

**Press Review Taiwan**

Trade Office of Swiss Industries, Taipei, 1—31 May 2018

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Switzerland in the local press

Swiss foreign minister renews questions about UNRWA's role (Taiwan News, 30.05.2018)

Switzerland's new foreign minister Ignazio Cassis says the international community should decide whether the UN refugee agency for Palestinians has become a "state within a state," questioning whether the Swiss should continue to help fund it. Switzerland has given UNRWA more than \$20 million annually in the last five years, and plans to continue similar funding through 2020. Cassis said that it's his job to question Swiss public funding.

Swiss gov't eyes simplifying process for name, gender change (Taipei Times, 25.05.2018)

The Swiss government wants to simplify the process for transgender or gender-variant people to officially change their name or sex. The Federal Council plans to cut through administrative red tape by making it possible for individuals to make a "simple declaration" for the civil register. The government also said that if a person is married, then the marriage will remain valid after a gender change, offering a back-door way to same-sex marriage.

Why Switzerland is a cryptocurrency heaven waiting to happen (Tech Orange, 23.05.2018)

The Swiss people seem to be willing cryptocurrency into power as the new normal. Popular cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ether are effectively units of mathematical abstraction, and if you'd like to trade in them, Switzerland's existing regulations are extremely favorable for businesses and people alike. At a time where global sentiment has "downright illegal" at one end of the spectrum, cryptocurrency is hip in Switzerland.

Switzerland: Australian, 104, dies in assisted suicide (Taipei Times, 11.05.2018)

Exit International says 104-year-old Australian biologist David Goodall has ended his life in Switzerland. Goodall had traveled to Switzerland to take advantage of the country's assisted-suicide laws. The British-born scientist said that he had been contemplating the idea of suicide for about 20 years, but only started thinking about it for himself after his quality of life deteriorated over the last year. Swiss law permits assisted suicide, including for foreign nationals.

Foreign Policy

European Parliament passes resolution on Taiwan-EU investment talks (Focus Taiwan, 30.05.2018)

The European Parliament passed a resolution, calling for the European Commission to start negotiations with Taiwan on a bilateral investment agreement. The resolution, which was passed in vote of 499-91, pushes the EC to quickly prepare the groundwork for negotiations on the agreement and officially start discussing the issue of investments with Taiwan.

Taiwan, Haiti sign joint communique on bilateral cooperation (Focus Taiwan, 29.05.2018)

President Tsai Ing-wen and Haitian President Jovenel Moise signed a joint communique that will further bilateral cooperation in multiple fields to benefit the people of both countries. The communique sets in writing an agreement to establish a high-level taskforce that will draft new terms of collaboration on economic and infrastructure development in Haiti as well as potential ways to attract more Taiwanese investors to the Caribbean country.

MOFA to launch new Indo Pacific section (Eye on Taiwan, 09.05.2018)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is preparing to set up a new Indo-Pacific section that will be responsible for Australian, New Zealand and Indian affairs, as part of Taiwan's implementation of its New Southbound Policy. The new section, which will come under MOFA's Department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, is being established in keeping with current geopolitical trends and with the goal of enhancing Taiwan's ties in the region.

China Relation

NIA rejects Straits Forum applications from Chinese officials (Taiwan News, 30.05.2018)

The National Immigration Agency (NIA) has rejected the applications of 10 Chinese officials scheduled to visit Taiwan for the 10th annual Straits Forum, citing "suspicion of promoting unification" as the reason for denying them entry. NIA said despite the strict standards the government is adopting for reviewing applications of visiting Chinese officials, it remains supportive of exchanges between the people on both sides of the strait.

Financial requirements for Chinese tourists to be relaxed (Focus Taiwan, 13.05.2018)

In an effort to boost the number of tourists visiting from China, Taiwan is planning to lower the financial threshold for Chinese tourists by accepting applicants who can show bank savings worth NT\$100,000 (US\$3,339) as opposed to the current requirement of NT\$200,000. The latest amendment is likely to go into effect 60 days after it was made public on May 11.

