

119,1

Chômage, impôts, croissance : quel bilan pour François Hollande depuis 2012

Par Guillaume Errard, Service infographie du Figaro

Publié le 19/04/2015 à 08:00

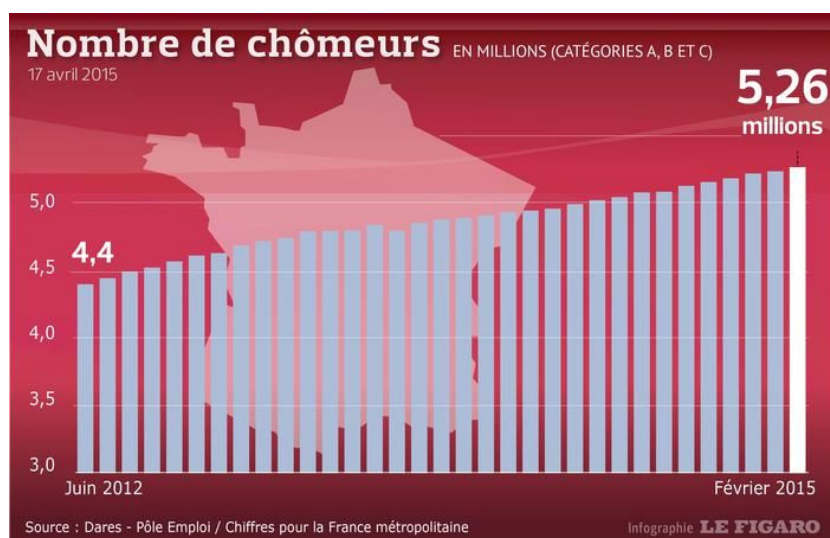
«L'année sera meilleure que 2014». Depuis janvier, le chef de l'État et son ministre du Travail, François Rebsamen n'ont eu de cesse d'exprimer à l'envi leur optimisme pour cette année. Les baisses conjuguées de l'euro, des cours du pétrole et des taux d'emprunt ont constitué leur principaux motifs d'espoirs pour croire à une amélioration de la situation économique d'un pays désormais sixième puissance économique mondiale. Si le déficit semble se réduire plus vite que prévu, force est de constater que la croissance peine à repartir.

• Chômage:

«Le chômage devrait baisser en 2016 et 2017»

déclaration de Michel Sapin le 8 avril 2015

Depuis trois ans, et l'élection de François Hollande comme président de la République, le chômage n'a cessé de grimper. De 4,4 millions (catégories A, B et C confondus) en mai 2012, le nombre de personnes sans emploi a grimpé à 5,26 millions en février dernier. Soit une hausse de 19,5%! Si l'on en croit les prévisions de l'Unedic, l'inversion de la courbe du chômage ne devrait pas intervenir avant la fin 2015. Le régime d'assurance chômage anticipe en effet 96.000 chômeurs de plus en catégorie A cette année.



Il faudrait un taux de croissance de 1,5% pour que l'économie française crée suffisamment d'emplois. Un taux qui la France devrait atteindre en 2016, selon les prévisions de Bercy...et de la Commission européenne. «Le chômage devrait baisser en 2016 et 2017», a promis la semaine dernière le ministre des Finances, Michel Sapin.

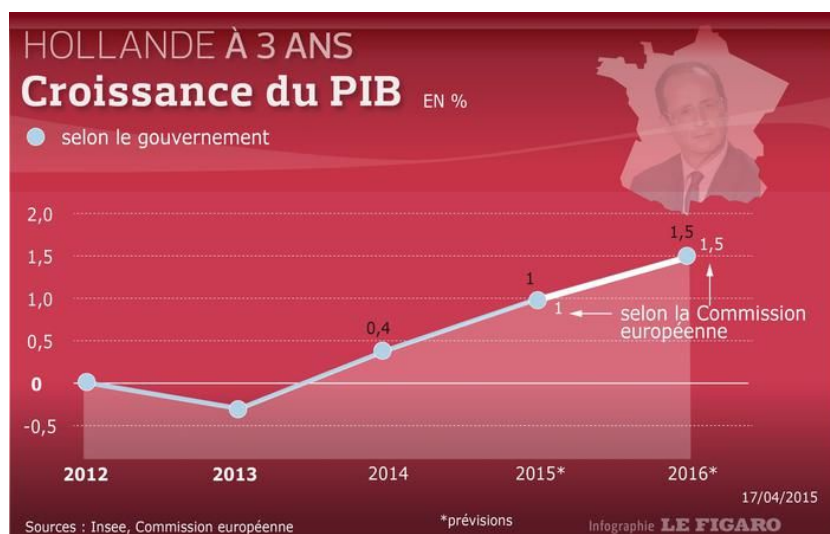
• Croissance

«L'année 2015 sera l'année du retour de la croissance»

déclaration de Manuel Valls le 25 mars 2015

Malgré les baisses des cours du pétrole (-39% sur les trois derniers mois de l'année 2014) et de l'euro (-5%), la croissance de la France est restée très molle: +0,4% pour 2014. Les chiffres du premier trimestre 2015 seront dévoilés prochainement. Preuve que ces deux éléments sont loin d'être suffisants pour assurer une relance de l'activité économique.

Pourtant, François Hollande - «la reprise est là» - et Manuel Valls - «L'année 2015 sera l'année du retour de la croissance» - continuent d'afficher leur optimisme. Le couple exécutif s'appuie sur les chiffres «encourageants» de la consommation, du moral des ménages et de l'investissement. **Un enthousiasme que même la Commission européenne a partagé en février dernier**, s'alignant sur les prédictions économiques de Bercy, soit 1,5% de croissance en 2015.



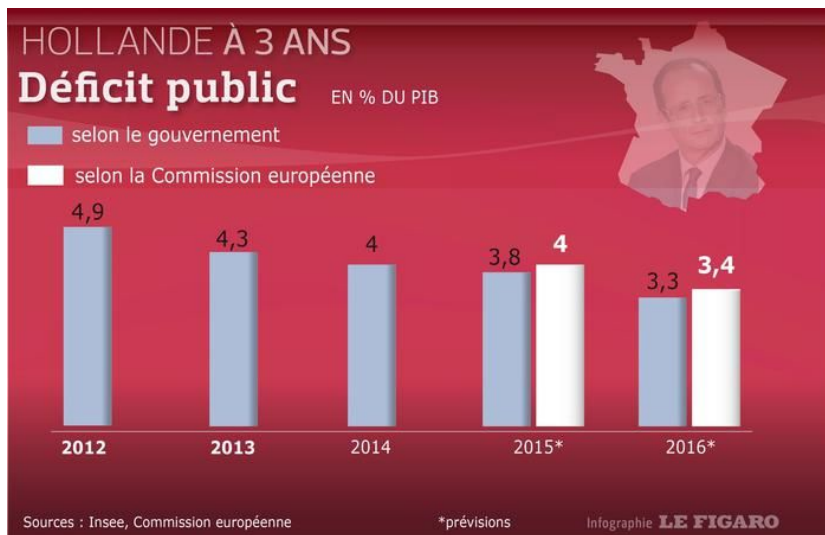
Pour les deux années suivantes, le gouvernement, qui anticipe une hausse du PIB de la France de...1,5%, joue la carte de la prudence, préférant miser sur la réduction du déficit. **«Cette prudence est un choix délibéré qui vise à redonner à la France toute sa crédibilité, affirmait la semaine dernière Michel Sapin.** Nos prévisions de croissance doivent maintenant être considérées comme des objectifs planchers et non pas comme des plafonds, quitte à constater de bonnes nouvelles par la suite». Une manière de rassurer Bruxelles et ses partenaires européens, particulièrement **irrités de voir la France obtenir de la Commission européenne un délai de grâce pour réduire son déficit.**

• Déficit/dette

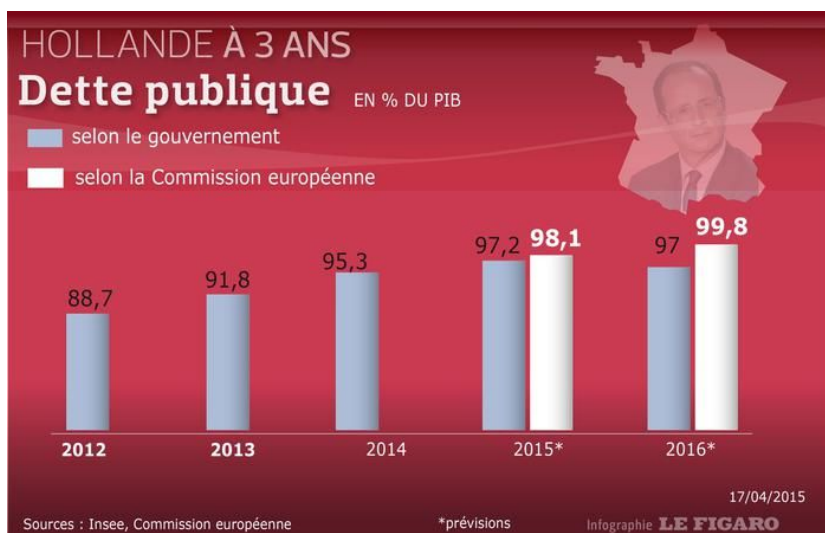
«La France déteste qu'on la force»

déclaration de Michel Sapin le 17 avril 2015

Adepte de la relance par la croissance, François Hollande a dû se résoudre à réduire drastiquement son déficit. **Pour autant, le gouvernement n'entend pas se laisser dicter sa stratégie:** diminuer le déficit, oui, mais à condition de ne pas casser la croissance. «La France déteste qu'on la force», a lâché Michel Sapin, en réponse à son homologue allemand Wolfgang Schäuble, qui avait déclaré, la veille, que «la France serait contente que quelqu'un force le Parlement» à adopter de dures réformes. **Dans une interview au Figaro en mars dernier,** le commissaire européen à l'Économie, Pierre Moscovici, avait jugé l'effort de la France «pas suffisant», appelant le pays à «ne pas décevoir ses partenaires» et réclamant, comme à la Grèce, un plan de réformes détaillé. **L'exécutif compte réaliser quatre milliards d'économies supplémentaires cette année dont 1,2 milliard de réduction de dépenses de l'État, et cinq milliards, en 2016.**



Côté perspectives, Bercy a révisé ses prévisions de déficit à la baisse pour 2015 et 2016. Conséquence: la dette publique devrait augmenter moins vite que prévu: 97% du PIB en 2016 et 96,9% en 2017. Le cap des 100% ne serait donc pas franchi. Mais on est encore loin des 74% affiché par l'Allemagne. Pourtant, le taux d'emprunt à 10 ans de la France est à peine supérieur à celui de son voisin germanique: 0,3% contre 0,08%. Soit une différence de 0,22 point alors qu'il y a un an, il s'élevait à...2 points.



• Impôts

«Ma plus grosse erreur, c'est peut-être de ne pas avoir intégré encore plus rapidement la question des impôts». L'aveu de Manuel Valls illustre à quel point le gouvernement a pris conscience de l'importance de réduire le taux de prélèvements obligatoires. **La France se classe en deuxième position des pays de l'OCDE où la pression fiscale est la plus forte, juste derrière le Danemark.**

Les prélèvements ont encore augmenté de 2,8 milliards en 2014. Mais **dans le programme de stabilité destiné à Bruxelles**, le gouvernement prévoit une baisse des prélèvements obligatoires rapportés au PIB en 2015, 2016 et 2017.

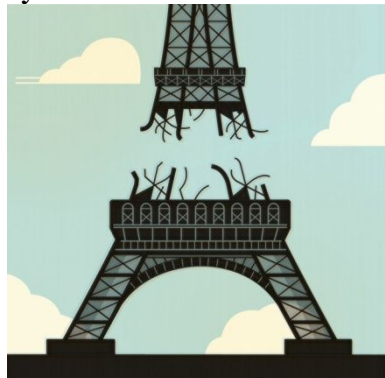
La facture a diminué d'une dizaine de milliards pour les entreprises, grâce au crédit d'impôt compétitivité emploi (CICE). Mais elle s'est alourdie pour les ménages, et notamment les classes moyennes supérieures. Les 20 % de ménages les plus aisés ont subi 75 % de la hausse d'impôt sur le revenu (IR) de 2013 et 2014.

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The Opinion Pages | OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Probing the Heart of French Malaise

By PASCAL-EMMANUEL GOBRY APRIL 13, 2015



Credit Harry Campbell

PARIS — [France](#) is in the throes of a unique cultural moment — one that stretches way beyond the soul-searching debates over Islamist violence and Muslim integration, or arguments over its economic travails, fractious labor politics and troubling brain drain. This collective angst has crystallized as two of the country’s most prominent and controversial authors — Eric Zemmour and Michel Houellebecq — published blockbuster books warning of the creeping Islamization of France just as the Charlie Hebdo attacks shook the nation. Though both men foresee a France falling prey to militant Islam, there is more to their vision of the country’s past, and future, than meets the eye. Both offer a unique window into the French mind.

Mr. Zemmour is a member of that esteemed French tradition of intellectual firebrands who are public pugilists and encyclopedically cultured writers. Though his latest book, “Le Suicide Français,” has rocked the charts, it is really a previous work, the much denser history tome “Mélancolie Française,” that offers the best lens into his worldview.

Mr. Zemmour argues that the well-known French “melancholy” — the typically French feeling of gloom and decline — has its roots back in the early High Middle Ages. In his telling, as the Valois kings were building what would become the French nation into a prominent European power, jurists from the south — where the tradition of Latin legal scholarship had survived the Dark Ages — pined for a restoration of the Roman Empire. They saw the fledgling French monarchy as the tool to implement their beliefs. Joining the royal court, they laid the foundations of the modern nation-state by building Europe’s first technocratic, merit-based central government bureaucracy, a crucial innovation in feudal Europe. This enabled King Philip the Fair to crush nonstate powers like the Knights Templar, and even to push the pope to move the seat of the papacy to Avignon.

This vision of a new Roman Empire, Mr. Zemmour recounts, explains the French self-definition of identity as relating to language, culture and laws (as with ancient Rome), and not simply a question of shared ethnicity or territory, as with most European countries. Hence the relentlessly expansionist foreign policy of the French state up to [World War II](#). Hence the self-aggrandizing French belief in the country’s vocation to greatness — and hence the French melancholy, since the state failed to achieve that grand goal.

The Industrial Revolution happened first in England, where economic power fueled the expansion of the British Empire. When Napoleon lost Russia, the death of the Grande Armée also meant the death of the French dream of uniting the West under French culture and laws. Until then, France had always been the foremost European power, helped by greater population and natural resources, although always frustrated in its designs for true

hegemony, either by meddling Hapsburgs, English resistance, or alliances of rival Europeans fearing French might.

The trauma of the 25 years of total war that followed the French Revolution caused France's birthrates to shrink and its power in the 19th century to wane. England ruled the seas, and Germany ruled the Continent. Two World Wars dealt the final blows to the French dream, the first leaving France too exhausted to build upon its victory, the second laying bare the nation's spiritual exhaustion.

Today, the Anglosphere is the new Roman Empire, and the culture that is to the modern world as Latin was to the ancient is Anglo-Saxon, not French.

The French reassure themselves that they can be Athens to the Anglosphere's Rome — a cultural and intellectual capital, if not a financial and political center. But even if this were true, or even possible, that was never the dream. Hence, the French melancholy.

Only within this context can Mr. Zemmour's warnings about Islamization be understood. Islamization is such a danger, he warns, because the French melancholy has caused a loss of trust in France's own identity, which is fatally weakened and liable to be replaced by confident Muslims who harbor no crushing self-doubt. France, he warns, has a long history of civil war.

Mr. Houellebecq's analysis, on the other hand, is psychological, not historical. All his work is concerned with the anomie of postmodern existence, and the budding sense that postmodern liberation from laws sexual and economic has been a dismal failure. The existential angst that this failure arouses is compounded by the sense that there is no alternative. In his latest novel, "Soumission," the Islamization of France is a device to explore this theme — the novel is not, in itself, an attack against Islam or a warning of Islamization.

In "Submission," a near-future France slouches toward theocracy. French society is not browbeaten by militant Islam, but instead finds itself sighing with relief as it relinquishes its stressful libertinism for a lifestyle with reassuring rules. French secularism and the loss of the historic Catholic faith has left the French open to new, more robust metaphysical beliefs. Polygamy, especially, affords men marital and sexual fulfillment. [Shariah](#)-mandated social subsidies afford women security and liberation from the pressures of trying to combine career and family.

What are their diagnoses worth?

Mr. Zemmour is a polarizing figure because he is a provocateur. In this role he is often off-base, as when he claims the Vichy regime tried to save French Jewry from the Holocaust. But he sometimes finds real truth — and is always worth reading. He is right that there has been a French national project of West-leading greatness that dates back almost a millennium, and he is right that the failure of this project has created a very special kind of malaise that when married with a postmodern multiculturalism makes it harder for France to integrate its Muslim youth.

Mr. Houellebecq is a finer psychologist than Mr. Zemmour. It is hard to read tales of everyday Western youth dropping everything to join ISIS and not conclude that there is something to the idea that postmodern anomie and libertinism leave a secret part of us craving an all-embracing, confident, life-shaping creed.

In the end, what Mr. Zemmour and Mr. Houellebecq have in common is not a critique of Islam or immigration, which is really secondary to their concerns. Instead, what they have in common is that they point to real wounds in the French soul, wounds that too often go unmentioned — wounds for which they freely admit they have no cure.

Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry is a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center and a columnist for [TheWeek.com](#)

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The Opinion Pages | OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Wolfgang Schäuble on German Priorities and Eurozone Myths

By WOLFGANG SCHÄUBLE APRIL 15, 2015

BERLIN — The annual spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank begin on Friday in Washington. I'm looking forward to them, even if the discussion in recent years has seemed, to some commentators, a bit too well-rehearsed to provoke much discussion or thought outside of the usual comfort zones.

The fact that the immediate sting of the global financial crisis has faded in much of the world has probably contributed to this complacency. **Unfortunately, however, the world economy is not yet out of the woods. It still faces very concrete challenges. We are as badly as ever in need of a common understanding of what needs to be done.**

The financial crisis broke out seven years ago and led many countries into an economic and debt crisis. **A pervasive set of myths — that the European response to the crisis has been ineffective at best, or even counterproductive — is simply not accurate. There is strong evidence that Europe is indeed on the right track in addressing the impact, and, most importantly, the causes of the crisis. Let me run through some of these myths.**

First, it has often been said that **German insistence on fiscal austerity** meant that Germany, the largest economy in the European Union, has “punched below its weight” — and thereby pushed the eurozone more deeply into crisis — by not stimulating more demand. This misses the point. As in medicine, to prescribe the right treatment it is essential to have the correct diagnosis.

My diagnosis of the crisis in Europe is that it was first and foremost a crisis of confidence, rooted in structural shortcomings. Investors started to realize that the member countries of the eurozone were not as economically competitive or financially reliable as the uniform bond yields of the pre-crisis years had suggested. These investors began to treat the bonds of certain countries with much more caution, causing interest rates for those bonds to rise. **The cure is targeted reforms to rebuild trust — in member states' finances, in their economies and in the architecture of the European Union. Simply spending more public money would not have done the trick — nor can it now.**

To this end, Germany has consistently advocated an approach of structural reforms and reducing public debt without throttling growth. This is not blind “austerity.” It is about setting a reliable framework for private-sector activity, preparing aging societies for the future and improving the quality of public budgets.

In **Germany**, this approach has shown tangible success: The economic recovery since 2009 has been broad-based, with domestic demand as the main driver of growth. Investment — both public and private — is increasing. **We are speeding up debt reduction, in line with the I.M.F.'s recent call for “symmetric stabilization” (reducing deficits in good times, to offset deficits in bad times).**

More importantly, many European countries are reaping the rewards of reform and consolidation efforts. Countries like Ireland and Spain, which put far-reaching reforms into effect when they hit financial trouble a few years ago, now boast some of the highest growth rates in Europe.

A second myth is the absurd claim by some commentators that **Germany — being a creditor nation— was actually profiting from the crisis.** I don't see how any member country can benefit from a European crisis. It is true that the German government now enjoys historically low borrowing costs. But so do almost all other eurozone members. Unconventional monetary policies pursued by the independent European Central Bank seem to have fulfilled their part there. **Low interest rates help all borrowers — but they come at ever-increasing costs to savers and pension funds. We should work hard to overcome this extraordinary situation and find our way back to a well-functioning market economy, in which interest rates serve to allocate savings to the most profitable investments.**

This leads to my **third point:** For many vocal commentators the answer to the crisis in Europe has been **ever-greater liquidity and ever-lower interest rates. Now that we have both, we are finding that these policy tools are no panacea, but create problems of their own.** More and more experts on both sides of the Atlantic **warn of dangerous bubbles in asset prices and risks to financial stability from ever-increasing leverage (financing by borrowing).** And it is clear that the debt burden in many countries cannot be solved by incentives to take on even more debt.

On the fiscal side, we need to prepare government budgets for an eventual normalization of monetary policy and capital markets. The ongoing debate over “tapering” in the United States — the end of the extraordinary period of “quantitative easing” by the Federal Reserve to stimulate economic growth by purchasing huge quantities of bonds — **shows how difficult it is to withdraw a stimulus once governments and markets get used to it.**

The European Central Bank has warned many times that monetary policy cannot substitute for fiscal and structural reforms in member countries. Christine Lagarde, the managing director of the I.M.F., has also called for **further structural reforms.** Such reforms include, for example, **more flexible labor markets; lowering barriers to competition in services; more robust tax collection; and similar measures. I fully share this view.** **Monetary policy can only buy time.** Our job is to make sure that this time is well used to put finances in order and economies on sustainable growth paths.

The priorities for Germany, as the current president of the Group of 7 nations, **are modernization and regulatory improvements. Stimulus — both in fiscal and monetary policy — is not part of the plan.** When my fellow finance ministers and the central bank governors of the G-7 countries gather in Dresden at the end of next month we will have an opportunity to discuss these questions in depth, joined — for the first time in the G-7's history — by some of the world's leading economists. I am confident that we can reach some common ground in Washington in advance of that meeting.

Wolfgang Schäuble is the finance minister of Germany.

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ECB's Draghi Rejects Talk of Greek Euro Exit

At IMF meetings in Washington, European Central Bank chief reiterates euro is irrevocable

By

BRIAN BLACKSTONE And **IAN TALLEY**

Updated April 18, 2015 4:37 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—European Central Bank President Mario Draghi on Saturday rejected speculation that Greece may be forced to abandon the euro, reiterating that Europe's single currency is irrevocable.

119,9

Pope Asks Europe to Do More for Migrants Flooding Into Italy

Sicilian towns running out of places to shelter arrivals

Associated Press

April 18, 2015 6:33 p.m. ET

ROME—Pope Francis on Saturday joined Italy in pressing the European Union to do more to help the country cope with rapidly mounting numbers of desperate people rescued in the Mediterranean during journeys on smugglers' boats to flee war, persecution or poverty.

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Greece's Binary Outlook Gives Markets a Headache

If Greece stays in the eurozone, it doesn't matter; if it leaves, it matters a lot



Germany's Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble has warned that time is running out for Greece. PHOTO: MIKE THEILER/REUTERS

By [RICHARD BARLEY](#)

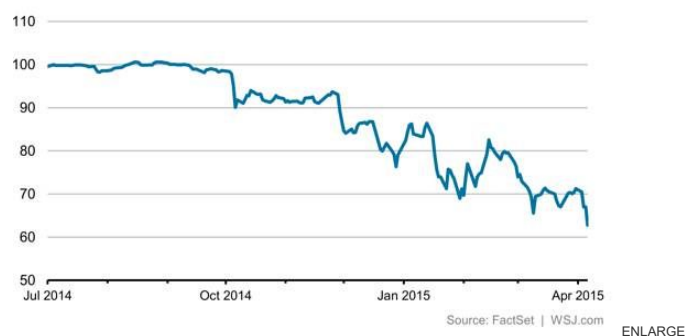
April 17, 2015 6:19 a.m. ET

The conundrum that Greece presents for most investors is simple, but troubling. It is either mostly irrelevant, or one of the biggest threats to markets this year.

The war of words over Greece and its attempts to strike a deal with its partners in recent days [has deepened](#). German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble warned that time was “running out” for Greece to strike an accord over its bailout program. European Commission Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis said talks were nowhere near the point where money could be disbursed. And International Monetary Fund Managing Director [Christine Lagarde](#) on Thursday advised Greece to “get on” with fixing the economy.

Big Dipper

Price of Greek government bond due July 2017, % of face value



Greece has so far kept up with debt service, and retained access to very short-term market funding. But some very chunky payments come due in the summer months. Standard & Poor's this week cut Greece's rating to triple-C-plus, warning that without deep reforms or further relief, Greece's obligations would become unsustainable. Fears of a eurozone exit are building again.

Financial markets are beginning to feel the jitters. Thursday, Greek bonds fell sharply, with two-year yields rising above 26%. Yields on Italian, Spanish and Portuguese bonds rose, widening the gap with Northern Europe. [German bond yields fell to record lows](#), partly due to the European Central Bank's bond-buying program, but partly due to nerves about Greece.

As long as Greece stays in the eurozone, most investors can afford to pay it little attention. It accounts for just 1.8% of the currency bloc's economic output. The lowly rating on Greece's bonds means they are off-limits for most funds; the volatility of Greek stocks will have deterred others from dipping into the market. The bigger factors affecting markets have been the ECB's actions, the pickup in eurozone economic data, and the moves in currency markets.

But if Greece leaves, all bets are off. The initial impact is probably containable, again due to Greece's relatively small size economically. The [ECB's bond-purchase program](#) should help stem financial-market contagion. But the second-round effects and political fallout are unknowable. UBS's economists, for instance, warn that the apparent lack of bond-market concern over Greece is an unreliable indicator of calm; they argue that the real risk would come from bank runs in other highly-indebted countries. Undoubtedly, the remaining members of the eurozone would seek to circle the wagons and declare Greece unique once more, but the credibility of that effort might fall short.

Markets aren't good at dealing with events where the potential outcomes are so wildly divergent. The core belief is still that Greece stays in. That means European stocks could continue to gain. But if uncertainty over Greece rises further, and with stocks already up nearly 20% year to date, investors should think about taking some chips off the table.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/17/refugees-eu-policy-migrants-how-many-deaths>

119,11

Refugees don't need our tears. They need us to stop making them refugees

[Anders Lustgarten](#)

The EU's de facto policy is to let migrants drown to stop others coming. How many more deaths can we stomach?



A dinghy packed with migrants off the Libyan coast. 'Five hundred people have already died this year; the figure for the equivalent period in 2014 was 15.' Photograph: Darrin Zammit Lupi/Reuters

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Friday 17 April 2015 18:33 BST Last modified on Saturday 18 April 2015 00:15 BST

In the desert, the smugglers lace their water with petrol so the smuggled won't gulp it down and cost more. Sometimes the trucks they're packed into stall crossing the Sahara; they have to jump out to push, and some are left behind when the trucks drive off again. In transit camps in [Libya](#) before the perilous venture across the Blue Desert, they play football, fight, and pool their scanty resources so an even poorer friend can pay his way. One man says his tiny wooden boat was flanked by dolphins as they made the journey, three on each side, like guardian angels, and this was what gave him hope.

These are the people we are allowing to die in the Mediterranean. The EU's de facto policy is to let migrants drown to stop others coming. Last year nearly four thousand bodies were recovered from the Med. Those are just the ones we found. The total number of [arrivals in Italy in 2014 went up over 300%](#) from the year before, to more than 170,000. And the EU's response, driven by the cruellest British government in living memory, was to [cut the main rescue operation, Mare Nostrum](#).

The inevitable result is that 500 people have already died this year. The figure for the equivalent period in 2014 was 15. There are half a million people in Libya waiting to make the crossing. How many more deaths can we stomach?

[Migration](#) illustrates one of the signal features of modern life, which is malice by proxy. Like drones and derivatives, migration policy allows the powerful to inflict horrors on the powerless without getting their hands dirty. James Brokenshire, the minister who defended cutting Mare Nostrum on the nauseatingly hypocritical grounds that it encouraged migration, never has to let the deaths his decision helped to cause spoil his expensive lunch with lobbyists. It doesn't affect him.

But it does affect us. Right now we are a diminished and reduced society, bristling with suspicion and distrust of others even as we perversely struggle with loneliness and alienation. We breathe the toxic smog of hatred towards immigrants pumped out by Nigel Farage and [Katie Hopkins](#), and it makes us lesser people.

Forget the fact that this society wouldn't work without migrants, that nobody else will pick your vegetables and make your latte and get up at 4am to clean your office. Forget the massive tax contribution made by migrants to the Treasury. This is not about economics. Far too often, even the positive takes on migration are driven by numbers and finance, by "What can they do for us?". This is about two things: compassion and responsibility.

[Lampedusa](#), my play currently running at the Soho Theatre, focuses on two people at the sharp end of austerity Europe. Stefano is a coastguard whose job is to fish dead migrants out of the sea. Denise is a collector for a payday loan company. They're not liberals. They don't like the people they deal with. They can't afford to. As Stefano says: "You try to keep them at arm's length. There's too many of them. And it makes you think, about the randomness of I get to walk these streets, and he doesn't. The ground becomes ocean under your feet."

Migration illustrates one of the signal features of modern life: malice by proxy

But eventually, the human impact of what they do breaks through. And in their consequent struggles, both Stefano and Denise are aided by a friendship, reluctant and questioning, with someone they formerly thought of as a burden. This is compassion not as a lofty feeling for someone beneath you, but as the raw reciprocal necessity of human beings who have nothing but each other. This is where we are in the utterly corrupted, co-opted politics of the early 21st century. The powerful don't give a shit. All we have is us.

But equally important is responsibility. In all the rage about migration, one thing is never discussed: what we do to *cause* it. A report published this week by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists reveals that the [World Bank displaced a staggering 3.4 million people in the last five years](#). By funding privatisations, land grabs and dams, by backing companies and governments accused of rape, murder and torture, and by putting \$50bn into projects graded highest risk for "irreversible and unprecedented" social impacts, the World Bank has massively contributed to the flow of impoverished people across the globe. The single biggest thing we could do to stop migration is to abolish the development mafia: the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, European Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

A very close second is to stop bombing the Middle East. The west destroyed the infrastructure of Libya without any clue as to what would replace it. What has is a vacuum state run by warlords that is now the centre of Mediterranean people-smuggling. We're right behind the Sisi regime in Egypt that is eradicating the Arab spring, cracking down on Muslims and privatising infrastructure at a rate of knots, all of which pushes huge numbers of people on to the boats. Our past work in Somalia, Syria and Iraq means those nationalities are top of the migrant list.

Not all migration is caused by the west, of course. But let's have a real conversation about the part that is. Let's have a real conversation about our ageing demographic and the massive skills shortage here, what it means for overstretched public services if we let migrants in (we'd need to raise money to meet increased demand, and the clearest and fairest way is a rise in taxes on the rich), the ethics of taking the cream of the crop from poor countries. Migration is a complex subject. But let's not be cowards and pretend the migrants will stop coming. Because they won't. This will never stop.

The Observer view on the human tragedy in the Mediterranean

[Observer editorial](#)

Europe can't afford to sit back and do nothing when thousands of migrants are dying every week in search of a new life in Italy and Greece



A fishing boat carrying 300 illegal migrants in the Mediterranean. Photograph: AFP/Getty Images

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Sunday 19 April 2015 00.05 BST Last modified on Sunday 19 April 2015 09.24 BST

A vast human tragedy is unfolding along the shores of the Mediterranean, its horrors largely ignored by Britain's inward-looking, election-fixated politicians and an insouciant, slow-to-react European Union. Dozens of orphaned and malnourished children daily cry out for help; injured victims are thrown to sharks or forced overboard by religious fanatics; and hundreds die needlessly in this ruthless, expanding traffic in human suffering.

These grisly events are not occurring on the tourist beaches of Spain's Costa del Sol, the French Riviera or the sheltered resorts of southern Turkey so beloved of well-to-do European holidaymakers. If they were, there would be more of a fuss. This tragedy has its origins, instead, in impoverished Chad, Darfur and Sierra Leone, in Eritrea and Somalia, in Syria and other war-ravaged countries of the Arab spring. And it reaches its usually unseen, often fatal denouement in the waters off northern Libya, as a growing number of refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants desperately bids to reach Italy and Greece by sea.

The numbers involved are hard to gauge accurately. But it is clear the exodus, principally from Libya, is accelerating rapidly. Italian ships picked up about 11,000 migrants in the past week alone. [Around 950 have drowned or been murdered so far this year](#), including about 450 in two shipwrecks last week. Although the overall total reaching Europe safely is similar, so far, to the same period last year, according to the International Organisation for Migration, the death toll is 10 times higher. As we report today, many are children who have been abandoned or sent on ahead by their parents in the hope of a better life.

Explanations for this developing tragedy are numerous. Libya, a failed state in all but name, is now embroiled in a multi-factional civil war. In the absence of effective governance, Islamist militias, including jihadis from Isis, hold increasing sway.

In these conditions, people-trafficking and smuggling gangs operate with impunity and readily resort to violence. Only last week the Italian navy was forced to storm a trawler that had been seized by armed men off Libya. The Vatican, meanwhile, condemned [the alleged murder of 12 Christian migrants by 15 Muslims who were sharing their boat](#).

Migrants and refugees, the majority young men, are coming to Libya, the closest point to the Italian coast, and other staging points, from all over the Middle East and north and west Africa, driven by a range of factors. These include all-out war, Islamist insurgencies and climate change-related drought and famine. Rapid population growth, exacerbating a chronic lack of jobs and economic opportunity, is another powerful spur. The result has been called the biggest human upheaval since the Second World War. Mostly, these legions of the displaced are heading for [Europe](#).

So what is Europe doing about it? The answer, so far, is dismayingly little. Instead of rallying around Italy's admirable Mare Nostrum search and rescue programme, which plucked 100,000 people from the sea in 2014, the EU replaced it with a more limited border security operation run by its Frontex agency. So far this year, Frontex, by comparison, has rescued only 5,000 people. Monthly funding for its Triton programme is less than a third of the Mare Nostrum budget.

As the crisis deepens, Brussels's dithering grows lethal. The European commission is due to publish a policy document next month, entitled Agenda on [Migration](#). As its name and timing suggest, they are not in a hurry. Member states will consider a more collectivised approach to asylum and legal migration and the contentious idea of migrant processing centres in north Africa. Given the political sensitivity of the immigration issue in EU countries, and the eurozone pleas of poverty, the prospect of quick, effective action is remote.

Both Italy and Greece appealed urgently for increased financial help and practical assistance last week, as did Save the Children and Human Rights Watch. Jan Egeland, a former UN emergency relief co-ordinator, warned that the Mediterranean has become the world's most dangerous border between countries not at war. He lambasted European governments for their inaction.

Meeting Barack Obama in Washington, [Matteo Renzi](#), Italy's prime minister, said the Mediterranean was a sea, not a cemetery. Obama promised to help, but his focus is on fighting Isis terrorism and stabilising Libya. From an American point of view, this seems understandable. This crisis on its doorstep is primarily a challenge for relatively wealthy Europe and its professed human rights values. If the EU cannot act collectively to counter such a threat to its shared security, borders and interests, then what, truly, is the EU for? But it seems few in Europe are listening. [Europe's politicians and the EU's insulated, insular functionaries are shamed by their silence](#).

Before British Eurosceptics, Ukip included, use this failure to further write off the EU, they should reflect on Britain's own inexcusably irresponsible response to the emergency. The [government refused last autumn](#) to support Mare Nostrum or Frontex's replacement operation. Its argument, that search and rescue programmes only encouraged increased migration, has been totally discredited by this spring's surge. Yet far from acknowledging their mistake, the Conservatives persist in ignoring what is happening beyond Dover. [They will not or cannot see the bigger picture](#).

Their election manifesto makes no mention of the migration crisis in the Middle East and Africa or the link to non-EU immigration into Britain. Does home secretary Theresa May really believe the young men jumping lorries at Calais have materialised from nowhere, like shadow figures emerging from a hidden underworld? Does Nigel Farage really think Britain is alone in facing these difficulties, and that it alone can resolve them? And what does Ed Miliband, whose immigration policy focus has also been disappointingly domestic, propose to do about the wider issues? It is time such matters were included in the wider election debate.

The challenge is enormous. The fundamental causes of this crisis will take years to address. An urgent first step is to reinstitute EU-underwritten search and rescue operations. At the same time, as the UN has urged, a top priority must be to create safe, legal options so that would-be migrants do not need to turn to people smugglers or put their lives at risk at sea. More should be done, too, to broker peace in Libya. Britain and other EU governments have a joint responsibility, to victims and voters, to act swiftly to halt the mayhem in the Mediterranean.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/11547278/Europe-hunts-for-people-trafficking-gangs-behind-tide-of-migrant-misery.html>

119,15

Europe hunts for people-trafficking gangs behind tide of migrant misery

The gangs behind the trafficking trade often go unidentified and unpunished, despite sending 170,000 people across the Mediterranean last year alone



A Guardia Costiera boat arrives in the port of Lampedusa island after rescuing some 100 migrants off the shore on October 25, 2013 Photo: FILIPPO MONTEFORTE/AFP

By **Colin Freeman**

3:25PM BST 18 Apr 2015

Like any court in **Italy's** Mafia heartlands, the prosecutors in the Sicilian town of Agrigento are used to dealing with murder, kidnap and other gruesome crimes. Seldom, though, has anyone in their dock been accused of having as much blood on his hands as Khaled Bensalam, a 35-year-old from **Tunisia**.

Mr Bensalam is not a Mob hitman, yet his body count is arguably far higher. Prosecutors say he was the captain of a **Libyan** people-trafficking ship that capsized off the Italian island of Lampedusa in October 2013, with 500 people packed in the hold. More than 360 drowned. Mr Bensalam was among those pulled alive from a sea full of corpses, but other survivors later **identified as him as the man in charge**.

At his latest court appearance last month, prosecutors asked that he be given a 20-year jail sentence for multiple manslaughter, causing a ship to sink and facilitating illegal migration.

As the worst disaster of its kind at the time, the ship's sinking was a key episode in the modern-day slave trade that people-smuggling has become. The public outcry it caused led to the launch of Operation Mare Nostrum, Italy's search and rescue mission that was axed last year because of fears that it was acting as a "pull" for further trafficking.

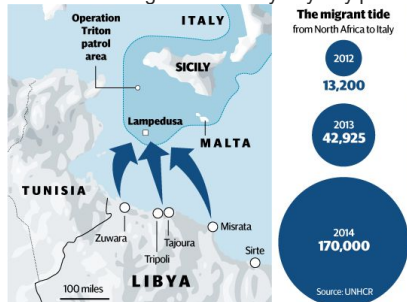


Women weep in the southern Sicilian city of Agrigento during a ceremony commemorating the migrants who drowned off the southern Italian island of Lampedusa

But the case was also highly unusual in that it actually led to a prosecution. In most cases, the gangs behind the trade go unidentified and unpunished, despite sending 170,000 people across the Mediterranean last year alone, 3,000 of whom drowned.

Their ruthless racket is now tearing a gaping hole in Europe's border control policies. Yet little is known about them. "We don't really know much about precisely who the trafficking gangs themselves are, although they tend to be multinational, with the likes of Malians and Senegalese working as agents to recruit the passengers," said Joel Millman, a spokesman for the International Organisation for Migration, which combats trafficking activity.

"Whether it is organised in Libya by any particular clans, or simply happens ad hoc, is hard to say."



Following Italy's rescue of more than 6,000 boat people last week alone – and the **loss of 400 lives in yet another sinking on Sunday** – Europe is under pressure to take a tougher line. Last month, the EU police agency Europol set up a new team in The Hague dedicated to breaking up the smugglers' networks.

"The tragedies we have seen at sea involving migrants requires prompt and coordinated action at EU level," said the Europol director Rob Wainwright, an ex-M15 officer who formerly ran Britain's Serious and Organised Crime Agency. "We will combine all available resources to provide a proactive law enforcement response."

• **The Med is now the most dangerous border in the world**

Quite how to be "proactive" is another question. Since Libya's post-Gaddafi government dissolved into armed factionalism last year, no EU country has even felt it safe enough to man an embassy in Libya, let alone a law enforcement mission to tackle the trafficking gangs, which are backed by heavily armed militia groups. A £30 million EU border guard training mission set up in 2013 now lies in tatters, as does the £1.5 million passport control facility it built at Tripoli airport, which is **currently a bombed-out wreck**.

Instead, the only thing the gangs have to worry about is competition from each other. So many are now entering the game that they jostle for fares "like budget airlines", according to Robert Pelton Young, a security adviser with the Migrant Offshore Aid Station, a Malta-based search-and-rescue mission. Among the would-

be players is Libya's new chapter of the **Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil)**, based in Gaddafi's home city of Sirte, which sees trafficking as a rich source of income and a way of smuggling fighters into Europe.



Two men hold a banner, marking the fact survivors were not allowed to attend the ceremony for those lost at sea, in the southern Sicilian city of Agrigento

"Libya has become the priority, but right now it is impossible to coordinate with the different militias and authorities within the Libyan state," Alvaro Rodriguez, a Spanish police inspector with the new Europol unit, told the Telegraph. "Our intelligence overview shows extensive cooperation between militias and smugglers from other nationalities, and there is also a threat from the Islamic State trying to take control."

Meanwhile, the case of Mr Bensalam offers a rare – and disturbing – insight into how the gangs work. His own ship, thought to have sailed from the Libyan port of Misrata, charged the mainly Eritrean passengers about £1,800 each, squeezing enough people to fill a medium-sized passenger ferry into a 60ft trawler.

When it neared Lampedusa, Mr Bensalam allegedly set fire to a blanket to attract the attention of the Italian coastguard, provoking panic among his passengers when the fire then got out of control. As hundreds rushed to one side to escape, the vessel capsized, leaving children as young as three trapped inside the hull. "There were bodies everywhere, trapped inside the wreck, but also on top of it and around the boat," said Simone D'Ippolito, a local rescue diver, who is still haunted by what he saw.

"I saw at least 100 corpses. But what struck me most was that some of them were locked in an embrace – they were hugging each other as they exhaled their last breath. Nobody wants to die alone."

Worse was to come. Survivors later told how, before the crossing, the gang had treated them as virtual slaves in Libya, making them work for months to earn enough money for their passage. The men claimed to have been regularly beaten, while 20 of the **women said they been repeatedly raped**.

Bensalam, who claims he was forcibly recruited by the gang, would have been nothing more than a foot soldier. As with drug gangs, senior figures do not go on the "runs" because of the risk of getting caught. They often subcontract the job of sailing the ship to the migrants, in exchange for a discounted fare. One boatload of 200 that recently arrived off the Italian coast was piloted by a 15-year-old from Guinea, who had been given a week's basic training.

So what exactly is known about the kingpins? "Most of the border patrol agencies of southern Europe would like to have smugglers' names right now, but very few actually do," says Mark Micallef, of the *Times of Malta*, who monitors the situation closely. "But we do know that the gangs usually control the territories that they work in, and often have astounding arrays of weaponry. In Libya now, there are even drug groups that have heavy artillery."

There are, he says, two main smuggling networks, a smaller one just east of Tripoli around the Ottoman-era port of Tajoura, and a bigger one in Zuwara, a town with picturesque beaches near the Tunisian border. Dominated by Libya's Berber-speaking minority, Zuwara was a people-trafficking haven even in Gaddafi's time. In the anarchy since his fall, business has boomed.

With boats typically taking 200 passengers at £1,000 or more each, earnings can run into millions. It can also be an easier contraband than drugs or weapons, needing no accomplices at the other end to receive the goods or hand over cash in exchange.

Prices apparently vary according to seaworthiness of the vessel and the "creditworthiness" of the smuggler. But another factor is the availability of search and rescue vessels to pick up boats. During **Operation Mare Nostrum, which ran until last October**, smugglers dropped their prices by 50 per cent, according to wiretaps of their phone calls made by Italian intelligence officials.



Italian policemen hold pictures of Palestinian Attour Abdalmenem, left, and Somali Mouhamud Elmi Muhidin in Palermo, Sicily. Abdalmenem and Muhidin have been arrested with charges of being responsible of the ship disaster of Oct. 3, 2013 off the coast of Lampedusa

As of now, according to Mr Micallef, Isil in Libya is still weak and far from being in on the act. But that is a small crumb of comfort in an otherwise gloomy picture. The new Europol unit, for all its grand aims, is still effectively just a working party of EU police chiefs. And as long as Libya's politicians remain at loggerheads, there is little chance of a new government with whom Insp Rodriguez can work. "How to arrest people in Libya right now?" he asked. "That is a very good question."

With the calmer seas of the Mediterranean summer now arriving, the **levels of migrants heading for Italy this year** are expected to exceed even 2014's record high of 170,000.

From the Left, it has prompted calls for a resumption of Operation Mare Nostrum, which since last year been replaced by the smaller Operation Triton led by the EU border force, Frontex.

From the Right, it has prompted warnings that a up to half a million migrants could now be on their way. In the past, such predictions used to be dismissed as scaremongering. Now, they longer seem so fanciful.

Additional reporting: Nick Squires

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/11546796/Italy-migrants-are-suffering-untold-violence-at-the-hands-of-smugglers.html>

119,17

VIDEO:

Italy migrants are suffering untold violence at the hands of smugglers

As Italy struggles to cope with a new influx of migrants there are increasing reports of violent and exploitative treatment of migrants by their "unscrupulous traffickers"

Emotions were running high in Italy Friday as the country struggled to cope with a new **influx of migrants** amid "worrying" allegations of clashes between **Muslim and Christian refugees on a boat**.

More than 11,000 migrants have been rescued in the Mediterranean and taken to Italy in the past six days, with hundreds more expected Friday, the coastguard said.



The migrant wave has swelled in recent days on the back of the worsening security situation in Libya - the staging post for most of the crossings - as well as the milder spring weather.

Aid workers said Friday a woman was found dead and 15 other people, including a six-month baby, were found injured on an inflatable dinghy carrying 90 people that had been adrift for two days.

The woman had been taken onboard despite suffering serious burns in a gas canister blast in a Libyan camp housing migrants waiting to be smuggled into Europe, the UN's refugee agency said.



More than 300 migrants were rescued on another stricken boat Friday, among them 45 women and 23 children, rescuers said.

Meanwhile, prosecutors in the Sicilian port of Palermo asked a court to remand in custody 15 migrants accused of throwing a dozen Christian passengers overboard after a row during a crossing from Libya.

Survivors told Italian police a group of Muslim migrants attacked a group of Christians in a dispute over religion and that those who survived had "forcefully resisted attempts to drown them".

Investigators interrogated the 15 accused - said by police to be from Ivory Coast, Senegal and Mali - on Thursday night.

The 12 victims were from Ghana and Nigeria, according to the police.

The case caused shock in Italy where investigators said that while fights on board were common, the violence suffered by migrants was usually caused by "unscrupulous traffickers and smugglers who pack them into unseaworthy vessels" - not other passengers.

Flavio Di Giacomo, press officer for International Organisation for Migration (IOM), said:

"There is an unwritten rule that says that some migrants told us that once you pay, you can not go back. Even if some migrants see that the weather conditions are bad, the vessels are really unsafe, unworthy, and they change their mind, they can not do that. So they are forced to get on board, with sticks, with guns."

Archive: Videos shown to the Telegraph reveal the violence of people smugglers herding migrants out of Libya and into Europe

The International Organization for Migration estimates the migrant death toll at 900 since January, a nearly tenfold increase on the same period last year.

Rights groups say migrants are so desperate the danger of the crossing is not dissuasive.

Conditions in migrant holding camps in Libya are particularly harsh, with many of those who make it to Europe reporting beatings by smugglers and food deprivation.

The European Affairs ministers of Italy, France, Germany and Slovakia called Friday for Europe to step up its response to their plight.

"The last tragic events in the Mediterranean, with the loss of hundreds of lives in shipwrecks of migrant boats, call for a strong and common reaction from Europe," they said in a statement after a meeting in the northern Italian town of Cesena.

UN befürchten bis zu 700 tote Flüchtlinge im Mittelmeer

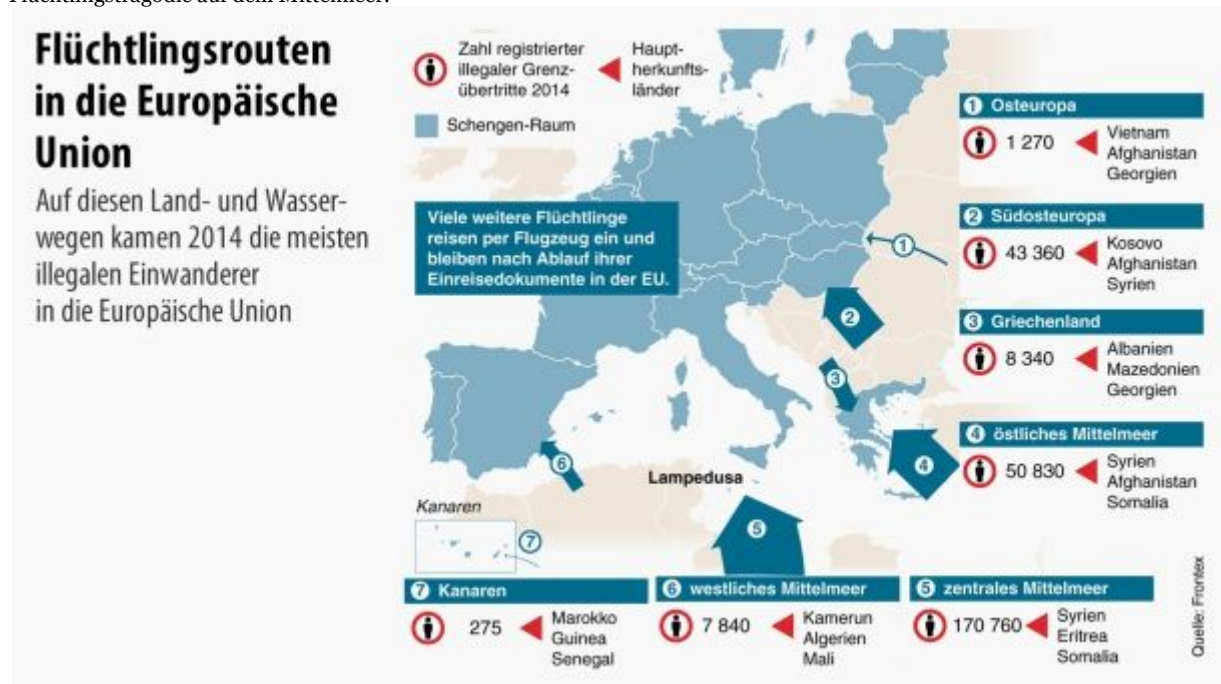
Ein Flüchtlingsboot mit mehr als 700 Menschen an Bord ist nach Angaben der Vereinten Nationen gekentert. Wahrscheinlich konnte nur ein Bruchteil von ihnen gerettet werden. Sollte sich das bestätigen, wäre es die schlimmste Flüchtlingstragödie auf dem Mittelmeer.

19.04.2015

Bei einem Schiffsunglück im Mittelmeer sind offenbar wieder Hunderte Flüchtlinge ums Leben gekommen. Etwa 700 Menschen würden vermisst, sagte eine Sprecherin des UN-Flüchtlingshilfswerks UNHCR am Sonntag dem italienischen Fernsehsender „RAInews24“. Der überfüllte Fischkutter kenterte demnach in der Nacht zum Sonntag rund 110 Kilometer vor der libyschen Küste im Kanal von Sizilien.

Ersten Informationen zufolge ging am Samstagabend gegen 23.30 Uhr ein Notruf bei der italienischen Küstenwache ein. Sie dirigierte daraufhin einen portugiesischen Frachter zu der Unglücksstelle. Beim Anblick des Schiffs hätten sich vermutlich die Passagiere auf dem Fischkutter auf eine Seite gedrängt und das Boot so zum Kentern gebracht, sagte eine UNHCR-Sprecherin. Nur 28 Menschen konnten bislang von dem Handelsschiff gerettet werden. Überdies wurden bereits 21 Leichen geborgen. Über die Herkunft der Menschen an Bord war zunächst nichts bekannt.

