



POLITICO Dijver Dispatch 11-2-25

Van KOOPMAN Pol <pol.koopman@coleurope.eu>

Datum Di 2025-02-11 07:25

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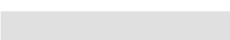
GREETINGS, this is Pol Koopman, here to guide you through the clusterfuck (pardon my French) that the EU is in its response to the two major crises that are currently unfolding in Moldova and South Sudan. It's shaping up to be a promising week, in terms of news that is. Allons-y.

CRISES? For those that have been partying too hard last weekend and have only recovered now or for those simply living under a rock, two great crises are currently taking place in Moldova – where Transnistrian forces are clashing with forces of the Moldovan government – and South-Sudan – where government forces, opposition groups and tribal militias are fighting not only each other but also forces of their northern neighbour. For more information read our take on the events [here](#).

DRIVING THE DAY: FORMING A UNITED BRUSSELS' FRONT

PRESENT ARMS! : No no, not a front in *that* sense of the word, at least not if it'd be up to certain Member States (more on that below). Unfortunately for them, the EU's foreign and security policy unofficially requires unanimity. It'll be the Foreign Affairs Council this Thursday that will reveal what instruments the EU will be using to tackle the crises, after they reach consensus on *if* they're actually willing to take care of them of course.

DISCONTENT AMONG THE TROOPS: While sources within the EU institutions speak of constructive talks, sources of certain Member States' delegations reveal otherwise. Both on what crisis is more important and on the question of either humanitarian or military means.

THEN THE WINGED HUSSARS ARRIVED: Polish official  pointed out the opportunity for Polish leadership. "As holders of the rotating Council presidency, we are trying to coordinate and reach consensus with all Member States. We're fulfilling our role and we want to understand all positions. We didn't find direct red lines yet though they might be uncovered later. Nevertheless, we hope to work on them in the GWG and PSC." We wish our Polish friends the best of luck with that. *Na zdrowie!*

MOLDOVA OR SOUTH SUDAN?

LET'S TALK ABOUT GAS BABY: Lithuanian Foreign Minister [REDACTED] expressed the Baltic country's position on the matter: "We border Russia. Our main priority is not to be blackmailed by them [on gas. This is happening in Moldova, according to sources]. This sentiment echoes widely across the Baltic Countries. We're ready to support South Sudan, but if I'm honest we're just very concerned with Moldova; thereby not saying that South Sudan is not important of course."

EASTERN APPROACHES: Anonymous Slovenian sources expressed a similar sentiment in favour of Moldova and added: "Austria and Germany are like-minded countries. We follow their leadership. Our priority, in the end, is enlargement."

AUSTRIAN LEADERSHIP?: In an exclusive interview, Austrian Foreign Minister [REDACTED] stated, without expressing a strong preference on which crisis is more important to the country, that "the EU should focus strongly on local energy production in Moldova. Either the EU [as a whole] or Member States should help ensure energy security in the country. Austria is keen to play a leading role in this." Now let's hope his *homologues* agree.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND?

... OR RATHER SPLENDID ISOLATION: "Our national tradition is more focussed on peace than on military means" remarked one Member State's delegate. Irish Foreign Minister [REDACTED] stated: "We're very much concerned about both crises. Ireland will promote peaceful solutions in line with its long-standing tradition of neutrality."

RELAX. TAKE IT EASY: "In both crises, our keyword is stability" two Southern European functionaries remarked. "A military presence might not be the most effective. There are more options on the table."

WHAT ABOUT THE HR/VP?: In two press statements, HR/VP [REDACTED] set out his plans for the EU to solve both crises, calling for ceasefires to both conflicts and a bunch of more measures (you can read them [here](#)). Though most people would find this a very sympathetic initiative, an anonymous official from a certain Central European country remarked: "EU external action is generally not efficient. I think that we should just focus on Europe." And the man is only trying to help ...

IN OTHER NEWS

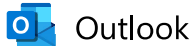
DIE WAFFEN NIEDER! : Enough talk about weapons and troops, at least for a minute. Today at **12 p.m.** the Swedes will observe a minute of silence after the mass shooting at Ribergska School last week. More information [here](#).

AGENDA

— 1st meeting of the Political and Security Committee (PSC), as well as of the Council's Geographical Working Group (GWG) at **9:00** during which national delegations as well as EU officials will discuss the EEAS's Options Paper which the Service finalised yesterday evening.

— VTC Informal Ministerial Meeting at **14:00**.

— Press conference with the Spokesperson HR/VP [REDACTED] at **16:00**.



