

A Glance At:

- **The Berlin Attacks**

On Monday, 19/12 a truck ran into in a crowded Christmas Market in Breitscheidplatz, Berlin. The Police Officials say the driver had crashed voluntarily into the crowd, which resulted in the killing of 12 people. The Berlin police said they were investigating leads that the truck had been stolen from a construction site in Poland, while the arrested suspect was from Afghanistan or Pakistan and entered Germany in February as a refugee. The European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker issued a statement of solidarity with the victims. Likewise, the European Council President Donald Tusk said Europe “*stands ready to help*”. Similarities with the [Nice attack](#) are striking, which was claimed by the Islamic State. US President-elect Donald Trump linked the attack to “Islamist terrorists” before the German police officials had said who was responsible.

Links:

- [Berlin Christmas market attack 'affects all Europe'](#)
- [Jean-Claude Juncker's statement](#)

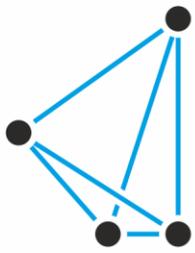
Monitored Policy Areas:

1. **Security and Foreign Policy**

- **News**

The Foreign Affairs Council has signed a new **agreement between the EU and Cuba**, with the aim of beginning new relations fostering cooperation in the fight against drugs and criminality, the preservation of cultural heritage and social development amongst others (12/12). The Alliance and Liberals for Europe (ALDE) Group's 2nd Vice President, Pavel Telicka said: “*I believe that an EU-Cuba cooperation agreement may open new space for improved relations, but the European Union must keep human rights and fundamental freedoms at the core of this agreement*”. The latter also urged the High Representative to take into consideration the existing opposition to the government in Cuba and calls that the latter be listened before the agreement is actually ratified and implemented. The intervention of the High Representative upon the signing of said agreement is enclosed below.

During a plenary session in the EP regarding the **rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in Poland**, the ALDE Group first vice-president Sophie in 't Veld



sent a message to Polish citizens, announcing that the European Parliament (EP) is on their side and sustain the marches of protest against the government (14/12). In the same occasion, also the Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the EP (S&D) Group strongly condemned the deteriorating fundamental rights situation in Poland and in particular the statement from a government minister that they were planning to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention on preventing violence against women.

The President of the EP, **Martin Schulz has given his end of term speech** on Wednesday, 14/12 at the plenary session he was chairing. During the latter he emphasized how, in the past five years, the EP has become “*more audible and more influential than ever*”. The full text of his speech may be found at the link below.

The President of the European Council, **Donald Tusk, also gave his final remarks after the meeting of 15/12**. In it, he thanked all the Slovak Presidency team for the excellent work undertaken: “*thanks to your professionalism you have also succeeded in making a number of promises from Bratislava a reality. To give a few examples, the Council agreement on the Trade Defence Instruments, the Visa Suspension Mechanism and the Schengen Borders Code. So let me conclude by again thanking Robert and the entire Slovak Presidency for a great performance*”. The full text of his remarks may be found at the link below. The outgoing Council Presidency was also praised by many political group speakers for delivering tangible results in very difficult times.

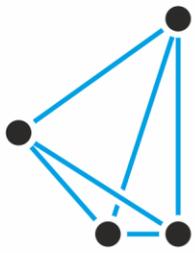
During the European Council on Security and Defence, the **NATO Secretary General has given a speech stressing the importance of EU-NATO cooperation (15/12)**, given the current threats that both institutions have to face: terrorism, hybrid threats, cyber-attacks and a combination of military and non-military means of aggression. The Secretary General went on in affirming that such cooperation is also necessary in the framework of the EU efforts of strengthening European defence: “*But we have to make sure that we avoid duplication. We must complement each other, not compete with each other*”.

Links:

- [EU-Cuba Agreement: Respect for Human Rights and individual freedoms must be at its core](#)
- [Intervencion de la Alta Rapresentante](#)
- <http://alde.eu/en/news/>
- [S&D: Fundamental rights are under threat in Poland](#)
- [Statement by President at the end of his term](#)
- [Remarks by President Tusk](#)
- [MEPs praise out-going Slovak Presidency](#)
- [Statement by NATO Secretary General on EU-NATO cooperation](#)

• Legislative Developments

The European Council has approved the **EU’s legislative priorities for 2017 (13/12)**. These include boosting jobs and in particular youth employment, growth and



investment, better protecting EU citizens' security, reforming EU migration policy, delivering in the Digital Single Market and building an energy union and a forward looking climate change policy. According to the S&D Group, however, several important elements which were [European Parliament's strategic resolution of 6 July](#) are missing in the joint declaration.

