



BLACK SEA NEWS UPDATE

EU – BLACK SEA OBSERVATORY

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

I. ABKHAZIA

1. Five Presidential Candidates Registered in Abkhazia
2. Limited Scope for Different View in Abkhazia

II. ARMENIA

1. Armenian Opposition Reaffirms Rejection of Turkey Deal
2. Armenian President to Visit to Russia's Kaliningrad

III. AZERBAIJAN

1. Russian Community of Azerbaijan Receives Award for Cooperation
2. Early Marriages Worry Azerbaijan Officials

IV. BULGARIA

1. Bulgaria Investment Climate 2009
2. Bulgaria: Economy Overview

V. GEORGIA

1. Playing the Slots: Georgia's Hidden Addiction
2. Georgia Looks to Attract Qatari Investors
3. Georgia May Join NATO without MAP
4. EU-Georgia Cooperation Council Meeting
5. U.S. Annual Report on Georgia Religious Freedom

VI. GEORGIA-RUSSIA

1. Saakashvili Tells Europeans to Remember Russia-Built Dividing Lines in Georgia
2. Russia's Policy Inadequate toward Georgia: Official
3. Belarus to Consider Recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia
4. Russia's Military Intelligence Chief Warns of New War
5. Head of Georgian MFA Gives up His Russian Citizenship
6. Russia Casts a Wary Eye on Deepening U.S.-Georgia Cooperation

VII. MOLDOVA

1. Moldova's Acting President Predicts End to Political Deadlock
2. Russia Accepts Pro-Western Candidate for Moldova's Presidency

VIII. ROMANIA

1. IMF, EU Delay Romania Loans until Next Year
2. Romania's Parliament Blocks New Government
3. Romania: Economy Overview

4. Romania Investment Climate 2009

IX. RUSSIA

1. Russia Is Dying to Learn Its Census Data
2. Rally Held in Moscow on the Day of Political Prisoners

X. SOUTH OSSETIA

1. Ossetian Separatists to Sentence 4 Georgian Teen-Agers
2. Bakradze Comments on Detention of Georgian Teens
3. Tskhinvali Residents are Dissatisfied with Compensations for their Lost Houses
4. South Ossetia to Suppress Broadcasting of Radio Liberty in its Territory

XI. TURKEY

1. Bids for Turkey's Power Grids Reach \$1.2bn
2. Turkey Warms to Greek Government
3. Turkey Pressing Ahead with Diplomatic Make-Over

XII. UKRAINE

1. Yushchenko Says IMF Will Not Extend Loan Tranche to Ukraine
2. Ukraine Could be Made to Pay \$7.8 bln in Gas Fines – Yushchenko
3. Ukraine Gas Problems Linked to Presidential Polls – Medvedev
4. 'Againstall' To Run for Ukraine's Presidency
5. Ukrainian Presidential Candidate Viktor Yanukovich: Foreign Policy Priorities
6. Rivals in Conciliation

XIII. CAUCASUS

1. U.S. Embassy Denies Karabakh Recognition Threat
2. Armenian Armed Forces Break Ceasefire
3. Armenian President Defends Turkey Policy
4. Turkish-Azerbaijani “Cold War:” Moscow Benefits from Washington's Indecisiveness
5. Karabakh Government Faces Little Competition
6. IWPR Events Help Activist Groups in Armenia and Georgia Communicate Refugee Concerns to Government Officials
7. Consequences of Failure in Caucasus Will Concern Everyone: U.S. Vice President
8. Diyanet to Exchange Scholars with Caucasus States

XIV. ENERGY

1. Moldova Says Gas Explosion Won't Affect Supplies
2. Putin Urges EU to Lend Ukraine at Least \$1 billion
3. A new Route for Natural Gas to Europe
4. Ukraine 'Pays Russian Gas Bill'
5. EBRD: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan “Punished” for Failing to Diversify Away from Energy Reliance
6. Could Turkey Bring Iran's Gas to Nabucco?
7. Challenges in Russia-EU Energy Cooperation

XV. GUAM

1. Georgia to Host GUAM PA

XVI. HEALTH

1. Ukraine's Security Council to Discuss Flu Epidemic Situation
2. Swine Flu Fatalities Rise to 27 in Turkey, But Survivors Total 250,000
3. Slovakia Closes Border Crossings with Ukraine Amid A/H1N1 Fears
4. Moldova Reports Increase in Swine Flu Infections
5. First Swine Flu Case Reported in Azerbaijan

6. Swine Flu Deaths in Russia Rise to 15
7. Bulgaria Asks EU for More Anti-Flu Drugs
8. EU Must Help Ukraine Fight Swine Flu, Poland Says

XVII. SECURITY

1. Jitters in Eastern Europe over Russia's Military Manoeuvres

I. ABKHAZIA

- 1.

Five Presidential Candidates Registered in Abkhazia

07.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Five_Presidential_Candidates_Registered_In_Abkhazia/1872025.html

The Central Election Commission of the breakaway Republic of Abkhazia has registered five candidates who applied to run in the presidential election on December 12. A sixth would-be candidate, Djamilik Ayba, withdrew his application before the November 2 deadline. The five are incumbent President Sergei Bagapsh; his former vice president and closest challenger in the 2004 presidential ballot, Raul Khadjimba; businessman and Economic Development Party of Abkhazia Chairman Beslan Butba; academic Vitaly Bganba; and Zaur Ardzinba, director of the State Steamship Company. All five have successfully submitted to tests intended to assess their fluency in the Abkhaz language.

- 2.

