



**IS  
SADIQ  
KHAN  
THE FACE  
OF EUROPE'S  
FUTURE?**

**+ MEET THE 27 OTHER  
PEOPLE SHAKING THE WORLD**

Reshma  
MSD Senior Scientist  
**Inventor**

# CANCER NEEDS CURES. **STILL.**

At MSD, we are proud to be a part of the great progress being made in the fight against cancer. But cancer remains a devastating disease that threatens to limit us in what we dare to achieve.

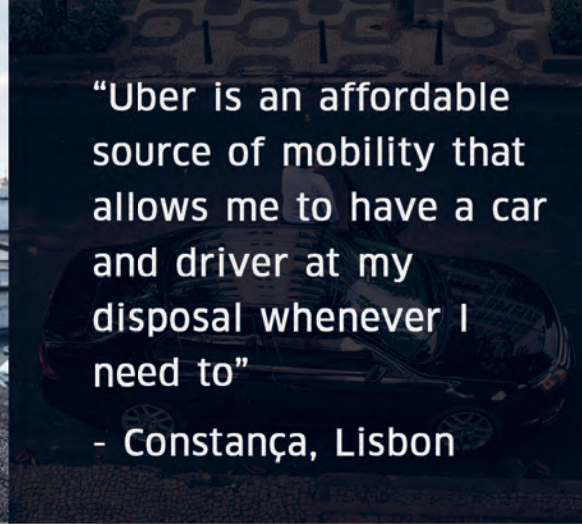
Our researchers are working to invent new ways to fight cancer – and ultimately, to find a cure.

We are taking on the world's most challenging diseases so that people can go on, unburdened, to experience, create and live their best lives.

To explore our commitment to invention, visit [www.immuno-oncology.msd.eu](http://www.immuno-oncology.msd.eu).

**For further details contact:**

MSD Europe  
Public Policy Europe Canada  
Clos du Lynx, 5 - 1200 Brussels  
Tel +32 (0)2 776 6211  
[EUCanPolicy@merck.com](mailto:EUCanPolicy@merck.com)



# Technology empowering European citizens

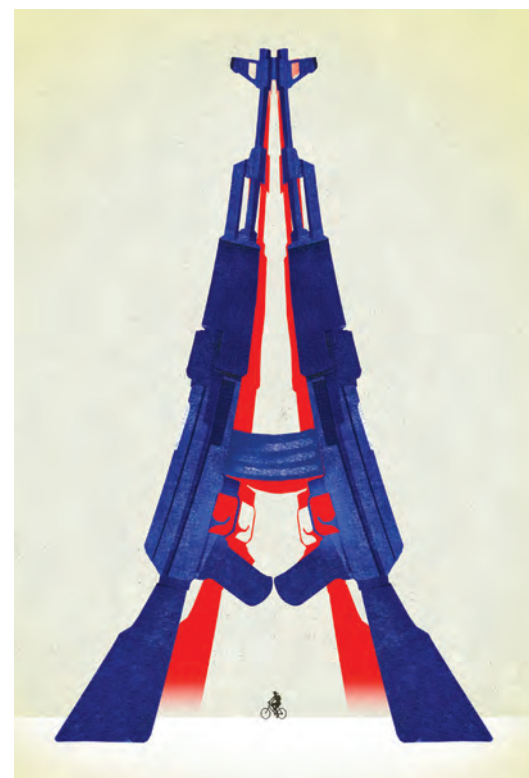


UBER

## A Split Second on Oxford Street

*Tom Kearney's one-man crusade for bus safety is politics at its most personal*

BY ALEX SPENCE  
PAGE 30



## In France, What if the Terrorists Won?

*One year after the Bataclan attacks, life in Paris has irrevocably changed*

BY NICHOLAS VINOCUR  
PAGE 72



## The Journey from Hero to Zero

*The age of the celebrity central banker is over. Now they're scapegoats*

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA  
PAGE 44

### MEET THE 28

*The doers and dreamers who are shaping, shaking and stirring Europe*

STARTING WITH NUMBER 1 ON PAGE 10

### IN NUMBERS

*The future of European immigration depends on where you look*

PAGE 90

---

ON THE COVER: SADIQ KHAN PHOTOGRAPHED IN LONDON BY KALPESH LATHIGRA/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

---

ILLUSTRATED PORTRAITS: PORTRAITS OF ALL POLITICO 28 HONOREES DRAWN BY DENISE NESTOR FOR POLITICO

# BUILDING THE FUTURE FOR 100 YEARS

In less than a century, Boeing took the world from seaplanes to spaceplanes, across the universe and beyond. If you thought that was amazing, just wait...

[boeing.com/europe](http://boeing.com/europe)



# The Envelopes, Please

**AFTER THE YEAR THAT JUST PASSED, WHO** knows what surprises the next one holds. We'll simply wager who'll be at the center of whatever action to come.

The magazine you have in your hands is our guide to the people likely to shape 2017 and beyond. These 17 men and 11 women from 28 different countries – hailing from the worlds of politics, naturally, as well as business, media and the arts – caught our eyes and are sure to catch yours.

POLITICO 28 debuted last year with selectees from each of the EU countries, but we chose 28 more as a symbolic than a literal figure; as it happens, NATO has 28 members too. With Brexit, the EU will soon have one fewer member; and with Montenegro slated to join the Western alliance, NATO will have one more. POLITICO 28 will stay at 28.

We cast our net widely and solicited nominations from readers. Then editors hashed out – not without a few disagreements – this list of the shakers, stirrers and shapers of our world. And then we ranked them in order of their impact. Simply holding a powerful public position in a European country didn't guarantee a spot on the list. (So, as in 2015, Angela Merkel isn't here.)

Last year, the headliner was Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. In our view, he was the trendsetter of a rising brand of nationalist politics across the Western world that, as it turned out, showed the way for Brexit and Donald Trump's stunning triumph. By the political law of gravity, the other side will inevitably make a comeback. Hence our No. 1 this year: London Mayor Sadiq Khan, whose centrist-liberal agenda and personal background represent an alternative, and a rebuke, to the dominant politics of the day. Khan is, incidentally, one of three mayors among the POLITICO 28, which highlights the growing importance of city bosses.

With the stock of politicians at historic lows, business figures play an outsized role in our lives, as well on this list. At No. 3, Ryanair's Michael O'Leary makes for an unlikely champion of the European project. If the EU manages to survive Brexit with the common market intact, it may be in no small part thanks to his efforts. At No. 6, Daniel Ek of Spotify shows Europe can reap the benefits of the digital revolution, but in his view, it needs to make some overdue policy fixes. George Soros, this year's entry from Hungary, is using his fortune to push the anti-Orbán political agenda.

Unconventional politics will surely be again a recurring theme. Far-right parties are due to perform better than ever in elections next year in Germany, France and the Netherlands. At No. 2, Frauke Petry, leader of the Alterna-



tive for Germany party that's set to win seats in the Bundestag for the first time, speaks to us at length about her ideas and plans.

And as a reminder that not only the well-known change our lives, Alex Spence brings the story of an Irish-American businessman who was nearly killed by a bus on Oxford Street. After coming out of a coma, Tom Kearney has fought tirelessly against political inertia and entrenched interests to toughen up bus safety rules, build public awareness and, in his ultimate victory, help get London to commit to pedestrianizing Oxford Street.

The choice of 28 people from a world of possibilities is bound to be subjective and contentious. Many worthy people are omitted. Ultimately, our intention is to produce a POLITICO 28 worthy of discussion and spirited debate. We look forward to hearing back from you.

– STEPHAN FARIS  
& MATTHEW KAMINSKI

**POLITICO**

POLITICO SPRL  
A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN  
POLITICO AND AXEL SPRINGER

EXECUTIVE

**John F. Harris**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

**Matthew Kaminski**  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

**Sheherazade Semsar-de Boissésou**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

**POLITICO 28 MAGAZINE**

ENTERPRISE EDITOR ..... STEPHAN FARIS  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR ..... TIM BALL  
COPY EDITOR ..... SANYA KHETANI-SHAH

The future of Europe: Illustration by Owen Gildersleeve

# Experts With Impact in

## Arbitration.

Named Arbitration Expert Firm of the Year by Who's Who Legal.

## Competition.

Compass Lexecon, a subsidiary of FTI Consulting, won Who's Who Legal's Award for Competition Economics Firm of the Year.

## Disputes.

Recognised by ALM Intelligence as having the deepest expertise in Dispute Advisory.

## e-Discovery.

Ringtail received the top product score for legal review in Gartner's Critical Capabilities fore-Discovery.

## Public Affairs.

A Holmes Report Award winner for EMEA Public Affairs Consultancy of the year

## Public Relations.

Number one in Mergermarket's volume league tables for PR advice on M&A transactions.



Our experts provide advice to clients across a range of economic, financial and communication disciplines in situations such as crises, disputes, investigations, restructuring and transactions.

FTI Consulting is the business advisory firm to turn to for Experts with Impact.

**[www.fticonsulting.com](http://www.fticonsulting.com)**



MANAGE CHANGE MITIGATE RISK RESOLVE DISPUTES

---

# **As a digital industrial company, we're singularly focused on being two things at once.**

---

Over the past year, we have transformed our business to become a digital industrial company, merging machines and analytics on a massive scale. How did we do it? By reshaping our portfolio around core strengths like sharing software and technology across our products and services, while expanding margins and making our businesses more efficient. The result: a more streamlined, profitable and focused operation.



**Tom Kearney didn't see the bus coming. The vehicle's side mirror caught him on the right side of the head, lurching him violently forward into the side of the bus. The second impact flung him about 20 feet across the road, where he lay in a heap, unconscious, bleeding from his mouth and ears. *Read about one man's crusade, as politics becomes personal, on Page 30***



**POLITICO**28



#### FIRST UP

1. Sadiq Khan
2. Frauke Petry
3. Michael O'Leary
4. Jarosław Kaczyński
5. Ada Colau
6. Daniel Ek

#### ON LANGUAGE BY ADAM JACOT DE BOINOD

Around the world, the most common drinking toast is to good health. There are, however, a few more specific ways of raising a glass:

"To good health" itself has many variants. In Slovenian, it's *na zdravje*; in Spanish, *salud*; in Hungarian, *egészségedre*; and in Flemish, *gezondheid*.



The Scandinavian toast *skål* (pronounced skoal) has a more macabre background: It originally meant "skull."

The word is alleged to have come from a custom practiced by the warlike Vikings, who used the dried-out skulls of their enemies as drinking mugs, with the evident advantage that the vessel could hold a large quantity of mead and was easily replaceable.



The Ukrainians, however, take toasts to another level. They say *budmo!* That's not just to good health for some undetermined period of time, but for eternity. As translated, it means: "Let us live forever!"



UNITED KINGDOM

**Sadiq Khan**

---

# The Alternative

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW RENNEISEN FOR POLITICO



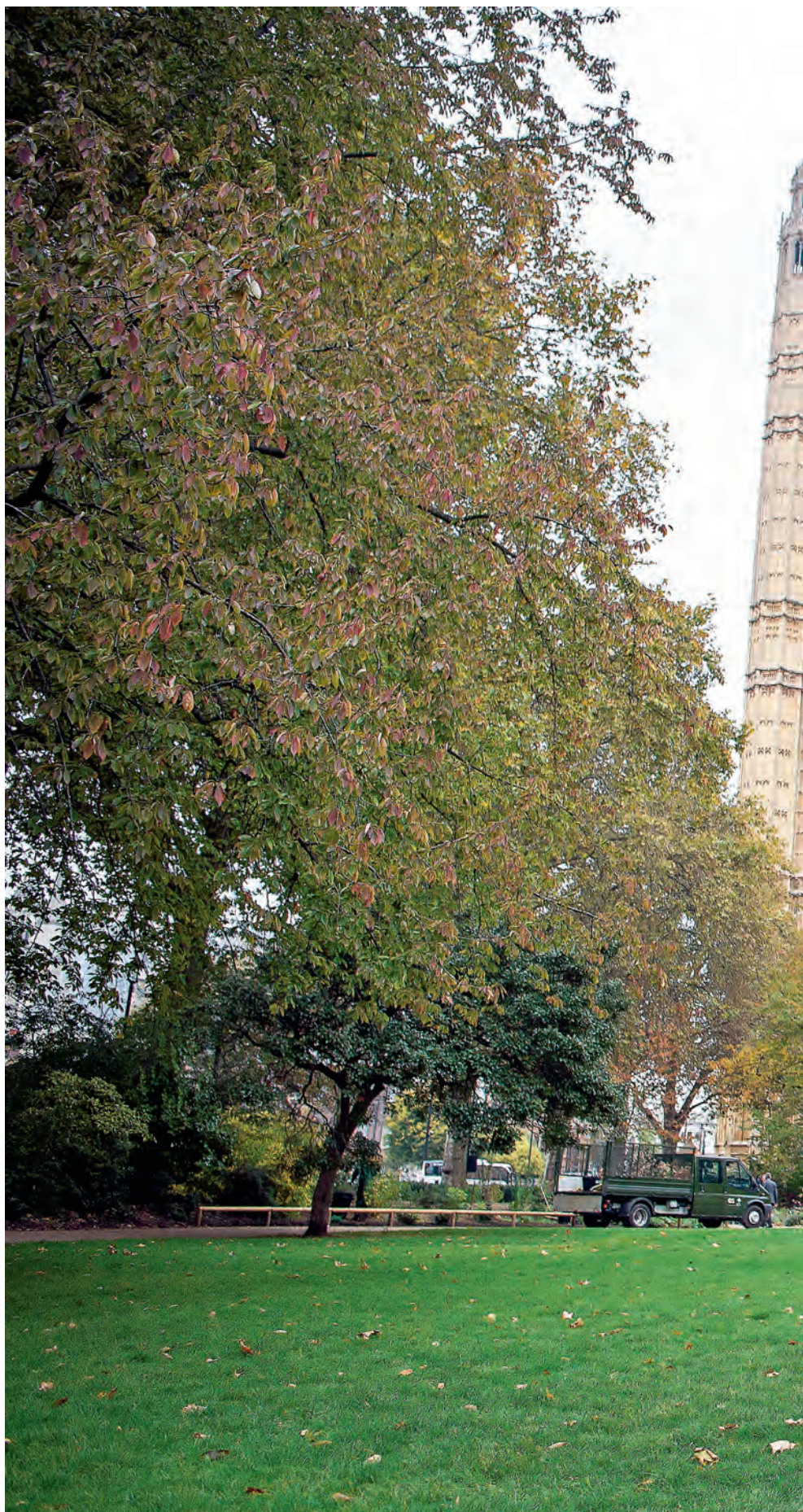
In a party shut out of power and led by a pension-age radical peddling last century's leftist nostrums, Sadiq Khan is the only Labour politician to hold major electoral office, which he won on a centrist platform earlier this year.

In a country that plans to leave the European Union and throw up barriers to newcomers, this immigrants' son leads its capital, a city that voted by a large margin to "Remain" and that – with its unrivaled ethnic diversity and economic dynamism – is the most cosmopolitan place this side of New York and the epitome of what Europe aspires to be.

And in a world where the tides of nationalism are rising from the right, this religious Muslim is the European Barack Obama, a charismatic politician of a younger generation (and a darker skin tone) primed to catch the wave when it comes flowing back, as it always does.

A year ago, Sadiq Khan was one of a group of moderately successful centrist Labour MPs whose Westminster careers had flatlined after the party's unexpected defeat in the 2015 general election. A former government minister under Gordon Brown who served in Ed Miliband's top team for five years (and was known in the party for a competitive streak on the football pitch), Khan was locked in a close race to be London's mayor with the millionaire Tory environmentalist Zac Goldsmith. There was little reason at the time to think the Pakistani bus driver's son would win the contest for City Hall in a landslide and become the Labour Party's one feel-good story – much less the symbol of an alternative brand of politics in the age of Brexit and President Donald J. Trump.

Times make the politician. And Khan, though early in his run in primetime politics and the holder of an office with rather limited



**“One of the reasons we are one of the richest, biggest  
and best cities in the world is our ability to attract talent.  
We’ve been open to people, ideas and trade for more than 1,000 years.  
We’ve got to make sure we can continue to do so.”**



authorities, is making the most of his.

His victory in May's London election – so soon followed by the shock of June's Brexit referendum and a historic American presidential campaign that reverberated across the world – has produced a different man.

Khan exudes a not-before-seen charisma and confidence, even star power. When he walks into a room, heads turn. A shortish man with closely cropped gray hair, Khan's warm smile, firm handshake and sharp suits leave an impression. As much as he is unproven as the mayor of London and as a prominent figure in the Labour Party, he has that freshness that counts for so much in current politics.

**KHAN, WHO WAS BORN IN 1970,** emerged triumphant this spring after one of the most divisive political battles in living memory. In the first in a year of electoral surprises, he beat Tory Zac Goldsmith in a campaign marred by accusations of dog-whistle racism, becoming the first Muslim mayor of a Western capital.

"Fear does not make us safer, it only makes us weaker – and the politics of fear is simply not welcome in our city," Khan said in his victory speech.

His predecessor Boris Johnson used City Hall as a global bully pulpit. And within days, Khan moved seamlessly into that role. He underlined his meteoric rise in liberal politics with effective swipes at U.S. Republican presidential hopeful Trump, who had suggested Khan could be exempted from his temporary ban on Muslims entering the U.S. The mayor shot back that Trump's "ignorant view of Islam" risks alienating mainstream Muslims and "plays into the hands of extremists."

As Khan's centrist liberalism is currently out of fashion in his own Labour Party and across the board, he says he hopes to link hands with a band of other city leaders and form a bulwark against populist politics. He's looking to forge ties with mayors Bill de Blasio of New York and Rahm Emanuel of Chicago. "If the 19th century was the century of empire, the 20th [the] century of nation states, then the 21st century is the century of mayors and cities," he says in an interview at his City Hall office along the southern bank of the Thames. "That's where the action is."

Khan, the third mayor in the British capital's modern history, is a natural advocate for a stronger City Hall. He's a Londoner through-and-through. The son of working-class Pakistanis, Khan grew up on a low-income council estate in South London, one of eight children. After attending university, he became a hu-



**Making the rounds:** Since taking office, Khan has met with (clockwise, from top left) Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo.

man rights lawyer and then, in 2005, an MP for the Tooting constituency in South London. In 2009, Khan was appointed transport minister under Gordon Brown, becoming one of the few Muslims to sit in cabinet.

**AT CITY HALL, KHAN HASN'T YET** attained Johnson's international celebrity, but he's undoubtedly on the rise. He is already arguably Britain's most consequential center-left politician (only Scotland's Nicola Sturgeon could make a competing case) and he is certainly the figure in the Labour Party with the widest popular appeal. Unlike the party's divisive leader Jeremy Corbyn, Khan has shown he can win elections. And unlike Corbyn, his rhetoric is that of a uniter, a coalition-builder.

At a time of deep and widening political and social tensions, Khan talks of bringing together divided groups: the U.K. and Europe; London and the rest of the country; the political establishment



and working-class voters; business and government; Right and Left; Muslims and those of other faiths. During the mayoral campaign, Khan was accused by Goldsmith of links to Islamic extremists. In his first official act after becoming mayor, Khan made a point of attending a Holocaust commemoration. He is a devout Muslim who doesn't drink and tries to pray five times a day, but he also voted for gay marriage in parliament and has championed LGBT and women's rights.

