



April 18, 2019

EUROPE - US Trump to EU: Include agriculture in US trade talks or face tariffs

Foreign Affairs

Donald Trump reiterated his threat that trade talks with the EU must open up markets to

farmers or he would impose tariffs on European car imports. EU negotiating directives agreed that agriculture must be excluded from planned negotiations. EU trade chief Cecilia Malmström held out hope that a transatlantic trade deal could be done "quite quickly" if both sides could agree on a basis to start negotiations, but such an agreement appears difficult to reach amid the row over agriculture. [POLITICO, April 16, 2019] EU tariffs to target 20 billion euros of U.S. imports - diplomats The European Commission has drawn up a list of U.S. imports worth around 20 billion euros

(\$22.6 billion) that it could hit with tariffs over a transatlantic aircraft subsidy dispute, EU diplomats said. President Donald Trump threatened to impose tariffs on \$11 billion worth of

European Union products over what Washington sees as unfair subsidies given to European planemaker Airbus. The EU measures would relate to the bloc's World Trade Organization

complaint over subsidies to rival Boeing. [Reuters, April 12, 2019] EUROPE - RUSSIA Russia jails Norwegian Frode Berg for spying on submarines A Moscow court has sentenced a 63-year-old Norwegian, Frode Berg, to 14 years in a strict-regime labour camp for spying on Russian navy submarines. Berg, arrested in Moscow in 2017, denied the accusation. He formerly worked as a guard on the Norwegian-Russian

border, and had been actively promoting closer ties. Berg admitted acting as a courier for Norwegian intelligence, but said he had little knowledge of the mission. The case remains shrouded in secrecy. [BBC, April 16, 2019]

Ukraine appeals to international tribunal for release of captured sailors

Russian aggression in the Kerch Strait in November 2018, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko said. "Today, on my instructions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appeals to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea with a request to take compulsory measures to the Russian side to release Ukrainian sailors," he wrote [Kyiv Post, April 16, 2019] EUROPE – EAST ASIA China presses on with interest in UK's high speed rail project with high level meeting in Beijing China is pressing ahead with its interest in the United Kingdom's controversial HS2 project, the largest high speed rail project in Europe, despite growing concerns over its cost and

Ukraine has appealed to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea for temporary measures against Russia for the release of Ukrainian sailors and ships seized as a result of

economic benefits. Members of China's government and biggest state-owned railway companies met with HS2 chief executive Mark Thurston in Beijing earlier this month, signaling China's interest in the £55.7 billion (US\$72.9 billion) project, which will be funded by British

EUROPE - MIDDLE EAST

connect eight of the UK's 10 largest cities. However, there have been mounting questions from the public about HS2's actual costs and its value for money. [South China Morning Post, April 16, 2019] Japan ready to support France in rebuilding Notre Dame Cathedral The government expressed willingness to support France in restoring the Notre Dame Cathedral, while officials and notable Japanese figures expressed sadness after Paris' iconic Catholic church was badly damaged by fire. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe sent a message to French President Emmanuel Macron, saying that he was "greatly shocked" to see the famous cathedral engulfed in flames. "Our hearts are with France at this time of huge loss," Abe was quoted by the Foreign Ministry as telling Macron. "The Japanese government will consider providing support if requested by the French government," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide

taxpayers. The UK government has said that HS2 will help to create more jobs and better

Suga told a news conference. [The Japan Times, April 16, 2019]

Libya conflict stirs divisions in Gulf and Europe

of the mechanism any further. [RT, April 14, 2019]

existence. [The Times of Israel, April 15, 2019]

EUROPE - ISRAEL

Internal Affairs

EU POLITICS

support in the past, viewing him as the best bet to end the chaos since a NATO-backed rebellion to end Gaddafi's murderous four-decade rule. Italy, with considerable oil interests in the OPEC member, supports the Tripoli government of Prime Minister Fayez al-Serraj and was furious with French reluctance to back a recent European Union resolution urging Haftar to halt his advance. [Reuters, April 16, 2019] Tired of waiting: Iran slams Europe for 'lagging behind' in launching trade mechanism Tehran will not wait forever for the European nations to launch the promised payments mechanism aimed at avoiding the US sanctions against the Islamic Republic, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif has warned. Ever since Washington unilaterally withdrew

from the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal, the European parties to the agreement – the UK, France, and Germany – have been considering the idea of a special payment channel with Iran, which would allow them to bypass re-imposed US sanctions. However, it seems that the Europeans

Former colonial ruler Italy and France have sparred over Libya. Paris has given Haftar

did not make great strides on this path, sparking discontent in Iran. Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif complained about a prolonged delay in the launch of the European non-dollar direct payment channel with Tehran called the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchange (INSTEX). He stated that the Europeans have "no excuse" for delaying the launch

