EU Leaders Fail to Bridge Budget Splits as Talks Stall



German Federal Chancellor Friedrich Merz (CDU) speaks to the press during the special EU summit on long-term financial planning and continued financial support for Ukraine in Brussels.

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - **German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has said that a special EU summit on the next long-term budget ended early because leaders' positions remain far apart.**

"We must acknowledge that the ideas about how we should shape it are still far apart," Merz told a press conference in Brussels on Thursday after intensive talks on the EU's 2028-2034 budget, also known as the Multiannual Financial Framework.

"We all know that it will take time and a great deal of goodwill to bridge these significant differences in perspective," he said. The leaders agreed during their discussions not to resume formal talks on Friday morning and instead hold a final round around midnight.

The European Council would now face a more difficult task, Merz noted, adding that member states will work to reach a deal by the end of the year.

"We are now preparing for a relatively intensive EU leaders summit on December 17," he said. "We will then see whether we can succeed. I cannot be certain, but I have not given up hope that we will manage it."

The leaders had arrived in Brussels for a special two-day summit aimed at overcoming differences on the long-term budget.

Before the summit, Merz told reporters that European Council President Antonio Costa's latest proposal was too high, beyond acceptable levels. He demanded deeper cuts, ruled out new borrowing, and insisted that the budget must clearly prioritize essential tasks that strengthen Europe's defense capabilities and ensure sustained support for Ukraine.

Ahead of the formal talks, the chancellor met like-minded leaders from the net-contributor countries — the member states that pay more into the EU budget than they receive back. The group, calling itself the "Sensible Seven," continues to press for a hard course of savings, including to funds that support poorer regions, amid deep divisions.

"Europe needs to exercise a sense of proportion when shaping its own budget. The budget cannot grow indefinitely, and the burden of financing it must be distributed fairly," Merz told reporters on Thursday night.

He also demanded that member states' contributions to the EU budget be adjusted for a fairer share of the costs.

"Germany currently pays for about a quarter of the EU budget, yet we receive only around 8 percent of the funds back directly," he noted.

Merz insisted that the new long-term budget must ensure sufficient funding for defense and secure aid for Ukraine.

"Europe must strengthen its economy and ensure security. To do so, it also requires a reserve — for instance, to provide long-term financing for Ukraine," Merz said. "Everyone must contribute to this. And it must subsequently be possible for decisions to be taken by a qualified majority."

The European Commission had initially proposed a €1.985 trillion ($2.18 trillion) package in July for the 27-member bloc's 2028-2034 budget. That plan was rejected by Germany and several other wealthy member states.

Costa has since tabled a compromise proposal worth €1.781 trillion ($1.95 trillion). Even after the cuts, the package would still be nearly 50 percent larger than the current 2021-2027 budget framework.

Petition Demanding U.S. Ambassador's Expulsion Submitted to Canadian Parliament



U.S. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra

OTTAWA (Xinhua) – **A petition signed by nearly 290,000 Canadians calling for the expulsion of U.S. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra was formally presented to the House of Commons on Thursday.**

Canadian Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, who submitted the non-binding petition to Parliament, called Hoekstra "the most undiplomatic diplomat."

"Canadians overwhelmingly have spoken clearly that they believe that Pete Hoekstra is not welcome in Canada," she said.

Initiated by a Calgary resident, the petition accuses Hoekstra of repeatedly making statements "undermining the Canada-U.S. diplomatic relations" and normalizing the U.S. administration's threats to annex Canada as the "51st state."

May described Hoekstra, a former office furniture salesman who later entered politics, as "the most undiplomatic diplomat" Canada has ever had, adding, "I think there are other countries he'd be happier living in."

The U.S. ambassador has repeatedly drawn criticism for embracing Trump's confrontational approach toward Canada, dismissing concerns over the U.S. president's annexation rhetoric and clashing with Canadian officials.

In June, Hoekstra insisted that Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney should have a "great discussion" about Canada becoming the 51st U.S. state.

He has also criticized Canadian politicians for opposing Trump's policies and tariffs, and earlier this year threatened that military relations between the neighboring countries could change if opposition to Washington's policies continued.

Hoekstra has dismissed his unpopularity in Canada as a consequence of carrying out his diplomatic duties, saying that winning over Canadians was never his assignment.

"It's not about me, OK. Donald Trump did not tell me to go to Canada and become liked," he told reporters earlier this year. "Matter of fact, I think he would have said, 'If you go to Canada and you're liked, it probably means that you're not doing your job!'"

