

AFRICA

## Turning the continent on its head

**Africa's youth holds the key to sustainable development**

Africa's youth constitute a key force for sustainable development across the continent. Global players such as the African Union and the United Nations are placing hopes of solving the continent's problems on the younger generations. This is a considerable task that has been written into the African Union's Agenda 2063 and United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The concern is always to keep social peace and detect potential protests as early as possible, all while initiating paradigm shift. But will it be that simple? And is it fair to just delegate the solution of all the problems to the next generation? They are certainly not waiting for top-down ideas and have long been taking things into their own hands: The focus is on urbanisation, demography, and ecological shifts, but established institutions are often simply too slow for youth. What is happening at the moment and who will ultimately be dependent on whom explains a new study by *Brookings* from Washington, D.C., USA.



## ENERGY

# How to green your money

**Investments in sustainable energy industries are important – but rarely used**



A great deal of money is still being invested in fossil fuels. This impairs the proliferation of the green energy sources that the world needs to achieve climate and air purification targets. These investments come from both governments and private investment funds and serve as a motor for the development of large infrastructure and energy projects. This situation can be changed only with government incentive systems for more investment in renewable energies. Countries should also promote fossil de-investment

campaigns so as to increase prospective returns on green investment. Until that happens, more government support is necessary, the *Asian Development Bank Institute* from Tokyo, Japan sums up.



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## ECONOMIC POLICY

# Too mid-sized to survive long

**How Europe's companies can be saved from international irrelevance**

Small and mid-sized enterprises, so-called SMEs, are the backbone of the German economy and an important guarantor of prosperity and stability for many European countries. But there is a fear that SMEs located in the EU are finding it increasingly difficult to benefit from global value-added chains. To remain competitive in the long term, many more SMEs would have to merge to reach a critical mass. Of the 50 largest global companies, only ten are from the EU, while 21 are from the US and eleven from China. Moreover, 70 percent of the key future competence, familiarity with machine learning, is located in the United States and China. Because growth cannot be forced, significantly more mergers are necessary, Bruegel in Belgium believes. But they are

**The top ten of the largest corporations by total revenue 2018 (in USD millions)**

	Origin	Corporation	Sector	Revenue
1		Walmart	Retail	514,430
2		State Grid	Energy	363,125
3		Sinopec	Oil/Gas	326,953
4		China National Petroleum	Oil/Gas	326,008
5		Royal Dutch Shell	Oil/Gas	311,870
6		Toyota	Automotive	265,172
7		Volkswagen	Automotive	260,028
8		BP	Oil/Gas	244,582
9		Exxon Mobil	Oil/Gas	244,363
10		Berkshire Hathaway	Financials	242,137

Source: Fortune (2018)

often prevented by European merger control. A new study released by *Bruegel* from Brussels, Belgium examines what can be done about this problem.



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## CITIZENS AND THE STATE

# The uncivilised civil society

**How social media can redefine civic activism**

Driven by social media, new civil activism movements all over the world are attempting to change societies. But how do their organisational forms differ from those of their predecessors? The *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* focuses on many of the differences in a new study. New movements not only have a much greater potential to organise and mobilise, but also confront

governments much more directly than traditional NGOs. For instance, they use social media much more selectively than conventional NGOs, which tend to use all channels at once, dissipating whatever influence they have. The new civic movements also pull off the balancing act between online and offline activism much better because they link the two instead of seeing one as an add-on, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* from Washington, D.C., USA summarised.



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## INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

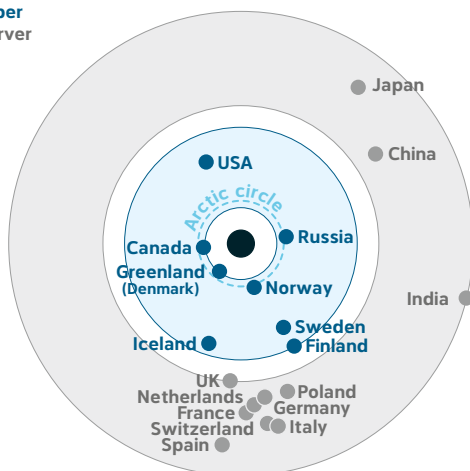
# When the ice is gone, the prospectors will come

## India wants influence and power in the Arctic

Many countries still think of the Arctic as nothing but a white spot on the globe – a part of our planet to be explored and exploited. But as long as the polar cap is covered with a thick layer of ice, most countries' interest will remain dormant. Now, as the protective layer is melting away, interest in the inestimable mineral resources in the far north is rising. India wants a bigger piece of this pie, too. It has been active in the Arctic Council for almost ten years. Its interests include ecological issues and the question of how melting ice relates to the Indian monsoon. But India also has economic interests. Unlike the Antarctic, the Arctic is not considered a global resource. A debate has now been sparked in India concerning the direction of the country's efforts in the Arctic and whether mere environmental protection is a good idea. An overview is provided by the *Observer Research Foundation* from New Delhi, India.