Europe must stand by the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine

former French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault, former British foreign secretaries David Miliband and Jack Straw, former German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, former EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and other leaders and ministers. [The Guardian, April 15, 2019] German leader calls Netanyahu, stresses need for two-state solution The German Chancellor Angela Merkel congratulated Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on his reelection and stressed the need to work toward a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Merkel's office said she emphasized in a phone conversation the continued relevance of a two-state solution, which she said should be the goal of international efforts, after Netanyahu vowed in the final days of his reelection campaign last week not to allow the establishment of a Palestinian state, which he said would threaten Israel's

High-ranking former European politicians urge the EU to reject any US Middle East peace plan unless it is fair to Palestinians. The former leaders urged the EU not to support Trump's plan if it does not respect this principle and international law. Among the 37 signatories are

Brexit: Jeremy Hunt says 'absolute priority' to avoid European polls It is an "absolute priority" for the government to leave the EU by 23 May to avoid having to take part in European elections, Jeremy Hunt has said. The foreign secretary said the public would find it "hugely disappointing" to be asked to send MEPs to Brussels. Asked if it could be a disaster for the Tories, he told the BBC "in terms of polling it certainly looks that way". Some local Tory activists have signaled they will not campaign and regard the polls as a "distraction". [*BBC*, April 15, 2019] Brexit chaos drags European Parliament elections into legal confusion

Britain's departure from the European Union (EU) could paralyze law-making in Brussels for at least 5 years. Brexit is set to happen before October 31st, after European leaders agreed to allow more time for Prime Minister Theresa May and the U.K.'s parliament to sort out the country's exit from the EU. But if current divergences in London over Brexit are not solved by

– as well as the entire Union – for the five years to come. [CNBC, April 15, 2019]

European Council President Donald Tusk today urged the EU to not treat the U.K. as a "second category" member of the bloc between now and the October 31 Brexit deadline, and

Donald Tusk urges EU not to treat UK as 'second category' member state

May 22, then Britain will have to take part in European Parliamentary elections — opening unprecedented legal and political challenges to the EU. Holding EU elections in the U.K. is set to fatally affect the good functioning of the next European Parliament (the EU's legislative arm)

to approach "seriously" the U.K.'s possible participation in next month's European election. Speaking to MEPs during the Parliament's last plenary session in Strasbourg before the ballot in May, Tusk defended the EU's recent decision to delay the date of the U.K. 's exit from the EU for a second time. [POLITICO, April 16, 2019] France's Le Pen unveils anti-EU campaign in Strasbourg To get rid of the European Commission and to reform the European Parliament are some of the proposals in the French far-right party's manifesto and program for the European elections. Marine Le Pen was in Strasbourg Monday, to defend her nationalist approach to reform the EU. "We are committing ourselves to freeing the Nations from a Union that

suffocates them, that deprives them of their sovereignty and that seriously undermines

democracy," Le Pen told gathered reporters. [Euronews, April 16, 2019]

Greta Thunberg urges EU voters to back child climate activists

presidency. [POLITICO, April 15, 2019]

Italian center left wants to build bridges with Macron

DOMESTIC POLITICS

2019]

meeting with European Parliament President Antonio Tajani, Thunberg urged voters to use the opportunity to "influence the decisions" on climate taken by elected and appointed officials. "We still have an open window that is not going to be open for long in which we can act," she said. "So we need to take that opportunity to do something and they [politicians] should do something." [The Local Sweden, April 16, 2019] Commission renews warning to Romania over rule of law Romania's government should step back from the brink and consult on any legal changes that could be seen as giving impunity to corruption, European Commissioner for Justice Věra

Jourová said in a debate in Strasbourg. "The risk of massive disruption to the Romanian justice system, including to corruption cases, cannot be ignored," Jourová said in a statement regarding the rule of law in the country, which currently holds the rotating Council of the EU

The new leader of Italy's center-left Democratic Party (PD) pledged to build bridges with other pro-EU forces in the next European Parliament, including French President Emmanuel Macron's La République en Marche. Nicola Zingaretti, who took the reins of the PD last

During a visit to the European Parliament in the French city of Strasbourg, Thunberg, 16, told a press conference that time is running out to stop the ravages of global warming. Following a

month, said the party would not form a group with En Marche, which has been trying to tempt parties out of the Parliament's traditional blocs. But, in a sign of the PD's willingness to work with Macron, an En Marche official, Caterina Avanza, is on its candidate list for next month's European Parliament election. [POLITICO, April 16, 2019] Spanish far-right Vox party banned from TV debate Spain's election board has banned the far-right Vox party from participating in the only confirmed debate for the April 28 election. The controversial, anti-immigration party achieved a surprise victory in recent regional elections. The electoral commission ruled that Vox's

inclusion would be a violation of electoral law. Spain's Atresmedia network said it would respect the ruling but stood by its decision to include Vox in the debate. [BBC, April 17,

demonstrations against him descended into violent clashes between protesters, who set about 70 fires in the streets, and the police, who made 23 arrests. The unrest in the Norrebro district of the Danish capital began on Sunday April 14th after Rasmus Paludan, the founder of a tiny

far-right party, tossed a book he claimed was the Quran into the air and let it fall to the ground. Mr. Paludan has spent the past months touring Denmark and staging offensive protests against Muslims and immigrants, often in neighborhoods with large immigrant populations. Until recently, he had largely been ignored by mainstream Danish news outlets,

