EUROPE EXPLAINED

SCAN TO READ & PLAY

"News that helps you think like a global thinker."

Vol. 1 • No. 17 • Tuesday, November 17, 2026 • London, UK • 2 Pages

TOP STORY • NUCLEAR TALKS

Three Leaders, One Room in Shenzhen, and No Seat for Europe

Trump says he will raise Ukraine with Xi and Putin. Kyiv warns against a new Yalta, and the EU says a ceasefire must come first.

Written and fact-checked by AI · News Pebbles

On Thursday, in the Chinese city of Shenzhen, the leaders of the United States, China and Russia are due to meet together for the first time ever. Their subject is nuclear stockpiles: the last nuclear arms treaty between the US and Russia expired in February 2026. A White House official said no disarmament deal is expected; the meeting is a starting point. China, which calls the meeting "ground-breaking," has long insisted that the US and Russia cut their own large arsenals first. No European government will be in the room.

Ukraine may come up anyway. US officials had said Donald Trump would avoid the war, but Trump says he will raise it with Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin, along with the war in Iran. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has warned against a repeat of the 1945 Yalta Conference, where the US, Britain and the Soviet Union divided Germany into occupation zones. The Kremlin replies that any Shenzhen agreements cannot be enforced on others.

Europe is preparing its own voice. After a meeting in Dublin, leaders agreed that the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Poland, with European Council and NATO officials, will speak for Europe in future peace talks. The EU's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, has set out its condition: "A ceasefire must come first."

A SUMMIT FAR FROM EUROPE



Locator map | Natural Earth

Trump, Xi and Putin meet in southern China; Ukraine, whose war Trump says he will raise, is thousands of kilometres away.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Ukraine's future decides how safe the rest of Europe feels. When the biggest nuclear powers talk without Europe, its governments have to be heard in other ways: by choosing who speaks for them, and by setting conditions of their own.

WORLD • UNITED STATES

A Router Swap in Arkansas Grounded Every Departure in the US

Flights are close to normal again, and Washington is arguing over who pays to replace an ageing network.

Friday 13 November showed how much air travel depends on a network most passengers never see. At 3:36 p.m. Eastern Time, America's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) halted departures across the country, ordering a nationwide ground stop after its communications network became unstable. Roughly 3,500 aircraft were already airborne; every one of them came down safely. The FAA's chief, Bryan Bedford, said the stop was ordered "out of an abundance of caution."

Officials said there was no sign of a cyberattack. Instead, the trouble began with an upgrade. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said a worker for L3Harris, the defence firm that owns and operates the network tying US air traffic control together, was swapping old copper wire for fiber and replacing a router at a remote site: a radio facility in El Dorado, Arkansas. Once switched on, the new router bombarded its neighbours with about 1,000 log-on attempts every four to five seconds, and the system overloaded, disrupting communications at 17 of the FAA's 22 Air Route Traffic Control Centers. A similar upgrade at a radar facility in Amarillo, Texas, weeks earlier had added to the strain.

Departures resumed at about 8:20 p.m., after more than four hours. The last nationwide stop came in January 2023, when an FAA computer system failed, and the one before that after the 11 September 2001 attacks. The flight-tracking service FlightAware counted about 9,159 cancellations on Friday alone. By Monday most major airlines were running normally or close to it.

The argument that follows is about money. Duffy called the $12.5 billion down payment for modernising the system not enough, and the administration now wants $30 billion. Two members of Congress, Rick Larsen and Andre Carson, countered that only $1 billion of the $12.5 billion has been used. Bedford says about 70% of the network has already moved from copper to fiber.

HOW ONE ROUTER STOPPED US FLIGHTS

1	A contractor replaces a router at a remote FAA site
2	The new router floods the others and the system overloads
3	Communications are disrupted at 17 of 22 control centres
4	The FAA orders a nationwide ground stop

The chain of events officials described, from a routine upgrade to a nationwide halt.

CONNECT THE DOTS

Economics: Approving money and spending it are different steps. Congress approved $12.5 billion, but two lawmakers say only $1 billion has been used, while part of the old copper network still waits to be replaced.

UNITED KINGDOM • BREXIT

Burnham Readies a Brexit Verdict Before Facing EU Leaders

Four days before his first UK-EU summit, the Prime Minister was due to argue Britain has "lost more than we have gained".

In 2016, 52% of British voters chose to leave the EU. On Monday, Prime Minister Andy Burnham was due to tell the Lord Mayor's Banquet in the City of London that the move has not paid off: "We have lost more than we have gained." His complaint is that a "needlessly hard" exit raised barriers for firms that sell to EU countries.

