



Press Review Taiwan



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Switzerland in the local press

Art market eyes rebound as Basel fair kicks off (Taipei Times, 17.06.2017)

The global art market appeared to collectively sigh with relief as deep-pocketed collectors descended on Art Basel after two years of dwindling sales. The world's biggest contemporary art fair opens to the public, while VIPs got an advance peak at the vast array of artworks for sale. They range from 20th century masters like Pablo Picasso to today's cutting-edge creations. Nearly 300 galleries representing more than 4,000 artists from around the world have put their best goods on display at the show, which has become unmissable for sellers and collectors alike.

Swiss foreign minister to step down, citing personal reasons (Taiwan News, 15.06.2017)

Former Swiss president and current Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter says he will resign on 31 Oct. as the Alpine country's top diplomat because he wants a change of career and more of a personal life. Burkhalter, 57, a politician for some 30 years has been foreign minister since 2012. His best-known diplomatic activities have included taking on issues like Ukraine's crisis involving pro-Russian separatists and helping Switzerland play host to talks between Iran and five world powers that led to an agreement on Tehran's nuclear program.

Citing Mideast, Swiss to tighten monitoring of aid outlays (Taiwan News, 14.06.2017)

Switzerland's foreign minister says his country will step up monitoring of its humanitarian aid activities and its support for non-governmental groups "with particular attention on the Middle East." Didier Burkhalter said Switzerland will make sure its contracts will do more to block discrimination, racism and incitement of hatred, and will involve a deeper political "risk analysis." The Swiss parliament is considering a measure aimed to cut off misuse of public funds for racist, anti-Semitic or hateful ends.

First commercial carbon capture plant is going live in Switzerland (TechNews Taiwan, 08.06.2017)

A Swiss company, Climeworks, is set to become the world's first to commercially remove carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere and turn it into a useful product. Climeworks, which will begin operations at a facility near Zurich, Switzerland, plans to compress the CO2 it captures and use it as fertilizer to grow crops in greenhouses. The company wants to dramatically scale its technology over the next decade, and its long-term goal is to capture 1 % of global annual carbon dioxide emissions by 2025.

Foreign Policy

US arms sales improves Taiwan's self-defense capability: MND (Focus Taiwan, 30.06.2017)

An arms sale to Taiwan worth US\$1.42 billion cleared by the US government will improve Taiwan's self-defense capabilities, the Ministry of National Defense (MND) said. The deal, which was approved by Washington, will help maintain peace across the Taiwan Strait, the MND said, thanking the US for its support. The deal is based on the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) and the Six Assurances.

Qatar grants landing visa privileges to Taiwanese tourists (Focus Taiwan, 27.06. 2017)

Qatar has recently decided to grant landing visa privileges to Taiwanese passport holders who visit the Gulf country for tourism, the MOFA said. The move allows Taiwanese passport holders to visit Qatar and stay there for up to 30 days with a landing visa. The new measure is expected to help promote bilateral exchanges in trade, tourism and culture.

Taiwan to send 'agriculture ambassadors' to Philippines, Indonesia (Eye on Taiwan, 20.06.2017)

Taiwan will send "agriculture youth ambassadors" to the Philippines and Indonesia in an effort to promote bilateral exchanges under the "New Southbound Policy," the MOFA said. The ministry is organizing the new program in partnership with the Cabinet-level Council of Agriculture to strengthen cooperation in agriculture with Southeast Asian countries. Under the program, 30 young adults will be selected and sent to the two countries in mid-September on a weeklong visit.

Trade missions under pressure from China to change names: official (The China Post, 14.06.2017)

Five Taiwan trade offices with "the Republic of China" or "Taiwan" in their names located in countries that do not have diplomatic ties with Taiwan have come under pressure by China to change their names, the MOFA said. That already happened in Dubai in the past month, when Taiwan's office there changed its name from the "Commercial Office of ROC (Taiwan)" to the "Commercial Office of Taipei." The four other missions under pressure are in Nigeria, Bahrain, Ecuador, and Jordan.