An der Such- und Rettungsaktion beteiligen sich laut dem italienischen Fernsehen zur Stunde Schiffe und Flugzeuge der italienischen Marine und Küstenwache sowie weitere zivile Handelsschiffe. Wegen der niedrigen Wassertemperaturen sehen Fachleute die Überlebenschance der Gekenterten allerdings als gering an. Sollte sich die befürchtete Opferzahl bestätigen, handelte es sich wohl um die größte Flüchtlingstragödie auf dem Mittelmeer.



Die italienische Küstenwache brachte am Wochenende immer wieder andere Migranten in Sicherheit, zahlreiche Boote mit Flüchtlingen erreichten die italienische Küste. Allein in der vergangenen Woche sollen es etwa 11.000 Menschen gewesen sein. Seit Anfang des Jahres sind laut UNHCR mehr als 900 Menschen bei der gefährlichen Überfahrt über das Mittelmeer umgekommen.

119,19

Hundreds Feared Dead After Boat Filled With Migrants Capsizes in Mediterranean

By GAIA PIANIGIANI APRIL 19, 2015

SIENA, Italy — Rescuers searched for survivors on Sunday after a boat with hundreds of migrants trying to reach [Italy](#) capsized in the Mediterranean Sea north of [Libya](#).

Twenty-eight survivors and 24 bodies have been recovered, Italy's Coast Guard said in a statement.

Details of the accident and the number of migrants onboard were unclear, the authorities said. However, news reports estimated that the boat was carrying 500 to 700 people.

The boat, which was 20 meters, or about 65 feet, long, capsized 70 miles north of Libya as a Portuguese vessel that the Italian authorities had diverted was approaching it early Sunday, the Coast Guard said.

The boat possibly capsized when the migrants moved to one side of their boat as the merchant ship approached, the Coast Guard said.

The search for survivors continued on Sunday with 17 vessels from the Coast Guard, Italy's financial police and the Italian and Maltese Navies, alongside vessels belonging to Triton, a European-led rescue program, and several merchant boats.

“It is really too early to know, but if the number was confirmed, this would be the deadliest shipwreck in the Mediterranean,” said Flavio Di Giacomo, a spokesman for the International Organization for Migration in Italy. “The migrant boats are increasingly overloaded, and the journeys become even more dangerous, if at all possible.”

According to the organization, an estimated 90 migrants died while trying to cross the sea to Italy in the first four months of last year. About 900 people are believed to have died so far this year, according to the organization.

“If there really were 700 dead this time,” Mr. Di Giacomo said, “we would hit a horrendous record.”

119,20

Sea of Sorrows: Many Migrants Drown Trying to Reach Italy

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS APRIL 19, 2015, 7:30 A.M. E.D.T.

ROME — Migrants seeking a better life in Europe have died by the thousands in the Mediterranean Sea in recent years while fleeing poverty and bloodshed in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

The precise figure of deaths is unknown. But the ill-documented toll is rising again Sunday as rescuers search for an estimated 700 passengers from a capsized boat north of Libya. The Italian Coast Guard has confirmed 24 deaths and 28 people rescued, but authorities expect the death toll to rise.

Authorities count only those bodies found in the sea, on shore, or aboard boats where migrants can die of thirst or exposure. Survivors often tell of fellow passengers who lost their lives at sea, but the bodies are never found.

Here is a list of the deadliest migrant boat events, based on bodies recovered or survivor accounts:

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Christmas 1996: 300 believed drowned in the waters between Malta and Sicily.

June 20, 2003: 50 corpses found, 160 migrants missing, 41 survivors in a shipwreck off Tunisia.

Oct. 20, 2003: At least 70 dead in waters off Sicily.

May 12, 2008: 50 dead off Sicily, including 47 who died aboard after suffering from exposure.

May 6, 2011: Boat carrying more than 600 migrants is shipwrecked off Libyan coast. Hundreds reported missing.

June 2, 2011: At least 270 missing from boat with 700 aboard sinks off Tunisian coast.

July 10, 2012: Motorized rubber dinghy deflates between Libya and tiny Sicilian island of Lampedusa; 54 die.

Dec. 14-15, 2012: At least 21 people die, six missing after boat sinks off Greek island of Lesbos.

Aug. 10, 2013: Six migrants drown, 94 rescued some 15 meters (50 feet) off a crowded swimming beach in Catania, Sicily.

Oct. 3, 2013: 366 people die, 155 survive after shipwreck off Lampedusa.

Jan. 20, 2014: 12 people, including nine children, drown when boat overturns near Greek island of Farmakonis.

Feb. 6, 2014: At least 15 migrants from sub-Saharan Africa die while swimming from Moroccan coast as they try to reach Spanish enclave of Ceuta. Police fire rubber bullets at the swimmers to force them back to Morocco.

Sept. 10, 2014: Some 500 Syrians, [Palestinians](#), Egyptians and Sudanese drown after their boat is rammed by another boat of human traffickers off Malta.

Sept. 14, 2014: Libyan navy reports 26 rescued from a boat carrying 250 migrants off Libyan coast. About 200 missing and presumed dead.

Feb. 8-9, 2015: At least 29 die and 300 people reported missing after four boats become waterlogged in the frigid sea after leaving Libya.

April 12, 2015: Nine confirmed dead after boat capsizes off Libya. Some of the 144 survivors tell aid workers that about 400 aboard drowned.

April 15, 2015: Christian survivors from a boat of African migrants arriving in Palermo, Sicily, tell Italian authorities that Muslim passengers threw 12 migrants overboard to their deaths when fighting broke out on board.

Migrant crisis: Flaws in EU policy

10/04 11:06 CET

This week on Utalk, many of you have commented on our latest edition of Reporter, which focused on [the dramatic situation of migrants in Calais, in northern France](#).

Fleeing war and dictatorships, more clandestines than ever are seeking refuge in Europe, where politicians complain a lot about the situation, but appear powerless.

Samir asked us “What is the EU doing to handle these migratory flows?”, and Claude: “Is Europe able to take in these refugees?”

Our reporter, Valérie Gauriat, replies:

“What’s problematic for the European Union is that it is still desperate for a common immigration policy. There is a whole range of measures, but they’re often non-binding.

An agency called FRONTEX manages cooperation at Europe’s external borders, and that involves a vast and highly-disputed security apparatus.

Not only is the number of illegal migrants rising sharply as conflicts spread, but they take ever-greater risks to reach Europe.

Also, the European asylum system stumbles over the Dublin Conventions, whereby a migrant must apply for asylum in the first host country – if he goes elsewhere, he can be sent back to his country of arrival.

So everyone is trying to get rid of the migrants who get sent back and forth, and thousands of people are kept for months or years in hiding and poverty.

Obtaining a proper visa for the EU is a real – and very lengthy – obstacle course. And when you are fleeing war or a dictatorship, finding a safe haven is imperative.

Regarding the EU’s ability to welcome more migrants, Europe is aging, and some countries need more workers. It is also a matter of how refugees are spread out, which can be very uneven from one country to the next.

It’s also worth pointing out that developing countries are those taking in 80 percent of the world’s refugees. And one can question the EU’s responsibility towards victims of conflicts and regimes that are often supported by European states.”

If you would also like to ask a question on [Utalk](#), click on the button below.

119,22

POLITICS

Süddeutsche Zeitung - Germany

EU reacting inhumanely to refugees' plight

Italian coastguards rescued 144 of an estimated 500 [refugees from the sea](#) on Monday after their boat capsized off the coast of Libya. The EU must finally set up its own search and rescue operation, demands the left-liberal daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: "It's embarrassing that the EU hasn't given the few ships that form its Frontex operation Triton a humanitarian mandate. The Italian coast guard service is constantly rescuing people put at the mercy of the sea from the dilapidated boats the traffickers put them on, and even the border guards often participate in the rescue operations. But that's not enough for the hundreds of thousands of refugees experts now expect. The violence in Syria, the crises in Africa and the chaos in Libya won't change any time soon. But a search and rescue fleet like the one Italy set up with its Mare Nostrum operation could be quickly deployed. The asylum procedures will decide whether those who are rescued are allowed to stay in Europe. But if they are allowed to drown, it's inhumanity that is making the decision." (16/04/2015)

[» full article](#) (external link, German)

More from the press review on the subject [» EU Policy](#), [» Migration](#), [» Europe](#), [» Southern Europe](#), [» Libya](#)

All available articles from [» Andrea Bachstein](#)

Who's saying what [» Europe's controversial refugee policy](#)

15. April 2015, 18:59 Uhr

<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/fluechtlinge-entsetzliche-gewoehnung-1.2435938>

Flüchtlinge

Entsetzliche Gewöhnung

Es ist unmenschlich, dass die EU Tausende Menschen ertrinken lässt, obwohl sie helfen könnte.

Von Andrea Bachstein

Überrascht sein kann niemand. Dass es erneut zu einer Tragödie im Mittelmeer mit Hunderten toten [Flüchtlingen](#) kommen würde, war sicher. Zwei Monate liegt ein Schiffsuntergang mit ähnlich vielen Opfern zurück. In der Zwischenzeit hat das Sterben derer nie aufgehört, die sich vor Krieg, Verfolgung und Not nach Europa retten wollen. Schon ist Gewöhnung daran eingetreten, dass das schöne Mittelmeer zum Grab für Unglückliche wird. 3500 Menschen starben 2014 in seinen Fluten. Dieses Jahr sind es schon mindestens 800, und die Saison beginnt erst.

Es ist beschämend, dass die EU nicht spätestens nach dem Unglück vom Februar reagiert und den paar Schiffen seiner Frontex-Mission Triton eine Flotte mit humanitärem Auftrag zur Seite gestellt hat. Die italienische Küstenwache rettet unablässig Menschen von den jämmerlichen Kähnen, auf denen Menschenschmuggler sie der See ausliefern, selbst die Grenzschrützer von Frontex sind oft im Rettungseinsatz. Aber das reicht nicht für Hunderttausende Flüchtlinge, die Experten jetzt erwarten.

An der Gewalt in Syrien, den Krisen in Afrika und dem Chaos in Libyen lässt sich schnell nichts ändern. Aber eine Rettungsflotte, wie Italien sie in Mare Nostrum stellte, lässt sich rasch entsenden. Ob die Geretteten in Europa bleiben dürfen, entscheiden Asylverfahren. Lässt man sie ertrinken, entscheidet Unmenschlichkeit.

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/home/presseschau/archiv/results/archiv_article/ARTICLE161354-Tsipras-must-stop-mass-immigration

119,23

Kathimerini - Greece | Sunday, April 12, 2015

Tsipras must stop mass immigration

The number of migrants and refugees crossing the border from Turkey into Greece almost quadrupled in the first quarter of 2015 in comparison with the previous year. The conservative daily Kathimerini calls on the Greek government to overcome its reservations and take swift action: "All of us sympathise with the refugees who confront the waves in search of a better future. But it's no good for a few government bureaucrats to call for open borders and then sit back and do nothing. The Aegean Islands are sounding the alarm because they're overwhelmed by refugees and migrants. ... Courageous decisions are now called for, even if they aren't compatible with the ideological obsessions of some members of government. This is the responsibility of our country's prime minister [Alexis Tsipras]. As long as he delays taking decisions on critical issues of public security, the dangers will only increase."

[» full article](#) (external link, Greek)

More from the press review on the subject [» Domestic Policy](#), [» Migration](#), [» Greece](#)

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/home/presseschau/archiv/results/archiv_article/ARTICLE159652-Greece-exploiting-refugees- plight

119,23

Frankfurter Rundschau - Germany | Tuesday, March 10, 2015

Greece exploiting refugees' plight

Greece's defence minister Panos Kammenos of the national-conservative Anel party threatened on Sunday to send refugees on to Germany if the virtually bankrupt country doesn't receive adequate financial support. The left-liberal daily Frankfurter Rundschau voices its disgust at such blackmail attempts from Athens: "Those who dismiss this as the fantasies of a right-wing populist are wrong. ... The deputy interior minister of left-wing Syriza said pretty much the same thing last week: if you don't give us money we'll send you those who are in need. ... Perhaps a few of them are even dangerous - terrorists, Islamists, murderers. ... What is this? Blackmail? For sure. But that's nothing unusual in Europe when states are negotiating over money. However this goes further. It is, to put it elegantly, the instrumentalisation of the refugees' plight in Europe. A calculation using people. Or in clearer terms: the threat to resort to human trafficking. And you don't really want to negotiate at all with people who act like that."

[» full article](#) (external link, German)

More from the press review on the subject [» Migration](#), [» National debt](#), [» Euro crisis](#), [» Greece](#), [» Europe](#)

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/home/presseschau/archiv/results/archiv_article/ARTICLE158745-EU-needs-coordinated-refugee-policy

119,24

La Vanguardia - Spain | Friday, February 20, 2015

EU needs coordinated refugee policy

The EU's Triton border protection mission off the Italian coast will be extended to the end of the year, the European Commission announced on Thursday. This isn't even remotely what a reform of Europe's immigration policy looks like, the conservative daily La Vanguardia comments in annoyance: "After all the images of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa crammed together on refugee boats, freezing cold and their eyes filled with fear, we have grown numb to their suffering. We've heard about so many capsized boats, disappearances and near drownings that it seems almost normal to us by now. ... Naturally there is no magic solution to this huge challenge. But we should at least show a minimal will to reduce the flow of refugees for example by making it possible for asylum seekers to put in applications in their countries of origin. The Europeans must coordinate a common strategy to prevent the disasters that are occurring daily on the Old Continent's doorstep."

[» to the homepage](#) (external link, La Vanguardia)

More from the press review on the subject [» EU Policy](#), [» Migration](#), [» EU neighbourhood policy](#), [» Italy](#), [» Africa](#), [» Europe](#)
Who's saying what [» Europe's controversial refugee policy](#)

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/home/presseschau/archiv/results/archiv_article/ARTICLE158226-Triton-a-cynical-calculation-with-human-lives

119,24

Tages-Anzeiger - Switzerland | Thursday, February 12, 2015

Triton: a cynical calculation with human lives

More than 300 people drowned this week in the waters between Libya and the Italian island of Lampedusa, according to the UN refugee agency UNHCR. In contrast to the Italian navy's recently concluded Mare Nostrum operation the current EU mission is inadequate, the daily Tages-Anzeiger argues: "It's uncertain whether all 200 - or even 300 - refugees who died this week in the cold winter storm off the coast of Lampedusa could have been saved by Mare Nostrum. But what is certain is that Mare Nostrum would have done all it could to save them. Triton, by contrast, is explicitly not designed to save lives. The operation is meant to protect Europe's borders - against the arrival of refugees fleeing war and poverty and searching for peace and a better life. ... These days the costs entailed by the protection of - and from - boat refugees are increasingly under discussion. One year of Mare Nostrum cost just under one hundred million euros and saved roughly 100,000 lives. Simple mental arithmetic. But even simpler is the arithmetic of the heart."

[» full article](#) (external link, German)

More from the press review on the subject [» Migration](#), [» Catastrophe](#), [» Europe](#)
All available articles from [» Oliver Meiler](#)

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/home/presseschau/archiv/results/archiv_article/ARTICLE158102-Europe-s-asylum-policy-is-an-aberration

118,25

La Repubblica - Italy | Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Europe's asylum policy is an aberration

On Sunday night the Italian coast guard rescued over 100 refugees from Africa in the Mediterranean. For 29 of them however help came too late and they froze to death in a storm and icy temperatures. Europe's asylum policy has failed spectacularly, the left-liberal daily La Repubblica complains: "The coast guards were too late to save lives because the Italian navy is no longer constantly present in international waters. ... The numbers speak for themselves. They refute the assumption that we discourage refugees from Africa with our unwillingness to take them in. Since Frontex took over from Mare Nostrum the number of refugees has increased from 2,171 in January 2014 to 3,528 in January this year. The number of deaths has risen from 12 to over 50. Consider these as the price for withdrawing the navy from international waters and ask yourselves whether people dying is less our problem because it happens 100 miles off the coast of Lampedusa rather than just 12."

[» to the homepage](#) (external link, La Repubblica)

More from the press review on the subject [» EU Policy](#), [» Migration](#), [» Italy](#), [» Europe](#)

All available articles from [» Gad Lerner](#)

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/home/presseschau/archiv/results/archiv_article/ARTICLE157917-EU-needs-a-new-asylum-agreement

119,25

Dagens Nyheter - Sweden | Friday, February 6, 2015

EU needs a new asylum agreement

The Dublin Regulation according to which all asylum seekers must apply for asylum in the first EU country they enter has failed, Swedish MEP Cecilia Wikström admitted on Thursday. Europe must finally take joint action on the refugee problem, the liberal daily Dagens Nyheter argues:

"More than half of all asylum seekers in Europe wind up in two other countries: Germany and Sweden. But these two can't do it all on their own. ... The situation in the EU is similar to the one we're currently discussing in Sweden: all too few communities - and countries - are demonstrating solidarity. Others continue to act as if it all had nothing to do with them. ... Even if the Dublin Agreement is now obsolete, the EU still needs a common asylum policy. And for that to work, more countries must shoulder their responsibility."

[» full article](#) (external link, Swedish)

119,26

The Independent - United Kingdom | Sunday, January 4, 2015

EU mustn't let refugees drown

The end of the Italian-backed "Mare Nostrum" rescue mission is to blame for the new refugee drama on the Mediterranean, the left-liberal daily The Independent believes: "So much for the notion that Operation Mare Nostrum was 'encouraging' migrants, an idea that now seems as wrong as it is distasteful ... It is hard for us to imagine, sitting in our warm living-rooms, how desperate these 'migrants' are - or how like us. Becoming a refugee is one of the most depersonalising things that can happen to human beings; they become part of a mass, no longer individuals that we can empathise with but symbols of a problem we don't want to address. But the only thing that will stop the apparently endless flow of migrants is the ability to live safely in their own country. ... We shouldn't allow the EU to respond with a second-rate search-and-rescue system that risks leaving traumatised people to drown."

» [full article](#) (external link, English)

More from the press review on the subject » [Crises / War](#), » [Migration](#), » [Society](#), » [Europe](#)

All available articles from » [Joan Smith](#)

119,26

El País - Spain | Monday, January 5, 2015

Don't leave rescue actions to single states

Europe's refugee policy must not be left to national governments, the left-liberal daily El País demands in view of the refugee drama on the cargo ship Ezadeen:

"Europe as a whole must react, trapped as it is between the compromise on human rights values and growing anti-immigration sentiment that is fomented by the extremist parties and is filling more moderate politicians with fear and doubt. ... This is an issue that should not be left to the individual governments. In reality the problem affects the entire international community, but it's up to Europe to take collective decisions and bridge the gap between those who want to introduce major search and rescue operations and those who reject the idea claiming it will only attract more immigrants."

» [full article](#) (external link, Spanish)

Flüchtlingsdrama im Mittelmeer

„Eine Schande für Europa und uns alle“

Nach dem vermutlich schwersten Flüchtlingsdrama im Mittelmeer seit langer Zeit gerät Bundesinnenminister De Maizière unter Druck. Er hatte eine Seenotrettungsmission abgelehnt. Die Grünen sprechen von einer „Katastrophe mit Ansage“.

19.04.2015

Nach dem neuerlichen [Flüchtlingsunglück im Mittelmeer mit Hunderten Toten](#) in der Nacht zum Sonntag sind bei Grünen, SPD und Linkspartei Forderungen nach einer neuen Seenotrettungsmission laut geworden. „Was wir dieser Tage erleben, ist eine Katastrophe mit Ansage“, so die Grünen-Vorsitzende Simone Peter. Sie sprach von einer „Schande für Europa und uns alle“. Es sei „ein tödlicher Fehler“ gewesen, im Herbst vergangenen Jahres das Seenotrettungsprogramm „Mare Nostrum“ einzustellen.

Bundestagsvizepräsidentin Claudia Roth (Grüne) griff Bundesinnenminister Thomas de Maizière (CDU) frontal an. „Das Grauen wird einfach weiter hingenommen“, sagte Roth. Dass nun wieder Hunderte Flüchtlinge ertrunken seien, liege auch daran, dass „europäische Politiker wie unser Innenminister Thomas de Maizière sie nicht retten wollen, um nicht noch mehr Anreize für Flüchtlinge zu schaffen“. Für diese „zynische, unmenschliche, ja schändliche Politik“ habe die EU „keinen Friedensnobelpreis verdient, er sollte ihr aberkannt werden“.

„Unterlassene Hilfeleistung“

Roth forderte eine „gemeinsame, robuste“ europäische Seenotrettungsmission und sichere Zugangswege nach Europa. „Wir haben die Schiffe dafür, wir haben gemeinsam auch die finanziellen Mittel.“ De Maizière hatte ein neues Seenotrettungsprogramm erst vor Kurzem abgelehnt.

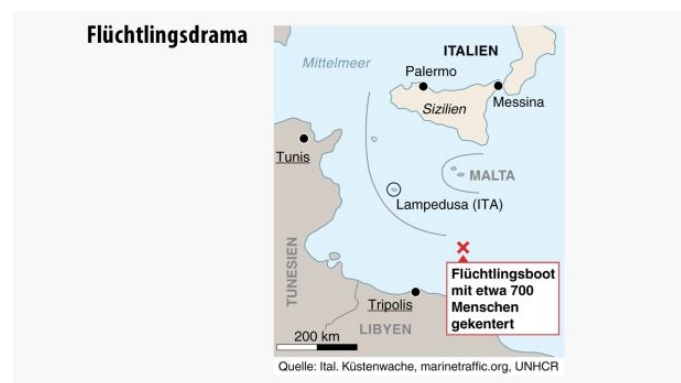
Der SPD-Menschenrechtsfachmann Frank Schwabe sagte: „Wer jetzt nicht handelt, macht sich unterlassener Hilfeleistung schuldig.“ Das „Schwarze-Peter-Spiel“ müsse schnell beendet werden. Eine Nachfolgemission von „Mare Nostrum“ wäre keineswegs ein Anreiz für weitere Flüchtlinge, sich nach Europa aufzumachen, „sondern ein Gebot der Menschlichkeit“.

Auch die Flüchtlingsbeauftragte der Bundesregierung, Aydan Özoguz (SPD), sprach sich nun für die Wiedereinsetzung einer Seenotrettungsmission aus. „Dass wieder so viele Menschen auf dem Weg nach Europa ihr Leben verloren haben, ist ein Armutszeugnis für uns alle“, sagte die Staatsministerin am Sonntag. „Es war eine Illusion zu glauben, dass die Einstellung von Mare Nostrum Verzweifelte davon abhalten wird, die lebensgefährliche Fahrt über das Mittelmeer zu wagen.“

Der stellvertretende Vorsitzende der Linksfraktion Jan Korte forderte: „Es ist an der Zeit, dass Deutschland seine restriktive Abwarte- und Abwehrhaltung aufgibt und sich in Europa an die Spitze setzt, um umfangreiche Hilfsmaßnahmen schnell und unbürokratisch zu organisieren.“ Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel (CDU) müsse in Europa „einen Gipfel der Mitmenschlichkeit initiieren, der dieses massenhafte Sterben stoppt“.

„Tatenlosigkeit nicht mehr hinnehmbar“

Vor der libyschen Küste hatte sich zuvor das bislang anscheinend schlimmste Flüchtlingsunglück im Mittelmeer ereignet. Nach Angaben des UN-Flüchtlingshilfswerks UNHCR kenterte in der Nacht zum Sonntag ein Trawler mit etwa 700 Menschen an Bord. Lediglich 28 Flüchtlinge konnten demnach gerettet werden. Sollten sich die Vermutungen bestätigen, würde die Tragödie das Ausmaß der Katastrophe von Lampedusa im Jahr 2013 noch übertreffen. Im Oktober 2013 waren vor der italienischen Mittelmeerinsel mindestens 366 vor allem aus Somalia und Eritrea stammende Flüchtlinge ertrunken, als ihr Boot Feuer fing und kenterte. Anschließend hatte Italien das Rettungsprogramm „Mare Nostrum“ ins Leben gerufen. Es wurde jedoch im Dezember 2014 wieder eingestellt. Das EU-Programm Triton konzentriert sich hingegen auf Überwachung und Patrouillen.



Barbara Lochbihler, stellvertretende Vorsitzende des Menschenrechtsausschusses im Europäischen Parlament sowie außen- und menschenrechtspolitische Sprecherin der Grünen-Fraktion, nannte die „Tatenlosigkeit“ der EU und ihrer Mitgliedstaaten „längst nicht mehr hinnehmbar“. Wer vor Krieg und Zerstörung fliehe, den „dürfen wir nicht weiter kriminellen Schleppern und den Launen des Mittelmeers überlassen“.

Es geht ums nackte Überleben

Bei neun Millionen syrischen Flüchtlingen ist die Aufnahme von weiteren 500.000 Syrern in Europa dringend geboten. Aber die EU setzt weiter auf Abwehr. Sie zwingt Menschen auf immer gefährlichere Wege. Ein Gastbeitrag.
26.10.2014, von SIMONE PETER

Die Autorin ist Bundesvorsitzende von Bündnis90/Die Grünen.

(...) Wer sich dieser Tage mit der europäischen Flüchtlingspolitik beschäftigt, erlangt unfreiwillig Expertise der antiken Mythologie. Denn den Verantwortlichen von Rom bis Warschau mangelt es nicht an kreativen Bezeichnungen für ihre Tätigkeit. Was sich hinter Namen wie „Mare Nostrum“ - übersetzt „unser Meer“ - und „Triton“ - ein Meeresherr der griechischen Mythologie - verbirgt, hat mit märchenhaften Sagen nichts zu tun: Es geht um das nackte Überleben und das Versagen der Akteure auf europäischer Ebene.

Das Seenotrettungsprogramm „Mare Nostrum“ wurde von der italienischen Regierung im vergangenen Jahr als Konsequenz auf die vielen Flüchtlingskatastrophen im Mittelmeer ins Leben gerufen. Allein dieses Jahr konnten bereits über 140.000 Menschen gerettet werden, darunter viele Flüchtlinge aus Syrien, Eritrea und Nordafrika. Trotz dieser Bilanz droht „Mare Nostrum“ zum Ende des Monats auszulaufen. Der Aufbau einer zivilen und gesamteuropäischen Seenotrettung ist deshalb zwingend. Italien darf damit nicht alleingelassen werden. Das Europäische Parlament muss dafür die nötigen finanziellen Mittel bereitstellen, bis dahin darf „Mare Nostrum“ nicht eingestellt werden. Alle EU-Mitgliedstaaten sind gefordert, sich an den Kosten des Einsatzes von monatlich rund neun Millionen Euro zu beteiligen.

„Statistik des Schreckens“

Die geplante Überführung der Seenotrettung in die Strukturen der Grenzschutzagentur Frontex ist keine Option. Frontex hat weder das Mandat noch genügend Mittel oder ein entsprechendes Selbstverständnis für diesen Einsatz. Im Rahmen der Operation „Triton“ steht nur etwa ein Drittel der Gelder zur Verfügung, mit denen Italien derzeit die Seenotrettung organisiert, das Einsatzgebiet ist um ein Vielfaches kleiner. Die EU setzt damit weiter auf Abwehr und zwingt Flüchtlinge mit ihrer Abschottungspolitik auf immer gefährlichere Wege. Dieses Jahr (2014) sind offiziellen Angaben zufolge schon über 3000 Menschen bei dem Versuch gestorben, über das Mittelmeer nach Europa zu gelangen. Die Dunkelziffer dürfte weitaus höher liegen. Das Flüchtlingshilfswerk der Vereinten Nationen (UNHCR) spricht von einer „Statistik des Schreckens“.

Bei aktuell neun Millionen syrischen Flüchtlingen ist die Aufnahme von weiteren 500.000 Syrern innerhalb der EU dringend geboten. Es bedarf dabei mehr Möglichkeiten der sicheren und legalen Einreise nach Europa. Die dauerhafte Neuansiedlung in einem Drittland („resettlement“) und vereinfachte Familienzusammenführung reichen nicht aus. Wir müssen zusätzlich humanitäre Visa für syrische Flüchtlinge bereitstellen, wie es die scheidende EU-Kommissarin Cecilia Malmström und der UN-Flüchtlingskommissar António Guterres seit langem fordern. Europarechtlich ist diese Möglichkeit längst verankert, einzig am Willen zur Umsetzung mangelt es. Es sollte Flüchtlingen möglich sein, in den EU-Delegationen und Botschaften Einreisedokumente zu beantragen. Wenn Fluchtgründe anzunehmen sind, kann so eine sichere Ankunft in der EU ermöglicht werden. Anschließend kann hier ein Antrag auf Asyl gestellt werden.

Neben all diesen Maßnahmen brauchen wir ein neues, solidarisches Aufnahmesystem von Flüchtlingen innerhalb der Europäischen Union. Eines, das der Verantwortung aller Mitgliedstaaten gegenüber Schutzsuchenden besser gerecht wird und dabei auch individuelle Aspekte wie soziale und familiäre Bindungen oder Sprachkenntnisse gebührend berücksichtigt. Hier darf sich Deutschland nicht aus der Verantwortung stehlen, denn gemessen an der wirtschaftlichen Leistungsfähigkeit und den absoluten Bevölkerungszahlen stehen wir bei der Flüchtlingsaufnahme nicht auf dem vielbeschworenen Spitzenplatz. Andere Staaten leisten jetzt schon mehr. Italien, Malta und Griechenland kommen schon lange an die Grenzen ihrer Kapazitäten, das „Dublin-System“ ist offenkundig gescheitert.

Mit halbherzigen Schritten ist es angesichts der weltweiten Kriege und Krisen nicht getan. Versagt Europa bei der Aufgabe, die Seenotrettung auf ein sicheres Fundament zu stellen und sichere Zugangswege für Flüchtlinge zu schaffen, werden viele weitere Menschen ihr Leben im Mittelmeer lassen. In der griechischen Mythologie ist es am Ende die Königstochter Nausikaa, die sich des Schiffbrüchigen Odysseus annimmt, ihm Essen und Kleidung gibt: eine mutige Frau und würdige Namensgeberin für ein Umdenken in der europäischen Flüchtlingspolitik.

119,29

Nach Flüchtlingsunglück

EU beruft Krisensitzung ein

Kritiker halten der EU vor, trotz Beteuerungen nicht genug gegen den Tod von Flüchtlingen im Mittelmeer zu unternehmen. Die Rettungsmission „Mare Nostrum“ war an fehlender Unterstützung gescheitert. Nun wollen die Mitgliedstaaten wieder beraten.

19.04.2015



© AFP, REUTERS Hunderte Tote nach Untergang von Flüchtlingsschiff befürchtet

Nach der neuerlichen Flüchtlingskatastrophe im Mittelmeer hat die Europäische Union eine Krisensitzung einberufen. Die EU-Kommission äußerte sich am Sonntag in Brüssel „zutiefst betroffen“ von dem Unglück mit vermutlich Hunderten Toten und kündigte eine Dringlichkeitssitzung der Innen- und Außenminister der Mitgliedstaaten an. Dabei solle es vor allem darum gehen, mit den Herkunfts- und Transitländern daran zu arbeiten, die Flüchtlinge von der gefährlichen Reise über das Mittelmeer abzuhalten.

„Der einzige Weg, die Realität zu verändern, ist, die Situation an den Wurzeln anzugehen“, teilte die EU-Kommission weiter mit. Solange es Krieg und Armut in der europäischen Nachbarschaft gebe, würden Menschen einen sicheren Zufluchtsort in Europa suchen. Deshalb sei es wichtig, mit den Drittländern zusammenzuarbeiten. Mitte Mai will die Kommission ein Strategiepapier zur Migrationspolitik vorlegen.

„Wir haben zu oft gesagt: nie wieder“

Die EU-Außenbeauftragte Federica Mogherini sagte am Sonntag: „Wir haben zu oft schon gesagt: nie wieder.“ Die EU als Ganzes müsse das Problem nun zügig angehen. Die Mittelmeer-Staaten seien zu lange auf sich allein gestellt gewesen.

Frankreichs Präsident François Hollande rief dazu auf, die EU-Mission „Triton“ zu verstärken. Es seien mehr Boote und mehr Überflüge des Mittelmeeres nötig, um gegen den Menschenhandel vorzugehen, sagte Hollande im französischen Fernsehsender „Canal+“.

Kritiker werfen der EU seit langem Tatenlosigkeit angesichts des Massensterbens im Mittelmeer vor. Italien hatte im vergangenen Herbst die Rettungsmission „Mare Nostrum“ eingestellt, weil sich die EU-Partner nicht an der Finanzierung des Marineeinsatzes beteiligen wollten. Seitdem läuft unter Führung der EU-Grenzschutzagentur Frontex die deutlich kleinere Mission „Triton“, die aber vorwiegend der Sicherung der EU-Außengrenzen und nicht der Rettung der Flüchtlinge dient. Einige EU-Staaten hatten Italien vorgehalten, mit „Mare Nostrum“ die Flüchtlinge zu der gefährlichen Überfahrt erst ermutigt zu haben. In Deutschland richtet sich die Kritik von Grünen und Linkspartei sowie von SPD-Politikern [gegen Bundesinnenminister Thomas de Maizière \(CDU\)](#).

Im Gegensatz dazu werfen Kritiker der EU nun aber vor, mit „Triton“ den Tod von Flüchtlingen in Kauf zu nehmen. Bei dem neuen Schiffsunglück vor der libyschen Küste kamen in der Nacht zum Sonntag bis zu 700 Menschen ums Leben. Das UN-Flüchtlingshilfswerk UNHCR geht davon aus, dass es außen den bislang 28 Geretteten keine weiteren Überlebende gibt. Der Fischkutter war wie viele andere Flüchtlingsboote auf dem Weg zur italienischen Insel Lampedusa.

Parce qu'il s'agit de la mort insupportable de milliers d'innocents, mais aussi pour leur sécurité, les démocraties européennes doivent se réveiller et réagir.



Un bateau de migrants en provenance d'Afrique du Nord intercepté par la marine italienne, ici en 2014.

Par MICHEL COLOMÈS

"La Méditerranée est une mer, pas un cimetière !" Ce cri d'alarme de Matteo Renzi, le président du Conseil italien, devant le président Obama, va-t-il enfin réveiller la conscience des démocraties ? Et si la solidarité devant les drames humains qui se multiplient (déjà neuf cents morts en trois mois) ne suffit pas, la crainte, ouvertement formulée, par le ministre italien des Affaires étrangères, jeudi, réussira-t-elle à faire bouger les gouvernants d'Europe et des États-Unis ?

Le constat de Paolo Gentiloni est simple : 93 % des malheureux qui débarquent en Italie ou se perdent en mer viennent de Libye. La quasi-totalité a embarqué dans les ports de Sirte, Derna et Sabratha. Ces trois villes sont tenues par les combattants de l'organisation État islamique. Cela veut dire que les djihadistes ont trouvé là un moyen de compléter leur trésor de guerre en rançonnant les damnés de l'immigration, dont certains viennent d'ailleurs de Syrie, où ils ont fui les combats entre des islamistes appartenant aux mêmes organisations et les troupes de Bachar.

Mais il y a plus : on peut légitimement craindre que les djihadistes manipulent ces marées de migrants pour inonder les côtes sud de l'Europe et déstabiliser les pays qui s'y trouvent. On soupçonne enfin qu'ils cherchent à infiltrer, au milieu de ces gens sans ressource et sans espoir, des kamikazes prêts à des actions terroristes. Et le même ministre de rappeler que son pays a plus que d'autres des raisons de s'inquiéter : pratiquement 100 % des réfugiés aboutissent, quand ils y arrivent, sur les côtes ou les îles italiennes. Onze mille depuis le début de la semaine.

Un front libyen

Si le constat est particulièrement inquiétant, les solutions pour contenir, sinon arrêter, cette marée et empêcher la répétition de ces noyades ont été jusqu'à présent inopérantes. Et les propositions faites aujourd'hui par les Italiens d'utiliser la manière forte contre les djihadistes ont peu de chances d'être acceptées par leurs partenaires. Car confronté à ces drames et à ce danger imminent, le gouvernement italien propose que la coalition étende aux places fortes de l'EI en Libye les frappes aériennes contre l'Irak et la Syrie.

En somme, Rome souhaiterait l'ouverture d'un nouveau front. Une intervention dont les risques sont majeurs et la réussite bien peu assurée. Même si les Italiens, en raison de l'histoire, ont une excellente connaissance du terrain en Libye, il est douteux que des frappes, même "chirurgicales", comme disent les militaires, soient efficaces. "Qui allez-vous bombarder ? demande l'amiral britannique Lord West of Spithead. Et pour quel résultat ?" Barack Obama l'a d'ailleurs confirmé à Matteo Renzi : "Nous ne pouvons pas résoudre le problème avec quelques frappes de drones ou quelques opérations militaires."

Certes, mais la solution que préconise le président américain, celle de "donner du temps au temps", comme aurait dit François Mitterrand, en espérant un gouvernement crédible en Libye, "qui protège ses frontières et travaille avec nous", n'est pas plus acceptable. Elle est surtout révélatrice de l'impuissance américaine.

Barrage maritime

Alors plutôt que des frappes aériennes qui n'ont guère de chances de se réaliser, n'est-il pas temps que l'Europe, avec ses marines nationales, mette en place un blocus des côtes libyennes ? Un véritable barrage maritime, non pas près des côtes italiennes, mais devant la Libye, pour décourager les migrants de partir et empêcher les djihadistes de continuer à les jeter à la mer par bateaux entiers.

Les Italiens ont amorcé une telle démarche en lançant fin mars l'opération "Mare sicuro", pour protéger leurs îles et leurs puits de pétrole off shore. Mais avec cinq patrouilleurs et quelques hélicoptères, ils ont quelques raisons de se sentir bien seuls et de dire, comme Paolo Gentiloni, le chef de leur diplomatie : "Il est scandaleux que l'Europe, la plus grande super-puissance économique de notre époque, consacre des sommes aussi dérisoires à la surveillance de la Méditerranée." Une mer qui fut autrefois le berceau de nos civilisations et est en passe de devenir la fosse commune de nos lâchetés.

119,32

Le Point - Publié le 19/04/2015 à 16:05

Le chavirage d'un bateau transportant des migrants aurait fait près de 700 morts en Méditerranée dimanche. Un nouveau drame qui suscite une avalanche de réactions.



Plus de 900 migrants ont perdu la vie depuis le début de l'année en effectuant la traversée entre le Libye et l'Italie

Depuis quelques mois, les naufrages de migrants se multiplient en Méditerranée. Après la mort de 400 migrants la semaine dernière, une nouvelle tragédie s'est nouée au large de l'Italie dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche. Près de 700 personnes auraient perdu la vie. Au total, plus de 900 migrants sont décédés depuis le début de l'année, en effectuant la traversée entre la Libye et l'Italie, sans compter ce nouveau naufrage... Un bilan qui n'a donc pas fini de s'alourdir. Face à ces tragédies, de nombreux responsables politiques et religieux ont réagi ce dimanche.

Pape François. Le souverain pontife a exhorté la communauté internationale à "agir avec décision et rapidité". "Affamés, persécutés, blessés, exploités, victimes des guerres, ils cherchaient une vie meilleure, ils cherchaient le bonheur", a poursuivi le pape, invitant les fidèles à prier pour ces migrants.

François Hollande. Le président de la République a quant à lui déploré la "pire catastrophe" en Méditerranée de ces dernières années. Invité de l'émission *Le Supplément* sur Canal+, le chef de l'État a demandé une "réunion rapide" des ministres européens de l'Intérieur et des Affaires étrangères. "La Méditerranée est une mer qui nous est commune, donc nous devons agir", a-t-il souligné. "Nous devons aussi renforcer le nombre de bateaux qui sont dans le cadre de l'opération Triton. Plus de bateaux, plus de survols par des avions, et également une lutte beaucoup plus intense par rapport aux trafics", a ajouté François Hollande.

Nicolas Sarkozy. Le président de l'UMP a demandé une "véritable politique d'immigration" de l'Union européenne "pour empêcher ces drames", sur Twitter.

Mariano Rajoy. Le chef du gouvernement espagnol a estimé que la "crédibilité" de l'Europe est en jeu et qu'il est temps pour elle d'"agir". "Ce sont des drames quotidiens", a-t-il souligné à l'occasion d'un discours de campagne électorale à Alicante, dans le sud-est de l'Espagne. "Aucun pays au monde, pour puissant et fort qu'il soit et quels que soient ses moyens, ne peut faire face seul à de tels événements", a-t-il affirmé. "La réponse doit venir d'Europe et les mots ne suffisent plus. Il faut agir. Nous Européens, nous risquons notre crédibilité si nous ne sommes pas capables d'éviter ces situations dramatiques qui se produisent tous les jours" ..

Commission européenne. L'Union européenne s'est dite "profondément affectée" dimanche par le nouveau naufrage d'un bateau de migrants en Méditerranée qui aurait fait près de 700 morts, et a annoncé la tenue prochaine d'une réunion des ministres de l'Intérieur et des Affaires étrangères pour prendre des mesures. "Des vies humaines sont en jeu, et l'Union européenne dans son ensemble a l'obligation morale et humanitaire d'agir", a réagi la Commission, qui prépare une nouvelle stratégie sur l'immigration qui doit être adoptée mi-mai.

119,33

Europe's worsening migrant crisis – the Guardian briefing

The news that as many as 700 would-be illegal migrants have died after their boat capsized off Libya has brought the issue of migration into Europe to a head. But what can be done about it?



Migrants are taken to the mainland after being rescued by the Italian navy last September. Photograph: Giuseppe Lami/EPA

[Mark Rice-Oxley](#) and [Peter Walker](#)

Thursday 18 September 2014 / Last modified on Sunday 19 April 2015

What's the story?

The perils facing migrants from Africa and the Middle East trying to get to [Europe](#) across the Mediterranean has been underscored once again with another deadly shipwreck off the Libyan coast, in which as many as 700 people are feared dead.

The toll brings to more than 1,500 the number who have perished already this year, making 2015 far deadlier than 2014, which itself was a record year for tragedy on the Mediterranean, with more than 3,000 deaths.

Rising tide

With economic decay, war, persecution and unemployment gripping at least a dozen countries on Europe's southern rim, the surge of migration north has overwhelmed authorities in Europe, which has struggled to articulate a single coherent policy and, say critics, played into the hands of unscrupulous people traffickers.

How this happened

It is not necessarily an exaggeration to characterise the scale of would-be migrants arriving illegally in Europe as a permanent crisis but even within this context 2015 is looking like a particularly difficult year.

Thousands were saved last year by Italy's search and rescue operation, Mare Nostrum, but that unit was stood down last autumn, replaced by a European operation with a much flimsier mandate.

Disembarking immigrants wait to be processed by authorities in Naples after arriving aboard the tanker Virginio Fasan. Photograph: isoimages / Demotix/isoimages / Demotix

The volume of migrants is, as ever, a result of many different factors. Many thousands arrive every year from sub-Saharan [Africa](#), notably Eritrea and Somalia, fleeing economic chaos, war and human rights abuses. More recently the numbers have been swollen by ever more people escaping conflict and civil breakdown in Libya and Syria. More than 120,000 Syrians have arrived in Europe since 2011, according to the UN refugee agency, the UNHCR. This is a large number, but nonetheless a small proportion of the 3 million or so Syrians who have fled abroad, mostly to neighbouring Jordan and Turkey.

The key issues

The complexity of criminal networks

The networks that bring people from war-torn nations to the African shores of the Mediterranean and then on to boats are not just necessarily criminal. They are also multinational, informal and ever-changing, with the migrants themselves having minimal contact with the organising gangs. Palestinian survivors of one tragedy recounted arranging their passage via a “travel office” in Gaza, making their own way to the Egyptian port of Damietta on tourist visas, before being taken by bus to a ship, and then once at sea switching vessels three times. This is likely to be a trail too complex to crack.

Funding rescue operations

Mare Nostrum lasted almost a year, at a cost to the Italian navy of around €9m (£7.15m) a month, a burden the country was understandably keen to share among its neighbours and allies. The replacement EU force, called Triton, is operating with a third of the Mare Nostrum budget, and questions have been raised over its capacity to monitor over 30,000 square miles of sea.

People disembark in Brindisi, southern Italy, following rescue operations off the coast of Sicily.
Photograph: DFF/AFP/Getty Images

Impact of geopolitics on migrant routes

Frontex’s annual reports illustrate the longer-term pattern of attempted illegal entry into Europe: while the routes remain constant their relative popularity ebbs and flows due to a combination of factors.

In 2012, for example, many more migrants entered using land crossings into Greece and Bulgaria, the so-called eastern Mediterranean route, whereas in 2009 the most numbers arrived via Kosovo and Albania. Last year, as the series of boat sinkings show, the great majority were seeking to reach southern Europe by sea, mainly [Italy](#) but also Malta or Greece.

North by northwest

By far the most common current starting point is Libya, where lawlessness and a long and generally unpatrolled Mediterranean coastline has made life easy for people smugglers. The great majority of arrivals come from either sub-Saharan Africa or the Middle East, mainly [Syria](#), and to a lesser extent Libya. Chaos elsewhere can change the picture – according to Frontex, 4,000 Palestinians made the journey in the first seven months of 2013, twice the number for all the previous year.

Economic migrants or refugees?

One perception of the flow of people from poorer nations into the EU is that they are led by a desire to earn money, often to send it back to relatives at home. Undoubtedly, the desperate economic situation in places such as Egypt, the Palestinian territories and Pakistan do fuel this movement. One survivor of a sinking off Malta recounted spending several days clinging to a buoyancy aid along with a teenage Egyptian whose hope was to pay for heart medicine for his father. The youth drowned before they could be saved. But the UNHCR notes that those in the three main nations of origin – Syria, Eritrea and Somalia – are escaping conflict and rampant rights abuses. This is especially the case for Syrians, said Andrej Mahecic, a UNHCR spokesman.

How can I find out more?

Frontex [publishes regular statistical updates on migrants](#) arriving at the edge of the EU, and the routes they take. Its [annual report](#) in particular is a mass of information. Similarly, the UNHCR [puts out regular updates](#) and news items, and produces an [exhaustive annual global report](#). For the Guardian, correspondent [@patrickkingsley](#) has a special focus on migration this summer. Chris Stephen and Nancy Porsia have reported on the [detentions and beatings faced by the estimated 3 million migrants in Libya](#) where, they write, “the collapse of government authority has turned [it] into a gigantic funnel to Europe”.

119,36

EU under pressure over migrant rescue operations in the Mediterranean

Human rights organisations call for collective European effort to prevent further disasters after 400 lives lost in latest incident

Julian Borger Diplomatic editor

Thursday 16 April 2015

European states have come under renewed pressure from human rights and refugee organisations to mount large-scale search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean after the [latest migrant boat disaster](#) led to the drowning of an estimated 400 people.

Critics say that the [cancellation last year](#) of an Italian-run sea rescue mission, Mare Nostrum, and the launch in November of Triton, a much smaller border surveillance operation by the EU, created the conditions for the higher death toll. They point to the figure of 900 dead so far this year, far greater than in the same period in 2014, as proof that the end of Mare Nostrum failed to deter migrants while leaving far fewer safeguards in place to rescue victims of frequent shipwrecks.

“It is time to bring back the search-and-rescue capacity of the Mare Nostrum operation, this time as a collective European effort,” said Jan Egeland, a former UN head of humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, and now secretary general of the Norwegian Refugee Council. “The Mediterranean is now the world’s most dangerous border between countries at peace. European nations have completely run out of excuses. They have to act now in order to prevent even bigger tragedies than those we have already witnessed.”

NB: These figures do not include official April numbers and also do not include the 400 unconfirmed deaths this week.

Michael Diedring, the secretary general of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, said: “Our calls for EU search-and-rescue efforts in the Mediterranean have fallen on deaf ears. Apart from the outstanding efforts of the Italian navy, the EU continues to fail to act.”

The Triton operation is run by Frontex, the EU’s border management agency, with a monthly budget of €2.9m (£2.1m), less than a third of what was spent on Mare Nostrum.

“Operation Triton and Mare Nostrum are two very different operations: the first was run by the Italian navy and was taking place close to [Libya](#). Operation Triton is run by Frontex, whose mandate focuses on border control. This is why our operation takes place closer to the Italian coasts,” said Izabella Cooper, a spokeswoman for Frontex. “Because of the different mandate, Operation Triton was never intended to replace Mare Nostrum.”

Cooper added: “While our primary focus is border control, saving lives is an absolute priority. Since the beginning of 2015 about 18,000 migrants arrived in [Italy](#) of which 16,000 were rescued during in search-and-rescue operations. Out of these over 5,000 – a third of the total – were rescued by Frontex vessels in Triton.”

She said the vast majority of Triton search-and-rescue operations actually took place far from the Italian coastal area and very close to Libya.

By comparison, the [Italian Mare Nostrum operation rescued 100,000](#) shipwrecked migrants over its year-long existence.

The European commission has drawn up a broad policy document, the [European Agenda on Migration](#), due to be presented to member states next month. It is aimed at establishing a concerted European asylum policy and more clearly defining conditions for legal migration, while formulating “a clear plan to fight smuggling and trafficking of migrants and an effective return policy”.

Human Rights Watch warned that some of the proposals being circulated, including the possible establishment of [offshore processing centres in north African](#) countries, as well as [outsourcing border control and rescue operations](#) in order to prevent departures, raised human rights concerns.

“It’s hard not to see these proposals as cynical bids to limit the numbers of migrants and asylum seekers making it to EU shores,” said Judith Sunderland, HRW’s acting deputy [Europe](#) and central Asia director. “Whatever longer-term initiatives may come forth, the immediate humanitarian imperative for the EU is to get out there and save lives.”

The British charity Save the Children said it would launch a campaign on Thursday calling on British political parties to press for search-and-rescue operations to be included in the European agenda on migration, and “develop a long-term plan to tackle the drivers of children on the move and ensure these children are protected.”

Justin Forsyth, the head of the charity, said: “Our political leaders cannot ignore the fact that without search and rescue we are allowing thousands of innocent children and their families to drown off the coast of Europe.

“Whoever makes up the next government has a moral obligation to work with the EU to restart the rescue. Every migrant child’s death is a stain on Europe’s conscience. How many thousands must die this summer before Europe acts?”

119,38

Migrant boat disaster: ‘irresponsible’ rhetoric blamed for failure to restart rescue

UN official accuses politicians in Britain and across Europe of obstructing attempts to save migrant lives after boat sinks in Mediterranean

Mark Townsend Sunday 19 April 2015 00.08 BST

Anti-immigrant rhetoric from politicians across [Europe](#), including Britain, is blocking attempts to introduce large search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean that would save large numbers of migrant lives, a senior UN official has warned.

In comments that reveal the growing frustration within the UN Refugee Agency over Europe’s response to the growing migration crisis in the Mediterranean, Laurens Jolles said political expediency was preventing measures being taken to reduce migrant deaths.

Jolles, the United Nations High Commissioner for [Refugees](#) (UNHCR) representative in Italy, said: “In many countries in Europe at the moment, the [political] dialogue and the rhetoric is quite extreme and very irresponsible.”

Italy is experiencing a wave of hostility towards the influx of migrants before regional elections at the end of May, while in the runup to the UK general election, Ukip has been accused of forcing [a toxic debate](#) about immigration and national identity.

Jolles said: “Because of elections and because of the economic crisis, it becomes difficult for those parties who traditionally would not follow on those same lines to counter the rhetoric with the strength that they should.

“It’s a fear of foreigners, which is a logical fear, a natural fear, but it is being exploited for populist or political reasons, especially in election periods.”

An estimated 400 migrants drowned last week when their boat capsized en route from Libya to [Italy](#). The tragedy prompted fresh calls from human rights organisations to mount large-scale search-and-rescue operations, but UNHCR officials say politicians are choosing to avoid upsetting their electorates. “The level of this dialogue compared to 20 years ago is just incredible. It wouldn’t have been possible in the past, the racist rhetoric, the rhetoric of intolerance. In the 60s, 70s and the 80s, we would never have accepted this,” said Jolles.

Critics say the cancellation last year of an Italian-run sea rescue mission, [Mare Nostrum](#), and the launch in November of Triton, a significantly smaller border surveillance operation by the EU, have created the conditions for what many believe will lead to a [record number](#) of migrant deaths in the Mediterranean this year.

EU governments believe the narrower scope of the current mission is justified, claiming that a scaled-back rescue operation will deter migrants from making the crossing.

The Foreign Office says it will not support future search-and-rescue operations because they encourage migration.

“The fact that the UK has made it clear that it does not wish to participate in contributing measures to a rescue operation, or putting in place a rescue operation in the Mediterranean, is very concerning,” said Jolles.

