Last year, the South Korean government’s R&D grant for SMEs rose to three trillion won (around 2.3 billion euros), placing Korea ahead of most other OECD nations. As the Korea Development Institute reveals, this government support for research has not only led to a surge in new patents but has also significantly increased investment by these companies in tangible and human assets. According to initial forecasts, the value added of the companies that have received state aid has increased by more than 100%. This South Korean initiative clearly offers potential for imitation by other OECD countries. Korea Development Institute, Sejong, South Korea
The relationship between China and the United Nations seems to be in the throes of fundamental change. It is true that China uses its Security Council veto more frequently than Western permanent members, but it still makes less use of it than Russia. In parallel, China's financial importance is continuing to grow. It is now the second-largest contributor after the US and provides almost 2,500 blue helmets. China is also using its new influence to play an increasingly important role in the United Nations reform process. Chinese think tanks have recently been remarkably busy with reform proposals for the United Nations and have presented several concepts for a new form of international governance. Unsurprisingly, the issue of human rights plays a subordinate role in these reform proposals. In its study, the European Council on Foreign Relations examines this new form of Chinese multilateralism.

The United Nations of China
Preparing for a new world order?

The United Nations of China
Preparing for a new world order?

MIGRATION
A bridgehead to Europe
What next for post-Gaddafi-Libya

Since the uprisings of 2011 forced the removal of ruler Muammar al-Gaddafi, the country's fortunes have spiralled downwards. The absence of democratically legitimised institutions, along with unsuccessful international interventions and disputes with its regional neighbours, mean that Libya has for some years been a prime example of a failed state on Europe's doorstep. Libya's unresolved fate has only returned to the agenda because of its role as a bridgehead for flows of migrants across the Mediterranean and the influx and growth of ISIS within its borders. The Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut describes how the fourth-largest country on the African continent could find a way forward and have a pivotal function in relations between Africa, the Middle East and Europe. Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut, Lebanon

DEVELOPMENT POLICY
Roads to peace
What is the role of infrastructure projects in peacebuilding

Do roads literally lead to peace? It may sound like a strange question, but many of today’s international development organisations seem to think so. Along with questions of governance, infrastructure projects are now considered to be a basis for peace-building missions in many fragile societies. Based on collaboration with the United Nations, the Danish Institute for International Studies has taken a closer look at this historically understudied phenomenon. In a new study, the researchers argue that infrastructure projects are profoundly entwined with contemporary peacebuilding, and that we therefore need to develop new approaches to development policy. The new study from Copenhagen shows how conflicts can be resolved through concrete and steel. Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, Denmark
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Software – a particularly soft target
A first draft of the common European safety standards is now available

Cybercrime is one of the biggest threats to Europe. While many attacks are coordinated internationally, all too often defensive measures get bogged down at the national level. The Centre for European Policy Studies, with its own Task Force, has now gathered examples of best practice from Europe, the US and Japan and formulated guidelines for governments and businesses to harmonise the process of handling and protecting against cybercrime throughout Europe. The aim of these recommendations is to aid the development of an effective policy framework for introducing coordinated vulnerability disclosure measures and obligations in order to finally accelerate government disclosure decision processes in Europe. Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, Belgium

AFRICA

The Sahel Alliance
North Africa needs greater security

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is the UN peacekeeping mission with the highest casualty rate in the world. 118 blue helmets have been killed so far, making it the mission that has suffered the most losses in UN history. At the same time, it has made little progress in ensuring the safe implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Accord for Mali, which is why local populations are increasingly unhappy with MINUSMA. It is, therefore, vital to either provide significant security gains in the shortest possible time or look for military alternatives that could achieve a similar result. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute examines these two options in its new paper. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Stockholm, Sweden

UN peacekeeper fatalities since 2013 to 2017

Sources: IHS Jane’s Terrorism and Insurgency Center, UN (2017)

A GLUT OF EXPERTS

IT experts on the move
When a good education becomes a push factor for migration

The Western industrialised nations are suffering from a shortage of IT professionals, and this is unlikely to change significantly in the near future, despite a number of training and funding programmes in this respect. Conversely, the number of well-trained and highly specialised IT professionals in India, China and other Asian countries is growing at double-digit rates. The international movement of IT professionals has become commonplace within Asia over recent years as highly skilled specialists move from country to country, steadily building their skills as they work on new projects. This trend now appears to be turning into a global phenomenon, says the Asian Development Bank Institute. It is creating a new type of global labour migration. The new study from Tokyo explains what advantages this can bring and what Western nations may have to get used to. Asian Development Bank Institute, Tokyo, Japan