### Members and observers of the Arctic Council

● Member  
● Observer



Source: Arctic Council (2016)

Not included here are the six Arctic indigenous communities which have a Permanent Participant status.

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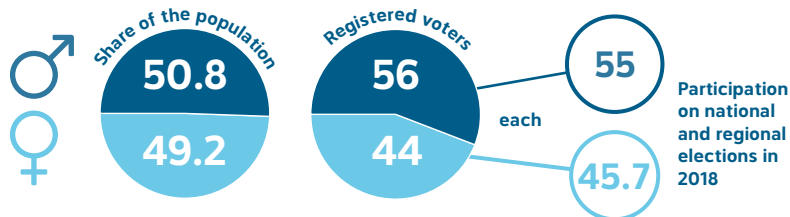
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## ELECTION RESEARCH

# Making their mark

## Why women in Pakistan are on the right path politically

Population, voting rights and participation in Pakistan in percent



Source: IDS (2019)

The road to gender equality in Pakistan will be long. This is evident in many areas, including voter turnout. Significantly fewer Pakistani women vote or run for office than men. But this imbalance may wane in future. The *Institute of Development Studies* has conducted a study on women's voting patterns in Pakistan over the past two years. The results show that male family members continue to pressure women to refrain from voting. Nevertheless, women have become much more confident and aspire to political office much more frequently. More (and, even more importantly, more targeted) political education is needed to convert this self-confidence into action, encourages the *Institute of Development Studies* from Brighton, UK.

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## EUROPE

# Look to Minsk!

## Belarus requires more attention

Belarus borders on the European Union – and on Russia. Nevertheless, the country receives little attention from Europe. The *European Council on Foreign Relations* (ECFR) from Paris even thinks that Western observers continue to misunderstand Belarus and are overlooking the pivotal role it could play in diplomacy and security architecture. At the same time, experts warn that the country could increasingly become a focus of Russian interests, like Ukraine before it. The recent disputes between the two countries are indeed more serious than previous conflicts. That is why the ECFR in Paris believes that we need to keep tabs on what is going on there – and not wait until something happens, reminds the *European Council on Foreign Relations* from Paris, France.

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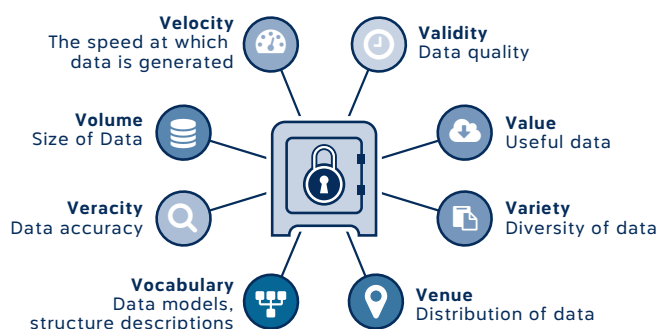
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## DIGITALISATION

# The new gold requires a new safe

**International data security standards for industry and civil society are needed**

## Dimensions of big data



Source: xenonstack (2017)

Data are the gold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But there are still no international standards for handling them. Settling semantics and definitions at an international level and forming a consensus on prescriptions and proscriptions represent urgent necessities. Disruptive technologies will change our economies and our social and political framework. A merely passive approach will therefore result in a patchwork of regulations and approvals. And at this rate, laws will arrive too late to establish truly protective standards. It is now time to initiate a broad discussion of new standards for big data and not wait until there is an international crisis, urges the [Centre for International Governance Innovation](#) from Waterloo, Canada.