In December, the UNHCR appealed to the EU to provide 130,000 resettlement places for Syrians displaced by the civil war. Germany has pledged to take 30,000 and Sweden 2,700. The remaining 26 EU states are taking 5,438 between them, with Britain taking just 143. “The UK should be participating and contributing in a European context to solidarity measures and trying to fulfil its part making it easier to deal with these [migration] flows,” said Jolles.

“If one really wants to tackle the problem and ensure that there are less deaths, then the thing to do is to look at providing legal avenues to come to Europe. There is an obligation, both moral and legal, to try and do something. People will die.”

The European commission has drawn up a policy document, the European Agenda on [Migration](#), due to be presented to member states next month, aimed at establishing a concerted European asylum policy. It more clearly defines conditions for legal migration, while formulating “a clear plan to fight smuggling and trafficking of migrants and an effective return policy”. The UNHCR is concerned that rather than helping to create a safe passage for migrants, the commission is more concerned with trying to stop people entering. “What we are hearing is that there is more dialogue on how to prevent people coming to Europe and how to stop them than how to manage the flows and what to do when these persons come into Europe,” said Jolles.

119,40

Europe Dithers in Face of Unprecedented Wave of Migrants

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS APRIL 16, 2015, 10:56 A.M. E.D.T.

BRUSSELS — An unprecedented wave of migrants has headed for the European Union's promised shores over the past week, with 10,000 people making the trip. Hundreds — nobody knows how many — have disappeared into the warming waters of the Mediterranean, including 41 migrants reported dead Thursday after a shipwreck.

Amid these scenes of desperation, none of the 28 nations from the world's wealthiest trade bloc has pledged a single ship, a single plane or a single cent to add to the rescue efforts. With the spring crossing season kicking off, the EU has no relevant legislation in the works, and no emergency meeting on the agenda.

Instead, the EU says it will unveil a migration agenda for discussions by the end of May and draw up a report by Christmas.

The most visible action has come from aid group Doctors Without Borders, which pledged to put medical workers on board a rescue ship beginning in May.

"We are acutely aware that we are only one boat," said Hernan del Valle, the group's head of humanitarian affairs. "It's a tragedy that Europe has turned its back on this problem."

The EU acknowledges it doesn't have a plan for the humanitarian catastrophe. There is no appetite to launch an emergency operation, like Italy did in 2013-14 when migrants started drowning in big numbers.

"We do not have a silver bullet," EU migration spokeswoman Natasha Bertaud said Thursday, citing political and financial constraints. "The European Commission alone cannot do it all."

The 28 EU nations have long argued about how to share the burden that migration places on the continent. Italy, Greece and tiny Malta are bearing the brunt of the influx. Germany and Sweden are accepting large numbers of asylum seekers.

Other countries are doing less. Many EU nations are mired in economic crisis, facing a growing anti-foreigner electorate at home and an increasing bent to look inward instead of out to the wider world.

The EU's own institutions, so often the first target of scorn, are hamstrung unless the member nations agree that forceful action should be taken.

That leaves migrants and asylum seekers — driven chiefly by poverty and conflict — on their own.

On Tuesday, survivors of a capsizing told the aid group Save the Children that some 400 of their shipmates were missing. On Thursday, the International Organization for Migrants said 41 more were feared drowned in another shipwreck, citing four survivors rescued by a helicopter after four days adrift at sea.

The EU's top migration official, Dimitris Avramopoulos, said such events are "unfortunately the new norm and we will need to adjust our responses accordingly."

According to the UN's refugee agency, 219,000 refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean last year, and at least 3,500 died trying. The numbers crossing in the first two months of 2015 were already up by a third over the same span the previous year, according to the EU's Frontex border agency.

Many migrants pay thousands of euros to be shoe-horned by smugglers onto old boats and rafts on the coast of conflict-torn Libya and pointed toward Europe. If they are rescued, the EU lets them stay while their cases are assessed — by which time many have settled in Europe.

The EU has of course spent money on defending its borders — it spends 90 million euros (\$96 million) a year on its Frontex border agency, whose widely criticized Operation Triton program is designed to control the EU's territorial waters, not to rescue people. Unlike Italy's Mare Nostrum program, which was closed last year because it was expensive and politically unpopular, Triton does not patrol close to the Libyan coast to pick up migrants in need.

Today, other than the Italian, Greek and Maltese coast guards, only three aircraft and six ships from European nations are patrolling the Mediterranean.

The EU has limited its response to providing opportunities for migrants who want to come legally, including better protection for refugees, special permits for certain kinds of migrants and steps to thwart smugglers.

EU interior ministers agreed last month that Frontex should be beefed up. Yet nobody came forward with a firm offer to contribute.

The discussions continue — but they are slow. After a report that the European Parliament says will be ready by Christmas, the policy discussions will certainly still be going this time next year.

"We managed politically and on the ground to almost eradicate piracy off the Somali coast," said Roberta Metsola, an EU lawmaker from Malta. "Can we not see what resources we have ... get to the Mediterranean and use those resources to save lives?"

Raf Casert in Brussels contributed to this report.

119,42

Europe Should Back Action to Protect Migrants in Mediterranean: Mogherini

By REUTERS APRIL 19, 2015, 8:36 A.M. E.D.T.

BRUSSELS — European governments should support action to protect migrants in the Mediterranean after one of the worst migrant boat disasters at the weekend, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said.

As many as 700 people were feared dead after a fishing boat packed with migrants capsized off the Libyan coast overnight.

"We have said too many times 'never again'. Now is time for the European Union as such to tackle these tragedies without delay," Mogherini, an Italian, said in a statement.

Many EU governments are reluctant to fund rescue operations in the Mediterranean for fear of encouraging more people to make the crossing in search of a better life in Europe.

In indirect criticism of northern European Union countries that have so far left rescue operations to southern states such as Italy, Mogherini said: "We need to save human lives all together, as all together we need to protect our borders and to fight the trafficking of human beings."

EU foreign ministers will discuss the issue at a meeting in Luxembourg, Mogherini said.

The European Commission, the EU executive, has warned that setting up an EU search and rescue operation in the Mediterranean will take time.

But the Commission said in a statement on Sunday that the situation could no longer be ignored. The Commission said it was consulting with EU governments, European agencies and international organizations to draw up a new migration strategy in May.

Commission spokeswoman Natasha Bertaud told reporters on Thursday: "We almost brace ourselves in the knowledge that it will only get worse in the weeks and months to come, notably as the weather improves and the instability and conflict in our neighborhood endure."

119,43

Europe Swamped With Crush of Migrants Arriving by Land, Sea

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS MARCH 5, 2015, 11:28 A.M. E.S.T.

MADRID — The European Union is immersed in a full-fledged migration crisis.

Some officials are even floating the idea of a multinational border guard to deal with the hundreds of thousands arriving from war-torn countries like Syria, poor nations in Africa and non-EU neighbors like Kosovo.

With no signs the flow will let up anytime soon, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Zeid Raad al-Hussein, said Thursday that dealing with migration "cries out for more thoughtful and coordinated action" between EU countries.

"The notion of ghost ships drifting on autopilot toward the coasts of Europe in the hopes that coast guards will rescue the people on board and the hideous sight of men and women tearing their flesh on barbed-wire fences in a desperate, and sometimes lethal, attempt to clamber into Europe and find a better, more peaceful life: Such scenes are simply intolerable," Zeid said in Geneva.

Here's a look at Europe's migration crisis:

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TAKING TO THE SEAS

Italy has turned into the prime human smuggling route into Europe because its southern island of Lampedusa lies just 290 kilometers (180 miles) from the coast of lawless Libya, where the absence of a functioning government is feeding a thriving trade in human trafficking.

Migrants and asylum seekers pay thousands of dollars each to climb into unseaworthy boats or rubber rafts to try to cross the Mediterranean. Migrants say the armed Libya-based smugglers, who often advertise on social media, are ruthless — some have forced their human cargo to leave even when seas are dangerously rough.

An astonishing 170,000 made the journey to Italy last year, most rescued at sea by Italy's coast guard and navy and cargo ships — and the torrent has only increased since January. On Wednesday, a flotilla of ships saved more than 1,000 migrants while 10 others died, some of the hundreds or more who die or drown annually on the route.

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ITALY SAYS 'WHERE'S THE HELP?'

For years, Italy has been urging the European Union to help stem the flow of migrants with more ships, aircraft or funding — pointing out that most of those rescued intend to reach relatives or jobs in other European countries.

This year, an EU patrol mission known as Triton replaced Italy's Mare Nostrum air and sea mission that had saved tens of thousands of lives. But the U.N. and some refugee organizations have called for renewed humanitarian patrols of the Mediterranean, arguing that Triton only monitors European waters and the southernmost borders.

"We are facing the worst crisis in a long time in the European Union," Matthias Ruete, the head of the EU's migration office, told EU lawmakers on Wednesday. "I think we have lost at the moment the European citizen, in terms of having faith in the European asylum and migration system."

COMING TO TURKEY, HEADING TO GREECE

Turkey now houses well over 1.5 million refugees from the war in Syria and has spent more than \$5 billion caring for them. But with limited economic opportunities for Arabic-speaking Syrians in Turkey, many are seeking routes into Western Europe — and that means via Greece.

Tens of thousands cross into Greece from Turkey every year — with that number reaching a record of 22,339 people during from July-September last year. Dozens cross by boat to Greek islands almost every day — a flow that has increased since Bulgaria and Greece stepped up monitoring their land borders with Turkey.

WHO CAN BLOCK A GHOST SHIP?

Even though it's not a member of the 28-nation EU, Turkey this week appealed for EU help to combat the phenomenon of "ghost ships." Two cargo ships were picked up in the Mediterranean a few months ago, speeding on autopilot toward the Italian coast with more than 1,000 migrants locked up on board. Authorities had to intervene to keep the ships from crashing into the coast.

The EU has been seeking an explanation from Turkey as to how the ships could have left the southeast port of Mersin and sailed for Italy without Turkish authorities noticing. Turkey's ambassador in Brussels, Selim Yenel, said the cargo ships were operating outside of Turkey's jurisdiction in international waters — and smugglers had ferried the migrants out to them from points along the Turkish coast.

Catching the small feeder boats often "depends on how much intelligence we can gather and then sharing it with our counterparts," Yenel said, adding that "these guys get under the radar, literally."

UP THE BALKAN ROUTE

Coming from as far away as Afghanistan and Syria and as close as economically hard-hit Kosovo, migrants have turned the Hungarian border into a booming illegal transit route. In the last two months alone, thousands a week have been walking through the fields and forests of Serbia to try to slip across the border into Hungary, which is part of the EU's borderless-free zone.

Hungary received 42,800 asylum seekers in 2014, compared with 18,900 in 2013 and just 2,157 in 2012. About half were from Kosovo. The flow has slowed to 100-150 migrants daily over the last several weeks due to tighter border controls and increased cooperation between Serbia, Hungary, Austria and Germany.

STORMING THE FENCES OF SPAIN

Each week last year, hundreds of mostly sub-Saharan African men stormed the towering, barbed-wire fences that separate Spain's North African enclave of Melilla from Morocco. The migrants live in rudimentary camps on a nearby mountain before staging well-organized, pre-dawn attacks on the fences.

At least 2,100 made it across in 70 attempts in 2014, but many more were intercepted by Spanish and Moroccan police. Many are aiming to eventually reach other European countries, in part because Spain's unemployment rate stands at 24 percent and is much higher for immigrants.

Morocco last month cleared out the migrant camps on Mount Gourougou overlooking Melilla, arresting hundreds and shipping many on buses to remote parts of the country. Since then, the number of fence stormings has dropped dramatically.

119,45

Italy Accuses Muslim Migrants of Killing Christians at Sea

By JIM YARDLEY and GAIA PIANIGIANI APRIL 16, 2015

ROME — The Italian police on Thursday charged 15 Muslim men with homicide aggravated by religious hatred after survivors of a migrant boat rescued in the Mediterranean told investigators that the men had menaced Christians on board and thrown a dozen Christians overboard to their deaths.

The arrests were made in Palermo, Sicily, where the police interviewed survivors from a smuggling ship that had departed from the coast of [Libya](#) en route to Europe. In a statement, the Palermo police offered few details but said an argument had broken out on the ship. The assailants, provoked by religious hatred, then tossed 12 Christians overboard, the police said.

The victims came from [Ghana](#) and [Nigeria](#), the police said, while the accused are from Ivory Coast, Mali and Senegal. The police based the charges on interviews with 10 survivors who were brought to Palermo on Wednesday among a group of 100 migrants rescued in the Mediterranean.

Michele Prosperi, a spokesman in Italy for Save the Children, confirmed that members of his organization had interviewed survivors after they arrived at the port of Palermo, but he declined to comment on the group's findings.

Migrants waited to disembark from an Italian Coast Guard ship near Syracuse, Sicily, on Thursday. Their arrival coincided with, but was unrelated to, an announcement by the police that a dozen people had been thrown off a smuggling ship to their deaths. [Credit Carmelo Imbesi/Associated Press](#)

"We provided everything to the authorities as is the protocol," Mr. Prosperi said. "We don't comment when there is such a delicate situation."

For the second consecutive year, Europe is facing a humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean as migrants from Africa and the Middle East flee war and poverty on rickety ships operated by ruthless smuggling rings. Last year, Italian Navy and Coast Guard vessels rescued more than 130,000 migrants.

It is a perilous journey: More than 3,200 migrants are thought to have died at sea last year, and humanitarian groups estimate that more than 500 people have died in the first three and a half months of this year.

Europe is also struggling with how to respond at sea. An Italian rescue program, Mare Nostrum, has been phased out in favor of a European-led program, Triton, that humanitarian groups worry could be much less effective.

The huge number of migrants arriving in Europe has raised concerns that smuggling ships might provide an easy way for terrorists to enter the Continent, a concern that has not yet been borne out. But the possibility of religious hatred onboard the ships would be a new and worrisome development.

"Religion has never been an issue," said Flavio Di Giacomo, a spokesman in Italy for the International Organization for Migration.

Mr. Di Giacomo said reports of arguments and fighting are relatively common on migrant ships, given that hundreds of people jockey for space on badly overcrowded vessels. But he said he had never heard of a case where fighting and persecution erupted along religious lines.

"This is something new," Mr. Di Giacomo said, noting that his group had no information about the allegations. "We have never heard something like this."

119,46

The Opinion Pages | EDITORIAL

Europe's Migration Emergency

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD JULY 14, 2014

Record numbers of migrants are risking perilous crossings by sea to reach Europe's borders. At least 23,000 have died attempting to make it to Europe since the year 2000, and more are dying every week. A new report from Amnesty International puts the blame squarely on "Fortress Europe" migration policies.

A clampdown on border crossings by land has led to a sharp rise in attempts by desperate migrants to reach Europe by sea. Italy has rescued more than 50,000 people since it launched its Mare Nostrum marine rescue operation in October 2013 after 400 migrants drowned in two disasters. Meanwhile, less than one-fifth of the 4 billion euros allocated to border management by the European Commission over the last seven years was devoted to the resettlement and integration of refugees in the European Union, while €2 billion was spent on external border protection.

Many in the E.U. argue that human traffickers are encouraging more people to cross by sea; that the best humanitarian response is preventing them from boarding boats in the first place; and that, in any case, they are economic migrants. The facts, according to Amnesty International, tell a different story. Most migrants are refugees from conflict-torn nations like Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Somalia; going home is not an option. Rounded up en route or turned back at Europe's borders, thousands languish in detention centers, while others are reduced to destitution and subjected to torture and other abuses in countries that do not guarantee their human rights.

There are signs that the new E.U. leadership intends to create a more united approach to migration. Italy is leveraging its new position as rotating president of the European Council to demand that the European border control agency Frontex take over the Mare Nostrum rescue operation, which currently costs €9 million a month. And Jean-Claude Juncker, the new president of the European Commission, is considering adding a new commissioner dedicated to migration.

For this new approach to work, the E.U. must shift its focus to human rights. Coordinated marine search-and-rescue efforts will save more lives, but the E.U. should also create legal avenues for refugees to reach Europe, increase financial assistance to transit countries and refocus Frontex's mission on the humane treatment of migrants who survive the journey to Europe's borders.

119,47

Refugees in the Mediterranean

The worst yet?

Another boat capsizes between Libya and Italy as Europe debates migration policy

Apr 19th 2015 | ROME | [Europe](#)

WHETHER it was the Mediterranean's deadliest refugee drowning in decades remains to be seen. But it was certainly terrible, and its political effects could spread far. One of the survivors of a refugee boat that capsized late on the night of April 18th in the waters between Libya and the Italian island of Lampedusa said that at least 700 people had been on board. Just 28 have been rescued so far. **That would make it by far the worst maritime disaster in the Mediterranean since World War II.**

On April 19th the Italian coast guard sounded a cautionary note on the casualty figures. The boat was just 20 meters long, and while it may have been transporting hundreds of people, it is doubtful whether even the ruthless people-smugglers who dispatch migrants from the Libyan coast could force 700 aboard a vessel of that size. By early afternoon, with 24 bodies recovered, the coast guard said the number of dead might need to be recalculated.

What is beyond doubt, though, is that the migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Europe are dying this year at an unprecedented rate. According to figures released by the Italian interior ministry after the latest disaster, **23,556 people have entered Italy irregularly by sea since January 1st.** That is not a big increase over 2014, when the figure for the same period was 20,800. **But the death toll, according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), has leapt almost tenfold. Even before the latest calamity it stood at 954.**

Why? Apart from worse weather, humanitarian aid officials point to two factors. **One is the suspension last October of Italy's Mare Nostrum search-and-rescue mission.** It was replaced by **Operation Triton**, run by the EU's border control agency, **Frontex**, which has a much narrower remit to patrol Italy's territorial waters and a budget of less than a third that of Mare Nostrum.

The second factor is that the smugglers are cramming more and more people on ever more vulnerable craft as they run short of boats. Twice this year, armed smugglers have forcibly taken back boats used to transport migrants and asylum-seekers after their passengers were rescued by other vessels—a sure sign that the boats are becoming more valuable. In the second incident, which took place last Monday, the smugglers fired shots in the air before recovering a wooden craft about 60 nautical miles (111km) from the Libyan coast.

Frontex's executive director, **Fabrice Leggeri**, said last month that **"anywhere between 500,000 to a million people" were ready to leave from Libya.** That would not be surprising: **Libya has lapsed into anarchy since the overthrow of Colonel Muammar Qaddafi in 2011.** It has become an especially hellish place for sub-Saharan migrants, who report being robbed, kidnapped and confined to detention centers, where men are often beaten and women raped. **But the shortage of boats suggests that a decreasing proportion of those wanting to leave for Europe will be able to do so—and those who do will face an increasingly perilous journey.**

What to do? The European Union's response so far has been remarkably languid. The latest disaster may at last spur it into action. Mr Leggeri has asked for more resources from the EU. And the leaders of member states may be now be prepared to consider a wider remit for Operation Triton. **It would foolish to imagine that the migrants and asylum-seekers will stop coming. In lawless Libya and in the migrants' countries of origin—Syria, Eritrea, Somalia, Mali—the factors pushing them to gamble their lives on a sea crossing to Italy are still in place.**

119,48

Die EU und die Flüchtlinge

Operation Massengrab

Die EU scheitert nicht nur an einer gerechten Verteilung der ankommenden Flüchtlinge. Sie ist auch nicht in der Lage, vor ihren Küsten Menschen zu retten. Die eingestellte Marine-Aktion „Mare Nostrum“ droht zur Operation „Massengrab“ zu werden.

19.04.2015, von REINHARD MÜLLER

Es ist ein Massensterben vor Europas Toren: Beinahe täglich ertrinken Menschen im Mittelmeer auf ihrem Weg in die Europäische Union. Die Opfer sind nicht ohne Namen, aber die kennt man nur auf dem Kontinent ihrer Herkunft – auf dem Kontinent ihrer Träume sind die Toten in Meldungen mit mehrstelligen Zahlen verborgen.

Wenn sie Opfer sind, gibt es auch Täter? Gewiss die erbarmungslosen Schleuser, die den Flüchtlingen erst alles abnehmen und sie dann ohne Aussicht auf Ankunft aufs Meer schicken. Diese Banden sind die verbrecherischen Vollstrecker eines großen Drangs nach Europa. **Die EU trägt zweifellos Verantwortung für das, was an ihren Rändern und darüber hinaus geschieht. Sie will ja Weltpolitik machen – nur am „Gemeinsamen“ ihrer Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik wie auch ihrer Asylpolitik, da hapert es. Sie scheitert nicht nur an einer gerechten Verteilung der angekommenen Flüchtlinge, obwohl sich dazu alle Staaten verpflichtet haben. Und sie ist nicht dazu in der Lage, vor ihren Küsten Menschen zu retten. Aus der eingestellten Marine-Aktion „Mare Nostrum“ droht die Operation „Massengrab“ zu werden.**

Doch es ist nicht zynisch festzustellen, dass **auch eine große europäische Seenotrettungsflotte vor der afrikanischen Küste die Ursachen der oft tödlichen Massenflucht nicht beseitigt. Diese Ursachen liegen in Afrika und anderen Krisenherden.** Auch das entbindet natürlich Europa nicht von seiner Verantwortung, die sich aus historischen Gründen, dem eigenen Anspruch und seiner konkreten Politik ergibt – einer Sicherheits- und Wirtschaftspolitik, die immer wieder überprüft werden muss. **Sie sollte darüber nachdenken, etwa Anträge nicht erst in Europa entgegenzunehmen. Doch Vorschläge, Flüchtlinge noch auf afrikanischem Boden unterzubringen, waren schon deshalb zum Scheitern verurteilt, weil das Wort „Lager“ deutschen Politikern offenbar verboten ist.**

Es geht allerdings auch nicht an, Europa zum Hauptschuldigen einer Art Massenmord zu machen: **Wo sind die Aufschreie afrikanischer Staatsführer, wo ihre Sofortprogramme zur Verhinderung des Ausblutens ihres Kontinents? Die Anklage, Europa sei für alles Elend verantwortlich, ist auch eine Art von neuem Kolonialismus. Das hat Afrika nicht verdient.**

119,49

The Mediterranean Refugee Crisis

Joseph V. Micallef

Best Selling Military History and World Affairs Author and Keynote Speaker

Posted: 04/18/2015 10:44 am EDT Updated: 04/18/2015 6:59 pm EDT

The civil wars that are tearing apart Libya and Syria are precipitating yet another humanitarian crisis as boat loads of desperate refugees attempt to cross the Mediterranean in order to seek asylum in the European Community. Italy, Greece and Malta are bearing the brunt of the rapidly escalating crisis of "Mediterranean Boat People."

In 2014, a total of 219 thousand refugees were rescued as they attempted to cross the Mediterranean to Europe from Africa and the Middle East. In the eastern Mediterranean the refugees were principally Syrians fleeing the fighting in their homeland. In the central Mediterranean, the refugees included Libyans fleeing their civil war but also a broad assortment of refugees from sub-Saharan Africa departing from Libya as a result of the complete breakdown of Libyan border controls.



Syrian Refugee Camp, Za'atri Jordan

The central Mediterranean, where the eastern and western basins of this inland sea meet, is the most popular route as the distance between the North African shore and Sicily is only about 300 miles. This is generally a two to three day journey. Moreover, the Italian island of Lampedusa is only 184 miles to the northwest of Tripoli while the island of Malta, the European Union's smallest member, is only 222 miles to the northeast. The distance from Tunis to Trapani, Sicily's closest port, is only 96 miles.

Between April 10 and 16, over 10,000 refugees were rescued by Italian naval vessels. The highest weekly number to date. An additional 400 refugees drowned while attempting the crossing. Since the beginning of the year at least 900 refugees have died while escaping from North Africa. The actual number is believed to be much higher. The death toll in the comparable period last year was 17 refugees and 3,500 over the entire year.

Much of the activity is being organized by criminal gangs that are charging exorbitant rates, often times exceeding \$3,000 per head, and filling boats with little consideration of their capacity or seaworthiness. Refugees are often rescued suffering from extreme dehydration and sunstroke. There are no life jackets.

The standing room only shipboard conditions, and the lack of medical or sanitation facilities, means that disease can spread like wildfire even on the relatively short crossing. Typically, the organizers radio a plea for assistance as soon as the boats are 30 or so miles off the Libyan coast.



Maltese Protector Class Patrol Boats, Maritime Squadron, Armed Forces Malta

Malta, 122 square miles in size and whose population numbers only 350,000, has been, proportionally, the hardest hit of the countries bearing the brunt of the Mediterranean refugee crisis. In 2014, Maltese authorities rescued 17,000 refugees, a figure equivalent to roughly 5 percent of its population. That's the equivalent of having 17 million refugees landing on American shores.

In October 2013, in response to the sinking of a refugee laden ship off of Lampedusa, which resulted in the deaths of 360 people, the Italian government launched operation Mare Nostrum. The program deployed Italian navy ships in the international waters between Libya and Sicily in order to intercept refugee boats.

The operation consisted of a total of 32 Italian naval vessels, averaging five ships on station at any one time. They intercepted a total of 420 boats carrying a total of 150,810 refugees. The operation lasted from October 2013 through November 2014, and cost approximately eight million euros per month. That cost was largely borne by the Italian government. An additional 50,000 refugees were rescued by commercial ships in the Mediterranean.



North African Refugees Being Disembarked From an Italian Coast Guard Vessel in Sicily

The program was criticized by a number of European Community members who argued that Italian willingness to rescue the refugees would only encourage more refugees to attempt the dangerous crossing. In November 2014, Rome announced the launch of Project Triton. This is a more modest program designed to intercept refugee ships when they approached within 30 miles of Sicily.

With summer rapidly approaching and the political situation in Libya spiraling increasingly out of control, there is widespread fear among Italian and Maltese authorities that they will be overwhelmed by a tidal wave of new refugees. Italian authorities estimate that approximately 500,000 refugees will attempt to make a crossing from North Africa this year. With anti-immigration sentiment on the rise within Europe, the EU has been ambivalent about tackling the issue.

There is also a mounting concern that jihadist groups in Libya will attempt to infiltrate militants into Malta and Italy, and from there elsewhere into the EU, posing as refugees. Many of the refugees rescued have little in the way of documentation and many refuse to disclose their nationality for fear of being deported back to their home countries.

Islamic State has claimed that it has smuggled over 4,000 militants into Europe disguised as refugees. While this number is probably exaggerated, it is likely that some number of jihadist militants posing as refugees have already entered Europe.

In addition there is mounting evidence that jihadist groups, especially in eastern Libya, are using refugee smuggling as a lucrative source of funds either by providing protection to the smugglers or by taking over the activity themselves. At roughly one million dollars per boatload of refugees, the "trade" in refugee smuggling is worth around 500 million dollars.

With little prospect of political stability in Libya, and with continuing unrest in the Sahel region and central Africa, from Mauritania to the Gulf of Guinea, and across Mali, Chad and the Sudan all the way to Somalia, the flood tide of refugees shows little signs of slowing down. Unless the European Community and the United Nations act quickly to bring some order to this situation, what began as a humanitarian crisis will quickly spiral into a catastrophe.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/katie-hopkins-on-lbc-hear-the-sun-columnist-left-grasping-at-insults-after-one-caller-takes-hateful-migrant-comments-to-task-10187792.html>

AUDIO

119,51

Katie Hopkins on LBC: Hear The Sun columnist left grasping at insults after one caller takes 'hateful' migrant comments to task



The Twitter villain was left searching for words during her radio show after Ronkey from Greenwich called in and forced her into an ad break

JENN SELBY 

Many who read [Katie Hopkins'](#) Sun column, in which she described migrants as “cockroaches” and suggested we turn “gunships” on boats full of refugees fleeing humanitarian disasters to stop them landing in the UK, were left outraged by her comments.

So much so, [a petition calling for her sacking from the tabloid is gathering pace](#) at a rate almost as alarming as the topic of her piece itself, potentially on course to knock the Bring Back Jeremy Clarkson campaign off of [Change.org's](#) fastest growing No.1 spot.

Radio station LBC thought they'd cash in on the troll-for-hire's publicity-courting racism by [organising a special slot for her to debate the “refugee crisis”](#), just as news of a major rescue operation to save the lives of [700 people on a capsized ship in the Mediterranean](#).

And, much to their delight, her remarks were predictably as inflammatory as her column had been. The best way to solve the problem? [Burn all the boats in north Africa “in a huge bonfire”](#).

The majority of the callers put through to Hopkins seemed to be admirers of her work. Those that weren't were quickly cut off, or rushed into an ad break.

119,52



Features; Opinion Column

Rescue boats? I'd use gunships to stop migrants

17 avril 2015

NO, I don't care. Show me pictures of coffins, show me bodies floating in water, play violins and show me skinny people looking sad.

I still don't care. Because in the next minute you'll show me pictures of aggressive young men at Calais, spreading like norovirus on a cruise ship.

Watching them try to clamber on to British lorries and steal their way into the UK, do I feel pity? Only for the British drivers, who get hit with a fine every time one of this plague of feral humans ends up in their truck.

Understand this, these two populations are the same. The migrants harassing Brit truckers at the port are the same as the vagrants making the perilous trip across the Med.

And there is no stopping them. 170,000 came last year. During a recent operation by the Italian coastguard to **rescue** migrants off the coast of Libya, the people traffickers threatened crew with Kalashnikovs to get their vessel back.

Clearly, **boats** are in short supply. And that is a good thing. No **boats**, no migrants. There is a simple solution to this. It's time for the Italians to stop singing opera, drinking espresso and looking chic in chuffing everything.

It's time to get Australian.

Australians are like British people but with balls of steel, can-do brains, tiny hearts and whacking great **gunships**.

Their approach to migrant **boats** is the sort of approach we need in the Med.

They threaten them with violence until they bugger off, throwing cans of Castlemaine in an Aussie version of sharia stoning.

And their approach is working. Migrant **boats** have halved in number since Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott got tough.

We don't need another **rescue** project. The now defunct £7million-a-month Mare Nostrum — Italy's navy search and **rescue** operation — was paid for (in part) by British taxpayers. And we don't need a campaign from Save the Children to encourage more migrants to take the journey.

What we need are **gunships** sending these **boats** back to their own country.

You want to make a better life for yourself? Then you had better get creative in Northern Africa.

Britain is not El Dorado. We are not Elysium. Some of our towns are festering sores, plagued by swarms of migrants and asylum seekers, shelling out benefits like Monopoly money.

They are survivors.

Once **gunships** have driven them back to their shores, **boats** need to be confiscated and burned on a huge bonfire. Drilling a few holes in the bottom of anything suspiciously resembling a boat would be a good idea, too, just for belt and braces.

Unless we take the emotion out of this and start connecting the migrants in the Med with the Africans clinging to trucks in Calais, we cannot deliver an appropriate response.

If you think **rescue boats** are a good idea, you may as well set up a Libya to Italy P&O ferry service and send your taxes to Africa by direct debit for good measure.

Or if you think like me, then it's time to get Australian. Bring on the **gunships**, force migrants back to their shores and burn the **boats**.

As it turns out, I do care. I care passionately about British truckers and taxpayers in the UK.

119,53

Katie Hopkins Defends Turning Back Migrants Even As 700 Drown In The Mediterranean

The Huffington Post UK/AP | By Chris York

Posted: 19/04/2015 10:54 BST Updated: 19/04/2015 13:59 BST

[Katie Hopkins](#) has defended her [hugely controversial article](#) in which she described migrants as cockroaches even as news emerged that 700 people may have drowned overnight after a boat capsized.

Emergency services mounted a major search and rescue operation north of Libya after a ship containing hundreds of migrants trying to reach Italy overturned in the Mediterranean.

Italy's ANSA news agency said an estimated 700 people were aboard and only 28 people had been rescued.

At the same time as the tragedy unfolded, Hopkins was given a slot on LBC Radio to debate her position that gunships should be used to turn such boats back to their country of origin.

SEE ALSO: [A Petition To Have Katie Hopkins Fired Over THAT Article Was Inevitable](#)

She said: "Why do we take on everyone else's problems? We can't afford to take on these problems. We need to push these boats back.

"And we should make a huge bonfire from these boats so they can't be used again. If we rescue boats we are perpetuating the problem."

Many callers were sympathetic to her views with one simply saying: "If the boat sinks then tough."

One who disagreed with Hopkins was shut down by the guest host. Hopkins said: "I'm going to shut you down there because it's boring me. Go back to reading your Guardian."



Katie Hopkins writing in Friday's Sun

Here's a reminder of what was in Hopkins' original post...

NO, I don't care. Show me pictures of coffins, show me bodies floating in water, play violins and show me skinny people looking sad.

I still don't care.

Also:

Make no mistake, these migrants are like cockroaches. They might look a bit "Bob Geldof's Ethiopia circa 1984", but they are built to survive a nuclear bomb. They are survivors.

And finally:

It's time to get Australian. Bring on the gunships, force migrants back to their shores and burn the boats.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/katie-hopkins-on-lbc-radio-solve-mediterranean-migrant-crisis--by-making-a-huge-bonfire-of-all-the-boats-in-north-africa-10187531.html>

119,54

Katie Hopkins on LBC Radio: 'Solve Mediterranean migrant crisis by making a huge bonfire of all the boats in north Africa'



Controversial *Sun* columnist hosts debate on refugee crisis in the Med as it emerges 700 migrants are feared dead in latest incident off coast of Italy's Lampedusa

ADAM WITHNALL 

SUNDAY 19 APRIL 2015

As [a major rescue operation was underway to save the lives of 700 people on a capsized ship in the Mediterranean](#), [Katie Hopkins](#) has suggested that the best way to solve the issue would be to burn all the boats in north Africa.

The news emerging overnight that another migrant ship had got into difficulties on route from Libya to Italy came as the controversial *Sun* columnist prepared to host her first radio talk-show on LBC.

She predictably made the topic her key talking point - and while a number of callers attempted to offer a range of views on the debate of what is done be done about the ongoing refugee crisis, Hopkins was far from an impartial host.

Hopkins wrote earlier this week in *The Sun* that instead of being rescued by European coastal authorities, the migrants should be turned back with "gunships".

And she went further on Sunday morning, suggesting that the flow of people should be stopped at source in north Africa by "mak[ing] a huge bonfire of all the boats they have".

A number of callers challenged Hopkins' views, with one - who was promptly cut off - saying that Western governments had done much to contribute to the wider problems of north Africa and should take some responsibility.

Another caller, Hussein, repeatedly rejected Hopkins' attempts to paint him as someone who came to Britain "to work".

"I came here to save my life," he said. "Why are you judging people for wanting to escape war?"

"I came here first to be safe and then I got a job and now I'm contributing. How can we judge these migrants who have seen rape and murder?"

But more callers appeared to agree with Hopkins, some suggesting refugees should "go through the normal channels if they want to come to Europe", others saying Britain should "send the Army over" to Calais to sort things out.

Others have praised Hopkins for at least bringing the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean to wider attention, while some were critical of LBC for giving her a platform at all.

119,55

UK General Election: Nigel Farage says David Cameron must take some responsibility for migrant deaths in Mediterranean

The Ukip leader said more migrants were coming to Europe since Gaddafi was ousted following British and French airstrikes

BEN TUFFT

SUNDAY 19 APRIL 2015

David Cameron must take some responsibility for the deaths of hundreds of migrants in the Mediterranean because of his decision to seek regime change in Libya, Nigel Farage has said.

The Ukip leader blamed the increasing number of migrants fleeing from Libya on the instability in the country, following western-led airstrikes, championed by the Prime Minister and other European leaders, which led to the toppling of leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

Mr Farage claimed it was the “European response” that created the initial problem.

“The fanaticism of Sarkozy and Cameron to bomb Libya – what they have done is to completely destabilise Libya, to turn it into a country of much savagery and a place where for Christians the situation is virtually impossible,” he said on the BBC’s Sunday Politics Programme.

“We ought to be honest and say we have directly caused this problem.

“There were no migrants coming across from Libya in these quantities before we bombed the country and got rid of Gaddafi, however bad he may have been, and destabilised the whole situation,” the leader added.

The remarks come the day after a boat carrying about 700 migrants sank off the coast of Libya, as it was on route to the Italian island of Lampedusa in the Mediterranean.

António Guterres, the UN’s high commissioner for refugees, insisted that the problem was one of anti-immigration rhetoric and a lack of resources.

He said the latest tragedy demonstrated “how important it is to have a robust rescue-at-sea mechanism, in the central Mediterranean”.

In November last year Italy’s Mare Nostrum programme was replaced by the EU-wide Frontex Plus mission, with much reduced funding and scope.

“Unfortunately Mare Nostrum was never replaced by an equivalent capacity to rescue people, and at the same time the legal avenues for those who need protection to be able to come Europe,” the high commissioner added.

Mr Farage made clear that he had “no problem” in allowing Christians to settle in the UK who had suffered persecution in the Middle East.

119,56

Europa darf das Flüchtlingselend nicht länger dulden

MEINUNG

ASYLPOLITIK

19.04.15

Die Meldungen über im Mittelmeer ertrinkende Flüchtlinge häufen sich wieder. Europa wird um eine humanitäre Intervention in Nord-Afrika nicht umhinkommen. Es ist höchste Zeit dafür.

Von [Alan Posener](#) Korrespondent für Politik und Gesellschaft

Wenn es um die Menschen geht, die in steigender Zahl im Mittelmeer ertrinken, hat Europa anscheinend nur **die Wahl zwischen zynischem Realismus und naivem Idealismus.**

Der Realismus gebietet anzuerkennen, dass die meisten keine politisch Verfolgten, sondern die Opfer krimineller Schlepperbanden sind; dass sie keine Aussicht auf Asyl haben; dass die illegale Einwanderung aus Afrika – Syrien ist ein Problem für sich – einzelne EU-Länder jetzt schon überfordert und Populisten zunehmend Zulauf verschafft; und dass humanitäre Rettungsaktionen paradoxerweise noch mehr Menschen den Schleppern in die Arme treiben.

Der Idealismus gebietet anzuerkennen, dass niemand ohne Not sein Leben und das seiner Familie riskiert, und dass Europa seine eigenen Werte verrät, wenn es zynisch den Tod Zehntausender als Abschreckung einkalkuliert.

Failed-States in der Region erschweren jede Lösung

Was ist also zu tun? Elf Jahre und [Zehntausende Tote](#) ist es her, dass der damalige Bundesinnenminister Otto Schily (SPD) die Einrichtung von Auffanglagern in Nordafrika vorschlug und dafür aus allen Parteien Häme erntete. Nun hat Bundesinnenminister Thomas de Maizière (CDU) den Vorschlag wieder aufgegriffen. Gut so.

Freilich sind die praktischen Schwierigkeiten im vergangenen, verschenkten Jahrzehnt weiter gewachsen. **Die Intervention in Libyen hat zum Zusammenbruch des Staates und zur weiteren, katastrophalen Destabilisierung der Region geführt.**

Heute [operieren die Schlepper](#) nicht nur dort nahezu ungehindert. Ohne Wiederherstellung von Staatlichkeit in Libyen kann weder der Menschenhandel eingedämmt noch der Plan de Maizières in die Tat umgesetzt werden.

Hier gilt es auch, den zugleich EU- und fremdenfeindlichen Populisten entgegenzutreten. Denn nur gemeinsames europäisches Handeln – von der Verstärkung der Grenzagentur Frontex über die Stabilisierung der südlichen Anrainerstaaten des Mittelmeers, Handelserleichterungen und Hilfen für Afrika bis hin zu Auffanglagern außerhalb Europas und Soforthilfe für Italien und andere vom Ansturm der [Verzweifelten](#) überwältigten Länder – **bietet die realistische Chance, zugleich effektiv als auch unter Wahrung unserer Werte den Migranten und uns selbst zu helfen.**

119,57

AUDIO: Hundreds Missing As Migrant Boat Sinks Off Libya

APRIL 19, 2015 7:45 AM ET

RACHEL MARTIN, HOST:

This is WEEKEND EDITION from NPR News. I'm Rachel Martin. There's a major rescue operation under way today in the Mediterranean Sea between Italy and Libya. That's where a boat carrying as many as 700 migrants capsized this morning. It's one of the worst disasters in what has become a migrant crisis in Europe. Today, Pope Francis appealed to the international community to take action to prevent future tragedies. He told thousands gathered in St. Peter's Square, quote, "they are men and women like us, our brothers and sisters seeking a better life."

For more on this, we've called Adrian Edwards from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva, Switzerland. Mr. Edwards, can you give us any more information on the ongoing rescue operation? What's the latest?

ADRIAN EDWARDS: The latest information we have is that 28 people have been rescued. There are about 20 ships, including Italian Maltese Naval vessels plus fishing ships, merchant vessels and several helicopters in attendance. There are many, many bodies in the water. We are hoping that there'll be word of further survivors amongst them, but it's really a great concern. If the numbers being reported dead, which is up to 700 people - if that's confirmed, we're looking at the biggest single tragedy we've seen on the Mediterranean.

MARTIN: Can you give us some context? I mean, these are people who are fleeing Libya, which has been a conflict zone for a long time. But this is not the first time this number of migrants has tried to make this journey.

EDWARDS: There have been, over the past 18 months or so, a big increase in the numbers of people trying to reach Europe via the Mediterranean. And that reflects, unfortunately, both a migrant issue and, increasingly, a refugee issue as well. In 2014, about half of those who crossed the Mediterranean - and there was almost 220,000 people who crossed the Mediterranean last year - almost half were from refugee-producing countries - Syria, Somalia, Eritrea, other countries. So sadly, what we're seeing reflects the very increased level of conflict worldwide and the very high numbers of refugees there currently are. Libya's situation compounds it because Libya, with insecurity, with lawlessness, has been almost a perfect environment for the growth of smuggling - of people smuggling networks that are facilitating these flows. So today, we're seeing the vast majority of all the crossings of the Mediterranean coming from Libya. This is people both who are migrating and people fleeing literally for their lives.

MARTIN: What's the European reaction been to this particular disaster and to this crisis in general? And what can the governments there do?

EDWARDS: Well, certainly in the cases of Italy and Malta, which are involved in the rescue operations, there have been what looks like an impressive initial response. We have to see, though, of course how many people are brought to life from the waters. More widely with Europe, the issue has been getting sufficient agreement from a robust search and rescue mechanism for the central Mediterranean. At the end of 2014, Italy's Mare Nostrum Operation, which had been a rescue operation set up in the aftermath of a 2013 disaster off the island of Lampedusa - that operation, which had saved thousands of lives last year, came to an end. It was replaced by a smaller operation, which really has a different focus than just search and rescue. So we are in a situation now - we're seeing higher numbers of people crossing the Mediterranean, more people dying, but there have been cuts in investment in search and rescue. We think that's something that has to be referred rapidly, and it's something we're working with European governments to achieve. But clearly there's work to be done to try and make inroads into that.

MARTIN: Adrian Edwards from the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva. Thank you so much.

EDWARDS: Thank you too, Rachel.

119,58

Bootsunglück im Mittelmeer

Schulz wirft EU-Ländern Tatenlosigkeit vor

EU-Parlamentspräsident Martin Schulz prangert den „Unwillen der Hauptstädte“ in der Flüchtlingspolitik an: „Nichts bewegt sich“, sagt er nach der Tragödie im Mittelmeer, bei der hunderte Menschen starben. „Wir müssen erkennen, dass wir ein Einwanderungsgebiet sind und eine legale, geordnete Einwanderungspolitik benötigen.“

20.04.2015

Nach der neuerlichen Flüchtlingstragödie im Mittelmeer mit hunderten Todesopfern hat der Präsident des EU-Parlaments, Martin Schulz (SPD), ein Umsteuern bei der europäischen Flüchtlingspolitik gefordert. „Wir können nicht an dem Symptom weiter herumdoktern, sondern müssen erkennen, dass wir ein Einwanderungsgebiet sind und eine legale, geordnete Einwanderungspolitik benötigen“, sagte Schulz in der Montagsausgabe des „Kölner Stadt-Anzeigers“. Er macht vor allem die Mitgliedsstaaten verantwortlich: „Nichts bewegt sich. Und das liegt nicht an der EU, sondern am Unwillen der Hauptstädte der EU-Mitgliedsstaaten. Nicht aller, aber einiger“, sagte Schulz.

„Wie viel muss eigentlich noch passieren, damit es dort endlich begriffen wird?“, kritisierte der EU-Parlamentspräsident. Als konkrete Maßnahmen forderte er, mit einer Regierung der Nationalen Einheit in Libyen eine Regelung zu treffen, um Flüchtlinge mit Ziel Europa „davon abzuhalten, sich in ein unkalkulierbares Risiko zu stürzen“. Außerdem werde ein effektiver Küstenschutz benötigt, um die organisierten Schleppernetzwerke zu bekämpfen. Schulz mahnte an, die Ursachen der Flüchtlingskatastrophen zu bekämpfen. Dies bedeute auch, gescheiterten Staaten in Afrika Mittel zur Verfügung zu stellen, damit die Menschen nicht das Land verlassen müssten.

In der Nacht zum Sonntag **war rund 110 Kilometer vor der Küste Libyens ein Flüchtlingsschiff gekentert**. Nach Angaben des UN-Flüchtlingshilfswerks UNHCR waren rund 700 Menschen an Bord, von denen nur 28 gerettet werden konnten. Nach Angaben eines Überlebenden befanden sich sogar 950 Flüchtlinge an Bord, darunter 50 Kinder. Die Außenminister der EU-Staaten wollen an diesem Montag bei einem Treffen in Luxemburg über die europäische Flüchtlingspolitik beraten. EU-Außenbeauftragte Federica Mogherini hatte das Thema **nach dem Unglück auf die Tagesordnung gesetzt**. EU-Ratspräsident Donald Tusk erwägt unterdessen die Einberufung eines EU-Sondergipfels auf Ebene der Sondergipfel der Staats- und Regierungschefs. Derzeit stehe er dazu mit verschiedenen Seiten in Gesprächen, erklärte Tusk am Sonntagabend via Twitter.

Der stellvertretende SPD-Vorsitzende Ralf Stegner warnte in der „Berliner Zeitung“ vom Montag, Europa dürfe „nicht immer mehr zur Festung werden, vor deren Mauern Menschen sterben“. Auch er forderte mehr Engagement der EU in den Herkunftsländern der Flüchtlinge und den Transitländern wie Libyen. Außerdem brauche es aber auch „endlich legale Möglichkeiten der Einwanderung nach Europa, um Menschen den oft tödlichen Seeweg zu ersparen“. Der Linken-Fraktionsvize Jan Korte sagte dem Blatt: „Wenn die EU weiterhin auf reine Abschreckungsmaßnahmen setzt, muss sie sich den Vorwurf der unterlassenen Hilfeleistung gefallen lassen.“

Die Grünen kritisierten, dass sich die Bundesregierung in der EU für ein Auslaufen der italienischen Seenot-Rettungsmission „Mare Nostrum“ vergangenes Jahr eingesetzt hatte. „Die italienische Marine hätte dem gekenterten Boot mit Mare Nostrum schneller und effektiver helfen können“, sagte die Sprecherin für Flüchtlingspolitik der Grünen, Luise Amtsberg, der „Berliner Zeitung“. „Trotz der grausamen Ereignisse sieht die Bundesregierung aber ihren Fehler nicht ein.“

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/20/opinion/europes-duty-on-migrants.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=c-column-top-span-region®ion=c-column-top-span-region&WT.nav=c-column-top-span-region&_r=0

119,59

Europe's Duty on Migrants

APRIL 19, 2015

Editorial

The high season of migration from Africa to Europe has begun, bringing with it a new wave of tragic drownings in the Mediterranean. Last year, more than 3,200 people died crossing the Mediterranean. This year, 900 people have already drowned, and on Saturday a boat carrying hundreds more capsized in the Mediterranean north of Libya. Unless Europe acts to reform its policy on migration, 2015 could be the deadliest year yet for the thousands of people who fled to Libya from conflict-torn regions across the Middle East and Africa, only to find Libya equally dangerous.

Obviously Europe is the safer place to be. But migrants cannot request legal asylum in Europe unless they actually set foot on European soil. This makes them easy prey for well-organized smugglers who offer passage across the Mediterranean - for a price, and on unseaworthy boats.

Italy's Mare Nostrum marine rescue program, created after more than 350 people drowned off Lampedusa in October 2013, rescued 130,000 people last year. But the program was too costly for Italy to continue, and was replaced in January by the much smaller European Triton border patrol program. Triton's budget is only one-third what Mare Nostrum's was, and operates only within 30 nautical miles of Europe's shores. Fortunately, the Italian coast guard and navy have stepped in and continue to patrol waters near Libya, but they cannot handle the current influx without more help. An astonishing 8,480 migrants were rescued last weekend alone.

Europe's border security agency, Frontex, says that between 500,000 and one million migrants are massed in Libya waiting to set forth for Europe, compared to the 170,000 who arrived in Europe by sea last year. But those figures have been challenged, and in any case the argument that Europe simply can't afford to take in any more migrants from the Middle East and Africa is also suspect: Turkey has taken in 1.7 million Syrians; Lebanon another 1.2 million.

The European Commission is expected to unveil a new policy in May aimed at sharing the burden among member states, finding more legal avenues for people to come to Europe and **setting up immigration screening centers in Africa and the Middle East**. The key is to get all 28 member states to support and finance these reforms. With no coherent policy and woefully insufficient funding, lives are needlessly being put at risk, and the European Union's humanitarian values are exposed as meaningless.

119,60

Fabrice Leggeri: «Cela dépasse désormais les questions migratoires»

Par Jean-Jacques Mevel, Service infographie du Figaro Publié le 19/04/2015 à 19:34

LE FRANÇAIS **Fabrice Leggeri**, ancien des ministères de la Défense et de l'Intérieur, dirige depuis trois mois Frontex, la petite agence européenne de coordination aux frontières et de contrôle de l'immigration. Il explique au *Figaro* que la situation en Libye, où s'organisent **les** trafics d'être humains, « *requiert d'utiliser d'autres ressorts, à l'échelon de la politique et de la sécurité internationales* » .

LE FIGARO. - La catastrophe humanitaire qui s'accélère entre la Libye et l'Italie est-elle encore contrôlable ? Pour stopper l'hécatombe, faut-il dépêcher plus de moyens de secours européens en Méditerranée centrale ?

Fabrice LEGGERI. - Le bilan des deux naufrages de ces derniers jours reste à vérifier, mais il est sûr que la pression migratoire venue de Libye est de plus en plus forte, sur fond de violence accrue. **Les** pays de l'UE ont confié à Frontex une mission de contrôle des frontières et de surveillance maritime. Le secours en mer, c'est une autre affaire : c'est du ressort des États. L'Italie l'a fait en 2014, avec son opération militaire « Mare Nostrum » . Quelque 170 000 migrants ont ainsi été récupérés et débarqués en Italie. Oui, il faut porter secours à ceux qui sont en danger. Oui, il faut accorder le droit d'asile à ceux qui seraient menacés s'ils étaient renvoyés chez eux, en Syrie, en Somalie ou en Érythrée. Mais il y a un troisième impératif, contradictoire : ne pas faire le jeu de trafiquants impitoyables, prêts à forcer **les** migrants à s'embarquer avec un fusil-mitrailleur pointé dans le dos.

La tendance semble exponentielle depuis le début de l'année, après le triplement de l'immigration irrégulière en 2014. La Libye est-elle devenue la plaque tournante ?

Le problème s'est aggravé, avec une hausse de 50 % des passages sur le premier trimestre 2015. Mais il a aussi changé de visage. **Les** migrants qui empruntent la route libyenne viennent **désormais** d'Afrique subsaharienne, et d'Afrique occidentale francophone. Et non plus de Syrie ou d'Irak. La Libye joue le rôle d' « aspirateur » pour le reste de l'Afrique. La plupart sont des migrants « économiques » , qui peuvent et doivent être renvoyés chez eux.

Combien sont-ils à attendre en Libye ?

Plusieurs centaines de milliers, c'est le chiffre considéré comme le plus réaliste. L'an dernier, des sources italiennes avançaient 500 000 sans doute, 600 000 peut-être. **Cela** ne veut pas dire qu'ils vont chercher à traverser tout de suite. D'ailleurs, il y a pénurie de bateaux... Mais c'est cohérent avec **les** 170 000 irréguliers débarqués l'an dernier en Italie.

Que faire pour casser le trafic ?

