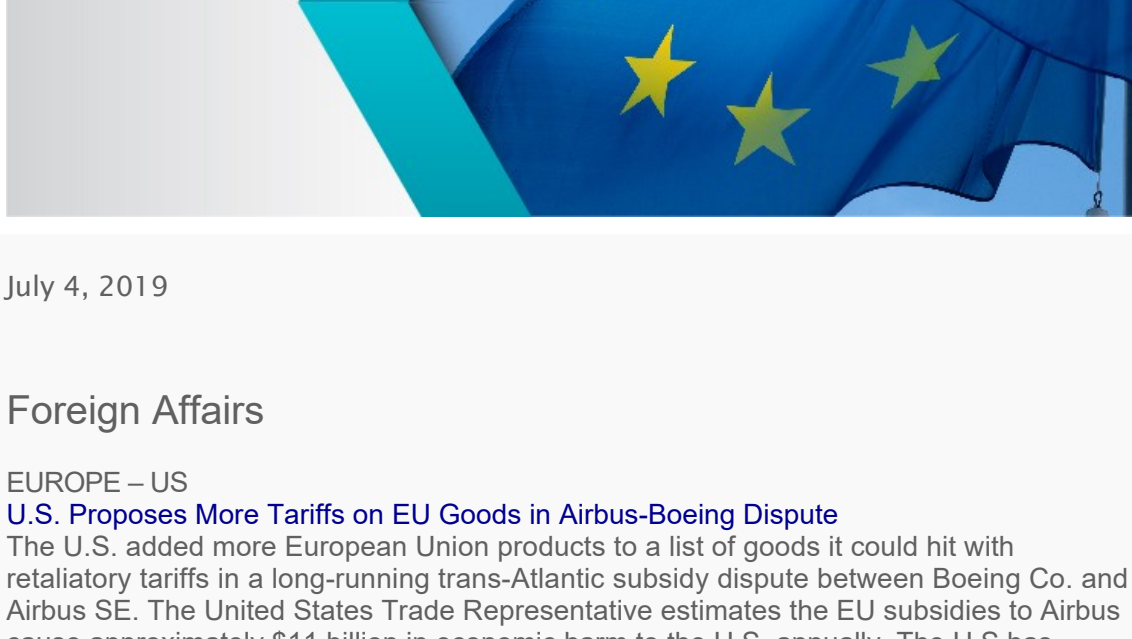
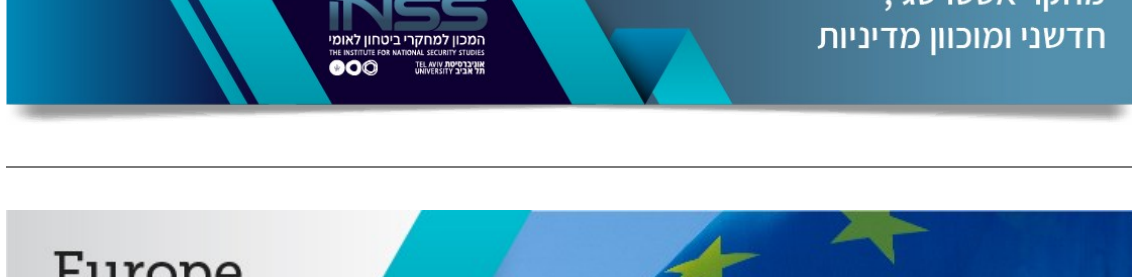




July 4, 2019

Foreign Affairs

EUROPE – US

U.S. Proposes More Tariffs on EU Goods in Airbus-Boeing Dispute

The U.S. added more European Union products to a list of goods it could hit with retaliatory tariffs in a long-running trans-Atlantic subsidy dispute between Boeing Co. and Airbus SE. The United States Trade Representative estimates the EU subsidies to Airbus cause approximately \$11 billion in economic harm to the U.S. annually. The U.S. has published a lost pf EU ranging from cherries to meat, cheese, olives and pasta, along with some types of whiskey and cast-iron tubes and pipes, to target in retaliation for European aircraft subsidies. The EU equally denounces subsidies to Boing and has prepared retaliatory tariffs of its own.
[*Bloomberg*, July 2, 2019]