Khan's brand of middle-of-the-road, internationalist social democratic politics may be a political loser at the national level these days, but he has carved out a power base in the one place in Britain where those views are still mainstream. At the same time, Khan is only too aware that London's success (and therefore his own) is threatened by the tilt toward protectionism that was underscored by Brexit. "One of the reasons we are one of the richest, biggest and best cities in the world is our ability to attract talent,"

---

**"The British public voted to leave the European Union. We are not leaving Europe."**

he says in his office, overlooked by the vast towers that dominate the City of London. "We've been open to people, ideas and trade for more than 1,000 years. We've got to make sure we can continue to do so."

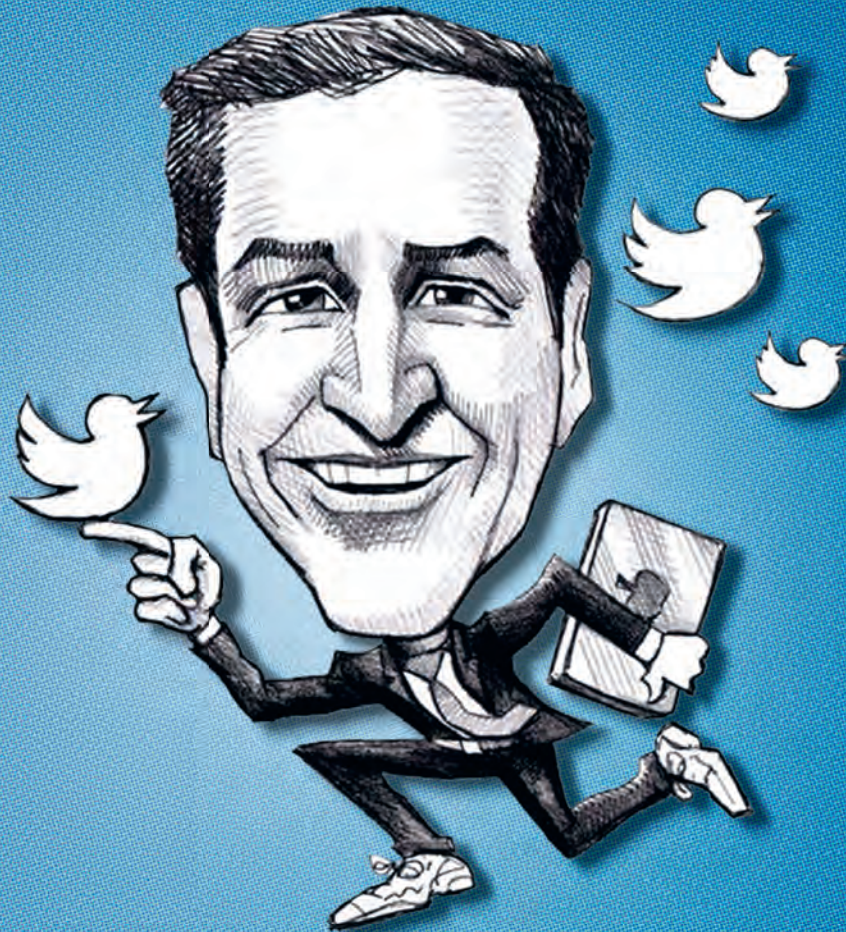
He faces significant obstacles, not least Britain cutting ties with the European Union, marooning a city that badly wanted to stay in. If Brexit has to mean Brexit, as Theresa May insists (and Khan accepts that leaving the EU is inevitable), London's mayor at least wants to ensure withdrawal doesn't wreck the capital's position as a global commercial, financial, cultural, media and travel hub. British voters chose to leave the EU as a legal structure, he argues, but nobody asked for fewer jobs, slower growth, diminished opportunities. "The British public voted to leave the European Union," Khan says. "We are not leaving Europe."

While Brexit is a threat to London, Khan is trying to turn it into an opportunity. If the capital, which makes a net contribution of about £30 billion a year to the British economy, has no choice about leaving the EU, then it should at least get more of a say over matters such as taxes, educa-

tion and health care. "If you compare London to New York or Tokyo, London spends 7 percent of the taxes raised in London. In New York, it's 50 percent, Tokyo 70 percent," Khan says. "Brexit now makes it a necessity that government gives more power to London."

On the world stage, by virtue of his appearance and politics, Khan is catching a lot of eyes. His future path at home is more complicated. In a sense, he is trying to ride two horses at once, portraying himself as a figure of broad popular appeal who understands ordinary Britons, not just Londoners, and at the same time as the champion of a city that is defiantly liberal and global, and feels it is being held back by provincial England. It won't be an easy trick to pull off. If he succeeds, it would be a mistake to rule out a return to the national stage as leader of the Labour Party – and, perhaps, even as the first Muslim to set up residence at No. 10 Downing Street. <sup>28</sup>

# POLITICO



# BRUSSELS PLAYBOOK

Ryan Heath's must-read briefing on what's  
driving the day in Brussels

**SIGN UP AT [POLITICO.EU/REGISTRATION](https://politico.eu/registration)**

2



GERMANY

**Frauke Petry**

---

PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS LOHNES/GETTY IMAGES



# The Populist Parvenu

In 2013, after a chemical company she started with her mother went bankrupt, Frauke Petry cofounded the anti-euro Alternative for Germany (AfD) and quickly became one of its stars. Last year, following an internal power struggle, she became the party's de facto leader, steering it to electoral success by veering away from its Euroskeptic roots to focus squarely on migration.

Petry's insurgency is discomfiting for another prominent German woman: Angela Merkel. The chancellor, who took power 11 years ago, will likely extend her run in next year's elections. Until now, Germany seemed largely immune to the anti-globalization populist furies that shook up politics across the Continent in recent years – and, with Donald Trump's victory last month, in the United States. But the migration crisis that began in 2015 changed the political dynamic in Europe's most powerful country. If it continues, it will send even stronger tremors across the Continent.

The AfD made inroads in regional elections this year, surpassing Merkel's conservatives for the first time, in a state election in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in September. On its own, the party won't defeat Merkel; its ambitions are for now limited to winning its first seats in the Bundestag. But Petry's outsider force is more in tune with the prevailing mood in the Western world than the establishment parties – and that makes the chemist the German political leader to watch.

---

**“The AfD believes it's simply impossible to integrate millions of people, who are functional illiterates, who come from countries with a fundamentally different cultural background when it comes to social standards and civil liberties.”**

True to her every-woman image, Petry showed up for an interview with POLITICO wearing jeans and a knit cap. She began with an apology: “I'll try to be concise, but I don't always succeed.”

**Your biography is not that different from German Chancellor Angela Merkel's. Do you see yourself as having a similar background?**

Let's look at it closely. She's a scientist, that's a similarity. But she was born in the West and I was born in the East. Her family migrated from West Germany to East Germany and we moved from East to West. I'm the mother of four children; she has none. She was broadly loyal to the [East German] system, while I was raised in a household very critical of it. I would say there are probably more differences than similarities.

**Were you politically active before you helped start the AfD in 2013?**

Having grown up in both German states, I've always been very interested in politics. But I was not a member of any party. I purposely tried to avoid such structures. Everyone can understand why I did so in the East. Party membership would never have been an option for me. But I also had the impression as a young adult that many of the structures of the large parties in the West were similar to those in the East.

**Is preserving national identity the core of the AfD's ideology?**

Whether a party really needs an ideology is a philosophical question. The AfD tries not to have one. But of course

every political movement has an overall concept. If we put the mission statements of the different German parties side by side, we can see that there aren't any patriotic parties in Germany anymore except for the AfD and the conservative wing of CSU, [the Bavarian sister party to Merkel's center-right conservatives].

### Could you imagine Germany leaving the EU?

That depends on the developments over the next few years. It depends on how the Brexit question is resolved – whether the British are driven out at a high cost. We know that the Wilders party in the Netherlands has been pushing a referendum for years. If the Dutch leave and the Austrians also consider it, then I think the question will also be raised in Germany.

**The refugee crisis has driven support for the AfD from about 3 percent in polls in mid-2015 to 15 percent today. Do you worry your support will diminish once the crisis is brought under control?**

Let's turn the question around: Where is there any indication that the refugee issue in Europe is anywhere close to being resolved? The migration issue is just one of many. We didn't choose it any more than German citizens chose it.

**Germany has millions of Turks and other foreigners living in the country. Is the AfD willing to spend money on their integration?**

First of all, it's an erroneous assumption to believe that more money for state programs will lead to better integration. What's more important – something that is still ignored by Germany's major parties – is the question of whether integration is feasible at all.

The key to successful integration is the academically capable and socially willing immigrant himself. The AfD believes it's simply impossible to integrate millions of people, who are functional illiterates, who come from countries with a fundamentally different cultural background when it comes to social standards and civil liberties. Why should it be the duty of Europe and Germany to integrate millions of Northern Africans into Europe?



**“We have to make sure that Germany, as a population and as a nation, does not disappear entirely. And gays and lesbians – sorry to say – can't make a significant contribution.”**

**Reading list:** Frauke Petry, above, looks at a paper that reads, in part, “Islam does not belong to Germany” during an AfD congress in May.

### How do you envision German society in five to 10 years?

The failures of the last two decades, if not more, can't be undone within five years.

Germany has had disastrous family policy for more than 50 years. Since 1965, the birth rate in Germany has been declining – and the current increase in birth rates is not based on German women giving birth to more children, but due to foreigners having more children.

The AfD promotes a traditional family model, because children are usually born out of this model. We are tolerant and say everyone can live the way they want to. However, the state should not just subsidize any lifestyle, except for those lifestyles that contribute to a healthy age pyramid.

### Should gays and lesbians in Germany be able to marry and adopt children?

This is a total minority problem. In numbers, the question is irrelevant. Gays and lesbians have, for the most part, the same rights in Germany. This is totally okay, and the AfD stands by this.

### They can't get married and cannot adopt children as couples.

You know, in Germany, there are so many parents who would like to adopt children. The question whether gays and lesbians, of all people, want to adopt children is not at all an issue when it comes to the size of the population that we have to take care of. We have to make sure that Germany, as a population and as a nation, does not disappear entirely. And gays and lesbians – sorry to say – can't make a significant contribution.

### In all likelihood, the AfD will win enough support in next year's national elections to enter parliament. How do you see Germany's political landscape shifting?

Even though it's plummeting in polls, I assume Merkel's Christian Democrats will be the strongest party once again. But this will only last as long as *Frau* Merkel stays on board, and the CDU doesn't do anything to counter its own decline.

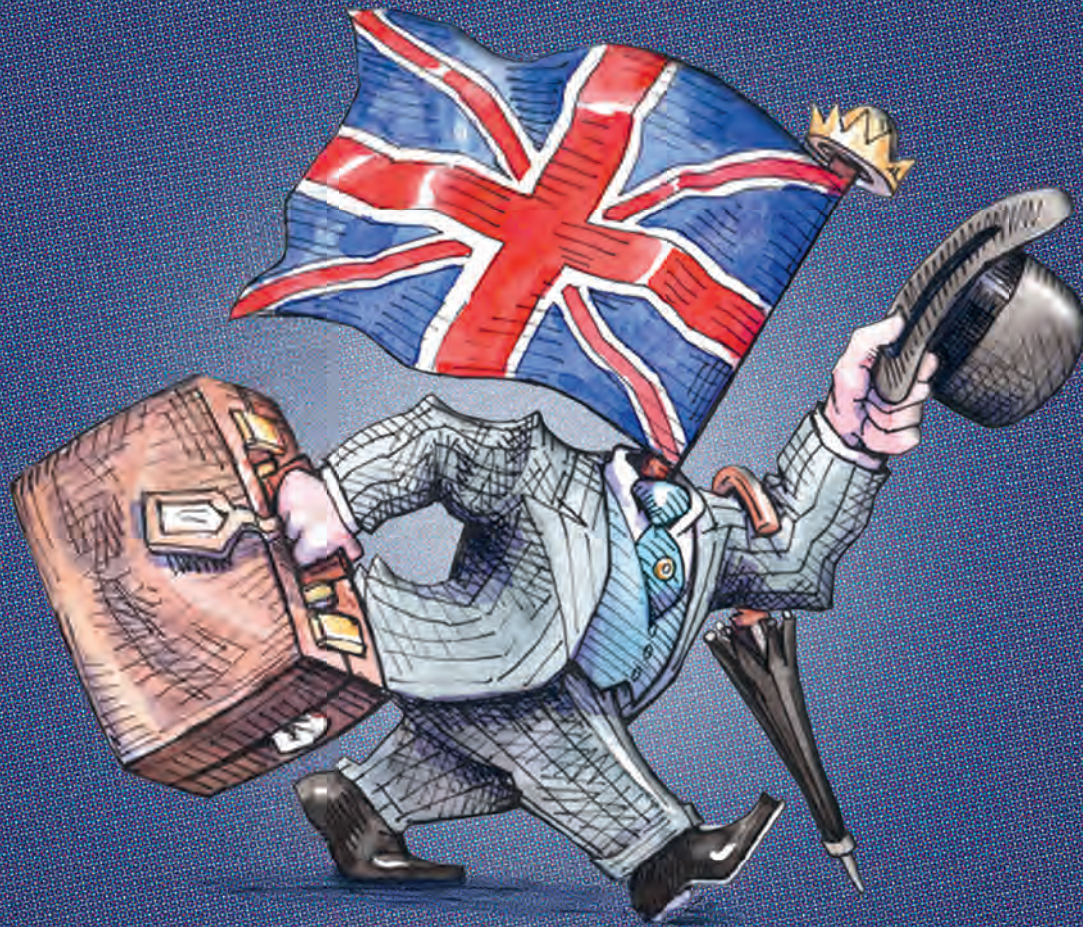
Our goal for 2017 is to become a strong opposition in the German parliament. For 2021, we want more. We're aware that this might sound ambitious, but we want to become the strongest party. **28**



Bundespressekonferenz

Bundespressekonferenz

# POLITICO



## BREXIT FILES

A daily afternoon digest of the best coverage and analysis of Britain's decision to leave the EU from POLITICO and beyond.

**SIGN UP AT [POLITICO.EU/REGISTRATION](https://www.politico.eu/registration)**



IRELAND

**Michael  
O'Leary**

---

# The Low-Cost Spitfire

For years, Michael O’Leary was known on the Continent primarily for two things: his stewardship of the low-cost budget airline Ryanair that made weekend hops to Kraków or Crete possible for anyone with a backpack and some spare change; and for his bombastic indictments of the European Union as an “evil empire,” a bloated bureaucracy that wastes money, stifles innovation and props up uncompetitive special interests. When the Commission demanded in August that Ireland collect up to €13 billion from Apple in what it ruled were unpaid taxes, O’Leary, in his characteristic language, suggested that Dublin write a letter to the EU “and tell them politely to fuck off.”

But times are changing, and maybe mellowing, the 55-year-old Irishman. For all his bluster about Brussels, arguably no man – and no company – has benefited as much from the Europe of open borders. And few stand to lose as much from the unraveling of the single market, now under heavy political pressure following June’s Brexit vote and the rise of anti-globalization movements on both sides of the Atlantic. The EU isn’t overflowing with political leaders who are willing to raise their heads high above the parapets



**In the more than 20 years O’Leary has spent in his company’s cockpit, the fortunes of his airline have been inextricably intertwined with those of the European project.**

to defend it. So, in a delicious irony, it’s been left to one of the EU’s loudest critics to step up and champion the European project.

O’Leary saw the danger to Europe, and his business, ahead of the Brexit referendum, when conventional wisdom held the U.K. would vote to stay in. During the campaign, Ryanair plastered ads on the noses of its planes and on the backs of its seats where passengers couldn’t avoid seeing them: “Stronger, Safer and Better off in Europe.” The company offered discounted tickets to Brits looking to return home to vote. And the day before the referendum, O’Leary showed up to a television interview in a suit stitched from the EU and British flags.

Since the vote, O’Leary has not wasted an opportunity to level his guns at British Prime Minister Theresa May’s efforts to take the United Kingdom out of the EU – accusing British negotiators of “sitting on their hands with no cards to play,” dismissing predictions of a good



deal as “arrogant nonsense” and making no effort to conceal his hopes that the British public will change its mind as the economic consequences of its decision becomes clear. “Nobody in the U.K. has a clue, including Theresa May, about what the discussions are going to be like,” he says in an interview at Ryanair headquarters in Dublin. “They haven’t actually talked to anyone in Europe yet about Brexit.”

The German, French and Dutch governments – which face nationalist insurgents in elections next year – can’t afford to give the U.K. a special deal, he says. “Every country would be straight out the door after.” Nor will economic considerations – pressure from the auto industry, for example – change their minds. “Germany can give a shit about their car manufacturers,” he says. “They’ll sell more cars in the EU. The Brits will be back on bicycles by that stage.”

In public, O’Leary can be caustic, peppering his sentences with profanity, or manic – popping his eyes for pictures

---

**“The European Union has been a tremendous vehicle for good and for change. But it’s run by a bunch of incompetent people in Brussels.”**

to hawk a €9.99 flight. In person, where he’s far more measured, his blunt talk comes across as sincerity; his intensity as almost boyish enthusiasm. He cuts the cursing to a minimum, or even spells it out: “When the S-H-I-T hits the fan,” he says at one point, relating an anecdote in which “a French air traffic control strike [happens] and we suddenly have to cancel 20 percent of our flights.”

O’Leary’s stance following the Brexit vote is not hard to explain. In the more than 20 years he has spent in his company’s cockpit, the fortunes of his airline have been inextricably intertwined with those of the European project. As the Continent’s largest airline (in terms of passengers carried), O’Leary’s Ryanair is one of the EU’s biggest beneficiaries, as well as one of its largest benefactors. He knows that Ryanair would never have gotten off the ground – let alone soared – without the EU. The company’s business model (and O’Leary’s billion-dollar fortune) was made possible by deregulation in the 1990s and the creation of the so-called

European Common Aviation Area in 2006, which allows carriers to fly from any airport in the region to another. Indeed, every step the EU has taken to make it easier for passengers to get around – passport-free travel in the Schengen zone, the introduction of the euro – has provided lift to Ryanair’s flight path.

Meanwhile, as O’Leary puts it, “Ryanair has done more for European integration than vast waves of European bureaucracy.” The company and its competitors are arguably the greatest facilitators of the free movement of people, one of the foundational pillars on which the EU was built. Ryanair flies Belgian vacationers to Barcelona and Spanish students to Sweden. Its low prices allow a Polish worker to board a flight and relocate to France – and to book another to return home for the holidays.

Call it the Erasmus Program for the 99 percent. The EU’s cultural exchange program will offer grants to four million people between 2014 and 2020 to study, teach or volunteer in another country. Ryanair carries some 10 million passengers a year.

As the EU gropes for direction after its largest setback ever, O’Leary’s potent cocktail of self-interest, outspokenness and outsized influence will make his calls for a way forward one of the loudest in the room. In July, just after the Brexit vote, Ryanair installed its first full-time Brussels lobbyist. The timing, O’Leary says, was pure coincidence. But the move reflects his growing understanding that his company’s fortunes are tied to the fate of the EU. “We realized that we can’t just run around shouting,” says O’Leary. “Megaphone diplomacy doesn’t work all the time.”

