



Press Review Taiwan



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## Switzerland in the local press

### Swiss man held in German was spying on tax officials (Taiwan News, 30.04.2017)

Germany's Welt newspaper reports that a Swiss man arrested for espionage in Frankfurt may have been spying on German tax officials. German prosecutors said the 54-year-old man was "suspected of working for the intelligence agency of a foreign power since the start of 2012." The Welt newspaper reported that man had been sent to Germany by Switzerland's NDB intelligence agency to identify German tax investigators involved in the purchase of confidential Swiss bank client data.

### Police detain 86-year-old spray-painter at Swiss bank (Taiwan News, 12.04.2017)

A Swiss pacifist group says an 86-year old woman was briefly detained after she spray-painted "Money for Weapons Kills" in German on a wall at Switzerland's national bank, as part of a campaign to strip state financing for arms vendors. If the campaign succeeds to garner at least 100,000 signatures over 18 months, Switzerland would hold a referendum on banning state pension funds and the Swiss National Bank from investing in publicly-traded defense contractors selling arms abroad.

### Swiss test wireless cameras to monitor newborns' vital signs (The China Post, 11.04.2017)

Swiss researchers said they have developed a wireless camera system to monitor vital signs in premature babies, a move that could replace uncomfortable and highly inaccurate skin sensors. The system should allow premature babies kept warm in neonatal incubators to be medically monitored using highly sensitive cameras that detect the newborn's pulse by detecting and analyzing its skin color, which changes ever so slightly every time its heart beats.

### Swiss president: Efforts advance with EU on bilateral deals (Taiwan News, 06.04.2017)

The Swiss president says "things are moving" in efforts to improve ties with the European Union after a Swiss referendum three years ago to limit immigration soured bilateral relations. Doris Leuthard said that Switzerland will hold out for the right agreement—even wait a year if necessary—in its efforts to patch up stalled bilateral deals. Leuthard decried what she called a "false" reputation in the EU that Switzerland, which is not an EU member, only chooses the most favorable deals for the Alpine country with the 28-member bloc.

### Swiss watchdog: Probes of money laundering jump in 2016 (Taipei Times, 04.04.2017)

Switzerland's financial markets watchdog says it investigated 22 breaches of money laundering requirements last year, from nine in 2015, particularly linked to international corruption. The authority, FINMA, said that "serious shortcomings" came to light in 2016, including major cases involving the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund, 1MDB, and Brazilian oil company Petrobras.

## Foreign Policy

### Taiwan still seeks invite to WHA (Taiwan News, 21.04.2017)

Despite dim outlook, Taiwan is still working to secure an invitation to this year's World Health Assembly (WHA), the nation's foreign ministry said. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been sending out invitations for the 2017 WHA meeting since March, for which Taiwan still anxiously awaits. With the deadline for the online registration approaching, Foreign Ministry is still working with the nation's representative office in Geneva on this issue, and is doing everything necessary to inform the organization the nation's intention to attend the meeting.

### Taiwan remains on US currency watch list (The China Post, 16.04.2017)

The US Department of Treasury has kept Taiwan on its currency monitoring list after Washington released its latest twice-a-year foreign exchange policy report. It was the third time that Taiwan was placed on the currency monitoring list since the US started to publish such a report in April 2016. Taiwan's Central Bank said that the results have been anticipated by the bank so the latest US currency report is unlikely to impose any material adverse impact on the local foreign exchange market.

### Taiwan seeks FTA with UK (Taiwan News, 13.04.2017)

President Tsai Ing-wen said while meeting a visiting delegation of British parliamentarians that the government's stance on promoting free trade agreements (FTA) with other countries remains unchanged and expressed hope Taiwan and the United Kingdom might sign such an agreement. In terms of parliamentary exchanges, three groups of British parliamentarians visiting Taiwan last year, while a delegation of Taiwan's legislators paid a visit to the UK last September.

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## China Relation

### **Chinese activist who left tour group found in New Taipei (Focus Taiwan, 20.04.2017)**

Taiwan police have found Chinese civil rights activist Zhang Xiangzhong and turned him over to the National Immigration Agency (NIA) for questioning. The 48-year-old civil rights activist from Shandong province arrived in Taiwan on April 12 as part of a tour group on an eight-day visit but left the group the next day, and his whereabouts remained unknown for days. Zhang indicated his intention to seek political asylum in Taiwan. However, he was given assistance by the government to return home because his case did not conform to the regulations on long term-residence, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) said.