"The embassy is aware of the petition. We decline to comment further," a spokesperson told Politico.

Trump has repeatedly fuelled tensions with Canada, even referring to Carney as the country's "future governor," reinforcing concerns in Canada over Washington's annexation rhetoric.

Amazon Workers Strike, Protest in Over 20 Countries



Amazon workers and their allies strike and protest in over 20 countries from Black Friday, 27 November, to Cyber Monday, 30 November 2026.

LNDDON (Dispatches) - **Amazon workers and their supporters staged strikes and demonstrations in over 20 countries on Friday, demanding better wages and stronger labor rights during one of the U.S. e-commerce giant's busiest shopping periods of the year.**

The four-day action, organized by UNI Global Union and Progressive International under the "Make Amazon Pay" campaign, is scheduled to continue through Cyber Monday, according to a statement issued by organizers.

Germany's United Services Union, known as ver.di, called for strikes at 11 Amazon facilities beginning early Friday, while unions in India announced rallies in at least 23 locations nationwide.

Demonstrations are also planned in several countries, including Poland, Brazil, Japan, and South Africa, while the Teamsters union in the U.S. will hold protests in Los Angeles and Chicago on Monday.

Now in its seventh year, the campaign calls on Amazon to recognize workers' collective bargaining rights, improve workplace safety, pay its fair share of taxes, and address the environmental impact of its operations.

The protests come two weeks after around 800 Amazon warehouse workers in Canada's British Columbia secured the company's first binding union contract in North America.

The three-year agreement, reached through arbitration, includes wage increases, improved vacation entitlements, and severance benefits.

Amazon defended its employment practices in a statement carried by Sky News, saying it offers competitive pay, benefits and safe working environments and directly employs more than 1.5 million people worldwide.

On Thursday in London, people faced severe delays, suspended Tube services and packed buses as a strike by Underground drivers disrupted travel across the capital.

Footage shows service suspensions and delays displayed on information boards at Oxford Circus station, with staff assisting passengers and commuters queuing for buses outside.

Hundreds of Thousands Without Power After Storms Hit U.S.



*** People cross the street wearing ponchos in high wind and rain during a Thanksgiving Day storm in New York City, U.S., November 26, 2026.*

WASHINGTON (AP) - **Nearly a million people were left without power Thursday after a severe storm lashed the East Coast of the U.S., tearing up trees and powerlines on Thanksgiving.**

New York City authorities had been forced to postpone the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade due to the intense winds.

The storm contributed to flight delays, with FlightAware reporting a total of 454 US-related cancellations on Thursday and 2,411 delays. Major airports in the Washington and New York City areas were among the hardest hit.

Heavy rains flooded coastal areas, while utilities warned of an increased risk of falling trees and power outages.

More than 908,000 U.S. utility customers had no power as of 9:56pm ET (0256 GMT), according to PowerOutage.us, down from 961,000 at 7:30pm ET.

The data included more than 207,000 outages in Pennsylvania, over 179,000 in New Jersey, 139,000 in Maryland, 106,000 in Virginia, 100,000 in Missouri and more than 68,000 in New York state.

Wind gusts of 80 to 112kph were reported or forecast across parts of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and coastal New England, according to the U.S. National Weather Service.

It said conditions would gradually improve across the Mid-Atlantic overnight as the heaviest rain and strongest winds moved into New England, although blustery conditions with gusts of 40 to 55kph ripped across parts of the East Coast on Friday.

New York City Emergency Management reported winds intensified on Thursday afternoon, reaching 90kph at LaGuardia Airport.

The NWS said strong onshore winds associated with the storm, combined with king tides, were causing coastal flooding in low-lying communities along portions of the East Coast.

Officials had already postponed Thursday's 100th edition of the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City because of the storm threat, the first time the event has been rescheduled due to severe weather.

People were rescued from their cars in New York City because of flooding, Mayor Zohran Mamdani said, and similar rescues were reported in other coastal communities.

"There is no destination worth your safety," Mamdani said.

Famine Expected to Worsen Due to Wars and El Nino, UN Warns

New York (AFP) - **Hunger is set to worsen significantly in 16 global hotspots over the coming six months, mainly due to armed conflict and extreme climate events, two United Nations agencies said in a new report.**

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Program (WFP) warned on Friday that Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, northern Nigeria and Yemen faced the gravest threats of famine, driven by violence, displacement, economic hardship and extreme weather, including the El Nino phenomenon.