On the European political spectrum, O’Leary is an outlier – far on the liberal right. He rails against taxation and restrictive regulations. He has successfully fought off attempts by his staff to unionize. He believes the science behind climate change remains unproven, resisting efforts to limit emissions, including from his more than 300 planes. In the long-standing debate over whether the EU should be built on classical-liberal or socialist principles, there’s no mistaking on which side he stands. “The European Union has been a tremendous vehicle for good and for change,” says O’Leary. “But it’s run by a bunch of incompetent people in Brussels who have lost the vision that this is a single market and a single market can transform the lives of its people.”

And so, as Ryanair engages with



**“We realized that we can’t just run around shouting. Megaphone diplomacy doesn’t work all the time.”**

Brussels, the company can be expected to advocate for the expansion of that free and common market. At the more industry-specific level, the company is joining other airlines to push for a reform of the EU’s air-traffic control system – an attempt to ensure, for example, that those frequent strikes in France do not continue to disrupt flights across the whole of Western Europe. Airport taxes and charges are another of the company’s concerns, as are efforts to fend off criticisms of its labor practices.

But it’s in the post-Brexit debate that O’Leary is likely to have the broadest impact. He may have lost the campaign to prevent the U.K. from leaving. He can’t afford to do the same with how its departure is handled. The Brexit vote alone has

**Out of the mouth of a CEO** “Nobody really wants political integration, but we all want the benefit of a single market.” “It was easy to be the Robin Hood when you were small and trying to compete with all of the big boys. Now that we’re one of the bigger boys in Europe, you can’t quite be Robin Hood all the time.” “How do you get young people in Spain, southern Italy and Greece back to work? Tourism. They can’t all be brain surgeons. And they can’t all be computer geniuses. We all got our first job in a hotel, in a restaurant, in a bar.”



been a blow to his company’s bottom line. In October, Ryanair blamed a post-referendum plunge in the value of the British pound for a decline in expected profits. Before the vote, O’Leary had planned to base up to 10 new planes and their crews in the U.K. as part of a broader expansion. As a result of the referendum, he decided to minimize uncertainty by locating them in the rest of the EU instead.

---

**For O’Leary, the U.K.’s decision to leave represents a double-fisted danger.**

For O’Leary, the U.K.’s decision to leave represents a double-fisted danger. A hard Brexit, in which the U.K. is dropped violently out of the single market, would also take it out of the European Common Aviation Area. In the absence of a replacement agreement, Ryanair could find itself unable to fly between cities in its largest market. As painful as that would be, it pales beside



an even bigger threat: that Brexit will prove to be an attractive option for other countries with large Euroskeptical populations. Should France or the Netherlands, for example, follow the U.K.'s example, the entire common market on which Ryanair was built could start to spin apart.

As the EU negotiates its divorce from the U.K., O'Leary will have to pursue two contradictory objectives. On the one hand, his company will have to work to minimize the impact of Brexit on its business, lobbying Brussels and London to consider air transport a critical part of the

---

**Should France or the Netherlands follow, the entire common market could start to spin apart.**

economic infrastructure – like electricity or telecommunications – and strike a deal to protect it early on in the Brexit divorce talks.

On the other, he will have to do everything he can to ensure that the U.K.'s departure is as painful as possible, so that other countries are discouraged from following its example. “The European Union has absolutely no choice but to deliver an incredibly hard Brexit,” he says. “It’s going to be, ‘Have the single market and free movement of labor, or get out.’” 28



Brexit. Trump. What next? Liberty, equality and democracy are under threat. It's time to wake up, unite and react. **Let's fight for a strong Europe.** With your help, we will turn this around.  
**Move Europe Forward.**

[WWW.ALDE.EU](http://WWW.ALDE.EU)



ALLIANCE OF LIBERALS AND  
DEMOCRATS FOR EUROPE







# A SPLIT SECOND ON OXFORD STREET

TOM KEARNEY'S ONE-MAN CRUSADE FOR BUS SAFETY IS POLITICS AT ITS MOST PERSONAL

BY ALEX SPENCE ILLUSTRATIONS BY WILL BARRAS FOR POLITICO

#### ON A COLD MONDAY NIGHT IN

November, a group of cyclists held a vigil outside London's City Hall, on the south bank of the Thames. They had gathered to mourn Filippo Corsini, a 21-year-old Italian who had been struck and killed by a truck while cycling to class a week earlier. He was the 53rd cyclist or pedestrian killed in London this year.

Two Italian flags fluttered in the stiff, icy breeze. Tower Bridge glowed in the distance. One cyclist took up the microphone to read a poem: *But you promised to come home ... You'd just called to tell me, 'Sorry I'm late, I'll be home to put the kids to bed,' but the police called ... and we put you to sleep instead.*

The poem's author, a 51-year-old named Tom Kearney, was in the crowd, filming the scene with his mobile phone. When the poem was finished, the cyclists clapped, their applause muffled by winter gloves. "Thank you, Tom," one of the vigil's organizers said. "Your poems always really get me." Kearney was still staring at his phone, firing off a string of tweets.

Kearney is an American-born former mining executive who has lived in London for nearly 20 years. He's not a cyclist, but he shares a common cause with the activists gathered that night. The poem was partly autobiographical: Seven years ago, Kearney was nearly killed and knocked into a coma by a bus near his office on Oxford Street, in London's busiest retail area.

Since then, he's been on a mission to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on London streets. While the cyclists present were focused on trucks, Kearney's target is the city's buses. In an alternative universe, Kearney, a Harvard graduate who has worked for the World Bank and Enron, would still be putting in long hours pulling together energy and commodities deals in the former Soviet Union and Africa. Instead, his main occupation these days is providing the London transport authority with a splitting headache.

Most people who have lived in or visited London have witnessed buses driving too fast or aggressively. Kearney's accident awakened him to what he describes as a flawed system that kills and hospitalizes people unnecessarily, costing hundreds of millions of pounds a year. To the blunt-spoken businessman, a descendant of proud Irish-American campaigners with a long history in Democratic Party politics, his adopted country's complacency when it comes





---

Tom Kearney, standing at the spot on Oxford Street where a bus hit him in 2009, calls transport officials who oppose his safety crusade "muppets" and "slimeballs." "I enjoy the discomfort I'm causing them, because I know how much they caused me."



to public safety was baffling. “Americans wouldn’t stand for it,” he says.

Kearney has gone after the bus industry with the same inexhaustible focus and intellectual belligerence that he once applied to business transactions. It was Kearney’s badgering that forced the city’s transportation agency, Transport for London (TfL), to publish quarterly data on the number of people killed or seriously injured by buses on London streets.

It was thanks to Kearney that TfL introduced a whistleblowing system allowing bus drivers to report concerns about dangerous practices without fear of reprisals from their employers. And it was in large part thanks to Kearney that, in February, TfL announced sweeping safety measures for London’s bus network, including incentives in bus operators’ contracts, better training for drivers, and trials of new technology to prevent crashes.

His efforts have also been a driving force behind a promise by London Mayor Sadiq Khan to pedestrianize Oxford Street by 2020 – immediately making several of the country’s most dangerous intersections, including the one at which Kearney was hit, safe for foot traffic. “He’s probably the most focused campaigner I think I’ve ever encountered,” says Caroline Russell, a Green party

---

**As he speaks, a bus speeds through a red light. “See look,” he says, “They just go. They don’t give a shit.”**

politician and activist who sits on the London assembly’s transport committee.

Kearney’s crusade represents politics at its most parochial – and its most personal. What he has achieved, he has done nearly single-handedly, using the Freedom of Information Act to hound officials for data and documents, building alliances with local politicians from across the political divide, and using digital media relentlessly to make contacts and get the message out. Cycling campaigns in London tend to be conspicuous and well supported. Kearney’s crusade to make the city safer for pedestrians has been a “one-man show,” says Nicola Branch of Stop Killing Cyclists, one of the organizers of the City Hall vigil. “If he’s not getting an answer from someone, he will knock on that door until he gets an answer. He’s a tornado.”

**KEARNEY LIVES IN HAMPSTEAD,** north London, with his wife Lesia, and their sons, aged 18 and 14. One Saturday afternoon, he served coffee and homemade chocolate-chip cookies in a living room furnished with an eclectic collection of paintings, antiques, rugs and books from the family’s travels on several continents. Kearney is a squarely-built man about 6 feet tall, with brown hair greying around the temples. The only visible sign from his collision is a small scar above his left eye. He wore a grey cashmere turtleneck, dark jeans and brown slippers.

He was raised in Portland, Maine, a picturesque seaside town of about 70,000 people two hours north of Boston. He grew up cycling, swimming and sailing. Kearney’s great-grandfather ran the Irish teachers’ union. His father, a management consultant, coordinated Jimmy Carter’s campaign in Maine during his run for president in 1976. His brother became an assistant attorney general in Maine, his sister a lobbyist in Washington. “I’m very familiar with the campaigning life,” Kearney says.

For a smart student growing up in a politically active household, the 1970s were a febrile time – Watergate, the Vietnam War, the Cold War. Kearney soon became hooked on international politics, and the Soviet Union in particular. He learned Russian and Ukrainian and still speaks both.

Kearney majored in Slavic languages and played violin in the orchestra at Harvard. After graduate school, he joined the World Bank, where he was posted to the institution’s first mission in Kiev, helping the country restructure its energy sector. In 1996, Kearney joined Enron, moving to London and delving into international coal trading. He left the company in 2001, just days before it went bankrupt

in one of the most spectacular collapses in corporate history, and joined a South African mining company that was among the first in the post-apartheid era to have black owners.

"I gravitated to places that are highly political, on the edge of change," Kearney says. "Situations that are ambiguous, where yes doesn't mean yes and no doesn't mean no, are very intriguing to me." In 2009, Kearney became chief executive of Africa Commodities Group, a coal and metals business based in South Africa. Four months after joining the company, he was hit by the bus.

Kearney's corporate past taught him two things he applies in his campaigning today. The first is the importance of accountability. For the head of a mining company, Kearney says, safety is always the foremost concern. And for good reason. "If you're the director of a mine and you aren't doing everything to ensure that fatalities don't occur, then you go to jail, it's that simple."

The second is more pragmatic. His experiences in emerging economies taught him how to achieve change in sclerotic bureaucratic systems: analyze the landscape, figure out who makes decisions, build relationships, lobby persistently. The situation in London is nothing like what he encountered in Ukraine or South Africa, he says, "except in one simple way: you have an incumbent bureaucracy that's wrong. And you have the power to start taking it down brick by brick."

**ON A RECENT WEEKDAY MORNING,** Kearney stood at a busy intersection on Oxford Street, pointing out the place where his life took a sudden turn.

It was just before 8 p.m. on an icy Friday night, a few days before Christmas 2009, and Kearney was looking forward to getting home to see his kids. Waiting at the traffic lights after a long day of meetings, his mind was turning to the holiday the family had planned in South Africa the following week. He didn't see the bus coming.

The vehicle's side mirror, travelling at about 20 miles per hour, caught Kearney on the right side of the head, lurching him violently forward into the side of the bus. The second impact flung him about 20 feet across the road, where he lay in a heap, unconscious, bleeding from his mouth and ears.

His brain was hemorrhaging, both lungs were collapsed, his liver was pierced. Police attending the scene called it in as a probable fatality. The last thing he recalls thinking, Kearney says, was, "Fuck, I'm not going to be able to put my kids to sleep."

London has one of the world's largest bus networks; about 9,300 vehicles drive 675 routes. Those buses are operated

by a handful of privately-owned companies, the largest of which, Go-Ahead, generated operating profits last year of £42 million. TfL issues service licenses and oversees the network.

According to Kearney's analysis of TfL data, the city's buses kill between 10 and 15 pedestrians every year and hospitalize hundreds of others, at a cost of more than £100 million a year. And yet, he contends, the system seems blind to the toll of its operations. Since it was privatized in the 1990s, the bus network has evolved into a confused, bureaucratic mess that isn't accountable and doesn't learn from fatal incidents, he says.

Buses follow the same "horse and carriage patterns they had 150 years ago," just because that's the way they've always done it. Roads are designed for traffic flow, not to keep pedestrians safe. And buses move too quickly and aggressively because the drivers are under pressure to meet their schedules, Kearney says. If buses run late, TfL penalizes the companies that operate them. At the same time, there are no incentives in the contracts to encourage better safety performance.

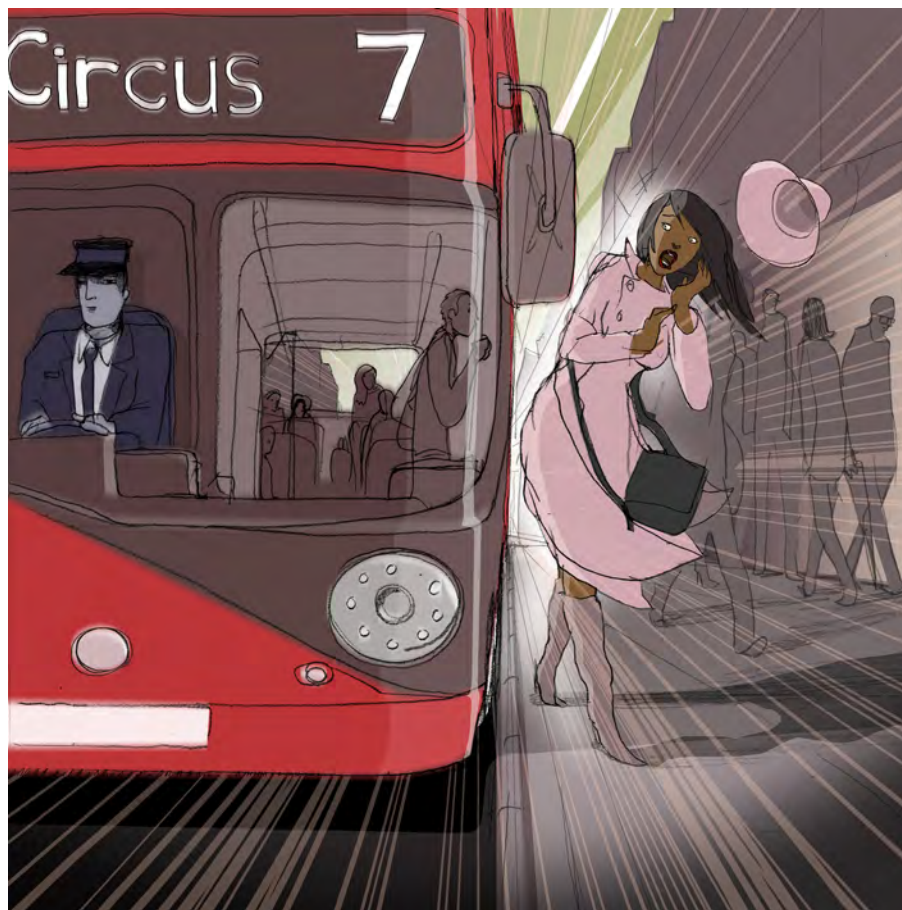
The intersection where Kearney was hit, the junction of Oxford Street and Harewood Place, is the most dangerous in the United Kingdom, according to the U.K.'s department of transport. Buses

zoom past, one after the other – about 300 every hour during the day – a constant danger to the masses of tourists, shoppers and office workers crowding the sidewalks.

Kearney's approach to activism is that of an impatient outsider who says what's on his mind and won't be deterred. Transport officials who get in his way are "muppets" and "slimeballs." He enjoys provoking the bureaucracy on Twitter, and relishes when he's got a point over them. "I enjoy pissing TfL off," he says. "I enjoy the discomfort I'm causing them, because I know how much they caused me."

In Britain, though, aggressive candor doesn't always go over so well. Some find him abrasive. "He's not everybody's cup of tea," says Paul Russell, head of the Confidential Incident Reporting and Analysis System (CIRAS), the whistleblowing system that TfL agreed to extend to bus drivers. "He has a habit of going in with both feet first. That persistence probably rubbed people up the wrong way. I mean that respectfully. He just doesn't let go of the ball."

At TfL, Kearney is regarded with a mixture of admiration and annoyance, according to several people there who have dealt with him over the years. Some regard him as a deranged,



one-issue obsessive. But all admitted that he has forced the organization to pay more attention to reducing the danger to pedestrians. “Tom is a tenacious campaigner who has been prepared to forensically examine the facts and then very actively prosecute his conclusions and recommendations,” Isabel Dedring, who was London’s deputy mayor for transport policy under Boris Johnson, says in an email. “I always loved working with people like Tom because when you have a burning platform it helps to get things done.”

Where other industries, such as railroads, have undergone root-and-branch overhauls to make them safer, the bus industry has – until recently – stubbornly refused to tackle the problem, Kearney says. Politicians were indifferent. Johnson, the former mayor, now Theresa May’s foreign secretary, made a show of cycling around the city, but he wasn’t really interested in talking about reducing the number of casualties in bus collisions, Kearney adds.

“Since I nearly died here, 86 people have been killed by TfL buses,” he says. “Eighty-six people. That’s, like, a plane-load of people.”

As he speaks, a bus speeds through a red light. “See look,” he says, “They just go. They don’t give a shit.”

**IN HIS HOME OFFICE, KEARNEY SITS** at a desk surrounded by documents, business cards and trinkets from around the world: lanyards from conferences, a baseball cap, a miniature Ukrainian flag. Several Apple devices lie charging on the desk top. He leans forward in his red leather office chair and peers at the iMac screen in front of him, scrutinizing CCTV footage of his collision from various angles.

“I want to show you something,” he says, zeroing in on a video clip taken from a camera at the front of the McDonald’s on the corner of Oxford Street and Harewood Place. To one side of the frame, the traffic lights reflect off the icy ground. The color changes from green to red, then a moment later a bus passes across the screen, followed by a blurry human figure tumbling sideways.

The footage is proof, Kearney contends, that the bus ran a red light. “Red. And boom, boom. That’s me right there,” Kearney says, pointing to the person on the screen, now lying motionless on the road. “You can see I’m run over right there.” He plays it back and forward from different angles several times.



After the collision, Kearney spent two weeks in a coma at the Royal London Hospital. He was confined to bed for about a month. He couldn’t eat through his mouth and had to be fed through a tube in his stomach. He lost a lot of weight. Improbably, he suffered no lasting physical injuries or cognitive damage.

Kearney’s brain isn’t accustomed to resting. With time to kill as he lay in hospital, he kept busy by searching the internet for information about collisions on Oxford Street. “Boom, all this shit pops up,” he says. “Dead, dead, dead, injury, injury. I said, ‘Wow, how many people are hit by buses?’”

When he searched the TfL website for casualty statistics, he was surprised he couldn’t find any. “Zero,” he says. “No information anywhere.” In what other industry, he wondered, would that be tolerated? “It blew my mind,” he says. “I have to get that data,” Kearney told himself.

While Kearney was in hospital, another thing nagged at him. As he lay there for weeks, with the tube in his stomach, playing the incident over in his mind,

nobody from the bus company, the transport authority, or the police came to speak to him. Not to offer support. Not to take a witness statement.