The European Council has held the **fourth meeting of the accession conference with Serbia** (13/12). The latter discussed in particular Chapter 5 on public procurement and provisionally closed Chapter 25 on Science and Research.

The European Commission (EC) has issued a **complementary Rule of Law Recommendation, taking into account the latest developments in Poland** that have occurred since the Commission's [Recommendation of 27 July 2016](#) (21/12). In it, the EC sets out in detail the remaining as well as its new concerns and invites the Polish Government to solve the problems identified as a matter of urgency. The ALDE Group, however, urges the EC to move from dialogue to action and trigger [article 7 of the Treaty of the European Union](#), which would result in the suspension of the voting rights of the representative of the government of that Member State in the Council.

Links:

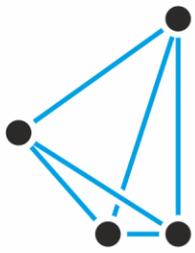
- [EU legislative priorities 2017](#)
- [S&D: Europe must aim higher in 2017](#)
- [Serbia Accession talks](#)
- http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4476_en.htm
- <http://alde.eu/en/news/>

● Publications

The EP think tank has published a briefing on the **security and defence developments** since June 2016, when the Council last addressed the issue and, in particular, EU-NATO cooperation (12/12).

The EP think tank has also published a briefing on **Poland's lobbying regulation framework** (12/12). In fact the country has been one of the first in Europe to regulate lobbying activities, with the introduction of the Lobbying Act in 2006. Said law has not only set a number of obligations, but has also instituted a registration system including three separate registers for those who carry out said activity. However, this registration system has been criticized for not providing reliable information on the lobbying landscape in Poland.

The same think tank has published a briefing on the **European Asylum Support Office**, which provides Member States with support in fulfilling their obligations under the Common European Asylum System (13/12). The office has increasingly expanded to reflect the changes in the EU's legal framework on asylum and to respond to the growing needs of Member States. The EC has advanced a proposal to



amend and expand said office in order to transform it into a fully fledged agency in order to achieve greater convergence between Member States' asylum systems.

The study of the EP think tank on the **European Council's role within the EU system** is designed to review the degree of progress in realizing the goals which the European Council has set itself since January 2010 and to assist the Parliament in exercising its important oversight role in this field (13/12).

The EP think tank also published a briefing on the **Priority dossiers under the Maltese EU Council Presidency** (15/12). Namely, the six identified priorities are the following: migration, Single market, Security, Social inclusion, Europe's Neighbourhood & Maritime sector. The Maltese Presidency will also have to head the negotiations with the UK, upon the triggering of Article 50 TUE, which is expected in March 2017.

EU-NATO cooperation and European defence after the Warsaw Summit was the object of study of a briefing by the EP think tank published on 15/12. The latter looks at the implementation of the actions set down at the summit to ensure EU protection.

The Director of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) think tank has published an insert on the **role of think tanks vis-à-vis rising populism** (21/12). The Director clearly stated that: *"Expert analysis, facts and figures, might not grab the headlines in the age of populism. But they retain their value because, usually below the radar screen of the public debate, policymakers, of whatever colour, have to make concrete choices to address problems that cannot be solved by simple slogans."*

Links:

- [The European Council and European defense cooperation: developments since June 2016](#)
- [Lobbying regulation framework in Poland](#)
- [European Union Agency for Asylum](#)
- [European Council Conclusions](#)
- [Priority dossiers under the Maltese EU Council Presidency](#)
- [EU-NATO cooperation and European defence after the Warsaw summit](#)
- [What role for a European think tank in the age of populism?](#)

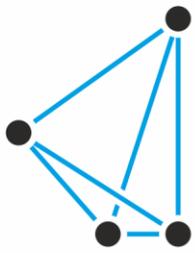
• Events coming up:

Wednesday, 25/01 and Thursday, 26/01: next meeting of the Security and Defence Committee;

- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/sede/home.html>

Thursday, 12/01: next meeting of the Committee on Foreign Affairs Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety;

- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=COMPART&reference=CJ26-OJ-20170112-1&format=XML&language=EN&secondRef=01>



Monday, 09/01: next meeting of the Committee on Foreign Affairs
Committee on Culture and Education;

- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=COMPART&reference=CJ27-OJ-20170109-1&format=XML&language=EN&secondRef=01>

Monday, 09/01: next meeting of the Committee on Foreign Affairs;

- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=COMPART&reference=AFET-OJ-20170109-1&format=XML&language=EN&secondRef=01>

2. Economic Issues

• **Legislative Developments**

The Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) agreed on the Council's negotiating position on a **proposal to modernize the EU's trade defence instruments** (13/12). The latter have remained virtually unmodified for the past 15 years, although the situation on world markets has changed dramatically. The proposed regulation amends current anti-dumping and anti-subsidies regulations to better respond to unfair trade practices. According to the S&D Group, said proposal is unacceptable as it falls short of the Group's expectations. The latter, therefore, will push for greater positions be taken during the negotiation with the European Parliament (EP).

Links:

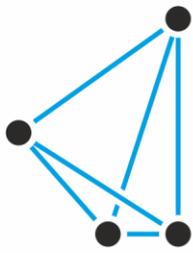
- [Trade defence instruments: Council agrees negotiating position](#)
- <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/council-s-proposal-renew-eu-s-trade-defences-unacceptable-sds>

• **Publications**

The Bruegel think-tank has published a policy Brief on the possibility of an **European Insurance Union** (13/12). The analysis looks at the arguments for and against centralisation of insurance supervision, the possible scope and legal basis of an insurance union, and the possible timing around the implementation of such a proposition.

The CEPS think tank has published a study on the consequences of the **Trump administration on the euro** (09/12): The study predicts that said administration will boost growth and employment in the eurozone.

Links:



- [European insurance union and how to get there](#)
- [Can Trump save the euro?](#)

- **Events coming up:**

Monday, 09/01: next meeting of the Budget Committee;

- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/budg/home.html>

3. Energy Issues

- **Publications**

The European Parliament (EP) think tank has published a briefing on the **greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States** (14/12). The Impact Assessment provides a sound justification for a review of the existing rules, although the range of options appears at times rather limited. This briefing provides a critique of the European Commission's (EC) Impact Assessment.

The CEPS think tank has published a study on **the climate change policies under (two) Trump administrations** (16/12). The latter reminds that, given the tendency of US Presidents to win re-elections, the world should prepare itself for eight years of Trump administration and, in particular, focuses on the consequences this might have on the global climate policies.

Links:

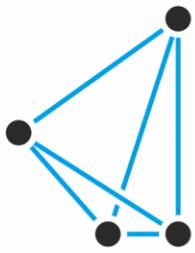
- [Greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States](#)
- [Climate policy in 2025- following eight years of Trump in the White House](#)
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4. Digital Agenda

- **Legislative developments**

The European Commission (EC) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have **launched the Connecting Europe Broadband Fund** (12/12). Said initiative is open to both private investors and National Promotional Banks and Institutions. The fund should raise at least €500 million at first, the EC will then invest €100 million into the Fund from the [Connecting Europe Facility](#).

The Slovak Presidency has reached an informal agreement with the European Parliament (EP) on the **use of a key frequency band that will allow for higher speeds and better access to mobile internet across Europe** (14/12). The deal



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also addresses the need for spectrum for broadcasting purposes. The outcome of the talks will be submitted for approval by member states at the beginning of 2017.

The **Joint Committee of the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs)** launched a **public consultation** about the potential benefits and risks of **Big Data** for consumers and financial firms to determine whether any further regulatory or supervisory actions may be needed (19/12).

Links:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/european-commission-and-eib-launch-connecting-europe-broadband-fund>
- [Boosting mobile internet for all](#)
- <http://www.esa.europa.eu/-/european-supervisory-authorities-consult-on-big-data>

• Publications

The EC has published the **full report on the public consultation regarding the ePrivacy Directive** (19/12). Results show that Europeans call for strong protection of the confidentiality of their communications and effective respect of their privacy, while Industry and public authorities express more diverse views, with the first demanding rules that would not stifle new opportunities and innovation related to use of data.

Links:

- [Full report on the consultations on the ePrivacy Directive](#)

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