Limited Scope for Different View in Abkhazia

30.10.2009, IWPR

READ MORE: <http://www.iwpr.net/EN-crs-f-357090>

With less than two months to go before Abkhazia's presidential elections, the main opposition candidate has accused the government of denying him equal access to the media and campaigning resources. Raul Khadzhimba told IWPR that the actions of his rival, President Sergei Bagapsh, who has headed the Black Sea statelet – recognised as independent by Russia, but considered to be a rebel Georgian province by almost all other countries – since 2005, revealed that his talk of democracy was a lie. "The representatives of the government pronounce beautiful words about how there must be an opposition in the country, but at the same time they react very negatively to the opposition's actions and its assessments of what is happening in the country. This does not give a positive image of the government," he said.

II. ARMENIA

- 1.

Armenian Opposition Reaffirms Rejection of Turkey Deal

08.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Armenian_Opposition_Reaffirms_Rejection_Of_Turkey_Deal/1872477.html

The opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) has reaffirmed its strong condemnation of agreements to normalize Armenia's relations with Turkey, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. Levon Zurabian, the HAK's central office coordinator, said on November 5 that the signing of the two agreements in Zurich on October 10 marked the "disgraceful failure" of President Serzh Sarkisian's policy of rapprochement with Turkey. He said the Turkish parliament will not ratify the accords unless Armenia makes more concessions to Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

2.

Armenian President to Visit to Russia's Kaliningrad

07.11.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20091107/156746907.html>

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan will pay a brief working visit to Kaliningrad, Russia's exclave on the Baltic Sea, on November 11, an Armenian presidential spokesman said on Saturday. The Armenian leader will visit at the invitation of Kaliningrad Governor Georgy Boos.

III. AZERBAIJAN

1.

Russian Community of Azerbaijan Receives Award for Cooperation

06.11.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1574393.html>

Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov conferred an order for cooperation to Russian Community of Azerbaijan Chairman Mikhail Zabelin, Moscow official Andrey Yevsipenko said. Today, Baku hosted the Third Congress of the Russian Community of Azerbaijan. The congress was attended by senior officials from both countries, including Azerbaijani Presidential Administration Public and Political Issues Department head Ali Hasanov, Russian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Dmitry Dorokhin, Lord Bishop of the Caspian Alexander and ministry and department representatives. The congress was also attended by Count Peter Sheremetyev, Prince Dmitry Romanov, a Russian Presidential Administration official and Ex-Russian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Vasili Istratov. The Azerbaijani diaspora in Saratov, Ryazan and Murmansk also attended.

2.

Early Marriages Worry Azerbaijan Officials

06.11.2009, IPWR

READ MORE: <http://www.iwpr.net/EN-crs-f-357288>

Officials in Azerbaijan are so concerned by the number of women getting married under-age that parliament is discussing raising the minimum age for marriage to 18. Women's rights activists say corrupt religious officials are prepared to conduct Islamic ceremonies for couples when the woman is too young for a state service, leaving her unprotected if her husband leaves her, uneducated and vulnerable to medical complications. But girls themselves, like 15-year-old Sabina Agavaliyeva, who is preparing to marry a man seven years her senior, say they are happy to take the risks and leave school early.

IV. BULGARIA

1.

Bulgaria Investment Climate 2009

02.11.2009, EUBusiness

READ MORE: <http://www.eubusiness.com/Bulgaria/invest>

Bulgaria has put in place a liberal foreign investment regime, including low, flat corporate and income taxes and competitive incentives to attract high levels of foreign investment. Promising sectors for foreign investors include: energy (including alternative energies), information technology, transportation, telecommunications, and agriculture. EU integration has opened new markets for Bulgarian-produced goods and services. Bulgaria's labor market is generally well-educated and relatively low-cost. The country's geographic position places it at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, and the CIS. A stable U.S. ally, Bulgaria is a member of NATO, the EU and the WTO.

2.

Bulgaria: Economy Overview

02.11.2009, EUBusiness

READ MORE: <http://www.eubusiness.com/Bulgaria/econ>

Bulgaria, a former Communist country that entered the EU on 1 January 2007, has experienced strong growth since a major economic downturn in 1996. Successive governments have demonstrated a commitment to economic reforms and responsible fiscal planning, but have failed so far to rein in rising inflation and large current account deficits. Bulgaria has averaged more than 6% growth since 2004, attracting significant amounts of foreign direct investment, but corruption in the public administration, a weak judiciary, and the presence of organized crime remain significant challenges.

V. GEORGIA

1.

Playing the Slots: Georgia's Hidden Addiction?

04.11.2009, Eurasianet

READ MORE: <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav110409.shtml>

Amid a Tbilisi slot-parlor boom, experts believe that problem gambling is on the rise in Georgia. The gaming industry may be pouring millions each year into state coffers, but the social costs of gambling are going unmeasured. Gaming fees generated some \$8.87 million in revenue for the first seven months of 2008, the most recent period for which the government has data. State coffers receive some \$6 million per year in licenses alone, according to the Ministry of Finance.

2.

Georgia Looks to Attract Qatari Investors

04.11.2009, Hürriyet Daily News

READ MORE: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=georgia-looks-to-attract-qatari-investors-2009-11-04>

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili said he hopes to secure investment pledges from Qatar in agriculture, hydropower, infrastructure and tourism. "Georgia is traditionally linked with the Middle East and they value our liberal reforms," Saakashvili told reporters on his plane before landing in Qatar on Wednesday to meet with potential investors. The \$12.8 billion Georgian economy suffered about \$1 billion in damage when its army was routed by Russia in the August 2008 war over the region of South Ossetia. Growth may resume this quarter. Foreign investment this year probably will not exceed \$1 billion, compared with the \$2 billion initially forecast by the government, Finance Minister Kakha Baidurashvili said on Oct. 6.

3.

Georgia May Join NATO without MAP

01.11.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/97326.php>

Georgian State Minister on Reintegration Issues Temur Iakobashvili recently announced in Tbilisi that Georgia can become a member of NATO without obtaining a Membership Action Plan (MAP), The Messenger reported. We have a mirror mechanism for the process of NATO integration an annual programme of actions which leads us towards membership to the alliance, stated Iakobashvili, referring to the NATO-Georgia Commission established in September 2008 to maintain regular contacts with NATO.

