



# BRUSSELS FLASH

Newsflashes from the capital of Europe for CEPI members

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The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), represented by Czech MEP Alexandr Vondra, have expressed cautiousness regarding supporting Ursula von der Leyen to continue as head of the European Commission. They emphasise the need to wait for the outcome of elections before making any commitments. The ECR anticipates growth in the upcoming elections and potential expansion with new members but underscores the importance of ensuring alignment with the group's values, particularly on issues such as Russian aggression against Ukraine, parties echoing Putin's propaganda are deemed unwelcome in ECR.



On 10th March 2024, thousands of protesters marched in Warsaw to oppose EU environmental regulations, which they argue are harming farmers' livelihoods. Solidarity trade unions, including farmers, miners, and automotive workers, organised the protest. Their grievances include cheap food imports from Ukraine and restrictions imposed by the EU's Green Deal. Protesters held placards denouncing the Green Deal and the EU. Politicians from the nationalist government joined the protest, criticizing the pro-European administration for allegedly prioritizing Brussels over Polish interests. While farmers secured subsidies from the EU and Polish government, they insist it's insufficient. Despite tensions with Ukraine over border blockades, protesters recently decided to lift the blockade, aiming to ease bilateral relations and trade.



Teresa Ribera, Spain's deputy prime minister and prospective EU commissioner, sharply criticized European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's approach to the Green Deal and alliances with the far right. Ribera expressed concern over von der Leyen's strategy of working with far-right groups, stating it emboldens extremism and could lead to Europe's implosion. She advocated for a stronger commitment to the Green Deal and proposed a super commissioner position to oversee climate, energy, and environment. Despite potential clashes with von der Leyen's conservative allies, Ribera remains determined to push for ambitious climate policies and environmentally sustainable practices.



The EU is set to release its next sanctions package against Russia, which would be the 14th package of sanctions and which could include measures against Russia's liquefied natural gas (LNG) sector. The package aims to limit Russia's income from LNG sales by banning EU infrastructure for transshipment of Russian LNG to third countries. The measure comes at a time when Russia seeks to expand its LNG production capacity, while Russia's ability to export depends on EU terminals. This proposed ban would curb Russia's LNG exportation to third countries without affecting the EU's energy stability. The European Commissioner for Energy is optimistic that the measure would be approved at a summit in Brussels on June 27-28.



The EU is moving to approve a major trade deal with Mercosur after EU elections. Negotiations have spanned two decades, but concerns over environmental impact and agriculture, notably from France, have delayed ratification. Despite efforts to finalise the deal post-election, divisions persist within the EU's agricultural sector. The deal's approval hinges on balancing agricultural concerns with environmental commitments and gaining support from member states, with France's stance critical.

For more information about any of the issues highlighted please contact the Secretariat.

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