The real test comes on Friday 20 November in Brussels, at Burnham's first formal summit with EU leaders. There he is expected to sign agreements covering food, energy and a youth scheme under which young Britons could study and work in EU countries, and young Europeans in Britain. He puts the gain for the British economy at about $22.5 billion, roughly 0.4% of GDP.

Brussels has demands of its own. The EU dislikes Britain's call for a yearly limit on the youth scheme, and wants its students at British universities charged the lower "home" fees. At home, the Conservatives say Labour is "dragging us into the European Union via the back door," leaving Britain to follow EU rules it cannot shape.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The deals decide how easily British firms trade with Europe, and whether young Britons could study and work in the EU.

Also in United Kingdom

• Europe: Burnham spoke to European leaders in Dublin last Thursday, alongside Zelenskyy.

• Climate: UK minister Miatta Fahnbulleh is expected at COP31 in Türkiye.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

• Estonia: It will close all three border crossings with Russia from 1 December, after foiling an arson attempt on a drone factory that it says Russian military intelligence ordered.

• Space: Europe's Euclid telescope has found its first comet, about 1.3 billion km away, between the orbits of Jupiter and Saturn.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

Words that unlock today's news

Arsenal
A country's stock of weapons. Today: China wants the US and Russia to cut their large nuclear arsenals first.

Leverage
Power to influence what someone else decides. Today: Kaja Kallas says the EU's leverage is its sanctions and frozen assets.

Sanctions
Penalties meant to change a country's or person's behaviour. Today: the EU added 113 names to its sanctions on Russia.

Referendum
A vote by a whole country on one question. Today: 52% of British voters chose to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Yalta Conference of February 1945 was held at the Livadia Palace in Crimea, on the Black Sea coast.

EUROPE • SANCTIONS

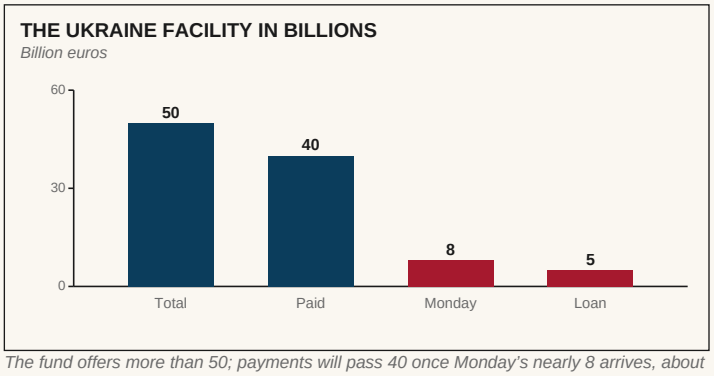
EU Hits Nearly 50 Russian Banks and Sends Kyiv Its Biggest Payment Yet

"We have leverage," says Kaja Kallas, as the EU uses money to earn a say in how the war ends.

Sanctions let a government punish people and companies without fighting: their assets in the EU are frozen, and EU businesses may not give them money. On Monday, EU foreign ministers in Brussels added 113 names to their sanctions on Russia, including nearly 50 Russian banks and financial institutions, to cut off "the financial channels" that fund the war.

Money flowed the other way too. Ministers approved nearly 8 billion euros for Ukraine, the largest single payment so far from the Ukraine Facility, a fund offering more than 50 billion euros through 2027. About 5 billion euros of it comes from the Ukraine Support Loan, and Kyiv completed more than 20 reform steps to unlock it. Once it arrives, payments since mid-2024 will pass 40 billion euros.

The EU's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, who chaired the meeting, said Russia's demands are "a clear pretext for keeping the war going." Europe's tools, she said, are "our sanctions" and "frozen assets."



The fund offers more than 50; payments will pass 40 once Monday's nearly 8 arrives, about 5 of it from the Ukraine Support Loan.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Sanctions and money are Europe's main tools in the war. With the US leading the peace talks, the EU is using both as leverage to win a say.

THINK LIKE AN ANALYST

Do sanctions on banks hurt a government's war effort more than ordinary people? What evidence would show whether the EU's leverage is working?

*New to this story? Catch up with **The story so far** on Read & Play.*

SPORTS CORNER

FOOTBALL: TEN MEN END SPAIN'S RUN

England beat world champions **Spain 3-2** in Madrid in the Nations League on Sunday, ending a **43-match unbeaten run**. Harry Kane, Ezri Konsa and Ben White scored, and after England went down to ten men, goalkeeper **James Trafford** made late saves. England now top their group on goal difference.

WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

• Shenzhen, Thursday: whether Ukraine comes up when Trump, Xi and Putin meet.

• Brussels, Friday: whether Burnham signs the food, energy and youth deals.

"Who sits at the table shapes what is decided on it."

You are not just reading the news — you are learning to think about it. See you in two days.