Les gros bonnets sont en Libye, et il est difficile de leur mettre la main dessus. Certes, on peut arrêter **les** passeurs. Mais ceux-là, parfois, sont eux-mêmes de simples migrants qui « pilotent » le rafioteur en échange de la gratuité du passage. Le chaos que connaît la Libye en fait une pépinière de trafiquants d'être humains, un terreau pour criminels en lien avec des groupes d'inspiration terroriste. Je ne sais pas si c'est une stratégie délibérée, une sorte de chantage contre l'Europe. Mais il y a des responsables qui exploitent la situation et gagnent beaucoup d'argent. Ils ont trouvé en Libye une foule de migrants qui, pour certains, attendent depuis un ou deux ans. **Les** autorités du pays, ou ce qu'il en reste, ne savent pas quoi en faire. Ces immigrants se retrouvent coincés dans un piège infernal.

Faut-il intervenir en Libye ? L'UE a-t-elle **les moyens d'agir seule ? Ou bien est-ce une vraie crise internationale, **désormais** du ressort de l'ONU, voire de l'Otan ?**

Frontex, en tout cas, ne peut pas tout faire. Il reviendra à l'UE et à Dimitris Avramopoulos, le commissaire en charge, de définir prochainement la « nouvelle » stratégie migratoire et de faire des propositions sur l'immigration légale, le droit d'asile, la lutte contre l'immigration irrégulière et le trafic d'êtres humains. Mais il y a aujourd'hui en Libye un niveau de violence et une faillite de l'État qui requièrent d'utiliser d'autres ressorts, à l'échelon de la politique et de la sécurité internationales. C'est ce que le premier ministre italien, Matteo Renzi, vient de suggérer à la Maison-Blanche, avec Barack Obama. Il semble que la préoccupation des dirigeants européens **dépasse désormais les questions migratoires...**

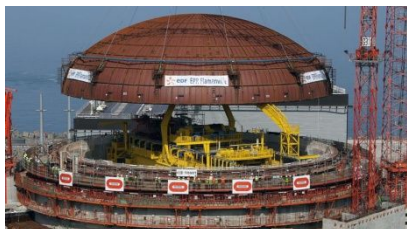
S'il n'est pas possible de bloquer la route en Libye même, faut-il stopper **les bateaux en Méditerranée ?**

Il y a deux raisons qui nous empêchent de le faire. La première, c'est un arrêt de la Cour de justice de l'UE qui avait condamné l'Italie parce qu'elle avait débarqué en Libye des migrants secourus en mer, après la chute de Kadhafi mais avant que le pays ne sombre dans le chaos. Seconde raison, ce serait aujourd'hui impensable. **Cela** laisse deux options. **Les** renvoyer dans des pays voisins, avec l'accord de ceux-ci, une aide européenne et sous le contrôle de l'ONU-HCR. Ou **les** faire transiter par l'Europe, avec un dispositif plus robuste et plus rapide de sélection entre ceux qui méritent le droit d'asile et ceux qui doivent être renvoyés dans leur pays d'origine.

119,62

Areva : les défauts de l'EPR inquiètent de Flamanville à la Chine

Par Guillaume Guichard Publié le 19/04/2015 à 23:13



Une anomalie de fabrication de la cuve et du couvercle, pièces maîtresses du réacteur EPR de Flamanville, préoccupent les autorités françaises et chinoises. Pour Ségolène Royal, le chantier manchois «n'est pas condamné».

Nouvelle alerte pour Areva et EDF. **Les défauts dans la fabrication de la cuve et du couvercle** du réacteur de l'EPR de Flamanville, dans la Manche, qui ont été dévoilés par l'Autorité de sûreté nucléaire (ASN) jeudi, vont jusqu'à inquiéter les autorités chinoises. Pékin est en train de construire deux réacteurs similaires, dont les cuves proviennent de la même usine qu'à Flamanville, à savoir celle d'**Areva** au Creusot.

«La construction de la centrale de Taishan est sous contrôle», a déclaré Tang Bo, membre de l'administration pour la sûreté nucléaire, cité par **Reuters**. Toutefois, aux vues des doutes de l'ASN, «le ministère ne chargera pas de combustible dans les réacteurs tant que le problème de l'équipement ne sera pas complètement identifié et résolu».

Au contraire, la ministre française de l'Énergie, **Ségolène Royal**, s'est voulue rassurante ce dimanche. «Non, le réacteur de Flamanville n'est pas condamné, a-t-elle déclaré sur France 5. EDF a communiqué pour dire que l'ouverture serait sans doute retardée d'une année.» Et la ministre de continuer: «Ce sont des travaux extrêmement complexes et comme dans tous les travaux industriels, même ceux menés en dehors de la filière nucléaire, il y a des ajustements en cours de travaux».

La ministre veut plutôt voir dans cette affaire le signe positif que le «système français [est] transparent et ça, c'est quand même un progrès extraordinaire». «Cela permet au parlement de faire des auditions, au gouvernement d'exiger des évaluations, des tests complémentaires ce qu'Areva s'est engagé à faire», a-t-elle ajouté.

«Composant essentiel»

Ce ton rassurant tranche avec celui du président de l'ASN, Pierre-Franck Chevet, qui a mentionné jeudi «une anomalie sérieuse, voire très sérieuse, sur un composant essentiel». La cuve et son couvercle pèse pas moins de 526 tonnes et abrite le corps du réacteur nucléaire et les systèmes de contrôle de la réaction nucléaire. Un défaut de cette pièce maîtresse, s'il était confirmé par les nouveaux tests en cours, pourrait même, d'après certains experts, entraîner l'abandon du chantier de Flamanville... «Tout dépend des choix industriels effectués par les opérateurs», a noté Pierre-Franck Chevet. EDF et Areva ont indiqué, **dans un communiqué** publié dès le 7 avril, qu'elles poursuivaient les travaux.

Les autorités chinoises n'ont pas non plus dit à ce stade si elles envisageaient l'abandon de la construction des EPR. La Chine est un marché gigantesque pour les industriels du nucléaire. Elle compte aujourd'hui 23 réacteurs actifs, tandis que 27 sont en construction. Le concurrent américain d'Areva et EDF, Westinghouse, devrait lui achever l'année prochaine la construction en Chine du premier exemplaire au monde de son nouveau réacteur AP1000.

119,63

La Libye, bombe migratoire au sud de l'Europe

LE MONDE | 18.04.2015 à 10h01 • Mis à jour le 20.04.2015 à 07h57 | Par **Frédéric Bobin** (Misrata (Libye), envoyé spécial)



« *Plutôt mourir que retourner au pays.* » Mohammed Abdi est très sérieux. Le jeune Somalien a côtoyé la mort, alors il connaît la charge d'ombre des mots. Visage fin encadré d'une capuche orange, menton piqué d'une touffe de poils, il est assis sur une chaise sous le soleil encore clément de Misrata et se souvient de la peur qui l'a noué quand le Zodiac a commencé à dériver, moteur cassé, au large des côtes de la Libye. C'était dimanche 12 avril, mer sans nuées et la Sicile si proche, l'avenir au bout de l'index. Le rafioteur au caoutchouc bombé ne suivait pourtant plus que d'incertains courants.

Cent dix migrants étaient entassés sur ce canot sans fond conçu pour en contenir à peine le quart. Tous des Somaliens qui avaient payé 600 dollars (556 euros) pour la traversée. « *Nous, les Somaliens, on préfère rester entre nous pour éviter les bagarres avec les migrants d'autres pays* », lâche Mohammed Abdi. Ce dimanche-là, il n'a pas fallu longtemps au jeune Somalien pour comprendre qu'avec le moteur cassé, son rêve de Norvège s'était brisé. La vedette des garde-côtes libyens a surgi et il en a été soulagé. Ce n'était qu'une première fois. Le voilà maintenant dans une école à la façade vert pomme aménagée en centre de détention pour migrants à la sortie est de Misrata, au cœur de cette Libye déchiquetée où s'affrontent les milices.

« **Plutôt mourir que de renoncer...** »

Qu'importe l'adversité, Mohammed Abdi sait qu'il tentera à nouveau sa chance : « *Pour moi, retourner en Somalie, avec son insécurité et sa pauvreté, n'est pas envisageable. Je réessaierai de partir en Europe. Plutôt mourir que de renoncer...* » Alors, oui, si on le renvoie chez lui, il est prêt à recommencer son périple de trois mois, « *caché d'endroits en endroits* », « *embarqué dans des grosses voitures* » sans même apercevoir des « *passeurs qui changent à chaque étape* ». Irrésistible courant ? Sur la seule journée du dimanche 12 avril, les garde-côtes de Misrata ont intercepté 250 candidats à l'émigration vers l'Europe, Africains subsahariens dans leur écrasante majorité.

Avec le retour du beau temps en Méditerranée, les départs s'intensifient et les drames en mer se multiplient. Le chaos qui règne le long de la côte de la Tripolitaine, où se concentre l'essentiel des départs de puis l'Afrique du Nord, expose de manière crue le défi migratoire que pose désormais à l'Europe une Libye à l'Etat failli. Après des chiffres records en 2014 – autour de 170 000 arrivées en Italie –, la courbe s'envole depuis le début de l'année. « *Avec le beau temps, on dénombre en ce moment entre 300 et 700 migrants qui quittent la Libye par jour* », estime un officier de renseignement de la coalition de milices qui contrôle Misrata.

« POUR MOI, RETOURNER EN SOMALIE N'EST PAS ENVISAGEABLE. JE RÉESSAIERAI DE PARTIR EN

EUROPE. PLUTÔT MOURIR QUE DE RENONCER... », RACONTE MOHAMMED ABDI, MIGRANT SOMALIEN

RÉFUGIÉ À MISRATA

Les lieux de la Tripolitaine d'où les esquifs précaires prennent la mer sont connus : Zouara, Sabratha, Zaouïa, Garabulli, Al-Khoms, Zliten, points d'aboutissements des routes méridionales traversant le Sahara. Et pour les contrôler, l'administration fantôme d'un pays en guerre ne dresse plus qu'une fiction de barrière. Le lieutenant-colonel Taufik Alskir soupire. Il arpente les quais du port de Misrata mouillés d'une mer d'huile. Sur le béton ébréché s'étale le Zodiac dégonflé saisi dimanche. On peine à imaginer qu'une centaine de personnes ont pu y prendre place. Trois d'entre elles sont tombées à l'eau et se sont noyées au moment où la vedette du lieutenant-colonel Alskir a arraisonné le canot en proie à l'agitation.

Le chef adjoint des garde-côtes soupire dans sa barbe poivre et sel car il ne sait plus comment faire. « *Je n'ai aucun soutien du gouvernement*, se lamente-t-il. *Sans aide, je ne peux rien faire pour lutter contre l'émigration illégale.* » Son arsenal se résume à deux vedettes – l'une à Misrata, l'autre à Al-Khoms – pour les 600 km de côtes qui relèvent de sa compétence territoriale. Et la maintenance des bâtiments est devenue, à l'en croire, un véritable cauchemar depuis l'éclatement de la guerre en 2014 et la division du pays en deux gouvernements rivaux, l'un basé à Tripoli (ouest) et l'autre à Bayda (est). Un contrat avait ainsi été signé avec l'Italie pour la réfection de quatre vedettes, mais Rome n'a toujours pas restitué les bâtiments en raison de la confusion politique ambiante.

Coopération grippée

Pour souligner son impuissance, le lieutenant-colonel Alskir lâche cette abrupte confidence : « *Vous voyez, si je prends la mer maintenant, je suis sûr de croiser un ou deux bateaux de migrants.* » Mais il ne prend pas si souvent la mer avec ces deux pauvres vedettes pour 600 km. Le chiffre de dix à quinze embarcations de migrants quittant la Tripolitaine par semaine ne lui semble « *pas impossible* ».

La Libye, bombe migratoire pour l'Europe ? A Tripoli, siège du gouvernement de l'Ouest libyen auquel est affilié Misrata, les officiels appellent à l'aide. « *L'Europe doit prendre sa part du fardeau, la Libye ne peut pas en supporter le poids toute seule* », a imploré le 14 avril lors d'une conférence de presse solennelle à Tripoli Mohammed Abou Al-Khair, le ministre du travail. Depuis que les ambassades ont quitté la capitale en 2014 pour se relocaliser en Tunisie voisine, en attendant que se règle la crise de légitimité entre les deux pouvoirs rivaux, toute la coopération internationale sur la question migratoire en Libye s'est grippée.

Le réseau diplomatique qui permettait le rapatriement vers leurs pays d'origine des migrants interceptés ne fonctionne plus qu'au ralenti. Les demandes de prise en charge doivent désormais être adressées par Tripoli aux ambassades africaines rapatriées à Tunis, allongeant d'autant les délais. « *L'ambassade du Sénégal coopère*, témoigne Salah Aboudabous, le directeur du centre de détention de Misrata. *Mais les ambassades de Somalie et d'Erythrée sont les plus difficiles d'accès.* »

Extrême précarité

En attendant, les centres de détention en Libye se remplissent dans des conditions d'extrême précarité. Dans l'ouest du pays – principal foyer de départs – environ 20 000 migrants ont été arrêtés depuis le début de l'année. A Misrata, la détresse des détenus est palpable. Hommes et femmes sont entassés, sans séparation stricte, dans des salles exigües au sol dur jonché de quelques couvertures, linge séchant aux fenêtres. L'eau est coupée à partir de 17 heures. « *Nous sommes enfermés là et nous ne savons pas pour combien de*

temps, grince le jeune Somalien Mohammed Abdi. Il y a déjà trois cas psychiatriques, des personnes qui se parlent à elles-mêmes. J'ai peur de devenir fou ici. J'ai peur de faire une bêtise et qu'on me tire dessus. »

Cette impuissance d'un Etat libyen fracturé a une autre conséquence : elle ouvre de nouveaux espaces aux réseaux criminels prospérant sur le trafic des êtres humains. De l'avis de nombreux observateurs, ces derniers font preuve d'une agressivité inédite. A l'image des milices qui font la loi alentour, ils s'arment pour s'ouvrir des accès à l'écart des principaux axes routiers devenus trop aléatoires. « *L'équipement en armes des contrebandiers est un phénomène nouveau depuis un an* », note le directeur du centre de détention de Misrata.

Dans ce contexte, la crainte de voir des groupes djihadistes faire la jonction avec les réseaux de passeurs n'est plus une simple hypothèse. Elle alarme de plus en plus les Européens. A Misrata, un officier de renseignement n'écarter pas cette perspective, même s'il n'est pas en mesure d'en fournir des indications tangibles. « *Il y a une stratégie des djihadistes d'utiliser les migrants pour déstabiliser l'Europe, croit-il savoir. Ils travaillent sur le long terme.* »



Frédéric Bobin (Misrata (Libye), envoyé spécial)

Journaliste au Monde **Suivre** [Aller sur la page de ce journaliste](#)

Flüchtlingsdrama im Mittelmeer: Die Bundesregierung ist ratlos

Nach dem Untergang eines Flüchtlingsbootes sind möglicherweise erneut Hunderte Menschen im Mittelmeer ertrunken - Deutschland zeigt sich besorgt, aber für den Moment auch ratlos. Unterdessen sorgt Volker Kauder mit einem scheinheiligen Vorstoß für Wirbel.

Nach der Havarie eines Flüchtlingsbootes [vor Libyen werden 400 Menschen vermisst](#). Wahrscheinlich kommt für die meisten jede Rettung zu spät. Die Bundesregierung zeigt sich besorgt, sieht aber auch nach dem neuen Flüchtlingsdrama im Mittelmeer Schwierigkeiten bei schneller Hilfe für Flüchtlinge.

Jede Anstrengung, die Situation von Flüchtlingen zu verbessern, die nach Europa kommen wollen, lohne sich, sagte ein Sprecher des Bundesinnenministeriums. "Aber es ist ein Thema, das komplex ist." Rein nationale Lösungen könne es nicht geben. Regierungssprecher Steffen Seibert sagte, klar sei, "dass jeder tote Flüchtling auf dem Mittelmeer einer zu viel ist".

Grenzpolizeiliche Maßnahme könnten die Probleme nicht beheben. Die Länder, aus denen die Flüchtlinge aufbrechen, müssten die Schlepper-Kriminalität besser bekämpfen. Den afrikanischen Heimatländern müsse geholfen werden, damit die Menschen eine Perspektive zum Bleiben haben. Grünen-Chefin Simone Peter warf der Regierung vor, sich weg zu ducken. **"Die Europäische Union muss nun zügig handeln, weg von einer Politik der Abschottung hin zu mehr sicheren Zugangswegen für Schutzsuchende nach Europa."**

Linke attackiert Scharfmacher de Maizière

Die Linke-Innenexpertin Ulla Jelpke sagte mit Blick auf das ausgelaufene Seenotrettungsprogramm "Mare Nostrum": "Die Scharfmacher unter den europäischen Innenministern, wie Bundesinnenminister Thomas de Maizière, sahen die Seenotrettung ohnehin nicht als humanitäre Pflicht der EU, sondern als Bedrohung für die Sicherheit der Außengrenzen." Das Bündnis "Gemeinsam für Afrika" forderte gemeinsame europäische Missionen zur Seenotrettung.

Unterdessen gibt es [Wirbel um Äußerungen von Unionsfraktionschef Volker Kauder](#). Kauder sprach sich in der "Bild"-Zeitung dafür aus, weiteren Flüchtlingen in Deutschland Zuflucht zu gewähren. Zugleich sagte er angesichts der Forderungen der Bundesländer nach mehr Geld für die Unterbringung von Asylbewerbern, Kommunen und Länder erhielten bereits eine Milliarde Euro extra. "Wenn die Länder weitere Mittel wollen, müssen auch sie ihre Anstrengungen erhöhen und zum Beispiel mehr abgelehnte Asylbewerber abschieben."

Grüne gegen Kuhhandel

Die Grünen-Fraktionschefin Katrin Göring-Eckardt mahnte: "Es darf keinen Kuhhandel "Geld gegen Abschiebung" geben." Flüchtlinge hätten einen Anspruch auf ein rechtsstaatliches Verfahren." Den Rechtsweg könne man nicht mit Geld abkürzen. Jelpke sagte der Deutschen Presse-Agentur, erpresserische Methoden gegenüber den Ländern seien unpassend - es gehe um Menschen in Not. "Die Forderung nach einer Abschiebepremie, die Herr Kauder jetzt ins Spiel bringt, ist geschmacklos und perfide."

Der Linken-Fraktionsvize Dietmar Bartsch begrüßte, dass Kauder zur Einsicht komme, "dass Deutschland deutlich mehr Flüchtlinge aufnehmen kann". Es sei aber "kleinlich", dass Kauder dies mit der Aufforderung zu mehr Abschiebungen verbinde. De Maizière mahnte, die Gespräche über die Finanzierung der Flüchtlingsunterbringung würden nicht leichter, "wenn man immer vorher sagt, was bei den Gesprächen rauskommt".

119,67

Hundreds of Migrants Believed Dead in Shipwreck Off Libya

Boat capsizes after passengers rush to one side

As many as 700 migrants are believed to have died after the fishing boat carrying them from Libya capsized in the Mediterranean this weekend. Photo: Giovanni Isolino/AFP/Getty

By **DEBORAH BALL**

Updated April 19, 2015 7:53 p.m. ET

ROME—As many as 700 migrants are believed to have died in a shipwreck off the Libyan coast, piling pressure on European leaders to find a solution to a spiraling migration crisis in the face of growing chaos in Libya and anti-immigration sentiment at home.

The 20-meter-long fishing boat sank on what has become the deadliest migrant route in the world—the crossing from Libya to the Italian island of Lampedusa—after launching a distress call early Sunday. The Italians sent a Portuguese mercantile vessel to help the boat near the Libyan coast. But when the migrants, mostly sub-Saharan Africans, saw it approach, they rushed to one side, capsizing the boat, the coast guard said.

The latest deaths, if confirmed, would mark one of the largest losses of migrants' lives, bringing the number of people who have died attempting the passage this year to about 1,600. The [dissolution of law and order in Libya](#) in particular has left Europe exposed to an increasing wave of Africans risking their lives to find a better life or flee conflict.

Accords between Rome and Tripoli helped keep the flow of would-be boat people under tight control before the fall of the Gadhafi regime in 2011. But since Libya's subsequent economic and political collapse, a people-smuggling trade has flourished in the country's Mediterranean port cities. One source of their demand comes from the large number of workers from sub-Saharan Africa who once flocked to jobs in Libya, many of them in oil fields, but are now without any livelihood.

A new surge of violence brought on by Islamic State's expansion into Libya has pushed even more migrant workers to flee the country. A video released by the extremist group Sunday appeared to show its militants beheading Ethiopian Christians in Libya, marking the second such mass execution of foreign Christians there in recent months. As a result of the growing mayhem, aid organizations and border-control officials expect the sea arrivals this year to easily surpass last year's numbers.

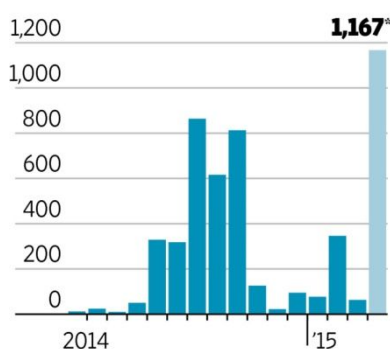
Survivors from the boat that capsized Sunday told aid workers from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that it originally held more than 700 people, but only 28 had been rescued by Sunday afternoon. The Italian Coast Guard dispatched 17 ships, including Maltese vessels, Italian fishing boats and other private vessels, to the area to search for other survivors.

Antonino Iraso, an officer with the Italian tax police, whose ships are involved in the search-and-rescue operation, told Italian television the teams had spotted an oil slick, floating life jackets and fragments of wood in the area where the boat sank.

During his weekly Sunday address, Pope Francis appealed to the international community to react decisively so that such a tragedy isn't repeated. "They are men and women like us, our brothers seeking a better life, starving, persecuted, wounded, exploited, victims of war," he said. French President François Hollande called the weekend's disaster "the worst catastrophe in recent years in the Mediterranean."

Dangerous Crossing

Number of migrants who have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean.



*As of April 19

Source: International Organization for Migration

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

ENLARGE

Last year, about 170,000 African and Middle Eastern migrants arrived in Italy using that passage, with a total of nearly 300,000 arrivals in all since the start of 2011. Nearly 3,200 died on the route in 2014, according to figures from the International Organization for Migration.

The deaths underscore the inability of the EU to find a united [response so far to the migration phenomenon](#), with deep differences on core issues such as how to deal with asylum seekers and addressing the deterioration of Libya. On Sunday, the European Commission issued a statement saying it was deeply chagrined by the news and called for bold action. It will consult with member states and aid groups as part of a plan to [produce a new migration strategy in mid-May](#).

Earlier: Interactive Graphic: Lampedusa

Smuggling, Survival, and Hope

That plan may include a beefed-up budget for border control. In late 2013, after more than 300 African migrants died in a shipwreck, the Italian government established a sweeping search-and-rescue program. But political pressure forced Rome to scrap the program late last year, and it was replaced with far more limited EU patrols. That has left the Italian Coast Guard and mercantile vessels [struggling to cope with the huge flow of migrants](#).

“Europe can do more and Europe must do more,” said European Parliament chief Martin Schulz. “It is a shame and a confession of failure how many countries run away from responsibility.”

But little enthusiasm exists for a strong, EU-supported search-and-rescue program, with leaders in some countries arguing that saving the migrants only encourages more to attempt the journey.

If some stability returned and a national unity government were formed in Libya, the EU could send a security mission that could help guard the ports and stem the people-smuggling trade, officials say. But Italy has struggled to gain support for an international response to help stabilize Libya.

The Italians have also proposed setting up havens in Egypt and Tunisia to allow refugees to file for asylum from there, but other EU members are unlikely to be willing to establish consular services in places that may be deemed too dangerous.

The surge in numbers of asylum seekers has made a solution more elusive. Last year, 626,000 people applied for asylum in the EU, up 43% over 2013.

The rise has fueled anti-immigrant sentiment in many countries. In Italy, images of decrepit boats teeming with migrants have stoked resentment in a country locked in a protracted economic downturn and where the percentage of immigrants in the population has tripled over the past decade.

Anti-immigrant parties such as the Northern League have seized on the flows to criticize the government of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. Authorities in local towns, particularly in the north, are fiercely resisting demands from the Italian Interior Ministry to resettle the migrants in their areas. There were 68,000 migrants housed in reception centers in February, compared with 17,000 at the start of 2014.

Last weekend, the Northern League set up gazebos in many towns where Italian citizens could “request asylum.” The stunt, which it organized ahead of regional elections next month, was a way to drive home their argument that refugees are milking Italy’s welfare system.

‘Europe can do more and Europe must do more.’ —European Parliament chief Martin Schulz

The poor economic prospects and weak support for migrants in Italy—where they can be seen sleeping in train stations or squatting in abandoned buildings—sends many north seeking more generous benefits. That has touched off tensions across the EU.

In Sweden, which has seen the largest number of asylum applications per capita, a far-right party won the third largest number of votes in last September’s parliamentary election on the back of strong anti-immigration sentiment.

Germany, with its relatively healthy economy and extensive social safety net, is the most popular destination. Nearly a third of the 626,065 refugees who filed asylum claims in the EU last year did so in Germany. An even bigger rise is likely this year after a sudden spike in the winter of arrivals from Kosovo. From January to March, 85,394 people applied for asylum in Germany, more than double the total in the same period last year.

The crush of migrants is overwhelming the authorities. Germany’s interior ministry reported a backlog of 200,000 undecided asylum applications at the end of March, double the total a year before.

Local and state officials, who are responsible for putting up the asylum seekers, are pleading with landlords to rent out apartments as refugee shelters and arguing with the federal government in Berlin about how to share the costs of housing the new arrivals. They have converted gyms, auditoriums and a stadium into temporary shelters for asylum seekers.

But for German leaders, the biggest challenge is political. Especially in the poorer, former Communist East Germany, protests against the high numbers of migrants have gripped the public.

In the eastern German city of Dresden, anti-immigrant [protests by a group](#) called Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West, which reached their high point this winter, have continued. About 10,000 people flocked to an appearance by Dutch anti-Islam activist Geert Wilders at one of the rallies last week.

119;69

Refugee Boat Tragedy Raises Pressure on EU Leaders to Act

by Lorenzo Totaro James G Neuger

12:00 AM CEST April 20, 2015

The capsizing of a boat carrying hundreds of refugees on the Mediterranean Sea raises pressure on European governments to ratchet up search and rescue measures to save migrants fleeing conflict in Africa and the Middle East.

European Union foreign ministers meet on Monday as the continent races to address a humanitarian crisis that critics say the bloc's governments helped create. Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said 25 bodies have been recovered and 28 people have been rescued from the ship that capsized late Saturday off the Libyan coast. A survivor told Italian officials there were 950 people on board, the news agency Ansa reported. Renzi said determining the exact number may be impossible.

"The main issue here is to build together a common sense of European responsibility on what is happening in the Mediterranean, knowing that there is no easy solution, no magic solution," European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said before the EU meeting in Luxembourg.

Conflict-wracked Libya is being used by growing numbers of refugees as an embarkation point to reach Europe. More than 35,000 asylum seekers and migrants have already arrived by boat this year, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. If the toll of the latest tragedy is confirmed, about 1,600 people will have died in 2015, the office said in a statement. That compares with 3,500 deaths and 219,000 successful crossings in 2014, it said.

Locked Up

Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said accounts given by survivors were "haunting" and that migrants on the doomed boat were packed on two decks, with those on the lower deck locked in the hold.

"A mass grave is being created in the Mediterranean Sea and European policies are responsible," Loris De Filippi, president of the Italian branch of the medical humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders said in an e-mailed statement. "Faced with thousands of desperate people fleeing wars and crises, Europe has closed borders, forcing people in search of protection to risk their lives and die at sea."

Italy and Malta, the closest European countries to the doomed vessel, deployed navy and coast guard ships Sunday to find survivors.

"We need to take bold actions to deal with the growing migration crisis," Dimitris Avramopolous, Europe's commissioner for migration, said in a statement on Sunday.

Departed Zuwara

The UN agency quoted Maltese authorities as saying 700 people were on board when the vessel left the Libyan port of Zuwara. A Maltese military official, who asked not to be identified, said the boat capsized about 61 nautical miles (113 kilometers) north of Libya late Saturday.

Italian news reports said the boat capsized when the passengers hoping to be rescued rushed to one side after spotting a merchant ship.

“Acting against human trafficking must stop being an Italian-only or a Maltese-only priority,” said Renzi, who added that he discussed the latest sinking with counterparts including French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel and that he hopes an EU summit on migration can be held by Friday to follow up on Monday’s talks. There’s no decision on a possible EU summit.

Stabilize Libya

Renzi has called on Europe to help stabilize Libya and has offered to lead a UN-backed mission into the North African country should diplomatic efforts fail. Italians were among the last foreigners to evacuate Libya in February when the embassy in the capital Tripoli was forced to suspend its activities due to increased violence.

“No solution to the migrant crisis can be found without a stabilization in Libya,” Renzi told reporters on Sunday.

Hollande said in a Canal Plus television interview that he had called Renzi “to see how we can act urgently.”

“The Mediterranean is a sea we share, between Africa and Europe, so we have to act. More boats, more overflights with planes and a much more intense fight against the trafficking,” Hollande said.

Italy has faced a wave of migrants and refugees from Africa and the Middle East who board unseaworthy vessels in Libya, paying traffickers to take them across the Mediterranean to seek refuge in Europe. Italian politicians have been seeking international support to cope with the influx.

“The problem is not the control of the sea, it is rather to destroy the human traffickers, the 21st century’s new slaveholders,” Renzi said in a post on Twitter after meeting earlier in the day with Mogherini in Rome.

Doctors Without Borders and other groups have repeatedly urged EU nations to undertake large-scale search and rescue activities to avoid more deaths at sea.

“If confirmed, this would be the largest tragedy ever in the Mediterranean involving migrants,” Malta’s Muscat said in a telephone interview. “Nobody should be allowed to die this way.”

Naufrage des migrants : l'Europe responsable?

La compassion ne sauvera aucune vie

Publié le 20 avril 2015 à 11:00 dans Monde Politique

Mots-clés : [Europe](#), [Immigration](#), [Italie](#), [Libye](#), [nauffrage](#)

Le nouvel appel du Pape à sauver les milliers de migrants qui tentent chaque jour de franchir la méditerranée est poignant. Le chef de l'Eglise catholique est incontestablement dans son rôle moral et spirituel. Il ne lui appartient pas d'envoyer sa flotte sauver les désespérés de l'Afrique. "Rendre à César ce qui est à César et à Dieu ce qui est à Dieu". Depuis que l'Italie s'est unifiée, le Vatican est déchargé des contraintes de gestion et c'est tant mieux pour lui. Les chefs d'Etat européens sont théoriquement dans une logique autre, celle du pragmatisme.

L'Italie, émue par les catastrophes, a longtemps payé pour les autres. Son opération *Mare Nostrum* a fait baisser pendant quelques mois le nombre des catastrophes maritimes. Elle a aussi considérablement accéléré les tentatives de passage. Épuisée d'être en première ligne, l'Italie a laissé l'Union Européenne prendre le relais avec les moyens qui sont les siens; c'est-à-dire pas grand chose. Avec Triton, la série macabre des naufrages reprend son cours.

On comprend toutefois que nos chefs d'Etat hésitent à augmenter les financements d'une telle opération. Notre continent n'a pas les moyens d'assumer une immigration subsaharienne inépuisable. Elle n'a surtout pas les moyens d'alimenter des filières crapuleuses, en se portant au secours de radeaux abandonnés; des embarcations de fortune avec pour seul gouvernail un téléphone satellitaire pour appeler les secours. L'Europe est montrée du doigt pour son "indifférence". Mais elle est pourtant la seule à agir. Et plus l'Europe engage des moyens pour sauver les migrants, plus ils sont de candidats à risquer leur vie en mer. C'est l'hôpital qui se moque de la charité.

La solution n'est donc pas humanitaire. Elle est avant tout juridique et politique; elle passe par la signature d'accords avec les pays de transit. L'Australie l'a fait avec l'Indonésie, et elle a asséché le marché des passeurs sans scrupule. Tout bateau de migrants qui quitte irrégulièrement les eaux territoriales indonésiennes est raccompagné par les garde-côtes australiens. Un retour systématique des migrants, sauvés des eaux, les dissuade de se ruiner dans une vaine traversée. Au sein de l'Union européenne, c'est d'ailleurs la règle: un immigré en situation irrégulière est expulsé vers le pays qui l'a laissé partir.

Mais élargir ce principe de responsabilité à l'ensemble de la rive sud de la Méditerranée n'est pas possible sans une Libye et une Syrie stables, capables de signer et de respecter des accords. Aujourd'hui, l'urgence commande d'abord d'aider les autorités libyennes et syriennes à reprendre le contrôle de leur pays.

Dans une Europe économique et sociale à bout de souffle, la maîtrise des flux migratoires est une question de survie. Le rejet de l'Europe est d'abord le rejet d'une Europe passoire, incapable de contrôler ses frontières autrement que par la rhétorique humanitaire.

119,72

Mediterranean refugee crisis: EU reduced to impotent handwringing

Demands for EU response to recent tragedies growing but member countries' policies differ wildly, while Brussels holds minimal authority

Ian Traynor Europe editor

Monday 20 April 2015

A wonder of modern engineering, Europe's longest road and rail bridge connects Scandinavia to mainland European transport networks by linking the Swedish city of Malmö with the Danish capital, Copenhagen, across the Øresund Strait.

The five-mile bridge has brought Sweden and Denmark closer together. But when it comes to dealing with newcomers, the two neighbours could not be further apart.

While the Danes practise the most restrictive immigration policies in the EU, the Swedes have the most open, liberal asylum and refugee regime in the union. It is difficult for foreign-born spouses of Danes to get residence rights in Denmark. But Sweden last year fielded more than 80,000 asylum applications, more than twice as many as Britain in a country six times smaller than the UK in population terms.

When it comes to immigration, Swedish and Danish policies are chalk and cheese. It highlights how, in the middle of a Mediterranean migration crisis that is seeing hundreds of thousands surrender their life savings to trafficking networks and [risk their lives to reach Europe's shores](#), **there is no such thing as an EU or European immigration policy.**

As the tragedies in the waters between Libya and [Italy](#) multiply weekly, newspapers, pundits, MPs, NGOs and charities are clamouring to know what "Europe" is doing. The desperation and the suffering, so evident on television and online, are fuelling fresh Brussels-bashing as unelected, self-satisfied eurocrats are said to be feckless, impotent and cynical in their lack of response.

In fact, the institutions of Brussels have minimal authority over immigration in Europe. It is Britain not Brussels that decides how many uprooted Syrians it will take in. It is Berlin and the German regional authorities that rule on whether asylum be granted or deportations ordered. This is why the interior ministers from 28 governments meeting on Monday in Luxembourg could agree or disagree on what to do about Lampedusa and why the [European commission](#) or parliament could only issue rather sad and empty words. In a demonstration of handwringing impotence, the commission in Brussels hit a new low on Sunday when it said it was "chagrined" at the fishing trawler capsizing on Saturday night, which may have left more than 900 dead.

"European" immigration policy is a mess, a patchwork of 28 hugely varying national systems constrained by national politics, shaped by culture and history. The big British and French ethnic minorities stem from the hangovers of empire. German multiculturalism derives from the foreign labour force, mainly Turkish, brought in to power the "economic miracle" of the 1960s. The newer EU countries of eastern Europe were, until a generation ago, closed societies behind the iron curtain with no experience of mass migration except the flight of their native populations from Russian occupation. They have continued to export their own people to western [Europe](#) since the first joined the EU in 2004.

Estonia had 155 asylum applications last year, according to EU figures. Germany had more than 200,000, almost a third of the asylum claims lodged in the EU (626,000 and nearly 200,000 up on the year before).

Between them, seven countries – or one-quarter of the EU – fielded more than three-quarters of asylum applications. Most fail. But although 425,000 claims were denied in 2013, less than 40% of those failures resulted in deportation.

There have been innumerable proposals over the past decade from Brussels for more common and coordinated policies, ranging from "blue card" schemes modelled on the US green card to making it easier for migrants to enter the EU legally.

But an EU-wide scheme is a no-go area for all national governments except those who might benefit from it, since it would entail a system of quotas and distributing refugees and asylum-seekers more equitably between EU countries.

Incumbent governments of the mainstream centre-left or -right are scared of this because immigration is one of the most toxic and incendiary topics in the national politics of so many countries.

The UK prime minister, David Cameron, is wary of Ukip on the issue and is fighting the rest of the EU over freedom of movement within Europe. The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, has an eye on the large recent anti-immigrant street protests against the “Islamification of the west” in her country.

When the former French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, sought to blunt the appeal of the anti-immigrant National Front of Marine Le Pen, he did so by sounding tough on immigration. The current socialist prime minister, Manuel Valls, tried the same trick when he was interior minister.

On Sunday, in Finland’s general election, the anti-immigrant populists called the (True) Finns party reached second place and a claim on coalition government. The Danish hard line over the past 15 years has been due to the influence on coalition politics of the nationalist, anti-immigrant Danish People’s party. Similar dynamics are at play in Austria, The Netherlands, Greece, Italy and Hungary.

In Brussels, too, the fear factor applies. When the Lampedusa tragedy left more than 300 dead off the Italian coast in October 2013, European immigration policy was put on to the agenda for an EU summit. Herman Van Rompuy, organising and chairing the summit, then had it removed until June last year. Why? Because national leaders were worried it would boost the fortunes of anti-immigrant parties in the European parliament elections in May last year.

Next Thursday in Milan, leaders of the European People’s party, the Christian democratic caucus that is the biggest in the European parliament, is to grapple with the issue.

Their – inconclusive – draft policy paper, obtained by the Guardian, talks of introducing quotas for distributing migrants across the 28 countries according to a country’s size and its wealth or depending on whether a certain “threshold” of refugee influx in a country has been exceeded.

“An intra-EU relocation scheme has to be elaborated,” the document says.

Next month, the European commission will unveil a European migration agenda blueprint tabling similar proposals.

Governments are likely to balk at such notions, as they always have. But the situation in the Mediterranean is spiralling out of control. A summer of “Europe’s shame” headlines looms. The politicians may be losing control as events dictate political outcomes.

119,74

The Telegraph

The 900 refugees drowned in the Mediterranean were killed by British government policy

By Dan Hodges

20 avril 2015

We were warned. We knew the dangers. We let 'migrants' drown

There's something we need to be clear on. The death of 900 refugees – we have to use that blanket term because we don't know the names of the dead, and I suspect we never will – in the Mediterranean over the weekend was not a “tragedy”. The word tragedy implies an accidental calamity. An unfortunate confluence of space and time.

There was nothing accidental about the deaths of The 900. They were killed as a direct – and deliberate – act of government policy. EU policy. And British government policy.

In October of last year I wrote about how ministers had adopted a new strategy for dealing with the wave of children, women and men fleeing the chanel houses of Syria and Libya. It involved drowning them .

In the House of Lords, Foreign Office minister Lady Anelay announced : "We do not support planned search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean". The reason ministers no longer supported planned search and rescue operations was, she said, because the government believed they created “an unintended ‘pull factor’, encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing and thereby leading to more tragic and unnecessary deaths”.

To her credit, Lady Anelay was clear and unambiguous about the rationale behind the decision. People currently believed that if they attempted to reach sanctuary by sea, there was a chance they would be rescued. If the rescue cover was withdrawn, they would not be rescued. They would die. And once enough of them died, then word would finally get back to Syria and Libya that there was, in fact, no prospect of rescue. At which point people would stop trying to make that perilous sea journey. Drown a migrant to save a migrant.

Well, the first part of Lady Anelay's policy is working. Children, women and men are currently drowning in their thousands. It's not yet clear how many more will have to drown before word finally filters down the people smuggling chain. Or if it ever will. But I trust Lady Anelay will keep Drown A Migrant To Save A Migrant under close review.

Sorry, that's cheap. It's not lady Anelay's policy. She's just a junior minister. At the end of the day it's David Cameron's policy. He'll be out on the campaign trail today. I wonder if he'll be given a running tally of the dead.

Nick Clegg will be out on the campaign trail too. Since the election started he's been keen to point out those “red line” policy areas where the Lib Dems have held their coalition colleagues to account . But the policy of drowning migrants to save migrants doesn't appear to have been one of them. In the New Statesman Tim Farron, the Lib Dems' foreign and commonwealth spokesman, wrote how the “tragic deaths” over the weekend were “a wake up call” . “We can't just brush aside allegations that smuggling gangs were exploiting search and rescue operations because they knew that people would be saved ... But we also can't turn our backs on the people caught up in the midst of wars in Syria, in Libya, in human rights abuses in Eritrea”.

Very eloquent. But Tim Farron and his colleagues did turn their backs on those people. Which is why they are now all dead.

Someone else who's been speaking out about “the tragedy” is Ed Miliband. Taking a break from having his photo taken with a Chester hen party, he tweeted: “Those dying in the Mediterranean are some of the poorest men, women and children in the world. We must act to stop these awful scenes. We are seeing tragic scenes for the second time in days. European leaders must work together to stop more of these drownings taking place”.

Those dying in the Mediterranean are some of the poorest men, women and children in the world. We must act to stop these awful scenes.

— Ed Miliband (@Ed_Miliband) April 19, 2015

The 900 did not fall victim to some tragic accident. They were murdered. Actually, they were massacred.

The policy stipulated they should be left to die. So they died.

The policy was put in place so ministers could look tough on immigration. And now ministers do look tough. Very, very tough.

Parties across the political spectrum have fought to convince the voters that they too believed Britain would be better if we could just get immigration under control. And the death of The 900 will have gone some way to convincing them our politicians are serious.

We have got our wish. The 900 will never set foot here. 900 jobs are safe. 900 houses available for local people. 900 hospital beds left open. 900 empty school desks.

The 900 are gone. Britain is better.

119,74

« En France, l'allemand risque d'être relégué au même rang que la culture des orchidées »

Par Marie-Estelle Pech Publié le 19/04/2015 à 17:45



INTERVIEW - Joachim Umlauf, directeur des Instituts Goethe en France, s'alarme de la réforme du collège voulue par le gouvernement. Il craint un affaiblissement de l'apprentissage de l'allemand.

Le FIGARO. - Que pensez-vous de la volonté du gouvernement de supprimer les classes bilangues au collège?

Joachim UMLAUF. - Nous ne comprenons pas. Nous n'avons rien vu venir. L'allemand risque d'être relégué en France au même rang que la culture des orchidées. Nos deux pays, la France et l'Allemagne, se sont pourtant efforcés depuis le traité de l'Élysée en 1963 de soutenir la langue de l'autre, dans une stratégie de «donnant-donnant», estimant que son apprentissage était crucial pour consolider notre rapprochement. Les raisons sont à la fois diplomatiques et économiques. Les classes bilangues ont été créées en France en 2004 pour relancer la langue allemande, car elle dépérissait depuis les années 1990. La volonté d'approfondir l'apprentissage de la langue du voisin a été réaffirmée à nouveau récemment dans l'agenda 2020 signé par Angela Merkel et Nicolas Sarkozy. Alors qu'on a réussi à stabiliser les effectifs à 15 % d'élèves apprenant la langue de Goethe dans le secondaire grâce à ce système des classes bilangues, leur suppression risque d'affaiblir considérablement cet apprentissage.

La ministre affirme que ces classes sont surtout réservées à une élite et qu'une deuxième langue vivante avancée en classe de cinquième sera plus égalitaire.

Elle parle d'égalité mais c'est plutôt le contraire. De nombreux collèges français défavorisés proposent aujourd'hui ces possibilités à leurs élèves. Je ne comprends pas, parce que ce système a prouvé son efficacité. C'est un peu simpliste de considérer l'allemand comme un instrument de sélection, comme le latin ou le grec apparemment. La ministre dit que les élèves qui ont débuté l'allemand en primaire pourront continuer en bilangues, mais c'est une fausse réponse car ils sont très peu nombreux.

Pourquoi est-il selon vous nécessaire d'apprendre l'allemand aujourd'hui?

Dans beaucoup de secteurs professionnels, nous ne trouvons pas de Français qui parlent suffisamment allemand. Des milliers d'emplois dans l'automobile, la restauration, l'industrie, la culture ne sont pas pourvus chaque année, faute de candidats bilingues. Nous cherchons actuellement des gens capables de travailler dans le négoce du vin entre la France et l'Allemagne. Et nous n'en trouvons pas. L'apprentissage n'est pas à la hauteur des enjeux commerciaux. Quand on voit la faible démographie de l'Allemagne, il y aura aussi des opportunités d'emploi grandissantes pour les jeunes Français; Pourquoi ne pas les saisir?

Comment réagissent les autorités allemandes?

La presse écrite et radio allemande s'alarme. Un grand article a été rédigé dans le *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. La presse de la Sarre, région frontalière avec l'Allemagne, est particulièrement étonnée car elle a récemment établi une stratégie très volontariste qui rend obligatoire pour chaque jeune l'apprentissage du français. Nous avons fait beaucoup d'efforts ces dernières années, 19 % des élèves allemands apprennent le français. Je crains fort que cette réforme française ne nuise à l'apprentissage du français en Allemagne. On va en Allemagne aussi finir par se demander si on a encore envie de soutenir le français quand on regarde ce qui se passe à Paris. Après tout, les différentes régions allemandes font attention à leurs dépenses en éducation. Comme chez vous.

119,77

Daily chart

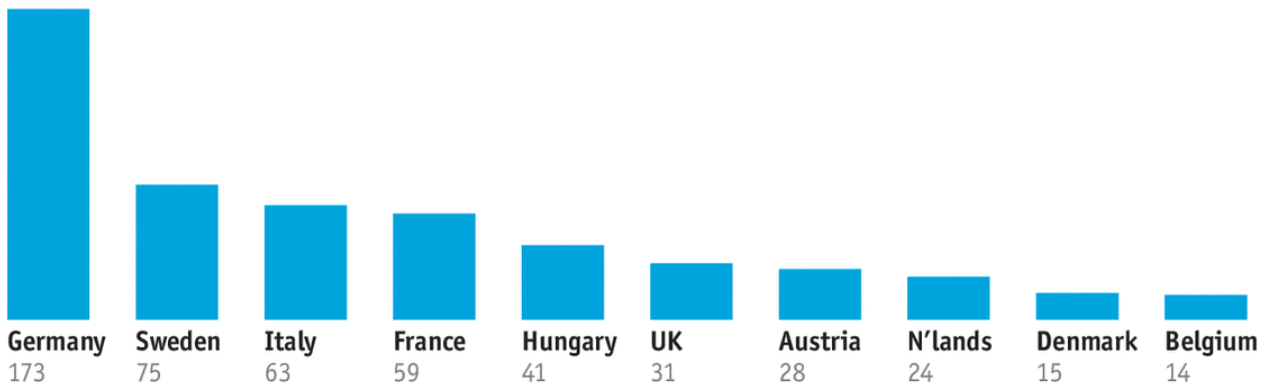
The cruel sea

Apr 20th 2015, 17:32 BY THE DATA TEAM

Asylum seekers to the European Union

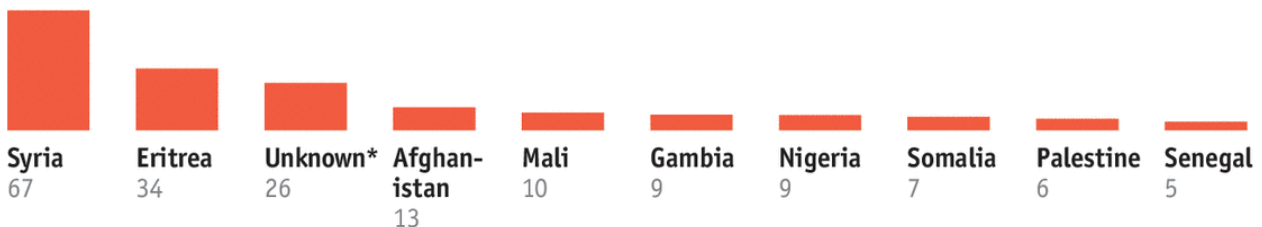
Top destination countries

Number of submitted asylum applications, 2014, '000



Top origin countries

Border crossings by sea, number of illegal detections, 2014, '000



Sources: i-Map; Frontex; UNHCR

*Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals

Economist.com

ON APRIL 19th an estimated 700 migrants were killed when their boat capsized in the Mediterranean, one of the worst refugee drowning episodes in decades. That puts the total number of deaths in the Mediterranean over 1,500 this year. That's a tenfold increase over the same period in 2014, and as the sea warms more are likely to attempt the journey to Europe. Why is the crossing more deadly? Rough weather is partly to blame, as is a rise in violence associated with political instability in Africa and the Middle East. Humanitarian-aid officials emphasise two other factors. One is the suspension last October of Italy's Mare Nostrum search-and-rescue mission. The second factor is that the smugglers are cramming more and more people on ever more vulnerable craft as they run short of boats. Given this perfect storm of contributing forces it is tragic but unsurprising that the toll continues to grow. Just today new reports circulated that two more migrant ships had issued distress calls.

<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2015-04-20/stop-presses-nobel-prize-winning-economist-slams-qe>

119,78

Stop The Presses: Nobel-Prize Winning Economist Slams QE

Submitted by Tyler Durden on 04/20/2015 15:29 -0400

Whether it is due to pervasive groupthink, a chronic lack of vision, the perpetuation of failed ideas, or just because the alternative casts grave doubts about the value of their very existence, conventional economists and their media lackeys have almost without exception been supportive of the Fed's "recovery" efforts, be it ZIRP or QE. After all, neoclassical economics demands it, and if the Fed is wrong about its response to the second great depression, then the value of every single economist likewise goes out the window.

Still, in the relentless rising tide of ever louder voices against central planning by the world's monetary authorities, and its destructive consequences, mostly originated by people who engage in actual work as opposed to tenured academics who live in ivory towers where they conduct (failed) thought experiments, it was only a matter of time before at least one prominent economist took the other side of the argument that according to the likes of Paul Krugman has only failed (so far) because not enough of it has been tried (leave it to an economist to completely fail to anticipate the collateral collapse resulting from relentless central bank debt monetization which Zero Hedge forecast as long ago as 2012).

That time has come, and over the weekend, none other than Nobel-prize winning economist Robert Merton (of expanded Black-Scholes fame) with Arun Muralidhar as co-author, released an Op-Ed in Pensions and Investments magazine titled "Monetary policy: It's all relative", in which they slammed not only the current monetary policy response to economic ills (as observed through the prism of pension math and the adverse impact of low rates), but question if instead of leading to an improvement, **QE isn't in fact making the situation even worse.**

Here are the key excerpts from the op-ed:

... while QE has increased absolute wealth, it has simultaneously lowered relative wealth for a large class of investors. This could lead to the opposite of the desired effect for this group of investors. Lower relative wealth means investors need to save more to improve their funded status, especially where regulations are strict, and it results in less consumption and investment, and may not remove the deflationary overhang.

An alternate, more sophisticated approach to explaining why QE may not work to stimulate aggregate consumption is, perhaps, because the demographic mix of the U.S. (and most parts of the developed world) has shifted toward older people. Unlike 30 or 40 years ago, the enormous baby boomer generation, and even retirees, are much wealthier (including human capital) than in the past, and they are wealthier than current generations earlier in their life cycle. So the wealth effect does not lead to an increase in consumption and, potentially, has the opposite outcome.

When baby boomers were in the sweet spot for housing needs, expenditures on children and cars, etc. 30 to 40 years ago, the effect the central banks were expecting from QE might have worked better, as they expected it would, but that need not be a reliable prediction under the changed current demographic and wealth distribution.

We believe it is imperative for central banks and academia to examine this perspective immediately and develop a new monetary policy toolkit, because it would be tragic if the central banks' attempts to improve economic security with the current orthodoxy leads, instead, to less consumption, less investment and greater retirement insecurity.