4.

EU-Georgia Cooperation Council Meeting

27.10.2009, Civil Georgia

READ MORE: <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21608>

Progress in democracy, rule of law and human rights is an important condition for the deepening of EU-Georgia cooperation, EU said after a meeting of EU-Georgia Cooperation Council on October 26. The meeting in Brussels, which was chaired by Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze, was tenth in frames of EU-Georgia Cooperation Council. Vice-Premier and State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Giorgi Baramidze, was also representing the Georgian side. EU delegation was led by Carl Bildt, Swedish Foreign Minister, whose country holds the EU presidency; Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy; Juan José Rubio de Urquia, Deputy Director General for Eastern European Affairs, who represented the incoming Spanish Presidency and Peter Semneby, the EU special envoy for South Caucasus, participated in the meeting.

5.

U.S. Annual Report on Georgia Religious Freedom

27.10.2009, Civil Georgia

READ MORE: <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21609>

Respect for religious freedom by the Georgian government continued to improve, according to the U.S. State Department's recent annual report on International Religious Freedom, which covers the period from July 1, 2008, to June 30, 2009. "Abuse of religious minorities, including violence, verbal harassment, and disruption of services and meetings, continued to decrease," according to the report released on October 26. "Both government officials and religious leaders attributed this decline to more vigorous government prosecution of those who harass or attack religious minorities."

VI. GEORGIA-RUSSIA

1.

Saakashvili Tells Europeans to Remember Russia-Built Dividing Lines in Georgia

08.11.2009, Civil Georgia

READ MORE: <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21652>

Europe will not be able "to sleep calmly," as long as Abkhazia and South Ossetia remain divided from rest of Georgia with Russian-built barbed wires, President Saakashvili said on November 8. Saakashvili compared Russian troops stationed in Georgia's breakaway regions to "dinosaurs" and said "these dinosaurs, with their dinosaurian imagination and dinosaurian small brains" were building barbed wires across the administrative borders hindering thousands of IDP families to return back to their houses.

2.

Russia's Policy Inadequate toward Georgia: Official

05.11.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1573667.html>

"Russia pursues an inadequate policy toward Georgia," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon said at a Center for International Strategy conference, Georgian television said today. He added that during the August war, Russia used "inadequate military force" against Georgia. According to Gordon, the U.S. shares security risks in Eastern Europe and its political course is aimed at developing common security principles in the region.

3.

Belarus to Consider Recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia

05.11.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091105/156714505.html>

The Belarusian parliament is to consider next week the recognition of the two former Georgian republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the head of the presidential administration said. "Next week, the parliament will begin considering the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia," Vladimir Makei said, adding Belarusian lawmakers are to visit the republics in order "to study the situation." Russia recognized the two republics shortly after a five-day war with Georgia in August 2008 that began when Georgian forces attacked South Ossetia in an attempt to bring it back under central control. Abkhazia and South Ossetia have also been recognized by Nicaragua and Venezuela.

4.

Russia's Military Intelligence Chief Warns of New War

05.11.2009, Civil Georgia

READ MORE: <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21643>

Alexander Shliakhturov, chief of Russia's military intelligence (GRU), said on November 5 that he did not rule out that Georgia might again use force against breakaway South Ossetia and Abkhazia. "The situation with Georgia remains tense because the current Georgian authorities do not only refuse to recognize the sovereignty of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but are sparing no efforts to return these countries, which have already become independent, to their jurisdiction," he told Itar-Tass news agency.

5.

Head of Georgian MFA Gives up His Russian Citizenship

04.11.2009, Caucasian Knot

READ MORE: <http://astrahan.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/11639>

Grigol Vashadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, wrote an application addressed to the President of Russia about his refusal from Russian citizenship and sent his Russian passport to Moscow. "I've already sent an application to President of Russia about my exit from Russian citizenship and attached my Russian passport to it," Mr Vashadze told journalists today.

6.

Russia Casts a Wary Eye on Deepening U.S.-Georgia Cooperation

03.11.2009, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35686&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=407&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35686&tx_ttnews[backPid]=407&no_cache=1)

On October 30, Russia's Permanent Representative to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, gave an interview to Ekho Moskvyy Radio, in which he severely criticized America's Georgia policy. Quoted by most of Russia's news agencies, Rogozin said: "No one has abandoned the idea to use Georgia as a counterbalance to Russia...[Georgia is] a toothache or a headache for us in the Caucasus; as far as we are concerned, these attempts will continue" (RIA Novosti, October 30).

VII. MOLDOVA

1.

Moldova's Acting President Predicts End to Political Deadlock

04.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Moldovas_Acting_President_Predicts_End_To_Political_Deadlock/1869177.html

Acting Moldovan President Mihai Ghimpu says enough members of the opposition Communist Party

will eventually help elect the country's new president and end the current stalemate, RFE/RL's Moldovan Service reports. Ghimpu, a leader of the four-party, pro-Western Alliance for European Integration (AIE) that won the July 29 elections, told RFE/RL that the communists will probably vote for the coalition's candidate in a vote in early December.

2.

Russia Accepts Pro-Western Candidate for Moldova's Presidency

04.11.2009, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35694&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=d4ba583bf8](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35694&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=d4ba583bf8)

Russia currently holds a greater degree of relevance and influence in Moldovan politics than at any time during the eight years of nominal communist rule (2001-2009) and indeed since 1991 in that country. Russia's growing political role is a direct result of Moldova's indecisive parliamentary elections held in April and July 2009 –followed by two failed presidential elections– with yet another round of elections possible in 2010. This has created unprecedented scope for Russia to insert itself in Moldova's internal political game as a would-be power broker. Russia is now competing against the European Union for the role of political mediator in Moldova's political and constitutional crisis.

VIII. ROMANIA

1.

