



Weekly Top 10

WASHINGTON, D.C. November 27, 2019

TO: NCSEJ Leadership and Interested Parties

**FROM: Daniel Rubin, Chairman;
Aleksander Smukler, President;
Mark B. Levin, Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO**

Dear Friend,

On Sunday, Romanian voters took to the polls and overwhelmingly re-elected President Klaus Iohannis who garnered more than 60 percent of the votes. Iohannis ran on a campaign of 'Returning to Normalcy'. As his victory became clear Iohannis stated:

"I promise to be a president for all Romanians," Mr. Iohannis, 60, said as the results came in. "The winner today is modern Romania, European Romania, the normal Romania."

[Almost one year ago](#), on November 25, 2018, Russian forces seized Ukrainian Navy Ships and detained their respective crews as part of the ongoing territorial conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Russia seized the ships after opening fire on them and wounding several sailors. Moscow said the ships - two small Ukrainian armored artillery vessels and a tug boat - had illegally entered its territorial waters. Kyiv denied that.

In September, the sailors were returned in a prisoner exchange between Kyiv and Moscow that garnered much fanfare. The ships themselves were returned this past Wednesday.

We are a little less than 2 weeks away from NCSEJ's next Board of Governors meeting. It will be held on **Tuesday, December 10 from 10:00 am — 1:00 pm at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (1779 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington D.C.)**. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Finally, I want to extend my warm wishes to you and your family for a Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,



Mark B. Levin
NCSEJ Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO

NCSEJ WEEKLY TOP 10 **Washington, D.C. November 27, 2019**

Voters in Romania Reject Years of Scandals and Chaos
Kit Gillet and Marc Santora
NY Times | November 24, 2019

BUCHAREST, Romania — In late 2016, a populist political party swept to power in Romania promising generous social spending, tax cuts and a continuation of the country's alignment with the European Union, nine years after it had joined the bloc.

What followed was a cascade of corruption scandals and political chaos, with the government led by the Social Democrats running through three prime ministers and almost 100 ministers. The party's leader was carted off to prison.

On Sunday, Romanian voters offered a verdict on the past almost three years: enough.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Will Putin release Issachar when he visits Israel in January? - analysis

GREER FAY CASHMAN

The Jerusalem Post | November 24, 2019

Other than playing guessing games about whether efforts to form a government will succeed or whether there will be a third election, the big question for many Israelis is whether Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is due to visit Jerusalem in January, will bring with him Naama Issachar, the American-Israeli woman who could spend up to seven-and-a-half years in a Russian prison because 9.5 grams of cannabis were found in her possession during a routine security check at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport when she was flying home from India via Russia.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Latvia bans nine Russian-language TV channels

Dominik Istrate

Emerging- Europe | November 25, 2019

Latvia's National Electronic Mass Media Council (NEPLP), the country's media regulator, has banned nine Russian language channels due to ongoing EU sanctions against one of their co-owners, Yury Kovalchuk, the Latvian press has reported.

The St Petersburg-based Channel 5 and movie channel Dom Kino are among the banned channels.

The Latvian media authority explained that the ban of the TV stations was not associated with their contents, but their ownership.

[Read the full article here.](#)

The Russians Are Coming: Israel's New Crop of Reform Rabbis

Judy Maltz

Haaretz | November 21, 2019

As a child growing up in communist-ruled Russia, Olya Weinstein was never explicitly told she was Jewish. She somehow figured it out, though.

"In those days, it was forbidden to practice Judaism," she recounts. "But I'd notice things at home, like that my mother never served us pork and that we had separate dishes for dairy and meat, and I'd ask questions. One day my mother broke down and told me we were Jewish, but for many years, try as I might, I never elicited much information beyond that."

[Read the full article here.](#)

Israeli Ambassador Voices Support For Azerbaijan's Territorial Integrity

Mushvig Mehdiyev

Caspian News | November 23, 2019

Israel's ambassador to Azerbaijan, Dan Stav, will be leaving his diplomatic post after four years of service in the Caspian region country. Before departing, Stav gave an interview to Trend, during which he commented on Israel's relationship with Azerbaijan, including Israel's position on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"The consequences of the conflict, if it continues, can go beyond the region," Stav noted on Tuesday, adding "We support the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan."