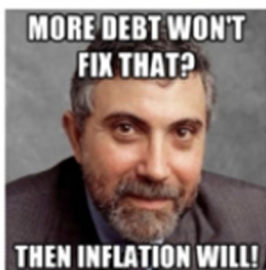
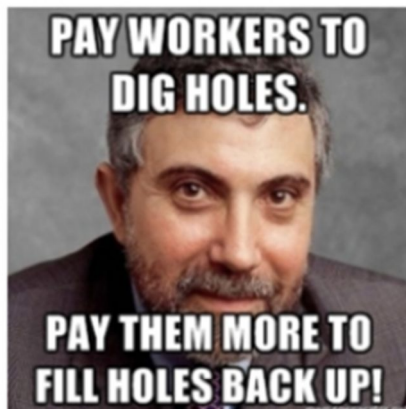
And the punchline:

A recent study by the Center for American Progress shows that millions of Americans (as high as 50% of households) are in danger of retiring with insufficient money to maintain the standard of living to which they are accustomed, and the problem is getting progressively worse. Your previous editorial argues that QE by the central bank may impose unintended costs on pensions, at both the institutional and retail level. This suggests more research needs to be conducted to examine how monetary policy affects relative wealth, not just absolute wealth, and whether traditional approaches are outdated given the current retirement landscape. **This may call for central banks to use a different set of policy tools than manipulating long-term rates, and may even argue for the Fed to actually raise long-term rates faster than what is recommended by traditional monetary policy.**

Alas, with central banks now proudly owning \$22 trillion in "assets", it is far too late. The best one can hope for is that the social collapse the results after QE's failure is finally accepted by all, and that includes all other economists, will be somewhat contained.

Needless to say, all it would take for the Fed to "lose credibility" (if only among its "very serious" peers; it has long since lost all credibility across the broader population) is for a few more economists to have a comparable epiphany and **declare that the money-printing emperor is naked**, and then all bets - at least for the current failed economic and monetary regime - are off.

As for the immediate response to this article from the Keynesian canon, here is a preview of what to expect.



119,80

European Leaders Address Migrant Crisis In Mediterranean

APRIL 20, 2015 4:26 PM ET

LAUREN FRAYER

[Listen to the Story](#)

European leaders say they have come up with a plan in response to the flood of migrants crossing the Mediterranean sea from Africa. If the death toll is confirmed in the latest tragedy Sunday, as many as 1,800 people have died making the perilous crossing to Europe so far this year.

MELISSA BLOCK, HOST:

Up to 900 migrants are feared drowned in the Mediterranean Sea after their boat capsized yesterday. And there are at least three more emergencies in the area today. Some 1,500 migrants have died in the Mediterranean so far this year. At the same time, as we'll hear in a few moments, more than 21,000 people have successfully crossed into Europe from Africa. We begin with Lauren Frayer for the latest on the rescue operation. Lauren, what is known about these latest boats that have run into trouble trying to get to Europe?

LAUREN FRAYER, BYLINE: Well, Melissa, one ship ran aground today off the Greek island of Rhodes. The boat splintered apart. Video shows survivors screaming in the water, only a few of them with lifejackets. The Coast Guard and passersby are wading out into - on the rocks trying to grab people. In the water, they were able to form a human chain to pass a small child to safety, all the while these waves crashing over them. That's just one case. Separately, Maltese and Italian ships are searching for two boats that sent out distress signals near the Libyan coast. One is believed to be an inflatable life raft with up to 150 people loaded on board, another a boat with up to 300 people. And rescuers are stretched pretty thin because they're still searching for those 900 people - possibly bodies by now - from a boat that capsized over the weekend.

BLOCK: And we've heard European leaders expressing horror for these events - this spate of incidents in the sea. There's also, though, been criticism that European leaders have done very little to avert this crisis.

FRAYER: Right. So one would hope this would be the sort of before-and-after moment for Europe. We've heard the U.K. prime minister calling this a dark day for Europe, the German chancellor saying she's appalled. But what's lacking so far still is a coherent strategy. Keep in mind, this is 28 countries trying to work together on this, and Italy is really the only country that's put its money where its mouth is, so to speak, launching this huge search and rescue operation two years ago. They saved more than 100,000 people, but were forced to wind it down late last year for lack of help from Europe. The EU does have Operation Triton, but it has a much smaller budget and is more limited.

BLOCK: Lauren, there was an emergency meeting today in Luxembourg, some of Europe's foreign and interior ministers meeting to try to come up with a strategy about this. Was there any progress?

FRAYER: Diplomats are calling for member states to address the root causes of migration - so the reasons why people are leaving their homes in Africa and the Middle East in the first place, also addressing security in North Africa, especially Libya, where many of the migrants who've died in the past few days have come from, also looking at resettling some migrants across Europe and the possibility of trying to destroy the human smugglers' ships at port in Africa before they can pick up migrants and start the journey. A big summit will be held on Thursday to discuss all of this. And the biggest and most controversial of what's on the table is the idea of beefing up search and rescue paid for by Europe. It would likely take months to set up, and some member states have been opposed to it until now on the grounds that search and rescue may actually encourage people to make that risky journey if they have a safety net.

BLOCK: And how volatile a political issue is that in these countries in Europe - this question of whether you encourage migration with these operations?

FRAYER: Just like in the U.S., immigration is a touchy topic in Europe - the whole idea of letting migrants into Europe. This is an election year in Britain, Spain. There were elections yesterday in Finland. There are fears that these migrants will add to the already high unemployment rate across the continent. There are fears that extremists could enter Europe in these boats. But as the EU foreign policy chief said today, no more excuses. Europe has to address this now.

BLOCK: OK. Lauren Frayer reporting on the latest migration crises in the Mediterranean. Lauren, thanks very much.

119,81

Mediterranean Migration Crisis Represents Scope Of Smuggling Business

APRIL 20, 2015 5:32 PM ET

[Listen to the Story](#)

All Things Considered

NPR's Robert Siegel speaks with **Leonard Doyle of the International Organization for Migration**, which estimates that more than 21,000 migrants have made it to Europe since the beginning of the year.

ROBERT SIEGEL, HOST:

Despite this crisis, many are willing to risk the journey. The International Organization for Migration - the IOM - estimates that more than 21,000 migrants have made it to Europe since the beginning of the year. And that number may explain why migrants are willing to pay for such perilous passage and why smugglers are willing to sell to them. Leonard Doyle is spokesperson for the IOM, and I asked him who these migrants are.

LEONARD DOYLE: They are, you know, frankly, the United Colors of Benetton. Some of them are from Senegal, a relatively peaceful place. Some of them are from Gambia. The numbers are there. Others are people who've fled repression in Eritrea or families in desperate need fleeing Syria trying to get to a safer place, having spent maybe way too long in a refugee camp. So this is a full galaxy of people. Even Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, you name it.

SIEGEL: And they're converging on Libya because, Libya being lawless at this point, is the easiest place for smugglers to operate from?

DOYLE: Exactly. Because the government of Libya is so weak - there are, in fact, two governments - it's relatively easy for them to get across the border. The militias, in effect, control the borders. They bring them in and then they put them in safe houses. They put them to work. Maybe they have them in forced-labor for a while. On the other hand, many communities from Africa work perfectly happily in Libya and never take the boat. So it's a kind of completely mixed bag, which is why sometimes the prescriptions you hear, the one-size-fits-all prescriptions, are just not right.

SIEGEL: And is the fact that Malta and Italy figure so prominently as destinations here - is it just that those are the closest countries to the Libyan coast or are many of these people headed for Italy or Malta?

DOYLE: Really not headed for - certainly not for Malta and not for Italy, except that it's a very benign place to set foot in. The Italians, you know, they have a proper rule of law. And one of those rules is that you can't force somebody to be fingerprinted. The migrants know that. They, therefore, don't get on the books in Italy and they scoot right through the place into northern Europe, where they'll claim asylum.

SIEGEL: And who are the smugglers? How sophisticated are the smuggling rings that people are paying for passage?

DOYLE: These people are probably closely politically connected. That have high access into the political classes, certainly in Libya. The amounts of money that are passing hands are vast. You know, we hear reports that one over-packed shipping vessel could bring in revenue in the order of between 4 and 7 million dollars. It depends, obviously, on the size of the vessel and the numbers of people aboard.

SIEGEL: And how much do people pay to cross in one of these boats?

DOYLE: Well, it's typically around a thousand dollars. It's kind of - if you're unfortunate enough not to have that, you might end up paying \$500 and ending up stuffed down in the hole by the engine of a rotten, old fishing boat. This happens a lot, and these people often die of asphyxiation.

SIEGEL: And, I mean, one of the boats that was reported on today was described as being only 30 yards from stem to stern. That's a fairly small vessel, and yet you would expect to find hundreds of people on such a boat?

DOYLE: Typically there would be up to 700 on an old fishing vessel that's long past its sell-by date or on a semi-rigid rubber raft that they brought in from Egypt. And you're not getting much customer service for your thousand dollars.

SIEGEL: Is there any crew on these vessels? That is, are there people who are the smuggler's guy who is directing the vessel toward Europe?

DOYLE: From what we were understanding last year, certainly from Libya - and it's different for every country - was that one of the passengers would get free passage in return for steering the vessel. Now, it's not necessarily like that at all times, but it seems that these smugglers disappear into the night and do not take part in the actual journey, which is probably why so many of the vessels found are so close to the Libyan shore.

SIEGEL: There's no indication that things in the Middle East are getting anymore safe for people who live there. To the contrary, war seems to be spreading. There's no indication that poverty is being greatly alleviated in sub-Saharan Africa. Would you just assume that, over the next several years, 180,000, 250,000 people will attempt or make the crossing predictably?

DOYLE: Well, unless some initiatives are taken, unless some moves are taken to do something about it - I mean, we've seen in these sorts of episodes that the international community can do great things. Look what happened over the Somali piracy episodes of a couple of years ago. This was an absolute scourge for any shipping going down the East Coast of Africa. The international community responded and stopped it by being forceful with the pirates. So we're not suggesting, necessarily, that that's the right approach for the Mediterranean, but we can see that the international community can deal with these things.

SIEGEL: Leonard Doyle, thank you very much for talking with us today.

DOYLE: You're very welcome. It was a pleasure.

SIEGEL: Mr. Doyle is spokesperson for the International Organization for Migration.

Warum die australische Lösung eigentlich keine ist

Australien ist, wie Europa, Ziel vieler Flüchtlinge. Die Regierung verfolgt gegen die mutmaßlichen Einwanderer eine harte Politik, die allerdings keine Lösung für tiefergehende Probleme bietet. Ein Kommentar
21.04.2015, von **TILL FÄHNDERS**, JAKARTA

Wer wissen möchte, wie man Flüchtlingsboote davon abhält, an die eigenen Küsten zu gelangen, der muss nur nach Australien schauen. Dort rühmt sich die Regierung des konservativen Premierministers Tony Abbott, dass in diesem Jahr noch kein Flüchtlingsboot in Australien gelandet ist und im vergangenen Jahr nur ein einziges. Im Jahr 2013 waren es unter der sozialdemokratischen Vorgängerregierung noch mehr als 300. Auch vor Australien waren früher viele Flüchtlinge ertrunken, teilweise direkt vor der Küste.

Der Regierungschef hat also eines seiner wichtigsten Wahlversprechen gehalten: „Stoppt die Boote“. Doch der Preis, den Australien und die Flüchtlinge dafür zahlen, ist hoch. Mit ihrer „Operation Souveräne Grenzen“ setzt die Abbott-Regierung auf eine Mischung aus Abschreckung, Abschottung und Ablehnung: Die Boote werden auf hoher See zur Rückkehr gezwungen. Falls ihre eigenen Schiffe zu morsch sind, werden die Flüchtlinge auf eigens für diesen Zweck angeschaffte Rettungsboote umgeladen, bevor die Marine sie ebenfalls zurück schickt.

Von allen anderen Flüchtlingen, die nicht mit einem regulären Visum gekommen sind, entledigt sich Australien, in dem es sie einfach in arme Länder verfrachtet. Die lassen sich das teuer bezahlen. So leben in den Flüchtlingslagern auf dem Inselstaat Nauru und auf der Insel Manus in Papua-Neuguinea rund 2000 Asylsuchende, die den Versuch gemacht hatten, über den Seeweg nach Australien zu gelangen. Auch Kambodscha hat versprochen, einige dieser Flüchtlinge bei sich anzusiedeln. Die ersten sollen dort bald eintreffen, verkündete Australien in den vergangenen Tagen.

Die Bedingungen, die in den Lagern auf Nauru und Manus herrschen, sind Berichten zufolge entsetzlich. Die Ungewissheit ist erdrückend. Ein großer Teil der Internierten leiden unter psychischen Problemen, es kommt regelmäßig zu Suizidversuchen, Aufständen und Hungerstreiks. In dem Manus-Lager wurde ein Iraner während einer Auseinandersetzung zwischen Wächtern und Flüchtlingen getötet. Auf Nauru soll Missbrauch an der Tagesordnung sein, auch an Kindern. Selbst einige frühere Mitarbeiter der Lagerorganisationen haben die Zustände angeprangert.

Doch wie Australien immer wieder versichert: Wer mit dem Boot versucht, an seine Küsten zu kommen, wird sich niemals in Australien niederlassen dürfen. In dem sich Australien der Verantwortung für die Flüchtlinge entledigt, die vor seinen Küsten landen, verstößt das Land aber gegen internationales Recht. Und selbst wenn die Boote gestoppt wurden: Niemand weiß, wie viele Flüchtlinge weiter bei dem Versuch, nach Australien zu gelangen, auf dem Meer untergehen. Dazu macht Canberra nämlich keine Angaben. Das Sterben geht weiter, nur eben nicht mehr direkt vor der australischen Küste.

119,83

Nucléaire: les déboires de l'EPR de Flamanville pourraient sauver la centrale de Fessenheim

Par Frédéric De Monicault Publié le 21/04/2015 à 06:00



Le retard du chantier de Flamanville pourrait repousser la fermeture de la doyenne des centrales nucléaires.

Le retard du chantier de Flamanville pourrait repousser la fermeture de la doyenne des centrales nucléaires.

Les déboires de l'EPR de Flamanville (Manche) pourraient bien faire les affaires de la centrale de Fessenheim (Haut-Rhin). Le gouvernement a promis l'arrêt de la doyenne des centrales d'EDF d'ici fin 2016. Dans le texte de loi d'orientation énergétique adopté fin 2014 par les députés en première lecture, le cap est tout tracé: la production d'électricité nucléaire est plafonnée à 63,2 gigawatts (GW). Ainsi, la centrale de Flamanville 3, actuellement en construction, ne pourra ouvrir qu'en compensant la déconnexion des deux réacteurs alsaciens.

«L'équation est limpide, mais le contexte a changé: plus personne aujourd'hui n'est en mesure de donner une date précise quant au démarrage de l'EPR, expose un spécialiste du secteur. Faut-il alors se priver d'un nucléaire qui marche au profit d'un autre qui patine. La question doit être tranchée sans tarder, car si François Hollande veut tenir la promesse faite aux Verts pendant la campagne de 2012, les procédures, notamment sur le plan administratif, doivent s'enclencher rapidement.»

Les problèmes sur la cuve ne sont pas les seuls obstacles qui pèsent sur le calendrier de Flamanville. L'échéance initiale de 2012 est désormais aux oubliettes: l'année dernière, EDF a fixé 2017 comme nouvel horizon, mais certains sous-traitants ne cachent plus que la phase des premiers tests pourrait faire glisser l'agenda au moins jusqu'en 2018.

119,84

EU Pledges Measures To Scale Up Response to Migration Crisis

Italian official accuses EU of treating the influx of refugees as an Italian problem

By LAURENCE NORMAN

Updated April 20, 2015 2:40 p.m. ET

LUXEMBOURG -- The European Union pledged a set of measures to step up its response to a growing migration crisis in a bid to stem the thousands of people risking the dangerous sea crossing to Europe.

The proposals, which now go to EU leaders for approval at an emergency summit on Thursday, include greater resources and a broader mandate for a joint EU-Italian border-control mission, as well as a possible military operation to destroy boats used by people smugglers.

The efforts mark the European bloc's first concrete steps in months toward developing a more cohesive plan of action to grapple with the humanitarian emergency. The crisis has spiraled as growing numbers of migrants from Africa and the Middle East seek to escape strife and economic turmoil via Libya, whose collapse has allowed human-smuggling rings to flourish along its coast.

Still, many of the proposals lacked specifics, while others have been tried -- and failed -- in the past. The centerpiece of the plan, bolstering the control-and-rescue mission, known as Triton -- would likely remain less ambitious than the Italian-led search-and-rescue operation that preceded it.

The move comes a day after what is shaping up to be one of the most deadly disasters on the Mediterranean. As many as 700 migrants are believed to have died when an overcrowded boat capsized near the Libyan coast over the weekend.

In response to the tragedy, the EU's interior ministers rushed to Luxembourg to join an already planned meeting of the foreign ministers. European Council President Donald Tusk also summoned EU leaders to gather in Brussels on Thursday.

"The situation in the Mediterranean is dramatic. It cannot continue like this. We cannot accept that hundreds of people die while trying to cross to Europe," Mr. Tusk said in a video message. "I do not expect any quick fix solutions to the root causes of migration, because there are none."

In a news conference after the ministers' meeting, EU foreign-policy chief Federica Mogherini spoke bluntly of the bloc's failure to act more quickly after previous tragedies. "I think we don't have to be afraid of showing the limits... of the policy-making processes. This is sad," she said.

At Monday's meeting, the European commissioner for migration, Dimitris Avramopoulos, presented a 10-point proposal to scale up efforts in grappling with the wave of migrants. They included plans for increasing the transport and funding resources for the Triton mission, although European governments have yet to agree upon the size of the increase in funding.

For now, additional money for Triton will come from the EU budget. But officials said that without additional funds from member states, a long-term search-and-rescue mission would be impossible.

Ministers also agreed to create some kind of mission to systematically capture and destroy vessels, although EU officials said there were divisions over the details of the operation. Member states are reluctant to commit troops to Libya. Any effort to capture and destroy boats or act against trafficking groups could require people on the ground.

Other proposals include a voluntary pilot project which would initially see 5,000 migrants distributed across the EU to share the burden. Germany, which takes on the most asylum seekers of any EU country, publicly backed the proposal but Mr. Avramopoulos said it would be voluntary.

The compromise plan also reflected divisions among the member states over how to combat the challenge. Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn said the EU needed to deploy a mission of the scale of the previous Mare Nostrum operation. But the U.K. argued the only effective strategy was to take the fight to the people traffickers.

"We've got to work upstream in the countries from which these people are coming. We are determined to put an end to this vile trade," U.K. Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said.

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The New Boat People

119,85

They're fleeing the chaos that Europe and America have allowed to spread.

April 20, 2015 7:03 p.m. ET

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

U.S. EDITION
REVIEW & OUTLOOK (Editorial)

21 avril 2015

The deaths of at least 1,000 migrants in the Mediterranean Sea during the past week -- including an estimated 700 who perished when a single ship capsized over the weekend -- have prompted calls for European leaders to address the migration emergency. If only the solution were as simple as stepped-up coast-guard patrols or the other patch-up proposals under consideration by the **European Union**.

The thousands of desperate souls on these boats are the latest collateral damage as Europe and America abdicate responsibility for stability in the Middle East and North Africa. They flee violence at the hands of **Islamic State**, Nigeria's **Boko Haram**, Syria's Bashar Assad or other regional thugs. Along the way they fall into the grasp of gangs of human traffickers who thrive in the region's growing lawlessness and destitution.

Victims of the weekend's drowning are believed to have been mainly from sub-Saharan Africa. They likely paid anywhere from several hundred to several thousand dollars for a passage across the Mediterranean in a dangerously overcrowded vessel.

Europe's politicians worry about whether their policies create a pull for migrants. Italy last year ran a wide-ranging search-and-rescue program called Mare Nostrum to try to rescue migrants at sea. The <euro>9 million-per-month cost and concerns that it was encouraging even more migration led Rome to end it, to be replaced with a much smaller effort focused on maritime border enforcement.

But Europe needs to worry at least as much about the push factor as it does about the pull. The European members of **NATO** urged and led the campaign to oust the Gadhafi regime from Tripoli. But, like the U.S., the Europeans largely abdicated any role in standing the new Libyan government on its feet. France, to its credit, has intervened directly against al Qaeda in Mali and aided African allies in the fight against **Boko Haram**. But Paris alone can do only so much.

Europe should at least do what it can to help the desperate people at sea, as the U.S. did for the Vietnamese refugees who fled Communist rule after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Emergency investments in Europe's chronically underfunded naval assets would be a start.

But until the West makes a strategic decision to reverse the disorder and chaos now engulfing its African and Middle Eastern neighbors, the refugees will keep getting into their boats, and the scale of the tragedy will mount.

119,86

Apr 20, 2015

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

For Some EU Commissioners, There's No Place Like Home

Agence France-Presse/Getty Images

Among the frequently-aired gripes about **Jean-Claude Juncker** is that he's a rather absent European Commission president. There are complaints that he delegates too much of his work and claims that he shows up in his office in Brussels just two to three days a week, often arranging "working lunches" in his home country, Luxembourg, on Mondays and Fridays.

So Real Time Brussels decided to take a look if these claims stand up — and how his schedule compares to other members of his commission.

Last week, Mr. Juncker's agenda seemed to support the complaints: On Monday he was in Luxembourg, meeting the president of the Court of Auditors, and on Friday he was back in Luxembourg for a working lunch with Luc Frieden, his former finance minister and now vice chairman of the board of **Deutsche Bank AG** DB +0.30%.

His spokeswoman on Friday fielded reporters' questions on Mr. Juncker's habit of meeting "his friends" at the expense of European taxpayers, who pay for his trips, and said Mr. Frieden "is contributing with ideas to ongoing debates such as the reform of the economic and monetary union."

She also suggested that other commissioners spend more long weekends at home than her boss.

Real Time Brussels pored over all the commissioners' agendas and **compiled a ranking of how many times they set up meetings back home on Fridays and/or Mondays:**

Top of the list is **Pierre Moscovici** — the economics commissioner who still has an apartment in nearby Paris. Mr. Moscovici often comes into Brussels Monday afternoon after scheduling meetings with press or French politicians in Paris in the morning. Of the 24 weekends since the commission took office on Nov. 1, he took the entire Friday or Monday for meetings in Paris on 13 occasions.

Competition Commissioner **Margrethe Vestager**, who hails from Denmark, comes in second: She set up speeches and meetings in Copenhagen on a Friday or Monday eight times since taking office.

Mr. Juncker is third, with six long weekends. Out of those, on two Mondays he traveled directly from Luxembourg to Strasbourg, where the European Parliament meets once a month and the commission has to be present. His office points out that unlike most commissioners, he spent Easter "working in the office in Brussels." No further details were given as to what exactly he focused on during that weekend.

Regional-policy Commissioner **Corina Crețu** went back to her home town Bucharest on five occasions — once as early as Wednesday. In March, she went on a three-day mission to Romania from Tuesday until Thursday. She didn't schedule any meetings in Brussels the following Friday.

Spanish Commissioner **Miguel Arias Cañete** — in charge of energy policy — held speeches or had official meetings in Madrid on three Fridays and two Mondays.

The Estonian commissioner, **Andrus Ansip** and his Swedish colleague, **Cecilia Malmström** used the long weekend method four times. Slovenia's **Violeta Bulc** went to Ljubljana on two Fridays. In February, she held a speech in the Slovenian Parliament on a Friday and had meetings on the Monday following that same weekend.

Italy's **Federica Mogherini**, Britain's **Jonathan Hill** and Latvia's **Valdis Dombrovskis** had two such long week-ends, while the rest of the commissioners had one or none.

If they have official meetings abroad, commissioners can claim travel expenses and a daily allowance of €50 to €100, depending on the country. For half a day spent abroad, the allowance is reduced accordingly. This comes on top of their monthly salary of over €20,000. Mr. Juncker earns €25,500.

119,87

Post-Gaddafi chaos in Libya fuels EU migrant crisis

Text by [FRANCE 24](#)

Latest update : 2015-04-21

The battle between secular and Islamist militias in Libya – including the Islamic State group – is helping fuel a migrant exodus from the North African nation, which has descended into chaos since the 2011 ouster of former leader Muammar Gaddafi.

EU foreign ministers were set to [discuss the influx of migrants at a meeting](#) Monday in Luxembourg after the drowning of at least [700 people off the Libyan coast](#) over the weekend. The disaster has shined a spotlight on a burgeoning EU immigration crisis that the UN said has claimed some [1,600 lives so far](#) this year.

Per capita national income in the European Union is 30 times that found in a majority of North African states, including Libya, a discrepancy that prompts many to risk crossing the Mediterranean. But the militia takeover of much of Libya – and the continuing fighting between rival armed groups – has led many more in recent years to attempt the perilous journey to European shores.

Libya is embroiled in a civil conflict that is threatening to turn the country into a failed state. Two rival governments – the internationally recognised winner of [June 2014 elections based in Tobruk](#) and another Misrata-based faction that controls the capital, Tripoli – are jockeying for dominance, with each controlling its own political institutions and military forces.

The inter-militia fighting has intensified since the general election last year and Libya is now more than ever in desperate need of a functioning government to assert control over the armed factions that united to overthrow Gaddafi in 2011 but which have since refused to disarm and cede control to a central government.

Up to [1,700 armed groups](#) are now active in Libya – some of them secular, others Islamist, with loyalties further divided along regional, ethnic and tribal lines. Militias and tribal fighters have seized the country's main oil ports, commandeering the OPEC member's main source of revenue.

[Rival militias](#) have carved out areas of influence, [launched multiple attacks](#) on the [airports](#) and [parliament](#), and carried out several high-level kidnappings, including [briefly detaining](#) the serving prime minister in 2013.

Criminal haven

Without a functioning central authority, Libya has become a safe haven for foreign terrorist organisations as well as human-traffickers. A lack of border controls has made Libya a key route for weapons shipments to al Qaeda branches in sub-Saharan Africa and a travel corridor for jihadists bound for Syria.

The leader of the country's largest jihadist group, [Ansar Al-Shari'a](#), has pledged allegiance to the [Islamic State group](#).

A video released Sunday purportedly showed Islamic State militants in Libya shooting or [beheading 30 Ethiopian Christians](#). The 29-minute video was grimly similar to a video released in February showing the militants beheading 21 captured Egyptian Christians on a Libyan beach, an act that prompted Egypt to launch air strikes on the group's strongholds in Libya. The Islamists also launched a high-profile [attack on the upscale Corinthia Hotel](#) in Tripoli in January.

The fighting in Libya killed more than 2,800 people last year and displaced almost 400,000, the [UN said in a February report](#).

US President Barack [Obama called on Gulf nations](#) over the weekend to use their influence to help resolve the infighting.

"We're going to have to encourage some of the countries inside of the Gulf who have, I think, influence over the various factions inside of Libya to be more cooperative themselves," Obama told reporters on Saturday.

"In some cases, you've seen them fan the flames of military conflict, rather than try to reduce them," he said.

Push for unity deal

[Bernardino Leon](#), the UN's special representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya, told reporters on Sunday that [rival factions reached a draft agreement](#) during a latest round of negotiations in the Moroccan city of Skhirat.

"We have now a draft which looks like something very close to a final agreement. Eighty percent of the text in this draft is, let me put it this way, is something that the parties can agree," he said.

He added that negotiators would be returning to Libya for consultations before coming back to Morocco in two weeks to finalise a deal.

He said preparations were also under way for the armed rivals to enter direct talks for the first time.

"This will be the first time that the armed groups, the people who are holding weapons and who are fighting on the ground, might meet," he said. "We want this meeting to be face-to-face – not proximity talks, but direct talks – with the support and sponsorship of the United Nations."

But Leon underscored that Libya faces a very precarious situation within its borders.

"There are reports of more terrorist activities by ISIS (Islamic State group)," Leon said.

"We know that the enemies of peace, the enemies of the agreement, will be active and will be more active in the coming days and weeks," he said.

Heading into the Luxembourg talks on Monday, Malta's Prime Minister Joseph Muscat emphasised that the EU needed to address the Libyan situation if it hoped to tackle the migrant crisis.

"The name of the game is Libya and the securitisation of Libya," Muscat said. "We have what is fast becoming a failed state on our doorsteps, and criminal gangs are enjoying a heyday."

"Unless something is done about Libya, these scenes will be repeating themselves," he warned.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini called the hundreds of migrant deaths a stain on the EU's conscience.

"We have said too many times 'never again'. Now is time for the European Union as such to tackle these tragedies without delay."

119,89

Die Industrie der Schlepper

Nur Drogen- und Waffenhandel sind lukrativer

Der Menschenschmuggel in Westafrika ist zu einem regelrechten Industrie-Zweig geworden. Nur mit Drogen- und Waffenhandel lässt sich noch mehr Geld machen. Wer an der Not der Menschen alles verdient, ist Gegenstand vieler Spekulationen.

21.04.2015, von THOMAS SCHEEN, JOHANNESBURG

Nach dem mutmaßlich schlimmsten Flüchtlingsdrama im Mittelmeer kannten die Zeitungen in Westafrika nur ein Thema: Flüchtlinge. Allerdings ging es in den Berichten nicht um das Schicksal der Ertrunkenen, sondern um das der wenigen Landsleute in Südafrika, die sich dort von ausländerfeindlichen Ausschreitungen bedroht sehen. Dieser Journalismus hängt zusammen mit der Idee des Panafricanismus und mit dem Traum einer afrikanischen Entwicklung, die von Afrikanern getragen werde.

Die Bootsflüchtlinge hingegen sind unterwegs zu den ehemaligen Kolonialisten und gelten aus dieser Sicht als Beweis einer gescheiterten Utopie. Das zuzugeben fällt umso schwerer, als die afrikanischen Volkswirtschaften zwar seit Jahren wachsen, jedoch nicht schnell genug, um allen Menschen Perspektiven zu bieten. Die entsprechende Faustregel lautet: Das Wirtschaftswachstum muss doppelt so hoch sein wie das Bevölkerungswachstum, um Armut nachhaltig zu reduzieren.

China hat darauf mit seiner Ein-Kind-Politik reagiert. In den meisten afrikanischen Ländern aber liegt das Verhältnis bei vier bis fünf Prozent Wirtschaftswachstum, dem ein demographisches Wachstum von deutlich über drei Prozent entgegensteht. Trotz wirtschaftlicher Zuwachsraten gibt es folglich pro Kopf immer weniger zu verteilen.

Die Flüchtlings-Industrie

Eine Umkehr dieses Trends ist nicht in Sicht. In den zurückliegenden 25 Jahren hat sich die Bevölkerungszahl auf dem Kontinent von 500 Millionen Menschen auf nahezu eine Milliarde verdoppelt. Bereits heute sind 41 Prozent der afrikanischen Bevölkerung jünger als 15 Jahre alt. Was machen diese jungen Menschen mit ihrem Leben, wenn es in ihrer Heimat keine Perspektive gibt? Sie wandern aus.

Im westlichen Afrika ist daraus eine regelrechte Industrie entstanden. Wer es sich leisten kann, flüchtet per Flugzeug. Dafür ist ein Schengen-Visum nötig, eine Einladung aus dem Zielland, ein Rückflugticket, eine Hotelreservierung und ein Kontoauszug, aus dem hervorgeht, dass der Antragsteller seinen Aufenthalt in Europa aus eigener Tasche finanzieren kann.

Diese Einladungen kann man kaufen, ebenso wie das Rückflugticket, den Kontoauszug und die Hotelreservierung. Speziell in Frankreich haben sich Schleusersyndikate darauf spezialisiert, Migranten aus dem frankophonen Afrika ins Land zu holen. Da dieselben Syndikate zudem den Markt für Schwarzarbeit in den großen Städten kontrollieren, kann von einer regelrechten Verwertungskette gesprochen werden, denen die Flüchtlinge ausgeliefert sind.

Sahelstaaten sind auf Überweisungen angewiesen

Diejenigen, die sich mit Booten über das Mittelmeer aufmachen, sind dagegen das arme Fußvolk. Die Preise für eine Passage beispielsweise von Ghana nach Italien liegen bei 3500 bis 5000 Euro. Das scheint nicht viel zu sein, wird aber zu einer kolossalen Summe, wenn es in Verhältnis zu dem westafrikanischen Durchschnittseinkommen von 50.000 CFA-Franc (76 Euro) gesetzt wird. Dann entspricht der Preis für die Reise in das vermeintliche Paradies knapp vier Jahren Arbeit.

Ganze Familien verschulden sich, um einem der ihren die Ausreise zu ermöglichen – in der Hoffnung, alsbald Dividende in Form von Auslandsüberweisungen zu erhalten. Die Weltbank schätzt, dass die in Europa und Amerika lebenden Afrikaner zwischen vier und sechs Milliarden Dollar jedes Jahr zurück in die Heimat überweisen. Diese Summe entspricht rund zwanzig Prozent des Bruttoinlandsproduktes eines Staates wie Burkina Faso. Es ist folglich nicht verwunderlich, dass kein Sahelstaat den Exodus ernsthaft zu unterbinden versucht.

Transitland Libyen

Die Anlaufstellen für die Flüchtlinge, die von Tunesien, Algerien oder Libyen die gefährliche Passage über das Mittelmeer nehmen, sind bekannt: Agadez in Niger und Adré in Tschad. Von dort aus bringen geländegängige Lastwagen die Flüchtlinge quer durch Libyen an die Küste. Schon zu Zeiten Gaddafis war Libyen ein unkompliziertes Transitland. Seit es dort aber keine Regierung mehr gibt, die diesen Namen verdient, gleicht das Land einem offenen Scheunentor.

Das führt zu der Situation, dass die Patrouillen der französischen Armee, die am Südrand der Sahara die Bewegungen von radikalen Islamisten zu unterbinden versuchen, regelmäßig auf Hunderte von Menschen treffen, die mitten in der Wüste auf den nächsten Lastwagen warten. Über das Endziel dieser Reisenden besteht kein Zweifel. Doch solange diese Flüchtlinge über Ausweise aus einem der Staaten der westafrikanischen Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion (Ecowas) verfügen, die sie von der Visumpflicht innerhalb der Union befreien, halten sie sich völlig legal in Tschad oder Niger auf.

Wer alles an diesem straff organisierten Menschenschmuggel verdient, ist Gegenstand vieler Spekulationen. Sicher ist nur, dass es dabei um sehr viel Geld geht. Nach Schätzungen der Internationalen Organisation für Migration (IOM) beläuft sich der Umsatz des organisierten Menschenschmuggels

weltweit auf eine jährliche Summe zwischen sieben und zwölf Milliarden Dollar. Nur Drogen- und Waffenhandel sind noch lukrativer. Es liegt deshalb nahe, hinter dem Menschenschmuggel in Westafrika ähnliche Strukturen zu vermuten.

„Die mit dem Blut Unterzeichnenden“

Dass die Sahara über weite Strecken von radikalen Islamisten kontrolliert wird, ist dabei eher hilfreich als störend. Bis zum Beginn der französischen Militäroffensive gegen „Al Qaida im islamischen Maghreb“ (Aqim) in Mali Anfang 2013 war das Land Umschlagplatz für südamerikanisches Kokain auf seinem Weg nach Europa.

Die kolumbianischen Drogenkartelle hatten dafür eine Allianz mit den Islamisten geschlossen, die den bewaffneten Schutz für die Drogenlieferungen durch die Wüste stellten. Die Drogenhändler hatten dabei unter anderen mit dem Algerier Mokhtar Belmokhtar zu tun, einem der militärischen Kommandeure von Aqim. Daneben war Belmokhtar ein sehr erfolgreicher Zigaretten Schmuggler, was ihm den Beinamen „Mister Marlboro“ einbrachte.

Der bereits mehrfach für tot erklärte Belmokhtar, der unter anderem den Terroranschlag auf die algerische Gasförderanlage von In Aménas im Januar 2013 zu verantworten hat, bei dem 38 Geiseln getötet wurden, führt heute eine Terrorgruppe namens „Muwaqiuun bi-l dam“, was so viel heißt wie: „Die mit dem Blut Unterzeichnenden“. Die Gruppe hat sich inzwischen im Süden Libyens und damit genau auf der Route der Menschenschmuggler eingerichtet.

Éducation : le projet de Najat Vallaud-Belkacem qui agace les Allemands

La ministre prévoit de supprimer les classes bilangues et européennes. Le coup de grâce à l'allemand, langue déjà très mal parlée par les Français ?



Les Français sont-

ils sur le point de se détourner de l'apprentissage de l'allemand ? © Tobias Schwarz / AFP

De NOTRE CORRESPONDANTE À BERLIN, PASCALE HUGUES

La proposition de Najat Vallaud-Belkacem de supprimer, dès la rentrée prochaine, les classes bilangues (qui proposent l'apprentissage de deux langues en parallèle dès la sixième à raison de trois heures d'anglais et deux heures d'allemand hebdomadaires) et les classes européennes laisse les Allemands perplexes. Cette réforme du collège va-t-elle donner le coup de grâce à l'apprentissage de l'allemand déjà si mal aimé dans les établissements scolaires français ? Une langue qui rebute déjà beaucoup d'élèves en raison de la difficulté de sa grammaire.

La France et l'Allemagne avaient donc décidé de donner un petit coup de pouce à l'apprentissage de la langue du partenaire qui déclinait à allure accélérée. Car en Allemagne aussi de moins en moins d'élèves optaient pour le français, une langue réputée difficile et choisie par "les filles sages et bonnes élèves". Les classes bilangues et européennes avaient donc été créées pour tenter d'enrayer cet effondrement. Ce dispositif qui s'est montré efficace dans les deux pays risque aujourd'hui de capoter. "Cela concerne 3 700 classes en France, soit 100 000 élèves", explique très inquiet Joachim Umlauf, directeur de l'institut Goethe à Paris. "La suppression de ce dispositif va nuire à l'allemand", ajoute-t-il. Avant d'expliquer : "Le problème de fond va se reposer. Face au recul dramatique de l'allemand qui, entre 1995 et 2002, avait chuté de 25 à 15 %, les gouvernements de nos deux pays avaient décidé de prendre ces mesures interventionnistes pour stabiliser le nombre d'élèves qui font de l'allemand à l'école. Opération réussie : 15 % des élèves français choisissent de faire de l'allemand à l'école aujourd'hui. Nous ne comprenons pas au nom de quoi la ministre décide soudain, sans consulter personne, de supprimer ce dispositif. On menace ici des instruments qui pourtant ont fait leurs preuves."

Une pétition a été envoyée à François Hollande

30 000 signatures ont déjà été recueillies par l'Adeaf, l'association des profs d'allemand, pour protester contre le projet. La pétition a été adressée à François Hollande. Une soixantaine de députés à l'Assemblée nationale ont également manifesté leur opposition à ce texte, arguant qu'il risquait de nuire à la relation franco-allemande si vitale pour l'Europe. Même Jean-Marc Ayrault, germanophone et ancien prof d'allemand, est intervenu dans le débat. L'ambassadeur d'Allemagne à Paris était quant à lui reçu lundi soir par la ministre.

"En tout cas, cette mesure unilatérale risque d'avoir des conséquences sur l'apprentissage du français en Allemagne, ajoute Joachim Umlauf. Les Allemands auront-ils envie de soutenir la France si elle les laisse tomber ainsi ? Ces mesures volontaristes de soutenir la langue de l'autre avaient été prises en commun. Que se passe-t-il si l'un des deux partenaires décide de quitter le navire sans consulter personne ? Et que va-t-il advenir du projet d'Angela Merkel et de Nicolas Sarkozy de renforcer en les doublant les rangs de l'université franco-allemande si les étudiants français ne parlent pas allemand ?"

En Allemagne, les Français ont la réputation de ne pas parler les langues étrangères et de sortir de l'école en ànonnant l'anglais. On se moque de leur accent, de leurs fautes de grammaire, de leur incapacité à être à l'aise dans une langue qui n'est pas la leur. Les petits Allemands commencent l'apprentissage des langues (en grande majorité l'anglais, mais aussi le français, l'espagnol et même le russe) dès l'école primaire. Un enseignement concentré sur l'expression orale. Un bachelier allemand parle bien l'anglais et s'il choisit la dominante française, il sera parfaitement capable de tenir une conversation dans la langue de Molière. Lors des échanges scolaires, les familles allemandes sont toujours frappées par le manque de confiance en soi des jeunes correspondants français qui ont du mal, après des années de cours, à aligner deux mots en allemand. La réforme proposée par la ministre française ne risque, estiment les Allemands, que d'aggraver les choses.

<http://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article139838774/Verfassungsrechtler-droht-EZB-mit-Untaetigkeitsklage.html>

119,92

Verfassungsrechtler droht EZB mit Untätigkeitsklage

Griechenlands Banken bekommen immer mehr Notkredite von der EZB. Dabei seien sie womöglich schon insolvent, warnt der Finanzprofessor Markus Kerber – und fordert ein Einschreiten der Aufseher.

Von [Sebastian Jost](#) Wirtschaftsredakteur



Foto: dpa Die Krisenpolitik der Notenbank gerät von vielen Seiten unter Beschuss. Jüngst protestierte eine Aktivistin bei der EZB-Pressekonferenz mit Präsident Mario Draghi

Markus C. Kerber überließ nichts dem Zufall. Auch nicht dem des normalen Briefträgeralltags. Der Berliner Rechtsanwalt und Finanzprofessor schickte eigens einen Gerichtsvollzieher los, um seinen Brief bei der Europäischen Zentralbank (EZB) abzugeben.

Er wollte sichergehen, dass das sechsstufige Schreiben samt diverser Anlagen tatsächlich in Frankfurt einging – und er will das auch vor Gericht beweisen können. Denn die Sendung von Anfang April hat es in sich. Sie setzt die Notenbank bei ihrer ohnehin schon umstrittenen Griechenland-Politik weiter unter Druck.

Es geht um die Frage, wie die EZB mit den Banken des Krisenlandes müsste. Bisher lässt sie die griechische Notenbank gewähren, die den Instituten immer mehr Notfallkredite gewährt. Der Jurist und ehemalige Bankkaufmann hält das für rechtswidrig, weil diverse betroffene Häuser aus seiner Sicht längst nicht mehr solvent sein dürften.

Deshalb müsse die Bankenaufsicht der EZB, die für die größten Banken Griechenlands zuständig ist, einschreiten. In seinem Schreiben an die Bankenaufsichtschefin Danièle Nouy verlangt Kerber nach Informationen der "Welt" Auskunft darüber, welche Maßnahmen die EZB bislang bei den griechischen Kreditinstituten ergriffen hat – und droht mit einer Untätigkeitsklage, falls die Frankfurter Aufseher einfach nur zuschauen sollten.

Unterstützung der Banken ist umstritten

Unabhängig von den juristischen Detailfragen gießt Kerber damit Öl ins Feuer, denn der Umgang mit den griechischen Banken ist höchst kontrovers. Seit Monaten ziehen Kunden Milliarde um Milliarde von griechischen Konten ab, sodass die Institute immer stärker von Zentralbank-Mitteln abhängig werden.

Für die EZB ist die Lage kniffliger als bei früheren Eskalationen der [Griechenland-Krise](#). Denn seit November ist die europäische Bankenaufsicht unter dem Dach der EZB auch für die vier größten Hellas-Banken zuständig. Das macht den Umgang mit den Notfallkrediten, deren Rahmen sich inzwischen auf 74 Milliarden Euro beläuft, besonders delikat.

Die Unterstützung dieser Banken ist in der Notenbank entsprechend umstritten, sowohl auf der Aufsichts- als auch auf der Geldpolitik-Seite. So setzten die Bankenaufseher durch, dass die griechischen Banken keine zusätzlichen Schatzwechsel ihres Heimatlandes mehr zeichnen dürfen, weil sich dadurch gewisse Risiken in ihren Bilanzen vergrößern würden.

Der orthodoxen Fraktion um Bundesbank-Präsident Jens Weidmann geht das freilich nicht weit genug, sie würde die Hellas-Banken gerne zwingen, diese Positionen nicht nur einzufrieren, sondern zurückzufahren – also auslaufende Kurzfristanleihen Griechenlands nicht zu verlängern.

Die Geldpolitiker im EZB-Rat wiederum erhöhen die Obergrenze für Notkredite der griechischen Zentralbank nur Woche für Woche in Trippelschritten, was die Banken stets im Ungewissen lässt, wie lange sie sich noch bei der Notenbank finanzieren können.

Griechenlands Regierungschef Alexis Tsipras bringt das so sehr in Rage, dass er sich in einem Brief an die deutsche Kanzlerin darüber beschwerte – ganz so, als erwarte er von Angela Merkel, die unabhängige EZB zur Ordnung zu rufen.

Griechische Steuerforderungen als Eigenkapital

Bisher freilich belässt es die Zentralbank bei solchen Nadelstichen. Wirklich schmerzliche Schritte gegen griechische Banken bleiben aus. Kerber hat deshalb schon EZB-Chefvolkswirt und Direktoriumsmitglied Peter Praet mit der Frage konfrontiert, warum die griechischen Banken weiterhin Notfallliquidität von der Zentralbank erhalten.

Die Krux: Diese Notkredite unterliegen zwar laxeren Kriterien als die üblichen Finanzierungsmittel, die sich Banken bei der EZB leihen können. Unumstößlich ist aber die Bedingung, dass keine Banken finanziert werden dürfen, die faktisch bereits insolvent sind, also der Pleite geweiht. Über die Solvenz wacht wiederum die zuständige Aufsicht – also Nouys Behörde.

Was die EZB darf und was nicht

Bislang betonten sowohl Nouy als auch EZB-Präsident Mario Draghi, dass die betroffenen griechischen Banken sehr wohl solvent seien. Diese Einschätzung sei "mit rationalen Maßstäben kaum noch nachvollziehbar", argumentiert Kerber in seinem Schreiben und führt mehrere Indizien an, die gegen eine Solvenz der Banken sprächen.

So sei es schwierig, am Markt noch Kreditausfallversicherungen für die vier großen griechischen Banken zu bekommen. Außerdem bestehe das Eigenkapital der Institute zu einem erheblichen Teil aus Steuerforderungen gegen die [klamme griechische Regierung](#) – und diese Forderungen erfüllten auch nicht die formalen Voraussetzungen, um als Eigenkapital anerkannt zu werden, so Kerber. Er sieht die Gefahr, dass die vier Institute zu "Zombiebanken" werden, die weder genug Eigenkapital noch flüssige Finanzmittel haben, "um im Kreditgewerbe tätig zu bleiben".

Die Aufsicht sei nach einschlägigen EU-Richtlinien verpflichtet, die Lage der Banken zu untersuchen, unter anderem mit Blick auf das [Eigenkapital](#) und die Verschuldungsquote. Tue die Behörde das nicht, würde dies aus Kerbers Sicht "schwere Amtspflichtverletzungen nach sich ziehen". Der Jurist fragt deshalb, ob Nouy die Banken aufgefordert habe, ihre Solvenz nachzuweisen oder ihre Geschäftspolitik zu ändern.

Angesichts der Zweifel an der Solvenz der griechischen Banken vertrete er die Auffassung, "dass es die Verpflichtung Ihres Gremiums wäre, dem EZB-Rat immedial und ohne jede Verzögerung die Notwendigkeit der Abwicklung der oben genannten Banken vorzuschlagen", schreibt Kerber weiter. Ansonsten setze sich Nouy dem Vorwurf aus, ihren Pflichten nicht nachzukommen. "Eine Untätigkeitsklage ... gegen die EZB wäre die unmittelbare Folge."

EZB will sich nicht äußern

Die EZB wollte sich zu der drohenden Klage nicht äußern und verwies darauf, dass ihre Maßnahmen hinsichtlich konkreter Banken vertraulich seien. "Die EZB hat eine Reihe von Aufsichtsmaßnahmen getroffen, aber wir können solche Schritte bezüglich einzelner Banken oder einer Gruppe von Banken nicht kommentieren", so ein Sprecher der Notenbank.

Die griechischen Banken erfüllten jedoch die Mindestkapitalanforderungen. Die EZB beobachte die Situation und sei in engem Kontakt mit der griechischen Zentralbank und dem gesamten Bankensektor, hieß es weiter.

Kerber hält die Bankenaufsicht durch die EZB grundsätzlich für problematisch. Vergangenen Sommer hat er zusammen mit anderen Wissenschaftlern in Karlsruhe eine Verfassungsbeschwerde gegen die neu geschaffene Konstruktion eingereicht. Aus ihrer Sicht ist es nicht mit den EU-Verträgen vereinbar, dass die Notenbank als geldpolitische Institution nun auch Banken beaufsichtigt.

Durch die Hellas-Politik sieht sich Kerber in dieser Auffassung bestärkt. Die Notfallkredite an die griechischen Banken belegten ebenso wie das neue Programm zum Kauf von Staatsanleihen die Interessenkollision für die EZB, argumentiert der Jurist in einem ergänzenden Schriftsatz an das Verfassungsgericht.

Es sei offensichtlich, dass die EZB als Bankenaufsicht ein Interesse daran habe, die Schieflage einzelner Institute zu vertuschen. "Um diesem Szenario zu entgehen, werden geldpolitisch getarnte Instrumente eingesetzt", die aber mit den EU-Verträgen unvereinbar seien. Gleichzeitig ist das Euro-System der Notenbanken selbst der größte Gläubiger der griechischen Banken, wäre also von aufsichtsrechtlichen Maßnahmen gegen diese Häuser stark betroffen.

Dies alles "beweist einmal mehr, dass die Aufgaben von Geldpolitik und Bankaufsicht nicht in die Hand einer supranationalen Zentralbank gelegt werden können". Die Karlsruher Verfassungsrichter schweigen sich zu diesen Vorwürfen bisher aus: Noch haben sie nicht entschieden, ob sie die Verfassungsklage für zulässig halten.

119,94

If Europe listens to Tony Abbott, the future for refugees will be cruel

[Richard Ackland](#)

Australia's brutal 'solution' to refugees coming by boat is justified in the name of preventing drownings at sea. Europe should not follow us down that path

Tuesday 21 April 2015 06:50 BST Last modified on Tuesday 21 April 2015 07:27 BST

Katie Hopkins' [call](#) for gunships to send refugee "cockroaches" back to their own country, and Ukip's [ploughing](#) of the anti-immigration furrow are entirely predictable appeals to the chip-butty and pint version of Little England.

What is most cringeworthy is that the Australian "solution" to boat arrivals is now regarded as best practice for the export market.

Australians are repeatedly reminded, by both sides of politics, that a mixture of boat tow-backs and harsh detention centres on remote islands is the best-worst solution to destroy the business model of "evil" people smugglers and prevent deaths at sea.

Tony Abbott, the Australian prime minister, has been quick to recommend his approach to Europe after hundreds of migrants [drowned in the Mediterranean](#).

"The only way you can stop the deaths is to stop the people smuggling trade. The only way you can stop the deaths is in fact to stop the boats," he said.

"That's why it is so urgent that the countries of Europe adopt very strong policies that will end the people smuggling trade across the Mediterranean."

While Hopkins was more concerned to appeal to the readership of "brilliant British truckers" who get fined if they're caught with "feral humans" clinging to the chassis all the way from Calais, it's only a matter of time before Abbott's advice is taken up, and cruelty is presented as the only way to prevent further loss of life in the Med.

Since the election of the Abbott government, those people whose boats are not towed back to Indonesia are being held in detention camps, funded and managed by Australia, on tiny Pacific islands – the Republic of Nauru (formerly known more happily as Pleasant Island) and Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. Some are also on the remote Australian territory of Christmas Island.

They have been advised that they will never be settled in Australia, even if they have refugee status. Instead, the government is seeking to resettle them in Cambodia, which has enough problems of its own, or in PNG. Others are being refouled back to Sri Lanka, Iran and even Vietnam.

The public disquiet is intensified by the repeated and inaccurate description of people seeking the protection of Australia under international law, as "illegals".

Much of this policy was set in place under the previous Labor government, which at one point sought to transfer the problem to Malaysia. The current government has taken it to an entirely new level of wretchedness in its determination to "stop the boats".

Speaking in Queensland [earlier this month](#), Abbott boasted that "any other government, I suspect, would quickly succumb to the cries of the human rights lawyers".

"Our determination to save lives at sea is greater than [people smugglers'] determination to profit from putting people's lives at risk."

Asylum seekers during a hunger strike at the Manus Island detention centre. Photograph: Refugee Action Coalition/AAP

It's a distressingly hollow posture when saving lives at sea comes at the price of destroying them emotionally and physically on land. By now, you'd think history would have taught us to see through such spurious moral justifications.

Information to hand from the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) and the [Moss report](#), which examined allegations of physical and sexual abuse on Nauru and the failure of the authorities to exercise a duty of care, leave little doubt that human destruction is in full swing in the camps.

It cannot be hidden by the pea and thimble game played by the Australian government, which claims the offshore detention camps are out of our jurisdiction and in the control of the Papua New Guinean and Nauruan governments.