IMF, EU Delay Romania Loans until Next Year

09.11.2009, The Wall Street Journal

READ MORE: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125772230441037203.html>

The International Monetary Fund and the European Union told Romania on Friday that they will delay the next installments of a bailout loan package valued at more than \$30 billion, until the country has a new government. The lenders were responding to the collapse of Romania's coalition government last month, which froze the country's ability to enact spending cuts the IMF has demanded as a condition of its loan. "We will proceed to the next disbursement once the political situation is resolved," Jeffrey Franks, head of the IMF's mission in Bucharest, told reporters, according to wire reports. He called for "quick action." The EU will wait until next year to disburse its next tranche, a spokeswoman for the 27-nation bloc said.

2.

Romania's Parliament Blocks New Government

04.11.2009, The Wall Street Journal

READ MORE: <http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB125734184547427947.html>

A bid by finance adviser Lucian Croitoru to lead the Romanian government failed Wednesday after three political parties voted against his team. Mr. Croitoru, the national bank adviser, was nominated in October by President Traian Basescu to be the country's new prime minister. Lawmakers in Parliament voted 250-189 against Mr. Croitoru. He needed 236 seats to be approved. The former government led by Emil Boc and supported by Mr. Basescu fell on Oct. 13 in a no-confidence vote. Parliament and Mr. Basescu have been embroiled in feuds for years.

3.

Romania: Economy Overview

04.11.2009, EU business

READ MORE: <http://www.eubusiness.com/Romania/econ>

Romania, which joined the European Union on 1 January 2007, began the transition from Communism in 1989 with a largely obsolete industrial base and a pattern of output unsuited to the country's needs. The country emerged in 2000 from a punishing three-year recession thanks to

strong demand in EU export markets. Domestic consumption and investment have fueled strong GDP growth in recent years, but have led to large current account imbalances. Romania's macroeconomic gains have only recently started to spur creation of a middle class and address Romania's widespread poverty. Corruption and red tape continue to handicap its business environment. Inflation rose in 2007-08, driven in part by strong consumer demand and high wage growth, rising energy costs, a nation-wide drought affecting food prices, and a relaxation of fiscal discipline. Romania's strong GDP growth moderated markedly in the last quarter of 2008 as the country began to feel the effects of a global downturn in financial markets and trade, and growth is expected to be much weaker in 2009. Romania hopes to adopt the euro by 2014.

4.

Romania Investment Climate 2009

04.11.2009, EU business

READ MORE: <http://www.eubusiness.com/Romania/invest>

Romania actively seeks direct foreign investment. The Agency for Foreign Investment (ARIS), created in 2004, is designed to advertise the country as a good investment destination and to improve aspects of the business climate. Romania's marketplace of 21.6 million consumers, a well-educated workforce, geographic location, and abundant natural resources make it an increasingly attractive destination for investment. To date, favored areas for American investment include IT and telecommunications, services, manufacturing, and consumer products.

IX. RUSSIA

1.

Russia Is Dying to Learn Its Census Data

04.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Russia_Is_Dying_To_Learn_Its_Census_Data/1869329.html

Last week's announcement that the next Russian census will be held in 2010 as originally scheduled is welcome news indeed. There had been considerable speculation that the census had been delayed largely for political reasons, and it is encouraging to think that the opinions of experts who say the census information is crucially needed were heeded in this case. The government originally said it would be forced to delay the census – first until 2012 and then later until 2013 – because of a lack of funds. But this argument never seemed convincing, especially considering that many former Soviet republics have conducted censuses or are proceeding with them despite economic situations far more dire than Russia's.

2.

Rally Held in Moscow on the Day of Political Prisoners

31.10.2009, Caucasian Knot

READ MORE: <http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/11599>

On October 30, the Day of Political Prisoners, Moscow held a rally in defence of victims of political prosecutions in Russia. Despite cold weather, over two hundred persons came to take part in the event. The protesters demanded to immediately release the "prisoners of conscience" and reconsider the cases of all political prisoners. Among those, whom the organizers of action treat as political prisoners, are the following persons: natives of Chechnya Zara Murtazalieva, Zaurbek Talkhigov, Umar Batukaev and Lors Khamiev; officer Sergey Arakcheev who fought in Chechnya; Krasnodar journalist Sergey Rozhkov; leader of the Rostov Regional UCF Branch Andrei Grekov; Mikhail Klevachov and Vladimir Vlasov, convicted for undermining "Grozny-Moscow" train; and journalist of the Chechen separatists' website "Kavkaz-Centre" Boris Stomakhin.

X. SOUTH OSSETIA

1.

Ossetian Separatists to Sentence 4 Georgian Teen-Agers

09.11.2009, Trend News

[READ MORE: http://en.trend.az/regions/scaucasus/georgia/1575853.html](http://en.trend.az/regions/scaucasus/georgia/1575853.html)

The Ossetian separatists today will decide the fate of four kidnapped Georgian teenagers. The four teenagers, studying at high school, were kidnapped from the village of Tirdznisi on the Georgian-controlled territory 5 days ago. The separatists accuse them of organizing a terrorist act.

2.

Bakradze Comments on Detention of Georgian Teens

06.11.2009, Civil Georgia

[READ MORE: http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21647](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21647)

Georgian Parliamentary Chairman Davit Bakradze said on November 6 that “kidnapping” of Georgians in the Tskhinvali region is “at least agreed with [Russian] servicemen stationed there.” “We have all grounds to suppose that it is coming from Russia and Russia’s attempt to create a pretext for another aggressive action stands behind it,” Bakradze said at the parliament’s session. “Therefore, we should not give them such pretext and we should act very vigorously... We should not allow Russia to use such incidents as a pretext and precondition for its own aggressive intentions.”

3.