EUROPE – RUSSIA

The Council of Europe votes for Russia's return

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) voted in favor of the return for Russia to return to the chamber following a three-year suspension. The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organization. In 2014, Russia was stripped of its voting rights in PACE following Moscow's takeover of Crimea and its backing of militant separatists fighting in eastern Ukraine since April 2014. The decision marks the first time that a major sanction imposed on Moscow since 2014 has been reversed. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron have supported Russia's reintroduction to PACE while the Ukrainian delegation the Ukrainian delegation left the Council of Europe assembly in protest to the vote. Russia will now be able to participate in the election of secretary-general for the Council of Europe on June 26th.
[*The Guardian*, June 25, 2019]

German companies oppose costly US sanctions against Russia

German companies judge the sanctions imposed against Russia as counterproductive. They pointed to the financial loss provoked by the sanctions. The President of the German-Russian Chamber of Commerce estimated that the Us uses the sanctions to pursue its economic interests at the expense of Germany and he called for the EU to end its sanctions against Russia. Previously this year, German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier signed a pledge to improve economic ties with Russia at the country's largest economic summit in St. Petersburg.
[*Deutsche Welle*, 26 June, 2019]

Sweden to boost air defense amid Russia tensions

Sweden's military indicated it would deploy a ground-to-air missile defense system BAMSE SRSAM to protect itself against Russian violations of Swedish airspace. Earlier this year, Sweden called in Russia's ambassador after a Russian fighter buzzed a Swedish military plane in international air space over the Baltic, flying just 20 meters away. The system will be set on the Baltic Sea island of Gotland, an important area from a military-strategic perspective, as it lies only 300 kilometers from Kaliningrad, the headquarters of Russia's Baltic fleet. Sweden is not part of NATO but has close ties to the alliance and has strengthened its military capacity amid Russia's aggressive actions in the Baltic Sea region.
[*Reuters*, July 1st, 2019]

EUROPE – EAST ASIA

China as an alternative to the European Union in the Balkans

The European Union decided to postpone membership talks with Albania and North Macedonia, offering an opportunity for China to invest in the Balkans. Because the EU is absent in the region, Beijing is currently operating in something of a vacuum and does not demand political reforms in return for investments. In the Balkans, as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, China is offering to build projects the EU opposes: coal plants in Bosnia and Serbia, a highway from the Adriatic coast to the border with Serbia.
[*Politico*, 25 June, 2019]

Japan and France sign a five-year plan for cooperation

A policy agreement was reached by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and French President Emmanuel Macron. Japan and France will deepen their ties in various sectors ranging from global trade to climate change. The two countries also agreed to cooperate on maritime security and assisting developing nations with improving infrastructure, amid China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
[*Japan Times*, June 26, 2019]

EUROPE – MIDDLE EAST

European powers fail to persuade Iran not to breach nuclear deal

France, Britain and Germany failed to convince Iran not to breach limits on its stockpile of nuclear fuel. Iranians estimate that European powers have made only little progress in developing a system to get around American sanctions on trade with Tehran. Iran first remained in compliance with the JCPOA after Donald Trump pulled out of the treaty in the hope to split the Europeans, Chinese and Russians from the U.S. Should Iran decide to break out of the agreement in coming days, it will create a major decision point for the United States and Europeans.
[*The New York Times*, June 28, 2019]

European leaders resist calls for Iran sanctions after breach of nuclear deal

Iran has indicated it had for the first time broken the terms of the nuclear deal by increasing its stockpile of low-enriched uranium over 300kg. The United Nations' atomic agency had confirmed that Tehran exceeded the cap. European leaders are trying to dissuade Iran from taking further steps away from the deal, notably to prevent Iran from raising the level to which it enriches uranium. French President Emmanuel Macron may travel to Tehran in the coming days to de-escalate tensions.
[*The Guardian*, July 1st, 2019]

