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Staatsfinanzen

Höchster Überschuss seit der Wiedervereinigung

Der deutsche Staat hat im vergangenen Jahr den höchsten Überschuss seit der Wiedervereinigung erzielt. Bund, Länder, Gemeinden und Sozialkassen haben unter dem Strich rund 19,4 Milliarden Euro mehr eingenommen als sie ausgaben.

23.02.2016

Die robuste Konjunktur lässt die Staatskasse kräftig klingeln und beschert Deutschland den höchsten Überschuss seit der Wiedervereinigung. Unter dem Strich nahmen Bund, Länder, Gemeinden und Sozialkassen rund 19,4 Milliarden Euro mehr ein als sie ausgaben. Bezogen auf die gesamte Wirtschaftsleistung fiel das Plus mit 0,6 Prozent somit noch etwas größer aus als die in der Januarschätzung angenommenen 0,5 Prozent, wie das Statistische Bundesamt am Dienstag in Wiesbaden [mitteilte](#). Einen prozentual höheren Überschuss gab es mit 0,9 Prozent des nominalen Bruttoinlandsprodukts (BIP) nur im Sonderjahr 2000. Damals hatte die Versteigerung der UMTS-Mobilfunklizenzen die öffentlichen Kassen kräftig gefüllt. In absoluten Zahlen lag der Überschuss im Jahr 2000 bei rund 18,2 Milliarden Euro.

Im vergangenen Jahr profitierte Europas größte Volkswirtschaft von der guten Lage auf dem Arbeitsmarkt und der Konsumlaune der Verbraucher. Steuern und Sozialbeiträge füllten die öffentlichen Kassen kräftig.

Mit dem zweiten Milliardenüberschuss in Folge - 2014 lag er bei 8,9 Milliarden Euro oder 0,3 Prozent des BIP - ist Deutschland weit entfernt von der Schuldenobergrenze, die sich die Europäer zugestehen (Maastricht-Verträge). Erlaubt ist höchstens ein Defizit von 3,0 Prozent. Zuletzt hatte Deutschland diese Marke 2010 mit einem Minus von 4,2 Prozent verfehlt.

Zum Jahresende hielt die deutsche Wirtschaft mit 0,3 Prozent Plus zum Vorquartal ihren Wachstumskurs - dank konsumfreudiger Verbraucher und staatlicher Ausgaben für die Versorgung Hunderttausender Flüchtlinge. Hier bestätigten die Wiesbadener Statistiker erste Berechnungen. Im Gesamtjahr 2015 legte Deutschlands Wirtschaftsleistung um 1,7 Prozent zu - nach 1,6 Prozent ein Jahr zuvor.

Wachstumsimpulse kamen von Oktober bis Dezember vor allem aus dem Inland: Wegen des Zinstiefs lohnt sich traditionelles Sparen kaum noch, viele Menschen geben ihr Geld daher lieber aus. Weil Tanken und Heizen wegen der niedrigen Ölpreise vergleichsweise billig ist, haben Privatleute zudem mehr Geld für den Konsum übrig.

Auch die Milliardenausgaben von Bund, Ländern und Kommunen zur Bewältigung der Flüchtlingszuwanderung stützen die Konjunktur: Im vierten Quartal erhöhten sich die Konsumausgaben des Staates kräftig. Viele Volkswirte werten die Zuwanderung von Menschen aus Syrien, dem Irak oder Afghanistan als Konjunkturprogramm - auch für 2016.

Allerdings nimmt der Gegenwind für die deutsche Wirtschaft zu. Wichtige Absatzmärkte wie China schwächeln, auch aus den Vereinigten Staaten kamen zuletzt schwächere Konjunkturdaten. Dennoch sehen die meisten Ökonomen Deutschland auch im laufenden Jahr auf einem robusten Wachstumspfad. Bundesregierung und Internationaler Währungsfonds (IWF) erwarten ein BIP-Wachstum in der Größenordnung von 1,7 Prozent.

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Après le «Brexit», le «Franxit» ?

Par [Coralie Delaume](#)

Publié le 22/02/2016 à 19:30

Coralie Delaume est essayiste. Fine connaisseuse du droit communautaire, elle a notamment publié Europe. Les États désunis (Michalon, 2014). Découvrez ses chroniques sur son [blog](#).

Allons bon: voilà que la perfide Albion nous ferait «du chantage». Après le sommet européen de la fin de semaine dernière et l'accord anti-**Brexit** conclu entre [David Cameron](#) et ses partenaires, certains semblent découvrir tout à la fois que l'Union européenne n'est pas une entité unifiée mais une collection d'États membres, que tous n'ont pas les mêmes intérêts ni les mêmes traditions politiques, que les rapports entre nations sont la plupart du temps des rapports de force, que le meilleur moyen d'obtenir des concessions reste encore de montrer les muscles, et que.... et que les Britanniques ont un rapport distant au processus d'intégration européenne.