Tskhinvali Residents are Dissatisfied with Compensations for their Lost Houses

05.11.2009, Caucasian Knot

[READ MORE: http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/11646](http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/11646)

Now, Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, looks like a huge construction site. However, the "Caucasian Knot" correspondent could not get any details about the works underway at the Committee for Restoration of South Ossetia. Residents of city appeared to be friendlier and said that they have to restore their houses with their own hands, but the compensation of 50,000 roubles is too small. Gregory Dzasokhov lives in the tent set up in his kitchen garden since April 2009. Before, he and his wife had to rent their apartment. "We moved in and out for seven or eight times; for two weeks we were even accommodated at the "Alan" Hotel; but then, they told us that it would be repaired, and we were driven out. Earlier, the state had promised that it would pay for our leased flats, but it appeared to be a lie," said the husband

4.

South Ossetia to Suppress Broadcasting of Radio Liberty in its Territory

02.11.2009, Caucasian Knot

[READ MORE: http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/11609](http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/11609)

As stated by Georgiy Kabisov, Chairman of the State Committee for Information, Post and Mass Communications of South Ossetia, the broadcasting of Radio Liberty in the territory of the Republic of South Ossetia is illegal and a sort of an information provocation. Starting from November 2, the Radio Liberty decided to put its programme "Echo of the Caucasus" on air in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. According to Mr Kabisov, the authorities of South Ossetia did not receive any applications from the managers of Radio Liberty asking to allow broadcasting in the territory of the republic; consequently, the broadcasting will be suppressed, as reported by the IA "Res".

XI. TURKEY

1.

Bids for Turkey’s Power Grids Reach \$1.2bn

07.11.2009, The Financial Times

READ MORE: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e0fb408c-caf6-11de-97e0-00144feabdc0.html?ftcamp=rss>

Turkey's privatisation administration (OIB) received bids totalling \$1.2bn at an auction of three power grids in Ankara on Friday, a test of market conditions that has persuaded it to press ahead with sales to ease strains on public finances. Eti Gumus, a recently privatised silver mining company with no previous involvement in energy, bid \$485m for the Osmangazi grid, which has one of the lowest ratios of electricity loss and theft in the country.

2.

Turkey Warms to Greek Government

06.11.2009, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2009/11/06/Turkey-warms-to-Greek-government/UPI-63411257537965/

The Turkish government approached its Greek counterparts to discuss forming a strategic cooperation council to improve bilateral relations. The European Union is scheduled to consider Turkey's bid to join the bloc during a December summit. Ankara has moved on a series of concessions meant to meet the policy requirements to join Europe but faces obstacles on various provisions over the island of Cyprus.

3.

Turkey Pressing Ahead with Diplomatic Make-Over

04.11.2009, EurasiaNet

READ MORE: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav110409b.shtml>

Autumn has been a busy -- if not dizzying -- period for Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. Turkey is attempting a drastic diplomatic make-over, one that would transform Ankara into a regional power broker. On October 10, Davutoglu was in Switzerland, putting his signature on a historic deal that paves the way for restoring diplomatic ties with Armenia and for the two countries to take a look at their mutually contested history. Four days later, the Turkish foreign minister was in Syria, signing yet another important deal, this one abolishing visa requirements between the two countries, who only a decade ago were on the verge of war after Ankara accused Damascus of supporting the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The two milestones are not unrelated. Over the last few years, Turkey's government, led by the Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP), has forcefully realigned the country's foreign policy, seeking a greater engagement with the surrounding region and to establish itself as a neighborhood soft power broker and mediator

XII. UKRAINE

1.

Yushchenko Says IMF Will Not Extend Loan Tranche to Ukraine

08.11.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/business/20091108/156758382.html>

The Ukrainian president said Sunday the International Monetary Fund will not extend a regular tranche of its loan to Ukraine as the Yulia Tymoshenko government is not current on its commitments to the IMF. "I am convinced the IMF will not provide... the tranche to Ukraine as [the government] fully ignores the memorandum," Viktor Yushchenko told Channel 5. He also said that the Ukrainian government has failed to implement five out of the six positions of its commitments to the IMF. "It's evident that it is impossible to keep ignoring the IMF program and receiving its assistance," Yushchenko said. One of the conditions for the loan was that Ukraine should gradually raise gas prices to market ones. However, the government decided not to raise gas prices for the population in 2009.

2.

Ukraine Could be Made to Pay \$7.8 bln in Gas Fines - Yushchenko

08.11.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/business/20091108/156757204.html>

Russian energy giant Gazprom could charge Ukraine nearly \$8 billion in fines for failing to consume the contract-stipulated amounts of natural gas, President Viktor Yushchenko said Sunday. "The whole world is waiting for each seventh day of next month [to see] settlements made [between Ukraine and Russia]. For the current year, Ukraine has consumed gas worth \$4 billion, half of which was paid through loans. Besides, it has been calculated that the [possible] amount of fines for Ukraine as of today is \$7.8 billion," Yushchenko told Channel 5. Under the current contract, each month's payment is due by the seventh day of the following month. Should Ukraine fail to pay on time, the contract stipulates a switch to advance payments.

3.

Ukraine Gas Problems Linked to Presidential Polls - Medvedev

07.11.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20091107/156745643.html>

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has linked Ukrainian problems with payment for Russian gas deliveries to the country's presidential polls, due to take place in January. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said in late October that his Ukrainian counterpart, Yulia Tymoshenko, had told him by telephone that President Viktor Yushchenko was blocking payments for Russian gas supplies. However, Tymoshenko said on Friday that despite difficulties, Ukraine's Naftogaz had paid Gazprom in full for Russian gas deliveries in October. "In my view this is linked to the presidential campaign going on in Ukraine," Medvedev told Germany's Der Spiegel magazine, adding that opposing forces were "hurting each other with the aim of scoring political points."

4.

