

## THE EURO BRIEF

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**APRIL 21, 2018**

### **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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#### **EUROPE – US**

##### [EU seeks to avoid U.S. steel tariffs by reviving trade pact](#)

The EU is drawing up a peace offer, a miniature and simplified version of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, it hopes will end trade hostilities with the White House and avoid steel and aluminum tariffs being imposed on the bloc. [*The Wall Street Journal*, April 18, 2018]

##### [U.S. companies upbeat about business in Germany](#)

A poll published by AmCham Germany shows that US companies operating in Germany expect revenues to increase this year, want to hire extra employees and invest more, despite the US decision to impose tariffs steel and aluminum imports. [*Reuters*, April 20, 2018]

#### **EUROPE – RUSSIA**

##### [Russia launches cyber war on UK with 'dirty tricks' campaign](#)

Russia has launched a “dirty tricks” campaign against Britain and the US in the wake of the Syria airstrikes as Boris Johnson warned of the need to be prepared for retaliatory attacks. [*The Telegraph*, April 16, 2018]

##### [Germany's Heiko Maas urges Russia to change its ways](#)

German Foreign Minister accused Russia of having become a difficult partner, urged Russia to adopt a more constructive approach to the conflict in Syria and several other problem areas and called for an open dialogue with the West. [*Deutsche Welle*, April 15, 2018]

## **EUROPE – EAST ASIA**

### [Austria wants to act as a bridge between EU and China](#)

The Alpine country wants to function as a bridge between China and Europe, attracting investments from e-commerce to electric automobiles while laying the groundwork for trade over the new Silk Road. [*Bloomberg*, April 19, 2018]

### [China's ZTE 'poses risk to UK security'](#)

The UK's cyber-defense watchdog has confirmed it has blacklisted one of China's leading state-owned companies and warned that its use of equipment and services could pose a national security risk. [*BBC*, April 16, 2018]

## **EUROPE – MIDDLE EAST**

### [EU wants to jumpstart Syria peace talks](#)

EU foreign ministers reiterated their support for the missile strikes carried out by the US, France and the UK and called on Russia and Iran to pressure Assad to resume political dialogue that might end his country's long and devastating civil war. [*Politico*, April 16, 2018]

### [Turkey taking 'huge strides' away from European Union: top EU official](#)

The European warned that years of progress toward EU standards in human rights, freedom of expression and the rule of law were being reversed and that Turkey had seen a weakening of local democracy as presidential powers increased. [*Reuters*, April 17, 2018]

## **EUROPE – ISRAEL**

### [Irish envoy summoned over Dublin Mayor visit to 'anti-Israel' event](#)

Israel summoned the Irish ambassador to protest the participation of Dublin's mayor in an anti-Israel conference in Ramallah, the decision to formally support a boycott of Israel and the call on the government to expel Israel's ambassador to Ireland. [*The Irish Times*, April 12, 2018]

### [Czech won't relocate Israeli embassy to Jerusalem, PM says](#)

Andrej Babi said his country will not break UN and EU policy and relocate their embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, but will examine the possibility of relocating their cultural center to Jerusalem and open an honorary consulate in Jerusalem instead. [*Haaretz*, April 21, 2018]

## **INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

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### **EU POLITICS**

#### [Concerned EU politicians push for legal action against fake news](#)

A group of MEPs urged their own governments to introduce legislation that will create logistical and technical hurdles for propaganda agents and stop populist, xenophobic and separatist groups from growing within the European Parliament. [*El País*, April 17, 2018]

#### [France's Macron urges EU to shun nationalism](#)

French President has warned that there seems to be a European civil war between liberal democracy and rising authoritarianism and urged the EU to renew its commitment to democracy. [*BBC*, April 17, 2018]

### [Brexit crisis: Ireland and EU reject every Irish border proposal - 'none of them work!'](#)

The 'Irish question' of how Britain can balance an open Irish border while pulling Northern Ireland from the customs union and single market increasingly appears to be the one issue which could bring the Brexit process screeching to a halt. [*Express*, April 20, 2018]

### [EU Commission proposes making fingerprints mandatory in ID cards](#)

The European Commission proposed that identity cards held by EU citizens will be required to include digital images of the holder's fingerprints, as part of a crackdown on fraudulent documents used by criminals and extremists. [*Reuters*, April 17, 2018]

### [EU draft report backs sanctions on Hungary over rule of law](#)

A 26-page report presented by the EU recommended triggering Article 7 procedures against Hungary, the strongest possible sanction against a member state, as it posed a clear risk of a serious breach to the EU's democratic values. [*Bloomberg*, April 12, 2018]

### [Pro-EU Milo Djukanovic wins Montenegro's presidential election](#)

Montenegro defied Russia by electing Milo Djukanovic, a pro-NATO political veteran who hopes to lead the small Balkan state into the EU. [*The Telegraph*, April 15, 2018]

### [Choc horror: four-fingered KitKat set to lose protected EU status](#)

The shape of the four-finger KitKat bar is set to lose its EU-wide protected trademark status after the European court of justice was instructed that the chocolate was not well enough known in Belgium, Ireland, Greece and Portugal. [*The Guardian*, April 19, 2018]

## **DOMESTIC POLITICS**

### [Italian president: I'm in no mood to wait for a government](#)

Sergio Mattarella warned he will wait just "a few days" for the country's political forces to break the post-election deadlock before he forces them to take action by giving exploratory or preliminary mandate to form a government. [*Politico*, April 13, 2018]

### [Thousands of Hungarians protest against newly elected leader](#)

The protests are unlikely to prompt the newly elected government to change course, but they reflect the deep divisions in this Central European country that has been at the forefront of a regional drift away from liberal Western values. [*The New York Times*, April 14, 2018]

### [SNP discipline collapses in bitter row over new referendum](#)

The Scottish National Party now presents an image of internal dissent and disagreement with insult-trading and bickering amongst its supporters and a leadership unsure of its next step. [*The Telegraph*, April 13, 2018]

### [More than 300,000 people demand the freedom of independence prisoners in Barcelona](#)

Barcelona has been dyed yellow in a demonstration of social, cultural organizations, unions and political parties who asked for the freedom of the leaders of the independence movement imprisoned in Madrid. [*La Vanguardia*, April 15, 2018]

### [Romanian president refuses to sack anti-corruption chief](#)

Klaus Iohannis rejected a request from the Justice Minister to sack the head of the anti-graft body DNA Laura Kovesi, who was accused of abuse of authority, violating the constitution and damaging Romania's image. [*Deutsche Welle*, April 16, 2018]

### [Belgian army criticised for plan to let homesick cadets sleep at home](#)

The Belgian army has suffered from a large number of recruits quitting early over complaints they miss their friends and family and is now examining whether to allow homesick recruits to sleep at home rather in barracks during their initial training. [*The Guardian*, April 12, 2018]

## **JEWISH COMMUNITIES**

### ['Anti-Semitism in full sight in Europe', warns Israeli president](#)

Reuven Rivlin has warned that anti-Semitism is in full sight in Europe even for those determined not to see it and hinted the problem is made worse by the people who refuse to acknowledge it is happening. [*The Telegraph*, April 19, 2018]

### [Berlin Jewish community launches 'wear a kippa' campaign after Israeli Arab posing as Jew attacked](#)

The chairman of Berlin's Jewish community said the objective of the campaign is to mobilize a broad social alliance to oppose hatred and noted that the Jewish community had repeatedly warned its members against wearing the kippa in public. [*Haaretz*, April 20, 2018]