

EU agrees to extend Russia sanctions

EU leaders agreed to roll over damaging economic sanctions against Russia for another six months because Moscow has failed to meet its Ukraine ceasefire commitments, EU president Donald Tusk said. "Agreed. EU will extend economic sanctions against Russia for their lack of implementing the Minsk agreement," Tusk tweeted at an EU leaders summit in Brussels. The decision will be formalised in July and become effective on July 31.



China regulator inspects loans to major firms

Beijing China's banking regulator has ordered an inspection of potentially risky loans to major Chinese companies that have invested heavily overseas, one of the firms under scrutiny said. Dalian Wanda Group said other domestic companies caught up in the review include AC Milan owner Rossoneri Sport Investment Lux, Club Med's Fosun Group and HNA Group.



This year's results show that, even during a severe recession, our large banks would remain well capitalized and this would allow them to lend throughout the economic cycle, and support households and businesses when times are tough."

- Jerome Powell

US Fed Governor



Record-breaking Forth bridge set for opening

Scotland's landmark £1.35 billion (\$1.7bn) Queensferry Crossing over the Forth Estuary will be the longest three-tower, cable-stayed bridge in the world when it opens to traffic in summer 2017

QUEENSFERRY CROSSING
 South tower 202m, Central tower 210m, North tower 202m
 Spans: 650m, 650m
 Total length: 2,633m
 Deck height 55m

QUEENSFERRY CROSSING
 Replaces Forth Road Bridge as main route

Deck: Consists of 122 steel / concrete sections lifted by crane and erected out from each tower by cantilever

Viaducts: Launched incrementally from shore across supporting piers

Cables: Cross mid-span to boost strength of structure, allowing more slender towers and lighter deck

Tower: Reinforced concrete

Road: Two-lane motorway plus hard shoulder in each direction

Windshielding: Reduces need for bridge closure in adverse weather

Opening: Aug 30, 2017. Bridge will briefly close Sep 2-3 to allow 50,000 members of public to walk across

Airbus to install new "black boxes"

Airbus will install Automatic Deployable Flight Recorders (ADFRs) and new Cockpit Voice Data Recorders (CVDRs) on its airliners. The ADFR is an aerofoil which can fly in the slipstream and float on water

ADFR: Mounted flush into skin of aircraft's tail

CVDR: Capable of recording 25 hours of voice and flight data, an increase from current 2-hour limit

ADFR: Deploys automatically using spring system in event of water submersion or structural deformation of aircraft

Aerofoil: Designed to float indefinitely and transmit location and ID of aircraft emergency beacon via satellite

Hydrostatic sensors trigger deployment at depth of 2 metres

ELT: Emergency Locator Transmitter

Lightweight data recorder does not need same crash-protection as regular recorder

Sources: Airbus, Aviation Week, Flight Global, L3 Aviation Products © GRAPHIC NEWS

Russia launches TurkStream gas deep-water phase

Moscow Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday launched the deep-water phase of the TurkStream gas pipeline project, calling Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan from a ship off the Black Sea coast. TurkStream will deliver Russian gas to Turkey and is eventually intended to serve the European Union. "Go!" Putin said, pressing a button on the Pioneering Spirit pipelaying ship, the world's largest construction vessel, to formally launch the work, accompanied by Gazprom energy giant's chief Alexei Miller.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, accompanied by Gazprom Chief Executive Officer Alexei Miller, launches the joining of the shallow and deep-water sections of the TurkStream gas pipeline

The Kremlin strongman also phoned Erdogan from the ship in an effusively friendly exchange covered at length by Russia's state Rossiya 24 channel. Speaking on a white dial phone, Putin praised the speedy progress of the project, attributing this to backing from Erdogan. "Where in our country it takes years, I'm not exaggerating, on various administrative agreements, with Turkey we do this in a few months," Putin said. Russia first floated the project in 2014 after the European Union blocked plans for a pipeline under the Black Sea to Bulgaria, at the height of the Ukraine crisis.

Then a diplomatic crisis in November 2015 over Turkey's shooting down of a Russian bomber on the Turkish-Syrian border delayed the project, which was revived when bilateral relations were mended last year. The two leaders spoke for around 15 minutes and then agreed to speak again later, while Erdogan said "Spasibo," or thank you, twice, Russian television reported. The Turkstream project will see the construction of two lines, each capable of carrying 15.75 billion cubic metres of gas per year. The first is due to be completed in 2018

and the second in 2019. The idea is not just to supply gas to Turkey but also to turn it into a transit country for Russian gas heading to the European Union, replacing Ukraine. "If our partners want this, we are ready to supply gas via Turkey to southern and southeastern Europe," Putin told Erdogan at the launch, quoted by the Kremlin website. Russia also plans Nord Stream 2, a twin pipeline under the Baltic Sea to Germany, but the project has been delayed due to opposition from countries including Poland.

Russia threatens Telegram app

Moscow Russia's state communications watchdog threatened yesterday to ban the Telegram messaging app, saying the company behind the service had failed to submit company details for registration. In a message on its website, the Roskomnadzor agency warned that "time is running out" for Telegram to comply with the law. Otherwise "Telegram must be blocked in Russia," it said. The free instant

messaging app has attracted about 100 million users since its launch in 2013. In an unusual move, the agency's chief, Alexander Zharov, addressed Telegram's secretive Russian chief executive, Pavel Durov. "I publicly call on the Telegram team and personally Pavel Durov: carry out the Russian law!" Zharov wrote, adding: "The choice is yours." The watchdog said it had been sending messages to the company

"practically every day" asking it to send company information for Roskomnadzor's register. Durov, who has previously refused to bow to government regulation that would compromise the privacy of users, called the threat "paradoxical" on one of his social media accounts. He said it would force users, including "high-ranking Russian officials" to communicate via apps based in the United States like WhatsApp.