

THE EURO BRIEF



AUGUST 21, 2018

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EUROPE – US

[UK official 'confident' about a trade deal with the US](#)

The UK trade commissioner for North America is optimistic and confident the UK will strike a deal with the US after Brexit as there will be mutual benefit for both sides [CNBC, August 14, 2018]

[Trump's trade war is destroying economic growth, says German minister](#)

German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said Trump's sanctions and trade tariffs are slowing down and destroying economic growth and producing new uncertainties. He added that a global trade war would not know winners, only losers. [Politico, August 13, 2018]

EUROPE – RUSSIA

[Merkel and Putin talk Syria, Ukraine and Nord Stream 2](#)

German chancellor and Russian president discussed the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine as well as the controversial Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline during talks. But the meeting ended with no agreements being signed off and no obvious progress made. [Independent, August 19, 2018]

[Putin dances at Austrian Foreign Minister's wedding, raising eyebrows across EU](#)

Russian President danced arm-in-arm with Austria's Foreign Minister at her wedding, after receiving an invitation that opposition critics said undermined the West's stance against Moscow over its annexation of the Crimea region from Ukraine and other issues. [Haaretz, August 18, 2018]

EUROPE – EAST ASIA

[Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field visits Indonesia](#)

Minister Mark Field visits Indonesia as he begins a 6-country tour of Southeast Asia to discuss bilateral relations, broader regional and global issues, and the UK's relationship with ASEAN and its members after the UK leaves the EU. [*Government of the UK*, August 14, 2018]

[UK to investigate claims that wrecks of British warships being plundered for scrap metal by Chinese pirates](#)

The UK government will work closely with the Indonesian and Malaysian governments and local authorities to investigate claims that 10 Royal Navy warships have been plundered for scrap metal by Chinese pirates. [*Independent*, August 19, 2018]

EUROPE – MIDDLE EAST

[Oettinger: It's not Germany's job to help Turkey financially](#)

EU budget chief Günther Oettinger rejected the idea of Germany helping Turkey out of its economic troubles, saying that this is the responsibility of the International Monetary Fund and not Berlin or Brussels. [*Politico*, August 20, 2018]

[EU concerned over detention of human rights lawyer in Iran](#)

The EU has expressed serious concerns about the continuing detention of Iranian human rights lawyer and 2012 laureate of the European parliament's Sakharov Prize Nasrin Sotoudeh facing charges such as espionage. [*The Guardian*, August 15, 2018]

EUROPE – ISRAEL

[Netanyahu slams Corbyn over terrorists' tribute; Labour leader fires back over Gaza killings](#)

Israel Prime Minister and British Labour Party leader exchanged barbs on Twitter after it was reported that Corbyn attended a memorial honoring the Black September terrorists. Corbyn condemned the killing in Gaza and Israel's nation-state law. [*Haaretz*, August 14, 2018]

[Top German Social Democrat urges bank to end Israel boycott support](#)

Michaela Engelmeier, a member of the executive board of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, demanded that the Bank for Social Economy stop its business with groups that support the BDS campaign. [*The Jerusalem Post*, August 16, 2018]

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

EU POLITICS

[EU fears its Brexit talks are being bugged by British secret agents trying to obtain sensitive files](#)

The EU's Brexit negotiators fear that they are being bugged by the British secret service after the UK obtained sensitive documents "within hours" of them being presented to a meeting of EU officials. [*The Telegraph*, August 15, 2018]

[Greece warns Brussels on Brexit: No-deal could trigger EU economic meltdown](#)

Greece has sent a shock warning to EU bosses that they risk the economic and political stability of the bloc's poorer countries while jousting with Britain over a possible no-deal Brexit. [*Express*, August 17, 2018]

[Commission: Greece must respect its post-bailout commitments](#)

The European Commission's chief for economic policy said the Greek government must respect the reform targets, including pension cuts, tax hikes and budget surpluses, that it promised its creditors following its exit from its €86 billion bailout program. [*Politico*, August 20, 2018]

[EU hits back at Italy populists over Genoa bridge collapse](#)

The European Commission has hit back at Italy's government after it suggested that EU spending limits could be responsible for the Genoa motorway bridge collapse that killed dozens of people and said "We gave you money to fix your infrastructure." [*The Independent*, August 16, 2018]

[Austria's far-right ordered a raid on its own intelligence service. Now allies are freezing the country out](#)

After police stormed offices of Austria's main domestic intelligence agency and carted off some of the nation's most sensitive secrets, European intelligence services have looked on in dismay and chosen to protect their own secrets by freezing Austria out. [*The Washington Post*, August 17, 2018]

[EU urged to step in after Romania protests led to violence](#)

European commission called on to defend rule of law in Romania in wake of injuries at protests against corruption and changes to the judicial system. Romania is likely to face growing scrutiny as it prepares to take up the EU's rotating presidency in 2019. [*The Guardian*, August 17, 2018]

DOMESTIC POLITICS

[Xenophobia in Germany: More than 700 attacks on refugees in 2018 already](#)

Attacks on refugees, including dangerous bodily injury, severe arson, property damage, sedition, insult and violations of the weapons law, have injured at least 120 people this year and the left makes the AfD and the CSU responsible for the violence. [*Die Zeit*, August 12, 2018]

[Italy's Salvini announces possible return of military conscription](#)

Interior Minister Matteo Salvini has repeatedly expressed his support for compulsory military service, both as a tool for social cohesion and integration, as well as for training young people to use arms responsibly. [*The Telegraph*, August 12, 2018]

[Orbán bans gender studies courses in Hungary](#)

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is pushing legislation to bar universities from offering courses in gender studies; as such courses are not economically viable and are at odds with everything it stands for according to the government. [*Haaretz*, August 12, 2018]

[Poland's president vetoes altered election rules](#)

Polish President Andrzej Duda has vetoed a reform of European Parliament electoral rules that would favor bigger Polish parties. He himself may need the backing of smaller parties to be re-elected in two years' time. [*Deutsche Welle*, August 16, 2018]

[Afghan teenager loses asylum bid in Austria because he didn't 'act' gay enough](#)

An Austrian immigration official rejected the asylum request of an Afghan teenager who said he was gay because he didn't exhibit stereotypical gay behavior and wrote "the way you walk, act or dress does not show even in the slightest that you could be homosexual." [*Time*, August 16, 2018]

[Muslim couple denied Swiss citizenship over no handshake](#)

The Swiss authorities said aspiring citizens must be well integrated into the Swiss community and demonstrate an attachment to Switzerland, its institutions and a respect for the Swiss legal order. [*BBC*, August 18, 2018]

JEWISH COMMUNITIES

[Muslims and Jews test new bonds at Auschwitz amid season of intolerance in Europe](#)

In a season of rising intolerance across Germany and throughout Europe, two dozen young Muslim refugees and Jewish Germans, brought to Auschwitz as part of an experiment to educate about the Holocaust and blunt anti-semitism. [*The Washington Post*, August 15, 2018]

[Britain's Labour suspends former MP for slamming Jews 'and their blairite plotters'](#)

The UK Labour Party suspended Jim Sheridan who said he lost respect for the Jewish community "due to what they and their Blairite plotters are doing to my party and the long suffering people of Britain." [*Haaretz*, August 18, 2018]