

#TRENDY THURSDAY

DEFENSE

EU seals deal on joint ammunition procurement for Ukraine

EU member states have agreed to supply Ukraine with one million artillery shells within 12 months, by using their own stockpiles and jointly procuring more ammunition. The deal is based on an EU-proposed plan to spend €1 billion on shells from stockpiles and €1 billion more on joint procurement. Member states will be reimbursed up to €1 billion for the delivery of ammunition from their own stocks to Kyiv. The EU countries have agreed to jointly procure 155mm ammunition and missiles for Ukraine in the fastest way possible, via the European defence industry and Norway.

EUROPEAN UNION

EU Commission wants to tighten controls at external borders

The European Commission aims to tighten controls at the EU's external borders to combat illegal migration, according to a letter by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The letter cited investments in modernising and expanding border control procedures, increasing reception capacities and returns, and supporting member states with border control and technological equipment. The Dublin regulation, which requires asylum applications to be made in the member state of arrival, and reducing incentives for secondary movements after registration, were also highlighted.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

NATO eyes €1bn defence innovation fund based in the Netherlands

The Netherlands will host NATO's innovation fund, which will invest €1bn over 15 years to develop dual-use emerging and disruptive technologies. NATO officials have said the fund aims to provide an opportunity to invest in start-ups and small businesses at the forefront of innovation while investing in research and development. The fund will invest in artificial intelligence, biotechnology and human enhancement, quantum-enabled technologies, big-data processing, novel materials, propulsion and space. The 22 NATO members will launch the fund at the alliance's Vilnius Summit on 10-12 July.

ENVIRONMENT

EU Commission agrees to provide 'additional input' on pesticide cut plans

The Commission has granted a request from EU agriculture ministers for an additional impact assessment on a plan to reduce the use and risk of pesticides by 50% by 2030, but warns it has limited information to offer. The sustainable use of pesticides regulation is a contentious proposal, with EU agriculture ministers demanding more information before proceeding, stalling negotiations. The Commission will provide additional input in the spirit of cooperation, but limitations on data availability restrict analytical possibilities. The Commission remains available to cooperate fully with the European Parliament and the Council to achieve swift progress on the proposal.

EMPLOYMENT

EU Council makes new attempt at platform workers directive

The Swedish presidency of the EU Council has proposed a narrower derogation for the presumption of employment in an attempt to reconcile disagreements over the platform workers directive. The Directive introduces a legal presumption of employment for misclassified 'self-employed' platform workers and regulates algorithmic management in the workplace. The reclassification into full-time employment would be triggered if a minimum of three out of seven criteria were met.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Xi, Putin back 'peace talks' for Ukraine war – but blame NATO and make no offer to withdraw

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a joint statement on Tuesday calling for "responsible dialogue" and "peace talks" over Ukraine, while criticizing sanctions and blaming NATO for the conflict. They did not offer to withdraw invading forces, nor did they mention a ceasefire. The statement shows China's support for Russia's narrative on the issue. Despite recent evidence of Chinese companies sending arms to Russia, the statement did not mention military support.