### **Taiwan trying to get detained Taiwan activist home: president (Taiwan News, 12.04.2017)**

President Tsai Ing-wen said that the government is doing its utmost to help a Taiwanese human rights and democracy advocate, Lee Ming-che, who has been detained in China to return to Taiwan, ensure his safety and maintain the nation's dignity. China has yet to clarify why Lee was detained and where he is being held after it confirmed in late March that he was being detained on suspicion of endangering national security.

## Domestic Policy

### **Come and work here (The China Post, 20.04.2017)**

To encourage more foreign talent to work in Taiwan, the Cabinet passed a draft bill, Act for the Recruitment and Employment of Foreign Professional Talent, which would relax restrictions and improve the working environment for foreign professionals in Taiwan. One of the major changes removes the requirement for foreign white-collar workers with permanent residence to remain in Taiwan for at 183 days per year to maintain their status. It also allows foreign nationals to enter Taiwan on a job-seeking visa that will be valid for six months.

### **Cabinet to spend US\$1.2 billion on reducing PM2.5 level: premier (Taiwan News, 13.04.2017)**

Premier Lin Chuan said that the government plans to spend NT\$36.5 billion (US\$1.2 billion), while state-owned Taiwan Power Company NT\$10.1 billion and the private sector NT\$168.4 billion before the end of 2019 to reduce the level of fine particulate matter smaller than 2.5 micrometers (PM2.5) per cubic meter by 18.2 %. The objective is to cut the average concentration of PM2.5 from 22 micrograms per cubic meter today to 18 micrograms.

### **Taiwan to invest US\$140 million in smart machinery industry (Focus Taiwan, 06.04.2017)**

The Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) is planning to spend NT\$4.27 billion (US\$140 million) this year promoting the smart machinery industry. The ministry noted that Taiwan has a global niche in machine tools, but will now seek to integrate equipment, production lines, whole plants and add smart technology such as robots, big data and sensors, to promote smart machinery exports under the nation's "New Southbound Policy."

## Economy/Finance

### **Economy grows 2.56% in Q1, beating expectations (Taipei Times, 29.04.2017)**

The nation's economy grew 2.56 % in the first quarter, as local semiconductor firms stepped up investment to meet global demand for advanced chips, the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS) said. The DGBAS also raised its GDP forecast for this year from its previous forecast of 1.92 % to 1.95 %, as demand would remain robust. Capital formation gained 8.1 % in the first quarter. Real exports of goods and services grew by 6.99 %, driven by foreign demand for electronic components. Imports also increased by 7.15 %.

### **Think tanks raise Taiwan's 2017 GDP growth forecast to over 2% (Focus Taiwan, 25.04.2017)**

The Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research (CIER) raised its forecast for this year's GDP growth from 1.73 % to 2.11 %, saying that the recovering global economy would benefit the nation's exports and private investments. Meanwhile, the Taiwan Institute of Economic Research (TIER) predicted that Taiwan's GDP will grow 2.04 % in 2017, 0.26 percentage points higher than its previous estimate made in January. The TIER said a strong export performance will serve as a key driver of Taiwan's economic growth this year. The IMF said it would maintain its 1.7 % GDP growth forecast this year for Taiwan.

### **Industrial production up for 8th consecutive month (Taiwan News, 24.04.2017)**

Despite overhauls in plants within the chemical and petrochemical sectors and amid the slow season for the electronics industry, the industrial production index for March rose 3.22 % from a year earlier to 112.87 on the back of increased manufacturing in the semiconductor and flat-panel industries, the MOEA said. For the first quarter as a whole, the index of industrial production rose 5.14 % y-o-y to 104.46.

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**Taiwan March unemployment rate down, says DGBAS (DigiTimes, 24.04.2017)**

Taiwan had 445,000 jobless citizens in March 2017, equivalent to an unemployment rate of 3.78 % which dropped 0.07pp on month and 0.11pp on year, according to the DGBAS. Taiwan's population aged 15 and over stood at 20.022 million in March, consisting of 11.758 million for labor force with a labor participation rate of 58.73 %, DGBAS indicated.

**Taiwan export orders up 12.3 percent in March (Focus Taiwan, 20.04.2017)**

Taiwan's export orders rose 12.3 % in March from a year earlier to US\$41.12 billion, on the back of strong demand for electronic products and information and communication products, the MOEA said. The rise marked the eight consecutive month of positive growth and represented an increase of US\$7.37 billion, or 21.8 %, from the same month last year.