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**Talks needed to avoid cross-strait conflicts: president (Taipei Times, 08.05.2018)**

President Tsai Ing-wen called for talks between Taiwan and China without any political preconditions on the basis of respect and equality to resolve misunderstandings and avoid misjudgments that could result in conflicts. "Only under such a circumstance could there be a possibility for both sides to move toward peace," she said. Beijing has cut off official contacts because Tsai and her party object to the "1992 consensus".

Domestic Policy**Legislature approves bill to limit donations from political parties (Focus Taiwan, 29.05.2018)**

According to the amendment to the Political Donations Act, political parties will not be allowed to donate more than NT\$25 million (about US\$881,700) to presidential and vice presidential candidates, or more than NT\$2 million to each legislative candidate. Mayoral candidates will not be allowed to receive more than NT\$3 million in political donations from their parties, while city and county council candidates will be bound by an upper limit of NT\$500,000.

Amendment allowing HIV-positive organ transplants passed (Taiwan News, 18.05.2018)

The Legislature passed into law an amendment that allows HIV-positive individuals to donate organs to HIV-positive patients in need. The amendment took into account the loosening of regulations regarding HIV-positive organ donors internationally and found precedent in domestic rules that allow individuals with hepatitis B and C to donate their organs to others with those diseases.

Premier outlines four core aspects of government energy policy (Taiwan News, 04.05.2018)

Premier Lai Ching-te has outlined four core aspects of the government's energy policy--energy safety, the green economy, environmental sustainability and fair burden sharing. To ensure Taiwan becomes nuclear free by 2025, the government is making the infrastructure and management preparations needed to ensure energy security for its people, while striving to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.

Government-funded security think tank launched (Taipei Times, 02.05.2018)

A national think tank titled the "Institute for National Security Studies" was inaugurated in Taipei to study China's political, military and regional situation and engage in exchanges with international think tanks. The institute, the first of its kind in Taiwan, said that it hopes to recruit excellent strategic and military researchers to strengthen Taiwan's national security research ability and build its international reputation in the field, as the country faces complicated and sophisticated security challenges.

Economy/Finance**Economy flashes 'green light' for 3rd straight month (Eye on Taiwan, 29.05.2018)**

Taiwan's economy flashed a "green light" for the third consecutive month in April, pointing to steady growth buoyed by strong industrial production, according to the National Development Council (NDC). The composite index of monitoring indicators for April rose three points from a month earlier to 26. The three-point increase resulted from gains in the industrial production index, manufacturers' shipments, and sales in the trade and food services sectors.

Taiwan has 19th-highest GDP by purchasing power (Taipei Times, 29.05.2018)

Taiwan's GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity (PPP) ranks 19th in the world, higher than Japan's 31st and South Korea's 32nd, the IMF data showed. Taiwan's PPP-based GDP per capita is US\$52,304, compared with US\$44,430 in Japan and US\$41,390 in South Korea. The Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS) said that the high ranking was due to the nation's low cost of living, stable prices and low inflation rate.

Taiwan's 2018 GDP growth forecast upgraded to 2.6% (Focus Taiwan, 25.05.2018)

The DGBAS said that it has raised its forecast for Taiwan's GDP growth for 2018 to 2.6 % after the country made a strong showing in the first quarter. The upgrade reflected the stable pace of global economic growth, which boosted Taiwan's export-oriented economy. In the first quarter, Taiwan's economy grew 3.02 % compared with an anticipated increase of 2.77 % forecast in February in the wake of strong export performance and growing private consumption.

Industrial production up 8.53% in April (Eye on Taiwan, 24.05.2018)

The Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) said the industrial production index in April was 102.94, up 8.53 % from a year earlier as sustained global economic growth boosted demand for the products of Taiwan's export-oriented manufacturers. The sub-index for the manufacturing sector, which accounts for more than 90 % of the country's total industrial production, rose 9.07 % from a year earlier to 103.52.