EUROPE – ISRAEL

U.K confirms joint F-35 jet fighter exercise with Israel for the first time

The British military acknowledged for the first time that its fighter jet carried a joint exercise with their Israeli counterparts. The announcement by the Royal Air Force (Raf) comes at a time of heightened military cooperation between the United Kingdom and Israel. Israeli aircraft will, for the first time, participate in an exercise in the Combat Warrior exercise in Britain in September.
[*Haaretz*, June 25, 2019]

Israel urges Europe to impose sanctions on Iran

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged Europe to impose sanctions on Iran after Tehran decided to accumulate more low-enriched uranium than permitted under the JCPOA. Iran's move was the first major step in violation of the deal since the United States pulled out of it more than a year ago and reimposed tough economic sanctions on Iran. Netanyahu stressed that European countries committed to impose automatic sanctions on Iran the moment it violates the nuclear agreement.
[*Reuters*, July 1st, 2019]

Internal Affairs

EU POLITICS

The European Union and Mercosur have agreed on a draft free trade deal

After nearly 20 years of talks, the European Union and Mercosur — the South American trading bloc of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay — have agreed on a draft deal that would create the largest free trade area in the world. Mercosur farmers would be allowed to export a set amount of beef at a preferential tariff rate and 180,000 tons of sugar and 100,000 tons of chicken to the EU each year. The deal received criticisms from environmental protection groups, fearing that the deal would spur deforestation, and from European farmers concerned that it would expose European farmers to unfair competition.
[*Deutsche Welle*, 29 June, 2019]

Former Catalan leader not able to claim his seat in the European Parliament

Carlos Puigdemont, exiled former Catalan leader, won a seat in May's European election. However, he is living in self-imposed exile in Belgium since he faces arrest if he returns to Spain due to his role in a separatist push in 2017. To be recognized as an MEP, Carlos Puigdemont must appear in Madrid's national parliament to declare his allegiance to the constitution. The EU General Court has temporarily denied Puigdemont's request to order the European Parliament to allow him to join other lawmakers. A final judgement on the case will come at a later date.
[*Politico*, June 1st, 2019]

Macron's group in EU Parliament demands pan-European candidate lists

Renew Europe, the liberal-centrist group in the European Parliament wants a commitment to allow transnational candidate lists in the European election. The liberals argue that EU citizens must have the right to choose who they consider as the most suitable for leading the European Commission. Critics have stressed that transnational lists would put larger parties and parties anchored in the EU's largest countries at a major advantage because they would be able to organize across the Continent and attract larger numbers of supporters.
[*Politico*, 29 June, 2019]

Council of Europe criticizes Poland over judicial reform and women's rights

A report published by the Council of Europe denounces the reforms implemented by the Poland's ruling Law and Justice party (PiS) in recent years. The Polish government has tried to tighten already restrictive abortion laws which sparked massive protests in 2016. Furthermore, according to the report, the ruling party has compromised the independence and credibility of the Constitutional Tribunal, Poland's highest judicial institution which is supposed to rule on the constitutionality of laws passed by parliament. The Polish government has ignored previous Council of Europe reports and has rejected the accusations made in the report.
[*Politico*, June 28, 2019]

Who did the E.U's leaders choose for its top jobs ?