In March 2010, police contacted Kearney’s wife to say they weren’t pressing charges against the bus driver, because there wasn’t enough evidence. Kearney was gobsmacked. Later, he would discover that the police had the McDonald’s CCTV footage but didn’t review it at the time. They didn’t ask for footage from other cameras pointed at the intersection. It was only through his own investigation, over months, that he pieced together what happened. He spent hours scouring Google, social network postings and newspaper articles to track down people who witnessed the crash. They were surprised to hear from him. “People were like, ‘What the fuck! You were dead!’” He visited the scene with witnesses, reconstructing the events that night. He obtained the CCTV footage the police had on file but hadn’t reviewed, and went through it painstakingly to piece together his movements that night. Kearney appealed the decision to drop

the charges, but it was dismissed. It was as if, he says, the authorities didn't really care about finding out what happened. "The police did dick," he says.

In April 2010, he returned to work – a remarkably quick recovery, given the scale of his injuries – but he was still preoccupied with buses, Oxford Street, collisions. When Kearney's company decided to withdraw from South Africa, and told him to take the rest of the year off while they figured out where to reassign him, it seemed a blessing – a chance to throw himself full-time into the issue that was consuming him. At the end of the year, he decided to leave the company. "I truly believe that if you're lucky enough to survive something like that and you don't make something good of it, then you've wasted it," Kearney says. "And I wasn't going to waste it."

Kearney began collecting troves of data from the transport authorities and bus companies. To apply pressure effectively, he says, it helps to have the organization's own figures at your disposal, so you know what questions to ask, where to push. His main weapon for seeking it was the U.K.'s Freedom of Information Act, the transparency law Tony Blair introduced in 2000 (and later described as one of his biggest regrets). At the same time, Kearney sought out politicians in the London assembly who he thought might be sympathetic, and could use official channels to draw information out of the transport authorities.

With a network of cross-party political supporters gathering information on one hand, and a steady stream of FOI requests on the other, Kearney was able to gradually piece together the first real, publicly-available picture of the human cost of bus collisions across the city.

It got to the point where the data and analysis Kearney was publishing was "better than ours," says a TfL source who asked not to be named, because he was not authorized to speak publicly. Eventually, TfL started publishing statistics every quarter on its website.

As Kearney describes his odyssey, his iPhone buzzes with messages. They're from bus drivers, he says.

Kearney is a member of several private WhatsApp groups in which drivers exchange information about working conditions. The drivers approached him after reading his blogs and Facebook posts, then added him to their groups, hoping he'd put pressure on TfL to address some of their concerns about dangerous practices on the road.

It was because of these back-channel conversations that Kearney began to campaign for the introduction of CIRAS, a "confidential reporting and analysis system" that allows drivers to report health and safety problems without risk-

ing the wrath of their employers.

The service had already been deployed in other transport sectors; CIRAS's head, Paul Russell, had approached TfL about adopting it too, but the talks were going nowhere. Kearney's tireless intervention was crucial, Russell says, in the transport authority agreeing in 2015 to adopt CIRAS for bus drivers across London. It is now looking at extending the system to truck drivers.

In an emailed statement, Leon Daniels, TfL's head of surface transport, says the bus safety measures the authority promised in February (in response to Kearney's badgering) will make London's bus network the "world lead[er]" on safety. "We are examining vehicle design, bus driver training, the provision of more information to the public and specialist support to those affected by serious bus incidents. We will also provide more information about bus safety and the outcomes of investigations into the most serious incidents."

"It's people like Tom that do make a difference eventually, where it really matters," says Russell. "He's a persistent safety campaigner who is now beginning to see some significant results as a result of many, many years of endless [lobbying]. I don't know how he did it, really. I would've given up a long time ago."

**MOST MORNINGS, EVEN IN WINTER,** Kearney goes for a swim in the open-air bathing ponds at Hampstead Heath, a park in north London. The bracing early-morning dip is addictive, he says. "Your physical and mental world are combined into one profound sense of being. It's totally present. It's totally real."

Kearney's accident was a "grand simplifying event" that gave him a new perspective on life, he says. "I was nearly dead. I've had the benefit of having

been to my own funeral." It made him determined to make the most of life, to do something worthwhile with it. He sees the bus safety campaign as a way of giving back to his adopted city, to the health service that saved his life. No other families should have to go through what his did. "I'm confident that what I'm doing is right," he says.

There have been times, though, when it has gotten too lonely and difficult. At the end of last year, Kearney says, he came close to giving up. Progress had seemed to stall, and some work he'd been doing in Ukraine to pay the bills was drying up. His activist allies urged him to hang in there. By the new year, he had rallied himself. "Fuck it," he recalls thinking. "I've invested so much in this. It's worth it for me to keep pushing."

February brought Kearney's big breakthrough – TfL's safety overhaul. In May, Sadiq Khan's election as mayor brought the pledge to pedestrianize Oxford Street. More recently, Kearney has been lobbying the House of Lords to extend the data-reporting and whistleblowing measures to bus operators across the country. Baroness Jenny Jones, a Green party politician, has proposed amending legislation being considered in the Lords to include Kearney's safety measures; a vote on that amendment was due on November 23 (after this magazine went to press).

Bus companies, Kearney says, should "keep track of the people [they] kill and give [their] staff the right to be completely and utterly free to report their safety concerns." That would allow researchers to put together a national database of collisions, so they can start to drill down and find out what is causing the injuries and fatalities – and start to do something about it.

For Kearney, campaigning has come at a cost. With his career on hold, the family have been living off savings, which are almost exhausted. He's been selling paintings from his collection to raise money. The eldest of his two sons is due to go to university next year, and the family is keen that Kearney get back to his old career. "I really have to get away from it," Kearney says. "It doesn't pay me a penny. I'm consuming all my assets to do it."

And yet, he adds, money is just money. He gets to spend a lot more time with his sons now than he did when he was a busy corporate executive, working long hours and traveling frequently. He runs and swims more than he used to. He finds the campaigning enormously satisfying. "I don't wake up in the morning feeling stressed," he says. "I know what I'm doing is absolutely right. Has the experience caused me financial hardship? For sure. Is it worth it? Fuck yeah." 28

---

**"It's people like Tom that do make a difference eventually, where it really matters ... I don't know how he did it, really. I would've given up a long time ago."**

POLAND

## Jarosław Kaczyński

THE BACKBENCH DRIVER

Formally, Jarosław Kaczyński is just one of 460 members of the Polish parliament. In reality, the former prime minister and current chairman of the ruling Law and Justice party is the most powerful man in the country. Whatever the decision – who will run Poland's state television? Should Donald Tusk be backed for a second term as European Council president? Does Prime Minister Beata Szydło get to keep her job? – it is Kaczyński who makes the final call.

In Poland, that has meant a sharp change in direction as Kaczyński has pushed back against what he sees as a quarter century of corruption, runaway liberalism, and dissipating national identity and control. Along with his ally in Budapest, Viktor Orbán, the 67-year-old leads the eastern flank of the anti-establishment brigades that have scored significant victories in the West, from Brexit to Donald Trump, and is setting its sights on critical elections in France, Germany and the Netherlands next year.

A lifelong bachelor, Kaczyński needles Brussels and cosmopolitan pieties with brio and pushes Catholic family values, all the while seizing – and to his vocal critics, emasculating – Poland's relatively young democratic institutions that were

### KACZYŃSKI THE MAN

Kaczyński arrives at work at about 10 in the morning, driven by his security detail (he has no driver's license).

He doesn't go out for lunch. He prefers traditional Polish food bought from a nearby canteen by his secretary. He almost always eats alone.

He is a 67-year-old life-long bachelor.

He speaks no foreign language, owns no computer, and only opened his first bank account in 2009.

a model of a successful transition away from authoritarianism.

In his tangles with Brussels so far, score it for Kaczyński. The Commission criticized his party's moves to overhaul Poland's constitutional court and media sector. It was ignored, and its attacks handed the wily Pole a propaganda gift at home. The nation state "is the only institution able to guarantee democracy and freedom," Kaczyński told a group of leading European newspapers.

"Who attacks us will not win. Poland will remain Poland." His hostility to the EU comes unadulterated. "The question is, if the Union in its current shape, with its horrible bureaucracy and institutionalized undermining of the nation state, is able to survive," he told a Polish interviewer. "According to me, no."

In the months ahead, Kaczyński will play a role in the EU's negotiations with





the United Kingdom, looking to defend the interests of a couple million Poles who reside in the U.K. while at the same time not doing Brussels any favors. After Brexit, Poland will become the EU's fifth most populous country and its seventh largest economy, one that could be the

**Down with Kaczyński:** Polish citizens supporting freedom of the press gather in protest against the Law and Justice party's swift move to seize control of state media.

EU's geographic and political center. If Europe as we know it is to recover from the blow of Brexit, Brussels and Berlin will need a Poland that embraces the EU, possibly joining the eurozone. Count on Kaczyński to fight that relentlessly. **23**

SPAIN

# Ada Colau

THE SWING VOTE

The future of Spain could well rest on the shoulders of the 42-year-old mayor of Barcelona. With a referendum on Catalonia's independence on the cards for next year that its backers call binding, Ada Colau's place in the region's politics – as a popular, outspoken and independent leader – gives her a powerful voice.

In her time in the public eye, Colau has never been one to hold her tongue. Before becoming the city's first female mayor in 2015, she was an anti-eviction activist famous for facing down banks, even if that meant being carried out of their offices by the police. In office, she made headlines by fining banks that refused to rent out vacant properties, promised to rein in what she describes as an out-of-control influx of tourists, and angered monarchists by removing a bust of the king from the city hall's council chambers.

Her influence is likely to only grow. Since her election, she has consolidated her power, emerging as the unofficial leader of the leftist coalition that won the 2016 general election in Catalonia. And while she dismisses talk of any public office outside the town hall, her name is frequently floated as a future president of the region – or even, possibly, as a leftist



## WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE PHILOSOPHER?

Hannah Arendt, for her insights into the origins of totalitarianism. Europe has much to think about that.

## WHO'S THE MOST INSPIRING EUROPEAN POLITICIAN?

Anne Hidalgo, the Spanish-born mayor of Paris, for her European and municipalist attitudes.

## WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CORNER OF BARCELONA?

Plaça Sant Felip Neri, in the Gothic Quarter. It reminds me of my youth, the time from which we keep the most emotional memories.

## WHAT'S THE LEFT DOING WRONG IN EUROPE?

The biggest mistake is embracing right-wing policies. But there's also a bureaucratization and a lack of understanding of the modern world.

candidate for prime minister.

And yet, on the hottest issue in the region, she remains stubbornly vague. Though she cast a ballot in favor of independence in a non-binding “popular consultation” in 2014, she has described her vote as a protest against Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy’s “recentralizing, repressive, authoritarian and reactionary” policies. Her ideal solution, she says, would be a Catalan republic inside a confederated Spain. “I’ve never been nationalist or pro-independence,” she says in an interview at Barcelona’s town hall. “But I’m convinced that the current territorial model is obsolete.”

In Catalonia’s sharply polarized political climate, such a position may be hard to maintain. Colau insists that a referendum may not be held at all. But secessionist forces are convinced that she will not be able to avoid choosing sides as the debate heats up. 28



SWEDEN

# Daniel Ek

THE RECORD SPINNER

Daniel Ek, the co-founder of music-streaming giant Spotify, has done more than anyone to make Stockholm into Europe's tech unicorn capital. But these days he's sending a different message, warning about the threats to the EU's nascent and – compared to the U.S. – still tiny startup scene. Politicians would be wise not to ignore him: The Continent needs to nourish the digital economy to flourish, much less cope, in the future.

Together with his co-founder Martin Lorentzon, Ek is threatening to take his company – one of the few digital stars in the European tech firmament – out of Sweden and out of Europe. Ek wants Stockholm to address its crippling housing shortage and introduce coding classes in public schools. He says tax laws make it nearly impossible for companies to offer stock options, which is how startups in the U.S. incentivize staff to work insane hours for low pay in the hope of big Google-like scores down the road. “Now is the time for action,” Ek wrote in an open letter posted on Medium. “Politicians – your move!”

Ek's call to action brought a few dozen managers of startups to protest outside of Sweden's parliament. But the government has been stirring too slowly for his tastes. He has vented on Twitter, and has



ostentatiously turned his attention abroad. The company is adding more staff in the United States than at home, and speculation that Spotify will list on the New York Stock Exchange has only gotten louder as Ek has gotten angrier.

Clearly Ek has learned a lesson from Microsoft and Google about the importance of playing politics. Besides his campaign to make Sweden friendlier to business, Spotify has also added legal and lobbying muscle in Brussels and Washington. The company has a small army of lawyers in Brussels compiling evidence of uncompetitive behavior by Apple Music. Sources say Ek has won the backing of influential MEPs, such as Andreas Schwab, in Brussels, and that Hank Johnson, the top antitrust Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives, is a supporter.

Asked to summarize Europe's approach to startups, Ek responds with just a link to a Spotify playlist containing a single song: “Wake Up” by Rage Against the Machine. **28**

Out of the shadow of boom-and-bust capitalism, a new breed of celebrity bankers stepped into the

limelight. The stewards of monetary policy suddenly found themselves the cocks of the walk. But these days, if politicians mention them at all, it's not to thank them — it's to condemn them. *Read about the rise and fall of the nerdy cousins of the financial family, on Page 44*



POLITICO 28



#### NEXT UP

7. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
8. Federica Mogherini
9. Andreas Georgiou
10. George Soros
11. Isabel dos Santos
12. Sebastian Kurz
13. Dalia Grybauskaitė
14. Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen
15. Alice van den Abeele
16. Edouard Perrin
17. Mustafa Akıncı
18. Yngve Slyngstad

#### ON LANGUAGE BY ADAM JACOT DE BOINOD

When it comes to ... well ... dying, other languages have highly inventive euphemisms for the tricky subject of kicking the bucket.



In Spanish — particularly in Central America — *colgar los guantes*, or “hang up the gloves.”

In Latvian, it's *nolikt karoti*, or “put down the spoon.”

In Dutch, it's *het hoekje omgaan*, or “go around corners.”



In French, if you pass on, you *sucrer les fraises*, or “sugar the strawberries.”

Prefer your strawberries unsugared? Another French expression for dying is *avalier son bulletin de naissance*, or “to swallow one's birth certificate.”

In Portuguese, you've got a choice: *bater a bota* or *esticar a perna* — hit the boot or stretch the leg. (Both might be a bit of a challenge if you're six feet under.)



**FROM**  
**HERO**

---

*THE AGE OF THE CELEBRITY CENTRAL BANKER IS OVER*

---

**ZERO**  
**TO**

**BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA**  
ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN STAUFFER

**CENTRAL BANKERS WERE THE** undisputed winners of the 2008 financial crisis. As the rest of the world tumbled in economic turmoil, they gained new powers, influence and fame for saving the global economy from collapse.

Today, their fortunes are turning once again. After nearly a decade spent lavishing money on sputtering economies, the masters of the monetary universe are being criticized for failing to engineer long-lasting growth in the developed world. Gone are the days when U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, European Central Bank President Mario Draghi and Bank of England Governor Mark Carney were hailed as the antidote to the spectacular failings of capitalism. They're now accused of being part of the problem by the same politicians, investors and bankers that put them on a pedestal when the economy needed saving.

The central banker's rise to prominence began in the heady days of September 2008, following the collapse of financial services firm Lehman Brothers and the near-failure of the giant U.S. insurer AIG. Those who were at the Federal Reserve at the time remember the moment their institution went from a respected but faceless cog in the global

economy to the all-powerful savior of nations and people.

It happened in the early morning of September 15, when a handful of officials from the New York branch of the Fed walked into the headquarters of AIG in downtown Manhattan. It was the first time they had been there. AIG's elegant building was a stone's throw from the New York Fed's fortress-like offices, but the Fed officials had had no reason to visit before because the central bank did not have oversight of insurance companies.

Now things were different. AIG was teetering on the brink and needed an emergency injection of billions of dollars just to stay alive. And only one institution had the capacity to provide it. Just like that, the Fed became the only game in town.

In the ensuing weeks, that pattern was repeated in Washington, Tokyo, Frankfurt and London. And over time, the elevated status of the Fed and its peers was enshrined in new laws and regulations. Out of the shadow of boom-and-bust capitalism, a new breed of celebrity central bankers stepped into the limelight.

Long considered the nerdy cousins of the financial family – less powerful than politicians, lacking the glitz and glamor of the trading floor, and massively under-

paid compared to Wall Street executives – the stewards of monetary policy suddenly found themselves the cocks of the walk.

These days, if politicians mention central bankers at all, it's not to thank them – it's to condemn them. Political leaders from Berlin to London blame their interventions for amplifying inequality and eroding the savings of hard-working citizens. Investors, who once thrilled at the torrents of money central banks poured into the markets, now complain that persistently low interest rates make it impossible to make money for pensioners and hedge funds alike. And bankers, having forgotten the bailouts that saved their businesses, bristle at the rules and regulations put in place to keep them from tumbling over the edge once again.

This radical change of mood has been driven by the failure of central banks to do much more than avert the worst consequences of the crisis. By opening up the cash spigots and driving down interest rates, monetary authorities in North America, Europe and Japan prevented a painful Great Recession from becoming a ruinous Great Depression. But as much as central bankers may have excelled as first responders during the economic earthquake, they haven't proved nearly as good at rebuilding the global economy.

And that's why the luminaries of the post-crisis recovery are being pushed back off stage, expected once again to sit in the wings as understudies to their political masters, looking numerate and unassuming.

To some extent, this is as it should be. Central bankers' great strength is to control both the amount and price of money in circulation through interest rates and printing presses. Those are good tools to smooth the ups and downs of normal economic cycles – and to administer shock therapy when the patient is not responding. But neither has proven adequate to create the conditions for robust growth.

Look around. The ECB's Mario Draghi was able to keep the eurozone economy alive by using a monetary "bazooka." In 2012, he promised to do "whatever it takes" to save the euro. But his efforts since have done little to get the economy moving again. The eurozone remains stuck in a corner, hobbled by consumer anxiety and dispirited businesses.

In the U.S., the recovery has been more pronounced, but distinctly uneven, leaving large swaths of the population feeling overlooked and angry. As for Japan, years of incredibly aggressive stimulus by Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda have barely made a dent in the stagnation that's been gripping the country for decades.

Interventions by central banks come at a cost. Like drug addicts, markets and economies seem to have grown injured





to the massive doses of stimulus injected by central banks, requiring ever greater amounts to receive ever less satisfying fixes. Meanwhile, near-zero or negative interest rates cut into the returns relied upon by banks, pension funds, and individual holders of saving accounts. And large-scale purchases of stocks and bonds push up the prices of those assets, disproportionately advantaging the wealthy.

Central banks are now stuck in a paradox of impotence: The more they try to use their limited tools to resuscitate the economy, the more glaring their failures appear – and the sharper the critics’ barbs become.

The American fund manager Bill Gross recently warned that persistently low interest rates could lead to “a cycle of stagnation and decay.” Paul Singer, an American hedge fund manager, accused central bankers of inflating “the biggest bond bubble in world history” whose eventual bursting will be “surprising, sudden, intense and large.”

