

THE EURO BRIEF



APRIL 11, 2018

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EUROPE – US

[Trump slams EU as being ‘solidly against us’ on trade](#)

President Donald Trump criticized the EU for its trade policies, saying barriers in European markets have made it nearly impossible for US companies to do business there, despite statistics showing otherwise. [*Politico*, April 5, 2018]

[Trump dubs Baltic states as example for other NATO countries for defense financing](#)

Trump thanked the Baltic states for raising their defense budgets, urging other NATO countries to follow them in defense spending, and pledged to continue the periodic deployment troops in the Baltic states to deter Russia. [*The Baltic Times*, April 4, 2018]

EUROPE – RUSSIA

[Russia must cooperate with chemical weapons watchdog, says EU](#)

The EU and the UK have declared at an emergency session of the global watchdog that Russia must start cooperating and provide full disclosure with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons’ into Salisbury spy poisoning. [*The Guardian*, April 4, 2018]

[NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg urges calm as Moscow rattles Baltic saber](#)

Stoltenberg said the alliance would watch Russia's ongoing military drills in the Baltic Sea closely after member state Latvia closed down part of its commercial airspace, but did not want to worsen relations with Moscow already at low ebb. [*Deutsche Welle*, April 5, 2018]

EUROPE – EAST ASIA

[Sturgeon aims to boost Scots-China trade with visit](#)

First Minister discussed the long-standing friendship between Scotland and China, showcased Scottish produce and technology and announced new agreements between Scottish and Chinese universities in the finance, energy and computer games sectors. [BBC, April 9, 2018]

[China and Austria agree to establish friendly strategic partnership](#)

Chinese President Xi Jinping and visiting Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen agreed Sunday to establish a Sino-Austrian friendly strategic partnership and advance bilateral pragmatic cooperation. [Xinhua, April 9, 2018]

EUROPE – MIDDLE EAST

[EU calls for response to 'yet another chemical attack' in Syria](#)

The EU condemned in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons and called on the UN Security Council to re-establish its checks to identify perpetrators of chemical attacks against a besieged rebel-held town in Syria. [Reuters, April 8, 2018]

[Turkey's Erdoğan says France is 'abetting terrorists'](#)

Erdoğan accused France of abetting terrorists by "hosting them" at the Élysée Palace, amid a diplomatic row between the NATO allies over Paris's support for the Syrian Democratic Forces, which Turkey considers a terrorist organization. [France24, April 7, 2018]

EUROPE – ISRAEL

[EU: Gaza Border deaths raise 'serious questions' about Israel's use of force](#)

The EU said that the deadly clashes at the Gaza-Israel border raise serious questions about the proportionate use of force and called for restraint, access to medical supplies for the injured and for the Palestinian Authority to assume full responsibility in Gaza. [Haaretz, April 7, 2018]

[Netanyahu congratulates Orbán on reelection, invites him to Israel](#)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Hungary's newly reelected leader Viktor Orbán to congratulate him on his victory in the general elections, invited him to visit Israel and thanked him for Hungary's support for Israel in international forums. [The Times of Israel, April 9, 2018]

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

EU POLITICS

[Victory for Emmanuel Macron after EU agrees migrant labour reform](#)

EU government have agreed tighter rules on cheap migrant labour despite objections from some eastern member states, handing Macron a success in his promise to deliver "equal pay for equal work" for employees across the union. [Financial Times, April 11, 2018]

[Eurozone on brink as Czech Republic makes shock demand](#)

The Czech Republic has claimed it shouldn't be liable for contributing to the bailout of Greece before it enters the Eurozone - a move which could bring further turmoil to the single currency. [Express, April 3, 2018]

['We don't want Brexit Britain to have better deal with EU than us,' Norway warns Brussels](#)

Norwegian MPs have warned that Brussels must not "give the same treatment or better than we have" to the UK if it does not meet the same obligations, such as following EU rules. [*The Telegraph*, April 3, 2018]

[British business tells May it wants EU rules after Brexit](#)

The Confederation of British Industry argues that the opportunities presented by breaking free from EU regulations are vastly outweighed by the cost of losing access to Europe's single market. [*Bloomberg*, April 11, 2018]

[Puigdemont's release from custody risks rift between Spain and Germany](#)

The decision to release former Catalan leader from custody has upset Spain's strategy for dealing with various independence leaders who have fled the country to avoid the legal consequences of their secessionist bid and questioned the use of EU warrants. [*El País*, April 9, 2018]

[Kaczyński: Hungary will point Europe 'in right direction'](#)

Polish conservative leader said that Orbán, a fellow critic of deeper EU integration, will help point the bloc "in the right direction" and that the EU's strength must be based on the strength of national states and their voluntary cooperation. [*Politico*, April 6, 2018]

[EU to Moldova: sort out corruption or €100m funds will stay blocked](#)

Moldova has been warned that €100m of EU funds will remain frozen because the government had failed to meet EU conditions on respect for the democratic process, voting system and crackdown on corruption. [*The Guardian*, April 6, 2018]

DOMESTIC POLITICS

[Angela Merkel orders two-day retreat to tackle coalition sniping](#)

German chancellor Angela Merkel has summoned her new grand coalition cabinet to a two-day retreat at a baroque castle outside Berlin in a bid to end the bad-tempered sniping that has overshadowed her fourth term so far. [*The Irish Times*, April 10, 2018]

[Macron's battle to put France back on track](#)

Macron's fight with public-sector rail workers will show how serious he is about economic reform. Unions are promising two days of disruption each week unless the president abandons his plan to expose the network to a whiff of economic reality. [*Bloomberg*, April 5, 2018]

[Italian parties vow to break government deadlock](#)

Italy's three main rightist parties vowed to present a united front in a fresh round of talks on forming a new government, defying attempts by the anti-establishment Five Star Movement to divide them in coalition negotiations. [*The Telegraph*, April 8, 2018]

[Hungary's strongman Viktor Orbán wins third term in power](#)

Orbán won a third straight term in power after his anti-immigration campaign message secured a strong majority for his party in parliament, granting him two-thirds of seats. [*Reuters*, April 8, 2018]

[Outcry in Bavaria over extending police powers](#)

The legislation to widen police powers has prompted anger in Bavaria and led critics, opposition parties and judges to warn against precedents being set outside court supervision. [*Deutsche Welle*, April 11, 2018]

JEWISH COMMUNITIES

[Israeli Labor leader cuts ties with Jeremy Corbyn](#)

Avi Gabbay announced temporary suspension of ties with Corbyn and his office over the hostility shown to the Jewish community and his anti-Semitic statements and actions, but would preserve the ties with the party as a whole. [*The Guardian*, April 10, 2018]

[Lithuania considers a bill targeting criticism of its role in the Holocaust](#)

The Lithuanian government-sponsored bill that would ban selling material that “distorts historical facts” about the nation, provoked passionate condemnations by critics who said it curtails freedom of speech and debate about the genocide. [*Haaretz*, April 4, 2018]