

EUROPE - US

Foreign Affairs

US to send 1,000 more troops to Poland Since September 2018, the Polish government has been pushing for an American troop

increase on its soil and the establishment of "Fort Trump", a permanent military base. The United States will add 1,000 troops, with logistical but not combat duties, to the 4,000 already deployed. The US President Donald Trump is unwilling to commit to a permanent facility as it would violate the 1997 Founding Act between NATO and Russia, which prohibits the permanent basing of NATO troops in former Warsaw Pact countries. [BBC, June 12, 2019] The US is considering sanctions over Russia's Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project

After meeting with the Polish President, Andrzej Duda, the US President Donald Trump

said that he was considering imposing sanctions on Russia to oppose the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline project. Germany has been pushing for the project as it would double the capacity of Russian gas export to Europe. Eastern European and Baltic countries see the new pipeline as increasing Moscow's economic grip on Europe and Germany's dependence on Russian energy. Poland is increasingly purchasing US liquefied natural [Reuters, June 12, 2019] EUROPE - RUSSIA EU election suffered from Russian disinformation

In a report published by the European Commission on Friday 14th of June, Brussels indicated that Russian sources mounted a "continued and sustained" disinformation effort

to "suppress turnout and influence voter preferences" at last month's EU parliament elections. The report does not draw conclusions about who was behind the attacks but point to "Russian sources" that aimed at "challenging the Union's democratic legitimacy and exploiting divisive public debates on issues such as migration and sovereignty". It is indicated that actors have opted for smaller scale operations than before, for instance instrumentalizing the Notre-Dame Cathedral's fire to show the decline of western and Christian values in the EU. [Financial Times, June 14, 2019] The Council of Europe could welcome Russia back after a three-year hiatus In 2014, the Council of Europe reacted to the Russian annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea and Moscow's backing of militant separatists fighting in eastern

Ukraine by stripping the Russian parliamentary delegation of its voting rights. In reaction,

Russia has for the past two years not paid its annual contribution of 33 million euros. On June 24, a report will be discussed by the Council that would prevent, if adopted, the ability to impose sanctions similar to those on Russia in the future but would also welcome Russia back into the fold immediately. It is considered likely that the report will pass, and Russia would then be back with full voting rights almost instantly. France and Germany have been the main drivers of the change as they consider that keeping Russia out prevents Russian citizens from taking their cases to the European Court of Human Rights. Those who argue against dropping the sanctions against Moscow, such as delegates from Ukraine or Georgia, say inviting Russia back could damage PACE's reputation. [Radio Free Europe, June 18, 2019] EU Extends Economic Sanctions on Russia Until 2020 European Union leaders agreed on Thursday to prolong until the end of January 2020 economic sanctions against Russia over Ukraine. The EU's economic sanctions include curbs on Russian energy, defense and financial sectors. European countries are banned from doing business with Russia-annexed Crimea. The bloc also expressed "utmost

to get Russian passports under simplified procedures. Poland and Lithuania are pushing for more punitive measures against Moscow but it would require the unanimity of all the

28 national leaders of the European Union and Italy or Hungary are opposed to new [Moscow Times, June 21, 2019] EUROPE - EAST ASIA Germany in South-China sea German officials are split concerning the role Germany should have in the South-China sea. While European countries are taking part in US-led "freedom of navigation" operations in the South China sea, the legacy of two world wars make it more difficult for Germany to join these US exercises. Germany's allies are hoping that Berlin will agree to play a bigger military role, but the German people are mostly against it. It would make

sense for Germany to ensure freedom of navigation in the South China sea as Berlin is a

could lead investors to back off and that growth could be in jeopardy if the situation boiled over. For the past two weeks, hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong residents have taken

concern" about President Vladimir Putin's decree allowing Ukrainians in the troubled east

German Economy Minister tells China to avoid escalation of tensions in Hong Kong The German Economy Minister, Peter Altmaier, was in Beijing for trade and investment talks with China. He warned the Chinese government that an escalation in Hong Kong

[South China Morning Post, 12 June, 2019]

major trading power.

