# EU Accession Talks at Risk as Hungary Takes Presidency, Putin and Kim Jong Un Strengthen Ties



**EU Accession Talks Stalled as Hungary Takes Presidency**

The European Union (EU) is facing potential delays in its accession talks with Ukraine as Hungary prepares to take over the bloc's rotating presidency on July 1, 2024. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government will manage the EU's weekly agenda and chair ministerial meetings until the end of the year, potentially deprioritizing Ukraine's membership negotiations.

Following the unveiling of Hungary's official presidency program on June 18, concerns have surfaced that Hungary may block advancements in Ukraine's bid to join the EU. Hungarian Minister for European Affairs, János Bóka, indicated that discussions on opening new chapters of membership negotiations might not occur during Hungary's term. While the 21-page program does address economic and territorial integrity issues related to Ukraine, it does not frame these within the context of EU enlargement. Instead, Hungary seems to prioritize discussions with Balkan countries such as Serbia and Montenegro.

Orban, who is known for his close ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin and his support for a slogan reminiscent of former U.S. President Donald Trump—"Make Europe Great Again"—has recently caused friction within the EU over energy ties with Russia and his stance on military assistance to Ukraine.

Ukraine has expressed its desire to join the EU, but Hungary's presidency could potentially stall progress until other EU member states reach a consensus. The situation underscores the complexities of the EU's enlargement policy, which requires unanimity for new members to join.

**Putin and Kim Jong Un Strengthen Russia-North Korea Ties**

In a related geopolitical development, Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement during a summit in Pyongyang on June 19, 2024. The agreement aims to bolster cooperation amid international sanctions and rising global tensions.

The summit, initially scheduled for one hour, lasted about two hours. Both leaders reiterated their commitment to strengthening ties, with Kim pledging full support for Russia's military actions in Ukraine. The agreement may see North Korea supplying munitions to Russia in exchange for economic aid and technology transfers, which could advance North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

This partnership comes as both nations face extensive sanctions—North Korea for its weapons program and Russia for its actions in Ukraine. The summit highlighted their shared opposition to what they describe as "imperialist hegemonistic policies" led by the United States and its allies.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken criticized the summit, pointing out the desperation of Russia to seek support for its aggressive actions in Ukraine. The meeting between Putin and Kim also underscores the complexity of international relations as both countries seek to navigate global sanctions and bolster their strategic positions.