E.U leaders selected the new heads of the Union. Germany's center-right defense minister, Ursula von der Leyen will lead, once she is confirmed, the European Commission. Christine Lagarde, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund chief, will head up the European Central Bank. The new European Council president will be Charles Michel, the acting prime minister of Belgium. Finally, Josep Borell, a Spanish socialist, has been nominated for the post of European Union's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy
[*New York Times*, July 2, 2019]

DOMESTIC POLITICS

German neo-nazis used police data to compile "death-list"

A group of German rightwing extremists compiled a "death list" of politicians from Germany's main political parties and pro-refugee targets by accessing police records, then stockpiled weapons and ordered body bags and quicklime to kill and dispose of their victims. The group called Nordkreuz had close links to the police and military and at least one member was still employed in a unit of the state office of criminal investigations. These findings came a few weeks after the murder of a pro-refugee politician by a rightwing extremist, and amid a growing debate about whether Germany's domestic intelligence agency, the BfV, has underestimated the threat posed by the militant far right.
[*The Guardian*, 28 June, 2019]

Chancellor Angela Merkel's party opposed to cooperation with the far-right AfD

Several politicians from the Christian Democrats party (CDU), notably in eastern Germany, have said that their party should not ostracize the far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD). In reaction, the governing board of the CDU rule out any form of cooperation with the AfD, saying the far-right party's anti-immigrant rhetoric was contributing to an atmosphere of hate that encourages political violence. A pro-immigration conservative politician, Walter Luebkke, was shot at close-range on June 2nd and prosecutors believe a far-right sympathizer is responsible. Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, said the AfD must share blame for the killing of Walter Luebkke.
[*Deutsche Welle*, 24 June, 2019]

Germany to ban exports of side-arms to non-allies

Germany will ban exports of small side arms to most countries outside NATO and the European Union. A small number of traditional allies such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Switzerland will be exempt from the ban. Earlier restrictions on exporting weapons systems to countries involved in the Yemen war prompted howls of protest from Britain and France. This ban, which is much smaller in scale, is expected to have fewer international repercussions, since pistol, gun and rifle manufacture tends not to be transnational in nature.
[*Reuters*, June 24, 2019]

250,000 Czechs protest to demand resignation of Prime Minister

In the Largest Protests since the Czech Republic won its independence from the Soviet Union in 1989, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets on June 23rd calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Andrej Babis. Mr. Babis is facing a criminal investigation over alleged abuse of €2bn in EU subsidies and is also the subject of an EU conflict-of-interest investigation. Mr. Babis said, "The Czech Republic is not going to change the government because of protests in the street "and that he would continue to work to make the Czech Republic "great again."
[*New York Times*, June 23, 2019]

Acting Spanish prime minister to face investiture vote on July 22

Pedro Sánchez, Spain prime minister, of the Socialist party (PSOE) may be voted back into power in an investiture vote set for July 23. The PSOE The PSOE won the highest number of seats at the April 28 general election but fell short of an absolute majority, meaning Sánchez will need the votes of other parties to be reinstated as prime minister. Sánchez does not currently have the support he needs to be sworn in as prime minister. If he fails to get the support of other parties, the Socialists would need to secure a simple majority (more yes votes than no) at the second investiture vote that will be held 48 hours later on July 25.
[*El Pais*, July 2, 2019]

Kyriakos Mitsotakis from the center-right New Democracy party set to be the next prime minister of Greece.

Greece will head to the polls on July 7 to elect a new government. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras called the snap election on May 26 after his left-wing SYRIZA party was dealt a heavy blow in the European parliamentary ballot. Kyriakos Mitsotakis from the center-right New Democracy party is leading in the polls. The leader of New Democracy is a centrist, but the party contains hard-right elements, notably Adonis Georgiadis who has been accused of anti-Semitism. The financial crisis of 2008 led to the extreme polarization of public discourse and the surge of extreme nationalist elements within New Democracy.
[*Politico*, 4th July, 2019]

