

# THE EURO BRIEF

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**DECEMBER 11, 2017**

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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### EUROPE – US

#### [Macron Steps into Middle East Role as U.S. Retreats](#)

President Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, his anti-Muslim tweets and his State Department staffing cuts have signaled to many a retreat of American diplomacy. That has made room for those who want to expand their presence on the world stage, Mr. Macron among them. He has quickly embraced a more visible role in the Middle East, especially as Britain and Germany have become more deeply preoccupied with domestic politics. [*The New York Times*, December 9, 2017].

#### [United States is isolated in the Security Council](#)

Following the controversial Jerusalem announcement by President Donald Trump, the United States has received a great deal of criticism from the 14 other members of the UN Security Council. [*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 8, 2017].

### EUROPE – RUSSIA

#### [Russia calls on OSCE states to ramp up cyber security efforts](#)

Russia's foreign minister called on Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) countries to strengthen efforts to ensure the safety of the internet. [*Reuters*, December 7, 2017].

#### [Putin congratulates his troops during a surprise visit to Syria](#)

Vladimir Putin made a surprise visit to the Russian military base in Syria where he was received by Bashar al-Assad and Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu. On the occasion, the Russian president claimed victory over the Islamic State was complete. [*Le Figaro*, December 11, 2017].

## **EUROPE – EAST ASIA**

### [EU closes mammoth trade deal with Japan](#)

The European Commission and Japan have finalized a bilateral free trade agreement. The deal will allow the bloc to sell food products including cheese, wines, and pork in Japan at reduced tariffs, granting Japanese carmakers easier access to the European market in exchange. Together, the EU and Japan account for about 30 percent of the world's gross domestic product. [*Politico*, December 8, 2017].

## **EUROPE – MIDDLE EAST**

### [World powers push Saudis, Iran to stop interfering in Lebanon](#)

World powers attempted to shore up Lebanon's stability by pushing Saudi Arabia and Iran to stop interfering in its politics and urging Hezbollah to rein in its regional activities. [*Reuters*, December 8, 2017].

## **EUROPE – ISRAEL**

### [Netanyahu calls on EU states to recognize Jerusalem](#)

Israel's prime minister has called on the EU to follow the example of Donald Trump on the Jerusalem issue. The EU foreign policy chief dismissed the request. [*Zeit*, December 11, 2017].

### [Netanyahu Faces Ire During EU Trip Over Trump's Jerusalem Step](#)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces a chilly reception this week when he travels to the European Union in the wake of U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. [*Bloomberg*, December 10, 2017].

### [EU vows push to make Jerusalem capital for Palestinians too](#)

The EU's top diplomat pledged to reinvigorate diplomacy with Russia, the United States, Jordan and others to ensure Palestinians have a capital in Jerusalem after U.S. President Donald Trump recognized the city as Israel's capital. [*Reuters*, December 7, 2017].

## **INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

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## **EU POLITICS**

### [New Basel rules on capital hit European banks](#)

Top international central bankers and regulators have struck a long-awaited deal on bank capital rules that Mario Draghi hailed as the final step of post-financial crisis reforms and which resolves a transatlantic rift on the treatment of the industry. [*Financial Times*, December 9, 2017].

### [NATO and the European Union deepen cooperation on cyber defence](#)

Senior officials from the European Union met their counterparts at NATO Headquarters to take stock of current efforts and discuss new areas for cooperation on cyber defence. [*Nato.Int*, December 8, 2017].

### [Global powers lobby to stop the Brexit deal for UK](#)

Theresa May's hopes of securing a unique post-Brexit trade deal with the EU were under threat on Saturday night. [*The Guardian*, December 9, 2017].

### [EU faces being Destroyed by forcing Eastern states to take in refugees, Czech leader warns](#)

Andrej Babis cautioned the bloc that pushing Czechs over the refusal to shelter asylum seekers could fuel a rise in extremist parties in the country. The EU's executive will sue Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in the bloc's top court for their refusal to host asylum-seekers. [*Express*, December 10, 2017].

### [Aspiring NATO member Macedonia angles for membership invitation in 2018](#)

NATO foreign ministers have promised to review the progress of would-be members ahead of next year's summit. Macedonia is keen to join some of its western Balkan neighbors in the military alliance, but challenges remain. [*DW*, December 7, 2017].

## **DOMESTIC POLITICS**

### [Polish PM Beata Szydło resigns](#)

PiS leaders decided to replace her with one of her deputies — the minister of finance and economic development, Mateusz Morawiecki. [*Politico*, December 8, 2017].

### [Territorial elections in Corsica: the nationalist coalition wins a large Victory](#)

The nationalist coalition of the autonomist Gilles Simeoni and the independentist Jean-Guy Talamoni won a large victory on Sunday, December 10, in the second round of territorial elections in Corsica, with 56.5% of the votes cast. [*Le Monde*, December 8, 2017].

### [Almost 57% of Catalans are confident that a negotiation will be opened after the elections](#)

Almost 57% of Catalans continues to trust in starting a negotiation process between the Generalitat and the Central government to resolve the territorial conflict. 46% consider it possible that the sovereignty process resumes again after the regional elections and only 43% believe that the most likely solution to the Catalan conflict is a reform of the Constitution. [*LaVanguardia*, December 10, 2017].

## **JEWISH COMMUNITIES**

### [De Maizièrè condemns the burning of Israeli flags](#)

Federal Interior Minister Thomas de Maizièrè (CDU) has sharply criticized the burning of Israel flags in protest against the United States' Israel policy. [*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 11, 2017].

### [Jerusalem: Antisemitic excesses in Sweden](#)

The synagogue of Gothenburg, the second largest city in Sweden, was the subject of an attempted fire on Saturday, December 9. [*Le Monde*, December 10, 2017].

### [Anti-Semitism in France has deep roots and 'new masks,' French PM says](#)

Amid attacks in Europe on Jews following the United States' recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Prime Minister Edward Philippe condemned anti-Semitism "that always tries to justify itself with new pretext," and which he said has deep roots in France. [*Times of Israel*, December 11, 2017].