



ODAP
Dünyayı Okumak İçin...

ODAP CENTER GLOBAL

BULLETIN - 15



Brussels Summit: Türkiye-EU Trade Diplomacy



Why the Modi-Xi Meeting Is a Pause, Not a Pivot?



Hezbollah and the Lebanese State's Monopoly on Force: Disarmament, Sovereignty and The Security Dilemma



Recent Developments in the Great Sea Interconnector Project and Its Regional Implications



Ukraine's Energy Truce: The Limits of American Mediation



The Postponed EU-GCC Summit: The Diplomatic Cost of Gulf Insecurity



Croatia-Serbia Tension: What Does the Election Interference Accusation Mean?



The Nord Stream Sabotage Trial in Germany and the Future of European Energy



ODAP
Dünyayı Okumak İçin...



Brussels Summit: Türkiye-EU Trade Diplomacy

The 3rd EU-Türkiye High Level Dialogue on Trade was conducted in Brussels on October 13, 2026. The meeting was co-chaired by EU Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič and Turkish Minister of Trade Ömer Bolat. During the meeting, bilateral trade relations were discussed, with a focus on market access, customs cooperation, and supply chains. As bilateral trade reached €217.6 billion in 2025, the need to update the Customs Union and remove existing technical barriers to trade was reaffirmed by both sides. One of the main outcomes of the dialogue was reaching an agreement on the mutual recognition of the AEO programs of the EU and Turkey. It was stated by Nail Olpak, President of DEİK, that the current structure of the Customs Union no longer meets today's trade needs and therefore needs to be updated. It was also stated that this modernization would create new opportunities for cooperation in e-commerce, public procurement, and agriculture as well as automotive and manufacturing sectors. In line with these expectations, an important

statement was made by Maxime Prévot, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium. It was stated by Prévot that while the EU is making new economic agreements with countries outside Europe, it is still difficult to explain why a stronger approach cannot be taken toward neighboring Türkiye. It can be argued that the European Commission has taken a more moderate approach to this update in order to reduce its dependence on inputs from China and shift supply chains closer to Europe. However, in the case of Türkiye, the Cyprus issue, Türkiye's relations with Russia, and some trade barriers are often mentioned as important concerns. From Türkiye's perspective, the main problem is that the Customs Union was designed according to the trade and economic conditions of the 1990s. In addition, problems are caused by the free trade agreements signed by the EU. Although certain political disagreements persist, it is anticipated that both parties will find common ground to strengthen and improve their economic and diplomatic relations. In this regard, progress will likely be made through practical and technical steps.



Hezbollah and the Lebanese State's Monopoly on Force: Disarmament, Sovereignty and The Security Dilemma

On 15 October 2026, Hezbollah MP Hassan Fadlallah admitted that the shipment of around 780 kilograms of explosives, which had been seized by Lebanese security forces a few days earlier, belonged to Hezbollah. The group claimed that the explosives were not intended for targets inside Lebanon, but for use against Israeli forces in the south. The Lebanese government, on the other hand, continues to argue that military activities and the movement of weapons outside state control cannot be accepted. From a security perspective, the main issue is not only the amount of explosives that was seized. The deeper question is who has the final authority to decide when and how military force is used inside Lebanese territory. In the modern understanding of the state, sovereignty is not only about internationally recognized borders. It is also connected to the state's ability to control the legitimate use of force within its own territory. In Lebanon, Hezbollah still keeps an independent armed capacity and