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**IMD world competitiveness report places Taiwan 17th (Taiwan Today, 24.05.2018)**

Taiwan ranks 17th in the World Competitiveness Yearbook published by Switzerland-based International Institute for Management Development. It is Taiwan's worst showing in nine years since 2009, when it was 23rd. In the report's four main categories, Taiwan dropped two spots in both government efficiency and economic performance to 12th and 14th, respectively, five places to 20th in business efficiency, and one position to 22nd in infrastructure. The declines were attributed to factors such as high export dependency as well as decreases in foreign direct investment and the talent pool.

Unemployment falls to lowest April level in years (Taipei Times, 23.05.2018)

The unemployment rate last month dropped to 3.64 %, the lowest for April in three years, as fewer people lost their jobs amid a stable economy, the DGBAS said. The jobless rate for the first four months of this year fell to 3.66 %, the lowest level in 18 years, lending support to continued economic improvement, which explained the addition of 3,000 jobs last month.

Taiwan records net fund outflow for 31st straight quarter (Taiwan News, 22.05.2018)

More funds for investment were remitted out of Taiwan than were remitted into the country in the first quarter for the 31st consecutive quarter, the longest run in the country's history, according to the Central Bank. The net fund outflow in Taiwan's financial account, which measures the flow of direct investment and portfolio investments, was US\$16.42 billion, bringing the aggregate net outflow for the 31 quarters to US\$367.78 billion, reflecting the continuing trend among investors in Taiwan, in particular major life insurers, to put their money into foreign markets.

Electronics, machinery push Taiwan's export orders up in April (Taiwan Today, 22.05.2018)

Taiwan's export orders in April posted y-o-y gains of 9.8 % to US\$39.11 billion, the MOEA said. Orders for electronic components rose 12.1 % y-o-y to US\$10.18 billion, fueled by strong demand for integrated circuits, servers and printed circuit boards for a growing range of applications in high performance computing, the Internet of Things, automotive electronics and gaming PCs. With demand for smart manufacturing on the rise, export orders for machinery rose for the 21st consecutive month in April, by 18.6 % to US\$2.26 billion.

Consumer goods imports hit 4-month high (Focus Taiwan, 12.05.2018)

Consumer goods imports for the first four months of this year totaled US\$11.49 billion, up 13.2 % y-o-y, according to the Ministry of Finance (MOF). The increase in consumer goods imports shows a rise in private consumption as the local economy has been on the road to recovery and the local equity market has been booming to stand above the 10,000-point mark. The food products accounted for 25 % of the total imports to hit US\$2.85 billion, up 13.5 %.

Machinery exports to rise up to 10%: TAMI (Taipei Times, 10.05.2018)

The nation's machinery exports this year estimated to grow 5 % to 10 % on the back of increasing demand for machine tools and key components used in machinery equipment, such as ball screws, the Taiwan Association of Machinery Industry (TAMI) said. In the first quarter of this year, machinery exports rose 18.3 % to US\$6.43 billion, with machine tool exports increasing 19.1 % annually to about US\$820 million.

Consumer Price Index rises 1.98% in April (Focus Taiwan, 08.05.2018)

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 1.98 % y-o-y in April in the wake of higher prices for tobacco, fuel, vegetable, fish and dairy products, the DGBAS said. The wholesale price index (WPI) for April rose 2.53 % from a year earlier, reflecting price increases for oil, coal, base metal, chemical goods and drugs in the month.

Taiwan exports up 10% in April (Eye on Taiwan, 07.05.2018)

Taiwan's exports grew 10 % y-o-y in April to US\$26.73 billion at a time when the global economy continued to show steady growth, the MOF said. The increasing tech applications worldwide, rising raw material prices, and strong demand from China for electronics components gave a significant boost to Taiwan's outbound sales in April. Taiwan's imports also grew 4.9 % y-o-y in April to US\$22.58 billion, indicating a trade surplus of US\$4.15 billion.

Forex reserves' 12-month rising streak ends in April (Taiwan News, 05.05.2018)

Taiwan's forex reserves at the end of April stood at US\$457.13 billion, down US\$56 million from a month earlier, stopping a 12-month increase; as total foreign currency holdings fell from a month earlier, reflecting the depreciation of non-US dollar currencies, including the euro, in the central bank's asset management portfolio, according to the central bank.