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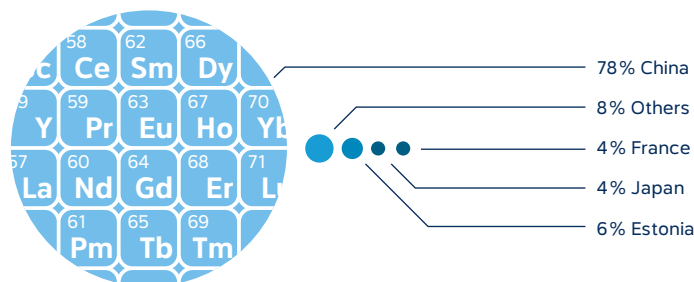
## ECONOMIC POLICY

# Rare on earth

## How China is controlling the digital industry's struggle for raw materials

In the past 20 years, China has produced between 80 and 95 percent of all rare earth metals. Among them are 17 chemical elements that have become key components of technological progress in the areas of energy, IT, medical products, and defence. Despite their name, rare earth metals can be extracted from a number of locations. Environmental concerns, liberalisation of global trade, and the Chinese policy of consciously using its vast resources have led to rare earth metal production being concentrated in China, which is now implementing conscious export control measures to greatly restrict the supply of rare earths to foreign industrial consumers. The price of some metals has therefore jumped by 500 percent or more in a very short time. The search for extraction points in Brazilian jungles and the depths of the Pacific and even on the surface of the moon have been going on for a long time. How China is coordinating this development describes a new study from the [French Institute of International Relations](#) (IFRI) from Paris, France.

## Origins of rare earth metals in US imports 2018



Source: Bloomberg based on USGS (2018)

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## EU-RUSSIA

# Under the radar

## How Russia is making the EU and its citizens the focus of hostile measures

Europe is in the crosshairs of Russian interests. But Russia does not have the same level of interest in every country, nor is Russian influence equally great everywhere. A new *Rand Corporation* report attempts to shed light on the situation. The heart of the issue is forecasting how the range and focus of Russian influence will shift in Europe over the next few years. The researchers compare their forecast with the resilience and susceptibility to hostile measures of various European countries. The conclusion is that Russia has a great strategic interest in influencing the more prosperous countries of Western Europe. But its greatest actual influence is in the smaller countries of Eastern Europe, analysed the *Rand Corporation* from Washington, D.C., USA.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

# Stinking to high heaven

## Thailand should take a leading role in air purity in Southeast Asia

People in northern Thailand are suffering from severe air pollution. In March 2019, the city of Chiang Mai had higher pollution values than any other location on earth. It was worse even than Delhi and Lahore. The reason for this suffocating smog is caused by forest-clearing fires during the annual dry period. The fires are set intentionally by farmers in Thailand and neighbouring Cambodia. Thailand has actually set itself the goal of being a good example and leading the way in Southeast Asia by incrementally improving air quality. A new study by the *Singapore Institute of International Affairs* shows how devastating air pollution is not only for large cities, but also for entire regions in Southeast Asia. It also proposes approaches for establishing an international regime that

### Fatalities of air pollution worldwide (estimated values)



Source: WHO (2018)

could allow the problem to be rethought. More of the same is something the Southeast Asian countries simply cannot afford – financially, ecologically, or economically –, the *Singapore Institute of International Affairs* (SIIA) from Singapore concluded.


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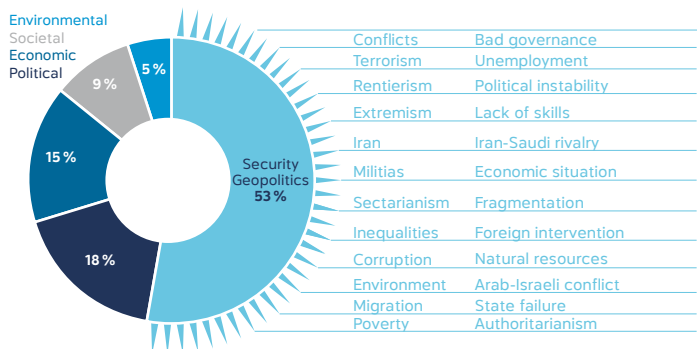
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## INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

# The art of negotiation

## How the new chapter in EU foreign policy in the Middle East might unfold

### Escalation risks in the MENA region



Source: MENARA based on CIDOB (2019)

The relationship between the EU and the Middle East is not an easy one. Although the countries on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea are in the EU's immediate vicinity, the two sides' points of view are not converging much. A new study concludes that Middle Eastern countries as a whole expect more quality and quantity of EU involvement. The EU, unlike other global players (the United States, Russia, and China), is viewed in a very positive light with respect to civil engagement and support for multilateralism and regionalism. The exceptionally good standing and immediate geographical proximity should lead to much better relationship. The new study issued by the *Barcelona Center for International Affairs* (CIDOB) from Barcelona, Spain shows why that is not the case and what can be done about it.