Global talent pool in 2030

Projected share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary degree across OECD and G20 countries (in percent)

Source: OECD Data (2015)
Poor performance

Raising the minimum wage in Canada brings poor results

As part of its Poverty Reduction Strategy, the government of the Canadian province of Ontario set itself the goal of raising the minimum wage to CAD 15 per hour in 2019. However, initial studies by the Fraser Institute in Canada show that simply raising the minimum wage is not an effective way of alleviating poverty. Statistically, 90.8 percent of workers earning the minimum wage in Ontario do not live in low-income families and in most cases are not the primary or sole income earners in the family. In 2017, nearly 60 percent of all minimum wage earners were under the age of 25 and the vast majority still lived with a parent or relative (86.3 percent). Of those minimum wage earners with an employed spouse, 95.7 percent were either self-employed or earned more than the minimum wage. The study claims that it is an ineffective way of helping the “working poor”. Fraser Institute, Montreal, Canada


Globalisation is having a particular effect on the world’s major cities. They are becoming global hubs that act as potent poles of attraction for the private sector and for professionals in the fields of finance, technology and innovation. But these poles of attraction are also linked to a tendency towards dissolution. The global city is becoming more and more fragmented. Centres of innovation are often located cheek-by-jowl with industrial wastelands and the growth of urbanisation makes it increasingly difficult to tell where the city begins and ends. The Barcelona Centre for International Affairs reports on the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow’s global city. Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, Barcelona, Spain

Global Cities Index 2018 top 10

The global migration crisis can only be resolved through supranational action, yet many commentators suggest there is a lack of political will to act. But how do we actually define “political will”, and is such a concept realistic in terms of migration and integration? A paper by Canada’s Centre for International Governance Innovation explores these fundamental questions. It begins by defining the notion of political will and then outlines the gap between the protection principles formally espoused by states and the ways in which states treat refugees and asylum seekers in practice. Centre for International Governance Innovation, Waterloo, Canada

The global city

Where does the city of tomorrow begin and end?

Globalisation is having a particular effect on the world’s major cities. They are becoming global hubs that act as potent poles of attraction for the private sector and for professionals in the fields of finance, technology and innovation. But these poles of attraction are also linked to a tendency towards dissolution. The global city is becoming more and more fragmented. Centres of innovation are often located cheek-by-jowl with industrial wastelands and the growth of urbanisation makes it increasingly difficult to tell where the city begins and ends. The Barcelona Centre for International Affairs reports on the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow’s global city. Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, Barcelona, Spain

Source: A.T. Kearney 2018 Global Cities Report
GLOBAL ECONOMY

A safe haven
Better protection for global shipping routes

Global piracy and armed robbery against ships, 2016

Globalisation is inextricably linked to the sea. The majority of all global products will eventually be transported via maritime routes – to the production plant, the consumer or for final recycling. It is hard to imagine globalisation without global sea routes. Despite this, the Institute for Security Studies believes that far too little is being invested in the security of this backbone of the global economy. This is particularly vital in Africa, which acts as a link between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. At some point, most of the world’s goods sail past the continent of Africa. As a geographical gateway, South Africa places unique demands on maritime safety. The study from the Pretoria-based institute explains what needs to be done to set up global trade routes for the future and the opportunities that they present. Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, South Africa

URBAN LIFE

No home of your own
When having a job no longer buys you a home

Housing costs are a growing problem for many families in the US. If people spend “too much” on housing (more than 30% of their income), they may not be able to afford other necessities, such as food or health care. Cities and towns with high housing costs are particularly tough for young families, who tend to have lower incomes and wealth. Conversely, communities with unusually low housing prices can also be problematic, especially for long-term homeowners, who rely on housing wealth to supplement their retirement savings. In a new study, Brookings uses the example of the US to show how such bubbles are created, how they can be objectively measured and how politicians can respond to them. Brookings, Washington D.C., USA