Ce n'est ni nouveau ni illogique, c'est simplement Britannique. Nos voisins d'outre-Manche ont toujours fait ainsi. Ils ont toujours eu un pied dans l'Europe et un pied à côté, soucieux de ménager la chèvre et le chou sans jamais s'en cacher. Ils sont montés à bord du Titanic européen bien avant que celui-ci ne percute l'iceberg, et ils ont embarqué dans un unique but: profiter du grand marché. Sans jamais envisager quelque union politique ou «saut fédéral» que ce soit, ce qui est bien leur droit. En revanche, il eût été de notre devoir, à nous Français, de ne pas tout leur céder. On n'était pas obligé d'accepter la libéralisation, la dérégulation de tout et de toute chose.

On les a pourtant acceptées. Mieux, on les a encouragées, et pas qu'un peu! On l'a oublié depuis mais l'Acte unique, traité européen qui vient tout juste de fêter son [trentième anniversaire](#), doit beaucoup à la coopération joyeuse d'un Britannique, lord Cockfield, et d'un Français, Jacques Delors. C'est au premier, ami personnel de Margaret Thatcher alors commissaire chargé du Marché intérieur, que le second, président de la Commission européenne, confia la rédaction du Livre blanc sur le marché unique. Jacques Delors aimait beaucoup cet Anglais «à l'esprit clair, à la réplique qui fait mouche et qui ne s'en laissait pas compter» (Jacques Delors, Mémoires, Plon, 2004 - p.204). Il aimait à travailler avec lui, et lui laissa la bride sur le cou pour rédiger l'étude préparatoire à la conception de l'Acte unique, texte de février 1986 qui libéralisa la circulation des personnes, des marchandises et... des capitaux. On s'étonne aujourd'hui que les conservateurs Britanniques défendent «la City»? Quel scoop en effet!

A sa façon, Delors la défendit aussi, la City. La circulation sans entrave de la fortune, il aimait ça, l'apôtre. Pour peu bien sûr que ses effets dévastateurs soient atténués par la mise en place collatérale de ce qu'on nomma «l'Europe sociale», soit un peu de charité de dame patronnesse à partager entre aux futurs laissés pour compte d'une Europe de l'argent.

Les Britanniques sont résolus à défendre bec et ongles leurs intérêts. Une pratique tombée en désuétude depuis si longtemps de ce côté-ci du Channel, que l'on n'en revient pas, et qu'on appose un peu vite l'étiquette « égoïsme national » sur ce qui n'est rien d'autre qu'une attitude normale.

Comme il le raconte dans ses *Mémoires*, le président français de la Commission se démena comme un diable pour que le Livre blanc de Cockfield soit validé par le Conseil européen de Milan de juin 1985. Et il dut mouiller la chemise, car à ce même Conseil, Français et Allemands avaient amené en douce un projet concurrent. Or ce projet se trouvait être une copie presque conforme du plan Fouchet promu au début des années 1960 par le général de Gaulle, projet d'Europe confédérale et non supranationale, projet qui faisait la part belle à la coopération intergouvernementale en matière de politique étrangère et de Défense, en lieu et place d'une intégration économique de type supranational ayant vocation à saper la souveraineté des États membres. Ah, il

fallut bien de l'ardeur pour obtenir la victoire de l'Europe thatchérienne sur l'Europe gaullienne! Jacques Delors l'emporta, et il en garde une tendresse appuyée pour le fruit de sa bataille. *«J'ai dit souvent par la suite que l'Acte unique était mon traité préféré. C'est aussi parce que ce traité n'a pas un pouce de graisse»*, raconte-t-il encore dans ses Mémoires (p.227). Pas un pouce de graisse en effet, et de solides jalons posés pour une future Europe de vaches maigres.

Sans doute les Français regretteraient-ils un peu tout cela, si toutefois ils s'en souvenaient. Les Britanniques, eux, se souviennent et sont déterminés à continuer. Ils viennent d'en administrer une nouvelle fois la preuve: ils sont résolus à défendre bec et ongles leurs intérêts. Une pratique tombée en désuétude depuis si longtemps de ce côté-ci du Channel, que l'on n'en revient pas, et qu'on appose un peu vite l'étiquette «égoïsme national» sur ce qui n'est rien d'autre qu'une attitude normale.