'Against all' To Run for Ukraine's Presidency

04.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Against_all_to_run_for_Ukraines_Presidency_/1869505.html

Not that we needed another reminder of the dismal state of Ukrainian politics, but an individual called Protyvsikh ("Against all" in Ukrainian) has registered as a candidate in the country's upcoming presidential election. Vasil Protyvsikh, previously known as Vasil Humeniuk, has changed his last name in the hope that he'll get support from the many disillusioned Ukrainian voters out there. Protyvsikh, 63, who is currently working as a manager at the Ivano-Frankivsk chamber of commerce and industry, said that he borrowed the \$312,000 required to register as a candidate from relatives and friends.

5.

Ukrainian Presidential Candidate Viktor Yanukovich: Foreign Policy Priorities

03.11.2009, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35687&cHash=ac67d8eed5](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35687&cHash=ac67d8eed5)

Viktor Yanukovich was put forward as a presidential candidate at the congress of the Party of Regions on October 23 (www.partyofregions.org.ua, October 23). Yanukovich's foreign policy can be gauged from several policies that he and his party have previously supported and the content of his January 17, 2010 election program "Ukraine For the People!" During the October 23 congress, Yanukovich promised to provide Ukraine with a "new foreign policy" as a non-bloc state pursuing its "national interests" (Ukrayinska Pravda, October 23). Yanukovich's foreign policy would be more pro-Russian than the pro-Western multi-vector pursued by President Leonid Kuchma in 1994 to

2004. In Kuchma's first term, Ukraine actively sought cooperation with the U.S. and NATO and he announced in 2002 Ukraine's intention to seek NATO membership, while one year later he sent Ukrainian troops to Iraq. Moreover, Yanukovych is more anti-NATO than Kuchma who was more cognizant of the Russian threat, whether in the 1990's when Moscow refused to recognize Ukraine's borders until 1997-1999, or when it made territorial claims on the island of Tuzla in 2003. Kuchma cut short a visit to Brazil to visit Tuzla as commander-in-chief ready to rebuff a potential Russian invasion.

6.

Rivals in Conciliation

27.10.2009, Russia Profile

READ MORE: <http://www.russiaprofile.org/page.php?pageid=International&articleid=a1256670766>

The Candidates Are Promising Reconciliation, but Ukraine's Differences with Russia Are Deeper than More Difficult to Change than a Politician's Rhetoric. As the presidential electoral race kicked off in Ukraine last week, both frontrunners pledged to revive severed ties with Moscow. While Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko promised a new phase of "equal and honorable" relations with the Kremlin in her opening speech on October 24, Party of the Regions leader Viktor Yanukovich said that renewing "a fully-fledged partnership with Russia" was his foreign policy priority. With both Tymoshenko and Yanukovich emerging as rivals keen to rebuild relations with Russia, which horse will the Kremlin back this time?

XIII. CAUCASUS

1.

U.S. Embassy Denies Karabakh Recognition Threat

06.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/US_Embassy_Denies_Karabakh_Recognition_Threat_/1871501.html

The U.S. State Department has strongly denied an Azerbaijani media report that alleges Washington threatened to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state unless Baku commits to a peaceful resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani dispute over that territory, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. The daily "Yeni Musavat" claimed that Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Tina Kaidanow issued the warning during a recent visit to Baku, the Azerbaijani capital. It cited Kaidanow as telling Azerbaijani leaders that they should avoid attempting to win back Karabakh by force or risk a formal U.S. recognition of the disputed region's secession from Azerbaijan.

2.

Armenian Armed Forces Break Ceasefire

05.11.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/1573432.html>

On Nov. 4, the Armenian Armed Forces opened fire at Azerbaijani troops in areas of the Tovuz region at 11.00-11.10. The shots were fired from the Garasu village in Armenia's Berd region.

3.

Armenian President Defends Turkey Policy

04.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Armenian_President_Defends_Turkey_Policy/1869223.html

Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian defended his reconciliation policy with Turkey at a meeting of leading clerical and secular representatives of the Armenian Apostolic Church on November, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. At a meeting chaired by Catholicos Garegin II, the head of the

Armenian Church, Sarkisian added that his administration will not stop seeking international recognition of the mass killings of ethnic Armenians by Ottoman Turks as genocide or make additional concessions to Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

4.

Turkish-Azerbaijani “Cold War:” Moscow Benefits from Washington’s Indecisiveness

02.11.2009, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35684&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=27&cHash=c3f02e5ed0](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35684&tx_ttnews[backPid]=27&cHash=c3f02e5ed0)

Recent weeks have seen unprecedented and potentially far reaching damage to the Turkish-Azerbaijani strategic partnership. Ever since Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) announced its intension to normalize relations with Azerbaijan’s arch-rival Armenia, the relationship between Ankara and Baku has cooled. The Azerbaijani leadership sent a strong message to Ankara in April, when President Ilham Aliyev refused to accept Turkish President Abdullah Gul’s invitation to attend the U.N. conference “Alliance of civilizations,” held in Istanbul.

5.

Karabakh Government Faces Little Competition

30.10.2009, IWPR

READ MORE: http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=357100&apc_state=henfcrs357090

Nagorny Karabakh, after a decade of vigorous debate, has lapsed into political stagnation as opposition figures seek the profits brought by cooperation with the government. In 2007, when Bako Sahakian announced he would run for president of Karabakh, which has declared independence but is not internationally recognised, all political parties united around him. For Gegham Baghdasarian, president of the Stepanakert press club and one of the few independent members of parliament, that was the moment when the opposition ceased to exist. “Here everything gets killed – ideas, movements, differences, competition and, as a result, development,” he told IWPR.

6.