"We are for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. We also support the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group in this regard. Azerbaijan and Armenia must find a solution that will be acceptable to them." Stav was referencing the body set up in the 1990s by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which is co-chaired by diplomats from Russia, the United States and France.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Lithuania Places Popular Far-right Symbol on Coin Celebrating Jewish Heritage

Cnaan Liphshiz

Haaretz | November 22, 2019

Lithuania announced it would celebrate Jewish heritage with a special coin, which some critics charge features a symbol associated with far-right admirers of Holocaust perpetrators.

The 10-euro coin celebrates 2020's labeling in Lithuania as the Year of the Gaon of Vilna and Jewish Heritage and features a menorah atop a local symbol known as the Columns of Gediminas,

commemorating that 13th-century ruler. Together, the two shapes form what the local Jewish community now calls “the Litvak sign.”

[Read the full article here.](#)

Antisemitism increasing in Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and Russia - polls

CNAAN LIPSHIZ

Jerusalem Post | November 22, 2019

Polling in Europe suggests a significant increase since 2017 in the prevalence of anti-Semitic attitudes in the continent’s eastern countries.

The Anti-Defamation League published on Thursday the results of polling this year of about 9,000 people in 18 countries.

The data largely agreed with a previous poll conducted in those countries in 2017. But Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and Russia showed major increases over 2017.

[Read the full article here.](#)

New Revelations of China’s Growing Interests in Ukraine

Alla Hurska

Jamestown | November 21, 2019

Chinese billionaire and co-founder/former executive chairman of the Alibaba Group, Jack Ma, visited Ukraine on November 7. During his trip, which, started in Kharkiv, he attended the Kyiv International Economic Forum, where he delivered a keynote speech (Kh.suspilne.media, November 7). While in Kharkiv, Ma met with students of the Karazin Kharkiv National University. The event highlighted immense public interest in the Chinese guest: approximately 700 students completely packed the university’s auditorium to hear Ma’s reflections on various business-related topics, education, and the place and role of individuals in the new digital world. During his speech, Ma expressed his admiration of Ukraine and pledged to boost and promote the East European country “as a business venue that wields huge potential” (Delo.ua, November 8). Later, while speaking at the Kyiv International Economic Forum, he addressed many similar issues and explicitly alluded to the necessity to deepen ties between Ukraine and China (Thepage.com.ua, November 9).

[Read the full article here.](#)

After Almost a Year, Russia Returns Seized Ukrainian Naval Ships

Pavel Felgenhauer

Jamestown | November 21, 2019

Almost one year ago, on November 25, 2018, two small Ukrainian Gyrza-M-class gunboats, together with a tug, attempted to cross from the Black Sea through the Kerch Strait into the Sea of Azov, where Ukraine controls two major port cities: Mariupol and Berdyansk. The Ukrainian convoy was stopped and attacked by Russian forces. One of the gunboats, the Berdyansk was hit multiple times as the Ukrainians, who did not return fire, were attempting a retreat. The boats were boarded and all 24 Ukrainian service members (some were wounded, though none fatally) were imprisoned in the Federal Security Service’s Lefortovo prison, in Moscow; they were questioned and accused of crossing the Russian border illegally, despite the existence of a 2003 Russo-Ukrainian treaty defining the Kerch Strait as a joint sovereignty “internal” waterway. The seized ships were impounded in Kerch (see EDM, November 26, 28, 29, 2018).

[Read the full article here.](#)

Japan foreign minister to visit Russia to discuss formal WWII treaty: official

Reuters | November 22, 2019

NAGOYA, Japan (Reuters) - Japan’s foreign minister agreed on Friday to visit Russia next month for talks about a formal World War Two peace treaty, a ministry official said, following a decades-old dispute that has prevented the countries from reaching a pact.

Toshimitsu Motegi agreed with counterpart Sergei Lavrov to visit Russia in mid-December and discuss the issue, the official said at a briefing on the sidelines of a meeting of the Group of 20 (G20) nations in the central Japanese city of Nagoya.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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About NCSEJ

Founded in 1971, the National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry represents the organized American Jewish community in monitoring and advocating on behalf of the estimated 1.5 million Jews in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, including the 15 successor states of the former Soviet Union.

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