can make military decisions outside the formal state structure. Therefore, the problem is broader than the simple fact that Hezbollah possesses weapons. If a non-state actor can decide which target to attack, when to act and which weapons to use without the approval of the central government, a gap appears between de jure sovereignty and de facto security control. At the same time, the seizure of the explosives shows that the Lebanese state is not completely powerless. However, the fact that such a shipment could still be organized by an independent armed group also reveals the limits of state control. Still, Hezbollah's disarmament cannot be understood only as a question of state capacity. Hezbollah argues that the continued presence of Israeli forces and ongoing Israeli attacks justify keeping its military capabilities. President Joseph Aoun, meanwhile, has stressed that weapons outside state control should be brought under state authority, while also calling for pressure on Israel to stop its attacks and withdraw from Lebanese territory. This creates a disarmament-security dilemma. The Lebanese state wants to strengthen its sovereignty by limiting Hezbollah's independent military power, while Hezbollah argues that disarmament under continuing external threat would weaken its own security. For this reason, the confiscated explosives should not be viewed only as an illegal weapons case. They are also a sign of the wider struggle over who provides security and



who holds real authority in Lebanon. The Lebanese state can become the dominant security actor only if it is able not only to control Hezbollah's weapons, but also to reduce the external threats that Hezbollah uses to justify its armed presence. Therefore, the central issue in Lebanon is not simply disarmament, but whether the state can become the final and effective authority in the security field.



Ukraine's Energy Truce: The Limits of American Mediation

On 11 October 2026, US President Donald Trump announced an energy ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, claiming that both sides would suspend attacks on energy infrastructure. However, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Ukraine had not been properly informed about the arrangement. Although Kyiv initially refrained from attacking Russian energy facilities, Zelenskyy subsequently announced that Ukraine would resume strikes after Russia continued attacking Ukrainian infrastructure. On 15 October, Ukrainian forces targeted an

oil refinery in Russia's Ryazan region, marking a further deterioration in the situation. Reuters and the Associated Press reported on the renewed attacks and the growing disagreement between Washington and Kyiv. The episode demonstrates the limitations of diplomatic initiatives that lack clearly defined obligations. A ceasefire requires both parties to understand what activities are prohibited, how compliance will be monitored and what happens when violations occur. In this case, the absence of an effective verification mechanism made it difficult to establish mutual trust. For Ukraine, energy infrastructure is central to both civilian survival and military resilience. Russian attacks on power plants and gas facilities can disrupt electricity supplies, weaken industrial production and increase the humanitarian consequences of the war. Ukrainian strikes on Russian refineries, meanwhile, seek to reduce Moscow's fuel production and impose economic costs on its war effort. Consequently, suspending such attacks without reliable Russian compliance could undermine Kyiv's bargaining position. The US role also raises questions about competing foreign-policy priorities. Washington wants to encourage negotiations and limit the economic consequences of the conflict, including pressure on fuel prices. However, policies that favour short-term economic arrangements with Russia may weaken Ukrainian confidence in American security commitments. The Financial Times has



examined Zelensky's criticism of Washington's approach, while The Guardian has highlighted the continuing obstacles to a negotiated settlement. The European dimension is equally significant. If Ukraine increasingly doubts the consistency of US support, European governments may face greater pressure to provide military assistance, strengthen their defence industries and coordinate sanctions. Nevertheless, disagreements among Western allies could reduce their collective leverage over Moscow. Ultimately, the proposed energy truce illustrates that mediation depends on more than the diplomatic influence of a powerful state. It requires credible guarantees, reciprocal restraint and agreement on the meaning of compliance. Without these conditions, a ceasefire can become another instrument of political pressure rather than a reliable step towards peace.



Croatia-Serbia Tension: What Does the Election Interference Accusation Mean?

Political tension between Croatia and Serbia has come up again, this time because of

accusations of foreign interference in elections. In the protest note sent by Belgrade to Zagreb, Croatia was accused of interfering in the upcoming election process in Serbia, while the Croatian government firmly rejected the claims. In Zagreb's statements, it is thought that the accusations are related to the political atmosphere in Serbia and that the government is trying to explain the pressure it faces at home through the idea of an external threat. It may be incomplete to view this development only as a diplomatic dispute between the two countries. Foreign interference in elections is a broad concept in political science. A country's interference in another country's elections is not limited to activities aimed at directly changing election results. Supporting political actors, influencing public opinion and shaping election campaigns can also be considered part of this concept. For this reason, it cannot be said that the claims against Croatia are theoretically impossible. However, it would also be wrong to accept the claims as proof of interference. The issue is more sensitive in the Balkans. The history of relations between Croatia and Serbia cannot be considered separately from the political and social memories left by the wars during the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Academic studies show that foreign policy and domestic politics cannot be clearly separated, especially in the former Yugoslav region. Carment's study on the Balkans draws attention to how the foreign