AFRICA

Women bring peace
Studies highlight the success of women mediators

Africa is still full of unresolved conflicts. The resolution of some disputes has been underway for years or even decades – often with little success. The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) believes one reason for this is the low level of female participation in mediation and at the peace table. The 1992 Kampala Action Plan recommended the creation of a mechanism to facilitate the involvement of African women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict at the highest levels, but too little has been done. ACCORD’s new study now presents a range of implementation options and gives practical examples of the strength of mediation teams under female leadership. African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, Mount Edgecombe, South Africa
OBSERVED

Radio has no future – we’ve been hearing these words at regular intervals ever since the 19th century. And it’s a topic that is now back on the radar of media professionals. What is the role of radio today? Can radio offer solution-oriented journalism while still keeping up with modern trends? Can traditional radio benefit from new trends such as podcasts or will they replace broadcasting? These are the questions addressed by Radio Days Africa, the continent’s largest conference for media professionals, which is held annually in South Africa.

Looking back at traditional values in order to look ahead – this is the idea behind the project headed up by the Wits Radio Academy at the University of the Witwatersrand.

MARKETING

True influencers

The development of influencer marketing

Nowadays, millennials are not the only ones who buy products online that have been advertised by influencers. According to an IZEA survey, 35 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 65 have purchased a product advertised by influencers. Such results confirm the view that influencer marketing has become a strong driver of sales. However, transparency and trust play a key role in these relationships, with over 70 percent of respondents saying they believe it is very important that companies clearly label influencers’ posts as advertising. Another interesting question is how influencer marketing not only affects purchasing intent but also political decisions. IZEA, Orlando, USA

FORESIGHT

Future radar

What the world thinks about the future

The new Clingendael Strategic Foresight programme focuses on the global future using tools such as trend analysis, horizon scanning and scenario planning. Its Global Security Pulse is a new horizon scanning method that tracks emerging security trends and risks to the international order worldwide, particularly in the areas of trade, commerce, climate change and the environment. Working with The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, it has manually integrated hundreds of its own contacts and a huge range of expert evaluations to create a brand new foresight instrument.

Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague, Netherlands

JOURNALISM

The radio is dead – long live the radio!

What will tomorrow’s radio look like?

“Radio has no future” – we’ve been hearing these words at regular intervals ever since the 19th century. And it’s a topic that is now back on the radar of media professionals. What is the role of radio today? Can radio offer solution-oriented journalism while still keeping up with modern trends? Can traditional radio benefit from new trends such as podcasts or will they replace broadcasting? These are the questions addressed by Radio Days Africa, the continent’s largest conference for media professionals, which is held annually in South Africa. Looking back at traditional values in order to look ahead – this is the idea behind the project headed up by the Wits Radio Academy at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Wits Radio Academy, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
HUMAN-ROBOT INTERACTION

Botanalytics

Ilker Köksal and Enis Gayretli are the founders of Botanalytics, an analytics tool for conversations and interactions based on artificial intelligence. Its aim is to improve communication between humans and bots. In the two years since it was founded in 2016, Botanalytics has become the market leader in bot-human interaction. Through the real-time analysis of thousands of bots and the processing of millions of messages every day, Botanalytics is steadily improving communication between humans and machines so that it is more like real life. But what happens when the user is no longer able to distinguish between bots and humans?

PEACE

Guaranteeing fair elections

The situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo remains precarious as it is beset by human rights violations, disease and fresh waves of violence. Elections are long overdue because of sluggish organisation, lack of training for election observers, political disputes and pressure on the opposition. All this only complicates the situation in the context of a completely impoverished society. But even in these dangerous times, there are people who are committed to working for peace and security in the DRC. The Catholic Church’s Justitia et Pax Commission in the DRC, chaired by Père Clément Makiobo, is considered to be an important pillar of civil society. It works tirelessly with national and international partners to ensure peaceful elections and greater prosperity for the population, including in remote rural regions.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Bot the Builder

Anyone who has ever built a house knows there are three main problems: delays, cost increases and construction defects. With Doxel, Saurabh Ladha has now created the first AI-driven monitoring of construction sites. Autonomous robots and drones continuously monitor construction progress, identifying potential bottlenecks and problem areas in a split second. They provide Doxel’s customers with meaningful, validated information on construction quality in real time. This avoids costly delays or allows them to be minimised from the outset. The software has been designed for all sizes of construction projects, from large private homes to airports.

bit.ly/TTR5_G4

bit.ly/TTR5_G6

bit.ly/TTR5_G5