POLITICO Dijver Dispatch 12-2-25

Van KOOPMAN Pol <pol.koopman@coleurope.eu>

Datum Wo 2025-02-12 07:25

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GOOD MORNING! Pol Koopman here, bringing you the latest news on the unfolding crisis situations in both Moldova and South Sudan and the negotiations on the EU's response to them. With only one full day to go until the Foreign Affairs Council on Thursday, things are looking ... interesting, to say the least. Let's dive in.

'GOOD'? Well, actually no; especially not if you're located in Moldova or South Sudan. The situation in the African country is becoming ever more dire, as reports speak of a "relentless cycle of retaliatory violence" and multiple Member States have called on their residents to evacuate ASAP. The situation in Moldova is none the better, as both clashes between Moldovan soldiers and Transnistrian armed forces are increasing, as well as protests against President Maia Sandu's pro-EU government. All of this makes it even more important for the EU to respond sooner rather than later.

DRIVING THE DAY: NEGOTIATING THE EU'S POSITION

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE: Yesterday afternoon, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov warned that "the actions of Western nations" could turn the country into the "next Ukraine". Russian influence in Moldova is no longer disputed, as HR/VP [REDACTED] recognised yesterday evening through a [statement](#). It's now a question on how this will affect the ongoing negotiations.

KEEPING THINGS COAL: At least, if it were up to Germany. The country launched a proposal yesterday to temporarily support Moldova with coal in order to alleviate the pressing energy crisis. Commissioners [REDACTED] (International Partnerships) and [REDACTED] (Equality; Preparedness and Crisis Management) see things differently, stating: "There's no need to revert on our international climate obligations, since there are good alternatives available, like LNG. Besides that, we should also think of Moldova's position as an accession country. We need structural solutions, not short term thinking. We cannot make a country dependant on coal and then make it join the EU."

V FOR VENDETTA: Or for veto, which can be the same thing really, depending on how you look at things. "My country will veto if the coal plan makes it into the final proposal" one Member State official already threatened. Negotiators better be warned ...

TO KILL, OR NOT TO KILL: Also that remains the question, as Member States still don't seem to have reached consensus on whether or not to provide Moldova with lethal equipment. "We have already

denied small arms to Moldova” a representative of a Northern European Member State said. “But it should come back on the table again. If we act like we did in Ukraine, we’ll be late as always.” The issue is viewed differently in more Southern regions of the continent. “Lethal armaments are a red line for us” according to an official.

WHAT ABOUT SOUTH SUDAN?: Leaked draft Council Conclusions reveal that the EU’s current position is for the creation of a new EU Special Representative to facilitate the implementation of the 2018 peace deal. The nationality of the candidate for this new EU top-job – a fiercely debated question as some reports suggest – remains still unknown.

YOU’RE IN THE ARMY NOW: bigger Member States say, as they apparently are pushing for military intervention in the African region. “[They want] military intervention, but the Commission is now rolling back because they’re seeing that it might have been a little bit too ambitious” a more pacifist Member State revealed.

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

IT’S LONELY AT THE TOP: And HR/VP [REDACTED] might have taken that saying quite literally, as anonymous Member State sources complain about his “very hierarchic” style of command. And it’s not just the EU’s chief diplomat, one Member State continued. “There is a growing discontent among the ministers on the fact that the Institutions don’t seem to cooperate with the Member States.”

FROM THE IVORY TOWER: On [Ekix](#), HR/VP Spokesperson [REDACTED] lamented the allegations about his boss, claiming they’re “detached from the truth of the EU crisis management process”, demanding a rectification from the reporting news outlet. EEAS Managing Director for Peace, Security and Defence [REDACTED] also doesn’t recognise his agency in such remarks. “I certainly am approachable. Though I have the feeling that the Polish Council Presidency feels a bit sidelined. If that’s the case, that’s not intentional at all.”

AGENDA

— 2nd meeting of the Political and Security Committee (PSC), as well as of the Council’s Geographical Working Group (GWG) at **9:00** during which national delegations as well as EU officials will discuss the draft Council Conclusions in the run-up to Thursday’s Foreign Affairs Council.

— 3rd meeting of the PSC, as well as the GWG at **14:00**.



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RISE AND SHINE! Pol Koopman again, here to update on the most recent developments in the negotiations on the EU's crisis response to the ever-worsening situations in Moldova and South Sudan. Ready yourself for this week's *moment suprême* as the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) is only three-and-a-half hours away. Will the EU's 27 Member States be able to reach a consensus? Let's dive in.

NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN: Things haven't gotten any better in either Moldova or South Sudan. In fact, you can safely say they've gotten worse. In Moldova the autonomous region of Gagauzia [declared independence](#) from the country yesterday, with officials pointing fingers at Moscow. Meanwhile, an [explosion](#) in a military depot in Moldova – which killed at least 12 civilians, prompted Transnistria to launch an attack. In South Sudan evacuations of EU citizens have begun this morning, as fights all across the country are still raging on. It's high time for the EU to respond and today will decide whether the bloc will be adequately able to do so.

DRIVING THE DAY: ALIGNMENT ISSUES

AEIO-OUCH!: Austria is acting recklessly on both crisis files, multiple officials say, undermining everything. "They don't know what they're doing. They're continuously blocking all proposals. They're taking an even stronger stance than Hungary" one official remarked. A Southern European official summarised the situation as follows: "They're having a ball that nobody's attending."

THE HABSBURG WAY: Another official went even further, stating that "the minister is so high on his horse that even his own officials are trying to convince him to stop blocking, but he just won't move. Now innocent civilians might die because of Austria ..."

GRÜß GOTT!: Austrian Foreign Minister  perceives things differently. "We stand firm behind our principles and we're ready to repeat them to all that are willing to listen" he said. What specific principles the *Außenminister* was hinting at, he did not clarify. "They're clear for everyone. I

don't need to repeat them." Just as vague as their principles are, seems to be Austria's negotiation strategy. "Of course I have a negotiation strategy" the minister added. "But I won't give it to you. Why? Because you are the press and I am the minister. Difficult negotiations are done around the negotiation table, not somewhere else." Let's see how that works out for him.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS: Despite Austria being pointed-out as being the big bad hardliner, Hungary's not making friends either. "We have the Russians on the outside and the Hungarians on the inside" one Eastern European official remarked. Another official said they have concerns "that the Hungarian and Slovakian delegations are advancing Russian interests within the Council." An Hungarian official simply said: "All that we discuss, is in the EU's interest. Sometimes contradicting is only good for the discussion." At least it's an interesting way to call on the Socratic method.

SLOVENIA?: Almost, Slovakia. And they're apparently still bitter about being confused with that other country ... besides that, they're not too fond of Moldovan refugees either. "They're unwilling to recognise the victims of the crisis as refugees, calling them migrants instead. We'd be setting a very dangerous precedent here" another Eastern European official remarked. "Which could even damage Moldova's accession to the EU."

ALIGNING HARD OR HARDLY ALIGNING?: Although the three countries seem to share the same interest in being uncooperative, an official pointed out, this shared experience doesn't bring them closer together. "They seem to be more isolated than ever and they know it ... yet they're now turning on each other. They don't believe in their own alliance anymore, it seems ..."

THE HR/VP'S SHINING LIGHT

AT YOUR SERVICE: After accusatory reports of HR/VP [REDACTED] apparent autocratic leadership style earlier this week, the EU's top-diplomat sat down with *Politico* to explain *his* vision on his way of working and how he's approaching the final negotiations. "I'm not trying to play the ministers' boss" the EU's top diplomat said. "I am at the service of the Member States in finding a coordinated and coherent European foreign policy." The HR/VP pointed out how he's prioritising meetings with Member States "though I cannot talk to everyone at the same time."

JUST A FORMALITY: The Union's 'foreign minister' stated furthermore he has good hope for today's FAC. "I've talked to the Member States and I know what issues still are thorny. Some details have to be rephrased. Some others have to be reworked. They'll be on the agenda and we'll have the time to discuss them. It is a matter of formalisation."

IN OTHER NEWS: SOUTH SUDAN'S NEWEST TOP JOB

THE LUCK OF THE IRISH: Though nothing is confirmed yet, there's talk going around on who will be the new EU Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan. Some claim it will be the Irishman [REDACTED] a seasoned negotiator and visiting professor at the College of Europe.

ER IST WIEDER DA: Yet others say it'll be **Charles Michel**. You can get a diplomat out of diplomacy but not the other way around, it seems. If Michel's indeed our next *man in Sudan*, let's just hope he's made use of the past few months to work on his people-skills ...

AGENDA

— COREPER II Meeting at **9:00** in preparation of the FAC.

- Morning session of the Foreign Affairs Council at **11:00**, followed by a formal lunch.
- Afternoon session of the Foreign Affairs Council at **14:00**, where the 27 Member States are supposed to reach a conclusion on the EU's crisis response by the end of the day. The final Council Conclusions are to be published tonight at **23:59**.