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Inside Europe: The inside take on European affairs

Information

On today's programme: A deal finally brokered on an EU diplomatic service - Turkey calls for support to crack down on terrorism- Will heads roll after France crashes out of the World Cup? - A 12 year German boy mobilizes schoolkids to help save the planet - In the second half we focus on religious issues around the continent: from France to Georgia from Islam to the Orthodox Church. A deal is finally brokered on a diplomatic service for the EU After months of tough negotiations, EU officials have reached a deal on the establishment of the bloc's first diplomatic service. The 27 member states and the European Parliament now need to endorse the agreement next month. Called the European External Action Service, the diplomatic corps is aimed at giving Europe a stronger, more coordinated voice in global affairs. It will come under the authority of Catherine Ashton, the EU's foreign policy chief. So how will it function? Helen Seeney put that question to Janis Emmanouilidis, a senior policy analyst with the European Policy Centre in Brussels. Can Belgium manage the EU presidency? Next week Belgium will take over the rotating presidency of the bloc. The problem is, it doesn't have a government. Belgium's main parties are still locked in coalition talks, led by Dutch-speaking Flemish separatist leader Bart De Wever. His N-VA party emerged as the biggest winner from this month's snap elections. One of Belgium's top politicians has said the country will have a government by October, in a bid to reassure the EU that its upcoming presidency will not be entirely managed by the current caretaker administration. Nina-Maria Potts has the details from Brussels. Turkey calls for more support to crack down on terrorism A separatist group called the Kurdistan Freedom Hawks has claimed responsibility for a bomb attack in Istanbul on Tuesday which killed 5 people. They were travelling on a bus carrying military personnel and their families. The group is believed to have links with the Kurdistan Workers Party or PKK which has been engaged in an insurgency against the Turkish government for more than 25 years. In recent weeks there's been an escalation in fighting between the PKK and the Turkish army. And as Dorian Jones reports from Istanbul, Turkey is looking to its allies and neighbours for support. 12 year German boy mobilizes support to help the planet More than thirteen hundred policy makers, scientists, energy experts and journalists gathered here in Bonn this week. They were attending Deutsche Welle's annual Global Media Forum which this year focussed on the role of the media in communicating issues related to climate change. One of the youngest guests was Felix Finkbeiner from Bavaria, who's just 12 years old. He's the driving force behind a movement called Plant for the Planet which he set up at the age of nine. It's a global student initiative which aims to plant a million trees in each country around the world. Felix has just achieved that goal here in Germany and he told Helen Seeney more about Plant for the Planet. Drive for the priesthood in France The Roman Catholic church is struggling with a shortage of priests here in Europe. In France the number of priests has been in steady decline since the 1960s. Determined to reverse that trend, the French Catholic church recently launched a public relations campaign designed to attract more young men to the priesthood. But as Eleanor Beardsley reports, the campaign has come at a difficult time. Decline in church attendance in Poland Poland is regarded as Europe's most devoutly Roman Catholic country. But there too, the number of young men willing to become priests has fallen. And a recent

study has revealed a ten per cent drop in church attendance over the past thirty years. The number is even higher in the country's cities. Rafal Kiepuszeswki has the details from Warsaw. Priests' lovers speak out in Italy Earlier this month, leaders of the group, Women's Ordination Worldwide, held a vigil in front of St. Peter's in Rome and called on the Vatican to allow women to be ordained as priests. And they're not the only movement of Catholic women speaking up for change. A growing number of women who have been the secret lovers of priests are also becoming more vocal. Nine women recently wrote an open letter to the pope calling for the abolition of the celibacy rule for priests. And now these women are meeting to share their experiences. Megan Williams has this report from Rome. Changing the face of Islam in the UK In the UK a campaign's been launched to improve the image of Islam after a survey found most Britons associate the religion with extremism. Posters of Muslims with captions that reflect positively on Islam are going up all over London. But critics say the campaign is one-sided, and even misleading. Olly Barratt reports from London. Influence of Georgian Orthodox Church The Orthodox Church in the former Soviet republic of Georgia is demanding new legislation against 'indecent'. This follows a dispute over a book which satirises the Church and Orthodox religion which provoked clashes between hard-line religious activists and liberal protesters. The Church wants what it calls 'sacrilegious' books to be banned. But liberals who have staged demonstrations for freedom of expression in recent weeks believe that the Church is trying to use its powerful influence over Georgian society to introduce censorship. Matthew Collin reports from Tbilisi. Vatican investigates apparitions at Medjugorje Until 1981 the town of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina was relatively unknown but things changed that year when six children there said they'd witnessed an apparition of the Virgin Mary. Since then more than 30 million pilgrims and tourists have visited Medjugorje. The shrine is not officially recognized by the Catholic Church but the Vatican has now set up a commission to investigate the apparitions. Mark Mattox has more.

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