At times, the incoming fire has been political. U.S. President-elect Donald Trump sharply criticized Janet Yellen while on the campaign trail, accusing the Fed chair of keeping rates too low to help Barack Obama and threatening not to reappoint her once her term expires in February 2018. In April, German Finance Minister

Wolfgang Schäuble blamed Draghi’s loose monetary policy for the success of the Far-Right in local elections. And in the U.K., Prime Minister Theresa May has leveled her sights on the Bank of England, accusing it of pursuing policies that benefit the rich at the expense of the poor.

The loudest critics are calling for central bankers to do not less, but more, deploying a radical monetary tool, known as “helicopter money.” The idea, first put into the public discourse in a 1969 paper by the Nobel-winning economist Milton Friedman, involves creating money by fiat and distributing it to the public (like dollar bills dropped from a helicopter). Largely untested, it has yet to gain currency in central bank circles.

Before they are forced to board their helicopters, central bankers are clamoring to see what the politicians have got in their toolkit. There is, after all, a much simpler and more reliable way to achieve the same results as “helicopter money” – through the fiscal stimulus of government spending or tax cuts. That’s the responsibility of prime ministers, parliamentarians and presidents – the very people who are accusing central bankers of not doing enough. And so far, those vocal critics of the ECB and the Fed have said precious little about how they can help.

As ECB insiders are happy to point out,

the open spigots and near-zero interest rates were only supposed to be emergency measures. In Europe’s case, they were meant to hold the eurozone together while governments reformed their economies, mounted a credible defense of the common currency, and readied themselves to intervene fiscally if necessary.

Instead, elected officials did little – or in many cases worse than nothing. Governments dragged their feet on reforms, relied on Draghi to defend the euro, and were prevented from introducing fiscal interventions by combinations of incompetence, ideology, fear of political blowback and stern warnings by the European Commission. Meanwhile, established parties undermined investor and consumer confidence through risky referendums, even as their populist challengers frightened the markets with irresponsible promises and threats of leaving the EU.

The masters of the money may well return to the shadows where they arguably belong. As they do so, elected leaders in Europe and elsewhere shouldn’t be surprised if the spotlight – and the responsibility for restarting the economy – suddenly turns in their direction. **28**

Francesco Guerrera, POLITICO’s chief financial correspondent, writes the daily Morning Exchange column.

TURKEY

# Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

THE OLD IRON FIST

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the most consequential Turkish leader since the founder of the republic, Kemal Atatürk. For much of his first decade-plus in power, Erdoğan had a shot at building a unique legacy: as the religious modernizer who showed Islam was compatible with democracy, built a Muslim tiger economy with Chinese-style growth, ended Turkey's internal conflict with the Kurds and brought his nation into the heart of Europe.

This past year changed all that, probably irreversibly. Erdoğan is no less consequential, for Turkey or Europe, but for wholly different reasons.

Following a failed military coup in July, he turned even harder than in recent years toward authoritarianism, jailing thousands of opponents and whittling away at institutions that might check his growing thirst for power. A dormant conflict with the Kurds flared up again, turning parts of the country's southeast bloody. Erdoğan's dreams of regional leadership, with talk of a neo-Ottoman resurgence, went up in smoke with the failure of the Arab Spring revolutions across the Middle East and the civil war in Syria that spilled across the border into Turkey. And as Turkey's hopes of

## ON THE RECORD

On the media: "I have never been against media; there have been numerous insults and libels against me and my family and those outlets are still broadcasting" — *Al Jazeera*

On relations with the U.S.: "We need to be more sensitive. Relations between our countries are based on interests, not feelings. We are strategic partners" — *Al Jazeera*

On Turkey in the EU: "We have been at the gates of Europe for fifty-three years now. The EU is solely responsible and guilty for this situation. No state has ever been treated the way Turkey has" — *Le Monde*

joining the European Union faded from distant to almost entirely dark, Erdoğan struck a new – to critics Faustian – bargain with Brussels: He'd play the Continent's most important border guard, stopping the waves of migrants that had raised concerns of EU citizens and fed the surge of far-right political parties, in return for cash and a blind eye to his domestic repressions.

The biggest refugee crisis since World War II has turned the EU's stick-and-carrot approach toward Turkey on its head. The resulting migration deal has handed Turkey's competitive president a strong hand, and Erdoğan hasn't been shy about using it to turn the screw. If Europe doesn't keep its side of the bargain – handing over some €6 billion in aid and providing Turks with visa-free travel to the bloc's Schengen area – Turkey could "put the refugees on buses" anytime, as he told EU leaders last year. **28**





ITALY

# Federica Mogherini

THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

In a European Commission destined to oversee disunity and unraveling, the old integrationist religion of “ever closer union” lives on in an unlikely place: Federica Mogherini’s External Action Service, a sort of foreign ministry for the European Union. The Italian politician, whose formal title is high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, can thank Brexit and Donald Trump.

The U.K.’s vote to leave the EU may have dealt a body blow to Brussels, but it will do away with the British veto on Mogherini’s hallmark effort: closer military cooperation under the auspices of the EU. And the stunning victory of an American presidential candidate who loudly questioned his country’s commitment to NATO on the campaign trail gives further reason for the EU 27 to circle their wagons.

When Mogherini was appointed in November 2014, expectations were low. Then 41 years old, she had spent just eight months as Italian foreign minister, following a long but undistinguished career in Prime Minister Matteo Renzi’s Democratic Party. Her predecessor Catherine Ashton, the first to hold the position, left Brussels with few accomplishments to her name. And Mogherini

## ON THE RECORD

On diversity: “It’s not diversity that is going to destroy us, but fear of diversity” — *Vogue*

On Brussels: “Moving from Rome to Brussels was hard. The main thing I miss is the light. If you land in Rome, you immediately see orange and yellow. Here it is white and gray. And I miss the food. But the food I can do myself” — *Vogue*

On the Continent: “It’s not just that Europe can manage, it’s also that Europe has to manage. We have to come to terms with the times we are living in” — *Vogue*

was flying into fierce headwinds. Her domestic critics complained she was inexperienced. Eastern European countries worried publicly that she was too soft on Russia.

In her two years in office, Mogherini has racked up some notable successes. She got some credit for playing a role in the last leg of negotiations on the Iranian nuclear deal. She’s logged thousands of miles as an effective ambassador for the EU. And for the first time, her department has built close contacts with its cousin across town, NATO.

But her priority is a project to sharply shift European security policy — and significantly upgrade her office’s responsibilities. Mogherini’s Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy was developed over the course of a year behind closed doors, to avoid influencing the Brexit debate taking place in the U.K., where any talk of a “European Army”





was catnip for British Euroskeptics.

When it was unveiled five days after the June 23 referendum, it was clear why she was so careful. Plans that foresee even the possibility of a common military structure tread on sensitive political ground. The strategy refrains from explicit calls to create an EU army, but sketches out military integration that includes coordinated investments in defense and the removal of “procedural, financial and political obstacles which prevent the deployment of the battlegroups,” rapid-response units of some 1,500 troops, drawn from the EU’s members. It also suggests a group of willing countries could bring together their defenses under existing EU treaties.

A common European defense has been an integrationist pipedream since France

---

**A common defense has been an integrationist pipe dream ever since France vetoed an attempt to create a supranational army in 1952.**

vetoed an attempt to create a supranational army in 1952 – and will remain largely so. Brussels is unlikely to field divisions under an EU flag anytime soon. But Mogherini has planted her seed. Security concerns, driven by chaos in the Middle East, pressure from Russia, the migration crisis and the Trump presidency, have raised interest in military integration from countries – particularly in Eastern Europe – that have traditionally been skeptical of providing Brussels with greater power.

“Normally the traditional attitude would be to cautiously test the ground, advance only on issues on which consensus is already there, or on what you think is not controversial” says Mogherini. “I decided to do [it] the other way round: I am putting everything on the table. You say you want to do it? Here it is.” 28

GREECE

## Andreas Georgiou

THE BEAN COUNTER

In 2010, as Greece hurtled toward insolvency, Andreas Georgiou left Washington, where he had spent 21 years working for the International Monetary Fund, and accepted a job as Greece's top statistician. In Athens, Georgiou discovered Greece had understated the figures it had used when negotiating its first bailout, and he recalculated the country's economic statistics according to EU law.

The resulting furor upended the country's political order, forcing Greece to accept more severe terms from its creditors during a second bailout and eventually helping propel Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras into power. Georgiou was accused of maliciously inflating the deficit figure, and in 2013 he was charged with "undermining the national interest" and slapped with criminal charges for "false statements and complicity against the State." At one point, he feared for his life. By the time, he stepped down in 2015, he had become public enemy No. 1.

Georgiou, who now lives in Maryland in the United States, was thrust back into the spotlight in August after the Greek Supreme Court overturned a lower court's decision to drop the charges against him. On trial is not just the Greek statistician, but the figures

### ON RETURNING TO GREECE TO PARTICIPATE IN REFORM

On returning to Greece to participate in reform: "I don't regret it one bit. I'd have done exactly the same again — in a heartbeat" — *Financial Times*

On reforming the statistical agency: "We had to build a bulwark against political interference, so that people could return to proudly practicing their profession. This agency was the laughing stock of Europe. Now it is the prodigal son that has returned to the European statistics fold" — *NRC Handelsblad*

underpinning the bailout package keeping his country afloat. A conviction would be popular in Greece, where the public, the media and the political class have been calling for his head, but it would also undermine the hard-won agreement that prevented the country from tumbling out of the eurozone. Unsurprisingly the ruling raised alarms in Brussels, where European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen issued a statement saying, "It is crucial that the statistical basis for our economic decision-making is and remains reliable."

For his part, Georgiou describes himself as a patriot — he lists "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey" among his favorite works — and raises his own concerns about the effects of his legal travails: "With continuing prosecutions and convictions, there will be long-lasting damage to official statistics and to evidence-based policy-making not only in Greece, but also in the EU and around the world." 28





**RANKED THE  
MOST-READ  
NEWS OUTLET  
AMONG EU INFLUENCERS**

---

By the ComRes/Burson-Marsteller 2016 EU Media Poll

**POLITICO.EU**

HUNGARY

## George Soros

THE SCOURGE OF ILLIBERALISM

Well into his eighties, George Soros is back on the frontlines of this decade's ideological struggle. Growing ranks of nationalist politicians are laying siege to the liberal democratic system that emerged victorious from the Cold War – and putting the Hungarian-American billionaire and the “open society” he has spent his fortune to support in their sights.

Soros is a veteran of these battles, having suffered or struggled against authoritarianism his entire life. Born in 1930, he lived under a nationalist pro-Nazi Hungarian regime before escaping to study in London and later make his fortune in America. When he set up what would become the Open Society Foundation in 1984, one of its early initiatives was to provide copy machines to universities, libraries and civil society groups in his native, then Soviet-dominated Hungary so they could reprint banned publications.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Soros went in big into the old Warsaw Pact and ex-USSR, helping advise on their transition to democracy and free markets. His foundation worked with local politicians and dissidents, many of whom played prominent roles at key events in their countries' histories – such



as the overthrow of Serbia's Slobodan Milošević in 2000 or Ukraine's uprisings against authoritarian leaders in 2004 and 2013-14. When a hacking collective widely suspected to be a front for Russian intelligence posted a trove of hacked OSF documents this year, it posited that the group's Hungarian-American founder was “an architect and a sponsor of almost every revolution and coup around the world for the last 25 years.” He might take that as a compliment.

These days, Soros is a blunt partisan player in America's political dramas, funneling millions to the Democratic Party and causes such as Black Lives Matter. With Donald Trump headed into the White House, he already stands at the forefront of efforts to oppose him. In Europe, Soros pushes his ideas through the

**U.S. activism:** In recent years, Soros has backed the Black Lives matter movement.



network of Open Society Foundations, which currently works in more than 100 countries across the world.

Even if his impact is exaggerated, Soros is a potent symbol of a certain kind of liberalism. He is admired across the Left and despised on the nationalist fringes of the Right, sometimes with rhetoric or imagery whose anti-Semitism leaves little to the imagination.

The battle is particularly fierce now in his native Hungary. The ruling Fidesz party of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has for years complained about his influence and intentions. Last year, when Soros called for a common European asylum policy in a thinly veiled rebuke of Or-

---

## **“An architect and a sponsor of almost every revolution and coup around the world for the past 25 years.”**

bán's hard line on migration, the Hungarian leader blasted him, saying, “his name is perhaps the strongest example of those who support anything that weakens nation states.” Soros clearly wasn't cowed. In September, he earmarked some \$500 million “for investments that specifically address the needs of migrants, refugees and host communities.” <sup>28</sup>

PORTUGAL

# Isabel dos Santos

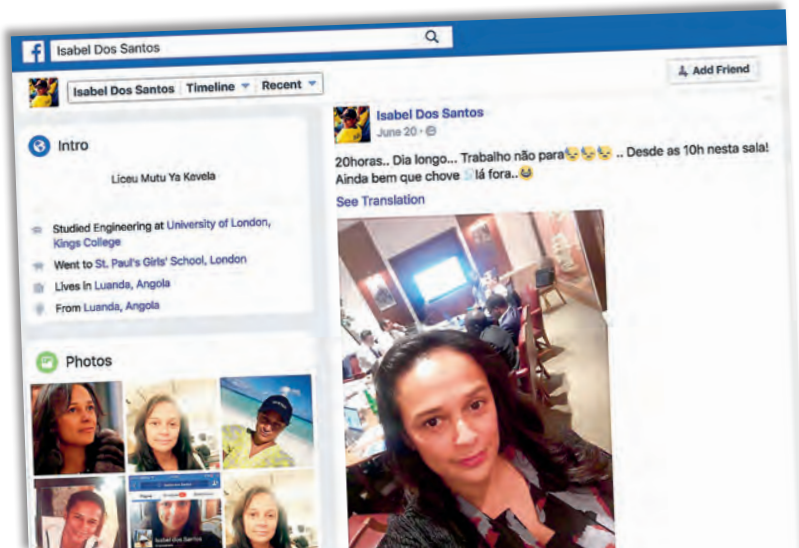
THE FOREIGN INVESTOR

Check out Isabel dos Santos' Facebook page and you might think she's a carefree teenager rather than a tycoon running a multi-billion dollar business empire. There she is in a striped T-shirt posing for a sea-side selfie. There's dos Santos on a plane, at the gym, complaining about a long day in the office with a row of sad-face emojis.

Switch to Twitter and the shots of dos Santos alongside men in suits give a more complete picture of how she spends her time. They show her discussing Brexit with the former head of Britain's Conservative Party; lunching with the boss of BP; in talks with the chairman of China Development Bank. One tweet complains about unfair coverage in the Portuguese press.

Dos Santos, the daughter of Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos, is Africa's richest woman and a symbol of the reversal of fortunes between Portugal and its largest former African colony. Though she's not a Portuguese citizen, her business interests make her one of the country's most influential people. Worth an estimated \$3.2 billion, she has stakes in oil, diamonds, restaurants and soccer clubs, as well as major holdings in Portugal's banking, telecoms, and energy sectors – investments that have elicited both consternation and gratitude in the

**Dos Santos, the first daughter of Angola, is Africa's richest woman and a symbol of the reversal of fortunes between Portugal and its largest former African colony.**



country's cash-starved economy.

To her fans, she's a talented role model, an engineer who battled to the top of a male-dominated world, cutting a glamorous figure in Lisbon, on the arm of her Congolese husband Sindika Dokolo, a major patron of Africa's hip contemporary art scene. She speaks seven languages, including Russian, the native tongue of her chess-champion mother who met the future Angolan president when he was studying petroleum engineering in the Soviet Union. Her English was perfected as a student at London's exclusive St. Paul's Girls' School and Kings College.

To her critics, she's the symbol of a corrupt regime, a "princess" who rode to riches on the back of daddy's despotic power in a country riven by inequalities. In June, her father appointed her head of Sonangol, Angola's state oil company, sparking howls of complaint. She says her mandate is to improve efficiency, cut costs and introduce greater transparency into the company's opaque dealings.

Whatever the motivation, dos Santos' Portuguese activities look to be taking a back seat as she focuses on affairs at home. Recently, she's dropped plans for a merger that would have created Portugal's biggest bank. Instead, she signaled acceptance of a takeover of Banco BPI, where she is a major stakeholder, by her rivals at Spain's CaixaBank. In return she's gaining greater control of BPI's Angolan offshoot.

Gossip in Lisbon and Luanda has her in the running as a possible successor to her 74-year-old father, who says he'll step down in 2018. That would put her in a strong position to fulfill her longstanding ambition to use her experience in Africa and Europe to build ties between the two continents. 23



AUSTRIA

# Sebastian Kurz

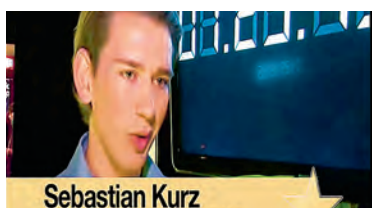
THE FRESH FACE

Sebastian Kurz was just 24 years old when he crashed Vienna's political scene in 2010 on the hood of a jet-black Hummer emblazoned with the words "cool-O-mobile." The slogan for his campaign for city council: "Black makes you cool." Black is the color associated with Kurz's party, the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP). But that wasn't the only double entendre. The German word Kurz used for "cool," *geil*, also means "horny."

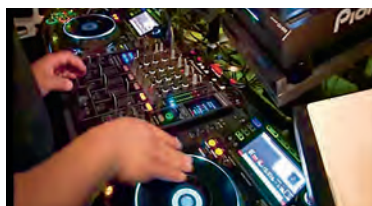
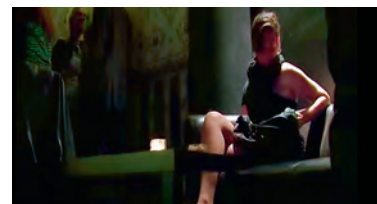
And so, when the party leadership tapped the fresh-faced law student to become state secretary for integration just a year later, the decision raised eyebrows within the ÖVP and guffaws outside it. The party is the bedrock of Austria's Catholic, conservative establishment and Kurz, with this slicked back hair, open shirts and devil-may-care attitude seemed to embody the opposite of its staid traditions.

That Kurz, who became foreign minister in 2013, is now regarded as the ÖVP's best – maybe only – hope for survival, says as much about the decline of Austria's conservative establishment as it does about his political talents.

Over the past year, Kurz has put himself



**View from the cool-O-mobile:** In 2010, Kurz burst onto the scene by posing on a black Hummer and hosting a party at an Austrian nightclub. In five short years, the fresh-faced foreign minister has turned raised eyebrows into nodding heads inside the Austrian People's Party.





at the forefront of Europe's debate over refugees, playing an instrumental role in crafting an agreement with Austria's southern neighbors to close the so-called Balkan route, the primary path for refugees heading from Greece to Northern Europe. The move put Kurz at odds with Berlin and Brussels, but he held his course. Today, even German Chancellor Angela Merkel acknowledges Kurz's intervention helped bring the refugee crisis under control.