to the streets to protest against a planned extradition law that would allow Hong Kong's government to extradite citizens to the mainland, where they are not guaranteed fair trials. [Politico, 19 June, 2019] **EUROPE - MIDDLE EAST** How Europe is dealing with ISIS militants French citizens that joined ISIS have been captured in Syria and transferred to Iraq for trial. Europeans do not want them to return and it is not possible to prosecute them in Syria. Iraqis have accepted prosecuting European citizens but wants to be paid for the

trouble of trying foreigners. France has denied making any payments. Paris has been criticized for accepting Iraq to judge its citizens: trials last 10 minutes, torture, and forced confessions have all been widely reported. If a country pays for its nationals to be

prosecuted in Iraq, it could potentially violate international law and make France complicit

The U.S accused Iran of being responsible for the attacks on fuel tankers in the Gulf of

in torture. [Foreign Policy, June 15, 2019]

[Deutsche Welle, 18 June, 2019]

[ The Times of Israel, 19 June 2019]

Europe urges "maximum restraint" as U.S-Iran tensions rise

Oman. European government are calling for de-escalation and are wary of blaming Iran as they are reluctant to accept the White House's claims at face value. Europeans are worried of the likelihood of missteps and miscalculations and are suspicious about American motives. [New York Times, June 14, 2019] Germany blames Iran for the tanker attacks near the Strait of Hormuz The German Chancellor Angela Merkel said there is strong evidence Iran carried attacks on two tankers on the Gulf of Oman. She stressed the need to avoid an escalation of the situation. Furthermore, Angela Merkel warned Iran of consequence if it violated any part

EUROPE - ISRAEL EU is ready to work with US on peace plan During a meeting in Washington, Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Europe Union for Foreign Affairs, signaled willingness to cooperate with the US administration's effort to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal, as long as it includes a clear commitment to the two-state solution. She underlined the fundamental interest of the European Union for lasting and sustainable peace and stability in the region. The

European Union will send a representative to next week's economic peace conference in Bahrain though it remains unclear at what level the EU will participate in the event.

of the nuclear accord but appeared optimistic Tehran would abide by its commitments.

The ALDE Group in the European Parliament has been renamed RENEW EUROPE The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe group in the European Parliament changed its name to RENEW EUROPE. Emmanuel Macron's party, which is the biggest in

[Politico, June 12, 2019]

to become Parliament president.

Internal Affairs

**EU POLITICS** 

to form a coalition. [Politico, June 12, 2019] Salvini alliance to be named Identity and Democracy The alliance of nationalist parties led by Matteo Salvini will be called Identity and Democracy (ID). It fuses the parliamentary group Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF), which includes Salvini's League party and Marine Le Pen's National Rally, with other Euroskeptic parties such as the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). However, Salvini has failed to unite with the Polish Law and Justice (PiS). As such Identity and Democracy will hold 73 of 751 seats in the Parliament, putting them in fifth place just behind the

the new group, wanted to avoid the word "liberal" which is often perceived negatively in France. The group has a total of 110 seats in the new Parliament, making it a key partner

The French President Emmanuel Macron and leaders from Poland, Belgium and Ireland warned the European Commission of the effects of a trade deal with the Mercosur bloc. The deal would give the Mercosur bloc of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay unprecedented access to Europe's agricultural markets in exchange for buying industrial products from the EU such as German cars. The European leaders fear that the deal would lead to increased deforestation in Brazil and the tariff-free import quota for beef could threaten this fragile sector in their countries. [Politico, June 19, 2019] Ex-Romanian Prime-minister to lead Renew Europe group Dacian Ciolos, former Romanian prime minister, was elected as head of Renew Europe,

the centrist group in the European parliament. Renew Europe replaces the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). It is composed notably by Emmanuel Macron's party, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, Ciudadanos, the Spanish liberal party, and by the former head of the ALDE, Belgian MEP Guy Verhofstadt. Verhofstadt is aiming

Four European leaders oppose a trade deal with the Latin America trading bloc Mercosur

[Politico, June 19, 2019] EU leaders fail to agree on top job candidates in Brussels talks A summit of 28 European Union leaders has failed to reach agreement on who should take on the bloc's top jobs, such as EU Commission president. The choices for the EU's top jobs have to take into account last month's European elections and achieve an acceptable balance regarding large and small states, gender and geography. The parliament says the new Commission president should come from the party with the most seats - which would mean Manfred Weber, a German in the centre-right European