**House prices now at record-breaking 9.35 times average annual income (The China Post, 18.04.2017)**

The price-to-income ratio, a number that indicates the price of purchasing real estate as a multiple of annual household income, is now at 9.35, an all-time high, according to the Construction and Planning Agency of the Ministry of the Interior. Experts stated that property prices that were 5 to 7 times the average household income for the purchase of a 30-ping new property were at a reasonable ratio.

**Taiwan's trade surplus hits 3-month high, exports gain for sixth straight month (EconoTimes, 10.04.2017)**

Taiwan's trade surplus increased to \$3.93 billion from \$3.36 billion in the previous month. Exports grew 13.2 % from a year earlier to US\$25.71 billion, largely on the back of gains in semiconductor shipments. Imports rose 19.8 % y-o-y following February's 42.1 % expansion because of increased demand for semiconductor production equipment driven by the semiconductor industry boom. Taiwan's exports posted strong gains in the first quarter on solid demand from China and the US, and analysts expect the momentum could continue into the second quarter.

**March CPI up 0.18% year-on-year (Taiwan News, 06.04.2017)**

Taiwan's consumer price index (CPI) in March edged up 0.18 % from a year earlier, with transportation and communications fees seeing the largest increases (+2.78 %), according to the DGBAS. The increases were partially offset by a 2.49 % fall in Internet fees and a 2.28 % drop in mobile phone fees. Food prices, meanwhile, were down 1.72 %.

**Service sector shows stable growth: survey (Focus Taiwan, 06.04.2017)**

The index of service industry (ISI) stood at 103 points in February, down from 105 the previous month, flashing a green light that represents a range of 100 to 103, indicating stable growth, according to a survey by the Commerce Development Research Institute (CDRI). The institute attributed the decline mainly to the sluggishness in the retail and restaurant markets due to weak demand following the conclusion of the Lunar New Year holiday in that month.

**Data shows manufacturing, non-manufacturing activity expansion (Eye on Taiwan, 06.04.2017)**

Indicators relating to the overall economic condition of the manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors in March both show expansion on the back of more work days in the month, the CIER said. The local manufacturing sector's purchasing managers' index (PMI) for March rose 9.4 points from a month earlier to 65.2 %, marking the 13th consecutive month of expansion, while the non-manufacturing index (NMI) rose 6.6 points to 55.1 %, reversing a contraction seen in the previous month.

**Housing transactions grow over 30% in March (Focus Taiwan, 03.04.2017)**

Data compiled by Yung Ching Realty Group, indicated that transactions of homes, offices and shops nationwide grew 32 % from February. Yung Ching said increased buying interest in the local property market comes after Taiwan's exports posted a y-o-y increase for the fifth consecutive month in February and the composite economic indicator flashed a stable "green light" for eight months in a row.

**Manufacturing fixed capital investment grows for 6th straight quarter (Taiwan News, 03.04.2017)**

The local manufacturing sector posted a y-o-y increase of 6.3 % in fixed capital investment for the sixth consecutive quarter in the fourth quarter to reach NT\$319.2 billion (US\$10.53 billion), with rising global demand encouraging Taiwanese manufacturers to spend more on capacity expansion, according to the MOEA. Of the NT\$319.2 billion in fixed capital investment, about NT\$277 billion or 86.8 % was assigned to buy machinery, ahead of an 11.9 % share spent on new plant construction.

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## Technology/Innovation

### **ITRI takes home silver at Edison Awards (Taiwan Today, 22.04.2017)**

The Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI), a leading technology research institution in Taiwan, has won a silver medal at the 2017 Edison Awards for its technology for the URABat, an ultrafast rechargeable aluminum battery. The URABat was honored in the Energy & Sustainability/Power Source category at the awards held in New York on April 20. "URABat is expected to offer a new power storage alternative that would hugely impact the world," ITRI said.

### **Taiwan in talks with Intel, Cisco to set up IoT centers: report (The China Post, 03.04.2017)**

The Taiwan government is in talks with several multinational high-tech firms on the establishment of centers for Internet of Things (IoT) development, according to local sources. Taiwan's Asia Silicon Valley Development Agency (ASVDA) has started negotiations with five to six U.S. high-tech firms, including semiconductor giant Intel Corp., networking services provider Cisco System Inc. and IT services firm Hewlett Packard Enterprise on working with Taiwan to develop IoT. The ASVDA seeks to transform Taiwan into an Asian Silicon Valley under the supervision of the government.

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