Bien sûr, on peut ne pas goûter la politique - économique notamment - menée par David Cameron et par son parti. Bien sûr, on a le droit de ne pas s'ébaudir devant par le caractère inégalitaire de la société anglaise. Mais enfin, que les Tories ne soient pas à proprement parler des marxistes-léninistes n'est pas une immense découverte. Quoiqu'il en soit, ce jugement appartient avant tout aux citoyens du pays, qui ont la chance d'avoir le choix. De fait, en résistant au processus de dépossession supranationale, Londres a su se laisser des marges de manœuvre et préserver sa souveraineté nationale. Et l'avantage, quand un peuple est souverain, c'est qu'il a le droit de décider lui-même de sa destinée. Rien n'empêchera à terme les électeurs britanniques, s'ils sont mécontents des politiques actuellement conduites en leur nom, de renvoyer Cameron à ses chères études et de confier le pouvoir à Jeremy Corbyn par exemple. Celui-ci défendra sans doute un peu moins la City, mais pas forcément beaucoup plus l'Union européenne, dont il n'est pas connu pour être un zélateur.

L'opportunité donnée aux électeurs de faire le bilan d'étape d'une appartenance européenne décidée dans les années 1970, et de s'offrir une bifurcation si le bilan ne les convainc pas.

Le choix donc. La possibilité pour la communauté des citoyens d'ouvrir un débat démocratique qui sera sanctionné par un référendum. C'est ce qui compte dans cet affaire de «Brexit» - ou de «Brex-in». L'opportunité donnée aux électeurs de faire le bilan d'étape d'une appartenance européenne décidée dans les années 1970, et de s'offrir une bifurcation si le bilan ne les convainc pas. La possibilité de changer de politique, de décider que l'avenir peut, à un moment ou à un autre, prendre ses distances d'avec le passé, c'est cela la démocratie.

On peut être mécontent des résultats du «chantage» anglais, et appréhender les résultats du référendum qui se tiendra le 23 juin. D'autant que la France n'a pas intérêt pour sa part à voir partir Londres demain, les pays de l'Est après-demain et pourquoi pas la Grèce le surlendemain. Cela nous laisserait plantés comme des jones au cœur de l'élément le plus difficile à détricoter, c'est-à-dire une zone euro dominée par l'Allemagne et engluée dans la déflation.

Mais encore une fois, en démocratie on a toujours le choix. Alors, à quand une renégociation avec nos partenaires des termes de notre engagement? A quand la défense effective de nos intérêts nationaux? A quand un grand débat démocratique suivi d'un référendum pour ou contre le «Franxit»? Qui nous contraint à renoncer à ce droit imprescriptible au «chantage», que nous devons au fait d'être un pays, tout simplement? Qui, pourquoi, et surtout, jusqu'à quand?

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• [REVIEW & OUTLOOK](#)

Europe Sputters Some More

The cost of ignoring Mario Draghi's pleas for reforms.

Feb. 22, 2016 7:18 p.m. ET

Investors are casting hopeful glances at the [European Central Bank](#) ahead of next month's policy meeting, waiting to see what monetary rabbits President [Mario Draghi](#) might next pull out of his hat. Good luck with that. For a more clear-eyed view of **the unmagical truth of the eurozone economy**, they might look instead at a Purchasing Managers' Index released on Monday.

Survey results compiled by economic data firm Markit finds that **economic activity across the eurozone in February increased at its slowest rate since January 2015**, with the index at 52.7 compared to 53.6 in January; a reading above 50 on the scale signals growth. **Manufacturing is the most glaring weak spot, at 51 compared to a 53 for services, both because the downturn there is more severe than the services slowdown and because the weak euro engineered by ECB President [Mario Draghi](#) was supposed to be a boost for exporting industries.**

The country-level results Markit released also are instructive. **[France could be headed toward a recession, with its output survey falling to a 13-month low of 49.8, signalling a contraction.](#)** Perhaps companies are waiting for [François Hollande](#) to back his talk of economic revival with action. Until the Socialist President does, there's no evidence France will be able to break out of its usual stagnation.

German business activity also slowed to the lowest overall growth rate in seven months, with activity in manufacturing barely in positive territory at a 15-month low. **Despite the putative boost of a weak euro, the export engine that's supposed to be powering a eurozone recovery is sputtering.**

[Germany remains one of the strongest eurozone economies, thanks to the labor reforms of a decade ago and its efficient manufacturers.](#) But in Europe, "strong" still means growth of only 1.7%, Germany's level for last year, and these survey results are a reminder of how fragile even the German economy can be.