IWPR Events Help Activist Groups in Armenia and Georgia Communicate Refugee Concerns to Government Officials

28.10.2009, IWPR

READ MORE: <http://www.iwpr.net/EN-crs-f-356973>

NGOs in the region have spoken of the important role played by IWPR in trying to get the authorities in the region to tackle the problems faced by internally displaced persons, IDPs. Over the last few months, IWPR has organised a series of conferences and round tables in Yerevan, Tbilisi and three Georgian regions (Shida Kartli, Imerti and Samegrelo-Zemo) aimed at raising awareness of IDP living conditions. The Georgian events were organised with the aim of drafting recommendations for the Tbilisi authorities and international organisations. At the end of the year, a conference in the capital is envisaged where representatives of different NGOs introduce their recommendations to high-ranking Georgian officials. In the Yerevan event, more than 45 people took part in a discussion on the problems and future of refugees in Armenia. The issue is a highly emotive one as it has a bearing on efforts to resolve the Karabakh conflict.

7.

Consequences of Failure in Caucasus Will Concern Everyone: U.S. Vice President

27.10.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/regions/scaucasus/azerbaijan/1567222.html>

The consequences of failure in the Caucasus will concern everyone, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden believes. "Ten years from now, where we are...are in that region of the world will be the real measure and test that our grandchildren are going to apply as to whether or not we succeeded in making a real change in the world in this 21st century. So, I think everyone's seized with the

consequence of not making progress in that region of the world. Therefore, because so many are focused on it, I'm more hopeful than I am pessimistic," Biden said in an interview with RFE/RL, Inosmi reported.

8.

Diyagnet to Exchange Scholars with Caucasus States

27.10.2009, Today's Zaman

READ MORE: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=191120>

The deputy president of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyagnet), Mehmet Görmez, has stated that the directorate has decided to launch an exchange program between scholars in Turkey and the autonomous states of the Caucasus after invitations to do so were given to the head of the directorate, Ali Bardakoğlu, during his visit to the region.

XIV. ENERGY

1.

Moldova Says Gas Explosion Won't Affect Supplies

08.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Moldova_Says_Gas_Explosion_Wont_Affect_Supplies/1872379.html

An explosion has damaged a Moldovan pipeline used to deliver Russian gas to the Balkans, but supplies to Europe were unaffected, the government said. A stretch of pipeline around 70 kilometers southeast of the capital Chisinau exploded on November 8, cutting supplies to some regions of Moldova, the government said in a statement.

2.

Putin Urges EU to Lend Ukraine at Least \$1 billion

08.11.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/97350.php>

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin urged the European Union on 2 November to lend Ukraine at least \$1 billion to help it pay for natural gas supplies from Russia and avoid another disruption of flows to Europe. Putin said Russia had done its part by paying transit fees of \$2.5 billion in advance. "Let the Europeans throw in a lousy billion," he said in televised remarks after talks with Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen. "Why have they gotten so stingy down there? Let them get something out of their pockets," he was quoted by the press as saying. "They have money, too."

3.

A new Route for Natural Gas to Europe

06.11.2009, The Wall Street Journal

READ MORE: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125743139771530815.html>

Nord Stream, an \$11 billion pipeline that would pump natural gas from Russia to Germany and bypass Ukraine, cleared its last major regulatory hurdles on Thursday when Sweden and Finland both gave the green light to a project that could redraw Europe's energy map. The two countries' governments said they had granted consent for the pipeline to pass through their exclusive economic zones in the Baltic Sea. Denmark approved the project last month. That leaves only Russia and Germany, whose consent is seen as a formality.

4.

Ukraine 'Pays Russian Gas Bill'

06.11.2009, BBC

READ MORE: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8347336.stm>

Ukraine has said it has settled an outstanding gas bill with Russia, calming fears Europe may suffer

any further disruptions to gas supplies. Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko blamed President Viktor Yushchenko for blocking payment, causing the delay. Last week, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin raised concerns that Ukraine had not paid for its gas.

5.

EBRD: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan “Punished” for Failing to Diversify Away from Energy Reliance

05.11.2009, APA

READ MORE: <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=110472>

The global financial crisis, which pushed some emerging European economies to the brink of collapse, revealed risky imbalances two decades after communism fell, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development said. The nations that joined the European Union, along with the southern Balkans, were driven into recession by the worldwide credit squeeze and lost investment. Commodity-rich nations including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan, were punished for failing to diversify away from energy reliance, the EBRD said in its annual Transition Report. The 30 emerging European and central Asian nations in which the EBRD invests are struggling to escape the deepest recession since they adopted free-market policies. The bank, which helped limit the impact of the financial crisis by persuading western European banks to stay in the region, has said the recovery from the region’s worst recession since the early 1990s will be “patchy” and “fragile.”

6.

Could Turkey Bring Iran's Gas to Nabucco?

04.11.2009, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2009/11/04/Could-Turkey-bring-Irans-gas-to-Nabucco/UPI-20091257356356/

The gas agreement signed between Turkey and Iran in October could bring Iranian gas supplies to Europe through the Nabucco pipeline, analysts said. Turkey agreed to fund several energy projects in Iran during bilateral talks in October. Europe aims to diversify its energy sector with the Nabucco pipeline. Despite the political backing for the project, it lacks firm commitments from potential suppliers. Iran sits on some of the largest gas reserves in the world, though Western-backed sanctions complicate its export potential.

7.

Challenges in Russia-EU Energy Cooperation

10.2009, Chatham House

READ MORE: <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/papers/view/-/id/794/>

- The energy relationship between Russia and the EU is interdependent, but it is not balanced. Whilst the EU as a whole does not suffer from excessive dependency, a number of states within the EU are heavily dependent on Russian gas.
- Visionary pipeline projects bypassing Russia will not be a substitute for modernisation, investment in interconnectors and storage, new exploration techniques and new energy sources.
- The EU's strategic challenge is to make interdependence with Russia work. This will not succeed until the EU is able to enforce its own standards of transparency and competitiveness and ensure that Europe's relatively liberal energy market is protected against interests and interference of a non-commercial nature.
- Neither will it succeed unless the framework governing sale and transit of gas between Russia, Ukraine and Europe is overhauled.

XV. GUAM

1.