The camps are entirely creatures of Australia, funded and managed under policies ordained by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. The fate of asylum seekers returned to countries they fled does not seem to figure in Australia's moral justification.

Calls for a Royal Commission into immigration detention are growing louder, but are likely to fall on deaf government ears.

Guardian Australia has [reported](#) the cases of asylum seekers who were tortured after being refouled, the prohibition of which under [international law](#) is steadfastly ignored by Australia.

And for that matter we don't know with any accuracy the numbers of people drowned at sea under the current policies, because they are "on water" operational matters subject to Kremlinesque secrecy.

The fate of asylum seekers returned to countries they fled does not seem to figure in Australia's moral justification.

Nor is there an adequate reckoning of lives lost in places of persecution because we have slammed shut the door on the escape route.

The odd thing is that asylum seekers who can land at airports with papers intact are in an advantaged position. They are acceptable, because maybe there is some curious logic at play that they have not endangered themselves at sea.

European and British authorities can learn a lot about how not to handle the problem if they study the Australian "solution". The only reason people get onto boats, with the high risk of drowning, is they have no hope.

Human displacement is now such a massive problem that the boats will never really stop, no matter how hard we pretend to the contrary. The Australian government policy is only tenuously glued together as long as Indonesia accepts tow-backs and as long as Nauru and PNG are bribed with enough money to roll over and handle Australia's problem.

If any of those ingredients collapse, then a more creative policy that gives people hope by a globally recognised resettlement response might have a chance.

Abbott's smug satisfaction with his policy would also come to a shuddering halt should the Indonesian authorities decide they've had enough and provide sufficient boats for about 20,000 or so asylum seekers, refugees and others of concern, mainly on Java, and say to them, "jump in and sail south".

Australia's current policy has been forged by a succession of drownings off the coast of Christmas Island, hand wringing by the major political parties, an expert panel headed by the former defence chief Angus Houston which, in 2012, recommended offshore processing in PNG and Nauru, cooperation with Malaysia and Indonesia and an increase in the humanitarian intake.

The end game was a policy of "no advantage" - if you arrive by boat you should not be advantaged over people seeking resettlement by other means.

Lives may well have been saved at sea, but at what cost if the cornerstone of the deterrent is based on transferring the human destruction from the sea to terra firma?

The latest [figures from the immigration department](#) show that we are not really pulling our weight.

In 2012-13, the Australian humanitarian programme was increased to 20,000 places from 13,750 places in 2011-12. A total of 20,019 visas were granted under the humanitarian programme, of which 12,515 were granted under the offshore component and 7,504 under the onshore component.

It's a mere drop. We could comfortably treble that annual intake, with great advantages to the economy and our nation building - quite apart from the need to do something about restoring our humanity.

It's not as though the government in Australia is without policy options. We could easily transfer our humanitarian intakes entirely to the near region, have agencies such as the UNHCR process the applications in camps in Indonesia and Malaysia paid for by the Australian government and shoulder a larger burden of the international crisis in human displacement.

If refugees are given the hope of orderly resettlement, then there is no need for them to risk their lives on boats. Consequently, there is no need for policies that inflict another form of death by a thousand cruelties.

119,96

Exportschlager

Man lernt Deutsch - fast überall

Deutsch als Fremdsprache wird in vielen Gegenden der Welt immer beliebter. Nirgends lernen heute mehr Menschen die Sprache Goethes als in Polen. Doch in Frankreich ist der Unterricht gefährdet.

21.04.2015, von HEIKE SCHMOLL, BERLIN

Es war im Deutschunterricht eines französischen Collège vor einiger Zeit: An einem Freitagnachmittag zwischen 16 und 17 Uhr versuchte eine Deutschlehrerin vergeblich, die vom Wochenende träumenden und leicht schläfrigen Schüler ausgerechnet mit einer Faksimile-Ausgabe der „Gartenlaube“, einem Beispiel für den Bildungsenthusiasmus des 19. Jahrhunderts, zu begeistern. Aber mit der fremden Welt des deutschen Gemüts hätten selbst deutsche Lehrer in ihren Klassen Schiffbruch erlitten. Es ist zu fürchten, dass die Absolventen eines solchen Deutschunterrichts auf jedem deutschen Markt verhungern würden.

Möglicherweise hatte die französische Bildungsministerin Najat Vallaud-Belkacem solch ein Beispiel für einen lebensfernen Deutschunterricht vor Augen, als sie das Deutschlernen insgesamt mit dem Verdikt des Elitären geißelte. Die französischen Pläne, den Deutschunterricht bei der Reform des Collège zu beschneiden, sind in Berlin auf großes Unverständnis gestoßen. So wurden sie eigens im deutsch-französischen Ministerrat thematisiert. Bundesaußenminister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) hat die Gespräche in Lausanne über den Irak außerdem dazu genutzt, dem französischen Außenminister seine Bedenken nahezubringen.

Die Staatsministerin im Auswärtigen Amt Maria Böhmer (CDU) sprach am Dienstag in Berlin von einer „schmerzhaften Nachricht“ und äußerte die Befürchtung, dass die bisher schon stagnierende Zahl der Deutschlerner in Frankreich sogar zurückgehen wird. Das Deutschlernen sei eine Chance für Bildungsaufsteiger, ganz gewiss keine elitäre Veranstaltung, so Böhmer. Deutschland will die 60 Abgeordneten im französischen Parlament, die gegen die Pläne der eigenen Bildungsministerin protestierten, unterstützen. Derzeit lernen etwa eine Million französische Schüler Deutsch, 9,6 Prozent schon in der Primarstufe und 15,2 Prozent in der Sekundarstufe. Schon in den Jahren zwischen 1995 und 2005 ist die Zahl der Deutsch lernenden Sekundarschüler um etwa ein Drittel zugunsten von Englisch und Spanisch gesunken.

Die meisten Deutschlerner an französischen Schulen sitzen in den bilingualen Klassen (88,6 Prozent), allein 35.000 Schüler nahmen das Angebot wahr, das deutsche Sprachdiplom der Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK) im Rahmen einer schulischen Prüfung zu erwerben. „Diese Zahl wird massiv einbrechen, wenn die französische Bildungsministerin bei ihren Plänen bleibt“, sagte der Generalsekretär der KMK, Udo Michallik, bei der Vorstellung der alle fünf Jahre veröffentlichten Datenerhebung „Deutsch als Fremdsprache“ am Dienstag im Auswärtigen Amt in Berlin. Erhoben wird sie vom „Netzwerk Deutsch“ auf Initiative des Auswärtigen Amtes und in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Goethe-Institut, dem Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienst (DAAD), dem Bundesverwaltungsamt, der Zentralstelle für das Deutsche Auslandsschulwesen (ZfA) und der KMK.

Die Schulen bleiben noch immer der bevorzugte Ort des Deutschlernens, 87 Prozent der 15,4 Millionen Deutschlerner sind Schüler. 8,8 Prozent nehmen als Studenten die Sprachangebote des DAAD wahr, und in der Erwachsenenbildung sind es 4,2 Prozent. An den Sprachkursen der Goethe-Institute im Ausland lernten allein im vergangenen Jahr 228.528 Menschen auf der ganzen Welt Deutsch.

Wahlpflichtfach abschaffte) vervielfacht sich das Interesse am Deutschlernen, in den Ländern der ehemaligen Sowjetunion dagegen geht es deutlich zurück. Mit der politischen Lage habe das weniger zu tun als mit sinkenden Bevölkerungszahlen und mit der Zusammenlegung von Bildungseinrichtungen im ländlichen Raum, hieß es in Berlin. Während heute noch 1,5 Millionen Menschen dort Deutsch lernen, waren es vor fünf Jahren noch 2,3 Millionen, was auch mit einer zunehmenden Orientierung am Englischen zusammenhängt.

In Südamerika, im Nahen und Mittleren Osten wird Deutsch immer beliebter. Auch in Europa gibt es weiter großes Interesse an Deutsch – dort lernen derzeit 9,4 Millionen Menschen Deutsch. Insgesamt sinke das Interesse an klassischer Germanistik, während dringend mehr Lehrer für Deutsch als Fremdsprache an Universitäten ausgebildet werden müssten, sagte die Präsidentin des DAAD, Margret Wintermantel, und verwies auf 430 Deutschlektoren, die Studenten Deutsch beibringen. Viele Südeuropäer in Spanien, Italien und Griechenland nehmen Sprachkurse an Goethe-Instituten oder an Universitäten wahr, um ihre berufliche Zukunft zu verbessern. In Griechenland haben im vergangenen Jahr 268.530 Menschen Deutsch gelernt, im Jahr 2010 waren es noch 156.440.

Mehr Ausländer lernen Deutsch

Mehr als 15 Millionen Menschen im Ausland lernen Deutsch. Vor allem in Polen und der Türkei. Aber auch in besonders von der Finanzkrise betroffenen Euroländern.

21.04.2015

Immer mehr Menschen im Ausland lernen Deutsch. Weltweit sind derzeit etwa 15,4 Millionen Menschen an Schulen, Universitäten oder in Goethe-Instituten im Deutsch-Unterricht. Das sind etwa eine halbe Million Menschen mehr als noch vor fünf Jahren, teilte das Auswärtige Amt mit, das die Zahlen erhoben hat. „Damit ist der rückläufige Trend gestoppt“, sagte Staatsministerin Maria Böhmer (CDU): Im Jahr 2000 betrug die Zahl noch 20 Millionen.

Das größte Interesse gibt es aktuell im Nachbarland Polen, wo etwa 2,3 Millionen Menschen Deutsch lernen. Deutlich mehr Deutsch-Schüler als während der vorigen Erhebung 2010 gibt es auch in der Türkei, in Serbien und in Bosnien-Herzegowina. In von der Finanzkrise besonders betroffenen Ländern wie Griechenland und Portugal stiegen die Zahlen ebenfalls. Dagegen setzte sich in Russland und anderen Staaten der ehemaligen Sowjetunion der Abwärtstrend fort.

In Russland ging die Zahl der Deutsch-Lernenden um annähernd 800.000 auf jetzt nur noch 1,55 Millionen zurück. Der Generalsekretär des Goethe-Instituts, Johannes Ebert, führte dies auf eine insgesamt sinkende Bevölkerungszahl und Änderungen im Bildungssystem zurück. „Das hat nichts mit der politischen Situation zu tun“, sagte er.

Die Zahlen sind nicht vollständig, weil alleinige Anstrengungen um Deutsch-Kenntnisse oder private Initiativen in der Erhebung nicht erfasst werden. Es gibt auch keine zuverlässige Zahlen, wie viele Menschen über die mehr als 90 Millionen Muttersprachler hinaus weltweit Deutsch sprechen. Nach Schätzungen sind es allein innerhalb der Europäischen Union etwa 60 Millionen.

119,98

Sprachenstreit belastet Beziehung zu Frankreich

Weltweit lernen wieder mehr junge Menschen Deutsch. Doch die französische Regierung hält den Sprachunterricht für elitär und plant, ihn stark zu kürzen. Die Bundesregierung will das nicht hinnehmen.

Von [Thomas Sebastian Vitzthum](#) Politikredakteur

WO DIE MEISTEN MENSCHEN DEUTSCH LERNEN



Rang	Land	Personenanzahl
5.	Ukraine	715.460
6.	Usbekistan	508.142
7.	USA	499.846
8.	Türkei	467.813
9.	Ungarn	434.761
10.	Italien	434.881
11.	Niederlande	411.895
12.	Tschechien	339.941



QUELLE: AUSWÄRTIGES AMT

DIE WELT

Foto: Infografik Die Welt

Die Bundesregierung wehrt sich gegen Pläne der französischen Regierung, den Deutschunterricht an den Mittelschulen im Nachbarland [stark zu kürzen](#). Die bilingualen Klassen, in denen neben Englisch auch Deutsch unterrichtet wird, sollen abgeschafft werden, auch die Europaklassen mit zwei zusätzlichen Stunden Fremdsprachenunterricht betrifft die Reform. Das Argument der französischen Bildungsministerin [Najat Vallaud-Belkacem](#) lautet, dass diese bilingualen Klassen nur von Kindern der Elite angewählt würden.

Die geplante Reform hätte große Auswirkungen auf die Zahl der Deutschlernenden in Frankreich, ist sich die Bundesregierung sicher. "Die Zahlen werden runtergehen", sagte die Staatsministerin im Auswärtigen Amt, Maria Böhmer (CDU), bei der Vorstellung einer Studie zur Zahl der Deutschlernenden weltweit. "Das ist eine schmerzhaft Nachricht für alle jene, die sich der deutsch-französischen Freundschaft verpflichtet fühlen." Böhmer appellierte an die Regierung und Präsident Hollande, die Pläne zu überdenken. "Wir brauchen mehr Deutsch in Frankreich, nicht weniger."

Etwa eine Million französischer Schüler lernt aktuell Deutsch. Jahrelang gingen die Zahlen zurück, bis vor allem die sogenannten classes bilangues, um die es in der Reform der Ministerin geht, ab 2002 zu einer Stabilisierung beigetragen haben. Fast 89 Prozent der deutschlernenden Schüler in Frankreich finden sich in diesen Klassen. Ihre Abschaffung hätte zweifelsohne erhebliche Auswirkungen auf die Gesamtzahl der Deutschsprecher.

Auch die Kanzlerin setzt sich für die Deutsch-Schüler ein

Udo Michalik, der Generalsekretär der Kultusministerkonferenz, berichtete, dass von weltweit insgesamt 70.000 deutschen Sprachzertifikaten allein 36.000 in Frankreich erworben würden. "Wir setzen alles daran, dass das so bleibt", sagte Böhmer. Dabei sei nicht nur sie in Gesprächen mit der französischen Seite. Außenminister Frank-Walter Steinmeier habe unlängst am Rande der Iran-Verhandlungen in Lausanne das Thema mit seinem französischen Kollegen besprochen. Der deutsch-französische Ministerrat habe sich ebenfalls damit befasst. "Auch die Kanzlerin setzt sich dafür ein", sagte Böhmer. "Doch", bekannte sie, "es ist nach wie vor schwierig".



Wir sehen in der geplanten Reform die Gefahr einer atmosphärischen Beeinträchtigung unserer bilateralen Abkommen und Absprachen



Susanne Wasum-Rainer

Deutsche Botschafterin in Frankreich

Offenbar droht Deutschland sogar mit mehr als symbolischen Schritten. Ungewöhnlich undiplomatisch äußerte sich die deutsche Botschafterin in Frankreich. "Wir sehen in der geplanten Reform die Gefahr einer atmosphärischen Beeinträchtigung unserer bilateralen Abkommen und Absprachen", sagte Susanne Wasum-Rainer in Paris. Berlin fürchte "weitreichende negative Folgen" bei Sprachdiplomaten, für Städtepartnerschaften, Schüleraustausch oder Programme des deutsch-französischen Jugendwerkes.

Abseits der Auseinandersetzung mit Frankreich sieht die Regierung einen Aufschwung für das Deutsche in der Welt. Alle fünf Jahre addieren die Goethe-Institute, der Deutsche-Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD), das Auswärtige Amt, die Auslandsschulen und das Bundesverwaltungsamt ihre Zahlen. Zwischen dem Jahr 2000 und 2010 hatte die Zahl der Deutschlernenden demnach um fünf Millionen auf 14,7 Millionen abgenommen. Seither stieg sie aber wieder leicht auf aktuell 14,9 Millionen. Die überwiegende Mehrheit sind Schüler.

Polen sind Spitzenreiter

Schwerpunkt ist immer noch Europa, wo 9,4 Millionen Menschen die Sprache lernen. An der Spitze stehen die Polen mit 2,28 Millionen. Von großen Zuwächsen berichtete Johannes Ebert, Generalsekretär des Goethe-Instituts, für Spanien und den Ländern, die in den zurückliegenden Jahren unter einer Wirtschaftskrise gelitten haben: "Deutschland ist als Arbeitsmarkt sehr interessant, deshalb erlebt auch das Deutsche einen Aufschwung." Beeindruckend sind die Zahlen in Griechenland. Gab es dort 2010 noch 156.000 Deutschlernende, so sind es heute 268.000. Ein Zuwachs um 71 Prozent.

An den Goethe-Instituten lernten 2014 rund 273.000 Menschen die Sprache, fünf Jahre zuvor waren es lediglich 185.000. In 60 Prozent der untersuchten Länder steigt die Nachfrage nach Deutsch. Doch es gibt auch Ausnahmen. Vor allem in den Staaten der ehemaligen Sowjetunion verliert das Deutsche an Rückhalt, gerade in Russland. Von rund zwei Millionen im Jahr 2010 ist die Zahl auf heute 1,5 Millionen gesunken. In den 90er-Jahren waren es 3,5 Millionen.

Hohe Bedeutung hat das Deutsche auch in Usbekistan. Dort lernt eine halbe Million Bürger die Sprache. Doch auch hier waren es schon einmal mehr. Zu registrieren ist ein Rückgang um 145.000 innerhalb von fünf Jahren. Dafür seien allerdings weniger politische Gründe zu nennen als vielmehr die bildungspolitischen Entscheidungen in den Ex-Sowjetrepubliken. Die Schülerzahlen sind aus demografischen Gründen rückläufig, deshalb sind viele kleine Schulen zu größeren zusammengelegt worden. Und an diesen Schulen gibt es offenbar die stärkere Neigung, Englisch als erste Fremdsprache zu unterrichten. Als zweite Fremdsprache sei Deutsch dagegen weiter attraktiv.

Asien und Lateinamerika als Wachstumsregionen

Wachstumsregionen sind Asien, Lateinamerika, der mittlere und nahe Osten. Mit Ausnahme von Korea und Japan ist das Interesse überall gestiegen. In China haben sich die Zahlen seit 2010 mehr als verdoppelt auf jetzt 117.000. Die absoluten Zahlen sind in diesen Ländern zwar vergleichsweise niedrig, verglichen etwa mit Europa, doch der Trend ist eindeutig. Ähnliches gilt für den afrikanischen Kontinent. Allerdings konnten dort nicht überall valide Statistiken ermittelt werden.

Das afrikanische Land mit der größten Gruppe an Deutschlernenden ist Kamerun (230.000). Möglicherweise rührt die Verbindung des Landes zum Deutschen aus der Kolonialzeit her. Kamerun war zwischen 1884 und 1919 deutsche Kolonie. Offizielle Amtssprachen sind allerdings Englisch und Französisch.

Der französischen Ministerin [Vallaud-Belkacem](#) geht es übrigens offensichtlich auch um die Wiedergutmachung einer persönlichen Niederlage. Als Studentin fiel sie zweimal bei der Aufnahmeprüfung zur staatlichen Verwaltungshochschule Ena durch. Ihr Scheitern schiebt sie auf die Eliten und Traditionen in Frankreich. Nun will sie mit ihnen brechen. Chancengleichheit durch mehr Gleichmacherei herbeiführen. Dass sie mittlerweile selbst Teil der Elite ist, das scheint sie wenig zu bekümmern.

119,100

European Press Review of 23/04/2015

MAIN FOCUS

Brussels steps up dispute with Gazprom

The European Commission threatened the Russian company Gazprom with a multi-billion euro fine on Wednesday. In ongoing [anti-trust proceedings](#) it has accused the gas giant of abusing its dominant market position regarding supplies to several EU member states. The EU will provoke further conflict with Russia, some commentators fear. For others, the defence of the common market warrants such disputes with foreign companies and governments.

Berliner Zeitung - Germany

Commission right to disregard political situation

Initiating protracted and exhaustive antitrust charges against two global companies at the same time deserves respect, the left-liberal daily Berliner Zeitung believes: "Companies like Google and Gazprom have unlimited possibilities at their disposal for defending themselves. As regards the Russian gas company, it is also noteworthy that Brussels did not refrain from escalating its anti-trust proceedings due to overriding political considerations. In view of the [Ukraine conflict](#), the Europeans' relations with Russia are already in tatters, and the charges against Gazprom only stand to make matters more complicated. But this is a question of protecting one of the Union's central pillars: the functioning of the single market. If necessary that means being ready to enter into conflict with foreign companies and governments." (23/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, German\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» EU Policy](#), [» EU neighbourhood policy](#), [» Economy](#), [» Russia](#), [» Europe](#), [» Eastern Europe](#)

All available articles from [» Thorsten Knuf](#)

Rzeczpospolita - Poland

Standing up to the gas giant

The European Commission's decision to take action against Gazprom is a positive development, the conservative daily Rzeczpospolita writes in delight: "It has understood that the colossus from the East must be forced to recognise the rules of free competition. Otherwise it will be subject to the dictates of a company that is simply a prolongation of the Kremlin. The Russians are pursuing a policy in Europe according to the principle of 'divide and rule'. And not only in the gas sector, but also on food imports. They negotiate with individual states, giving some preferential treatment and using others as scapegoats - depending on the Kremlin's needs. The EU, which represents a major global market, won't accept this and has the means to counter it effectively, as we are now seeing." (23/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, Polish\)](#)

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Il Sole 24 Ore - Italy

Anti-trust case a geopolitical minefield

By adopting a sharper tone with its anti-trust complaint against Gazprom the EU is treading on thin ice geopolitically and could provoke yet another conflict with Putin, the liberal business daily Il Sole 24 Ore warns: "It's the political aspect that distinguishes this case from other proceedings like those against Google or Microsoft. It shifts the debate about gas pipelines and contracts to far more dangerous ground. The [war in Donbass](#), the frozen trade relations with Moscow, the cohesion of the 28 EU member states. ... When the EU began its investigation against Gazprom Vladimir Putin signed a decree to protect Gazprom that forbids the passing on of information to foreign countries without the Kremlin's approval. Now that Brussels has fired the first shot, Gazprom is calling for the case to be examined on a state by state basis. Moscow doesn't recognise the EU legislation regarding the monopoly. So the consequences of these proceedings could be far more serious than a fine." (23/04/2015)

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La Vanguardia - Spain

EU and Gazprom need each other

Mutual independence will force the EU and Gazprom to reach an amicable agreement in the anti-trust dispute, the conservative daily La Vanguardia writes: "In Brussels and other European capitals there are fears of a harsh reaction from Moscow as a defensive measure against this commercial sanction. However the indications are that everything will be done to seek an amicable agreement. In reality the European Commission and the Russian company have to be on good terms because a breakdown in relations and collaboration would have negative consequences for both sides. The EU is the Gazprom's main customer and the company, in turn, is practically the exclusive supplier of natural gas to many countries in northern, central and eastern Europe." (23/04/2015)

[» to the homepage \(La Vanguardia\)](#)

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POLITICS

Reflex - Czech Republic

Humane treatment of refugees is cruel

The EU heads of state and government plan to discuss potential [solutions](#) to the refugee crisis on the Mediterranean today at their special summit in Brussels. Europe must do all it can to improve living conditions in the countries of origin, otherwise only two options will be open, the liberal weekly paper Reflex warns: "The first: Europe opens its doors to all and sundry. There's room enough, so we could share the wealth we have in abundance. ... The second: all migrants without exception are sent back home, regardless of whether they reach Europe's shores or are fished out of the water. On the coasts of Italy or Malta they would be given dry clothes, medical care and enough food to last a week. Cases would not be examined

individually. When they get home they would spread the news that you can't get to Europe by boat. That's cruel? Inhuman? Well, is it any less inhuman when hundreds die trying?" (23/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, Czech\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» EU Policy](#), [» Migration](#), [» Europe](#), [» Middle East](#), [» North Africa](#)

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Who's saying what [» Europe's controversial refugee policy](#)

The Malta Independent - Malta

Improve distribution of migrants within EU

At the EU special summit on refugee policy taking place today in Brussels the northern member states must be called upon to do more, the liberal-conservative daily The Malta Independent writes: "Let us be clear, the EU, up to now, has not only failed its Southern members, but it has also failed humanity. ... The [10-point plan](#) still refers to voluntary burden sharing, but it is absolutely clear that more needs to be done by other member states in this regard. The sad reality of it all is that many migrants still end up going north anyway, once their applications are processed and approved. Refusing to take them in only exacerbates their own problems because it feeds the desire within migrants to make it north even more." (22/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, English\)](#)

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Who's saying what [» Europe's controversial refugee policy](#)

The Independent - United Kingdom

British Greens have missed their chance

Two and a half weeks before the British general elections, the Green Party has dropped from eleven to five percent in opinion polls. They've failed to put their main cause, environmental protection, on the political agenda, the left-liberal daily The Independent comments: "In a crowded market, a political party has to have one big idea that it can push to the centre of the debate and by which it is immediately defined. The SNP has Scottish home rule. Ukup has immigration. In the past, the Lib Dems had opposition to the Iraq war and to tuition fees - though not any more. The Green Party has a big idea - concern for the environment - but failed to get it on to the mainstream political agenda. It is almost as if it did not try. ... This election was their biggest opportunity. They have squandered it." (22/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, English\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» Domestic Policy](#), [» Environmental Policy](#), [» Elections](#), [» Climate change](#), [» United Kingdom](#)

Who's saying what [» A close race in the UK](#)

ECONOMY

Diário de Notícias - Portugal

Portugal's Socialists succumb to economic utopia

Portugal's opposition Socialists presented their "Economic Outlook" in preparation for the elections next autumn on Tuesday. The economic agenda promises an end to "blind austerity" and more investments to boost the ailing economy. The liberal-conservative daily Diário de Notícias doubts the feasibility of many of its plans: "The Socialists aim, among other things, to triple investments: between 2015 and 2016 they are to climb from 2.9 percent of the GDP (as predicted by the European Commission) to 7.8 percent. But how is this feat supposed to be achieved in a context of brutal sovereign debt - and at such a rapid pace? ... It looks like the impetus that public and private investments are supposed to give to growth is simply being overrated." (22/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, Portuguese\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» Domestic Policy](#), [» Fiscal Policy](#), [» Elections](#), [» Portugal](#), [» Europe](#)

Le Courrier - Switzerland

Hope for stricter rules for multinationals

More than 60 human rights and relief organisations initiated a petition for a referendum in Bern on Tuesday, and will gather signatures until October 2016 on a vote to oblige multinational companies to do more for environmental protection and human rights. There is every reason to persevere, the Christian-social daily Le Courrier believes: "The activists will also be able to evoke a certain Swiss legal notion stressing an ethic of equity before the law. The slowness of direct democracy could also work to its advantage. Because this federal initiative will be closely watched from abroad. If enough people sign it in Switzerland - a bastion of transnational commerce - it could have a significant effect on other countries that are hesitant to take the first step. The hope is certainly slim, but it deserves to be maintained. We cannot simply accept that companies that rule over the lives of hundreds of millions of people remain above the law." (22/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, French\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» Environmental Policy](#), [» Corporations](#), [» Social affairs](#), [» Switzerland](#), [» Global](#)

All available articles from [» Benito Perez](#)

Kaleva - Finland

Finland's forest industry in good shape again

The Finnish forest industry group Metsä-Group announced on Tuesday plans to build a large pulp mill in central Finland. This is proof that Finland's forest industry still has good [chances](#) on the global market, the liberal daily Kaleva contends: "The plan in Äänekoski produces long-fibre pine pulp from which for example cardboard boxes and paper tissues are made. There are growing markets for both products. ... Moreover, thanks to innovative production processes, the valuable by-products of pulp production can be put to good use. In Äänekoski these are refined bio-products, above all textile fibres, bio-composites for strengthening plastics, fertilisers and sulphuric acid. There is high demand for these expensive refined products on the global market. ... Finland, which in the last decade mainly owed its [success](#) to the IT sector, now relies more heavily on its forest industry. But not as one-sidedly as one would assume." (23/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, Finnish\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» Corporations](#), [» Economy](#), [» Finland](#)

Aftonbladet - Sweden

Sweden has enough sun for energy

Sweden's social democratic Energy Minister Ibrahim Baylan wants to raise the tax on solar energy production as of July 2016 in accordance with EU regulations. For the left-liberal daily Aftonbladet this sends a very negative message: "While the rest of the world is switching to alternative energies the Swedish government wants to make them more expensive. ... Solar panels are an important component of the energy mix of the future, one which we can both use and produce. Solar energy is renewable, and unlike wind energy and bioenergy doesn't

generate conflicts with environmental interests or annoyed residents. ... We are hopelessly behind in terms of using of solar energy. In southern Sweden the sun shines roughly as much as in Germany, but Germany generates 170 times more electricity from solar energy." (23/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, Swedish\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» Domestic Policy](#), [» Energy](#), [» Sweden](#)

SOCIETY

La Croix - France

Europe must learn to live with terror

French security forces on Sunday arrested a presumed jihadist suspected of planning attacks on churches. But fear and panic are not the right response, the Catholic daily La Croix argues: "The jihadists of the IS have made Christians a priority target. It was only to be expected that one day this violence would migrate to Europe. We must learn to live with this threat. Nothing leads us to doubt that our country will do all it can to protect Christian institutions, as it has been doing relatively discreetly in the past. Everyone is called upon to be vigilant in identifying potential danger. But without giving in to fear. And without seeing every Muslim as a potential enemy. Because that's exactly what the jihadists are trying to accomplish." (22/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, French\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» Religion](#), [» Terrorism](#), [» France](#)

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Zeit Online - Germany

Genocide debate just term fetishism

Speaking to German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the telephone, the Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu has protested the use of the word "[genocide](#)" in a resolution to be put to the Bundestag on Friday. Whether the word is used or not is of secondary importance at this stage, political scientist Burak Çopur writes in a commentary for the liberal web portal Zeit Online: "The discussion bordering on fetishism over the use of the term 'genocide' cannot be the foundation for fostering a culture of remembrance. Of course in the long term the Turkish state must call the genocide by its name if it wants to become a liberal democracy. But other issues are at stake on the way there. In political terms, the issue must be dealt with by improving relations between Turkey and Armenia and resuming the protocols that have been put on ice. And for Turkey - as well as for Turks living in Germany - a sensitive approach to remembrance and commemoration in the education system is needed. More must be done to educate and inform about the events of 1915." (22/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, German\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» International Relations](#), [» History](#), [» Remembrance culture](#), [» Turkey](#), [» Armenia](#)

All available articles from [» Burak Çopur](#)

Who's saying what [» Row over Armenian massacre](#)

Yeni Şafak - Turkey

Every Turk's duty to remember and admonish

In the process of [dealing with the past](#) and the debate about the massacre of the Armenians, terms are less decisive than attitude, columnist Ali Bayramoğlu also stresses in the pro-government daily Yeni Şafak: "I am among those who have no qualms about using the word 'genocide'. ... Call events what you will, you must understand that if you live here it is your moral duty to remember and to admonish - your moral duty towards history, your own people, the next generation and the dead. In this way the Turkish identity will be purified and find an opportunity to renew itself as a democracy. ... This country, the forces that are driving it forward, its intellectual energy and its academics have been fighting for this since the start of the millennium. ... Right now the glass is pretty empty. But it is filling up." (23/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, Turkish\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» International Relations](#), [» Crises / War](#), [» Minorities](#), [» History](#), [» Society](#), [» Turkey](#), [» Armenia](#)

All available articles from [» Ali Bayramoğlu](#)

Avgi - Greece

Greek laws no business of the US

According to a legal amendment passed last week, Greek prison inmates with an 80 percent disability or more will be allowed to complete their sentences at home. The potential release of Savvas Xiros, a Greek terrorist jailed for the murders of US citizens, has drawn harsh criticism from the US. The left-leaning daily Avgi is surprised to see the opposition siding with the US: "The US ambassador openly called for the law to be repealed. ... Rather than dealing seriously with this interference in Greece's domestic affairs, the media and the parties of the opposition have reacted by mocking the government. ... The so-called release is house arrest with an ankle bracelet - for someone who is 80 percent disabled and has already spent ten years behind bars. This doesn't just apply to Xiros but to all those who find themselves in a similar situation today or in the future." (22/04/2015)

[» full article \(external link, Greek\)](#)

More from the press review on the subject [» International Relations](#), [» Ethics](#), [» Crime](#), [» Justice](#), [» Terrorism](#), [» Greece](#), [» U.S.](#)

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119,103

Collège : la grogne contre les nouveaux programmes s'étend

Par Marie-Estelle Pech Publié le 22/04/2015 à 20:39



Malgré les remous et les critiques, la ministre de l'Éducation, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem défend pied à pied sa réforme du collège.

Les critiques sur les programmes et la réforme du collège continuent à s'additionner. Proposés par le Conseil supérieur des programmes, les contenus entreront en vigueur, pour tous les niveaux, en septembre 2016. Si la crainte d'un affaiblissement du latin a rapidement fait son apparition, ce sont aujourd'hui les professeurs des langues vivantes qui s'inquiètent, ceux d'allemand en premier lieu, une préoccupation relayée par l'ex-premier ministre Jean-Marc Ayrault, ancien professeur d'allemand.

Face aux remous suscités par la suppression des classes bilingues et européennes, jugées trop élitistes par le ministère, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem n'a pu faire l'économie de recevoir l'ambassadrice d'Allemagne lundi soir. Sans réussir à convaincre cette dernière du bien-fondé de ses choix.

«Je souhaite et je demande que les programmes soient lisibles par tous et donc écrits dans une langue que tout le monde peut comprendre»

Même Jack Lang s'est inquiété de la disparition des classes européennes, mercredi sur France Info. Mais la ministre défend pied à pied sa réforme, évoquant «une politique volontariste pour que l'allemand soit appris en langue vivante 1». Elle assume la philosophie de sa réforme, rejetant les critiques comme venant des défenseurs d'un système éducatif de reproduction sociale, dénoncé par Pierre Bourdieu: «Ce qui est frappant, c'est que ce débat sérieux et profond - élitisme dynastique versus élitisme républicain, qui suppose qu'on rebatte vraiment les cartes en offrant de mêmes chances de réussite à chacun - n'est jamais mené de façon franche, en tombant les masques. Les défenseurs d'un système inégalitaire et de reproduction sociale ne vous le diront jamais frontalement, sans doute parce qu'ils perçoivent ce que leur position peut avoir d'intenable dans un pays amoureux d'égalité», insiste-t-elle dans Le Point.

Une approche ludique

De quoi faire s'étrangler les professeurs de latin ou d'allemand qui enseignent en ZEP. L'interdisciplinarité conçue comme une manière de tromper «l'ennui» des collégiens est également très critiquée par les multiples associations de professeurs qui craignent un appauvrissement des programmes au profit d'une approche ludique. La ministre répond par la nécessité de travailler davantage en équipe et à l'oral.

Plus anecdotique, les multiples expressions jargonnesques qui parsèment les programmes lui ont été reprochées. On parle de «traverser l'eau en équilibre horizontal par immersion prolongée de la tête» dans un «milieu aquatique profond standardisé» ou de «produire des messages à l'oral et à l'écrit». «Les enseignants, comme tous les professionnels, utilisent un vocabulaire expert. Toutefois, je souhaite et je demande que les programmes soient lisibles par tous et donc écrits dans une langue que tout le monde peut comprendre», répond-elle. Une consultation des enseignants est organisée du 11 mai au 12 juin sur ces projets de programmes. Elle permettra de les améliorer et de les rendre plus clairs, affirme-t-elle.

Frauder dans le métro, c'est so frenchy !

Le correspondant à Paris du "Financial Times" s'étonne de cette propension typiquement française à ignorer la loi. Au nom d'une certaine idée de la liberté.



Jacques Chirac saute par-dessus un tourniquet dans le métro parisien, en 1980. ©

Jean-Claude Delmas / AFP

Par VICTORIA GAIRIN

"Si vous vivez à Paris et que vous prenez le métro, un jour ou l'autre quelqu'un va se coller à vous et passer le tourniquet à vos frais. Il y a différentes façons de frauder. On peut vous bousculer légèrement en s'excusant d'un geste ou, pendant quelques secondes, en vous donnant l'impression que vous êtes agressé. Souvent athlétique, le fraudeur saute par-dessus les barrières, quand il ne se faufile pas en dessous." Depuis quelques années, la presse anglo-saxonne se fait un malin plaisir d'épingler les uns après les autres les comportements de ses voisins d'outre-Manche. Au nom d'un "ils sont fous, ces Français" qui les fait exulter, les Anglais feignent de décrypter nos us et coutumes, et ce - il faut bien l'avouer -, pour notre plus grand plaisir.

Ainsi le correspondant du Financial Times à Paris, Adam Thomson, s'en est-il pris cette fois-ci à nos transports en commun, et plus précisément à la fraude "qui fait partie intégrante du quotidien du Parisien". Son coût annuel pour la SNCF s'élève, en effet, à 300 millions d'euros, et 100 millions pour la RATP. Que le ticket soit presque trois fois plus cher et la fraude bien moins importante dans le tubelondonien ? Que le U-Bahn et le S-Bahn à Berlin puissent toujours être dépourvus de portillons ? "Dans un pays catholique, la transgression est un sport national, analysait Michel Onfray, interrogé sur le sujet par Le Parisien, en 2013. Dans les pays protestants, on est redevable de ce qu'on fait parce qu'on entretient un rapport direct à Dieu."

"Ça contrôle sévère au niveau des portiques"

Mais au fond catholique vient s'ajouter chez les Français un rapport à la loi et à l'État très paradoxal, que le sociologue Alain Mergier, interviewé par Adam Thomson, explique très bien : "Les Français considèrent que l'État est là pour veiller au respect de la loi et refusent d'être leur propre policier. Ils estiment aussi que les transports publics leur appartiennent : s'ils n'ont pas payé leur billet, ils ne volent personne !" Ainsi donc les Français s'organisent, créent des réseaux, s'entraident pour tenter d'échapper au prix fort. On a vu émerger ces dernières années des mutuelles clandestines de "sans-tickets" qui, pour sept euros par mois, prennent en charge les amendes de leurs adhérents. Ou encore des applications qui permettent d'indiquer aux autres usagers la présence de contrôleurs à telle ou telle station. "Attention, ils sont partout, sortie tapis roulant mais aussi direction Montrouge", peut-on lire sur l'application Check My Metro. "Ça contrôle sévère au niveau des portiques, direction les Transiliens", poste chrisdfb de la gare de Lyon.

Le collectif RATP (Réseau pour l'abolition des transports payants) va encore plus loin en revendiquant purement et simplement la gratuité des transports. La recette de la billetterie ne couvrant, selon le Groupement des autorités responsables des transports (Gart), que 25 % du coût réel, une vingtaine d'agglomérations en France ont décidé de supprimer les coûts des contrôles et... d'opter pour la gratuité. "Les transports en commun devraient être gratuits comme les bibliothèques, les piscines, la santé, l'éducation et tout ce qui est construit avec l'argent prélevé sur le contribuable", persiste Michel Onfray. Et si la célèbre photo en noir et blanc de Jacques Chirac en train de sauter par-dessus le portillon du métro était pour quelque chose dans cette quête de liberté ? s'interroge encore le journaliste britannique. "Il n'est manifestement pas en train de frauder - à la vue de tous -, analyse-t-il, mais de faire preuve d'une résistance typiquement française au conformisme." Well said !

<http://www.neimagazine.com/news/newsreassurance-from-initial-tests-on-flamanville-rpv-4559624>

119,105

Reassurance from initial tests on Flamanville RPV

22 April 2015

Print [Email](#)

French firm AREVA says that additional studies have, so far, confirmed the quality of the forged components for the Flamanville 3 EPR, which is under construction in northern France. However study of the forgings and the quality processes at the Creusot Forge plant are still ongoing.

The news comes two weeks after AREVA informed the French nuclear regulator that chemical and mechanical tests conducted in late 2014 on a reactor pressure vessel head similar to that of the Flamanville EPR had revealed an area with high carbon concentration. At the time AREVA and plant owner EDF pledged to perform additional tests as soon as possible to demonstrate the safety and quality of the corresponding equipment.

AREVA said that so far the analyses have examined questions related to the fabrication of forgings for the Flamanville 3 reactor vessel and similar analyses previously conducted on other forging. In 2005 the French authorities brought in a new order on nuclear pressure equipment (ESPN), and the Flamanville 3 vessel must comply with new mechanical specifications.

Analyses also concern a mechanical testing laboratory at the Creusot where a material inspection tool was "inaccurately used" for hot tensile testing measurements from 2009 to 2014. This problem, AREVA said, means that reinterpretation of results or repeats of certain tests are required.

"These assessments have confirmed thus far the intrinsic quality of the forgings and the safety of components," AREVA said. It also confirmed that none of the components subject to the faulty testing procedure are installed in an operating reactor.

Meanwhile EDF said, 20 April, that on the basis of the information available, work can continue on Flamanville's EPR site.

Independent quality review

AREVA has appointed French-British company Lloyd's Register Apave Limited to carry out an external review of areas related to forging and inspections.

This review, which will begin on 4 May, is expected to last for at least two months.

AREVA said it would help the company "to identify the causes of potential defects in practices and in quality inspections," as well as improvement measures.

The Creusot Forge, acquired by AREVA in 2006, specialises in the manufacturing and machining of major forgings and castings. It is one of the only forges in the world capable of producing components for the nuclear island.

119,106

France's nuclear calamity has UK worried

Published: 21 Apr 2015 13:03 GMT+02:00



France's world renowned prowess in the nuclear industry is being seriously undermined by its efforts to build a flagship nuclear reactor which is fast becoming a costly calamity. The future of the Flamanville 3 project appears to hang in the balance after yet another major setback that has London worried.

It was supposed to showcase the expertise of France's nuclear energy industry to the world and is key to the UK's own nuclear strategy.

But after being beset by hold-ups and snags - the latest and potentially most serious one coming last week, the flagship project to build a new state of the art nuclear reactor, France is getting a reputation for all the wrong reasons and London has been left looking on nervously.

In 2005 the French government proudly gave the green light for construction to begin on the first third-generation nuclear reactor at Flamanville in Normandy on the north coast, a site environmentalists say is threatened by flooding.

The third-generation "European Pressurized Reactor" (EPR), built by EDF and Areva, was supposed to be in operation by 2012 and is meant to be one of the safest reactors in the world, and the most energy efficient.

It was commissioned as part of France's nuclear renaissance programme that will see the country's aging nuclear plants replaced over time.

However Flamanville 3, as it is known, is unlikely to start producing power anytime soon after being hampered by a litany of problems and incidents, including the death of a construction worker in 2011 (see below).

The latest setback came last week when it was revealed that "a very serious fault" had been detected in the steel of the "pressure vessel" - a key component of the reactor, meaning another delay of at least a year was likely.

"It is a serious fault, even a very serious fault, because it involves a crucial part of the nuclear reactor," said Pierre-Franck Chevet, head of France's nuclear safety agency (ASN).

That "fault" means construction is unlikely to be completed before 2018 and more worryingly, the budget, initially set at €3.3 billion, is now estimated at more than €9 billion and counting.



(The steel vessel, in which anomalies have been found arrives at the site. Photo: AFP)

In short Flamanville has become France's own "nuclear catastrophe" as it was described in one of the many critical articles in the French press.

Tests will need to be carried out on the steel vessel but if after these tests the vessel still does not meet necessary safety standards, it will need to be changed.

"That's a very difficult operation in terms of costs and time," said the ASN's Chevet.

The steel vessels weigh around 425 tonnes and stand around 11 metres high so building a new one would take considerable time and come at a huge cost.

Changing the vessel would be a major headache given all the construction work that would need to be undone.

Some in the business of nuclear safety have even suggested that if the steel vessel needs replacing then the whole project could be scrapped.

That will have authorities in the UK sweating as the same steel has been used to build two vessels destined for the [planned EPR nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point in the UK](#).

They are scheduled to be built by 2023 and supply six percent of the UK's power.

Some suggest the latest set back in Flamanville should be the nail in the coffin for the Hinkley Point project, which is still waiting for the final go-ahead.

"The disastrous Flamanville project certainly shouldn't be an example that the UK government should be looking to follow," Allan Jeffrey from Stop Hinkley organisation told The Local.

"There are so many other quicker and cheaper ways to get energy rather than waiting for all these problems, which come one after another to be sorted out."

The UK's Office for Nuclear Regulation also said that lessons would need to be learnt in France before undertaking the UK project.



(Photo: AFP)

That would no doubt please the anti-nuclear power environmentalists at Greenpeace, which has seized the opportunity of Flamanville's ongoing complications to twist the knife in.

"This is clearly the knock-out blow for the EPR reactor," said Yannick Rousselet from Greenpeace. "What foreign client would want to purchase a reactor of this type, if even France itself is not able to complete the construction?"

"The bill from the EPR reactor will be so high that it won't end up showcasing what to do, but exactly the opposite," said Rousselet. "This is a huge blow to the know-how of the French nuclear industry."

Greenpeace has called for work at Flamanville to be called off.

"It must be stopped immediately so there is no more wasting of public funds on this industrial nightmare," said Rousselet, who added that France should be concentrating resources on finding renewable energy solutions.

[SEE ALSO : France's most hated building projects](#)

The latest setback had the county's Minister of Ecology, Ségolène Royal scrambling to reassure the public that project was not doomed.

"The reactor is not condemned," said Royal, who simply talked of "adjustments" to the works and a delay of the opening by around one year.

Royal congratulated the speedy reaction of the nuclear safety authorities and insisted the French people can be reassured.

"Additional tests will take place. Those results will be made public in the autumn and then work will resume," said Royal.

Of course it is not just French authorities who will be eagerly awaiting the results of those tests, as Areva bosses also have orders for EPR reactors from both the US and China.

Both Areva and EDF have so far declined to comment on the latest problems at Flamanville.

The Elysée Palace however insists the work on the reactor will continue as normal.

Flamanville – A timeline of costly setbacks

2005 – The green light is given for construction to begin on a new third-generation EPR (European Pressurized Reactor) at the Flamanville nuclear power plant. The overall cost of construction is estimated at €3.3 billion.

2007 – Construction on the new reactor begins in December 2007.

2011 - A construction worker on the new EPR reactor dies after an 18-metre fall as the footbridge he was walking on was hit by a crane.

2012 – In the year that the reactor is due to begin operating, EDF announced that costs have in fact risen to €8.5 billion and the completion will be delayed until 2016.

2014 – In November EDF says construction was delayed again until 2017, due to delays in component delivery by Areva.

April 2015 – Areva informs French nuclear safety regulator ASN that anomalies have been detected in the reactor vessel steel, meaning a delay of at least another year.

October 2015 – Results of further tests on the vessel are set to be handed to authorities. The future of the whole project could hinge on those results.

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119,110

EDF backs 2017 Flamanville date despite comments

368 mots

21 avril 2015

[European Daily Electricity Markets](#)

Published on the ICIS Dashboard at 15:12

French incumbent EDF is still backing a 2017 date for the completion of the 1.65GW nuclear reactor at Flamanville despite the French energy minister Segolene Royal indicating in a TV interview it could be pushed to 2018.

“EDF has communicated to say that the opening will no doubt be delayed by one year,” Royal said, referring to the anomaly reported in the composition of the steel of the nuclear vessel. However, she denied that entire project was doomed. EDF said it does not confirm the delay to 2018.

The anomaly was first reported by the nuclear watchdog ASN on 7 April, and was described as very serious, by the president of the organisation, Pierre-Franck Chevet in an video interview on 17 April. The flaws were introduced during the manufacturing process, he explained, adding that it would take several months for EDF and Areva to complete new tests and several months for ASN to analyse the results. “We are currently in discussion with EDF and Areva on the nature of these tests,” he said.

The energy ministry said the results of the new tests are expected in October.

If utility EDF and manufacturer Areva are unable to prove that the characteristics in the metal are strong enough to meet current requirements, the nuclear vessel would have to be dismantled, Chevet said. This could set the project back several years.

EDF released a statement saying that the manufacturing processes used on Flamanville 3 reactor vessel are compliant with the mechanical requirements of existing French reactors and that the robustness of this process had been demonstrated through years of good operations. However, new mechanical specifications were introduced by ASN in 2005. In the meantime, work continues at the construction site, the statement said.

Flamanville 3 was originally scheduled for completion in 2012 and is the first third-generation nuclear reactor to be built in France. The Areva-designed EPR model is also under construction in Finland and China and been planned for the UK and India. The date of completion was revised from 2016 to 2017, EDF confirmed in November last year. Joachim Moxon

119,111

EDF / Areva : Le chantier de l'EPR de Flamanville (Manche) "n'est pas condamné",...

240 mots

20 avril 2015

[La Correspondance Economique](#)

EDF / Areva : Le chantier de l'EPR de Flamanville (Manche) "n'est pas condamné", a assuré hier la ministre de l'Ecologie, du Développement durable et de l'Energie Ségolène ROYAL, invitée de l'émission "C Politique" sur France 5, parlant de simples "ajustements de travaux" à faire, à propos de l'anomalie de fabrication détectée sur la cuve du réacteur nucléaire de troisième génération construit par EDF et Areva. Selon la ministre de l'Ecologie, "la clarification est faite, les choses sont dites, il y a un complément d'examens, de tests qui vont avoir lieu, dont les résultats seront rendus publics à l'automne prochain, et ensuite les travaux reprendront". Par ailleurs, Mme ROYAL a promis que le choix des modalités du rapprochement entre le groupe nucléaire Areva, en grande difficulté financière, et l'énergéticien EDF, sera fait "assez vite". "Un certain nombre d'hypothèses sont aujourd'hui sur la table", a rappelé la ministre.

"Pour l'instant, je suis en train de consulter les entreprises concernées, je leur fais confiance aussi pour identifier les stratégies industrielles, les stratégies financières et les stratégies d'offensive à l'export", a-t-elle poursuivi. "Cela va se faire assez vite", a-t-elle estimé, sans préciser davantage le calendrier. "Plus c'est rapide, mieux c'est, plus on peut restructurer intelligemment", a-t-elle ajouté.

119,112

UK nuclear strategy in doubt as ‘very serious’ faults found in French plant

By Sophie Vorrath on 20 April 2015



Further doubt has been cast over the future of three nuclear reactors under development in the UK, after the discovery of a potentially catastrophic mistake in the construction of an identical power plant in France.

French regulators have been informed of “manufacturing anomalies” in components “particularly important for safety” at the Flamanville 3 power plant, in Normandy – a prototype of France’s new generation of European Pressurised Reactor (EPR), touted as a safer and more efficient nuclear technology.

“It is a serious fault, even a very serious fault, because it involves a crucial part of the nuclear reactor,” said Pierre-Franck Chevet, head of France’s nuclear safety inspectorate.

The anomalies have prompted a second investigation into the quality of the steel used to make a 50ft-high safety casing, or “pressure vessel”, which encloses the groundbreaking new reactor at Flamanville.

In a joint statement, French multinationals Areva and EDF said new tests were under way on the “reactor vessel head and bottom”.

The companies said this followed initial tests which had shown “greater than average carbon content” – something French regulators said caused “lower than expected mechanical toughness” in the steel.

“Teams are working to perform the additional tests as soon as possible, following approval by the French Nuclear Safety Authority on the test conditions, and to provide the safety authority with all the necessary information to demonstrate the safety and quality of the corresponding equipment,” the statement said.

Whatever the outcome, it’s not good news for UK Prime Minister David Cameron’s “keep the lights on” energy strategy, a large part of which has been the development of two EPR



nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point in Somerset and another, later, in Suffolk.

The Independent reports that if the steel does prove to be defective, the completion of the prototype UK plant – already behind schedule and nearly three times over budget – could be delayed for several years more.

One of the main concerns, reports the BBC, is that questions about safety will spook the Chinese state investors who were expected to cover part of the cost of the £14bn Hinkley project, intended to supply 6 per cent of Britain’s energy needs for 60 years.

“What foreign client would want to buy this reactor when France itself is not capable of completing its construction?” asked Greenpeace France’s Yannick Rousselet, in a statement describing the latest problems to beset the Normandy prototype as “the coup de grâce for the EPR idea.”

Sources in the French nuclear industry have told the newspaper *Le Parisien* that dismantling the faulty pressure vessel and ordering and manufacturing a new one could take several years.

“If the weakness of the steel is proved, I don’t hold out much hope for the survival of the EPR project,” a former senior nuclear safety official told the paper.

In the UK, it has taken the government months to negotiate a contract for EDF to supply electricity at a guaranteed price for 35 years.

The final decision on the British project is expected in the coming months but is also delayed by the current lack of a fully functioning government – something which could be exacerbated if talks on forming a government drag on after the election.

<http://www.france24.com/fr/20150417-areva-flamanville-epr-anomalie-economie-nucleaire-reacteur-chine-finlande-edf-france/>

119,113

L'anomalie à l'EPR de Flamanville, un risque économique pour Areva

© Charly Triballeau, AFP | Le chantier de l'EPR de Flamanville en février 2014.