Kurz has just turned 30, but no one

---

## **The only question surrounding Europe's youngest foreign minister is: What's next?**

jokes about his age or lack of a university degree anymore. The question surrounding Europe's youngest foreign minister is: What's next? The post of party leader is considered to be his for the taking. While the ÖVP has dipped to below 20 percent in the polls, leaving it a distant third behind the right-wing Freedom Party and the Social Democrats, Kurz's personal ratings are the highest of any Austrian politician, and many in the country consider him the best option for preventing a Freedom Party politician from becoming chancellor. **28**

LITHUANIA

## Dalia Grybauskaitė

THE IRON LADY

In Lithuania, where politics are synonymous with scandal and volatility, President Dalia Grybauskaitė is a figure of solidity. Nicknamed “Steel Magnolia,” the former European commissioner elicits comparisons to Margaret Thatcher, sharing with the late British leader a penchant for the acid phrase and a work ethic little changed from her student days in Leningrad when she doubled up courses with shifts at a Soviet fur factory.

Her country and her region will surely need a steadying hand in the months ahead. The election of Donald Trump brings to power a Republican who on the campaign trail consistently expressed his admiration for the Baltics’ fervent foe Russian President Vladimir Putin and cast doubt on America’s commitment to the NATO military alliance that guarantees their security.

Grybauskaitė’s strong position at home and her familiarity with the inner workings of Brussels lets her punch above her small nation’s weight. Since coming into office in 2009, the second-term 60-year-old president has picked her battles on the international stage, pushing for Western sanctions against Russia, to help Ukraine defend itself, to protect free movement of labor in the EU and on

### BESIDES BLACK-BELT TRAINING IN MARTIAL ARTS, WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE HOBBY?

There aren’t many opportunities to engage in hobbies. I like reading, enjoy music, but my attention is always focused on my job.

### WHAT DO YOU MOST MISS ABOUT LIFE IN BRUSSELS? WHAT DO YOU NOT MISS?

There is no time to reminisce about the past. It is more important to look ahead. International experience gained in Brussels is valuable to me and helps me work for the future.

### WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF A DREAM HOLIDAY?

I do not dream of holidays. My job gives me both hard work and satisfaction. The joy to see good results in what I do — it is enough for holidays also.

the migration crisis. All those issues are likely to stay atop the agenda in 2017.

A longtime critic of Putin whom she has, on a number of occasions, compared to Hitler and Stalin, Grybauskaitė will have to work even harder to keep sanctions in place with growing calls in Rome, Athens, Budapest and now possibly Washington and Paris to ease off the Kremlin. “If we reverse our position or succumb to Russia’s pressure, nobody knows how many more red lines will be crossed,” she writes in an email interview.

On migration, where she has pushed a marginally more welcoming line than her Baltic neighbors Latvia and Estonia, she says the EU “must move beyond the fire-fighting approach and address the root causes of migration.” Inside the EU, she adds, “we have to focus on the integration of refugees who are already here. This is the only way to prevent the backlash in our societies.” 28



DENMARK

## Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen

THE FOUR-STAR SECRETARY-GENERAL



Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen is that “faceless bureaucrat” of Euroskeptic lore who genuinely wields outsized influence in Brussels. Broadly liked, widely esteemed, he’s notable too for having notched up successes in yet another *annus horribilis* for the European Union.

His biggest achievement – though you’d never hear him put it this way – is to have saved European Council President Donald Tusk’s European career. In mid-2015 Tranholm-Mikkelsen passed up a move to lead Denmark’s embassy in Washington to become the Council’s secretary-general.

His arrival coincided with a turnaround. Tusk, then a Brussels rookie, was facing whispered calls for his head. Tranholm-Mikkelsen brought savvy, calm and bureaucratic discipline. Since then, Tusk has won the argument on migration against Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker with a plan that emphasized border security, and he earned high marks for his handling of the Brexit talks with London, the results of referendum outcome notwithstanding. Much of the credit goes to Tranholm-Mikkelsen.

The 54-year-old works out of an expansive office as nondescript as an airport hotel room. His rimless glasses, dark blue suit

### JEPPE THE MAN

He is known for his extreme work ethic, logging 100-hour work-weeks at times of maximum urgency. Former colleagues admit to a certain stress from working under a boss who is seemingly never off duty.

“He is not the kind of guy who is going to tell a joke to lighten the mood,” one of his aides told an interviewer. “But if you want a witty take on the European semester or the capital-requirements directive, he is probably your man.”

and sensible shoes are similarly understated. But his background isn’t. Born in Yemen to missionary parents, Tranholm-Mikkelsen remembers growing up in a household in which the family radio was always tuned to the wider world. He climbed fast up the diplomatic ranks and served as ambassador to China.

Tranholm-Mikkelsen wants to better use the Council’s army of 2,800 civil servants, many of them lawyers and translators, to level the bureaucratic playing field in Brussels. Tusk, only the second man to hold the office created by the Lisbon Treaty, has had to rely mostly on a tiny office of a dozen close aides. Across Brussels’ Schuman Square, Juncker can count on a machinery of some 32,000 souls.

A Danish official who has worked closely with the secretary-general says he “enjoys very difficult problems.” Even so, Tranholm-Mikkelsen acknowledges with a blink-and-you’ll-miss-it smile, the current political moment “may be too much of a good thing.” 28



A woman with long, vibrant red hair is seen from behind, looking out over a cityscape. To the left, a tall, cylindrical brick chimney rises into the sky. In the foreground, a multi-story apartment building with a tan facade and white window frames is visible. Several windows have laundry hanging from them. On the roof of this building, a row of blue solar panels is installed. The background shows more urban buildings under a cloudy, overcast sky.

BELGIUM

# Alice van den Abeele

THE STREET CURATOR

---

Brussels' newest museum, the Millennium Iconoclast Museum of Art, debuted at an inauspicious time in an unlikely location. Just weeks after twin bombings killed 32 people last March in the Belgian capital, it opened its doors in Molenbeek, the neighborhood from which the terrorists planned and staged the attacks. For Alice van den Abeele, the creative brain behind MIMA and one of its four founders, giving voice to contemporary artists is a way to explore issues of social cohesion and modern identity.



**Where did MIMA originate?**

My husband [Raphaël Cruyt] and I have run a gallery for more than 10 years, and a couple that followed our work, Michel and Florence de Launoit, saw the enthusiasm people had for what we were doing. We quickly realized it was a way to reach a much larger audience. The idea was to make accessible the work of artists, and a whole culture, who are underrepresented in cultural institutions today.

**What, if anything, changed after the Brussels attacks?**

What happened forced us to ask ourselves a lot of questions, about the role of our museum, and art in society more generally. Our location is no accident. The building's location represents what we're about, which is creating bridges. But we'd be the same museum on the other side of the canal, because, to us, both sides are the same.

**ARE YOU AN EARLY BIRD OR A NIGHT OWL?**

I have two kids (they're 8 and 6), so I have no choice. If I could sleep in later I would, but I'm up early.

**DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE BELGIAN ARTIST?**

Oh, I can't play favorites. I'd say it depends on my mood. I'd have to describe a mood and a time of the day to name a favorite artist.

**WHAT IS THIS CITY'S BEST KEPT SECRET?**

The canal. Because the water is so low, people walk along the edge without noticing the barges gliding by every day. I can't help it: every time I see them, I stop and want to take a photograph. It shows you a different side of the city. For most people, the canal is just dirty water. But actually, when you see these boats, it feels timeless, it's magic.

**What kind of art do you look for? What makes you take a chance on an artist?**

Authenticity. There needs to be a strong connection to what we experience in our daily lives. Access to culture and art has completely changed. You no longer have to go through a gallery or a studio. You can follow an artist on Instagram, see their influences, where they go out to eat. So what I mean by authenticity is that there's a sense that the artist is really anchored in our time, and explores subjects that are real, not borrowed or remote.

**What role can contemporary art play in a community like Molenbeek?**

Crossing the threshold of an art gallery is difficult for most people. The most common response to contemporary art is, "I don't get it." Not everyone feels they can decode this kind of work and what we're saying is yes, you can.



**How does MIMA work to make a difference?**

When we started we became a kind of positive flag-bearer for Molenbeek. That's great, of course, but we hardly had a chance to land. For now, the idea is to make our museum available as a tool to people who are already doing great things in the neighborhood. We're hosting workshops for an organization that works with children from disadvantaged neighborhoods and teaches them about different types of careers in the art world.

**How do you interact with your audience?**

Our strength is that the artists we present have a strong following before they're

---

**“Our location is no accident. The building's location represents what we're about, which is creating bridges.”**

introduced to the general public in any formal way. They work in a very direct, empathetic way. For many of them, their first canvas was the street because it allows them speak to people in their daily lives.

**If you had no constraints — time or money is not a factor — what would you do?**

There are always constraints — and that's not a bad thing, because it can force you to be more inventive. I try not to think about the future too much. It brings up questions like 'Is this going to work?' and the anxieties that come with that. So I'm fairly connected to now, to today. My big dreams are very abstract. They're about meeting people, artists I admire, and seeing projects become reality. 28

FRANCE

## Edouard Perrin

THE DOGGED REPORTER

French investigative journalist Edouard Perrin is obsessive when it comes to covering stories. He never expected to become the story himself, yet that's exactly what happened in 2016 when he found himself on trial – and under intense media scrutiny – in Luxembourg for having facilitated the release in 2014 of thousands of pages of corporate documents as part of a major scandal known as “LuxLeaks.”

“It’s very disorienting to be thrust into the spotlight,” says Perrin. “I never did my job for any sort of personal notoriety, and here I was in the middle of the coverage.”

Charged with “domestic thievery,” “violating professional secrets” and “violating business secrets” for disseminating documents leaked from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Perrin was acquitted in May. But his ordeal shows no sign of being over.

Two whistleblowers in the case, both former PwC employees who were fined and sentenced to suspended jail time, have appealed the decision. Luxembourg is also appealing the ruling. “Clearly, they are not satisfied with the result,” says Perrin with a nervous chuckle.



**Trials dissuade whistleblowers from exposing shady corporate practices — and discourage journalists from publishing what they might be given. “Few people can handle the legal costs of defending yourself.”**

In the years since LuxLeaks first made headlines, Perrin has been both comforted and dismayed by Europe’s response to tax avoidance schemes. “There is definitely movement, when you consider that the OECD has put corporate tax optimization on their agenda as a priority, or when you see what [European Competition] Commissioner Margrethe Vestager has done on the corporate avoidance.”

On the other hand, he points out that Europe still has as many tax regimes as it does countries, and firms are still free to exploit the differences for their benefit. Meanwhile, legal trials dissuade whistleblowers from exposing shady corporate practices and discourage journalists from publishing what they might be given. “Few people can handle the legal costs of defending yourself,” he says. “We need much wider protections for whistleblowers in Europe.”

For now, Perrin is preparing to appear in court, and working on his next big investigation. On what? “Of course I am not able to tell you,” he says. <sup>28</sup>



CYPRUS

## Mustafa Akıncı

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

As mayor of northern Nicosia in the late 1970s, Mustafa Akıncı helped to link Cyprus' divided capital city with a single sewage system – one of the few successful attempts to bridge the “Green Line” splitting the Turkish and Greek sides of the island. Today, as president of the self-declared Turkish Cypriot state, Akıncı is trying to cross the divide once again – this time by reunifying the entire island.


In 2014, Akıncı was elected on a promise to revive stalled talks with the internationally recognized Greek portion of the island. Once in office, he was fortunate to find a willing partner on the other side of the line: Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades. The two older men – Akıncı is 68; Anastasiades is 70 – were supporters of a 2004 bid to unify the island led by then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Both were disappointed when the majority of Greek Cypriots, including its most prominent politicians, rejected the deal.

This time, unlike in previous negotiations, the two leaders have taken full control of the process, meeting nearly every week for the last few months of 2016. The final deal could be put to a vote in 2017, if the last few, most sensitive issues can be resolved. These include Turkish Cyprus' ties to Ankara, its sole benefactor for the past



42 years, and the presence of more than 30,000 Turkish troops on its side of the island. The talks stalled in November.

Success will also depend on Akıncı's and Anastasiades' ability to convince voters who have grown up in a divided country that unification is worth supporting. The two men both grew up in Limassol, in southern Cyprus, and are part of the last generation that remembers what it was like to live in a mixed country where Greek Cypriots spoke Turkish and Turkish Cypriots spoke Greek.

“It is, of course, not easy to solve a problem that has been ongoing for 50 years,” Akıncı says. “However, together with Mr. Anastasiades, we are aware that we are engaged in the final trial of our generation.” 

**All smiles:** U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon watches as Akıncı, left, shakes hands with Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades.

NORWAY

## Yngve Slyngstad

THE GREEN CAPITALIST



When Yngve Slyngstad makes a decision, investors around the world take note. The soft-spoken Norwegian runs the world's largest government investment fund, some \$885 billion of petroleum money his country has set aside for future generations. The fund is the world's largest owner of publicly traded shares, holding on average 1.3 percent of every listed company in the world. And so when Slyngstad shifts his weight – as he did earlier this year when he cited environmental concerns as a reason for divesting from 52 companies that rely on coal mining and coal-fired power generation for their revenues – the markets tend to follow.

Slyngstad, 50, became CEO of Norges Bank Investment Management, the branch of the Norwegian finance ministry in charge of the fund, in 2008. He is a longtime advocate of active management, and under his tenure the bank has not shied from using its voting power at annual meetings of the companies in which it has a stake.

Slyngstad has also pushed for measures that would grant shareholders a greater say in appointing company directors and for better reporting on the risks posed by climate change. And in May, he

**“We want to measure the risk in our investments. We expect companies to communicate the impact of their activities on the environment.”**

announced his company would be taking a close look at excessive executive pay.

Norway's oil fund has a tradition of ethical investing; it has refused to buy shares in Wal-Mart, which it accuses of immoral labor practices, or in producers of nuclear weapons, landmines, cluster bombs and tobacco. Adding environmental considerations to the equation could have far-reaching consequences. Green groups estimate that Slyngstad's coal strategy will result in a total divestment of €7.7 billion – the largest from an institutional investor so far.

There may be more to come. In a letter to the Norwegian government late last year, Slyngstad asked it to allow the fund to invest in unlisted renewable energy infrastructure projects. The parliament is expected to assess his recommendations in the spring. Should it give him the green light, Norway's oil wealth could soon be fueling the fight against climate change. **28**



ENJOY A POLITICO PRINT SUBSCRIPTION  
AND RECEIVE YOUR WEEKLY MUST-READ ON  
EUROPEAN POLITICS, POLICY AND POWER

**46 ISSUES FOR €199\***  
[POLITICO.EU/SUBSCRIBE](http://POLITICO.EU/SUBSCRIBE)

\* Price excluding VAT. VAT will be added if applicable.

**France has changed more profoundly than its residents are willing to admit. Repeated acts of violence have robbed the French of their presumption of safety. France has mutated into a different version of itself: angrier, ready for more violence and locked into increasingly hostile and polarizing debates. *Read about the country's new normal, on Page 72***



**POLITICO 28**



**NEXT UP**

- 19. Marietje Schaake
- 20. Andrej Babiš
- 21. Dana Reizniece-Ozola
- 22. Pekka Rantala
- 23. Irina Bokova
- 24. Khaled Omar Harrah
- 25. Jelena Milić
- 26. Daphne Caruana Galizia
- 27. Marian Godina
- 28. Shpend Ahmeti

**ON LANGUAGE** BY ADAM JACOT DE BOINOD

Given the barrage of emails we send and receive every day, it's a wonder there is no official name for "@" — what we refer to as the "at symbol."

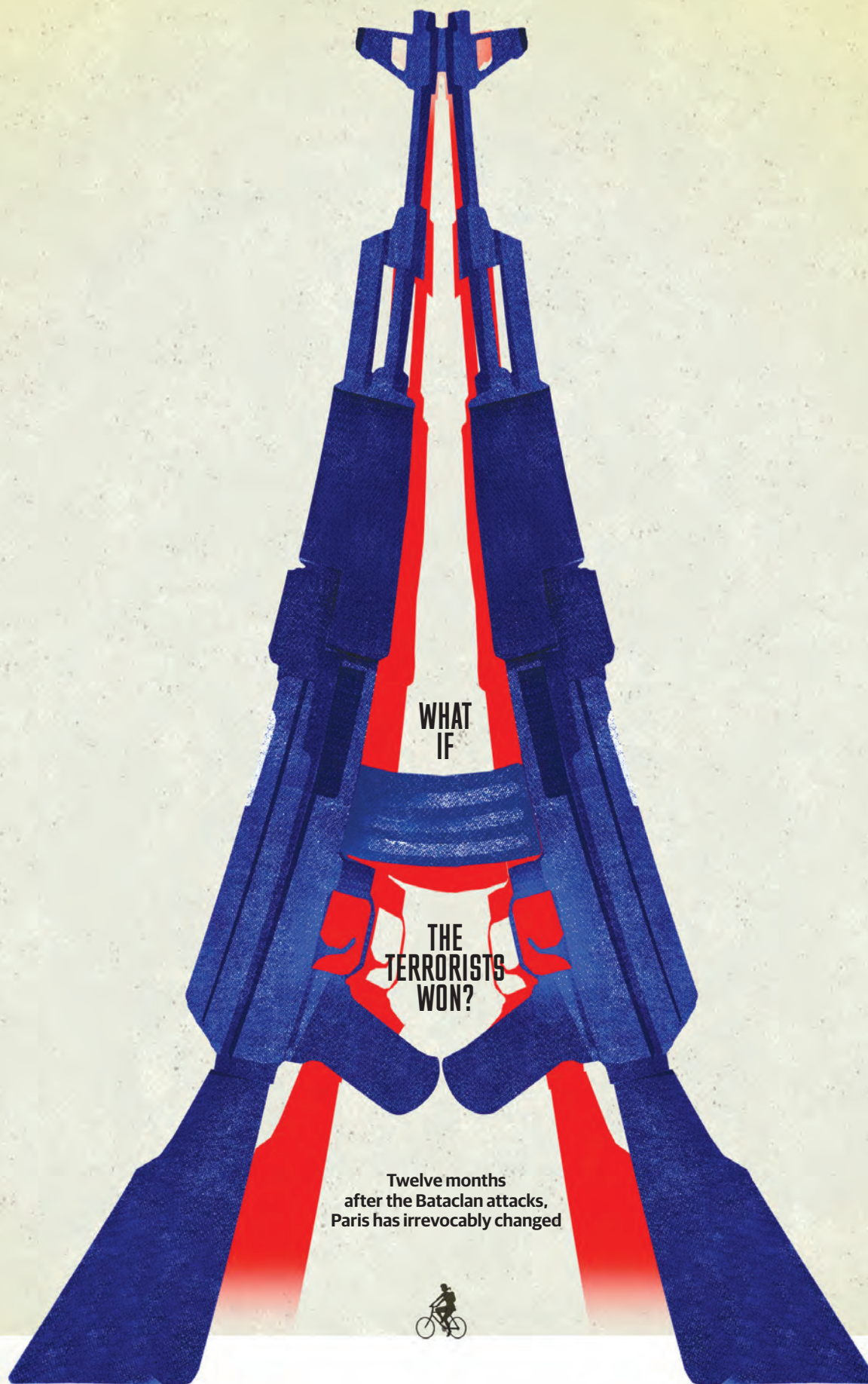
In other languages, it takes on an animalistic nature. In Polish, it is *małpa*, or "monkey."

In German, it's *klammeraffe* or "clinging monkey," while in Dutch it's far more entertaining: *apeklootje*, or "little monkey's testicle."