Georgia to Host GUAM PA

09.11.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1575845.html>

Georgia will host the fourth meeting of the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly (PA) to be held on Nov. 9-11. Georgian Parliamentary Speaker David Bakradze will open the meeting at the Sheraton Metechi Palace Hotel. The GUAM PA will take place with participation of delegations of the Baltic Assembly and experts.

XVI. HEALTH

1.

Ukraine's Security Council to Discuss Flu Epidemic Situation

09.11.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20091109/156761101.html>

Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) will convene on Monday to discuss a flu epidemic that has killed at least 144 people in the country, a senior presidential official said. Ihor Popov, deputy chief of the presidential staff and presidential representative in Ukraine's parliament, said the NSDC would consider declaring a state of emergency, which could delay the presidential polls scheduled on January 17, 2010 until May.

2.

Swine Flu Fatalities Rise to 27 in Turkey, But Survivors Total 250,000

09.11.2009, Today's Zaman

READ MORE: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=192393>

The growing death toll in the swine flu pandemic has caused panic among the public. In an attempt to address the rising concerns, Dr. Hürrem Bodur, a member of the Health Ministry's scientific board, pointed out: "Not every infected person dies of swine flu. True, 27 have died, but 250,000 infected people have recovered and developed immunity against the virus."

3.

Slovakia Closes Border Crossings with Ukraine Amid A/H1N1 Fears

07.11.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20091107/156749426.html>

Slovakia will close on Sunday all border crossings with Ukraine, except for the car checkpoint in Vysne Nemecke, amid fears of spreading the A/H1N1 virus, the Slovakian interior minister said on Saturday. As of November 6, a flu epidemic had left 135 people dead and over 871,000 infected in Ukraine, the ex-Soviet country's Health Ministry said on its website on Saturday. However, Robert Kalinak said Bratislava was not currently considering sealing off the border with Ukraine. "Our border guards may deny entry to the Schengen zone to foreigners with flu symptoms," Kalinak said.

4.

Moldova Reports Increase in Swine Flu Infections

07.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Moldova_Reports_Increase_In_Swine_Flu_Infections/1872126.html

Moldova's Health Ministry says 25 high-school students in Chisinau have tested positive for swine flu, raising the number of those infected in the country to 65, RFE/RL's Moldovan Service reports. Elementary and secondary schools were on holiday this week, and the government announced that schools will remain closed next week as well. The Health Ministry said that the country's universities

will also take a week of holiday from November 9-15. Thus far only one swine-flu patient, a 50-year-old man, has died in Moldova.

5.

First Swine Flu Case Reported in Azerbaijan

06.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/First_Swine_Flu_Case_Reported_In_Azerbaijan/1871225.html

The first swine flu case has been officially confirmed in Azerbaijan, RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service reports. A representative of Azerbaijan's Health Care Ministry told RFE/RL that a woman from Azerbaijan's Kurdamir district who had returned from Ukraine's Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast last week was found to have swine flu -- also known as H1N1 -- and was placed in the Baku-based Pneumonia Research Center on November 4.

6.

Swine Flu Deaths in Russia Rise to 15

05.11.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091105/156717382.html>

A 25-year-old man died of the A/H1N1 virus in Ufa, the capital of Russia's Urals Republic of Bashkortostan, a source from the regional sanitary watchdog said on Thursday. "A young man died ten days after falling ill," the source said. This is the sixth laboratory confirmed swine flu case and the first swine flu death in the republic, the source added. A total of 15 people have died in Russia of swine flu and 3,122 other cases have been confirmed as the A/H1N1 virus as of November 3.

7.

Bulgaria Asks EU for More Anti-Flu Drugs

05.11.2009, EU business

READ MORE: <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/health-flu-bulgaria.1bl>

Bulgaria has asked its fellow EU members for additional supplies of anti-viral drugs in the face of a looming nationwide swine flu epidemic, health minister Bozhidar Naney said Thursday. Naney told parliament that Bulgaria had asked the European Commission for help in securing additional supplies from other countries and had also requested 200,000 extra doses from drug makers. Bulgaria with its population of 7.6 million is bracing for a nationwide (A)H1N1 influenza epidemic, with more than 100,000 people already infected with the potentially deadly virus.

8.

EU Must Help Ukraine Fight Swine Flu, Poland Says

05.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/EU_Must_Help_Ukraine_Fight_Swine_Flu_Poland_Says/1868458.html

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk has called on the European Union to help neighboring Ukraine fight a swine-flu epidemic, saying its further spread is threatening the wider bloc. Ukraine shut schools, banned public meetings, and restricted travel earlier this month in an attempt to combat the H1N1 flu epidemic, which has caused public concern in Poland. "The character of this threat demands that rapid action be undertaken at the European Union level," Tusk wrote in a letter to European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, who holds the rotating EU Presidency.

XVII. SECURITY

1.

Jitters in Eastern Europe over Russia's Military Manoeuvres

29.10.2009, The Economist

READ MORE: <http://www.economist.com/node/14776852>

Scaremongering is where defence-planning and politics overlap. Big military exercises in western Russia and Belarus, which finished earlier this month, were based on the following improbable scenario: ethnic Poles in western Belarus rise up and "terrorists" from Lithuania attack the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. More than 10,000 troops from Russia and Belarus countered them, reinforcing Kaliningrad from the sea and sending special forces behind the enemy lines. Three NATO-like brigades, one visiting, one Estonian and one Latvian, then invaded western Russia, where they were successfully rebuffed by the elite Pskov-based 76th air assault division, reinforced by a motorised rifle brigade.

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Editor: Olga Borou

Compiled by: Jan-Hinrich Wagner

EU – BLACK SEA OBSERVATORY

International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)

4 Xenophontos Str.

10557 Athens, Greece

Tel: +30 210 322321

Fax: +30 210 324 2244

Email: icbss@icbss.org

Website: www.icbss.org

Director General: Dr. Dimitrios Triantaphyllou