

## MNI POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS - Week Ahead 29 September-5 October

by Tom Lake

(MNI) London – All timings are subject to change. *Editor's Note: The next Political Risk Week Ahead will be published on Monday, 13 October.*

*Monday 29 September:*

- **United States:** President Donald Trump meets with congressional leaders from both parties at 15:00ET (20:00BST, 21:00CET) ahead of the looming federal government shutdown on 1 October. This will be the first meeting for Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and House minority leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) since Trump returned to office. House Democrats will hold a caucus on Capitol Hill in the afternoon, but with House Republicans out of Washington, D.C., swift movement would be required to get a deal through in time.
- **Israel-United States:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with US President Donald Trump at the White House. An initial Oval Office session with press present takes place ~11:00ET (16:00BST/17:00CET), followed by a closed press bilateral meeting and lunch. A joint press conference in the State Dining Room will take place ~13:15ET (18:15BST, 19:15CET). Trump is expected to push a peace deal for Gaza in the meeting after touting a deal on 26 September, although this was rebuffed by Netanyahu on 28 September after saying "it's not been finalised yet."
- **Europe:** Foreign ministers from the 'Weimar Triangle' group (France, Germany, Poland) met in the Polish capital, Warsaw. The focus of discussions was the situation of the war in Ukraine (with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha also attending) as well as Russia's recent incursions into NATO airspace.
- **European Union:** Business and industry ministers from across the EU hold a Competitiveness Council meeting in Brussels to hold talks on the EUR410bn European Competitiveness Fund, one of the major sections of the Multiannual Financial Framework (long-term budget) intended to run 2028-34. European Commission VP Stéphane Sejourne will address ministers regarding simplification of EU procedures and functions, followed by former Italian PM Enrico Letta to talk on structural issues within the single market.

*Tuesday 30 September:*

- **United Kingdom:** Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer is due to deliver his keynote address to the annual conference of his governing centre-left Labour party. The conference comes amid significant pressure on the government, and Starmer in particular, over its record in office since taking power in the July 2024 general election. Speculation over a leadership challenge from Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham have overshadowed the conference, with a well-received address from Starmer having the potential to reinforce his position, while a lacklustre speech could further exacerbate his increasingly vulnerable position.

- **South Korea-Japan:** Outgoing Japanese PM Shigeru Ishiba arrives South Korea for a working visit, shortly before he leaves office (see below, 4 Oct). Ishiba will hold talks with President Lee Jae-myung in the southern city of Busan, in what Lee's national security adviser has referred to as a return to "shuttle diplomacy". The visit will mark the first time in 21 years that a Japanese PM has travelled outside Seoul. Both sides have sought to emphasise their intention that close relations and frequent in-person talks should continue after Ishiba leaves office.
- **Africa-United States:** The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), in place for 25 years and offering 32 developing African nations tariff-free access to the US, is due to expire unless renewed by Congress. With a focus on Capitol Hill on the looming government shutdown, there may be little opportunity to get the requisite approval to keep AGOA running. Countries with prominent export industries oriented towards the US, such as Madagascar and Lesotho, [face significant declines](#) in revenue according to International Trade Center modelling.
- **Russia:** Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is due to deliver a speech and answer questions at the Valdai Discussion Club's annual meeting in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. Lavrov's session is due to start at around 11:30 local time (04:30ET, 10:30CET). While Lavrov's comments on the war in Ukraine have been [dismissed by senior NATO figures](#), his address will still be taken into account and assessed for any signals on ceasefire talks, or indeed Russia's alleged aerial incursions into NATO airspace. Livestream [here](#).

## *Wednesday 1 October:*

- **United States:** Unless a continuing resolution is passed by Congress, the federal government will shut down from 00:00:01ET. The last shutdown occurred in December 2018, running for a record 35 days over a dispute for the funding of President Donald Trump's border wall.
- **European Union:** An informal meeting of heads of state and/or government takes place in the Danish capital, Copenhagen. The main topics of discussion will be common European defence (in the context of numerous Russian incursions into EU member states' airspace by drones and aircraft in recent weeks), support for Ukraine, potentially including discussions on using frozen Russian assets held in the EU to fund Ukraine's reconstruction via a 'reparation loan'. Leaders will also discuss the prospect of stronger sanctions on Israel over the war in Gaza.
- **Russia:** Deputy PM for the Fuel Energy Complex Alexander Novak is due to deliver a speech and answer questions at the Valdai Discussion Club's annual meeting in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. Session due to start at ~13:30 local time (06:30ET, 12:30CET).
- **China, Cyprus, Israel:** Market holidays for National Day (China), Independence Day (Cyprus) and Yom Kippur (Israel)