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**Taiwan, Solomon Islands ink open skies pact (Focus Taiwan, 09.06.2017)**

Taiwan signed an open skies agreement with the Solomon Islands, the 57th open skies agreement Taiwan has sealed, that paves the way for direct flights between the two countries, the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) said. Under the agreement, the two countries will be able to each designate one or more airlines to offer direct services between Taiwan and the Solomon Islands, one of Taiwan's diplomatic allies in the South Pacific.

Taiwan suffers new setback in trying to attend ILO conference (Eye on Taiwan, 04.06.2017)

Taiwan's bid to participate in this year's conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) was rejected, marking another setback it is facing in participating in international gatherings, after it was excluded from the World Health Assembly last month. The 106th session of the International Labour Conference, a high-level annual event of the ILO, will be held in Geneva, Switzerland from June 5-17. Its exclusion is widely seen as the latest move by China to clamp down on Taiwan's international participation.

New visa measures for Asian visitors take effect (Taipei Times, 02.06.2017)

Citizens from Sri Lanka and Bhutan can now apply for visitor's visas, while those seeking to enter on business visas are no longer required to have a Taiwanese company as guarantor, the MOFA said. Businesspeople from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have the option to apply for e-visas to visit Taiwan, once they obtain recommendations from the branch offices of the Taiwan External Trade Development Council in their respective countries.

China Relation**Approved China-bound investment projects up more than 120% (The China Post, 20.06.2017)**

A total of 214 applications were approved for China-bound investment during the five month period, an increase of 120.62 %, mainly due to many Taiwanese high-tech companies are willing to invest in the China market as the economy there has been showing strong growth, according to the Investment Commission. However, the value of approved China-bound investment by Taiwan companies dropped 24.4 % y-o-y in the five-month period to US\$2.57 billion. This was due mainly to a relatively high comparison base.

Taipei-Shanghai forum set for July 2 (Focus Taiwan, 19.06.2017)

A Taipei-Shanghai forum is set to be held in Shanghai on July 2, with the theme of "healthy city," a Taipei spokesman said. Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je and Shanghai Mayor Ying Yong will represent the two cities at the forum. The forum will center on four topics--community health, environmental protection, smart city and public service, and young start-ups.

Most Taiwanese reject one-China as precondition for ties with Beijing (Eye on Taiwan, 08.06.2017)

According to a poll released by the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), 73.4 % of respondents do not recognize China's adherence to the "one-China" principle as a political precondition and consider it an effort to treat Taiwan as a local government. Meanwhile, 83.9 % thought China's ongoing efforts to limit Taiwan's international space have undermined Taiwan's rights and interests and 80.5 % said that China should recognize the existence of the Republic of China, the official denomination of Taiwan, according to the poll.

Domestic Policy**Bill passed to cut civil servants' retirement benefits (The China Post, 27.06.2017)**

A bill that will dramatically cut the retirement benefits of Taiwan's civil servants cleared the Legislative Yuan and is scheduled to take effect in July 2018. According to the bill, the preferential, government-subsidized 18 % interest rate on savings for those who receive NT\$32,160 per month or more in retirement income will be reduced to 9 % from July 1, 2018 to Dec. 31, 2020, and cut to zero starting on Jan. 1, 2021. In addition, civil servants' minimum age of retirement with full pension will be 60 starting in 2021. The retirement age will be raised by one year every year until it reaches 65 in 2026.

Amended anti-money laundering act to go into effect June 28 (The China Post, 21.06.2017)

An amendment to the Money Laundering Control Act goes into effect June 28, stipulating that foreign currency and negotiable securities exceeding a certain amount carried into or out of the country by passengers undeclared shall be confiscated. Under the revised law, passengers entering or leaving Taiwan with cash in local currency exceeding NT\$100,000, foreign currency exceeding US\$10,000, Chinese currency exceeding 20,000 yuan or other negotiable securities such as traveler's checks, other checks and money orders, should be declared.