People's Party (EPP). However, Emmanuel Macron, the French President, favors Michel Barnier, the man in charge of the Brexit negotiations. A new summit will now be held on 30 June - just two days before a key meeting of the European Parliament to determine who will take on the bloc's top jobs. [BBC, 21 June, 2019] DOMESTIC POLITICS France: "Act II" of Emmanuel Macron's presidency The French Prime Minister, Edouard Phillipe, announced several measures, aimed at "social

justice" and environmental protection, during a formal address to the French parliament. Edouard Phillipe announced several environmental measures, notably a 100 percent recycling target for plastics, to appeal to the 3 million French citizens who voted for the Greens in the European Parliament election. Furthermore, he indicated €5 billion worth of tax cuts targeting the middle class along with a reform of unemployment benefits to respond to the Yellow

Germany's far-right party defeated in its first mayoral election

far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). Ursu won by 55.1% to Wippel's 44.9%. Goerlitz lies in the heart of a region in eastern Germany seen as a stronghold of support for the far-right party. The election has been closely watched as a possible bellwether for September 1st

reductions.

[*Al Jazeera*, June 22, 2019]

refugee crisis in 2015. [*BBC*, June 23, 2019]

Jacket movement.

[*Politico*, June 12, 2019]

German state elections in Saxony, a federal state where the AfD remains neck-and-neck with the CDU. [NPR, June 17, 2019] Salvini threatens to quit over budget battle with EU Italy's Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini raised the stakes in a budget tussle with Brussels on Friday by threatening to resign and bring down the government unless he can push through at least 10 billion euros (\$11bn) of tax cuts. His party, Lega, has gained power over its coalition partner 5-Star Movement and Salvini has made reducing a high tax burden a priority

for the government. The European Commission wants Italy to reduce its debt this year and next and has opposed wide tax cuts if they are not offset by new revenues or spending

The second round of voting in the town of Goerlitz opposed Octavian Ursu, a 51-year-old Romanian immigrant from the Christian Democratic Union party, to Sebastian Wippel from the

Boris Johnson under fire during his campaign to become UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is currently leading the race to be Britain's next prime minister. However, a poll conducted on the 21st of June showed support for Johnson had fallen sharply after the police were called to his home because of a late-night altercation with his partner. The incident has encouraged those backing Jeremy Hunt, Johnson's opponent for PM. [*The Guardian*, June 22, 2019] German politician's murder raises spectre of far-right attacks Walter Lübck, a senior politician from Angela Merkel's CDU party in Hesse, was well known

in the region for his liberal attitude towards people seeking asylum. The head of Kassel district

politically motivated assassination, planned and perpetrated by a right-wing extremist who, it's feared, may not have acted alone. The main suspect is Stephan Ernst, known to have had links to neo-Nazi networks such as the NSU (National Socialist Underground) - an extremist group which shot dead 10 people, most of whom had migrant backgrounds, between 2000 and 2007. Commentators believe that the focus on the threat of Islamist terror has led authorities to overlook right-wing networks which have gained a new momentum after the

government was shot in the head at close range and detectives believe that this was a

JEWISH COMMUNITIES Holocaust survivors to receive increase in compensation from Germany Holocaust survivors are set to receive an upgrade in the compensation they receive from the German government, after an agreement was signed on Thursday between the finance ministries of Israel and Germany. Survivors will receive an additional 100 Euros to 400 Euros per month. There are some 200,000 Holocaust survivors living in Israel, with around 50,000 living at or below the poverty line. however, the new agreement will affect only around 7,000 survivors because survivors from North Africa, for example, who suffered from the Holocaust but were not directly swept up in it, do not receive compensation from Germany. The same goes for emigrants from the former Soviet Union and survivors who did not undergo forced labor. [The Jerusalem Post, June 21, 2019]

The director of the Jewish Museum Berlin. Peter Schäfer, has resigned following a tweet from the museum supporting the BDS movement. The museum's tweet linked to a news article about Israeli academics who condemned a German parliament resolution that called the pro-Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement "anti-Semitic." The museum was also criticized for the exhibition "Welcome to Jerusalem." which focused on daily life, religion and politics in the city. Some said the exhibit was biased in

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Director of Jewish Museum Berlin resigns

favor of the Palestinian point of view. [Deutsche Welle, 14 June, 2016]

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