Listings in the report, released twice a year through the Global Network Against Food Crises, have risen from 13 hotspots in June, with Chad, Uganda and parts of both Southern Africa and Central America added, while Lebanon was removed.

Armed conflict and violence were driving hunger in 12 of the 16 hotspots, the report said, as soaring food, energy and transport costs were eroding people's ability to feed themselves.

El Nino, which is set to intensify to exceptional levels in the coming months according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), is a major driver behind three of the four newly identified hotspots: Southern Africa, the Central American Dry Corridor and northeastern Uganda.

Covering December 2026 to May 2027, the agencies warned that shrinking humanitarian funding was affecting efforts to avert catastrophe.

In the five countries most at risk, all repeatedly cited on the hotspot list since 2022, humanitarian assistance has declined by nearly two-thirds over the 2022-2025 period, from $5.1bn to $2bn.

"While conflict, economic shocks, climate extremes and access constraints have remained the primary drivers of these crises, declining humanitarian resources have reduced the capacity to sustain gains and mitigate worsening conditions," wrote the FAO and WFP.

While past humanitarian assistance helped avert famine, "the gains proved fragile and of limited duration: severe acute food insecurity risks – including risk of famine – re-emerged within a few years."

In Sudan, famine remains a risk in 13 areas of North Darfur and South Kordofan through January 2027, as fighting disrupts food production, markets and aid deliveries.

The agencies also identified famine risks in parts of Somalia and South Sudan, where escalating violence has compounded an already desperate humanitarian situation.

Afghanistan, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gaza were also classified as areas of very great concern.

News in Brief

MEXICO CITY (Xinhua) – Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum reaffirmed Mexico's solidarity with Cuba on Thursday, voiced opposition to any trade or energy blockades imposed on the Caribbean island and defended the Cuban people's right to determine their own destiny. During her daily press conference, the president stressed that Mexico's foreign policy is rooted in respect for the self-determination of peoples, and stated that no country should intervene in Cuba's internal affairs. "The only ones who can decide Cuba's destiny are the Cuban people, no one else," Sheinbaum said in response to a reporter's question on her government's stance toward the island nation.

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SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said his country should focus on deploying tactical nuclear weapons across multiple domains and that its nuclear material production capacity was being systematically expanded, state media KCNA reported on Thursday. Kim, who spoke during an inspection of nuclear material production and weapons research facilities, also said North Korea's status as a nuclear weapons state was "absolutely inviolable." Kim said North Korea should "focus on utilizing tactical nuclear weapons across multiple domains for different missions" and called recent achievements in nuclear weapons production a major success for the country's nuclear force policy. The tour of the nuclear facilities appears aimed at underscoring Pyongyang's push to expand and diversify its nuclear arsenal in defiance of calls for denuclearization, as questions persist over prospects for renewed dialogue with the United States.

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PARIS (AFP) - Paris-based international news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP) has taken its AFP Forum content platform offline following a cyberattack, its management said Thursday. The attack began at 1.30 am Paris time (0030GMT), targeting AFP Forum, a platform used by clients to browse and download the agency's content, according to an internal email sent by management. "As soon as the intrusion was detected, our teams moved immediately to contain the intrusion and took AFP Forum offline as a precautionary measure. AFP Forum remains unavailable until further notice," the email said. The agency said it was providing alternative solutions to subscribers while the platform remains inaccessible. "An investigation is underway with the help of outside experts. At this stage, we have no information on who is behind the attack," the statement added.

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KINSHASA (AP) - Uganda's army said on Friday it planned to withdraw from a key DR Congo town and accused militias apparently allied to the Congolese government of stepping up attacks in the strife-torn eastern region. The Ugandan announcement comes days after the DRC said it had summoned the Ugandan embassy's head of mission over remarks by the country's army chief. The mineral-rich eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has been wracked by violence for more than 30 years, often drawing in its neighbors Uganda and Rwanda directly or through support for local armed groups.

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MEXICO CITY (Reuters) – Mexico filed a formal complaint with the United States over a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) tip line seeking information on suspected drug traffickers and allegedly corrupt Mexican officials, President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Nov 27. Foreign Minister Juan Ramon de la Fuente contacted the US ambassador to Mexico to lodge a formal complaint over the matter, Sheinbaum said during her morning press conference, adding that the ambassador told him he would look into the issue. The DEA did not immediately respond to a request for comment.