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Technology/Innovation

Taiwan launches new research vessel (Focus Taiwan, 23.05.2018)

The Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) held a launch ceremony for a new research vessel at the Banana Pier in southern Taiwan's Kaohsiung, the first of several new ships that will make up Taiwan's new marine research fleet. The "Legend," a new 2,629-ton research vessel built by a Singaporean company, features state-of-the-art research and safety equipment, including an electric propulsion system for research at sea, a remotely operated underwater vehicle that can reach depths of 3,000 meters, comprehensive core sampling equipment, and a high precision, all-depth surveying sonar system.

Taiwan's new supercomputer now operating (Eye on Taiwan, 09.05.2018)

Taiwan's new supercomputer, the "Taiwania," started officially operating, which, according to the MOST will contribute tremendously to the country's tech and research development. The Taiwania, which is the country's first petascale supercomputer, has a central processing capability of up to 1.33 peta floating point operations per second (pflops), and took two years and NT\$430 million (US\$14.426 million) for the ministry's National Applied Research Laboratories (NARLabs) to build.

Taiwanese scientists identify gene responsible for cancer spread (Focus Taiwan, 02.05.2018)

After 10 years of research, Jou Yuh-shan, a research fellow at Academia Sinica, announced that a team of scientists has discovered a gene called the paraspeckle component 1 (PSPC1), which they found controls the metastasis of cancer cells and can even control the function of other genes to prevent apoptosis (process of programmed cell death) in cancer cells and prolong their survival.

Special Focus

Burkina Faso cuts diplomatic ties with Taiwan (Taiwan News, 24.05.2018)

Taiwan is cutting diplomatic ties with Burkina Faso after the African country announced an end to its ties with the Republic of China (ROC), Foreign Minister Joseph Wu announced. Taiwan will also halt all bilateral cooperative projects, cut all assistance to Burkina Faso, and pull out its diplomatic staff and technical missions from the country which has maintained ties with the ROC for 24 years. The African country's foreign ministry indicated that the decision to cut ties with Taiwan was made based on the government's firm desire to "defend the interests of Burkina Faso and its people in the concert of nations." However, the statement did not mention a switch to Beijing.

The Burkina Faso is the fourth diplomatic ally to terminate the diplomatic relationship with Taiwan since the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) administration took office in May 2016, after Dominican Republic this month, Panama in June last year, and Sao Tome and Principe in December 2016. Taiwan has only 19 diplomatic allies in the world now, a historic low.

Proposal for Taiwan's presence as WHA observer rejected (Eye on Taiwan, 22.05.2018)

A proposal submitted by 15 member-states of the World Health Organization (WHO) to invite Taiwan as an observer to the World Health Assembly (WHA) was rejected. The proposal was rejected after a two-on-two debate was held at the 71st WHA General Committee and also during the WHA plenary session.

Taiwan expressed regret that it has once again being excluded from the annual World Health Assembly (WHA) meeting, after the registration deadline for the forum expired without Taiwan receiving an invitation to attend. It is the second year in a row that Taiwan has failed to obtain an invitation to the WHA, the decision-making body of the WHO, which will hold its 71st session this year from May 21 to 26 in Geneva. Despite the exclusion from the upcoming WHA meeting, Health and Welfare Minister Chen Shih-chung headed a delegation to Geneva and meet with other delegations at and around the WHA meeting as he did last year.

Taiwan cuts ties with Dominican Republic (Focus Taiwan, 01.05.2018)

Taiwan is cutting diplomatic ties with the Dominican Republic after the Caribbean country switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, Foreign Minister Joseph Wu announced. "To safeguard our nation's sovereignty and dignity, we've decided to terminate diplomatic ties with the Dominican Republic immediately," Wu said. Taiwan will also halt all bilateral cooperative projects, cut all assistance to the Dominican Republic, and pull out its diplomatic staff and technical missions from the country that has had ties with the Republic of China for 77 years, Wu said.

According to MOFA's source, China has promised the Dominican Republic more than US\$3 billion in loans to support its infrastructure projects, leading the Caribbean country to cut its 77-year ties with the Republic of China (Taiwan).

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