it would take Budapest to the European Court of Justice if it does not comply with the warrant. Poland's support

for Ukraine and Hungary's pro-Russia stance has further deteriorated bilateral relations. This is evidenced by Warsaw publicly criticizing Budapest for its relationship with Moscow, while Orban has accused Warsaw of 'hypocrisy' over its stance on the conflict. In addition, Poland's pro-EU position and Orban's anti-EU rhetoric have also exacerbated tensions. Given this, bilateral relations are unlikely to improve in the near term, with Budapest's relationship with the EU also remaining strained.

Source: [Euronews](#)

UK: Government faces backlash from opposition over "grooming" gangs scandal, per January 4 reports; anti-government protests likely

Current Situation - As per a January 4 report, the government blocked a public inquiry into historical child sexual abuse scandals by "grooming" gangs in multiple towns in England and Wales. The report alleges that local authorities covered up sexual abuse networks, fearing triggering cultural or ethnic tensions, as offenses were predominantly committed by men of South Asian background against predominantly white girls. The report has attracted large-scale backlash from Conservative politicians, as well as prominent figures like Elon Musk.

Assessments & Forecast - Considering the scope of the scandal, with thousands of alleged child sexual abuse victims, the report is likely to trigger anti-government and/or women's rights protests in the immediate term. This is especially so as sexual grooming offenses increased by 10 percent in 2024. In towns affected by the scandal, there is also a risk of anti-immigrant protests, which pose a heightened risk of unrest. In Rotherham, hundreds of anti-immigration protesters attacked a migrant shelter facility in the July-August nationwide riots, reflecting elevated anti-immigrant sentiments in affected towns. Against this backdrop, far-right actors and politicians are also liable to leverage public backlash to push anti-immigrant narratives.

Source: [Telegraph](#)

Other Developments

- On January 2, High Representative for **Bosnia and Herzegovina** Christian Schmidt annulled resolutions passed by the Republika Srpska (RS) National Assembly aimed at undermining judicial proceedings against RS President Milorad Dodik. This decision is expected to heighten tensions with RS.
- As of January 1, arms sellers in the **Czech Republic** are required to report suspicious purchases to the police, a measure likely intended to prevent potential shootings. This rule is expected to face challenges in implementation.
- On January 3, reports revealed that **Finland's** national power grid operator requested the seizure of an oil tanker suspected of damaging an electric power cable in the Baltic Sea in December 2024. Finnish customs suspect the vessel is part of a shadow fleet used to evade sanctions on Russian oil. This incident underscores ongoing risks of Russian destabilization efforts in the Baltic Sea.

- On January 3, police in Athens and Thessaloniki conducted a large-scale operation targeting criminal groups tied to a Turkish organized crime network, arresting 10 Turkish nationals and one Lebanese national. Despite these arrests, the network's influence and the associated threat of violence in **Greece** are unlikely to diminish significantly in the short term.

Notable Dates

28 Europe Holiday: Ramadan
FEB

1 Moldova & Romania Holiday: Martisor
MAR

1 Bosnia and Herzegovina Holiday: Independence Day
MAR

1 Spain Holiday: Balearic Day
MAR

1 Switzerland Holiday: Republic Day in Neuchatel
MAR

1 UK Holiday: St. David's Day in Wales
MAR
