

Trump to Meet EU Chiefs in his First Overseas Trip

BRUSSELS - U.S. President Donald Trump will meet with European Union (EU) chiefs during his first overseas trip later this month since taking office, a spokesman of European Council President Donald Tusk confirmed on Friday.

"Confirmed. @eucopresident and @JunckerEU will meet @realDonaldTrump in Brussels on 25 May," spokesman Preben Aamann tweeted, referring to Tusk and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

Days after Trump took office on Jan. 20, Tusk branded the new U.S. President's "worrying declarations" as an external threat, which, along



with other factors, "make our future highly unpredictable".

"Particularly the change in Washington puts the European Union (EU) in a difficult situation, with the new administration seeming to put into question the last 70 years of American foreign policy," Tusk said in a letter to leaders of EU member states in Jan. 31, ahead of the Valletta Summit.

Trump is scheduled to attend NATO summit in Brussels and G7 summit in Italy later this month. The White House announced Thursday in a statement that Trump's trip will include additional stops in Saudi Arabia, Israel and the Vatican. (Xinhua)

UN Chief Announces Closure of UNOSDP

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced on Thursday a "direct partnership" with the International Olympics Committee (IOC) in Geneva and the closure of the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP), an apparent cost-saving measure.

"The secretary-general agreed with the president of the IOC, Thomas Bach, to establish a direct partnership between the UN and the IOC," chief UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. "Accordingly it

was decided to close the UNOSDP on April 30 of this year."

"The substantive portfolio of the office will be handled by the (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)," the spokesman said. "The secretary-general has also requested the UN office in Geneva to oversee the closure arrangements for the Office on Sport for Development and Peace."

Dujarric said Guterres "wishes to express his appreciation for the dedicated service provided by the staff and its leaders." (AP)

UN Chief Hopes to See Accord Improve Lives in War-Torn Syria

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Thursday that he was encouraged by the signing of a new agreement on Syria, adding it will be crucial to improving the lives of Syrians.

The agreement was reached by guarantor countries Iran, Russia and Turkey to de-escalate violence in key areas in Syria, noted a statement issued here by UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric.

"The secretary-general welcomes the commitments to



ceasing the use of all weapons, particularly aerial assets; to rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access; and to creating conditions for the delivery of medical aid and meeting civilians' basic needs," the statement said. "The commitments made should not affect the rights of Syrians to seek and enjoy asylum."

On Thursday, Russia, Iran and Turkey signed a memorandum in Kazakhstan's capital Astana on the creation of four safe zones in war-torn Syria. (Xinhua)

UNICEF Warns 75,000 Refugees in European Transit Countries Suffering Psychologically

UNITED NATIONS - Nearly 75,000 refugees and migrants, including 24,600 children, stuck in European transit countries are at risk of psychosocial distress, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned on Thursday.

The stranded asylum seekers in Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Western Balkans are suffering psychologically in face of a protracted state of limbo and uncertain future, said UNICEF.

The situation is particularly acute for single mothers and children in Greece or the Balkans waiting for

reunification with family members in other EU countries, UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told a daily briefing.

According to the UN, in many cases of refugees, adult males are the first family members to make the trip to Europe, with the rest of the family following later.

However, other family members are being held up in transit countries where they must apply for family reunification as a result of an EU-Turkey agreement in 2016 and border closures in some European countries. (Xinhua)

Beijing Forum to Send Positive Message on Globalization, Win-Win Cooperation: Senior UN Official

UNITED NATIONS - The upcoming high-level forum on China's Belt and Road Initiative will send a positive and important message to the world that globalization is irreversible and the win-win cooperation can inject strong impetus to the future world development, a senior UN official has said.

Wu Hongbo, UN under-secretary-general for economic and social affairs, told a group of UN-based Chinese news outlets in an interview that the Belt and Road Forum

for International Cooperation, scheduled for May 14-15 in Beijing, will be "a great event both in China and the world this year," and it will be held against a backdrop of rising voices against globalization and for trade protectionism in some parts of the world, the western countries in particular.