VIDEO

Vidéo par [FRANCE 2](#)
Texte par [Sébastien SEIBT](#)

Dernière modification : 17/04/2015

La découverte d'une anomalie "sérieuse", jeudi, à l'EPR de Flamanville, n'est pas qu'un souci de sécurité pour Areva. Il en va de la crédibilité de la technologie française et donc de la santé financière du spécialiste hexagonal.

Il est urgent d'attendre. Après [la découverte d'une anomalie "sérieuse"](#) dans la cuve de l'EPR de Flamanville, les autorités chinoises ont annoncé, jeudi 16 avril, que la mise en route des deux réacteurs [EPR commandés à Areva était suspendue](#). Cette annonce risque de retarder leur entrée en service qui était prévue, pour le premier réacteur, dès la fin de cette année. Areva, qui fournit les cuves aussi bien à l'EPR [en chantier à Flamanville](#) qu'à [ceux construits en Chine](#), n'avait pas besoin d'une telle annonce. Car, pour le géant français de l'atome, qui n'a pas dégagé de bénéfice depuis quatre ans et a subi une perte de 4,8 milliards d'euros en 2014, le temps, c'est beaucoup d'argent. Les retards à répétition en Finlande [ont déjà coûté près de 4 milliards d'euros en plus](#). [Le réacteur finlandais devait être mis en route en 2009](#), il ne le sera probablement pas avant 2018.

"Aussi crucial que l'iPhone pour Apple"

Le problème détecté par l'Autorité de sûreté nucléaire à Flamanville est loin de n'être qu'une question de sécurité ou de technologie. Les conséquences économiques peuvent se faire ressentir très rapidement. "Le projet EPR est crucial pour la stratégie de croissance d'Areva. C'est comme l'iPhone pour Apple", souligne Thomas-Olivier Léautier, économiste spécialiste des questions d'électricité et d'énergie à la Toulouse School of Economics.

Or l'EPR ne semble pas, pour l'instant, être pour Areva la réussite spectaculaire que l'iPhone a été pour Apple. Bien au contraire. "Areva se présente comme le super champion du nucléaire, mais son échec en Finlande et ce nouveau problème prouvent que c'est loin d'être cas", tranche François Mativet, l'un des administrateurs du [réseau Sortir du nucléaire](#). Pour ce militant, "la question de la survie d'Areva se pose désormais". Une manière de se demander si l'anomalie détectée à Flamanville peut handicaper la capacité future du spécialiste français du nucléaire à vendre ses EPR ailleurs qu'en Finlande et en Chine. La réponse pourrait venir d'Inde : Areva avait annoncé, le 10 avril, [la signature de deux accords](#) avec New Delhi concernant le projet de construction de réacteurs nucléaires. Les négociations vont-elles se poursuivre comme si de rien n'était ?

Accélérer le rapprochement entre Areva et EDF ?

Tout dépend, pour l'économiste Thomas-Olivier Léautier, de la nature du problème. "Si c'est un problème lors de l'exécution du chantier, Areva peut rassurer et s'assurer que cela ne se reproduira plus, mais si c'est une erreur de conception de cuves pour réacteur de troisième génération, le souci est plus profond", analyse-t-il.

Dans ce dernier cas, les concurrents d'Areva risquent de sauter sur cette occasion de dénigrer leur rival. "Il y a environ cinq concurrents principaux sur le créneau des réacteurs de troisième génération, dont l'AP1000 de l'Américain Westinghouse", remarque Thomas-Olivier Léautier. En 2009, Areva avait subi un échec aussi cuisant qu'étonnant lorsque le "petit" Sud-Coréen Kepco avait décroché un giga-contrat de quatre réacteurs avec [les Émirats arabes unis](#). Si l'anomalie "sérieuse" remet en cause la conception de la cuve, des futurs échecs à l'export pourraient être moins étonnants.

"Cela pourrait accélérer le rapprochement entre Areva et un autre groupe comme EDF", juge l'économiste. L'électricien veut, en effet, devenir l'acteur principal de la filière nucléaire française. C'est d'ailleurs lui qui négocie la construction d'un EPR en Angleterre.

Une anomalie, quelle anomalie ?

Le ver est dans la cuve. L'anomalie détectée, il y a une semaine, par l'Agence de sûreté nucléaire (ASN), concerne cet élément essentiel de l'EPR de Flamanville. Le cœur du réacteur y est en effet logé et la cuve participe à contenir la radioactivité.

Mais celle livrée par Areva à Flamanville présenterait justement un risque de fissure et donc de fuite de produit radioactif. Le souci vient du couvercle et du fond de cet immense contenant de 11 mètres de haut. L'ASN a constaté que la teneur en carbone de l'acier utilisé était "supérieure à celle attendue". Par conséquent, prévient l'autorité, la résistance au choc du couvercle et du fond risque de ne pas être à la hauteur.

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The EPR “anamoly;” what’s at stake for Areva

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Installation of the reactor dome at Areva's EPR reactor at Flamanville, France. Now, indications of a serious problem with the reactor pressure vessel could scuttle the already delayed and over-budget project.

In early April, the troubled French nuclear reactor manufacturer Areva announced that there is an “anamoly” in the reactor pressure vessel installed at Electricite de France's (EdF) Flamanville reactor currently under construction.

While the U.S. thankfully appears to have avoided any construction of the Areva EPR reactors—the U.S. EPR flagship reactor at Calvert Cliffs-3 was defeated in NRC licensing hearings and EdF has announced it is giving up on the U.S. market—EPRs remain under construction elsewhere, most notably in France, Finland and China. Areva—the world's largest reactor manufacturer—is already near bankruptcy; if this “anamoly” is endemic to Areva EPRs it could put the final nail in Areva's coffin.

We appreciate the work of Yves Maignac of WISE-Paris, who prepared the following paper on what the problem is, how extensive it may be and its implications for Flamanville and the rest of the world.

Fabrication Flaws in the Pressure Vessel of the EPR Flamanville-3

Summary

Fabrication defects detected at the end of 2014 in upper and lower heads of the Flamanville-3 reactor pressure vessel are, by size and characteristics, very serious mechanical defaults. These phenomena strongly put into question the safety case of the EPR (European Pressurized Water Reactor) currently under construction in Normandy.

The reason why a well-known material heterogeneity problem was not solved during the forging of the pieces at Areva's Le Creusot plant has yet to be investigated. The reason why the defects were detected or publicly released so late, at a moment when the pressure vessel was already in place in the reactor building, also needs to be scrutinized.

Areva will face a very difficult challenge in justifying the safety case for the flawed pressure vessel. The only alternative to demonstrating safety in spite of the defects would be to repair or replace the faulty components, which appears hardly feasible and particularly expensive in the case of the bottom piece. Therefore the future of the entire Flamanville-3 project is at stake.

The problem has also international implications, since at least some of the upper and/or lower heads of the Taishan-1 and -2 EPRs, under construction in China, are apparently also affected. It is also not clear whether components destined for the Hinkley Point-C have been fabricated yet and could be concerned.

On the 7th of April 2015, the French Nuclear Safety Authority (ASN) [announced that fabrication defects had been found in the reactor pressure vessel \(RPV\) of the EPR reactor under construction at Flamanville. This information was soon confirmed](#) by the manufacturer of the components, Areva, and the operator, EDF. [Additional information was published by ASN](#) on 8 April 2015. The following is a synthesis of this information completed by direct e-mail and phone communication between ASN and WISE-Paris on 9 and 10 April 2015, and some additional research.

Safety Significance of the Reactor Pressure Vessel

The pressure vessel, which hosts the fission reaction of the nuclear fuel, is one of the most crucial pieces of equipment for the safety of a nuclear reactor. This is even more true in the case of the EPR: with a design capacity of 1,650 MWe, its pressure vessel would hold more nuclear fuel, and therefore a higher potential of danger, than any other reactor in the world. In particular, to exclude any breach of the pressure vessel is key in the safety assessment.

Considering the extreme kind of mechanical, hydraulic, thermal and radioactive loads it is exposed to, this imposes very stringent requirements for the mechanical toughness of the pressure vessel. The design pressure is 176 bar and the design temperature is 351°C. The reactor pressure vessel of the EPR is a cylinder of roughly 12.7 meters high and 5.7 meters diameter (7 meters with the nozzles), made of five main parts: three toruses, of which the upper one holds the nozzles connecting the vessel to the primary loops, and the cap-shaped bottom which are welded together, plus a separate cap-shaped head. Each of these manufactured components as well as the quality of the weldings has to meet specific requirements.

The defects announced on 7 April 2015 concern the pressure vessel head and bottom of the Flamanville-3 EPR. Unlike the largest parts of the pressure vessel that were forged by Japan Steel Works (JSW—operating the only forge in the world that can process the very large EPR vessel ingots—these smaller parts could be forged by Areva in its plant at Le Creusot.

Nature of the Defect

The vessel closure head is made up of a forged ring, the vessel flange, and a forged partly spherical upper head, penetrated by welded tubes. The lower head is a similar partly spherical forged piece, welded through a forged transition ring to the central core shells. The whole body of the pressure vessel weighs 410 tons, while the vessel head weighs an additional 116 tons.



China's Taishan 1 and 2 reactors, now under construction, may be affected by Areva's pressure vessel problems.

The pieces are all made of 16MND5 steel. The defect consists in carbon segregation in a certain area of the partly spherical upper and lower heads. It occurs due to insufficient elimination during the forging process of the higher part of the ingot, where carbon tends to concentrate, in the fabricated piece. Why such a well-known phenomenon was not avoided will be, according to ASN, an important part of its examination of the case.

The problem was found recently through destructive tests on a similar vessel head that had been forged in the same conditions. The results are as follows:

- Carbon concentration was found to reach 0.30% in the central area of the forged piece. The fabrication process should ensure, according to the technical specifications applying to 16MND5 steel, that higher concentrations found in the forged piece remain under 0.22%, which is the upper boundary for qualifying materials on the basis of existing studies and return of experience. In other words, as ASN put it, the carbon concentration in the segregated zone brings the material significantly far from the domain of knowledge where the required mechanical properties are well proven.
- This carbon concentration affects the mechanical properties of the material, and most particularly its resilience (its capacity to absorb the energy of a shock, expressed in Joules), which is one of the key properties to be assessed to qualify the pressure vessel. Samples from the segregated zone showed a resilience between 36 J and 64 J, with a mean value of 52 J. This is below the regulatory threshold for the vessel head and bottom, which is of 60 J on average. Taking into account the expected margins, the resilience aimed for and obtained in non-segregated areas is above 100 J.
- The segregated zone is a concentric area with a diameter of around 1.20 meters, on the external face. The depth of the zone remains to be assessed.

Those results are highly likely to be transposable to the head and bottom of the Flamanville-3 pressure vessel, given the very same conditions of their fabrication. Moreover, non-destructive chemical tests on the surface of these parts have confirmed the presence of a similar defect.

Timing of the Process

The ASN was first informed by Areva of the results of the tests in December 2014. These destructive tests were part of the qualification procedure for the components of a pressurized nuclear piece of equipment which the manufacturer has to complete prior to its operation (independently of the whole approval of the reactor start-up, which has to be obtained by the operator).

The head and bottom were apparently forged as early as 2006 (even before EDF obtained the license to create the new reactor at Flamanville, which was granted by a decree in April 2007).

Major defects in the vessel closure head were found by Areva in the Autumn of 2010 and in June 2011. One concerned the welding of adaptor tubes, the other concerned the welding of more than 50 penetrating tubes (out of 107 in total). In October 2011 ASN allowed Areva to carry out deep repair work instead of fabricating a new head. Also some of the tubes probably cross the segregated zone, the reparation process, which is not complete yet, has apparently proceeded without noticing—or taking into account—this problem.

Meanwhile, no such welding issue was raised with the body of the pressure vessel, which was delivered to the Flamanville site in October 2013 and put in place in January 2014. Nevertheless, the destructive testing program, part of the upper and lower head qualification, was only proposed by Areva to ASN in September 2012. Finally, the tests which revealed the segregated zone were only run in October 2014.

It is unclear for the time being why the industrial process went as far as positioning the pressure vessel in the reactor pit and pursuing the construction around it for many months, when these qualification tests had not even started. This questions both the reason why Areva failed to spot this very important problem at an earlier stage, and the reason why EDF did proceed while qualification was not complete. According to ASN, the reasons for the late testing will be part of the investigation.

Regulatory Issue

Once fully constructed, the EPR reactor in Flamanville-3 would require a final operating license, delivered by ASN under the nuclear regime, to start commercial operation. Prior to that operating license, all pressurized nuclear equipment of the plant, starting with the pressure vessel, must be approved under specific regulations reinforced in 2005. Although previous requirements could have been applied during an exemption period granted in the 2005 ministerial order, ASN made it clear that 2005 regulation fully applies as Areva never asked for such an exemption.

The regulation requires that the manufacturer demonstrates that the pressure vessel meets all the mechanical specifications, of which resilience is an important part. Regarding the parts concerned with the defects, the regulation requires Areva either to prove that the vessel head and bottom meet the mechanical criteria, including an average resilience of 60 J, or to justify that it reaches an equivalent safety level by other means.

Theoretically, there is therefore room for the defective pressure vessel to be qualified through alternative proofing, although the nature and size of the problem will likely make it very difficult, if not impossible. It should also be noted that since vessel head and bottom are not subject to the same operational constraints, the technical assessment could reach different conclusions regarding the acceptability of the two pieces of equipment. In particular, the tube penetrations through the vessel head, needed for the control rods and other instrumentation, introduce further potential weaknesses on welded parts while increasing the mechanical constraints. The lower head, on the contrary, is free of such openings (which is an important change introduced in the design of EPR, compared to previous French reactor designs that had instrumentation penetrations in the bottom plates).

The first step in the reassessment process will be a new series of tests that has already been announced. Areva has proposed a testing program to ASN, which the authority has yet to approve. This will likely consist of further destructive tests on the similar head, which has already been used. These new tests will specifically aim for a more detailed characterization of the defect.

Areva will also need to reinforce the demonstration regarding the transposability of these findings to the actual head and bottom of the Flamanville-3 EPR. Although the program has yet to be discussed, the French Minister of Ecology already announced that the results are expected by October 2015. The ASN will then consider the justification case which Areva will build upon these results. Whether this could be conclusive, one way or the other, and when ASN could come to a final decision are still open questions.

Another open question is the regulatory status of such a decision and whether and how this could be challenged either by the industrial stakeholders or the project opponents, depending on the outcome. In particular, should a positive decision be granted on the basis of a modified justification, this could fall under the regulatory requirement to start a new license, going through a public inquiry, etc. Also, one important issue will be to clarify who would bear the responsibility either to stop the project or to start the reactor in such a context.

Alternative Options

If Areva fails to provide a convincing alternative proof to complete the safety case, then the only alternative option is to repair or replace the faulty pieces. The fabrication of a new pressure vessel head would be possible. Regarding the lower head, it is technically very unlikely either to separate it from the whole pressure vessel for replacement or to repair it in situ. Any repair or replacement would therefore almost certainly need the entire pressure vessel to be removed, which would be unprecedented and seems very challenging given the progress of work and lack of space inside the reactor building.

The technical hurdles which any repair or replacement solution for the pressure vessel bottom would need to get over, and the major new safety issues related, come with huge costs and high uncertainty. The feasible alternatives, if any, will raise serious issues of profitability. In other words, economic scenario assessments might show that abandoning the project is cheaper than repair or replacement options, when factors such as the financial costs of further significant delays, or the savings on decommissioning costs if the reactor doesn't go nuclear, are included.

International impact

The question also arises of the potential impact on other EPR projects where similar defects could be found. There is no particular reason to believe that any vessel head and bottom which has been forged by Japan Steel Works would present the same defect. This is the case of those used for the pressure vessel of the Finnish EPR at Olkiluoto, which are therefore not concerned.

On the contrary, upper or lower heads for other EPRs which have been forged at Le Creusot are expected to be as defective. Although it is still not clear how many and which ones, some of the four parts consisting of the two heads and bottoms of the pressure vessels of Taishan-1 and -2 in China are concerned. One important issue will be the consistency of the technical assessments and the decisions taken by the safety authorities between France and China.

It also remains to be clarified, whether head(s) and bottom(s) already have been forged for the Hinkley Point-C project in Great Britain or even that of Jaitapur in India, and if so whether they were forged at Le Creusot.

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April 13, 2015

Permalink: <http://safeenergy.org/2015/04/13/the-epr-anomaly/>

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UK nuclear strategy faces meltdown as faults are found in identical French project



The faults could also scare off the Chinese state investors who are supposed to cover part of the cost of the £14bn Hinkley project

JOHN LICHFIELD 

PARIS

SATURDAY 18 APRIL 2015

A “very serious” fault has been discovered in a French nuclear power station which is at the heart of David Cameron’s strategy to “keep the lights on” in Britain in the next decade.

The future of two nuclear reactors planned for Hinkley Point in Somerset has been thrown into doubt by the discovery of a potentially catastrophic mistake in the construction of an identical EPR power plant in Normandy.

“It is a serious fault, even a very serious fault, because it involves a crucial part of the nuclear reactor,” said Pierre-Franck Chevet, head of France’s nuclear safety inspectorate.

A second investigation has been ordered into the quality of the steel used to make a 50ft-high safety casing, or “pressure vessel”, which encloses the groundbreaking new reactor at Flamanville, near Cherbourg. If the steel proves to be defective, the completion of the prototype EPR plant – already behind schedule and nearly three times over budget – could be delayed for several years.

Mr Chevet also revealed that the same manufacturing techniques had been used in the steel for the identical safety casings destined for Hinkley Point, which “have already been manufactured”.



Yannick Rousselet, of Greenpeace France, said the latest problems to beset the prototype power station in Normandy are “clearly the coup de grâce for the EPR idea”

The fault could undermine the already fragile finances of the French state-owned nuclear construction company Areva, which is supposed to build two EPR reactors at Hinkley by 2023 and a third at Sizewell in Suffolk. It could also scare off the Chinese state investors who are supposed to cover part of the cost of the £14bn Hinkley project, intended to supply six per cent of Britain’s energy needs for six decades.

A final “investment” decision for Hinkley, several times delayed, is now expected in June. The French Prime Minister Manuel Valls called a crisis meeting on 17 April to discuss the threat posed by the fault to France’s nuclear construction industry – the largest in the world.

Mark Hackett, a councillor in Manchester who chairs Nuclear Free Local Authorities, said: “This is a devastating blow to proponents of new-build nuclear power stations in the UK. It is likely to scare off the Chinese backers. If I was a betting man, I would now bet that Hinkley Point will never be built.”

Yannick Rousselet, of Greenpeace France, said the latest problems to beset the prototype power station in Normandy are “clearly the coup de grâce for the EPR idea”. He asked: “What foreign client would want to buy this reactor when France itself is not capable of completing its construction?”

Apart from Britain, the United States and China are in the process of buying versions of the new generation of European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) – supposedly safer and more efficient – from France. Both Areva and Électricité de France (EDF), the French energy giant which will own and operate Hinkley Point, have refused to comment in detail.

EDF said that “further investigations of the steel safety casing” would be conducted as soon as possible. In the meantime, other work on the €8.5bn project at Flamanville (originally costed at €3bn) would continue, EDF said.

Mr Chevet, head of the nuclear safety watchdog, ASN, first revealed the fault a week ago. In more detailed public comments yesterday, he revealed that the steel ordered for the safety casings or “pressure vessels” for six EPR reactors – including those earmarked for Hinkley Point – appeared to have been made inaccurately.

Tests in December on the pressure vessel already installed at Flamanville suggested that the steel at the top and bottom of the casing contained an excessive amount of carbon. This meant that the enormous cylinder which surrounds the reactor and prevents radiation leaks may be “too weak” and “could rupture”.

All the casings were forged by Areva at Le Creusot in central France as long ago as 2007-08. It would be possible to replace them, Mr Chevet said, but it would be “very costly in terms of time and money”.

Sources in the French nuclear industry told the newspaper Le Parisien yesterday that dismantling the faulty pressure vessel and ordering and manufacturing a new one could take several years. “If the weakness of the steel is proved, I don’t hold out much hope for the survival of the EPR project,” a former senior nuclear safety official told Le Parisien.

Mr Chevet said a second opinion had been sought and that experts in other countries “may be consulted”. There was no doubt, he added, that “mistakes had been made”. “It is more than 15 years since the last nuclear power stations were constructed in France,” he said. “The expertise in some trades has not been sufficiently passed on from one generation to the next.”

The original plan to develop an ageing nuclear site at Hinkley Point for a new generation of British reactors goes back to the last Labour government in January 2008. It was taken over by the present government as the keystone of its strategy to meet international commitments to reduce carbon emissions.

EDF, which owns the site, is due, in principle, to start building work in 2017. Together with a third EPR at Sizewell, Hinkley is expected to generate 16 per cent of Britain’s electricity – and six per cent of its energy needs – by the mid-2020s.

The crisis at Flamanville is also a potential calamity for Paris. France relies on nuclear power for 80 per cent of its electricity needs. Like Britain, it has an ageing array of nuclear power stations. EPR was supposed to offer a clean and safe new source of nuclear power. The technology was expected to make Areva and EDF the undisputed leaders of the world nuclear industry

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EPR de Flamanville : un désastre pour le nucléaire français

Une anomalie « très sérieuse » a été découverte sur la cuve du réacteur de dernière génération de Flamanville (Manche). Un problème qui pourrait sonner le glas d'un chantier ayant déjà coûté 9 milliards d'euros.

Erwan Benezet et Frédéric Mouchon | 17 Avril 2015, 07h52 | MAJ : 17 Avril 2015, 08h03

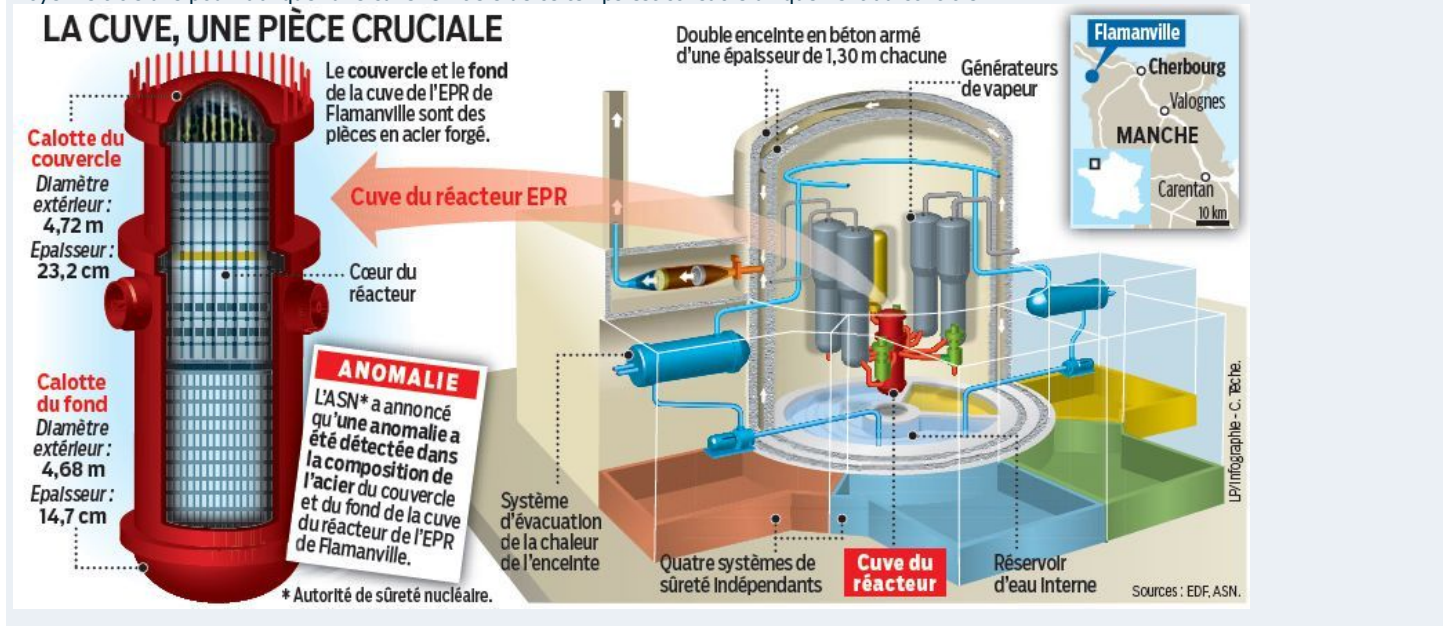
Il devait être la vitrine du nucléaire français à l'étranger. C'est devenu l'exemple à ne pas suivre et le symbole d'une industrie de l'atome made in France en grande difficulté. Des travaux qui ont pris au moins cinq ans de retard, une facture qui a triplé, estimée aujourd'hui à près de 9 MdsEUR, des déboires à répétition.

.. Maudit depuis son démarrage en 2007, le chantier de l'EPR (réacteur pressurisé européen) de Flamanville (Manche) vient de subir un nouveau revers qui pourrait le condamner. La découverte d'une « anomalie », qualifiée de « très sérieuse » par l'Autorité de sûreté nucléaire (ASN), dans la composition de l'acier de la cuve du réacteur plombe un peu plus les espoirs de la France de vendre cette technologie à l'étranger.

Un risque de fissure de la cuve du réacteur

L'anomalie détectée dans la composition de l'acier du couvercle et du fond de la cuve de l'EPR de Flamanville concerne un élément vital du futur réacteur. C'est la cuve qui contient le combustible nucléaire. C'est elle qui permet de confiner la radioactivité. Or, dans certaines zones, la capacité de l'acier à absorber un choc s'est révélée plus basse que la norme réglementaire. La hantise de l'Autorité de sûreté nucléaire (ASN) ? Que la cuve finisse par se fissurer. « Quand la cuve d'un réacteur est en fonctionnement, la température à l'intérieur est de 300 °C et on y injecte de l'eau à température ambiante, explique l'ASN. Cela crée alors un choc froid sur les parois de la cuve, provoquant une rétractation du matériau. » S'il y avait une fissure, même minime, au niveau de l'acier composant la cuve, elle pourrait s'élargir et provoquer une fuite d'eau radioactive.

En cas de mise en service du réacteur EPR, l'Observatoire du nucléaire, une association anti-atome, estime que « ces malfaçons peuvent entraîner la rupture de la cuve ». Une cuve qu'il faut des années pour concevoir. « Elle est constituée d'un assemblage de plusieurs composants gigantesques, explique un expert. Le fond et le couvercle sont obtenus en fondant deux pièces massives de 157 t, un alliage d'acier, de manganèse et de nickel, que l'on écrase pour leur donner une forme de demi-sphère. » La pièce définitive dépasse les 50 t. « Chaque étape est cruciale, ajoute l'ingénieur. Il faut en moyenne trois ans pour fabriquer une cuve. Un tiers de ce temps est consacré uniquement au contrôle. »



Le coup de grâce ?

Le président de l'ASN, Pierre-Franck Chevet, l'a redit hier : si, après de nouveaux essais, cette cuve ne respecte pas les standards exigés par le [gendarme](#) du nucléaire, il faudra la changer. « Une opération très lourde en termes de coût et de délais », prévient-il.

En clair, la question se poserait de poursuivre l'aventure. « Si la faiblesse de la cuve est avérée, je ne donne pas cher de la survie de l'EPR », confie un ancien haut responsable de la sûreté nucléaire française. « Pour la filière EPR, c'est clairement le coup de grâce, tranche Yannick Rousselet, chargé du dossier au sein de l'association Greenpeace. Quel client étranger voudra acheter demain un réacteur de ce type dont la France elle-même n'est pas capable de mener à bien la construction ? »

Au-delà de l'image désastreuse véhiculée dans le monde de l'atome par ce chantier cauchemardesque, c'est le modèle même de cette centrale que certains experts commencent à remettre en cause. « L'EPR n'a pas un grand avenir car il est déjà relativement démodé dans sa conception et beaucoup critiquent notamment le choix du gigantisme », confie à nouveau l'ancien haut responsable de la sûreté nucléaire. « La facture de l'EPR sera tellement élevée que ce qui devait être une vitrine devient le contre-exemple total de ce qu'il ne faut pas faire, estime Yannick Rousselet. Cela pointe un gros problème de savoir-faire dans l'industrie nucléaire française. »

Contactés hier, ni Areva, concepteur de l'EPR, ni EDF, futur exploitant, n'ont souhaité s'exprimer (lire ci-dessous). A l'Elysée, en revanche, on maintient un discours rassurant : « Des résultats d'analyse plus précis sont attendus pour le mois d'octobre. En attendant, la construction de Flamanville se poursuit. » Mais pour combien de temps ?

Le silence d'EDF et Areva

Chez EDF ou Areva, c'est l'omerta sur l'EPR de Flamanville. Selon nos informations, la consigne a même été donnée il y a quelques jours par la direction d'EDF d'observer le silence sur le sujet. Rien ne doit filtrer dans les médias. Sollicité par notre journal, EDF renvoie au communiqué de presse laconique diffusé le 7 avril dans lequel il annonçait la réalisation « au plus tôt d'essais complémentaires » et confirmait la poursuite du chantier. Areva a opposé une courtoise fin de non-recevoir à nos sollicitations.

Du côté des pouvoirs publics, l'Etat en tant qu'actionnaire à 85 % d'EDF et à 86,5 % d'Areva (directement ou indirectement) déclare « ne pas pouvoir s'exprimer ». Tout au plus, l'Elysée invite-t-il à ne pas tirer de conclusions définitives. Même mutisme de la part de la ministre de l'Energie, Ségolène Royal.

Il faut dire que les conséquences d'une mise à l'arrêt définitif du chantier de l'EPR de Flamanville (le risque est réel) seraient désastreuses. Outre 9 Mds€ (le coût actuel de l'EPR, sans parler de celui d'un éventuel démantèlement) qui partiraient en fumée, c'est toute la filière nucléaire qui serait impactée. La seule construction de l'EPR de Flamanville mobilise 8 000 emplois directs ou indirects. Et 4 000 emplois supplémentaires sont associés à tout EPR vendu à l'exportation. Sauf que la fin de Flamanville entraînerait quasi automatiquement l'arrêt d'autres projets, notamment en Grande-Bretagne et aux Etats-Unis.

Premier exportateur mondial d'équipements et de services dans le secteur de l'atome, la filière nucléaire française engrange plus de 6 Mds€ de chiffre d'affaires annuels à l'export, employant directement 125 000 personnes. Certaines régions ont développé des compétences spécifiques, comme le Rhône-Alpes, avec l'enrichissement de l'uranium, ou la Bourgogne dans la fabrication des gros composants pour réacteurs. Autant de fournisseurs et de sous-traitants, pour l'essentiel des PME, dont le destin est intimement lié à celui de Flamanville.

Nuclear power: UK 'must learn' from French reactor concerns

- 18 April 2015
- From the section [UK](#)

Lessons should be learned from problems with a French reactor that is very similar to one planned in the UK, says Britain's nuclear safety regulator.

French regulators have been informed of "manufacturing anomalies" in components "particularly important for safety" at Flamanville 3 power plant, in Normandy.

The reactor is similar to one planned for Hinkley Point, in Somerset.

EDF Energy - involved in both projects - said a new series of tests was under way and it was working with regulators.

An investigation revealed **potential weaknesses in the steel** used to make a safety casing around the reactor at Flamanville, near Cherbourg.

Areva, which is building Flamanville 3 for EDF, says it is the first plant in the **"new French reactor fleet"**, and it includes Areva's new EPR reactor.

The UK Office for Nuclear Regulation said it was aware of the French Nuclear Safety Authority's concerns about the reactor and would continue to liaise with French authorities.

"The UK currently have no EPR reactors but expects that learning from Flamanville 3 will be taken into account in the manufacture of components intended for the planned new reactor at Hinkley Point C," it said.

Analysis



By Joe Lynam, BBC business correspondent

These safety issues in France could lead to even further delays in the construction and completion of the proposed £24.5bn Hinkley Point nuclear power plant.

It has already been delayed by months as the government negotiated a contract for EDF to supply electricity at a guaranteed price for 35 years.

The final decision on the project is expected in the coming months but is also delayed by Britain not having a fully functioning government - something which could be exacerbated if talks on forming a government drag on after the election.

These safety concerns in France are not expected to set the Hinkley Point project back too much but they may spook the Chinese companies set to invest in the project.

In a joint statement, Areva and EDF said new tests were under way on the "reactor vessel head and bottom".

It said this followed initial tests which had shown "greater than average carbon content" - something French regulators said caused "lower than expected mechanical toughness" in the steel.

EDF and Areva added: "Teams are working to perform the additional tests as soon as possible, following approval by the French Nuclear Safety Authority on the test conditions, and to provide the safety authority with all the necessary information to demonstrate the safety and quality of the corresponding equipment."

The components in question have not yet been fitted at Hinkley, but it would cost money and could delay the project if they had to be entirely re-made.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOIht8tflbM>

119,122

Hinkley Point C - les coopérations industrielles



Société française d'énergie nucléaire (SFEN)

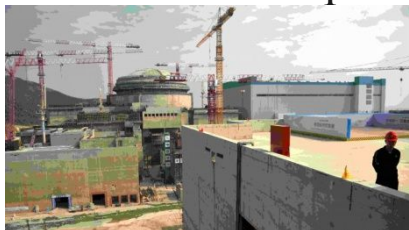
Ajoutée le 14 avr. 2015

Table ronde sur : "Les collaborations industrielles nucléaires franco-britanniques : quelles clefs pour le succès ?"

Participants : Bruno Bocard (Bocard Cavendish Nuclear), Guillaume Puravet (Assystem), Jason Smith (Rolls-Royce), Keith Parker (NIA), Marc Lachaise (EDF Energy), Robert Davies (AREVA), Serge Klaeyle (PFME), Vincent Avrillon (Bouygues TP).

Le Royaume-Uni et le France réinventent leur modèle énergétique, dans lequel le nucléaire joue un rôle central au service de la réduction des émissions de CO2. Le programme britannique est l'occasion pour les deux pays et leurs entreprises d'échanger leurs compétences dans le domaine de la construction, de l'aval du cycle et de la recherche. La Convention SFEN du 5 mars 2015 a permis de faire le point sur ces différents sujets.

France's nuclear power giant beset by setbacks



© Peter Parks, AFP I A file picture taken on December 8, 2013 shows the joint Sino-French Taishan Nuclear Power Station outside Taishan City in Guandong province.

Text by [Liza MALYKHINA](#)

Latest update : 2015-04-17

France, which has one of the most advanced nuclear energy systems in the world, is struggling to remain a major player in the nuclear field as its state-owned company Areva leaks cash and faces safety concerns.

France's nuclear security authority ASN (Autorité de sureté nucléaire) last week declared that a multi-billion dollar Evolutionary Power Reactor (EPR) being built by Areva in Flamanville, Normandy has "a serious anomaly".

The anomaly comes at a difficult time for the French company as it faces a host of setbacks related to the construction of nuclear power plants around the world.

After ASN demanded tests on the new reactor to determine the cause of the fault, Areva reported 'a defect in the steel composition in some areas of the lid and the bottom of the tank of the EPR reactor'.

More tests will be required of Areva in coming months in order to guarantee the safety of the Flamanville reactor and if it cannot be repaired, a complete replacement may be necessary.

In France, the state-owned Electricité de France (EDF) has commissioned Areva to design EPRs to increase the supply of electricity to consumers.

"Either EDF abandons the project or it takes out the vessel and starts building a new one... this would be a very heavy operation in terms of cost and delay," Pierre-Franck Chevet, head of the ASN, told the French daily 'Le Parisien'.

So what next for the EPR?

Overall, there doesn't seem to be an easy fix.

Yannick Rousselet, a nuclear specialist at Greenpeace in France, says that replacing the tank in Flamanville is more difficult than one might think.

"The tank is the only element that you cannot move easily," Rousselet told FRANCE 24.

"Historically, tanks were not designed with the idea of dismantling them. In addition, the one at Flamanville is already welded in place, and fixed to the pipe of the reactor."

Because EDF is state-owned, tax payers will ultimately pay the bill for the expensive project, says Rousselet.

"It's the French who will pay for the mistakes. Officials collectively took us to a dead end."

International trouble

The EPR is a third generation nuclear reactor that was designed by Areva for Electricité de France (EDF) to be both more efficient and safe, but with the latest announcements, questions are being asked about its cost and

safety. Currently there are four other such reactors being constructed worldwide - one in Finland, one in France, and two in China - all these projects have faced numerous scheduling and budgetary problems.

The Flamanville reactor has cost the French government more than double its original \$3.5 billion price tag, and is already five years behind schedule.

To add to the company's troubles, China announced Thursday that it will not be loading fuel into the EPR nuclear reactors designed by Areva until safety issues are resolved. The country which boasts 23 nuclear reactors has a clean safety record and it continues to invest in nuclear energy with another 27 reactors under construction.

“In general, the Taishan nuclear plant is functioning effectively, and its construction is under control,” Tang Bo, an official at China's National Nuclear Safety Administration was quoted by the ministry as saying.

Billions lost at Areva

Thomas Olivier Leautier, a specialist in the energy sector at Toulouse School of Economics, says that the success of the EPR is crucial for Areva's future.

“Areva's financial situation is critical, the EPR is as crucial to them as the iPhone was to Apple. Their failure in Finland and now the problem in Flamanville could prove fatal,” Leautier told FRANCE 24.

In March, the company announced that last year it lost more than 4 billion euros.

Philippe Knoche, Areva's CEO, said that the company must adapt to “new market realities”.

“The scale of the net loss for 2014 illustrates the twofold challenge confronting Areva: continuing stagnation of the nuclear operations, lack of competitiveness and difficulties in managing the risks inherent in large projects. The group understands how serious the situation is,” said Knoche.

119,125

France to Weigh Costs of Maintaining Older Plants in Nuclear Policy

By REUTERSOCT. 5, 2014, 11:46 A.M. E.D.T.

PARIS — France's energy minister said on Sunday that the cost of maintaining older reactors would be factored into any decision on the future size of its large and aging nuclear power fleet.

The government already plans to shut the Fessenheim plant on the German border as part of a pledge to bring down atomic energy to 50 percent of French power output by 2025 from the current 75 percent, the highest share in the world.

But it has skirted the issue of whether to extend the operating life of its 58 nuclear reactors, which state-owned utility would like to prolong from 40 years to up to 60 years.

"Investments in reactors at the oldest plants don't last forever. You then have to re-invest and that is very expensive," Energy Minister Segolene Royal told France 3 television.

"If it costs a lot more to carry out maintenance to make older plants secure, it would be better to build renewable energy installations," she said.

France, like other European countries, faces rising costs to maintain a nuclear fleet with an average age of about 30 years. EDF has estimated that extending the life of the plants would cost 55 billion euros.

About half of its reactors are due to reach the current 40-year limit during the 2020s. French nuclear watchdog ASN has said it will give an initial opinion on the issue next year.

Royal is steering through parliament an energy transition bill that introduces a cap on nuclear power production, which would force EDF to close an equivalent capacity when it launches the 1,600 megawatt Flamanville reactor, due in 2016.

She said this week the government could choose to close another site than Fessenheim but dismissed as "fanciful" a 5 billion euro estimate made by two parliamentarians for the cost of closing Fessenheim.

(Reporting by Gus Trompiz and Michel Rose; editing by Jane Baird)

Warum Politiker lügen müssen

Erstmals ist auf einem Eurogruppen-Treffen offen über einen „Plan B“ zu Griechenland gesprochen worden. Bestätigen darf das freilich keiner der Euro-Finanzminister. Was aber bedeutet Plan B eigentlich? Denkbar ist vieles.

25.04.2015, von WERNER MUSSLER

Etwas zu oft haben die Finanzminister des Euroraums am Freitag und Samstag in Riga beteuert, sie hätten in den Verhandlungen mit Griechenland keinen Plan B. Der Bundesfinanzminister hat freilich eine orakelnde Erklärung dieser Beteuerungen hinterher geschoben. Fragen nach einem Plan B dürfe man verantwortlichen Politikern im Griechenland-Streit nicht stellen, sagt Wolfgang Schäuble. Er befinde sich in einem Dilemma: Wenn er die Existenz eines solchen Plans bestätige, dann seien die Folgen kaum absehbar. Wenn er sie leugne, laufe er Gefahr, dass man ihm nicht glaube. Damit formuliert Schäuble etwas filigraner, was vor einigen Jahren der damalige Eurogruppen-Chef und heutige Kommissionspräsident Jean-Claude Juncker in ähnlichem Kontext gesagt hat: dass man als Politiker zu lügen gezwungen sei, wenn es ernst werde.

In Riga hat sich jedenfalls gezeigt, dass die bisherige Strategie der Euro-Staaten nicht aufgehen wird - und entsprechend ratlos sind die Minister. Diese griechische Regierung will sich nicht auf den Rettungskonsens einlassen, nach dem jeder Krisenstaat zuverlässig auf neues Geld hoffen kann, der den Gläubigern Wohlverhalten verspricht. Die Links-Rechts-Regierung kommt aus ihren ideologischen Schützengräben nicht heraus und setzt zugleich darauf, dass sie die Euro-Staaten am Ende schon erpressen kann, weil diese keinen Grexit wollen.

An dieser Erpressbarkeit hat sich vermutlich nichts geändert. Aber erstmals ist auf einem Eurogruppen-Treffen offen über einen Plan B gesprochen worden. Der slowenische Ressortchef Dusan Mramor hat seinem griechischen Kollegen Giannis Varoufakis signalisiert, wenn dieser weiter nur herum schwadroniere, müsse er die Konsequenzen tragen. Varoufakis hat darauf sehr gereizt reagiert – ein Zeichen dafür, dass er sich vielleicht zu sicher gefühlt hat.

Dabei ist die Frage nach dem Plan B fast banal. Sie stellt sich schon wegen des wachsenden Zeitdrucks. Der bisher geplante Programmabschluss bis Ende Juni, mit der Auszahlung der Restkredite von 7,2 Milliarden Euro und umfassenden griechischen Reformen im Gegenzug, ist nicht nur deshalb **unrealistisch geworden, weil sich die Verhandlungen mit Athen seit Mitte Februar keinen Millimeter fortbewegt haben** und die Regierung so bockig wie eh und je ist. Selbst wenn sich dies schlagartig änderte, bliebe kaum genug Zeit, bis Ende Juni die nötigen Reformen ins Werk zu setzen. **Das bedeutete, dass ohne weiteres Zutun die vorhandenen Kredite verfielen und ein ungeordneter griechischer Staatsbankrott unvermeidbar würde.**

Was aber bedeutet Plan B? Denkbar ist vieles. **Ökonomisch am saubersten wäre ein Austritt des Landes aus der Währungsunion mit Schuldenschnitt.** Diese Option ist freilich bei allen Beteiligten unverändert unpopulär, aus unterschiedlichen Gründen. **Die juristischen Probleme sind dabei die geringsten.** Die griechische Seite müsste die kurzfristige ökonomische Schockwirkung dieses Schritts fürchten. **Die meisten Euro-Staaten hängen immer noch an der „Integrität“ des Euroraums, und sie sind sich im Klaren darüber, dass sie der Schuldenschnitt viel kosten würde.**

Es bleiben unterschiedliche **Variationen der bisherigen Strategie: des Durchwurstelns.** Dazu gehören auch **die nur schemenhaft erkennbaren Pläne eines griechischen Zahlungsausfalls bei gleichzeitigem Verbleib in der Währungsunion.** Diese Idee wirft mehr Fragen auf, als sie beantwortet. **Deshalb bleibt neue Hilfe am wahrscheinlichsten, selbst wenn das derzeit niemand sagen will.** Auch nach Riga **bleibt der Grexit ein Tabu, und nichts spricht dafür, dass sich das ändert. Unter diesen Voraussetzungen wird den Euro-Staaten am Ende nichts anderes übrig bleiben, als in der zweiten Jahreshälfte abermals zu zahlen.** In der konkreten Ausgestaltung ist allerlei vorstellbar, auch der bisher zum Tabu erklärte Plan, dass der Euro-Krisenfonds ESM der Europäischen Zentralbank griechische Staatsanleihen abkauft. Es wäre eine von mehreren Optionen für **die „Brückenfinanzierung“ für lau**, die sich Athen immer gewünscht hat.

119,127

Ölkonferenz in Houston

Siemens-Chef macht Witze über Energiewende

Die Förderung von Photovoltaik in Deutschland sei so sinnvoll wie der Anbau von Ananas in Alaska, sagt Siemens-Chef Kaeser. Auf einer Ölkonferenz in Houston spottet er über die deutsche Energiepolitik.

23.04.2015, von WINAND VON PETERSDORFF, HOUSTON



© REUTERS  Siemens-Chef Joe Kaeser

„Sind wir noch ein deutsches Unternehmen?“ Der Siemens-Chef Joe Kaeser bereitet mit dieser rhetorischen Frage die sorgfältig abgewogene Aussage vor: „Wir sind in Deutschland geboren, in Europa aufgewachsen und in der Welt zu Hause.“ Als er diese Worte mit kraftvollem bayrischem Akzent spricht, ist er in Houston, Texas, auf der wichtigsten Ölkonferenz des Jahres, der IHS Ceraweek. Gemessen an der CEO- und Minister-Dichte, ist diese Veranstaltung nur noch vergleichbar mit dem Weltwirtschaftsforum in Davos. Kaeser ist hier, um die Energiewirtschaft zu umschmeicheln.

Diese „ziemlich coole Industrie“ sei voller Unternehmer, die auf Powerpoint-Präsentationen pfeifen und für die ein Handschlag noch etwas gelte. Das klingt für deutsche Ohren dick aufgetragen, aber es entspricht dem Pathos-Level amerikanischer Reden. Siemens ist dabei, sich unentbehrlich zu machen für die Öl- und Gaswirtschaft durch die Übernahmen von Rolls-Royce-Turbinen und Dresser-Rand, einem großen Lieferanten der Energiewirtschaft. Die Hinwendung zum Öl- und Gasgeschäft macht Siemens deutlich, indem das Unternehmen erstmals in seiner Geschichte ein Vorstandsressort im Ausland angesiedelt hat. Vorstandsmitglied Lisa Davies, zuständig für das gesamte Energiegeschäft des Münchner Konzerns, sitzt just in Houston.

Lustig machte sich Kaeser über die deutsche Energiewende. Wer je die Energiepolitik eines Landes bestimmen müsse, müsse einfach das Gegenteil von dem machen, was in Deutschland gemacht werde. Deutschland subventioniere erneuerbare Energie mit einer Garantiesumme von knapp 500 Milliarden Euro. Er hoffe, dass es wenigstens gelinge, den Export von Windkraftanlagen zu beflügeln. Die Förderung von Photovoltaik in Deutschland findet er so sinnvoll wie den Anbau von Ananas in Alaska.

119,128

Règlement de comptes à l'Institut national de l'audiovisuel

Par **Enguérand Renault** Publié le 26/04/2015 à 19:00



INFO LE FIGARO - Agnès Saal, PDG de l'INA, est visée par une lettre anonyme dénonçant ses factures de taxis. Elle s'en est expliquée devant son conseil d'administration le 23 avril. Elle s'est engagée à rembourser les déplacements privés.

Après **Radio France**, l'INA. La semaine dernière, un corbeau a envoyé aux administrateurs de l'Institut National de l'Audiovisuel, une entité de l'audiovisuel public, un rapport détaillé des factures de taxis d'**Agnès Saal**, la PDG de l'INA. Cette dernière a remplacé **Mathieu Gallet**, à la tête de l'INA en mai 2014. En dix mois de fonction, Agnès Saal a totalisé une facture de 40.915 euros auprès de la compagnie de taxis G7, dont un peu plus de 7000 euros d'abonnement et plus de 32.000 euros de déplacements.

Ce courrier du corbeau spécifie que ces factures «matérialisent une possibilité d'abus de biens sociaux». Il a été envoyé la veille du conseil d'administration de l'INA qui s'est tenu le 23 avril. Le conseil d'administration comprend une sénatrice, un député, des représentants des ministères de la culture et de Bercy, un représentant de la cour des comptes, des représentants du personnel et des personnalités qualifiées.

En préambule, Agnès Saal a expliqué la situation et a indiqué qu'elle a déjà remboursé une partie des dépenses de taxis relevant de ses déplacements personnels. «En tant que PDG de l'INA, j'ai une voiture de service avec chauffeur à disposition. Mais, comme je ne peux pas le faire travailler 12 à 15 heures par jour ni les week-ends, j'ai également un abonnement aux taxis G7, car je n'ai pas de permis de conduire. Ce dispositif avait déjà existé avant mon arrivée et je l'ai repris», explique la PDG de l'INA.

6700 euros de taxi pour le fils de la PDG de l'INA

Elle a aussi reconnu une erreur. Sur la facture de taxi, 6700 euros sont directement imputables à son fils à qui elle a communiqué son code de réservation. «C'est une maladresse, j'en reconnais la responsabilité et j'ai immédiatement remboursé ces frais.» Reste, pour la PDG de l'INA, à déterminer, dans les 7800 euros de taxis facturés le week-end, ce qui relève des déplacements professionnels de ce qui relève des déplacements privés. «Je suis en train de faire le décompte. Ce n'est pas évident de savoir si une course de taxi pour un événement dans lequel je représente l'INA est professionnel ou personnel», analyse Agnès Saal. «Mais j'estime que l'usage professionnel du taxi pendant les week-end représente environ un tiers ou un quart de la facture», calcule-t-elle. Elle s'est donc engagée, devant ses administrateurs, à rembourser les deux tiers ou les trois quarts restant.

Depuis l'affaire Mathieu Gallet - **qui a été blanchi** par une enquête de l'inspection générale des finances -, la question des frais dépensés par les présidents de l'audiovisuel public est très sensible. Fleur Pellerin, ministre de la Culture, exige une totale transparence et exemplarité des dirigeants d'établissements culturels. Elle a chargé l'inspection générale des affaires culturelles (IGCA) d'une mission pour mieux encadrer et contrôler les dépenses de fonctionnement des dirigeants des entreprises publiques. «Nous demandons la régularisation des toutes les sommes dépensées sur le plan personnel», affirme la rue de Valois qui a également missionné le Contrôle général économique et financier (CGEfi) afin de déterminer les suites à donner à cette affaire.

«La mission de l'IGCA devrait aboutir à la définition de conditions d'exercice similaires pour toutes les présidences, et je m'en réjouis», souligne Agnès Saal. Cette dernière tient à prendre les devants. «En novembre 2014, avant même toutes ces affaires, j'ai pris la décision de réduire le budget 2015 de frais de fonctionnement de la présidence de l'INA de 90 000 euros à 70 000 euros.» La PDG a mis fin aux différents contrats de conseil en image et en stratégie, dont celui de Denis Pingaud qui conseillait Mathieu Gallet.

À son arrivée à la tête de l'INA, elle assure n'avoir pas refait ses bureaux. «J'ai uniquement acheté trois lampes chez Ikéa. Surtout, je passe tout mon temps à Bry-sur-Marne, siège de l'INA, et nous devrions mettre fin à la location coûteuse des bureaux à Paris, rue de Patay». Dans ses précédentes fonctions, à la direction générale du Centre Pompidou, elle assure qu'elle a préféré continuer d'habiter chez elle plutôt que d'utiliser un appartement de fonction qui aurait pu être mis à sa disposition.