France will debate a bill to stop online hate speech

The French Parliament started debating a bill on online hate speech and harassment on Wednesday 3rd of July. The main goal of the bill is to push tech companies to regulate content more forcefully and to crack down on hate speech more quickly. Under the bill, once users flag content as hate speech, online platforms would have 24 hours to analyze the information, and, if necessary, remove it. The scope of content that platforms would be obliged to remove is broad: any message that attacks someone on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, gender identity or disability; propaganda tied to terrorism or war crimes; and harassment. The bill will be harmful for free speech, critics say. They pointed to several examples of free-speech issues that tech companies would find difficult to settle in less than 24 hours, such as whether the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel was anti-Semitic.
[*New York Times*, July 1st, 2019]

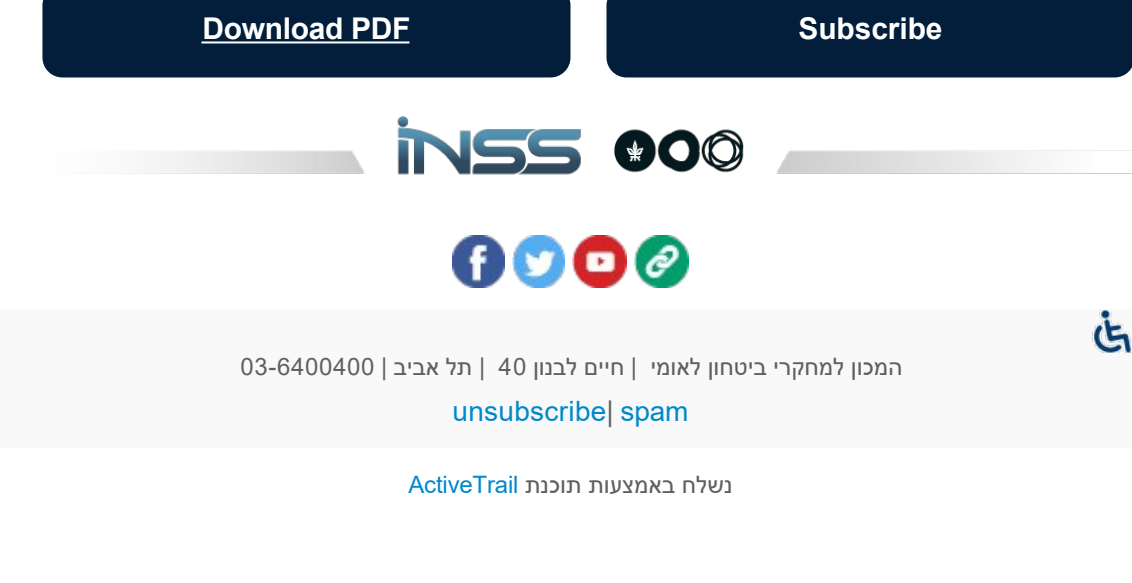
JEWISH COMMUNITIES

Dutch Railway company will pay compensation to Holocaust survivors

During World War II, the Dutch railway, Nederlandse Spoorwegen, transported Jews to transit camps where Jews and other minorities awaited deportation to death camps. Payouts of 5,000 euros to 15,000 euros will be made to Jews and to members of the Roma and Sinti communities. The payouts are the latest compensation offer by companies in Germany and other countries occupied by the Nazis for their roles in the Holocaust. In 2011, S.N.C.F., the French state railway company, apologized to victims of the Holocaust after lawmakers in the United States moved to block it from winning contracts there if the firm did not acknowledge its role in the shipping of Jews to death camps.
[*New York Times*, June 27, 2019]

Germany extends Holocaust compensation to survivor spouses

The organization that handles claims on behalf of Jews who suffered under the Nazis said Tuesday that Germany has agreed to extend compensation to their surviving spouses and to increase other payments. Until now, pension payments to Holocaust survivors had been stopped upon their death, but the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany said Berlin has now agreed to continue survivor pensions for nine months after the death of a the spouse. The Claims Conference carries out continuous negotiations with the German government to expand the categories of people eligible for compensation for suffering and losses resulting from persecution by the Nazis. Since 1952, Germany has paid more than \$80 billion.
[*Washington Post*, July 1st, 2019]



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