

# THE EURO BRIEF

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**FEBRUARY 11, 2018**

**YOUR LAST WEEK BRIEFING: COALITION IN GERMANY, HOLOCAUST BILL IN POLAND AND THE ITALIAN ELECTION.**

## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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### **EUROPE – US**

[EU tells Trump: No Paris Climate deal, no free trade](#)

France's foreign affairs minister and EU's trade chief said that any country who signs a trade agreement with EU should implement the Paris Agreement on the ground. [*Forbes*, February 8, 2018]

[Sigmar Gabriel calls on Europe to lead disarmament push](#)

Germany's foreign minister joined a chorus of condemnation after the US proposed upgrading and expanding its nuclear arsenal and said it was now up to Europe to take the lead in pushing for worldwide nuclear disarmament. [*Deutsche Welle*, February 4, 2018]

### **EUROPE – RUSSIA**

[Russia: meddling while Europe votes](#)

Putin has found disinformation a cheaper and arguably more effective route to influence than tanks or foreign investments. Broadly, the Kremlin aims to split the EU and NATO and a quick way to do this is to bolster populist movements. [*Financial Times*, February 8, 2018]

[Russia deploys nuclear-capable missiles to border with Poland and Lithuania](#)

Russia has said it has the sovereign right to deploy weapons anywhere within its own borders. President of Lithuania warns weapons pose threat to 'half of all European countries'. [*Independent*, February 7, 2018]

## **EUROPE – EAST ASIA**

### [China's meddling poses greater threat to EU than Kremlin, says study](#)

A report by two German think tanks warns that the EU is ill-prepared to defend itself against Beijing's influence on European politics. [*Politico*, February 5, 2018]

### [Xi meets May: calling for better Sino-British ties in new era](#)

Xi encouraged both countries to dovetail strategies, enhance cooperation in areas of finance, nuclear energy and investment, and explore cooperation in artificial intelligence, green energy, the digital economy and sharing economy. [*Xinhua*, February 2, 2018]

## **EUROPE – MIDDLE EAST**

### [German intelligence part of secret anti-terror unit targeting returning 'IS' fighters](#)

Germany's secret service has reportedly joined a US-led unit targeting jihadis returning to Europe from Iraq and Syria. Officials have warned that many families of "Islamic State" fighters have already returned home. [*Deutsche Welle*, February 3, 2018]

### [EU worried about erosion of rule of law in Turkey](#)

The EU says it's worried about the undermining the rule of law and independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Turkey after the jailing of Amnesty International's chairman and Turkish Medical Association members there. [*The Washington Post*, February 2, 2018]

## **EUROPE – ISRAEL**

### [Israel using tourism to legitimize settlements, says EU report](#)

EU Heads of Mission in Jerusalem warn Israel is developing archaeological and tourism sites to support, legitimize and expand illegal settlements in Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem. [*The Guardian*, February 1, 2018]

### [Ex-Mossad agent who helped capture Eichmann backs far-right Germany party](#)

Former cabinet member and Mossad agent, Rafi Eitan, has expressed support for the far-right Alternative for Germany party, saying he hopes its ideology expands to the rest of Europe. [*Haaretz*, February 3, 2018]

## **INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

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## **EU POLITICS**

### [Can Europe's new xenophobes reshape the continent?](#)

Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia have the ambition to spread their brand of "illiberal democracy", with its constant attacks on liberal freedoms and its disdain for Muslim migrants perceived to be undermining the country's identity. [*The Guardian*, February 3, 2018]

### [EU announces ambitious expansion plans in western Balkans](#)

The European Commission wants to add countries from the western Balkans to the bloc by 2025 as it fears the region might come under increased Russian or Chinese influence, and is also concerned about rekindled local conflicts. [*Deutsche Welle*, February 6, 2018]

### [Switzerland-EU deal on the brink: Talks collapse threat - calls mount for referendum](#)

There are fears the European Union wants to use the trade talks with Bern to strengthen the bloc's hand in Brexit negotiations with Britain. [*Express*, February 10, 2018]

### [We will use sanctions to punish you, says Brussels](#)

The EU is demanding that Theresa May submit unprecedented legal powers allowing them to punish Britain unilaterally if it breached the terms during the Brexit transition period without the oversight of European courts. [*The Times*, February 7, 2018]

### [Brexit plan to keep Northern Ireland in customs union triggers row](#)

Officials from the UK and EU are drawing up a plan to in effect keep Northern Ireland in the customs union and the single market after Brexit in order to avoid a hard border. [*The Guardian*, February 9, 2018]

### [Macedonia says ready to change its name and end row with Greece](#)

Macedonia is ready to add a geographical qualifier to its name to help resolve a dispute with Greece that has held up its prospects of joining the EU and NATO. [*Reuters*, February 6, 2018]

## **DOMESTIC POLITICS**

### [Germany's grand coalition parties reach a deal](#)

An unprecedented four-and-a-half months after its election, Germany has edged a step closer to a new government, following a final 20-hour negotiating marathon to conclude a common plan for another "grand coalition". [*The Economist*, February 7, 2018]

### [Italy's populists turn up the heat as anti-migrant anger boils](#)

Ahead of Italian elections on March 4, there is plenty of anti-immigrant anger. The far-right extremist who wounded six African immigrants in a racially motivated shooting rampage in central Italy is a radically expression of it. [*The New York Times*, February 5, 2018]

### [Catalan government "designed an army," Civil Guard report concludes](#)

A report from the Spanish Civil Guard shows the ousted Catalan government had designed plans for an army "to defend the Republic" following the independence declaration. [*El País*, February 2, 2018]

### [Macron rejects official status for language](#)

President Emmanuel Macron said he was open to adding a specific mention of Corsica in the French Constitution but rejected several other demands for autonomy made by the island's nationalist leaders. [*France24*, February 8, 2018]

### [Brussels neighborhood struggles to break ties to terrorism](#)

The trial of the only surviving assailant from the November 2015 Paris attacks has refocused attention on the Brussels district of Molenbeek. It is a painful reminder for the neighborhood of its role as the breeding ground of the terror cell. [*The Wall Street Journal*, February 8, 2018]

[In Italy, Facebook will have fact checkers ‘hunting’ for fake news for the first time](#)

Facebook has tasked a team of independent fact checkers in Italy to hunt down and debunk fake news on the social network ahead of the March 4 vote. [*The Washington Post*, February 2, 2018]

**JEWISH COMMUNITIES**

[Israeli Embassy in Poland: Anti-Semitic remarks amid Holocaust Bill crisis](#)

The Israeli Embassy in Warsaw issued a rare statement following an outburst of anti-Semitic comments against the embassy, most made on social media and Polish state television. [*Haaretz*, February 2, 2018]

[Anti-Semitic attacks surge in France](#)

French Interior Ministry figures indicated a 28 per cent increase of violent anti-Semitic incidents and France's Prime Minister said that a “new type” of anti-Semitism had emerged in France that was “violent and brutal”. [*The Jewish Chronicle*, February 9, 2018]