

THE EURO BRIEF



MAY 21, 2018

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EUROPE – US

[EU's Tusk slams 'capricious' Trump](#)

European Council President slammed US President for pulling out of the Iran nuclear accord and threatening the EU with tariffs on steel and aluminum in by far the harshest rebuke yet by Brussels of the unpredictable American leader. [*Politico*, May 16, 2018]

[EU unveils plans to block Donald Trump's sanctions against Iran](#)

Brussels updated a “blocking statute” in a move that would prohibit EU-based companies trying to do business with Iran from complying with the US sanctions and provide compensation if they were affected by American penalties against them. [*Independent*, May 18, 2018]

EUROPE – RUSSIA

[Which European democracies are best combating Russian disinformation?](#)

European Values think tank places Spain, France, Germany, Romania, Finland, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Poland as the most protected from interference by Russia-funded media thanks to government and intelligence measures. [*El País*, May 13, 2018]

[Putin and Merkel hold talks In Sochi on Iran, Ukraine and Nord Stream 2](#)

Russian President has held wide-ranging talks with German Chancellor over the Ukraine conflict, Europe's response to the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and the construction of a pipeline bringing gas from Russia to Germany. [*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, May 18, 2018]

EUROPE – EAST ASIA

[UN human rights experts urge Spain to halt extraditions to China](#)

UN human rights experts say they are deeply concerned by Spain's decision to extradite Chinese and Taiwanese individuals to China where they face fraud charges and may be exposed to the risk of torture, other ill-treatment, or the death penalty. [*OHCHR*, May 18, 2018]

[Portugal firmly supports China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative](#)

The Portuguese President has said that Portugal firmly supports the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China since its commencement and is willing to make joint efforts with China and forge ahead along the road of mutual cooperation. [*Xinhua*, May 20, 2018]

EUROPE – MIDDLE EAST

[EU tells Tehran it remains committed to accord despite Trump's withdrawal](#)

The EU has moved to reassure Iran it remains committed to the nuclear deal and the European commissioner for energy and climate said the 28-nation bloc hope to boost trade with Tehran as long as they are sticking to the agreement. [*Independent*, May 20, 2018]

[Turkey's Erdoğan rallies supporters in Bosnia-Herzegovina ahead of elections](#)

The Turkish president has brought together more than 20,000 people in the Bosnian capital to back his election bid, as some leaders are worried his growing influence in the Balkans could lead to regional instability. [*Deutsche Welle*, May 20, 2018]

EUROPE – ISRAEL

[Over 18,000 people sign petition calling on Iceland to boycott Israel Eurovision](#)

More than 18,000 people have signed a petition calling for Iceland to boycott next year's Eurovision Song Contest in Israel, citing human rights violations against Palestinian people. [*Euronews*, May 16, 2018]

[EU donating \\$35 million to repair key Gaza crossing torched by rioters](#)

The EU said it will donate \$35 million to fully repair the Kerem Shalom Crossing into the Gaza Strip, which serves as the main terminal for commercial goods and humanitarian aid into Gaza, after it was heavily damaged by Palestinian rioters. [*The Times of Israel*, May 19, 2018]

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

EU POLITICS

[EU-Western Balkans summit: improving connectivity and security in the region](#)

A summit between the leaders of the EU and the Western Balkans partners confirmed the European perspective of the region and set out a number of concrete actions to strengthen cooperation in the areas of connectivity, security and the rule of law. [*European Commission*, May 17, 2018]

[EU takes France and five other member states to court over air pollution](#)

The European Commission referred Britain, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Romania to the EU's highest Court of Justice, saying they failed to respect air quality limits and didn't take appropriate action in time. [*France24*, May 17, 2018]

[France urges Italy to stick to EU commitments](#)

French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire has warned Italy to respect its financial commitments to the EU even under a possible populist new government if the stability of the eurozone is to be maintained. [*Deutsche Welle*, May 20, 2018]

[Irish PM warns UK could crash out of EU without Brexit deal if no progress soon](#)

Varadkar has raised the prospect of the UK crashing out of the EU without a deal if UK government infighting continues over the next few weeks and failing to offer any further solutions to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and the republic. [*The Guardian*, May 17, 2018]

[Gibraltar Brexit talks deadlocked over Spanish airport demands](#)

Negotiations over the post-Brexit future of Gibraltar are deadlocked on the issue of security at the territory's airport, raising fears of a deepening stand-off between Britain and Spain on the contentious issue of the The Rock. [*The Telegraph*, May 14, 2018]

[Scotland will consider independence vote after Brexit clarity](#)

Nicola Sturgeon will consider another vote on Scottish independence when Westminster offers greater certainty on Brexit and said her Scottish National Party would not block a vote on any Brexit final deal. [*Politico*, May 20, 2018]

[Montenegro's president talks of EU aims during inauguration](#)

Djukanovic has promised in his inaugural speech to boost democratic freedoms and to fight corruption in Montenegro seeking EU membership, but said that the future of Balkan countries in the EU is "blurred" by the bloc's internal and global problems. [*ABC News*, May 20, 2018]

DOMESTIC POLITICS

[Italian parties agree government program, say no threat to euro](#)

Italy's two anti-establishment parties have been discussing a common policy agenda for a coalition government and agreed the basis for a governing accord that would slash taxes and ramp up welfare spending. [*Reuters*, May 17, 2018]

[Royal wedding 2018: Prince Harry and Meghan married at Windsor](#)

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, who will now be known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, exchanged vows and rings before the Queen and 600 guests at St George's Chapel in a moving ceremony. [*BBC*, May 19, 2018]

[Merkel stands behind Seehofer at anchor centers](#)

In the general debate in the Bundestag, Chancellor Merkel defends her Interior Minister Horst Seehofer against criticism and repeats her demand for a common European migration policy. [*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 16, 2018]

[Quim Torra sworn in as Catalan premier with no mention of king or Constitution](#)

Quim Torra, a hardline separatist and a controversial candidate for the role, was sworn in as the new regional premier of Catalonia and promised to be faithful to the people of Catalonia and continue down the road of unilateral secession for the region. [*El País*, May 17, 2018]

[France is debating a law to set the first-ever age of consent](#)

France's lower house of parliament started debating a law to fight sexual and gender-based violence - a proposed bill that comes in the wake of the #MeToo movement but is being strongly criticized by women's groups. [*Time*, May 14, 2018]

JEWISH COMMUNITIES

[EU agency rolls out survey of European Jewish reactions to anti-Semitism](#)

Jewish citizens and residents of 13 EU member states are being urged to fill out an online survey detailing their personal experiences with anti-Semitism, as part of a new EU initiative to combat hatred and prejudice toward Jews. [*The Algemeiner*, May 18, 2018]

[British Muslim group denounces anti-Semitism in full page newspaper ad](#)

Muslim leaders took out a full-page ad in a major British newspaper condemning anti-Semitism and said they must be ever vigilant against those who cynically use international issues to vilify Jews or promote anti-Semitic tropes. [*Haaretz*, May 21, 2018]