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## BUSINESS

# More than design

## How a good design can affect business value

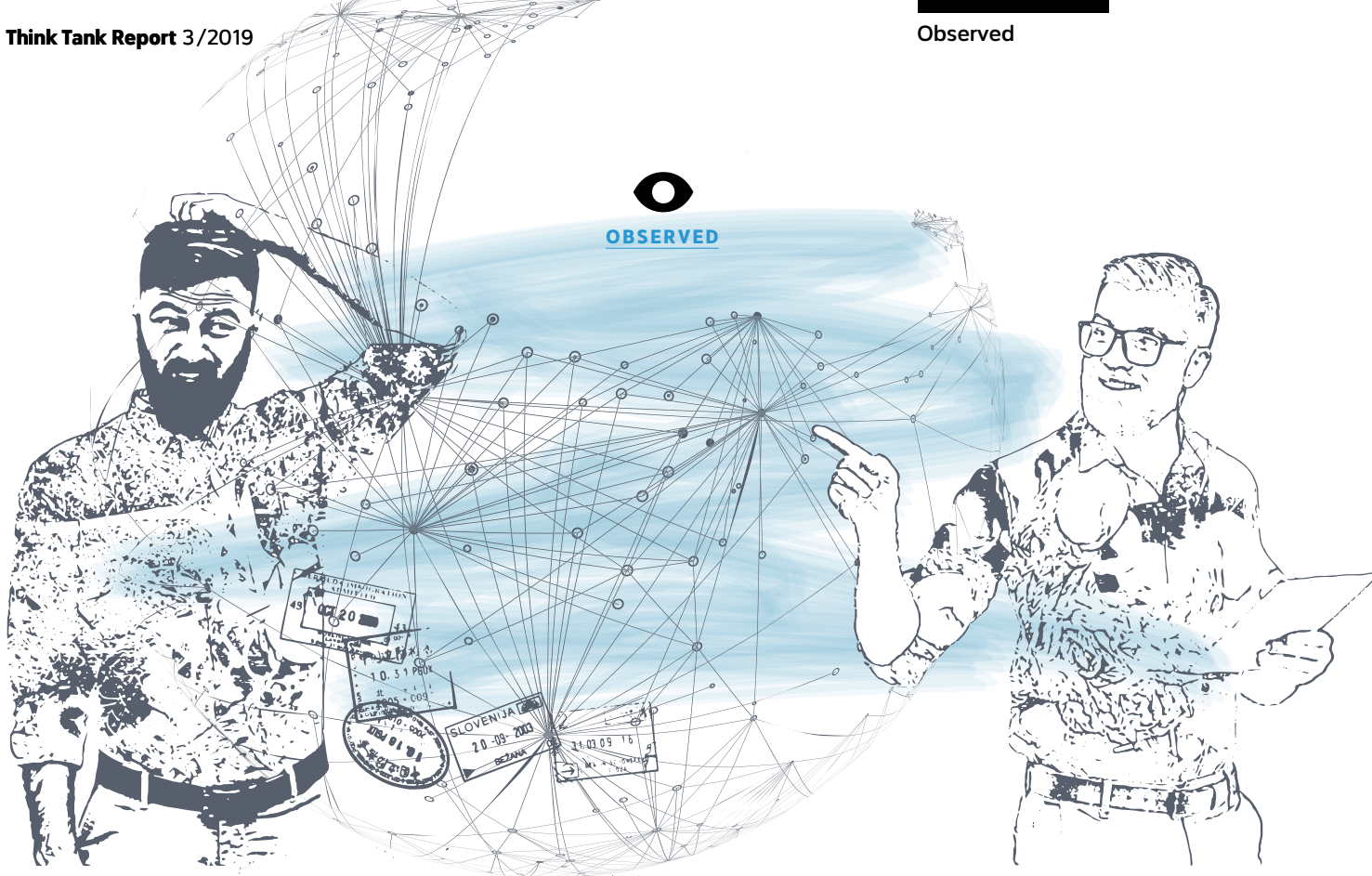
We all know examples of badly designed products. Just think of USB plugs, which always take three tries to insert (if you're lucky). But there are also cases in which design plays a decisive role in the product's success – the Swiss Army Knife, for instance. After evaluating the design practices of 300 publicly listed companies

over a period of five years, *McKinsey* can confirm this. It does not matter whether the product is material or digital. Nor does it matter much what industry the company is active in. This is because design always plays a role. The report presented by *McKinsey Design* from London, UK has more to say on this issue.


