

THE EURO BRIEF



DECEMBER 21, 2017

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EUROPE – US

[US beefs up its European bases to counter Putin](#)

The US is to build up its bases around Europe next year to flaunt its most advanced stealth combat fighter aircraft as a deterrent to Russia. [*The Times*, December 20, 2017]

[EU and Mexico make big push for trade deal](#)

The EU and Mexico are making a big diplomatic heave to secure a preliminary trade deal before Christmas, but only have a few days to resolve a major rift over whether Mexico will recognize EU protections for gourmet food labels. [*Politico*, December 20, 2017]

[Trump and UK's May discuss Jerusalem, agree on importance of US-led peace effort](#)

While Palestinians say they want nothing to do with any American initiative, British leader backs president on need for 'US bringing forward new proposals'. [*Times of Israel*, December 20, 2017]

EUROPE – RUSSIA

[Baltics to cooperate on Belarus nuclear power tax](#)

Lithuania is seeking regional action to tax or block all electricity imports from Belarus, where Russia is building a nuclear plant close to the border and Lithuanian capital Vilnius. [*BBC*, December 20, 2017]

[Britain Says West Must Defend Undersea Cables From Russian Attack](#)

Britain and its NATO allies must defend deep sea cables against a potentially catastrophic attack by the Russian navy that could disrupt trillions of dollars in financial transactions, the head of Britain's armed forces warned. [*Huffington Post*, December 15, 2017]

EUROPE – EAST ASSIA

[Cyber-attack: US and UK blame North Korea for WannaCry](#)

The US and UK governments have said North Korea was responsible for the WannaCry malware attack affecting hospitals, businesses and banks across the world earlier this year. [*BBC*, December 19, 2017]

EUROPE – ISRAEL

[Czech, Israeli governments to have another joint meeting next May](#)

Czech Prime Minister Babis invited his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu to a joint government meeting to be held in Prague next May in a phone conversation. [*Prague Daily Monitor*, December 19, 2017]

[Israel's Elbit Systems gets \\$46 mln NATO contract](#)

Israeli defense contractor Elbit Systems Ltd said it won a follow-on \$46 million contract to supply additional direct infrared countermeasures [DIRCM] self-protection systems to NATO for its Airbus A330 tankers. [*Reuters*, December 19, 2017]

[Israel boycotts Cooperation with Ministers of the Austrian Extreme Right-Wing Party](#)

The Israeli government wants to keep the cooperation with the right-wing populists in Austria on a professional level only. Prime Minister Netanyahu will be in direct contact with Chancellor Kurz. [*Die Zeit*, December 19, 2017]

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

EU POLITICS

[The European council powerless to face Warsaw](#)

To punish Poland, accused of flouting the independence of its justice, several member countries are now considering giving priority to the financial track. [*Le Monde*, December 21, 2017]

[NATO Secretary General discusses Alliance's continued adaptation with President Macron](#)

At a joint press conference with President Macron, the Secretary General praised France's significant contribution to NATO's collective defense, remarking on the "committed, professional" French troops he had met during his visit to the NATO battlegroup in Estonia. [*NATO*, December 18, 2017]

[Brexit: EU will refuse to back UK over Falkland Islands in future UN votes](#)

The EU will refuse to back Britain in United Nations votes over the Falkland Islands after Brexit, a former ambassador has suggested. [*Independent*, December 20, 2017]

[The Real Price of Brexit Begins to Emerge](#)

The pre-referendum estimates of the long-term pain ranged from a hit to the economy of 1 per cent to 9 per cent of national income — an annual loss of gross domestic product of between £20bn and £180bn compared with remaining in the EU. [*Financial Times*, December 18, 2017]

DOMESTIC POLITICS

[What to Watch for in Catalonia's Election](#)

Catalans vote for a new regional Parliament, an election that could decide whether the region persists in its drive for independence or instead seeks to negotiate a settlement with the Spanish central government after months of feuding. [*New York Times*, December 21, 2017]

[Lessons learned from the Berlin Terror Attack ?](#)

Families of victims of last year's Berlin terror attack do not blame Chancellor Merkel for their death. However, they demand to know, if whether lessons were taken [*Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, December 18, 2017].

[Austria: New Government to Resist "Islamization"](#)

The new Austrian government is a coalition between the anti-immigration Austrian People's Party and the anti-establishment Austrian Freedom Party. One of its major goals is to prevent Muslim migration and Islamists from entering Austria. Heinz-Christian Strache, leader of the Austrian Freedom Party, is a great supporter of Israel [*Gatestone Institute*, December 17, 2017]

JEWISH COMMUNITIES

[European Jews Divided on Austria's New Government With Party With Nazi Past](#)

The Jewish world is divided over how to react to the swearing-in Monday of an Austrian government that includes the Freedom Party, which has anti-Semitic and Nazi roots. In the Austrian Jewish community, some people say Freedom Party leader Heinz-Christian Strache, now the country's vice chancellor, deserves a chance to mend the party's ways [*Haaretz*, December 19, 2017]