While acknowledging there are pros and cons in the globalization, Wu said, "Although globalization has some problems and has room for improvement, the trend continues



and develops, and win-win cooperation can help make up for problems that crop up in globalization." The Belt and Road Initiative, put forward by China in 2013, is in line with the

spirit of the UN Charter and the 2030 Agenda, he said, adding that both the UN agenda and the Chinese initiative are aimed at eradicating poverty. (Xinhua)

No US Combat Troops to Stay in Iraq after IS: Iraq PM:

BAGHDAD - U.S. combat troops will not stay on in Iraq after the fight against the Islamic State group is over, Iraq's Prime Minister said Friday - a statement that followed an Associated Press report on talks between Iraq and the United States on maintaining American forces in the country. A U.S. official and an official from the Iraqi government told the AP this week that talks about keeping U.S. troops in Iraq were ongoing.

The U.S. official emphasized that discussions were in early stages and that



"nothing has been finalized." Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

In his statement, Haider al-Abadi emphasized that there are no foreign combat troops on Iraqi soil and

that any American troops who stay on once IS militants are defeated will be advisers working to train Iraq's security forces to maintain "full readiness" for any "future security challenges." (AP)

Turkey, Iran and Russia Sign Deal on Safe Zones in Syria

BEIRUT / Turkey - Iran and Russia on Thursday signed an agreement calling for the setting up of four "de-escalation zones" in Syria - the latest attempt to reduce violence in the war-torn country - and said that president Bashar Al Assad's air force would halt flights over the designated areas in the country's north, centre and south.

But as officials from the three countries that back rival sides in the conflict signed the agreement at talks in Kazakhstan, some members of the Syrian opposition delegation shouted in protest and walked out of the conference room in Astana, the Kazakh capital. The opposition is protesting against Iran's participation at the conference and its role as a guarantor of the agreement, accusing it of being a party in the war that has killed some 400,000 people and displaced half the country's population. (Agencies)

UN Security Council Calls for Swift Implementation of Power Transfer Deal in DRC

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Security Council on Thursday called upon all parties concerned to carry out a peace accord signed in December 2016 in an effective, swift and timely manner for "a peaceful transfer of power" in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

"The members of the Security Council expressed their concern at the challenges facing the implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement, they noted that the signatories of the agreement were unable to reach a consensus on the special arrangements of the agreement signed on 27 April by some, but not all, of the signatories of the agreement," the council said in a press statement issued here. "They called on all stakeholders to redouble their efforts to achieve a greater degree of inclusivity that would help in the resolution of the very serious problems faced by the DRC," the statement said.

"They reiterated their call for a swift implementation of the agreement, in good faith and in all its components, in order to organize peaceful, credible, inclusive and timely elections, no later than December 2017, leading to a peaceful transfer of power, in accordance with the Constitution and Security Council resolution 2348 (2017)."

"To this end, the members of the Security Council called on all parties to remain committed to the agreement and the overarching objective of peaceful, credible, free, fair and inclusive elections by the end of 2017, including through the full and equal participation of women," the statement said. (Xinhua)

Merkel Says Wants Good Partnership with Britain after Brexit

HAMBURG, Germany - German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on Friday for fair and constructive negotiations with Britain over its exit from the European Union, with the aim of retaining a good partnership. "We will of course need, and want to have Britain as a good partner in the future," Merkel said in a speech in Hamburg, adding that the Brexit negotiations would be "extremely complex and intense".

"Britain will in future be less closely connected than until now, including in the economic domain," she said, adding that it would be important nonetheless to have good ties with Britain on economic, security and defense policy. (Reuters)

EU to Boost People-to-People Dialogues with China: Senior EU Official

BRUSSELS - The EU and China should work on a daily basis in research to make sure that all actions reflect the latest developments of research and innovation, a senior EU official has told Xinhua.

"Innovation is essential if we want to secure a level of cooperation that is up to date," said Martine Reicherts, director-general of the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission.

"I think China is very strong in innovation, and EU can learn from it," said Reicherts, adding more innovation should be applied in the education and culture cooperation between EU and China.

Reicherts made the remarks during the ongoing Europe-China Rectors Seminar in Lisbon, Portugal, bringing together rectors from both European and Chinese universities in the framework of the EU-China high level people-to-people dialogue (HPPD).