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## DIGITALISATION

## Bringing the ends together

Connectivity will be the measure of success in future

Connectivity is a significant feature of a successful society – today more than ever. A new online portal clearly shows how connectivity influences globalisation by closing distances, stimulating international trade, and enhancing the mutual dependencies of countries and national economies. Connectivity overcomes political barriers that traditionally hinder greater international integration. Regulations, standards, and technical requirements are becoming increasingly similar all over the world, allowing technologies and transnational infrastructure projects to spread. But rising protectionism has begun to impede connectivity. *Italian Institute for International Political Studies* (ISPI), Milan, Italy

## MIGRATION AND WORK

## New job – new country

Uncomplicated visas for the elites among global migrant workers

There are people for whom a new job also means a new country. They are usually highly specialised technicians that are extremely hard to find and usually available and ready to go within a very short period. But there is a problem that disproportionately plagues this group: time-consuming visa procedures. There is now a solution to this problem: *Legalpad*. The Seattle start-up has developed a new digital process that, in most countries, can greatly streamline visa procedures for these skilled workers. This allows companies to place their most important workers more quickly. Initially, these procedures will benefit only a global elite, but in the long run, they should change the entire visa process, simplifying it permanently. *Legalpad*, Seattle, USA

## SUSTAINABILITY

## Stylish plastic waste

Clothing can be sustainable

A plastic bag from the lowest point in the world – the Mariana Trench – is an embarrassing discovery. It is embarrassing for everyone who hasn't yet taken the problem of plastic seriously. But there are a few people who have been trying for years to be sustainable within their own industries. This trend has reached fashion. Javier Goyeneche founded *Ecoalf* in 2009 after becoming frustrated with the exorbitant use of natural resources and the mountains of waste. Today, the fashion entrepreneurs produce not only attractive clothing made of recycled material (such as jackets made of plastic bottles), but also remove waste from the oceans for use as raw material. Since 2015, the *Ecoalf Foundation* has removed 330 tonnes of ocean waste for use in clothing production. *Ecoalf*, Madrid, Spain



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@ecoalf



FACES



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

## The naked avatar

Sara DeCou made headlines in April 2018 when it became known that her tech start-up was behind the Instagram characters Lil Miquela (@lilmiquela) and Brud (@brud.fyi). The personable virtual model Lil is a well-booked influencer with more than 1.5 million followers on Instagram and several successfully released songs on Spotify and YouTube. Also she was voted one of Time Magazine's most influential protagonists on the Internet in 2018. Even on the catwalk of the fashion label Prada she was staged virtually. And the career of the fictional character is far from over. DeCou and *Brud* co-founder Trevor McFedries have impressively succeeded in merging the digital and analog worlds. It also shows how easily public opinion can be influenced digitally from a young entrepreneur's studio in California.

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## SUPPLY CHAIN

## From A to B

Daria Rebenok grew up in Russia and often returned from her travels with suitcases full. This experience inspired *Grabr*, which Rebenok and her husband founded in 2015. The start-up works like this: A customer in country A wants a bottle of a special kind of barbecue sauce from country B. Rebenok's start-up *Grabr* finds someone there who can buy such a bottle and bring it on his next trip to country A. In several rounds of financing, *Grabr* has collected more than 14 million US dollars and acquired more than 900,000 travellers with this procurement and courier concept. Rebenok herself has carried almost 200 articles, from coloured pens to high-priced SLR cameras, for people all over the world. Her favourite items are children's toys.

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## 30 YEARS AFTER THE WALL FELL

## What's up in the East?

What does it mean to be a young person from eastern Germany in 2019? What is going well, and where are there still problems? What can be done with an industrial warehouse in the middle of western Leipzig? Why is inheritance in eastern Germany much less than in western Germany (if indeed there is any inheritance at all)? How can it be that there is not a single university chancellor from eastern Germany? Frieda from Leipzig attempts to answer these and other questions on her Instagram blog. She is 21 and likes to talk about life in eastern Germany. Pay gap, identity, elections, rights – all issues that are on Frieda's radar. Sometimes she explains eastern Germany to her friend Leon from Cologne. The region still requires clear explanations, even 30 years after the wall came down.

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