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**Are you mislabeling your vinegar? Cut it out by July (The China Post, 06.06.2017)**

Starting July 2018, all vinegar manufacturers will be required to state clearly on the label whether their vinegar is natural or synthetic. Synthetic vinegar is vinegar made by a chemical process, while natural vinegar is made in a biological process using bacteria. Companies that do not properly label vinegars with multiple ingredients as either a "blended" or "artificial" vinegar will be subject to a fine of between NT\$30,000 (US\$998) and NT\$3 million.

Cabinet approves wind power development plan (The China Post, 02.06.2017)

The Cabinet approved a four-year plan to promote wind power generation, in the hope of increasing Taiwan's installed wind power capacity to 4.2 gigawatts (GWs) by 2025. Under the four-year plan, the government will develop wind farms onshore and set up model wind farms in near-shore areas from 2017 to 2020, with the goal of adding 652 megawatts (MWs) to Taiwan's wind power output and raising the country's total installed capacity to 1,334 MWs within four years, according to the MOEA.

Economy/Finance**Think tanks retains Taiwan GDP growth forecast of over 2% (The China Post, 29.06.2017)**

The Yuanta-Polaris Research Institute has retained its forecast for Taiwan's GDP growth for 2017 at 2.10 % on the back of rising global demand; however, the uncertainty over cross-Taiwan Strait relations is expected to serve as one of the negative factors to economic growth, the think tank said. Meanwhile, the Taiwan Research Institute has raised its forecast for GDP growth in Taiwan for 2017 to 2.01 %, at a time of rising global demand and growing exports. The government has also upgraded its 2017 GDP growth forecast to 2.05 % from 1.92 %.

Industrial production returns to growth in May (Focus Taiwan, 23.06.2017)

Taiwan's industrial production returned to y-o-y growth in May following an unexpected decline a month earlier on the back of solid global demand for electronic devices, the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) said. The local industrial production index for May rose 0.78 % from a year earlier to 109.63 after a y-o-y fall of 0.15 % in April. The sub-index for the manufacturing sector, which accounted for more than 90 % of total industrial production, grew 2.02 % from a year earlier in May, marking the 13th consecutive month of growth.

Unemployment falls to two-year low at 3.66% (Focus Taiwan, 22.06.2017)

Taiwan's rate of unemployment fell 0.01 percentage point to 3.66 % in May, the lowest level in two years, according to government data released. The May figure was down 0.18 percentage points compared with the same month last year. There were 431,000 workers out of job in May, 1,000 fewer than in April, the data showed.

Taiwan's export orders up for 10th straight month in May (The China Post, 22.06.2017)

In May, Taiwan's export orders rose 9.1 %, the 10th consecutive month, from a year earlier to US\$36.81 billion as the world economy remains on the road to recovery, offsetting the impact of slow-season effects during the month, the MOEA said. The global recovery also minimized the impact of consumers waiting for the latest products to hit the market, according to the MOEA.

Growth in Taiwan's net foreign capital inflows wanes (Eye on Taiwan, 15.06.2017)

Although Taiwan's net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows hit a record high of US\$12.9 billion this year, there have been recent indications of increased capital outflows. Accumulative inflows of FDI have hit a record high of US\$212.281 billion so far this year, compared with US\$193.372 billion last year, according to the Financial Supervision Commission. For the first five months, the country attracted net FDI inflows of US\$12.724 billion.

Taiwan exports grow for 8th straight month in May (Taiwan News, 07.06.2017)

Taiwan's exports rose for an eighth consecutive month in May because of solid demand for electronic components such as semiconductors and flat panels, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) said. Strong demand for machinery also contributed to export growth during the month. Taiwan's exports grew 8.4 % in May from a year earlier to US\$25.52 billion, while the imports in May rose 10.2 % from a year earlier to US\$22.07 billion.

