

## CHRONOLOGY

### June – December 2018

#### **4 June**

The anti-immigrant, centre-right Slovenia Democratic Party emerged as the largest party in the general elections.

#### **7 June**

The UK proposed to stay in the EU customs union until a new customs arrangement was agreed, thereby avoiding a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

#### **8 June**

Sweden joined Finland and Germany in granting Russia permits to lay down gas pipelines as part of the much bigger Nord Stream 2 energy network.

#### **9 June**

Trump head butts Europe with call to bring back Russia into G7 fold.

China honours Russia's Putin with its first-ever Friendship Medal.

#### **10 June**

Russia brushes off any chance of return to G7.

#### **12 June**

The majority of British Parliamentarians backed a Bill that ensured parliamentary oversight of the Brexit process.

#### **13 June**

In a speech to MEPs in Strasbourg, Dutch premier Mark Rutte urged for a more united, but less centralised Europe in the post-Brexit scenario.

#### **14 June**

The EU parliament and council negotiators reached a provisional deal on the new EU-wide rules granting asylum-seekers the right to work six months after registration of their application.

**19 June**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron issued Meseberg Declaration in a pre-EU Summit meeting that proposed structural reforms within the euro zone.

**25 June**

MEPs in the civil liberties committee voted to trigger an EU sanction process in the European Parliament against Hungary over rule of law violations.

**26 June**

Poland's EU affairs minister Konrad Szymanski briefed his EU counterparts on the judicial reforms, convincing them that the Communist era judicial system required an overhaul.

**28 June**

A two-day EU summit began in Brussels to discuss proposed reforms in defence, trade, asylum and monetary system.

Putin agrees to meet Trump “in a third country”.

**29 June**

EU countries approved a plan to create a single market for data storage and processing services. National authorities would be allowed to impose restrictions, only on grounds of public security.

EU leaders agreed to extend economic sanctions on Russia for another six months at a summit in Brussels, despite the reservation of Italy. Continuous ceasefire violations from Russia prompted the decision.

**5 July**

German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer met with his Austrian counterpart and the Chancellor Sebastian Kurz in Vienna to have a discussion on the German plan for setting up migrants control centres at the frontiers between the two countries.

**7 July**

Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China back Iran over N-deal US isolated.

**10 July**

British government in turmoil as two ministers resign over Brexit row.

**12 July**

NATO formally invited Macedonia to join the Western alliance. It would be the 30<sup>th</sup> member.

**13 July**

On his official visit to the UK, US President Donald Trump tossed out plans for a bilateral trade deal based on Theresa May's Brexit blueprint.

**14 July**

Amid demonstration in London, Trump, in Britain, retracts his earlier critical statements, says ties "between the two countries have never been stronger".

**17 July**

The EU and Japan signed a landmark trade deal in Tokyo that would eliminate nearly all tariffs on products *that moved between the two parties*.

Trump meets Putin; completely buys the latter's "powerful" denial of any interference in US polls; calls US findings to the contrary a "disaster".

**19 July**

Turkey ended a two-year state of emergency, but vowed to continue crackdown against anti-government elements.

EU fines Google \$5bn for 'squeezing out rivals'.

**20 July**

Libyan Prime Minister Fayed al-Sarraj in an interview to the German daily said that he was "absolutely opposed" to the EU's idea to establish camps there for people who could not claim asylum in Europe.

**23 July**

US far-right strategist Steve Bannon opened a campaign office in Brussels to support European nationalist and populist parties in EU elections to be held in 2019.

Britain's new foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt warned authorities in Berlin that the UK public would blame Brussels if there was no Brexit deal.

**24 July**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel met Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Berlin to discuss Syria, the situation in the Middle East and the conflict in Ukraine. German Foreign Minister and the head of Russia's military general staff also attended the meeting. Anger sparked over the visit of Russian officials in the country.

**25 July**

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker paid an official visit to Washington and met US President Donald Trump.

**30 July**

In another Brexit aftermath, the EU states decided to move the HQ of the Atalanta anti-piracy mission from the UK to Spain and France.

**1 August**

French government survives no-trust vote.

**6 August**

A European Commission spokeswoman told reporters in Brussels that the EU firms which pull out of Iran because of US sanctions may be sued by the EU states. The EU refused to conform to the US demand to cut off ties with Tehran.

**10 August**

The pro-EU Swiss Social Democratic Party joined hands with the right wing party in resisting a deal that might undermine wages and working conditions of Swiss people. The EU was attempting to replace agreements with Switzerland with a single treaty.

Germany lifts ban on Nazi symbols in video games.

**11 August**

The Slovenian Parliament approved a minority government led by former comedian Marjan Šarec, ending more than two months of political stalemate since an inconclusive election. Šarec's centre-left LMS party struck a coalition deal with the Social Democrats, the Modern Centre Party, pensioners' party Desus, the centrist SAB, and the Left party.

**12 August**

US-Turkey ties hit rock bottom over detained pastor, tariff hike and currency crash.