After an anti-Muslim provocateur publicly desecrated the Quran in Copenhagen,

but the riots have propelled him to the center of national attention. [The New York Times, April 15, 2019] Industrial policy row masks deeper German struggle over post-Merkel era

Ukraine election rivals trade taunts and media tricks

April 17, 2019]

anti-Semitism

2019]

April 4, 2019]

In Copenhagen, reaction to an anti-Muslim event turns violent

again over the future shape and leadership of their party as the chancellor stage-manages her exit as German leader. The battle, ostensibly over a new industrial strategy led by Economy Minister Peter Altmaier, is symptomatic of a deeper struggle in the party over its future and has broken a truce agreed in December after a divisive leadership contest. At stake are both the direction the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) takes as it starts to chart a course for the post-Merkel era, and the prospects of Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer - the new party leader and Merkel's protege. The debate pits supporters of a more interventionist industrial policy like Altmaier against CDU traditionalists who seek to limit the state's role to creating the right legal framework for competition to flourish. They see this approach, known as "ordoliberalism", as key to Germany's postwar economic revival. [Reuters, April 15, 2019]

Slick online ads and attention-grabbing antics have spiced up Ukraine's presidential election, now shaped by the frontrunner - popular TV comic Volodymyr Zelensky. He and billionaire rival Petro Poroshenko - the incumbent president - have taunted each other over holding a public debate in Ukraine's biggest sports stadium. But they could not agree when to have the debate. So Mr Poroshenko stole the limelight by turning up at the stadium on 14 April and empty-chairing his rival. Mr Zelensky goes into the 21 April runoff vote with a commanding lead: he got 30.2% on 31 March, almost double Mr Poroshenko's score of 15.9%. [BBC,

After a brief ceasefire, Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats are fighting among themselves

The party of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey applied to the country's election commission for a rerun of the Istanbul mayor's race, after two weeks of appeals and recounting of ballots still showed the opposition candidate ahead. The application for a rerun is seen as a last-ditch attempt by the governing party to avoid losing control of Istanbul, Turkey's largest city and financial center. A defeat in Istanbul would deal a significant blow to Mr. Erdogan, who has been in power for 18 years. [The New York Times, April 16, 2019] JEWISH COMMUNITIES Polish Diplomat Who Saved Hundreds of Jews During the Holocaust Named Righteous Among the Nations Yad Vashem declared a Polish diplomat who saved hundreds of Jews during the Holocaust a member of the Righteous Among the Nations, some 60 years after he died.

Konstanty Rokicki, the Polish vice consul in Switzerland during World War II, supplied false passports to hundreds of Jews, a few dozen of whom are still living thanks to him. The rescue operation became fully known through extensive archival research in recent months, including

Jeremy Corbyn in Recording Casts Doubt on Labour Party's Ability to Review Complaints of

British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn admitted privately that evidence of anti-Semitism in the party has been "mislaid, ignored or not used," The Sunday Times reported. Corbyn made the admission during a meeting in February with Jewish Labour lawmaker Margaret Hodge, which was secretly recorded. The Sunday Times called it the first time Corbyn has cast doubt on his own staff's ability to tackle the problem that has dogged his leadership for years and whether they have mishandled evidence of anti-Semitism and racism. [Haaretz, April 15,

familiar and mutant ways, fusing ideologies that otherwise would have little overlap. The spike is taking place in a context of rising global economic uncertainty, an emphasis on race and national identity, and a deepening polarization between the political left and right in Europe and the United States over the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. [The New York Times,

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Thwarted in Istanbul election recount, Erdogan's party applies for rerun

by Poland's ambassador to Switzerland. [Haaretz, April 17, 2019]

Swastikas daubed on a Jewish cemetery in France. An anti-Semitic political campaign by Hungary's far-right government. Labour lawmakers in Britain quitting their party and citing ingrained anti-Semitism. A Belgian carnival float caricaturing Orthodox Jewssitting on bags of money. And that was just the past few months. The accumulated incidents in Europe and the United States have highlighted how an ancient prejudice is surging in the 21st century in both

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Anti-Semitism Is Back, From the Left, Right and Islamist Extremes. Why?