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Dec 02, 2024 by [Andrew Dubbins](#)

## **Public Diplomacy in the News: Russia's Wild Animal Diplomacy, China's Cottagecore Influencer, & World Cup Challenges** <sup>[1]</sup>

*“Public Diplomacy in the News” is a CPD Blog series by Andrew Dubbins that spotlights noteworthy stories on public diplomacy topics such as cultural diplomacy, nation branding, exchange programs, international events and conferences, digital diplomacy, and strategic global communications.*

**Russia deepens alliance with North Korea through wild animal gifts.** Russia recently sent

a collection of wild animals, including bears, yaks, a lion, and cockatoos, to North Korea as a gesture of diplomatic goodwill, reflecting the strengthening ties between Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un. This exchange comes amid reports that North Korea has supplied artillery, missiles, and even troops to support Russia's war in Ukraine. Once close allies during the Cold War, the two nations have renewed their alliance over the past three years as both face mounting sanctions from the West. This symbolic gift highlights the deepening relationship between the two isolated regimes.

Kim Hjelmgaard / USA Today

**Chinese Influencer returns to share rural life and cultural heritage.** Li Ziqi, a renowned Chinese influencer celebrated for her idyllic depictions of rural life, has returned to social media after a three-year hiatus due to a legal battle with her former management agency. Known for her serene videos showcasing traditional Chinese crafts, cooking, and farming, Li's comeback included three new videos that quickly gained millions of views, reinforcing her global appeal. During her absence, Li settled disputes over brand rights with the agency, reclaiming significant control of her trademarks with government mediation. Now focusing on promoting China's cultural heritage, her reemergence has been embraced by fans and state media alike, cementing her role as a cultural ambassador.

Zeyi Yang / Wired

**Challenges loom over FIFA president's World Cup ambitions.** Gianni Infantino's ambitious 32-team Club World Cup, set to debut in the United States in 2025, faces significant challenges, including unresolved funding, skepticism from broadcasters, and backlash over player welfare. As FIFA president, Infantino has tied his legacy to this tournament, aiming to make it a global sports cornerstone despite doubts from industry experts about its revenue potential. The tournament's financial viability is uncertain, with projections of up to \$1.2 billion in sponsorship and media rights revenue falling short of market expectations. Critics highlight player burnout and FIFA's reliance on support from key stakeholders like Saudi Arabia to offset potential deficits, casting uncertainty on its success and Infantino's leadership.

Tariq Panja / The New York Times

**Wealthy nations fall short on climate funding commitments.** At COP29, global climate negotiations concluded with a commitment to provide \$300 billion annually by 2035 for climate action in developing countries, far short of the \$1 trillion economists deem necessary to curb global warming effectively. While wealthy nations—responsible for the majority of historical carbon emissions—were expected to contribute substantially, they fell significantly short, drawing criticism for evading responsibility. This insufficient funding underscores the persistent gap between urgent climate needs and the international community's response.

Zoë Schlanger / The Atlantic

**Mapping Portugal's science diplomacy and European integration.** A new study analyzes the evolution of Portugal's science diplomacy within the context of its integration into the European Union. Authored by Marta Abrantes and Raquel Vaz-Pinto, the study highlights how Portugal has developed a hybrid governance model blending science and foreign affairs, heavily leveraging EU initiatives while also maintaining global ambitions, particularly in Portuguese-speaking countries. Despite progress, recent investments in science attachés and

promotional instruments remain limited, and the authors suggest further research on Portugal's role in addressing global challenges and bridging EU relations with other geographies.

Marta Abrantes & Raquel Vaz-Pinto / Nature

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