**14 August**

The UK Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt began a three-day visit to Finland, Latvia, Denmark, and the Netherlands to continue talks with the European partners on future prospects in post-Brexit Europe.

**15 August**

The European General Court accepted a case by a group of citizens against the European Parliament and Council for adopting inefficient policies to deal with the issue of climate change.

**17 August**

Germany reached an agreement with Greece to take back asylum seekers if they had already applied for asylum in the Mediterranean country but later ended up in Germany. The Berlin government secured a similar deal with Spain, paving the way for de-escalating an internal political spat over migration.

**20 August**

Greece, the recipient of the largest bailout package, ended its European Stability Mechanism (ESM) programme after eight years of receiving loans. The country received a total of €204 billion through different financial instruments since 2010 to deal with the economic crisis.

**24 August**

Pope Francis paid a landmark visit to Ireland first by any pontiff in almost 40 years. The Pope attended an international Catholic World Meeting of Families on the invitation of Archbishop of Dublin in the capital city.

**26 August**

Iran and Russia held talks over N-Plant.

**29 August**

Germany hit by xenophobia as far-right take to the streets in massive numbers.

**31 August**

Caricature contest in Holland cancelled after protests by the Muslim world.

**3 September**

Row over anti-Semitism definition hit British politics.

**5 September**

Spain cancels arms sales to Saudi Arabia amid Yemen concerns.

**6 September**

Cyprus interior minister, Constantinos Petrides, announced to seek help from the EU to offload a bulk of asylum seekers to other EU states, as the island-state was no longer able to manage further intake of migrants.

Germany, France, Canada and the US issued a joint statement backing British investigation against the alleged nerve attack on two Russian ex-spies.

**7 September**

At a British and Irish Chambers of Commerce conference in Dublin, Carol-Ann O'Keeffe, a senior Irish tax official put forward Ireland's proposal on a special Brexit deal to keep using the UK as a "land bridge" or a free passage for goods with sealed containers in transit to Dublin with border checks in France.

In the UN Security Council, eight EU member states – the UK, France, Sweden, Poland, the Netherlands, together with Germany, Belgium and Italy – called on Russia and Iran to maintain a ceasefire and avoid military escalation in the Syrian province of Idlib in order to protect civilians.

**8 September**

Russia, Turkey and Iran fail to agree on Syria truce.

**9 September**

General elections held in Sweden to elect the 349 members of the Riksdag. The election resulted in a hung parliament with the centre-left and centre-right coalitions each holding about 40% of the seats.

**12 September**

Polish foreign ministry said in a statement that Poland would vote against if the EU would impose sanctions on Hungary.

In an annual State of the Union address to the European Parliament, Jean-Claude Juncker warned of "exaggerated nationalism" in Europe. He expressed his hope to see the global EU playing a dominant role in shaping world events, as the US was retreating from the world stage.

The European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker announced a new relationship with Africa, based on free trade deal. He hinted that the Commission had outlined the vision, promising jobs and growth by leveraging public funds for investments in the African continent.

**17 September**

The Slovak EU Commissioner Maros Sefcovic launched a bid to succeed the Presidency of the Commission.

**18 September**

The EU Commission referred Poland to the EU's top court over firing Supreme Court judges. However, Warsaw refused to commit to the EU Court's ruling in future.

Tensions mount over Kosovo-Serbia deal as the Serbian Foreign Minister claimed that his country would never recognize an independent Kosovo.

**24 September**

Chair of the European Parliament's environment committee Adina Valean argued that to reach the EU's 2030 renewable targets on climate and energy, both public and private investment was inevitable.

**25 September**

In New York, during the UN General Assembly, the EU showed solidarity with Russia and China in favour of Iran leaving the US diplomatically aloof.

**30 September**

A *referendum* was held in the Republic of *Macedonia* which resulted in 'Yes' to rename the country as the Republic of North Macedonia. The poll paved the way for the country to apply for the membership in the EU and NATO as Greece had hitherto blocked its entry into said organizations because of a naming dispute.

**3 October**

NATO Defence Ministers' meeting held in Brussels that emphasized on further strengthening the Alliance against an assertive Russia in its periphery.

**5 October**

The US envoy to the WTO, Dennis Shea, said in Geneva that the US would not support the EU's proposal to grant more authority to the appellate body to solve the trade disputes brought by WTO members.

The Netherlands invited the EU diplomats to discuss the creation of a new sanctions regime against human rights abusers worldwide including European states. It proposed to target individuals via EU visa bans and asset freezes to discourage them from violations.

Western capitals accused Russia of involvement in cybercrimes.

**6 October**

France-based Interpol chief held in Beijing.

**9 October**

Italy's 5 Star Movement (M5S), which had 14 MEPs in the European Parliament (EP), ruled out an alliance with the far right in upcoming EP elections.

The EU delegation led by Jean-François Cautain along with Political Counsellor Frank-Olivier Roux and Human Rights Counsellor Javeria Kabani,



raised the concerns over banning of the 18 INGOs and requested the Interior Ministry of Pakistan to review the decision.

