

EURASIA DIGEST

Monthly Compilation of News from Russia, Central Asia & Europe

Vol 5 | Issue 2 | February 2025



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China-Russia Trade Hit Record High In 2024

Trade between China and Russia [reached](#) a record high in 2024. China's General Administration of Customs reported that the total value of trade between the two countries stood at US\$ 244.8 billion. The total value of the imports and exports between the two nations amounted to \$244.8 billion, a modest increase from \$240.1 billion in 2023. While the trade reached an all-time high, the year-on-year growth rate has slowed significantly compared to the 26.3 per cent surge in 2023. Meanwhile, in his New Year message, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized to his Russian counterpart, President Vladimir Putin, that the two countries "have consistently moved forward hand-in-hand along the correct path of non-alignment."

Russia and Iran Signed Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

Russia and Iran [signed](#) a "comprehensive strategic partnership" on 17 January 2025 during the visit of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Moscow. President Pezeshkian stated that "neither Iran nor Russia will give in to the demands of the West" and that they can adopt policies, develop the economy, and ensure security, tranquillity and development in the region together. He added that both sides have pledged not to cooperate with a third party who attacks one of them and that security cooperation is underway between the two countries.

Syria's New Leadership Urged Russia to 'Address Past Mistakes' in First Talks Since Assad's Ouster

Syria's new leadership, on 29 January, [called](#) on Moscow to "address past mistakes" during talks with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov - the first such meeting since the ouster of Bashar al-Assad. The statement released by Syria "stressed that restoring relations must address past

mistakes, respect the will of the Syrian people and serve their interests". The talks also covered "justice for the victims of the brutal war waged by the Assad regime".

Germany's Russian LNG Imports Surged Over 500% in 2024

Germany's [imports](#) of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) soared by 500 per cent in 2024 year-on-year, reaching a total value of 7.32 billion euros. Though Berlin has officially banned direct imports of Russian LNG to its new facilities on the north coast, it has received Russian LNG via intermediary ports elsewhere in Europe. Today, between 3 and 9.2 per cent of Germany's gas supply originates from Russia, reaching the country through other EU members. Meanwhile, Russia's total share of the EU gas market has fallen from 40 to 6 per cent.

Armenia Signs Strategic Partnership with The United States of America

On 14 January, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan [and](#) his American counterpart, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, signed a Strategic Partnership in Washington, D.C. The document would focus on cooperation between our two democracies based on shared values and common interests. These include advancing democracy and economic freedom, defending sovereignty and territorial integrity, strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, supporting innovation and technological advances, and bolstering energy security.

Uzbekistan President Visits United Arab Emirates

The Uzbekistan President officially [visited](#) the United Arab Emirates from 13 to 16 January, including Abu Dhabi and Dubai. During his stay in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi, the President held productive negotiations with the President of the UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, as well as meetings

with the heads of major state institutions, companies, and banks of the country. During the visit, there was also the Declaration on the Establishment of Strategic Partnership.

Iran President Visits Tajikistan

On 15 January, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Honourable Masoud Pezeshkian, arrived on a [state](#) visit to the Republic of Tajikistan. At least 13 documents on different cooperation areas based on economy and tourism were signed during the visit. In the same visit, the two nations signed 23 cooperation documents to expand in political, economic, cultural, educational, transport, customs, and trade fields.

Aleksandr Lukashenko Wins Belarus Elections

On 27 January, Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko won the [elections](#) with 86.82 per cent of the voters casting their ballots in his favour. The closest competitor was Sergei Aleksandrovich Syrankov, who received about 3.21% of the votes. This would be the seventh time Lukashenko has won the elections.

France to Host Syria Conference in Paris on February

President Emmanuel Macron's office [announced](#) on 17 January that France will hold an international conference on Syria to aid in the country's transition following 50 years of Assad family dominance next month. In a statement Thursday, the French presidency announced that France will host a meeting on Syria in Paris on February 13. Macron's office said the two Presidents spoke about the Syrian crisis after speaking with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Macron Calls on Europe to 'Wake Up' and Spend More On Defence as Trump takes Office

French President Emmanuel Macron on 20 January [urged](#) Europe to increase defence

expenditure and reduce its reliance on the United States as President Donald Trump is expected to change U.S. foreign policy. Macron underlined the importance of Ukraine's strategic independence and sustained assistance. Despite the risks of conflict with Russia, there is discussion about the possible deployment of Western forces as peacekeepers in Ukraine.

Latvia Reports External Damage to Crucial Undersea Cable in Baltics

On January 26, the Latvian Undersea Cable in the Baltic Sea was [damaged](#) by external forces. There are suspicions that the damage might have been due to sabotage. Latvian officials have identified a "suspect vessel" near the site of the incident. This follows a series of similar incidents in the Baltic Sea, raising concerns about deliberate attacks on critical infrastructure. Latvia, Sweden, and NATO allies are conducting a thorough investigation. A warship has been dispatched to inspect the area and the vessels involved.

Italy's Prime Minister visit Saudi Arabia

From 25 to 27 January, Italy Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni [paid](#) an official visit as part of the Italian Government's efforts to strengthen cooperation with Gulf countries on issues of common interest. The Prime Minister met with the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, in Al-Ula today. During the meeting, the two leaders signed a joint declaration to elevate bilateral relations to the level of strategic partnership, launching structured cooperation. President Meloni also participated in a round table with both countries' public and private sector representatives, during which several agreements were signed at both government and private levels.