The Finns and Swedes see it as a cat curled up in its own tail. In Swedish, that's *kattsvans* and in Finnish, there are at least three names for this: *kissanhäntä* ("cat tail"), *miaumerkki* ("meow sign") and *miukumauku* (something like "meow meow," roughly translated).



In French, Korean, Indonesian, Hebrew and Italian, it's a snail. In Turkish and Arabic, it's an ear. In Czech, pickled herring; in Greek, a duckling and in Turkish, a rose. In Hungarian, you're typing the symbol for a worm or maggot and in Russian, a little dog.



WHAT  
IF

THE  
TERRORISTS  
WON?

Twelve months  
after the Bataclan attacks,  
Paris has irrevocably changed



**BY NICHOLAS VINOCUR**  
ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN STAUFFER

**LIKE 9/11 FOR NEW YORKERS,** the Paris attacks of November 2015 have become that rare thing for city slickers – a topic of conversation in which everyone can participate. There are two million Parisians, each of whom has a story about the night suicide bombers and gunmen killed 130 people at cafés, restaurants, the Stade de France and the Bataclan music hall.

Some offer a poignant mix of tumult and tragedy, like the one my high school friend tells of diving under a table at a café when a terrorist opened fire on drinkers with an assault rifle. (She performed CPR on a shooting victim who ended up dying from loss of blood). Others, like mine, are less riveting. After making sure my friends and family were safe, I got to work covering the story. The tales all have one thing in common: a moment in which the person recounting it is struck by the enormity of what occurred.

In my case, it came more than 24 hours after the attacks. After news of the shooting broke, my girlfriend and I hunkered in our apartment: me to write and report, her to comfort and host friends who kept dropping by. It was only the next day, when a couple of German friends called and suggested getting together, that we ventured out into post-attack Paris. Our street is usually a party strip. It was utterly silent. Bars, restaurants and hotels that do brisk business even under driving rain were closed and empty. The scene – eerily quiet, cinematically barren – yanked me out of the story I had been writing and into the reality of the tragedy that had engulfed the city.

As we turned left onto Avenue de Clichy, I tried to joke about it, noting that it looked like the perfect setting for a sequel to the zombie movie “28 Days Later.” My girlfriend didn’t laugh. An awful thought crowded my mind: The terrorists had won. With a few cell phones, Kalashnikov rifles and suicide vests, they had silenced this proud and insolent city and reduced its residents to cowering in their apartments when they should have been making noise in the streets.

Once we got to our friends’ place, just a few blocks away, the mood lightened. We drank, shared our stories of the night, and even managed a few relieved laughs. But there our conversation had a melancholy undertone: We kept coming back to whether the violence would trigger a civil war. Fortunately, it didn’t. Neither those



killings nor any of the bloodshed that followed escalated into all-out conflict between French Christians and Muslims (though the head of domestic intelligence warned in testimony to a parliamentary committee this past summer that it was a possibility). But they primed us for the possibility that tragedy could strike at any moment, and they made all Parisians inordinately vigilant.

In the metro, people stared harshly at young men wearing beards, or, more ominously, beards paired with tracksuits and backpacks (the “jihadist look,” according to surveillance footage captured of two assailants who had ridden the metro after the attacks.) All of us suddenly became security experts who knew how to identify a soft target. Some of us – or maybe it was just me – would occasionally be stricken by sudden rushes of sadness. When I first went to see a movie at a theater a few weeks after the attacks, I felt proud to be relaxed enough to be keeping up my old habits. But when a young man entered the screening room late, I was gripped by terror. I had to reason with myself that, by staying until the end of “Crazy Amy,” I was doing my part in France’s fight against terrorism.

A year later, are we still sitting on the edge of our seats, half-expecting a terrorist to enter the room? No. Take a walk on any nightlife stretch in the French capital and you will see café terraces full of young people drinking and smoking as patriotically as before. The fact that Parisians returned to their old haunts so rapidly after the attacks was widely interpreted as proof of the French Republic’s resilience in the face of terror. The Moveable Feast was still on the move. The City of Light was shining as brightly as ever. Take that, terrorists, we said, raising our glasses of wine.

But it would be wrong to say that France simply snapped back to the way it was before the attacks. The place has changed more profoundly than most of its residents are willing to admit. Repeated acts of violence have robbed the French of their presumption of safety. Despite admirable efforts to respond to the terrorist threat in a measured way, to avoid reaching Israeli levels of obsession with security, France has mutated into a different version of itself: angrier, ready for more violence and locked into increasingly hostile and polarizing debates.

The most shocking thing about terrorism in France in 2016 is that terrorism is no longer shocking. It can be terrifying, distressing and infuriating, sure. But the steady drumroll of attacks that started in early 2015 – from the Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan attacks in Paris to the massacre on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice to the murder of a Catholic priest in his church in Normandy – have burned away our capacity for shock. Instead of reacting to attacks with surprise, the

French nation now responds with ever shorter loops of grief, outrage and calls to hang the bad guys.

The *kumbaya* spirit of the post-Charlie Hebdo period, when more than a million people marched behind a procession of European leaders to proclaim their love of free speech, is gone. After a man killed 86 people by driving a cargo truck into a crowd celebrating Bastille Day in Nice, opposition politicians didn't wait 24 hours before slinging mud at the government, accusing it of "criminal negligence" for having let the attack happen. Needless to say, there was no new march – the state of emergency made sure of that.

France may feel that it looks the same in the mirror, but the rest of the world sees it differently. At recent a dinner in New York, I was asked by a worldly American whether it was dangerous where I live. My reflex was to accuse him of being naive, but I caught myself. The fact is: Yes, France is dangerous, compared to most other Western countries. I just don't live in a constant state of alert.

French police thwart terrorist plots on a regular basis. They do their best to keep track of an estimated 10,000 radicalized individuals (and sometimes fail tragically – the men who murdered the priest were registered radicals who wore ankle bracelets.) Yes, cafés are full and your waiter is still too busy to bring the check. But now there is a man with a gun over there, patrolling in full combat gear with two buddies in loose formation.

Travelers may also notice that security has been tightened at certain border crossings. Bulky luggage now has to go through an airport-style machine scan at the Gare du Nord in Paris, and on board the trains heavily armed cops traipse up and down the aisles. Other changes are designed to go unnoticed – like the plainclothes marshals, who now ride on select routes, carrying concealed weapons. The government has also hired thousands of new officers for the police, justice system and domestic and exterior intelligence agencies and extended a state of emergency, granting police vastly expanded powers. Hundreds of suspects have been placed under house arrest, at times under flimsy pretexts.

Despite such measures, leaders acknowledge there is no such thing as zero risk. To prepare the population for the possibility of another big event, the state has ordered public hospitals, institutions and schools to carry out large-scale simulations of terrorist attacks. Even primary schools are no exception. In September, children as young as six practiced how to behave in case of a terrorist attack on their school, taking cover behind solid objects in classrooms with teachers barricading the doors. That same month, Prime Minister Manuel Valls called the terrorist threat "maximal."

Such warnings make headlines around

the world – and tourists, not surprisingly, choose not to travel to France. It's become increasingly rare to hear American English or Japanese spoken at the foot of the Eiffel Tower or the Arc de Triomphe, which has had a devastating effect on the economy in one of the world's most popular tourist destinations. More painful is the psychological impact. Even during hard times, the French could console themselves with the knowledge that theirs was a country people wanted to visit, admire, emulate and envy. No more.

Over the past year, and especially after the Nice attacks, the tone of political discourse had gotten more brutal. Statements that would have raised eyebrows a few months ago are now standard fare. Conservative candidates seeking a presidential nomination have happily proclaimed that Islam is "incompatible" with the French Republic. A few months ago, saying so might have earned them a lawsuit for discriminatory speech.

Several have called for France to build its own Guantanamo-style camps, where "potential" terrorists can be locked away. And Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, a former conservative presidential candidate, suggested banning the hardline Islamic current of Salafism, winning herself an invitation to Valls' office to discuss the

idea. Marine Le Pen, head of the far-right National Front party, sounds moderate compared to some of the "mainstream" candidates, having dismissed the idea that there's an inherent conflict between Islam and the Republic.

As politics has gotten tougher, intellectual debate has turned positively apocalyptic. Declinism has long been part of French fashion. Today, literary bestsellers describe a country swept away on waves of virulent political Islam and hordes of migrants. And it's not just crusty nostalgists and Catholic fundamentalists who want France to stop worrying and start getting serious about policing the country's five-million-strong Muslim population. Hipsters are at it, too. At a bar on Rue des Dames, I recently asked a young man sporting a furry beard and skinny jeans who he might vote for in next year's presidential election.

I expected him to tell me that he was fed up with politics and didn't find anyone particularly inspiring.

Without missing a beat, he said: "Le Pen."

"Really?" I asked.

"Well, I don't see who else is going to deal with terrorism," he said. **28**

Nicholas Vinocur is a POLITICO reporter in Paris.



# Iberdrola, a catalyst for change

in the way we produce  
and consume energy

As a power  
generator and a  
network company,  
Iberdrola  
combines clean  
energy production,  
smart storage  
solutions and  
technology to give  
consumers control  
over the energy  
they use.

[www.iberdrola.com/sustainability](http://www.iberdrola.com/sustainability)



**IBERDROLA**

THE NETHERLANDS

## Marietje Schaake

THE LIBERAL STALWART

Many politicians use Twitter to reach out to their supporters. Dutch MEP Marietje Schaake has turned the microblogging site into an agenda-setting tool, with rapid-fire tweets on the issues closest to her heart: the Middle East, the migration crisis, Turkey and trade, transatlantic relations, “dual-use” digital technology that can be used by repressive governments against their citizens. It is a rare example of a politician willing to engage with the issues in real time, in full public view.

Since her election in 2009 on a 10-tweet manifesto, Schaake has not shied from confrontation. She has criticized, for example, former foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton for not taking a strong enough stance on human rights. During a visit to Iran, Schaake met with a human rights advocate to the displeasure of the ruling mullahs.

At a time when the tide of liberalism is receding – in the Netherlands and in Europe, generally – Schaake remains a vocal, if increasingly lonely, champion of free markets and a borderless world. Her biggest worry at the moment: that rising acrimony among EU countries will undermine the European project. “When is the silent minority going to speak up?” she asks.



**Marietje Schaake**  
@MarietjeSchaake

Goodmorning, next 6 hours 11 meetings  
#neveradullmoment #coffee



**Marietje Schaake**  
@MarietjeSchaake

.@FedericaMog and Foreign Ministers of EU Member States must condemn the mass executions in #saudi and rethink the wisdom of 'partnership'



**Marietje Schaake**  
@MarietjeSchaake

Good question, where is @MartinSchulz ??  
Missing while consequence of his decision to postpone #TTIP vote were hotly discussed this morning

With parliamentary elections in the Netherlands next year, Schaake's name has been floated as a potential candidate for the foreign ministry. For now, her attention remains focused on Brussels. 28



**Marietje Schaake**  
@MarietjeSchaake

(Did Juncker just compare himself to a turtle?)  
#SOTEU



**Marietje Schaake**  
@MarietjeSchaake

Wow, who would have imagined the US would have #NetNeutrality rules in place before Europe... Now let's make sure we have strong EU laws!



**Marietje Schaake**  
@MarietjeSchaake

Commissioner Jourova says Italian government 'assured' European Commission that Hacking Team acted within the law. Scouts Honor not enough



**Marietje Schaake**  
@MarietjeSchaake

'Lead with a resignation letter in your hand' is a wise advice I once got. Many politicians lead with next job or election in mind #epc20

CZECH REPUBLIC

## Andrej Babiš

THE BOHEMIAN TRUMP

When Andrej Babiš launched his political party in 2012, he insisted that the last thing he wanted to be was a politician. To hear the plainspoken billionaire tell it, he was forced into the fray in order to clean up the Czech Republic's corrupt, inefficient politics. Like former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in Italy or Donald Trump in the United States, Babiš successfully cast himself as an alternative to the usual suspects, leading his party, "Action of Dissatisfied Citizens," into second place in the 2013 Czech elections.

Now finance minister, the 62-year-old Slovak-born head of the country's largest food, agricultural and media conglomerate has benefited from a growing economy. The Czech Republic has Europe's lowest unemployment rate, 3.9 percent. Its GDP rose by 4.5 percent in 2015, and Babiš is on track to deliver a budget surplus this year. In October's regional elections, his party made a strong showing, definitively breaking up a political landscape that had been long dominated by the duopoly of the right-leaning Civic Democrats, the center-left Social Democrats, and their overlapping clientelist networks.

Babiš' success has rattled the country's



traditional political elite, who – with some cause – argue that his sprawling business interests, media investments and allegedly unsavory past should disqualify him from prominent government roles. In 2014, he successfully sued to have his name removed from a list of known collaborators with the communist-era security services.

Polls show voters are not impressed with the accusations. With tensions rising between Babiš and Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka, there can be little doubting the Czech Republic's anti-politician would love to become the top office holder when the country next holds elections in the fall of 2017. **28**

**A drop in the bucket:** Babiš casts his ballot in Prague during the first day of the Czech regional elections in October, where his ANO 2011 party made a particularly strong showing.

LATVIA

## Dana Reizniece-Ozola

THE GRANDMASTER

The stone corridors of Latvia's finance ministry echo with the sound of high heels: Minister Dana Reizniece-Ozola is arriving six minutes early.

Not one to keep journalists stewing in the waiting room, she breezes in, keeping her handshake firm and her greeting casual. "Hello, I'm Dana," she says, smiling as if she's already won the chess match we are about to play.

Granted, the minister has faced sterner tests. Much of her vacation time is spent globe-trotting to World Chess Championships, often leaving her four children behind, in pursuit of chessboard glory. She's been a woman grandmaster since 21, and on a recent vacation to Azerbaijan, she took on world champion Hou Yifan – and won.

For our match, her drink of choice is a green tea laced with honey. "This is a historic moment," she declares. At 35, she's only held her portfolio since the start of the year, and this is the first real chess game she's played in her office. Her staff have yet to challenge her, and if she ever plays between meetings, she says, it's against a computer.

But before history gets underway, we

**If chess-playing skills are transferable to Latvian politics, where the rules are continuously changing, then Reizniece-Ozola's style is well suited to the situation.**

turn to a less comfortable topic: Latvia's finances. The small Baltic nation of less than two million is rummaging through its pockets in an anxious search for revenue. With Russia flexing its military muscles in the region, the country has been jolted into large-scale defense spending at a time when its GDP is struggling to reach pre-financial crisis levels, its slim-line welfare system is gasping for capital, and the country's taxpayer base – aging and shrinking from emigration to Western Europe – is reluctant to pay up.

If chess-playing skills truly are transferable to Latvian politics, where the rules are continuously changing, then Reizniece-Ozola's style is well suited to the situation. She sees herself as a representative of the Romantic school

**On her way to history:** Reizniece-Ozola in deep concentration on her way to beating Hou Yifan, the world champion, in Azerbaijan.





of chess, a style pioneered by her hero, Mikhail Tal, a legendary grandmaster from Riga known for his emotional, imaginative play – and the occasional bold sacrifice.

“I’m a person who likes to take on the difficult tasks that no one else would dare to start,” she says, inexplicably bursting into laughter. As economy minister in the previous government, she pushed through the challenging liberalization of Latvia’s gas sector. In 2017, she plans to devote herself to reining in the informal economy and regulating the country’s rogue banks. On the EU level, she’ll be pressing for greater fiscal unity to help stabilize the euro, which Latvia joined in 2014. She’s also planning to be a flag-bearer against EU-wide tax evasion.

---

**“I’m a person who likes to take on the difficult tasks that no one else would dare to start.”**

Our game begins. She holds out two clenched fists, a pawn in each hand – black or white?

She opens her palm: She’ll be playing with white. Her move: pawn to C4 – the English Opening. The same one she used to take down the world champion.

When it comes to her political gambits, though, some have intimated she owes her swift rise to Latvia’s version of Donald Trump: Aivars Lembergs, an outspoken, flamboyant politician and businessman who made his money in the country’s smash ‘n’ grab transition to capitalism and has spent the last decade fighting off charges of money laundering and abuse of office. When asked about him, Reizniece-Ozola says he remains influential, especially in her party, and that is a “good thing” due to his valuable ideas and experience. However, she stresses she’s nobody’s pawn. Her personal freedom, she says, “is of vital importance.”

At the moment, the country’s two-year-old ruling coalition is looking stable, but given that Latvia’s governments since independence have a life expectancy of less than two years, that could change quickly. Turmoil at the top could see Reizniece-Ozola emerge as a strong candidate for prime minister.

For the moment, however, she’s thinking about the country’s finances – and about chess. I’ve responded to her opening with a charge of the light brigade. It all ends too abruptly – outmaneuvered, cut down, checkmate. A rematch is requested. Her spokesman, Arno Pjatkins, the sole witness to this historic moment, suddenly interjects that the minister has only six free minutes. “You have another meeting,” he says. Reizniece-Ozola, unfazed, agrees to the rematch. And she easily makes her next meeting. 23

– RICHARD MARTYN-HEMPHILL

FINLAND

## Pekka Rantala

THE RELAUNCH ARTIST

Finns are not known for excessive optimism. So it wouldn't be quite right to say the hopes of an entire nation are pinned on Pekka Rantala, the man in charge of reviving the Nokia phone – a brand whose rise to global dominance in the 1990s was as spectacular as its subsequent crash.

But Rantala cannot avoid the eyes of his countrymen as head of marketing at HMD global, the Helsinki-based startup that bought the rights to the Nokia brand for mobile phones and tablets until 2024. The world may have forgotten that as recently as in 2007, Nokia still held 60 percent of the global smartphone market, but Finland – where the company's decline piled weight on an economy still struggling to recover from the Great Recession – has not. Between 1997 and 2007, when the company provided a quarter of the country's GDP growth.

An affable, smooth operator, Rantala's strengths are in forging partnerships and cross-industry collaborations. These abilities will be key as he navigates the relaunch of a new Nokia phone – possibly by the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona at the end of February – and seeks to prove that Europe cannot yet be counted out as a high-tech powerhouse.

He comes to the task with a 17-year

### ON THE RECORD

On past pursuits: "If you've got kids, you'll undoubtedly know what I'm talking about: They or their friends have Angry Birds T-shirts, backpacks, and plush toys" — *Fast Company*

"They watch Angry Birds TV shows and animated films on DVD. And if they're in the right part of the world they may even go to Angry Birds theme parks" — *Fast Company*

(Angry Birds Land does indeed exist in Finland, as do similarly themed attractions in Asia.)

history as a Nokia marketing executive and a 19-month stint as a job-slashing CEO of Rovio, the Finnish firm that created the popular Angry Birds video game.

"Pekka is the closest thing Finland has to what a California executive would be," says Tero Kuittinen, a former Nokia analyst, now co-founder of Kuuhubb, an investment firm. "He is a far smoother and polished executive than most Nokia leaders who typically have been socially awkward engineers."