ODAP
Dünyayı Okumak İçin...

policy actions of Serbian leaders are sometimes connected to domestic political concerns. This historical background explains why the mutual accusations that emerge today quickly gain a wider political meaning. The main point to consider here is that the accusation has emerged during an election period. During elections, the idea of an external threat can become a useful tool for political governments. Focusing on interference by foreign actors instead of discussing domestic economic, social or political problems can shift voters' attention in another direction. However, this possibility does not mean that Serbia's claims are false. To determine whether they are true, there must be concrete evidence and independent verification of the nature of the alleged interference and the political actors being targeted. For now, this discussion can be seen as another example of diplomatic tension between Croatia and Serbia. However, the fact that the accusations have emerged during an election period suggests that the issue is not limited to foreign policy. It will not be political statements but verifiable evidence that shows whether the claims are based on actual interference. Therefore, the best approach at this stage is to consider the evidence behind the claims and the history of relations between the two countries together, rather than accepting the statements of either side as established facts.



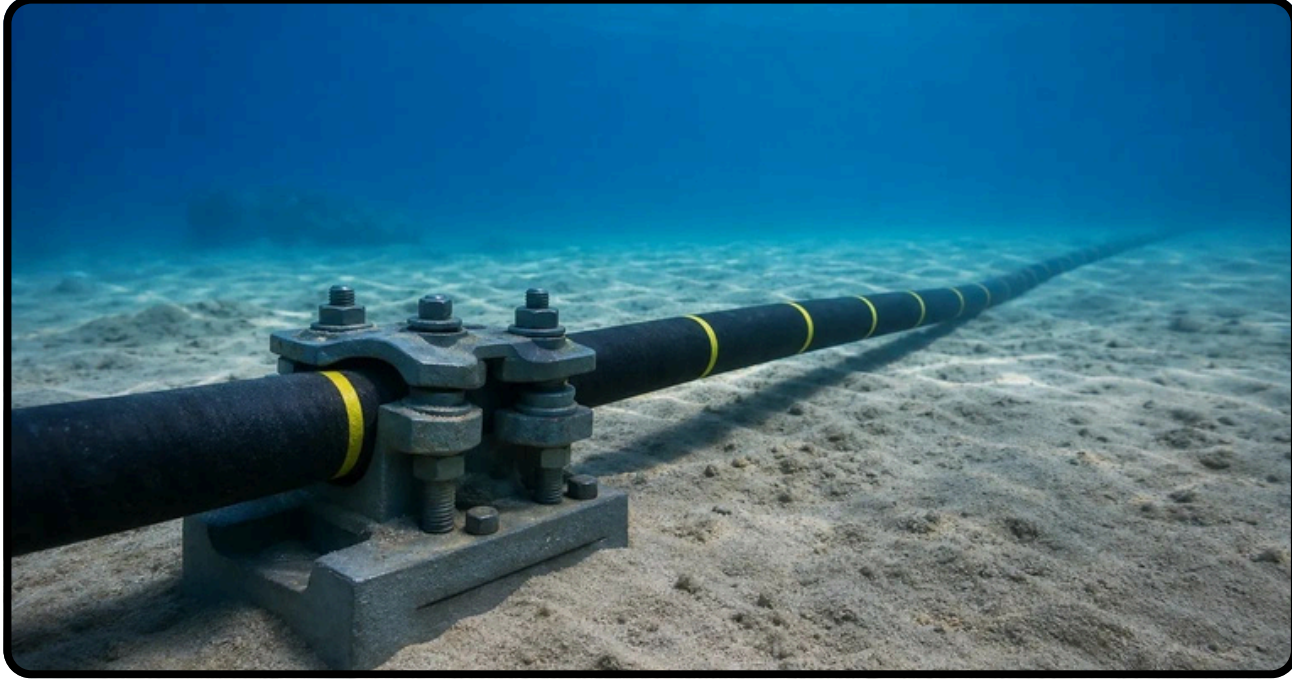
Why the Modi-Xi Meeting Is a Pause, Not a Pivot?