Taiwan's forex reserves hit new high (Focus Taiwan, 06.06.2017)

As of the end of May, the country's forex reserves were at the highest ever at US\$440.25 billion, up US\$1.83 billion from the end of April, mainly on aggressive stock market buying by foreign institutional investors, according to the central bank. Increased returns from the central bank's management of the forex reserves and an appreciation of the currencies in the bank's portfolio, in particular the euro.

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**Prices of several daily commodities surge in May (The China Post, 06.06.2017)**

The Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS) said the CPI in May was up 0.59 % y-o-y, mainly because of price increases for fishery and dairy products and services. Core inflation, which excludes the prices of fruit, vegetables and energy, was up 1.11 %.

Taiwan declines in IMD world competitiveness rankings (The China Post, 01.06.2017)

Taiwan ranked 14th out of 61 economies covered by the International Institute for Management (IMD) World Competitiveness Center, its lowest ranking since 2010, but it remained the third most competitive economy in Asia, behind Hong Kong (1st overall) and Singapore (4th). Taiwan maintained its 9th-place ranking in the government efficiency category, but slipped in the other three categories, falling to 15th from 11th in economic performance, to 16th from 14th in business efficiency, and to 19th from 18th in infrastructure.

Technology/Innovation**First satellite developed by Taiwan to launch on Aug. 25 (The China Post, 29.06.2017)**

Formosat-5, the first satellite developed by Taiwan, is scheduled to be launched on 25 August in California, according to the National Space Organization (NSPO). The satellite took six years, more than 50 teams and cost NT\$5.659 billion (US\$186.37 million) to develop the optical remote sensing satellite. The images taken by Formosat-5 will be used to guide disaster inspection and prevention, identify landslide prone areas, conduct environmental monitoring, academic research and international humanitarian relief work.

Taiwan showcases defense tech at Paris Air Show (Taiwan Today, 20.06.2017)

The National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology is leading a delegation comprising several Taiwan companies and organizations at the 52nd International Paris Air Show taking place June 19-25, showcasing a variety of domestically developed defense and aerospace technologies. The institute is displaying 48 of its products including unmanned aerial vehicles, missiles, infrared equipment and observation systems as well as electro-optical products, which are designed to perform a range of tasks through the generation, detection and manipulation of light.

Taiwan scientists find potential treatment for Alzheimer's disease (Focus Taiwan, 17.06.2017)

A research team at Taiwan's National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) has proven the efficacy of a zinc finger-like protein in restoring memory deficits, which suggests it has the potential to treat Alzheimer's disease. In their research, the scientists found that Zfra, a naturally occurring 31-amino-acid zinc finger-like protein, can effectively reduce plaque aggregation and tangle formation. Zinc fingers are small protein structures coordinated by at least one zinc ion that serve a wide variety of biological functions.

Special Focus**Taiwan breaks ties with Panama (Focus Taiwan, 13.06.2017)**

Taiwan is cutting diplomatic ties with Panama after the Central American country switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, Foreign Minister David Lee announced. Even though the two countries had diplomatic ties for over a century, Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela caved in to Beijing for "economic interests" and ignored Taiwan's long-term assistance that supported its overall development, Lee charged. Lee described Panama's diplomatic switch as "most unfriendly" and accused Panama of "deceiving the Republic of China government to the last moment," and he expressed Taiwan's "strong dissatisfaction and anger" over the moves.

Taiwan unbowed by China's 'threats': Tsai (Taipei Times, 14.06.2017)

President Tsai Ing-wen said that Taiwan would not give in to threats from China, after Panama announced that it was switching diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing. Despite Beijing's constant suppression of Taiwan's international space, the Republic of China (ROC) remains a sovereign nation and that is a fact Beijing cannot deny, Tsai said. The president said her message to Beijing is that Taiwan has fulfilled its responsibility to maintain cross-strait peace and stability, but Beijing's actions have affected the stable cross-strait "status quo," which is unacceptable to Taiwanese.

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