## *Thursday 2 October:*

- **Europe:** A meeting of the European Political Community takes place in Copenhagen. The EPC brings together the leaders of the 27 EU member states, as well as those from non-EU European states such as the UK, Switzerland, Norway, Ukraine and

Turkey (among others). Much like the informal EUCO the day before (see above), the EPC is likely to be dominated by talks on the European security situation and the war in Ukraine. The presence of Turkey (a potential mediator between Ukraine and Russia), and the UK (one of the primary military backers of Kyiv) will lend further impetus towards discussions.

- **Russia:** The final day of the Valdai Discussion Club think tank's annual meeting in Sochi. In the past, President Vladimir Putin has spoken at the event on issues ranging from the economy, to the war in Ukraine, to domestic and foreign policy. While not officially scheduled at present, there is the prospect of a late announcement to confirm a Putin address.
- **China, India, Israel:** Market holidays for National Day (China), Mahatma Gandhi's birthday (India) and Yom Kippur (Israel).

#### *Friday 3 October:*

- **Czechia:** Legislative elections get underway, with all 200 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower chamber of the Czech parliament, up for grabs. The governing coalition formed by PM Petr Fiala's centre-right SPOLU alliance and the liberal regionalist STAN looks on course to lose its overall majority. Former PM Andrej Babiš' populist ANO is set to retain its position as the largest party, but could be forced into working with the far-right in order to secure a majority post-election. Voting continues on 4 October, with polls closing at 14:00CET (08:00ET, 13:00BST) and the results to come through during the course of Saturday afternoon and evening.
- **Germany-France:** German Chancellor Friedrich Merz speaks at an event marking the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reunification of Germany. Merz will be speaking in the city of Saarbrücken on the French border alongside French President Emmanuel Macron. The two leaders have sought to present a united front at the European level on issues such as support for Ukraine in its fight against Russian invasion. However, divisions remain on trade (notably the Mercosur trade deal), while both leaders face domestic political crises (for Macron, the instability of the series of minority governments he has appointed, for Merz, the continued rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany).
- **China, South Korea:** Market holidays for respective National Days.

#### *Saturday 4 October:*

- **Japan:** The election for the presidency of the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) takes place to determine who will succeed outgoing PM Shigeru Ishiba. Frontrunners are former Minister of State for Economic Security Sanae Takaichi, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi. With no candidate expected to win an overall majority in the first round (where half the ballots are cast by LDP lawmakers and half by grassroots party members) a run-off between the top two is likely. In a run-off, each LDP lawmaker receives a vote, as does each of the 47 prefectural chapters. The new LDP leader will face an immediate challenge in gaining enough parliamentary support to be elected prime minister, given the party and its coalition ally Komeito are short of a majority in both chambers of the National Diet.



- **Europe:** German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt is set to host his counterparts from Austria, Denmark, France, Czechia, Italy, and Poland, and the European Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, Magnus Brunner, in Munich to discuss border security and illegal immigration. Announcing the meeting in late September, Dobrindt said, "...we will discuss further impetus and necessary measures for the European migration turnaround...We must toughen the EU migration pact and tighten the rules on deportation." All countries participating are either governed by parties pledging to restrict immigration, or have sizeable opposition movements demanding such action from the government.

*Sunday 5 October:*

- **Italy:** Regional elections in the southern region of Calabria get underway. Regional President Roberto Occhiuto from the centre-right *Forza Italia* is seeking a second term in office at the head of a centre-right coalition. Occhiuto's main challenger is MEP for Southern Italy Pasquale Tridico from the left-wing populist Five-Star Movement and its centre-left allies. Voting continues on 6 October.
- **Syria:** Parliamentary elections take place, the first nationwide vote since the fall of the regime of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024. Rather than direct elections, a provisional, indirect system will be used, with 131 elected via constituency-based electoral colleges formed of committees of local experts and community figures. The remaining 70 seats are appointed by President Ahmed al-Sharaa.
- **OPEC+:** Eight OPEC+ countries hold an online meeting to make a call on November output levels. Reuters [reports](#) that according to its sources, "*OPEC+ will likely approve another oil production increase of at least 137,000 barrels per day at its meeting next Sunday, as rising oil prices encourage the group to try to further regain market share, three sources familiar with the talks said.*"

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