The recent high profile meeting of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in New Delhi has given rise to hopes of better relations between the two countries. The meeting has drawn international attention after renewed diplomatic talks and some progress on border tensions. But even with these positive signs, it may be premature to view this meeting as a big change in relations. It can be seen as an effort to ease tensions rather than resolve long-standing issues. There are many reasons for both countries to improve communication. India-China ties have been marred by military tensions and a trust deficit since the Galwan Valley clash in 2020. Both sides do not want another serious conflict, as it may damage its political and economic interests. Tighter relations with India could assist China in deflecting pressure from U.S. led partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region. For India, reduced tensions on the border would enable the country to better focus on economic growth and internal development. So even if they have bigger disagreements, both countries



have good reasons to want to avoid further conflict. But despite these common interests, their relationship continues to be affected by important problems. Improved diplomatic communications doesn't mean that the two countries have changed their perceptions of each other. India remains wary of Chinese investments, especially in the technology and manufacturing sectors, citing national security and local industry concerns. In addition, the balance of trade is heavily in favor of China, which raises economic concerns for India. These problems point to the fact that improved political relations do not necessarily mean better economic cooperation. Another important issue is regional security. India and China have not yet reached a final settlement to their border dispute along the Line of Actual Control. Some military withdrawals may reduce tensions but do not solve the larger territorial problem. India is also deeply concerned about China's close relations with Pakistan and its growing footprint in the Indian Ocean. Consequently, the two countries are likely to continue competing. Overall, the Modi-Xi meeting is a good step toward de-escalation of tensions but not necessarily a major shift in their relationship. The two governments seem ready to put aside their differences to avoid any further conflict. But lasting improvement will depend on progress in border talks, trade relations, and regional security. Until these issues are resolved, the

meeting is more likely to be a pause in strategic competition rather than the beginning of a new partnership.



Recent Developments in the Great Sea Interconnector Project and Its Regional Implications

On October 15, 2026, Greece announced that an application had been submitted to resume seabed surveys for the Great Sea Interconnector project. The aim of this project is to connect the electricity networks of Cyprus, Greece, and Israel, improve Cyprus's energy security, and provide an alternative electricity supply for Europe. Planning for the Great Sea Interconnector project began in 2012. However, the project has faced long delays due to its high cost and disagreements between Türkiye and Greece over their continental shelves. Türkiye has concerns about the project because some activities may take place in an area related to its continental shelf claims. The French company Nexans, which is responsible for laying the undersea cables, also plays a role in moving the project forward and restarting the seabed surveys. Türkiye's concerns about the



project are also related to the maritime agreement it signed with Libya in 2019. Greece opposes this agreement, and the two countries have different views on maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean. Türkiye may see the project as a challenge to its regional interests. Disagreements between Türkiye, Greece, and the Greek Cypriot Administration over the Cyprus issue may increase political tensions surrounding the project. The project may also benefit for the European Union. One of the reasons for its support may be Europe's concerns about energy prices and its dependence on Russian energy supplies during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War. The European Union wants to find alternative energy sources to improve its energy security. The United States supports this project because it can strengthen energy cooperation between its allies, including Cyprus and European countries. The project may help reduce dependence on external energy suppliers and strengthen cooperation among Western allies. The Great Sea Interconnector project is also related to the long-standing disagreements between Türkiye and Greece, as both countries want to protect their regional interests and increase their influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Türkiye's maritime security concerns and Greece's opposition to the 2019 maritime agreement between Türkiye and Libya are among the factors that may make the development of this project more difficult. If the

project cannot move forward in the future, tensions between Türkiye and Greece may increase further. The involvement of countries such as France and the United States in supporting the project may increase the possibility of Russia becoming involved in the issue in the future. In my opinion, Russia may be concerned about the project because it wants to maintain its energy exports and may not welcome stronger energy cooperation between Israel, Cyprus, and European countries.