119,129

France and labour-market reforms

François Hollande's Rhine journey

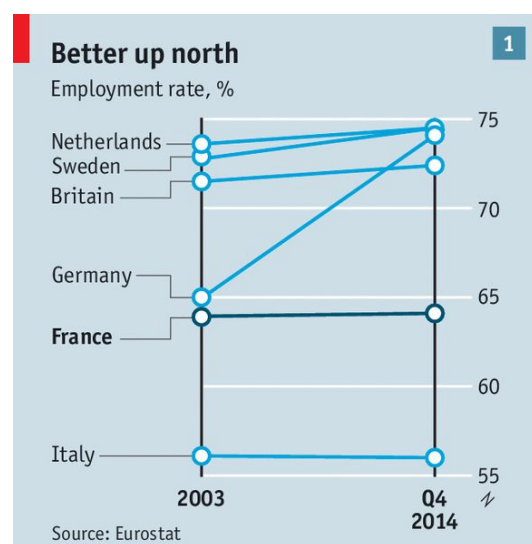
The French president tries belatedly to catch up with other more competitive countries. But his efforts may amount to too little, too late

Apr 25th 2015 | PARIS | [From the print edition](#)

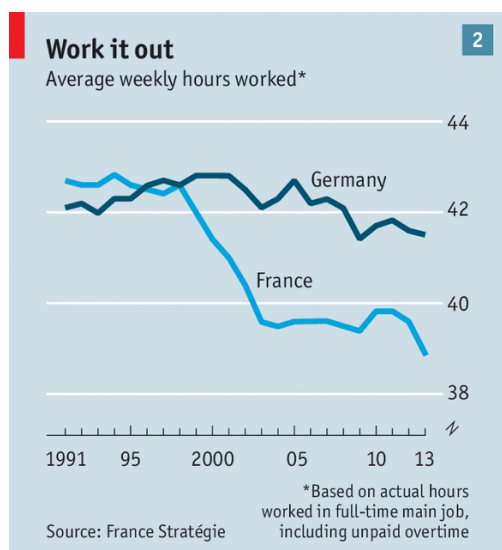


IN NOVEMBER 2003, France and Germany teamed up to bust the euro's stability-pact rules for budget deficits that they had agreed to six years earlier. For three years neither Jacques Chirac of France nor Gerhard Schröder of Germany respected the deficit cap of 3% of GDP. Neither suffered sanctions. But Germany used its fiscal space to become more competitive and loosen its labour market. France, which had just introduced the 35-hour working week, mainly made matters worse.

Now, under François Hollande, France is once more breaching the deficit rules and has, yet again, been given more time to bring its deficit below 3%. The unwritten deal is that this time it will make a proper stab at reform, especially of its labour market. France's labour code, a fat red doorstop of a book, runs to 3,809 pages, 45% longer than ten years ago. The collective-bargaining agreement for hairdressers alone covers 196 pages. "The key challenge", concludes a recent survey of France by the OECD, a Paris-based think-tank, "is to reform the labour market to promote job growth." Yet is this likely?



The contrasting record on jobs across the Rhine is compelling. In 2001 unemployment in France and Germany was comparable, at just under 8%. Today it is below 5% in Germany, but over 10% in France. Although France and Germany have similarly high productivity per hour worked, the French start work later and stop earlier. Too many French youngsters leave school with no qualifications and drift for years on the fringes. The share of young people not in education, employment or training is 19% in France, almost twice that in Germany. In 2003 the overall employment rate in the two countries was similar; today it is 74% in Germany but only 64% in France. Among 55- to 64-year-olds only 47% of the French toil away, next to 66% of Germans (see charts 1 and 2).



Put simply, Mr Schröder, a Social Democrat, made the political choice to get people into jobs, even if only part-time and low-paid, rather than leave them on the dole. His controversial Agenda 2010 measures, including the Hartz labour reforms, may even have cost him the chancellorship in 2005. They shortened the maximum period for receiving unemployment benefit, made it harder to refuse job offers and let small firms shed staff more easily. Combined with wage-moderation deals between unions and employers, the outcome was an injection of flexibility that eased low-wage service-sector job creation, lifted employment and limited job losses during the 2008-09 financial crisis.

On both the French left and right, by contrast, political leaders implicitly accepted high unemployment as a price for giving those in work more security and higher wages. This has created a dual labour market of insiders and outsiders (see [article](#)). Employers are deterred from creating permanent jobs by the uncertainty and costs of shedding them if they have to. So they hire only on short-term contracts, reinforcing precisely the insecurity that the system of job protection was meant to avoid. Over 80% of new hires in France are on contracts of three months or less.

Under Manuel Valls, the reformist prime minister, and Emmanuel Macron, his economy minister, Mr Hollande's government has shifted its stance. There is less talk of subsidised job-creation or raising the already high minimum wage, and more of market incentives. Three years of near-zero growth and worries that unemployment may not drop before the 2017 election have concentrated minds. French employers, Mr Valls has said, are "frightened of hiring" because of labour-market rigidities. On April 19th Mr Hollande said he would make labour courts judge contested redundancies within six months; today's average is 25 months.

How far is the government ready to go on labour reform? Unlike Mr Schröder with Agenda 2010, it is doing lots of small things that make it hard to judge the whole. Mindful of hostility from unions and its own party rebels, the government has decided not to go for one big eye-catching labour-market reform. "We're doing the opposite to Renzi," says one adviser, referring to Italy's prime minister, Matteo Renzi, who has made a splash with a single, more flexible short-term contract. French reforms are parcelled out between Mr Macron, who is already pushing through a law to liberalise product markets, and François Rebsamen, the labour minister. Some planned reforms are being left to talks between employers and unions, even though only 8% of private-sector workers belong to one.

The French ragbag includes a bill, unveiled by Mr Rebsamen on April 22nd, to simplify works councils. This will not abolish "threshold effects", which deter firms from employing more than 49 staff, when rules obliging them to set up separate works councils and health-and-safety councils kick in. But it should reduce the burden, in some cases by

blending the two councils into one. The bill will also merge two back-to-work benefits to encourage (if not force) the unemployed to work.

The government plans to loosen rules passed in 2013 that allow firms in “serious economic difficulty” to renegotiate working hours and pay in return for protecting jobs. Only nine firms (including Renault) have used this. Unions and employers will also discuss ways to make it easier for small firms to hire; they may loosen rules on short-term contracts or strengthen firm-level bargaining. And they must trim the €4 billion (\$4.3 billion) deficit in the unemployment-insurance fund. This could mean reducing the maximum period for which benefit is paid (now three years for over-55s), or reducing payouts (now capped at €6,000 a month). These measures come on top of a cut in social charges of as much as 8%, taking a slice off France’s notoriously high tax wedge on employment (see chart 3).



Economist.com

Mr Macron claims that all this adds up to “60% of what Schröder did on the labour market, and [referring to his product law] more than the Germans did on liberalising goods-and-services markets.” He does not seem cowed by the bruising experience in February of having to force his law through parliament by decree, for want of a guaranteed majority. Indeed, if need be, the government could do the same again in July. It claims that its reforms could create 800,000-900,000 extra jobs and add a cumulative four points to GDP over five years.

It all sounds good. But the twin difficulties ahead are muddle and politics. In a recent report comparing France and Germany, Jean Pisani-Ferry, head of the government’s economic-planning unit, and Henrik Enderlein, a German economist, pointed to the shortcomings of French piecemeal reform. “Partial reforms often fail to provide enough clarity to economic agents,” they wrote, adding that “external perception of French priorities and directions remains blurred at best”.

The best guess is that these reforms are useful steps, but nowhere near as much as France needs to prompt a lot more private-sector permanent jobs. “France could perhaps level the playing-field with Spain, or even Italy, but certainly not with Germany, where liberalisation has gone through the roof,” says Ludovic Subran, the chief economist at Euler Hermes, a credit insurer. The high level of the minimum wage is seen as a taboo, even for the young. Jean Tirole, a Nobel prize-winning economist at the Toulouse School of Economics, says that “at some point, you have to confront the duality of the labour market and the excessive role of judges in severance procedures.”

But this may be the best that can be hoped for, given the political constraints. Mr Hollande campaigned on a promise to squeeze the rich and the banks, not to curb unemployment benefits or reduce job protection. Mr Valls, who has in the past called for such things, took under 6% of the vote when he ran in the Socialists’ presidential primary in 2011. France is never far from another election. Regional polls now beckon in December, and after that the pre-presidential season will begin. So the space for taking political risks is dauntingly narrow.

Yet, if many Socialists are sceptical, the public seems less so. Less than 5% of voters support the Communist Party, the main backer of France’s biggest union. After resorting to his decree, Mr Macron rose in popularity. Mr Hollande may not win friends on the left by letting his government push labour-market reform. But he has little chance of seeing a revived jobs market before 2017 if it fails.

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Labour reforms in Europe

Doing better slowly

Other European countries have moved faster than France on labour reform

Apr 25th 2015 | [From the print edition](#)



ALL countries that are in the euro need flexible labour markets, because they cannot devalue their currencies if they become uncompetitive. Instead they must pursue the stonier path of “internal devaluation” by lowering labour costs. How does France compare with fellow euro members and other advanced economies?

In countries where labour markets are flexible, workers find jobs more easily because, if need be, employers can shed staff. By contrast, countries with inflexible labour markets can find their workforce split between insiders on permanent contracts and outsiders on fixed-term ones. The insulation of insiders allows them to defend their wages and working hours in hard times, pushing any necessary adjustments on to temporary workers. And high taxes on employment inevitably tend to reduce its level: France’s huge “tax wedge”, arising from extraordinarily high employer social-security contributions, is a strong disincentive to new hiring.

An OECD gauge of job protection finds France above the average at the start of 2013. That position is unlikely to have changed much since then, because subsequent reforms have been modest. France’s inflexible labour market explains why so few new hires are for permanent positions, and may also account for an exodus of young people across the Channel and into Britain’s more flexible labour market.

The OECD index also shows that France did little to loosen its overly strict job regulations between 2003 and 2013. By contrast, southern European countries have done a lot more in response to the euro crisis. Portugal has done the most, though its labour-market rules were so constrictive that it remains among the most rigid. Spain, where the labour market has long been notoriously blocked, introduced a reform in 2012 that made life less cosy for permanent staff by giving firms more leeway to get rid of workers on economic grounds and reducing severance pay.

Although the index (see chart) is a useful guide, it has limitations. In Italy it understates the full cost of firing workers, which arises from long legal delays and the fact that reinstatement is the main sanction for unlawful dismissal. Reforms under Mario Monti in 2012 to tackle the block on getting rid of workers were half-hearted. Although Matteo Renzi, the current prime minister, has scrapped the obligation to reinstate staff, the reform leaves public-sector workers untouched and applies only to new private-sector contracts, leaving intact the protection of existing staff.

Flexibility elsewhere matters too. Despite Germany’s high score for job protection, its labour market functions better because its arrangements for collective bargaining have proved surprisingly adaptable, allowing many firms to strike deals with their workforces. Until this year there was no minimum wage, and the Hartz reforms of 2003-05 made it easier to hire young people and part-timers on lower wages. Spanish firms may opt out of collective agreements, thanks to the 2012 reform. By contrast French firms are more bound by the high minimum wage set by the government, which creates a floor, and by agreements between employer groups and unions, even though these represent only a small number of workers.

Product-market regulations that impede competition also protect insiders. On an index for these rigidities France scores uncomfortably high, reflecting the fact that it has made less progress in dismantling restrictions even than hard-hit countries in southern Europe. That is why the reforms being pushed through by Emmanuel Macron, the economy minister, ought to boost employment, just as streamlining heavy-handed judicial processes that snag the labour market also should.

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Charlemagne

British cooks, European soup

The general election on May 7th could decide Britain's place in Europe

Apr 25th 2015 | [From the print edition](#)



A JUMBLE of parties spanning a riotous spectrum of ideology from romantic nationalism to social democracy to parochial populism, thrown into the mix of an unpredictable campaign and none able to win a majority: Britain's general election on May 7th has a distinctly European flavour. That will be even truer after the vote, as the parties scratch together a government. Whatever programme emerges may deviate considerably from all the campaign promises. "Britain has lurched from a paragon of stability to something beyond Belgium," says one Eurocrat.

It is ironic that Britain should learn the vagaries of continental-style politics just as it appears to be drifting towards exit from the European Union. Despite this, Europe seems curiously uninterested in Britain's election. In France and Germany elections can bring EU business to a grinding halt. But now, consumed by crises from Greece to Russia to migration, the EU is paying little heed to the quirks of a grumpy island in its north-west. Election coverage in France and Germany has been muted.

That is a pity, for this election may have a decisive influence on Britain's position in Europe. Should he manage to win a second term as prime minister, David Cameron says he will renegotiate Britain's relationship with the EU and put the results to an in/out referendum before the end of 2017. By the next election, in 2020, Britain could, conceivably, be out of the club, on terms nobody can predict. And that makes other Conservative pledges hollow.

Mr Cameron, who once suggested that voters were tired of the Tories "banging on about Europe", has not pushed hard to make the EU an election issue. (His main opponent, Labour's Ed Miliband, has also seen little advantage in drawing attention to his party's "no-referendum" pledge.) But if he wins, Mr Cameron must move fast. Britain's fellow members will expect him to present his proposals for reform, which have so far remained largely opaque, to an EU summit on June 25th.

Behind the scenes, officials are working furiously to shape both the substance of those demands, from restrictions on migrant benefits to a bigger role for national parliaments, and the form in which they can be secured. Because a full rewrite and ratification of the EU treaties is impossible before Mr Cameron's deadline, the Conservatives' finest minds are debating clever alternatives. In parts of Westminster, the air is thick with

talk of “Danish” or “Irish” options (both countries held EU referendums on the basis of treaty changes promised but not yet ratified).

Can it work? Britain’s hand is reasonably strong, for few of its fellow members want it to leave. A “Brexit” would remove one of the EU’s most dynamic economies and, besides France, the only country with global ambitions. True believers would lament a grievous blow to their European dream. Smaller countries that find Britain a useful bulwark against the tide of integration would feel exposed. Some also fret that Brexit could embolden their domestic Eurosceptic insurgencies. Italy would miss a counterweight to Franco-German hegemony. And so on.

This cluster of concerns is fuelling a British belief, in the words of one worried official, “that everything will be all right on the night”. But Mr Cameron must tread carefully. Countries like France see an EU with a strong single market and competition rules, enlargement to the east and a string of special British opt-outs, and wonder why Mr Cameron cannot understand that he has already won. Officials from Germany and elsewhere also warn against opening the Pandora’s box of treaty change, as other countries pile in with their own demands.

Some of this is posturing, just as Mr Cameron must say he might campaign for Brexit if the talks don’t go his way (he almost certainly would not). But rather as Greek grandstanding has raised the risks of Grexit from the euro, so Britain’s missteps have run its reservoir of goodwill dry. Mr Cameron, notorious for his transactional approach in a club that values long-term relationships, cuts a lonely figure these days. Some have not forgiven his decision to pull the Tories out of the centre-right European People’s Party grouping. Britain’s slow drift from the mainstream may also have reduced the potential pain for others from Brexit. “We’ll do what we can to keep the Brits in,” says a diplomat from another big country, “but to very precise limits.”

Vote Miliband, get Brexit?

So much for Mr Cameron. What of the man who would replace him? Most of Britain’s European friends think its place in the EU would be safe under Mr Miliband, even if they have no idea who he is. But it has become fashionable in London to suggest the opposite. The argument is that, if Labour wins, the Tories, bruised but freed from government, might choose a hardline leader who takes a sharply Eurosceptic turn and may even fight for Brexit in 2020. A weak and divided Labour government, propped up by Scottish nationalists who know that their best hope of independence is if the rest of Britain leaves the EU but Scots prefer to stay, might also be unable to resist pressure for an EU referendum.

Should Mr Cameron stay, on the other hand, he will have every interest in talking up the EU and Britain’s achievements in reshaping it (even if the odd phoney battle must be staged to prove his mettle). He will re-engage with Europe, fighting for such priorities as a transatlantic trade deal. If you want Britain to stay in the EU, in short, pray for a Tory victory on May 7th.

Perhaps. But such crystalline predictions could be a relic of old thinking in Britain, when overall majorities were won, manifestos became government programmes and politics was a game of push-me-pull-you between the two main parties. Today’s political marketplace is messier, its outcomes harder to forecast. Many other European countries have made their peace with this sort of politics. Britain will have to do the same.

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Scottish nationalism

Northern exposure

Poised to triumph in Britain's election, the Scottish nationalists spell trouble for the union

Apr 25th 2015 | [From the print edition](#)



THE general election that will be held in Britain on May 7th is so finely balanced that predictions are foolhardy. Save one: the Scottish National Party (SNP) will triumph. And that spells grave danger for the United Kingdom, including—indeed, especially—for Scotland itself.

After failing to win last year's independence referendum, the SNP might have been expected to collapse. Astonishingly, it has roared back. Through relentless campaigning and exemplary use of social media, the SNP has made fervent supporters out of nationalist sympathisers, many of them working-class Scots who always voted Labour. As a result, it now has 100,000 members from among 5m Scots; the Conservative Party, which draws from all 64m Britons, has only about 150,000. Nicola Sturgeon, the SNP leader, has been the star of the campaign's televised debates. Polls suggest that the "Nats" may win as many as 50 of Scotland's 59 seats in the House of Commons, up from just six in 2010. If (as seems likely) no clear winner emerges, they could well hold the balance of power.

This is a big problem for the Labour Party, and not just because its MPs occupy most of the seats the SNP is poised to grab. The nationalists could also drag it leftward. Ms Sturgeon, who is more straightforwardly left-wing than her predecessor, Alex Salmond, will not prop up a Tory government, and indeed promises to do her utmost to bring one down. She would support a Labour administration. Part of the price, suggested in her party's manifesto, unveiled on April 20th, would be higher spending, particularly on welfare. Part would be the constant demand for favours to Scotland (see [article](#)).

Such informal dealmaking will threaten the legitimacy of government and the future of the union. When the Tories warn of the danger of a separatist party with a finger on the wheel of British government, they are trying to scare English voters away from Labour. But they are also right—and the appearance of nationalist influence could be as damaging as the reality. If Labour holds power with SNP support, every policy will be scrutinised for signs of Scottish favouritism. Labour wants a tax on homes worth more than £2m (\$3m). Since there aren't many of those in Scotland, this will be seen as a raid on the English, with some of the proceeds going to the canny Scots—who already receive much more state cash per head than the English or the Welsh. Repeat that complaint a few times, and you have the makings of a constitutional crisis.

Paradoxically, a resurgent SNP chafing under another Conservative-led government could imperil the union even sooner. Today the Tories have just one seat north of the border. If David Cameron remains in Downing Street, leading an almost entirely English party, the SNP will noisily question his legitimacy. A Cameron government would also raise the spectre of a British exit from the EU after the "in-out" referendum the prime minister promises. Nationalists already insist that Scotland's views on this matter should be considered separately. If Britain does vote to leave, there will surely be another independence referendum, which the nationalists would win.

Just one good thing has come of the SNP's surge. Belatedly, unionist politicians are paying attention to Scottish politics. They have long ignored it, leaving their B teams in Edinburgh while their best operators take top jobs in Westminster. Yet the SNP's record in Scotland offers much to attack. The country's schools are mediocre; the hospitals are protected from competition—and all the worse for that. The Nats boast about free university tuition, yet fewer working-class teenagers go straight to university in Scotland than in England, where they pay.

Not as tough as they look

Most damning, Scotland cannot afford the SNP's plans. This newspaper argued three years ago that Scots would probably be poorer outside the United Kingdom, even with handsome earnings from North Sea oil and gas. Cheap oil has removed the uncertainty. The Scots would now unquestionably be much worse off: the Institute for Fiscal Studies, a think-tank, reckons that this year Scotland's deficit will be roughly double Britain's. Either independence or fiscal autonomy (the SNP's next-best option) would be utterly ruinous. The nationalists are rampant, yet their case is crumbling. Exposing their fallacies is the best way to limit their sway over the next government, whatever its complexion—and to save the union.

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Refugees

Europe's boat people

The EU's policy on maritime refugees has gone disastrously wrong

Apr 25th 2015 | [From the print edition](#)



THE European Union likes to boast that it is a force for good. But in the past ten days as many as 1,200 boat people have drowned in the waters of the Mediterranean. An unknown number were refugees from Syria, Eritrea and Somalia fleeing war or persecution. They perished in part because the EU's policy on asylum is a moral and political failure.

In a hastily arranged summit, under way as *The Economist* went to press, EU leaders set out to do something about the drownings. Before them was a ten-point plan designed to enhance rescues, suppress people-smuggling and spread the burden of taking in refugees. Yet, even if Europe's leaders embraced the plan in full, it would still fall short.

Officials say 1m migrants are camped on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, waiting to embark on a life that is incomparably better than the one they are leaving behind. The Arab world is engulfed in fighting that is likely to last decades and which has set whole nations adrift. Chunks of Africa are prey to sectarian and ethnic strife and to environmental depredation. An enclave of stability and wealth in an ocean of violence, Europe has not begun to grapple with the choices ahead.

Nightmare nostrum

A refugee crisis is hard to cope with because its very existence is a symptom of warfare, persecution or misrule (see [article](#)). You cannot stop the tide of refugees because, this side of Utopia, you cannot impose peace upon Libya and Syria or wish good government on Eritrea and Somalia. You cannot let everyone in, because refugees mingle with people in search of prosperity—and states want to choose their economic migrants, not be chosen by them. On the other hand you cannot keep everyone out, because, after the crimes of the second world war, countries made solemn undertakings never again to abandon innocent people to persecution and conflict.



A detailed look at Europe's refugee crisis

Yet, as well as reflecting a deep malaise in the lands they are fleeing, the plight of Europe's boat people also exposes the failings of countries with a duty to shelter them. In Europe that starts with a breakdown of ethics. The EU is putting only a third as much money and less than a tenth of the manpower into maritime rescue as it did last year. Several countries, including Britain, argued that a high chance of being rescued acts as a "pull" factor which only encourages more migrants. In effect, the EU was proposing to stand back and watch one lot of innocent people drown so as to deter another from following them into boats. That logic was wrong as well as morally repugnant. Even before the recent disaster, the death rate this year, compared with the start of 2014, was ten times greater—and still people have been coming in the same numbers.

European solidarity has yet again been shown to be flimsy. Although UN conventions say refugees are the responsibility of the country where they turn up, allies have sometimes shared the burden. When boat people left Vietnam, a co-ordinated plan eventually resettled over 1m of them across the rich world. But co-operation in Europe has been in short supply. Although leaders negotiate asylum policy at the EU level, they jealously guard their national powers. That way, mindful of public opinion and the threat from anti-immigration parties, they can both cynically deflect responsibility towards Brussels and also avoid having to accept many flesh-and-blood refugees. Last year 626,000 people applied for asylum to the EU (only a fraction of them came by boat); roughly half of the applicants who were processed were successful. France granted asylum to 15,000; Britain to only 11,000. Despite honourable exceptions, including Germany, with 41,000, and Sweden, with 31,000, most countries wish the problem would go away.

The cruel seafarers

Europe's policies are also rife with unintended consequences. A new fence between Greece and Turkey stopped migration across the land border, but led to a doubling in—more dangerous—crossings of the Aegean in the first half of 2014. Relying on merchant vessels to answer migrants' calls for help causes them to switch off their radios, increasing the risk of collisions and the dangers for shipping in distress. Countries shut asylum-seekers inside detention centres for long stretches or prevent them from working in order to make life so miserable that people will seek refuge elsewhere. That wastes money, besides making newcomers harder to integrate.

If the EU is to live up to its values, it must act on many fronts at once, from saving lives at sea to helping countries with the greatest burden. EU leaders are right to boost the rescue mission—but it needs to be much bigger, larger even than the one in operation last year. The EU is also right to take on the people-smugglers. But they will be resilient, as the profits are irresistible and the supply of crew members almost inexhaustible.

Maritime migration is thus a problem to be dealt with on land. UN treaties mean that refugees must travel to the EU to claim asylum there—which is why so many head for the Italian island of Lampedusa, 70 miles (113km) from the Tunisian coast. The best way to stop the boats is for camps to process asylum applications to Europe on the south shore of the Med. If camps are seen to work, refugees will prefer them to the risk of drowning. Setting them up will not be easy. The EU will have to pay north African countries to host them. Asylum-processing must be fast, fair and efficient. The economic migrants who are rejected need to be sent back home. And member states must sign up to their share of refugees—which should be well within the scope of 500m wealthy EU citizens.

Europe cannot put an end to the violence and desperation that leads people to flee, but in the longer run it should do more for its neighbours. Engagement makes sense in itself and may eventually help stem the flow of refugees. If the EU works for a settlement in Libya, the criminal networks may become less entrenched. If it accepts north African produce, it may face fewer north African people. If more of the EU offers help to the 1m refugees in Lebanon, fewer will turn up on the streets of Paris and Berlin. Europe likes to think it is a model for how nation states can work together to make the world a better place. At the moment, the boat people put that idea to shame.

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Greece

On the Gredge

A Greek exit from the euro may soon become inevitable

Apr 25th 2015 | [From the print edition](#)



EVENTUALLY every long-running drama, from “Downton Abbey” to “Dr Who”, feels formulaic. So it is with Greece’s debt saga. For five years it has followed a wearily familiar script of unpayable debts, aborted reforms and 11th-hour compromises that let the country stagger on inside the single currency. That history has lulled many into expecting the usual denouement in the latest wrangling between Greece’s Syriza government and its European creditors. But this is looking ever less likely. Unless Syriza suddenly capitulates—and a meeting of euro-zone finance ministers on April 24th is one of its last chances to do so—Greece will fail to pay its creditors. If that happens, its exit from the euro will be just a step away.

Greece has already restructured its debts once, in 2012. It now owes money mainly to other European governments, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the IMF. These official creditors have slashed interest rates and stretched out maturities, but not enough. With a debt stock of 175% of GDP, Greece will need more relief. Most European politicians quietly accept this. The danger lies in a chaotic default born of brinkmanship. The Greek government has bills to pay and no money to pay them. It is resorting to desperate measures. This week Alexis Tsipras, the prime minister, ordered local-government bodies to move spare cash to the central bank (see [article](#)). That might buy a few weeks. But in the end Greece will not be able to pay its pensioners, let alone its creditors, without a deal with its European paymasters that unlocks new loans.

That seems increasingly unlikely, for three reasons. The first is a deep loss of trust on the part of Greece’s creditors. The euro zone has always had only a faint version of the solidarity that characterises a true union. But since Syriza came to power that has been ripped apart. The stunts and stumbles of Greece’s inexperienced government are a factor. But the bigger problem has been Syriza’s unwillingness, or inability, to name, let alone implement, the reforms that it will undertake in return for its next tranche of money. Once Greece’s creditors might have taken general promises; now they want specifics.

Second, Europeans worry less today about the market consequences of Grexit. Thanks to the 2012 restructuring, the direct effects of another Greek default would be easier to handle because Europe’s banks, the weak link in any panic, are now more insulated. As fears of financial contagion have dwindled, so has European creditors’ appetite for compromise.

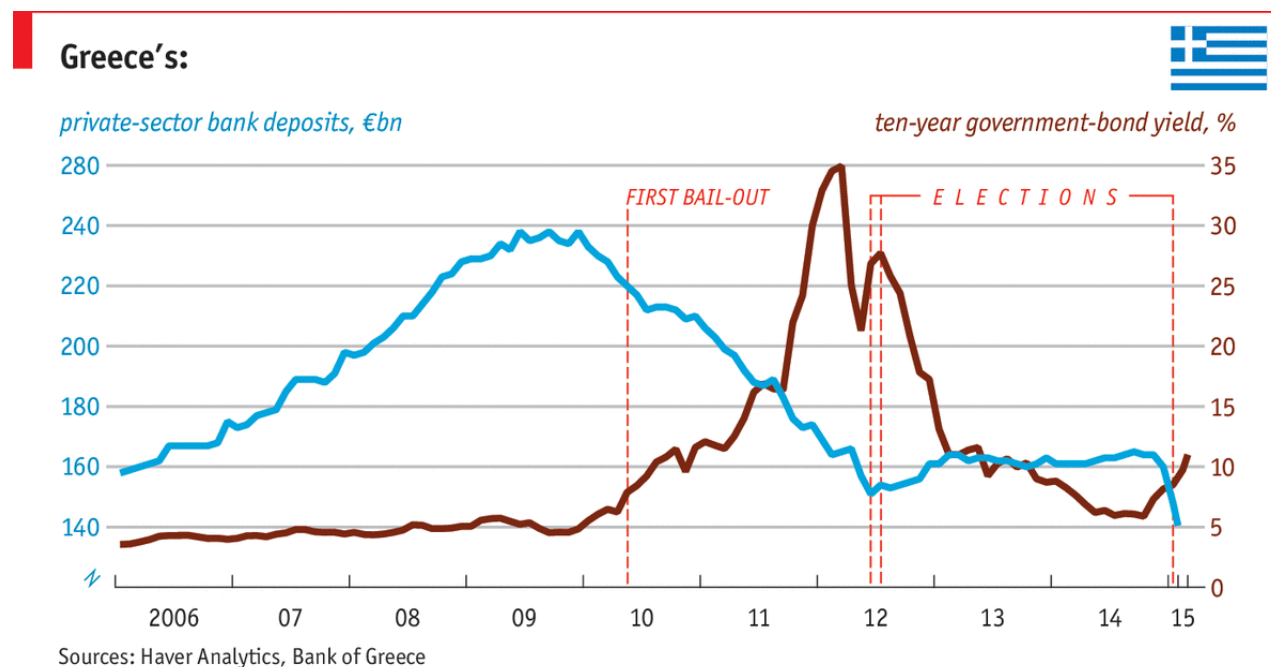
And third, political constraints on both sides make bargaining hard. Syriza was elected on a promise to halt the endless austerity required by its bail-outs. The government has its own factions to control, among them hard-left MPs unprepared to make concessions on privatisations or pensions. Mr Tsipras might need a referendum or

another election to win a mandate to backtrack even if he wanted to. Voters in creditor countries are tired of paying for Greece; politicians in places like Spain that have also been through austerity are hawkish.

Repayments to euro-zone lenders are not due until the 2020s. But if you add all these elements together, it is hard to see how the Greeks can reach a deal that will let them honour their more immediate debts to the IMF and the ECB.

Outward bound

Less clear is whether such a default must lead to euro exit. The two need not go together: Greece defaulted on private-sector creditors in 2012. But stiffing private investors with the support of the euro zone is quite different from unilateral non-payment to official creditors. The decisions of the ECB, which keeps Greece's banks afloat, would be critical. The ECB does not want to be the actor that precipitates Grexit by withdrawing support; and ratings agencies have helpfully said that a missed payment to an official creditor would not constitute a default. But if the ECB itself were not being paid, that would be a hard line to hold. And non-payment would depress the value of Greek banks' holdings of short-term government debt and encourage deposit flight. That would leave the banks needing more liquidity support from the ECB just when doubts about their solvency crystallised. The ECB is unlikely to help then.



Economist.com

There are ways for Greece to defer disaster. It could save hard currency by issuing scrip, a type of IOU, in lieu of payments to its citizens (see [Free exchange](#)). But that would be an open invitation to Greeks to take their remaining euros out of the banks. So the government could impose capital controls. Cyprus has had these for two years without leaving the euro, but that was done in concert with its partners. If Greece ever got to this stage—a parallel currency in circulation, capital controls in place and bail-out cash withheld—the gap between default and exit would be paper-thin.

From the print edition: Leaders

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Linkspartei

Statt Erfolg ein Imageproblem

Die Linkspartei hat es mit ihrer Verehrung von Putin und Tsipras schwer. Nun übt sie ihre Kampagnenfähigkeit und fragt nach der Zukunft.
24.04.2015, von MECHTHILD KÜPPER, BERLIN



© DPA  Gregor Gysi bei einer Pressekonferenz in Bremen.

Der Linkspartei ist es nie gelungen, in größerem Stil Intellektuelle an sich zu binden. Also werden die wenigen, die sich bei ihr und mit ihr zeigen mögen, mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung behandelt. Der Dichter Volker Braun durfte am Donnerstagabend in der Volksbühne – gegenüber der Bundesgeschäftsstelle der Partei, dem Karl-Liebnecht-Haus – die „Woche der Zukunft“ eröffnen. Er las seine „Zukunftsrede“, die er 2010 vor dem Ernst-Bloch-Zentrum gehalten hatte: „In der Zukunft kennen wir uns schon aus“, heißt es darin: „Biete ihr deinen Platz an (Dann jedenfalls ist nichts verloren)“.

Braun stand vorn auf der kleinen Bühne im Licht, auch die Bar hinten im „Grünen Salon“, dem kleinen Veranstaltungssaal der Volksbühne, war erleuchtet. Dazwischen aber saßen die zumeist betagten Gefolgsleute der Linkspartei und versuchten, im Dunkeln einige Notizen zu machen. So kapitalismuskritisch sich die Linkspartei auch gibt, von der eigenen Führung lässt das Fußvolk sich behandeln wie unmündige Konsumenten. Als „Wozu?“ wurde die (Vier-Tage-), „Woche der Zukunft“ milde verspottet. Das Signet, das die Parteiführung für sie ausgesucht hatte, deutete an, wie gering der Anspruch ist, in den achtzig Veranstaltungen etwas Bleibendes zu formulieren: Ein Papierflugzeug, wie es kleine Jungen losschicken, fliegt, die Nase steil nach oben, in die Luft.

„What goes up must come down“, summten schon die Hippies. Und auch die Linkspartei hat erfahren, wie riskant Höhenflüge sind. Nach der Bundestagswahl 2013 zog sie als „Oppositionsführerin“ in den Bundestag ein. Sie hatte 8,6 Prozent der Stimmen, die Grünen 8,4 Prozent. Wie hoch die Fraktion diesen Status schätzt, war ein Jahr später an der „Hetzjagd auf Gysi“ abzulesen. Gäste einiger seiner linksradikalen Parteifreundinnen wollten Gysi zwingen, ihnen einen Persilschein (als nicht antisemitisch) auszustellen, lauerten ihm auf, verfolgten ihn über den Flur, filmten seine Flucht vor ihnen und stellten die Bilder ins Internet. Am Ende gelang es Gysi, sich aufs Klo zu retten. Doch statt den Eklat zu nutzen – wozu in der Partei und der Fraktion etliche bereit waren –, sich von bestimmten Kräften zu trennen, reagierte Gysi lässig, als sei ihm versehentlich auf den Fuß getreten worden.

Gysi ohne Erben

Viel Freude am herausgehobenen Status der Oppositionsführerin hat die Linke-Fraktion in den vergangenen Monaten nicht. Denn seit Putin die Krim annektierte und die Ostukraine in einen Krieg zog, verhält sich die Linkspartei mehrheitlich, als gäbe es die KPdSU und die Sowjetunion noch und als erhielten sie ihre Orders aus Moskau. So zerstritten die Partei oft ist, in ihrem Moskowitertum sind sich offenbar die innerparteilichen Gegner – ob „Reformer“ oder „linke Linke“, ob ehemalige PDSler oder alte westdeutsche DKP-Chargen – herzlich einig. Gysis scherzhafte Versicherung, er werde Fraktionsvorsitzender bleiben, bis er 90 sei, hat an Wahrscheinlichkeit gewonnen. Denn die in herzlicher Feindschaft innig kooperierenden Protagonisten Sahra

Wagenknecht und Dietmar Bartsch – in der Fraktion offen als „Beutegemeinschaft“ erkannt – werden sich Gysis Nachfolge nicht teilen.

Wagenknecht zog sich, wie zuvor schon vom Vorhaben, die Partei zu führen, zurück. Und auch Katja Kipping, die mit Bernd Riexinger seit 2012 die Partei führt, winkte ab: Sie habe kein Interesse an dem Posten. So ist es nun bis auf weiteres egal, ob Gysi oder jemand anderes die Fraktion führt. Die kritiklose Gefolgschaft gegenüber Putin und die kritiklose Bewunderung der verhandlungsfeindlichen Macho-Politik der griechischen Bruderpartei macht die Partei politisch und intellektuell uninteressant. Allenfalls der Mut von Gysi und Riexinger, den Begriff des „Landesverrats“ in den Mund zu nehmen – wenn es um den BND geht –, erstaunt. Gysi ahnt offenbar, wie dünn das Eis ist, auf dem er tritt. Im Deutschlandfunk versicherte er am Freitag treuherzig, er sei „überhaupt nicht antiamerikanisch“ – wie andere Linke. Aber die „Hasenfüßigkeit“ der Bundesregierung sei schlimm – gegenüber den Vereinigten Staaten, versteht sich.

Die Linkspartei meldete Ende 2014 60551 Mitglieder, die Grünen 60329. Riexinger freut sich über die Parteieintritte vieler junger Menschen, im Jahr der Bundestagswahl seien 5000 neu in die Partei gekommen, im Jahr darauf 4000. Der Mitgliederschwund im Osten ist mit dem hohen Alter der treuen Genossen zu erklären. Im Westen aber habe man eine Welle von „Ausbuchungen“ nicht-zahlender Mitglieder unternommen, sagte Riexinger, allein in Nordrhein-Westfalen seien tausend Mitglieder so aus der Partei verschwunden: „Wir haben ziemlich zugelangt.“ Die Karteleichen sind eine Altlast aus der Ära Oskar Lafontaine. Der setzte auf die „Staubsaugermethode“, alle, die mochten, wurden dazugezählt, und mochten sie noch so schräge Vögel sein. Programmatisch bringt weder Gysi in der Fraktion noch die Partei insgesamt die Kraft zu „Ausbuchungen“ auf.

Ihre Partei, sagte Katja Kipping vor der „Woche der Zukunft“, wolle „mehr sein als das sozialpolitisch schlechte Gewissen der SPD und das friedenspolitisch schlechte Gewissen der Grünen“. Und Riexinger sagte, man habe lange von der Kritik an Schröders Agenda 2010 gelebt, doch nun „kommen neue Fragen hinzu“. Zunächst soll die Kampagnenfähigkeit der Partei trainiert und bewiesen werden: Vom 1. Mai 2015 bis zur Bundestagswahl 2017 sollen die Büros der Partei für Nicht-Mitglieder geöffnet werden, die Themen weit über das „Erfurter Programm“ von 2011 hinaus geweitet werden. „Das muss drin sein“, heißt die Kampagne.

Kipping habe sich, sagte sie kürzlich, nicht mit ihrer Idee durchgesetzt, ein kostenloses Schulessen für jedes Kind zu fordern. Beschlossen wurde, folgende wuchtige Forderungen zu erheben: Befristete Arbeitsverträge und Leiharbeit soll es nicht mehr geben. Statt Hartz IV für Langzeitarbeitslose soll eine „existenzsichernde Mindestsicherung ohne Sanktionen“ gezahlt werden. Arbeit soll „umverteilt“ werden, Wohnen und Energie sollen „bezahlbar“ sein. Für Bildung, Pflege und Gesundheit soll mehr Personal eingestellt werden.

Der Sozialismus von morgen

„Die kommende Demokratie: Sozialismus 2.0. Zu den Aufgaben und Möglichkeiten einer Partei der Zukunft im Europa von Morgen“ überschrieben Kipping und Riexinger ihr „Manifest“, das sie am Freitag mit verteilten Rollen vortrugen. Wer meinte, nun versuche die Linkspartei die Flucht ins Feuilleton – „Der Sound des Sachzwanges ist längst zur Parole von Untoten geworden“ –, merkte rasch, wie gebräuchlich die liebgewonnenen Klischees – „eine neue Melodie, die die Verhältnisse zum Tanzen bringen will“ – noch sind und wie vertraut die Gesichter, mit denen man sich umgibt. Der Text des „Manifests“ enthält alle Lieblingsideen und -phrasen von Kipping. Doch wer meinte, sie habe sich nun, da sie den schwäbischen Gewerkschaftssekretär Riexinger zum gemeinsamen Rezitieren gebracht hatte, vollständig durchgesetzt, merkte bald: Alles halb so wild, Arbeitsteilung und friedliche Koexistenz kann es auch in Parteien geben.

Der Linkspartei ist klar, dass ihre Putin- und Tsipras-Verehrung sie davon entrückt hat, als Regierungspartner für SPD und Grüne in Frage zu kommen. Und so stellen sich Kipping und Riexinger in eine Tradition, die sie eigentlich durch eine „andere Tonalität“ beenden wollten, und dreschen fröhlich auf die SPD und ihren laut Varoufakis „faustischen Pakt“ mit den „Profitinteressen“ und den Traum „von einem grünen Kapitalismus“ ein.

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Pourquoi la France ne parvient pas à réduire ses dépenses

Par Marie Théobald Publié le 27/04/2015 à 07:00

Les pays qui réduisent leurs dépenses publiques sont ceux qui choisissent de faire des économies sur des postes bien ciblés, c'est la conclusion que l'on peut tirer de la note d'analyse de France Stratégie sur la réduction des dépenses publiques, publiée ce lundi.

Or, la France est un des pays européens qui a le moins modifié la structure de ses dépenses sur la période 2009-2012 et donc, un de ceux qui a le moins réduit ses dépenses publiques, révèle l'organisme de concertation et de réflexion rattaché au premier ministre. Les revues stratégiques, qui impliquent des choix quant aux dépenses auxquelles il faut renoncer ou sauvegarder, comptent parmi les moyens les plus efficaces d'obtenir des réductions. Une telle revue exige un fort arbitrage qui dépend des préférences nationales et des priorités des autorités politiques.

«Pour qu'une revue stratégique soit efficace, explique Vincent Aussilloux, chef du département Economie-Finances à France Stratégie, il faut qu'elle bénéficie à la fois d'une forte volonté politique et d'un fort degré d'appropriation des administrations concernées. Par exemple, s'il s'agit d'une réduction des dépenses de santé, l'administration concernée sera le ministère de la Santé». L'objectif de réduction des dépenses pluriannuel doit être précis et ambitieux. «La revue stratégique doit pouvoir évaluer tous les champs de dépenses même si elle décide finalement de ne toucher que quelques postes, par exemple les transports et le logement. Ce procédé global permet de faire un choix éclairé entre les différents postes et de définir des priorités, contrairement à la méthode du rabot qui réduit toutes les dépenses dans la même proportion, sans discernement, sans efficacité», poursuit Vincent Aussilloux.

«La méthode du rabot réduit toutes les dépenses dans la même proportion, sans discernement, sans efficacité»

Vincent Aussilloux, chef du département Economie-Finances à France Stratégie

La France a réalisé des exercices de revue de ses dépenses publiques ces dernières années, mais avec des résultats limités: «D'abord entre 2007 et 2010 avec la Révision générale des politiques publiques (RGPP) et, depuis 2013, avec la Modernisation de l'action publique (MAP). Dans les deux cas, les effets de ces revues ont été de faible ampleur. La RGPP aurait conduit à une réduction des dépenses publiques de l'ordre de 11 milliards d'euros, et il est difficile d'estimer les effets de la MAP», indique France Stratégie. Les raisons? «Le faible champ d'application de ces revues et l'absence d'objectifs de la dépense chiffrés et ambitieux», justifie la note d'analyse. Entre 2015 et 2017, la France s'est engagée à réduire ses dépenses publiques de 50 milliards d'euros à travers le Pacte de responsabilité «et il est indéniable que cet effort se fait déjà au prix d'arbitrages difficiles», commente France Stratégie.

Notons que ce ne sont pas forcément les pays qui modifient le plus la structure de leurs dépenses qui les ont le plus domptées. Certains Etats peuvent faire peser le poids de leur ajustement budgétaire sur certaines dépenses déterminantes pour leur croissance potentielle: «investissement en R&D, éducation, formation», énumère le rapport. Le Royaume-Uni apparaît comme un des pays européens ayant opéré les arbitrages les plus importants. Pourtant, ses dépenses publiques n'ont pas diminué significativement entre 2009 et 2012.

Par ailleurs, certaines dépenses comme les retraites ou l'indemnisation du chômage ne dépendent pas seulement de décisions budgétaires mais aussi, respectivement, de la démographie et du taux de chômage.

Entre 2004 et 2007, la France est déjà l'un des pays où les différentes dépenses évoluent de manière proportionnelle sur chaque poste. L'augmentation des dépenses publiques sur cette période a aussi été le fruit d'une augmentation généralisée des dépenses. Plus que d'un arbitrage.

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Paul Krugman's Love Affair with France

APRIL 27, 2015 — Louis Rouanet

In recent years, Paul Krugman has incessantly defended France and its welfare state, even going so far as to pretend that the French economy was in fact in better shape than the British economy. [According to him](#), "To an important extent, what ails France in 2014 is hypochondria, belief that it has illnesses it doesn't." However, except for some Keynesian propagandists, nobody believes that the French economy is not deeply in crisis and it is now more and more obvious that Krugman is wrong.

The UK, on the other hand, [is growing faster](#) than any other major advanced economy this year. Growth has picked up since the first quarter of 2013 to 2.6 percent in 2014 — a seven fold higher rate than for France — and employment in Britain, both in absolute terms and as a share of the adult population, has never been higher. Even wages, which were constantly depressed after the 2008 crisis, has begun to rise again.

As usual, British politicians took advantage of the British economy's good performances to make fun of France. Chancellor Mr. Osborne [has claimed](#): "And which county has created more jobs than the whole of France? The great county of Yorkshire," after the latest UK jobs figures showed employment at a record high. David Cameron recently stated that "Labour will make us as bad as France." French bashing is almost part of the British culture, it is true, but for now, the UK is indeed in better shape than France.

Fiscal Austerity vs. Spending Austerity

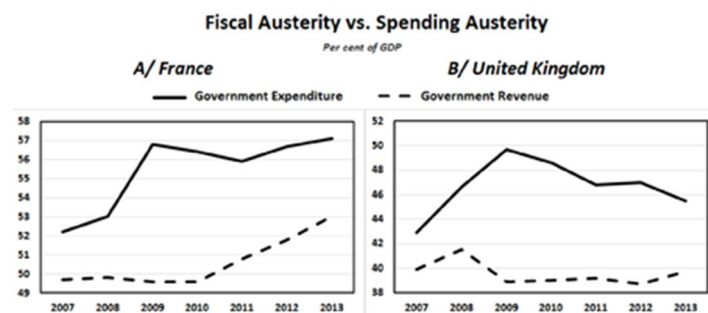
Since 2009, France and the UK have used opposing economic policies. France increased taxes and didn't decrease government expenditures. The UK, on the other hand, decreased government expenditures but didn't increase taxes. Between 2010 and 2013, the UK reduced its structural deficit by more than any other advanced economy (4.7 percent of GDP).

If you follow Krugman's ideas, then this should suggest to you that there was less economic growth in the United Kingdom and more in France. Not very surprisingly, however, the exact opposite happened, and while the French economy stagnates, the UK has mounted an economic recovery.

Public spending in France is now more than eleven points of GDP higher than public spending in the UK. Taxes are also much higher in France and government regulations, particularly in the labor market, are not as problematic in the UK. Thus, it was easier for the structure of production to adapt itself after the crisis in UK than in France.

But while the public sector shrank in the UK, it expanded in France. Therefore, measuring economic progress via GDP — a deeply flawed strategy — underestimates the development of the British economy.

People who are forced to pay for public expenditures via taxation were not expressing actual preferences. Thus, as Dr. Salerno [put it](#): "it is certainly true that a reduction in real government spending causes a reduction in real GDP, as it is officially calculated. But ... the reduction in government spending does not retard the growth of production of goods that satisfy consumer demands and, in fact, most likely accelerates it."



But even if the French economy is as great as Paul Krugman says it is, why then are so many French leaving their country to cross the English Channel? When you want to know if an economy is thriving look how people vote with their feet. If Krugman had done that, he could have seen that it is mainly the French that are immigrating to London, and not the English to Paris. Indeed, the number of French immigrants in the UK has increased dramatically over the past twenty years. The mayor of London, Boris Johnson, likes to say that he is the mayor of the sixth largest French city in the world. There are now more than 200,000 French immigrants in London alone.

Of course, the UK is far from perfect. Public debt and deficits remain too high and much needs to be done, mainly in the very public British healthcare sector. Indeed, health care public spending is still rising — 4 percent in volume between 2010–2011 and 2014–2015. Moreover, the Bank of England has conducted an expansionary monetary policy which could lead to instability and further crisis. There could be, for example, a new real estate bubble in England in the works.

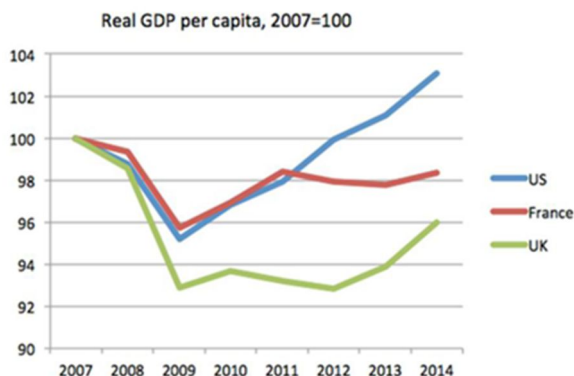
Krugman's Data vs. Actual Data

On November 8, 2013, [Krugman denounced](#) the S&P decision to downgrade France:

I'm sorry, but I think that when S&P complains about lack of reform, it's actually complaining that Hollande is raising, not cutting taxes on the wealthy, and in general isn't free market enough to satisfy the Davos set.

A few days after Krugman wrote those lines, better than expected employment figures were published for Britain whereas France still had [a double digit unemployment rate](#). Already in 2013, it was visible that something was wrong with France's economic policies. But Krugman was convinced otherwise.

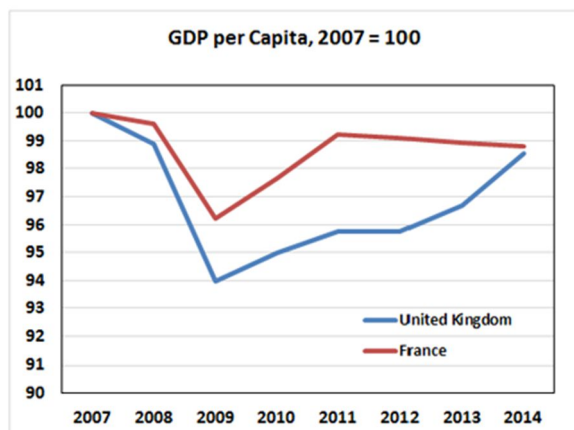
Early in January 2015, Krugman published [another article](#) which aimed at showing the superiority of the French economy over the British economy. And again, it wasn't long before new statistics showed that what Krugman was saying was simply wrong. To sustain his argument, he published the following graph without any sources:



Krugman wrote:

Austerity triumphant. Or, maybe not. Part of this is the growth rate fallacy — no matter how badly an economy has done over an extended period, you proclaim success after a year or two of good growth.

There are two major problems with Krugman's claim. First of all, if you look at GDP per capita growth since 2000, the UK outpaces France. Second, Krugman's graph is wrong. Whether you look at the data of the IMF, the [World Bank](#), or Eurostat, no one matches with his data. The graph actually looks like this:

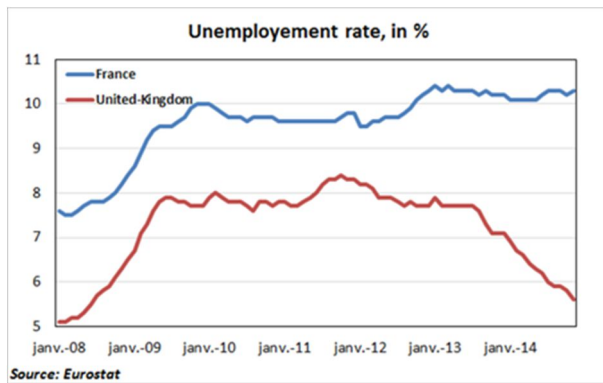


Source: [Eurostat](#)

Furthermore, austerity policies in the UK were introduced only after 2009. Thus, the Keynesian orthodoxy is unable to explain why growth, decrease of unemployment, and austerity took place at the same time. Krugman gave no explanation.

Unemployment

From December 2009 to December 2014, in Britain, the number of employees in the public sector went from 6,370,000 to 5,397,000 whereas *total* employment [went up](#) by about 1,700,000. However, the public and private sector employment series have been affected by a number of major reclassifications where bodies employing large numbers of people have moved between the public and private sectors. But even if you take this into account, the number of jobs created by the private sector is still very impressive. On the other hand, the number of government employees in France never stopped increasing and [unemployment is still at a very high level](#). Keynesianism is completely unable to explain what happened. They expected that austerity would have led to a strong recessionary effect. This is not what happened.



For those not bogged down by Keynesianism, however, the graph can certainly be explained, as can the relatively superior growth levels experienced in the UK. A reduction in the number of government employees is good because that labor becomes available for private companies, and wages fall. This fall makes new investment projects viable. When the public sector shrinks, it becomes relatively more attractive to work in the private sector. Only then can entrepreneurial energies be used to serve consumers on the market place rather than being directed toward *rent-seeking* in the political arena.

The future of France is not as bright as Paul Krugman thinks it is and his recommendations are far from being verified by theory and facts. During a crisis, the best rule the government can follow is, as Rothbard wrote "[don't interfere with the market's adjustment process.](#)" One other thing the government can do however is to slash government spending and taxes. To an extent, this is more or less what was done in the UK, especially when compared to France. As Rothbard [showed](#), "depression is a time of economic strain. Any reduction of taxes, or any regulations interfering with the free market, will stimulate healthy economic activity; any increase in taxes will depress the economy further."