**10 October**

Swedish MEP Bodil Valero proposed a billion-euro project for NGOs to strengthen civil society and promote European values in the face of rising populism.

**12 October**

The Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul granted autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. In response, Moscow warned that the split would trigger clashes over possession of major monasteries.

**14 October**

Bavaria's conservative Christian Social Union, the sister party of German ruling Christian Democratic Union, lost its absolute majority in the regional parliamentary elections.

**15 October**

German Chancellor Merkel suffers electoral losses in Bavaria.

**17 October**

British Prime Minister Theresa May in her 15-minute speech at the Brexit summit in Brussels proposed to extend the divorce proceedings for three years if no Brexit deal was finalized.

**19 October**

The 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) summit began in Brussels. The leaders from fifty one European and Asian countries met to discuss global issues covering two-thirds of world economy.

**23 October**

Germany announced a unilateral arms ban on Saudi Arabia over its killing of a journalist, but France, the UK, and the US did not follow suit.

**30 October**

In Brussels, the US state department official on Syria, James F. Jeffrey, strongly condemned the Russian activity in western Syria.

The 70<sup>th</sup> session of the Nordic Council held in Oslo. British PM Theresa May also attended the session to discuss the post-Brexit relationship with the Nordic region.

**31 October**

The Nordic Council refused to mediate between Catalonia and Madrid, and deemed the matter as Spanish internal affair.

**1 November**

The Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis expressed his desire to withdraw from the UN migration pact.

Greece's largest carrier, Aegean Airlines, resumed its flights to Macedonia after 12 years.

**5 November**

New Caledonia votes against independence from France.

**6 November**

France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the European Union jointly condemned Washington's fresh sanctions on Iran's economy, vowing to protect European firms doing business with Tehran.

**7 November**

French President Emmanuel Macron called for an EU Army to contain Russian military build-up in its neighbourhood.

**8 November**

At the party's congress in Helsinki, delegates of the European People's Party (EPP) chose Germany's Manfred Weber to lead the party in the May 2019 European Parliament's election.

**9 November**

The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group in the European Parliament endorsed Czech MEP Jan Zahradil as their leading candidate in the euro elections.

**10 November**

Taliban attend Moscow meeting, but refuse to negotiate with Kabul.

**15 November**

EU negotiator Michel Barnier presented the withdrawal agreement in the European Parliament. He along with President Antonio Tajani and Brexit coordinator Guy Verhofstadt conducted a joint press conference in which they emphasized that the Parliament would play a crucial role in approving the Brexit agreement between the UK and the EU.

**19 November**

Euro area finance ministers poured cold water on the Franco-German proposal to create a euro zone budget at their meeting in Brussels.

**20 November**

Lithuania threatened to quit Interpol, along with Ukraine, if the international police agency elected a Russian official as its new president.

Britain and Iran held N-talks.

**21 November**

A high-level Conference on the Fight against Anti-Semitism in Europe held in Vienna. The Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and senior rabbi Arthur Schneier also graced the occasion.

**22 November**

The UK and the EU reached an agreement on a draft text of the 'Political Declaration' for their future relationship. It was agreed that the post-Brexit transition period could be extended to one or two more years. However, some British MPs expressed concerns over silence of the draft on the core issue of Gibraltar.

**25 November**

Anti-government protests disrupt life in Paris.

**26 November**

Russia fired on and seized Ukrainian military vessels, prompting EU and US alarm on an escalation of the war on Ukraine.

Moscow rejected Western calls to free Ukrainian ships and sailors and unblock access to the Azov Sea.

Brexit deal signed; Britain to walk free on March 29, 2019.

**27 November**

Lawyers in the European Parliament expressed their support to the EU plans to establish migrants' centres in Africa to stop irregular movement of asylum seekers to Europe.

**6 December**

Hundreds of students came out in the Albanian capital of Tirana to protest high tuition fees.

**7 December**

Russia accused the United States of America of interfering in the domestic affairs of Macedonia. The country aimed to join NATO and had recently struck an agreement with Greece over its name that had been a bone of contention between the two countries since Macedonia's independence. Moscow saw the rush in the whole process as Washington's work.

**10 December**

Croatia unveiled a monument honoring its late nationalist leader Franjo Tudjman who had been central in the country's independence from the Yugoslav republic.

**11 December**

The International Monetary Fund urged Slovenia to utilize its good economic health by undertaking necessary structural reforms to preserve growth in the coming years.

**12 December**

The British Prime Minister Theresa May survived an intra-party leadership challenge triggered by her controversial Brexit deal.

**14 December**

Theresa May survives no-trust vote within the Conservative Party over Brexit row.

**18 December**

Italy and the European Union reached a budget agreement according to which Rome agreed to reduce its deficit for 2019 from 2.4 to 2.04.

**19 December**

Bulgaria's food safety agency reported bird flu outbreak.