The Postponed EU-GCC Summit: The Diplomatic Cost of Gulf Insecurity

The European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council were scheduled to meet in Riyadh on October 24, 2026. However, it was announced that the Second EU-GCC Summit had been postponed to a later date. The European Council did not provide any details regarding the reason for the postponement. The GCC, however, cited the ongoing Houthi attacks, the suspension of flights at King Khalid International Airport, and concerns over the safety of the participating delegations.



In a recent attack on Riyadh's airport claimed by the Houthis, 13 people were killed and hundreds were injured. This development shows that the security crisis has consequences beyond the military sphere. This summit was intended to be more than a political meeting. The parties were expected to discuss and cooperate on several issues, ranging from trade to energy. Another important purpose of the meeting was to strengthen solidarity between Europe, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf countries during the war, while maintaining the momentum created by the first summit in 2024. However, the postponement has the potential to slow cooperation between the parties and delay the steps they might take to address common problems. Both the EU and the GCC have stated that they remain committed to strategic cooperation. Nevertheless, the postponement is also a sign of how seriously the region's security situation has deteriorated. This decision is significant not only for the region but also for Saudi Arabia. Riyadh has sought to host international summits in order to strengthen its central position among the Gulf countries. In the international arena, the willingness to host such meetings is important, but the main priority should be ensuring that participating delegations can reach the host country safely. The inability of the capital's main airport to operate because of attacks could put pressure on Riyadh's image as a secure and accessible diplomatic hub. Still, a

single postponement does not mean the end of Saudi Arabia's regional diplomatic role. The new date and location of the meeting will be announced later. This development is important for both the region and Saudi Arabia. From a regional perspective, the postponement of such an important summit turns a problem of military deterrence into a question of diplomatic credibility. A prolonged postponement or the relocation of the summit to another country could result in a diplomatic setback for Saudi Arabia. The country's claim to being a regional diplomatic centre will be measured not only by its willingness to host international meetings but also by its ability to provide secure access and uninterrupted diplomatic activity.



The Nord Stream Sabotage Trial in Germany and the Future of European Energy

A former Ukrainian military officer has gone on trial in Germany, accused of orchestrating the covert operation that blew up the Nord Stream gas pipelines in September 2022. This sabotage effectively cut Western Europe off from its primary source of Russian natural gas.



ODAP
Dünyayı Okumak İçin...

Serhii Kuznetsov is being held responsible for the explosions in the Baltic Sea. The blasts also damaged the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, a multibillion-dollar project that Germany had suspended just before the conflict began and which never became operational. Despite this incident, Germany remains Ukraine's largest backer and arms supplier in Europe. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has consistently denied allegations of having prior knowledge of the attack or ordering it. Before the war, pipelines like Nord Stream, Nord Stream 2, Brotherhood, TurkStream, and Yamal-Europe were the main arteries of Europe's energy supply. For years, Europe relied heavily on cheap Russian gas, but this dynamic shifted rapidly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Following heavy Western sanctions, Russia first reduced its gas exports and spiked prices, eventually halting deliveries almost entirely. While Europe pivoted, Turkey has maintained its natural gas imports from Russia using the TurkStream and Blue Stream pipelines across the Black Sea. Meanwhile, the European Union has managed to secure alternative supplies from countries such as Norway, the United States, Qatar, and Algeria, while also accelerating its investments in green energy. Even as the judicial process regarding the sabotage unfolds, bilateral relations between Ukraine and Germany remain solid. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz continues to advocate for increased

military support for Kyiv. On the energy front, while Europe has managed to replace cheap Russian gas through various alternatives, it is now paying a significantly higher economic price to sustain its energy security.