"We will continue to foster discussion among academics and higher education professionals through our higher education platforms for cooperation and exchanges," she said. Specific themes like quality assurance, degree recognition and social inclusion in higher education would be highlighted in the future conferences, according to her. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

China Stresses Security Needs for New Silk Road Initiative

BEIJING - China's ambitious initiative to generate economic prosperity by building a new Silk Road will depend on the countries involved ensuring strong security, the country's top policemen said, ahead of a summit to discuss President Xi Jinping's pet project.

Leaders from 28 countries will gather in Beijing on May 14-15 on what China formally calls the "One Road, One Belt" plan that envisions expanding trade links between Asia, Africa and Europe underpinned by billions of dollars in infrastructure investment.

Speaking at a security dialogue on the new Silk

Road, domestic security chief Meng Jianzhu the plan could only advance if there is a secure and stable environment, the Public Security Ministry said late Thursday.

"Increasing international cooperation, jointly dealing with risks and challenges and protecting the security of One Road, One Belt is the joint responsibility of all countries," the ministry paraphrased Meng as telling attendees.

Public Security Minister Guo Shengkun said there should be more pragmatic cooperation in such areas as public security, anti-terrorism, and protecting overseas interests. (Reuters)

PM Blames Opposition for Power Shortfall in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Friday pleaded with his opponents to continue cursing the ruling party, "but don't stall these development projects".

At the breakthrough ceremony of the right head-race tunnel of the Neelum Jhelum project, the PM lashed out at the opposition, blaming them for the power shortfall in Pakistan.

"You're well aware of who is responsible for this shortfall. They come on TV and spew hatred

every day, but to sit in Islamabad and level allegations and speak lies is frustrating people now," he said.

The PM, who has been announcing development projects in various parts of the country as elections draw nearer, also delivered an unusual warning to his opponents. "Don't keep your eyes closed like a pigeon. If you keep this up, the lion is going to eat this pigeon in the upcoming elections." (Monitoring Desk)

Iran for better Trade Ties with Pakistan

QUETTA - Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Rafiei has said that Iran and Pakistan enjoy cordial relations in different fields since long and "we are mainly focusing on strengthening ties with Pakistan in the field of trade and economic cooperation".

Addressing a press conference at his office here, he said peace in areas bordering Pakistan's Balochistan was significant to Iran.

In recent high-level meetings, his country had pledged to further improve its relations with Pakistan, especially in

trade."

He said that Iran was keen to join the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "Since CPEC originates from Balochistan, therefore, we also mainly focus on Balochistan in terms of trade and economics." "Chabahar and Gwadar are two sister ports and these are not rivals to each other," he added.

Talking about recent tragic incident in Mirjaveh in which 10 Iranian border guards died and one of them was still missing, he said a role may be played to bring perpetrators to book. (Monitoring Desk)

Germany Looks to Develop Ties with Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT - Germany intends to do its utmost to develop relations with Turkmenistan, said German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier in his letter to Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov.

Only confronting together the global challenges of modern time, Germany and Turkmenistan will be able to jointly make important contributions to ensuring the peace and freedom of all people, creating conditions for their

worthy life, said the letter.

German companies make a significant contribution to the implementation of long-term projects in Turkmenistan. In December 2016, Ashgabat hosted a business forum, which was attended by about 70 big German companies. It was previously reported that 167 investment projects and contracts with participation of German capital worth \$540 million and nearly 555 million euros were registered in Turkmenistan. (Trend)

Uzbekistan to Host Int'l Oil and Gas Exhibition

TASHKENT - The 21st Oil and Gas Uzbekistan / OGU 2017 international exhibition and conference will be held in Tashkent May 17-19, the ITE Uzbekistan world class exhibition company told Trend.

The event is timed to the 25th anniversary of the Uzbekneftegaz National Holding Company in 2017. The official opening ceremony of the 21st exhibition and conference will be held at Uzexpocentre

in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on May 17.

The conference entitled "Key Development Prospects for the Future Growth of the Oil and Gas Industry of Uzbekistan" will start on the same day.

Over 80 Uzbek authoritative oil and gas experts are expected to deliver speech at the conference. Some 400 companies and delegates from 27 countries have confirmed their participation. (Trend)