HMD says it aims to invest more than \$500 million over three years to market Nokia-branded mobile phones and tablets. Industry observers expect the new phones to be aimed at emerging markets, where the brand still resonates. Kuittinen says the name could spring up on a variety of consumer products, from virtual reality and augmented reality devices to wearable intelligent gear and other smart household items. "Moving beyond the phones – that is going to be the theme," he says. **28**



BULGARIA

## Irina Bokova

THE CRUSADING PRESERVATIONIST

Defenders of the world's most significant cultural landmarks breathed a sigh of relief when the United Nations declined to appoint her its first female secretary-general. That meant Irina Bokova, the Bulgarian head of the U.N.'s cultural and educational body, UNESCO, would remain in her job – and keep fighting to bring to justice the perpetrators of looting, desecration and destruction of cultural landmarks.

When Bokova, 62, became the organization's first female director general in 2009, nothing in her history seemed to have prepared her for her new role. Born into her country's communist *nomenklatura* – her father was the editor of the official party newspaper, and the regime's chief propagandist until his fall from grace in 1976 – she spent her youth as a privileged apparatchik's daughter, studying at Moscow's State Institute for International Relations. After the fall of the Soviet Union, she pursued a career in politics as a socialist, serving without distinction as an MP, ambassador to France and Monaco and interim foreign minister.

At UNESCO, Bokova has spearheaded the effort to bring to justice those who destroy cultural heritage. In 2015, she used the term "cultural cleansing" to describe

**"The war against extremism must be fought also on the battlefield of culture, education and the media."**

the systematic looting and destruction carried out by the Islamic State in Palmyra and elsewhere in Iraq and Syria. The destruction of cultural heritage has been technically defined as a "war crime" ever since the so-called Rome Statute created the International Criminal Court in 1998. But it was Bokova who made it a reality.

In September, the ICC at The Hague handed down a nine-year prison sentence to Ahmad al-Faqi al-Mahdi, the leader of an Islamic extremist militia brigade that destroyed mausoleums and the Sidi Yahya mosque in Timbuktu, Mali, in 2012. It was the first time an individual was convicted of a war crime for attacking religious or historical buildings. "The war against extremism must be fought also on the battlefield of culture, education and the media," Bokova wrote after the verdict's announcement. As destruction continues in Yemen, Libya and Syria, the conviction sets a precedent for similar prosecutions in the future. **28**





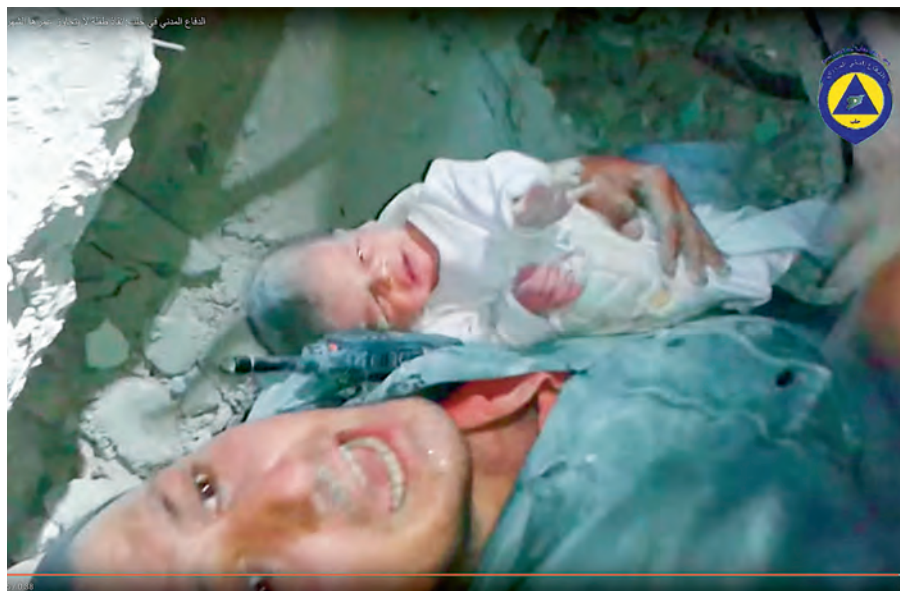
SYRIA

## Khaled Omar Harrah

THE FIRST RESPONDER

His colleagues called him the “child rescuer” for all the kids he pulled out of the rubble. Khaled Omar Harrah, a member of the Syrian Civil Defense Force, a group of volunteers better known as the White Helmets, would often be among the first rescue workers at the scene after an airstrike, a bombing or a chemical attack in his native Aleppo, Syria. If Vietnam was the television war, Syria is the YouTube war, and nobody has done more than the White Helmets to push it into the public discourse and onto the agenda of European politicians who would prefer to wish it away. Using handheld recorders and helmet-mounted cameras, the rescue workers have captured some of the civil war’s most memorable videos and images, highlighting the conflict’s civilian cost. A clip of Harrah, a former painter and decorator, using his hands to dig out a 10-day old baby from the rubble of a collapsed building in 2014 (at right) went viral around the world. That child was just one of the many he rescued. In August, Harrah was killed in an airstrike in Aleppo as he tried to save others. 28





SERBIA

## Jelena Milić

THE AUDACIOUS ATLANTICIST

In a country always looking over its shoulder, Serbian activist Jelena Milić embodies the aphorism, “Just because you’re paranoid doesn’t mean they’re not out to get you.” Milić, who runs the Belgrade-based think tank Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies, is one of the staunchest advocates for Serbian membership of both the EU and NATO – and perhaps the most outspoken critic of Russian influence in the country.

Those positions would be unremarkable in most of Eastern Europe, but in Serbia, a country still trying to shake the ghosts of Yugoslavia’s disintegration, they’re polarizing. Milić’s pro-West attitude and willingness to confront Serbia’s nationalists have made her a target. She has received so many death threats that she has spent time under police protection.

By most accounts, Serbia has come a long way since the days of former President Slobodan Milošević. The country has taken steps toward shedding its pariah image by recognizing borders and cooperating with The Hague war crimes tribunal. And yet tensions remain between the minority of Serbs who want their country to embrace the West and those who see its future at Russia’s side.



**Her positions would be unremarkable in most of Eastern Europe, but in Serbia, a country still trying to shake the ghosts of Yugoslavia’s disintegration, they’re polarizing.**

**Painting history:** A mural depicting Serbs and their flag in Belgrade.

Even as Serbian forces participate in NATO maneuvers, for example, they also hold joint exercises with Moscow under the banner, “The Slavic Brotherhood.” Serbian leaders argue the country should be “a house with two doors,” one facing Russia and the other the West. Milić calls the approach “schizophrenic,” adding: “Of course it’s not sustainable.”

Milić acknowledges the vast majority of Serbs oppose NATO membership. Walk through central Belgrade and it’s easy to see why. Just steps from the Serbian parliament, the bombed-out shell of the old defense ministry has been left untouched on purpose as a daily reminder of what many Serbs consider NATO’s unwarranted bombing of the city in 1999.

Where she has a chance to make a difference, she argues, is in preserving the gains her country has made. “What we are fighting to protect are the very weak seeds of democracy here,” she says. “That’s where the battle should be, and we are losing it.” 28



MALTA

## Daphne Caruana Galizia

THE BLOGGING FURY

The best way to think of Daphne Caruana Galizia is as a one-woman WikiLeaks, crusading against untransparency and corruption in Malta, an island nation famous for both. To John Dalli, a former European commissioner whom she helped bring down in a tobacco lobbying scandal, Galizia is “a terrorist.” To opposition MPs, she’s a political force of nature, one who fortunately has her guns aimed at the other side of the aisle. “She single-handedly brought the government to the verge of collapse,” says one MP. “The lady has balls,” says another.

Galizia’s mantra is simple: blog relentlessly about the “cronyism that is accepted as something normal here. I can’t bear to see people like that rewarded.” Nothing scandalous is too big or too small, be it false declarations of residency by the beneficiaries of Malta’s cash-for-passports scheme or the evening-wear decisions of the prime minister’s wife.

No one is exempt from Galizia’s digital cross-examination, and her language is invariably scalding. “Education minister blows own trumpet about ethics classes,” is a typical headline. “How much is she paid again?” she wrote in October of a government communications officer.



“Enough to cover the cancer treatment of several patients, no doubt. But they’ve got to go begging off charity to get their medication paid for.”

Whatever one thinks of her style, it’s working. On a good day, Galizia gets 400,000 readers, more than the combined circulation of the country’s newspapers (Malta’s population is 420,000).

When she dines out, guests from other tables come over to wish her well. But her unease with what she sees as the island’s twin scourges – big money and shadowy politics – leaves her bitter. Fear of where her country has headed has made her unapologetically pro-EU: “Over my dead body will my children be stuck on these rocks,” she says. <sup>28</sup>

**Steps to power:** A member of parliament walks down a staircase with Parliament House in Valletta, Malta, as a backdrop.

ROMANIA

## Marian Godina

THE HONEST COP

Earlier this year, Marian Godina's boss called him to his office. The 30-year-old traffic cop in the Transylvanian city of Braşov had confiscated the license of a driver who had nearly hit a pedestrian. His boss' objection: The woman in the passenger seat was the local director of the Red Cross, and when she had informed him that she knew his superiors, he had told her to stay in the car while he finished writing his report.

Not a problem. Godina posted about the incident on his Facebook page. Within two days, the local prosecutors had placed his superiors under investigation for abuse of office. By the end of the week, the national police union had called for the resignation of the head of the police department.

Today Godina, who has some 360,000 Facebook followers, is a social-media sensation in Romania, regaling readers with his day-to-day observations about life on the beat. Some of his posts are funny, some are whimsical, like the one about the time he helped a farmer pick up dozens of watermelons after the farmer's truck had gone into a ditch.

Others are more serious. In addition to holding his bosses accountable and enforcing the rule of law on the streets,

**"I still see myself as a police officer in the future and still writing, but you never know. Look how much changed in a year."**

he once mobilized the city to help catch a hit-and-run suspect. A collection of his posts, published in February, became a national bestseller. He has also written a children's book explaining traffic rules.

Godina is widely seen as a bright spot in an otherwise bleak landscape and his dispatches resonate in a country fed up with corruption. Meanwhile, his exploits, he says, have encouraged other officers around the country to challenge official luminaries when they step over the line. "I received messages from colleagues across the country, saying they opened a criminal file against a mayor and were thinking of me," he says.

Asked where he sees himself ten years from now, he demurs. "I still see myself as a police officer in the future and still writing, but you never know," he says. "Look how much changed in a year. I learned not to plan for the long-term future." 28



KOSOVO

## Shpend Ahmeti

THE NATION BUILDER

Kosovo may have taken an important step toward international recognition this year, when it joined FIFA and won Olympic gold in Rio. But for Shpend Ahmeti, the mayor of Pristina, building a nation begins on the ground.

Since his election in 2013, the 38-year-old Harvard graduate, former World Bank economist and university professor has been waging a battle to bring basic public services – public transportation, running water, garbage collection, and clean and affordable heating oil for schools, hospitals and homes – to the capital's 350,000 residents.

Ahmeti, one of the highest profile members of the country's largest opposition party, has governed by example. His first guests in the mayor's office were independent auditors.

His first decision was to auction off his predecessor's Audi Q7. Then he had all of the municipality's cars listed and serviced, fitting them, as well as his own car, with tracking devices so civil servants could not venture far from their area of operation without being noticed.

The job is a dangerous one, pitting him against a political power structure forged

### ON THE RECORD

On life in the city: "Pristina is a little bit chaotic, we have a lot of illegal construction. But it also has a wonderful cultural life, night life. We sell the biggest amount of *macchiatos* – coffees – per day. About one million coffees per day" — *Citiscopes*

On entering politics: "The movement that I belong to, they convinced me to run for mayor. It was a surprise victory. Because I ran against an incumbent who was mayor two times, for six years. We ran against [an established] party and we just created a movement of young people ... It's their victory, it's not mine. Now I have a bigger responsibility toward them, basically, to make change" — *Citiscopes*

in the post-independence chaos in which former freedom fighters, led by current President Hashim Thaçi, consolidated power in nearly every aspect of Kosovo's society, including politics, business, security and the courts. It would be an understatement to call it an uphill battle. For example, he has sent a dozen former municipal officials to court on suspicion of corruption. Not a single one has been prosecuted.

Ahmeti estimates that Pristina would need 250 buses to provide its inhabitants with dependable public transport. It has just seven. But when he tried to order more buses in 2015, the government refused to sign the importation documents.

"They want to do everything they can to make us fail ... in order to show that this type of government is not possible," Ahmeti says. "And we want to do everything we can to show that there is a way." 23





# POLITICO PRO

►► THE REAL-TIME POLICY NEWS SERVICE FOR PROFESSIONALS

POLITICO Pro provides the most distinct and authoritative policy news coverage of Europe and beyond and because of that, Pros depend on us to do their jobs.

LEARN MORE AT [POLITICO.EU/PRO](https://politico.eu/pro)

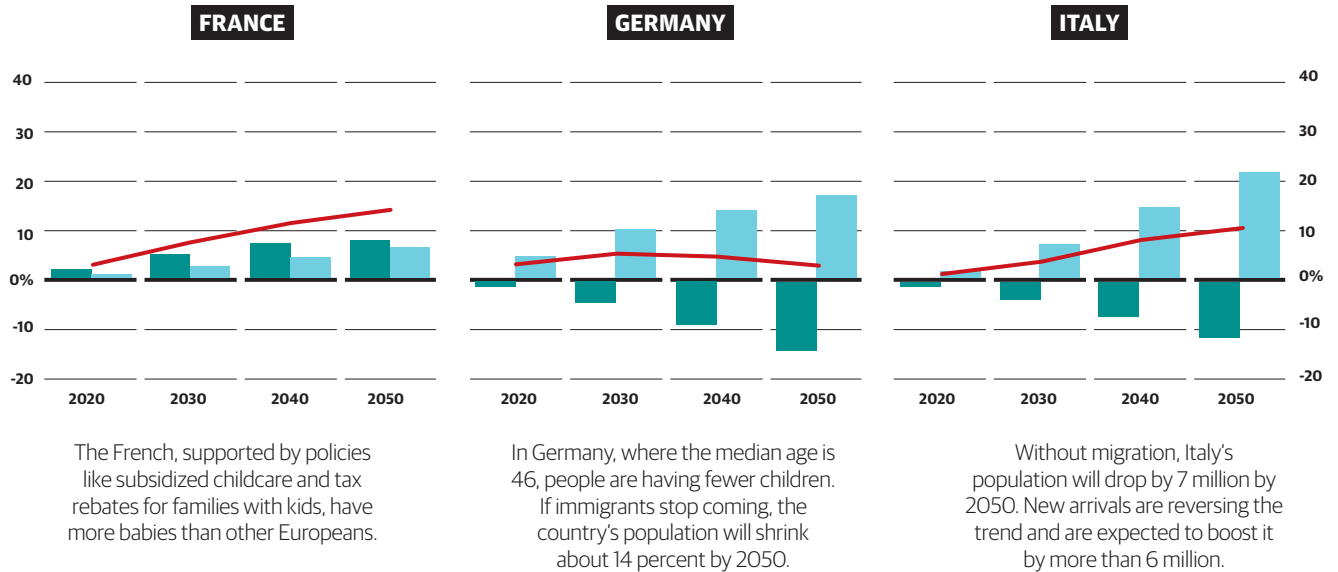
# On the Move

## There is no European immigration problem

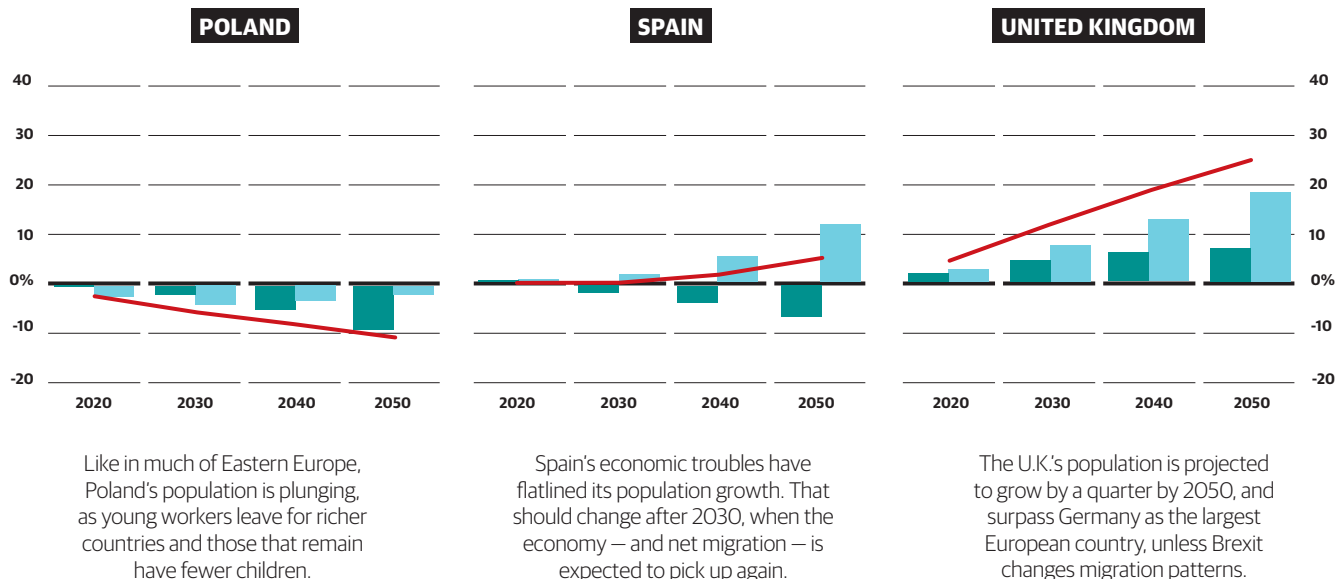
For Europe as a whole, immigration can present an opportunity as much as a challenge. Aging, shrinking populations need young workers to prop up social security systems and keep the economy moving.

But as these projections show, for individual countries, the picture can be very different. For some, low birthrates make mass immigration a must. For others, outward migration is accelerating depopulation. Still others have put in place family friendly policies that favor childrearing, reducing dependency on new arrivals. Perhaps it's not surprising that the European Union has struggled to come up with a common response to immigration.

"Europe is so diverse," says Tomas Sobotka of the Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital in Vienna, Austria. "Most of the solutions should be local." — *Laurens Cerulus*



■ NATURAL POPULATION CHANGE ■ NET MIGRATION — TOTAL POPULATION CHANGE



# NEW BRUSSELS BUBBLES



At AB InBev, and as the leading global brewer, we believe that offering our consumers a wider choice of products with different alcohol strengths is key to helping them make smart drinking decisions.

That's why **we work hard to extend the availability of no- and lower alcohol beer.** With more and better options, enjoyment and moderation can always go hand in hand. Even when not drinking alcohol at all, whether by choice or by necessity, we want a beer to be available that is right for the occasion.

To achieve this objective we have committed, as part of our Global Smart Drinking Goals, that by the end of 2025 **at least one in five beers that we brew will contain either little alcohol\* or no alcohol at all.**

We're keen to share more about our progress and hear your views: join the conversation on [www.ab-inbev.eu](http://www.ab-inbev.eu)

Cheers!

**AB InBev**

\* Below 3.5% ABV

# Sky in Europe

Sky is Europe's leading entertainment company, making a vital and growing contribution to the European economy.