All this marks a further retreat from last summer's enthusiasm as the ECB's large new bond-purchase program, or quantitative easing, got underway. Instead, QE without accompanying policy reforms such as looser labor-market rules and liberalized product markets is losing traction fast. Only those reforms could boost European resilience in the face of global developments such as China's slowdown that weigh on growth.

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Le Monde.fr

Le Monde.fr

mardi 23 février 2016

Un Parti socialiste au bord de la rupture

Michel Noblecourt, éditorialiste au « Monde », observe que le PS ne se reconnaît pas dans son premier ministre et qu'il s'identifie de moins en moins à son président.

Le symbole est lourd de sens. Pour la première fois depuis 1993, le Parti socialiste ne tiendra pas son université d'été, du 26 au 28 août, à La Rochelle (Charente-Maritime) mais à Nantes (Loire-Atlantique). Pour son premier secrétaire, Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, il s'agit d'illustrer sa stratégie de «*dépassement*» du PS autour d'une «*alliance populaire*». Celle-ci vise à fédérer «*par le bas*», en dehors des appareils partisans, «*des écologistes, des socialistes, des démocrates, des radicaux et surtout des citoyens*». Le 15 décembre 2015, au lendemain des élections régionales, M. Cambadélis avait même appelé «*à la rupture avec le parti qui a été constitué à Epinay*» en 1971. Deux mois après, le PS semble bel et bien au bord de la rupture avec ses militants, avec le reste de la gauche, voire avec son gouvernement et même son président.

Pour conduire ce «*dépassement*», M. Cambadélis est à la tête d'un parti très affaibli. Lors du dernier congrès, que tout le monde a oublié, en mai 2015 à Poitiers, le PS revendiquait 131 000 adhérents, une perte de 40 000 en trois ans, bien loin de l'objectif de 500 000 membres en 2017. Mais seuls 65 432 avaient voté sur les motions, soit la plus faible mobilisation de son histoire. Depuis 2012, à travers les élections municipales, départementales et régionales, le parti a perdu un gros tiers de ses élus. Plusieurs fédérations sont en survie artificielle, notamment celles qui ont longtemps été les plus puissantes, le Nord et les Bouches-du-Rhône, qu'on appelait dans le jargon socialiste «*les Bouches-du-Nord*». Plus grave encore, les militants désertent les débats dans les sections comme s'ils ne se sentaient plus concernés par leur parti. «*Camba essaie de faire des choses, note un dirigeant, mais dès qu'il sort la tête de la tranchée, il prend un obus.*»

Avec le reste de la gauche, la rupture semble de plus en plus irréversible. Le débat sur une hypothétique primaire, lancé en dehors du PS, l'illustre. Dans *Le Journal du dimanche* du 21 février, M. Cambadélis se prononce de nouveau en faveur d'un tel scrutin, jugeant qu'«*il serait plus efficace qu'il y ait une candidature unique de la gauche*». Il évoque même une date, «*en décembre ou janvier*». Mais plus il défend la primaire, plus il démontre qu'elle est chimérique. «*Il faut que tout le monde s'engage à soutenir le vainqueur, énonce-t-il. Nul ne peut soutenir un autre candidat si le vainqueur ne lui plaît pas, c'est le principe d'une primaire.*». Même si le Parti communiste admet que François Hollande puisse concourir - il serait exonéré, précise «*Camba*», de façon baroque, de l'«*obligation de participer à tous les débats*» ...-, il n'y a aucune chance qu'il se range derrière sa bannière si d'aventure il l'emportait.

Prise de distance

Vis-à-vis du gouvernement, on assiste à une série de ruptures. La plus grave est intervenue dans le débat sur la déchéance de nationalité qui a accru sensiblement le nombre de frondeurs. Non seulement M. Cambadélis n'a pas réussi, comme naguère M. Hollande, à faire la synthèse, mais lors du vote sur la révision constitutionnelle, le 10 février, 119 députés socialistes sur 287 ont voté contre ou se sont abstenus. L'avant-projet de loi de Myriam El Khomri sur le droit du travail, qu'on peut pourtant difficilement réduire à un simple copier-coller des revendications du patronat et de la droite, est une autre fracture. C'est la première fois, que le premier secrétaire va jusqu'à déclarer qu'il ne le votera pas «*en l'état*» et appelle, audia pason de la CFDT

et de plusieurs ministres, dont Jean-Marc Ayrault, à un sérieux rééquilibrage avec moins de flexibilité et plus de sécurité.

«Le PS s'est placé dans une situation vis-à-vis de son gouvernement qu'il n'a jamais connue depuis 1971», souligne un hiérarque socialiste. Sous le règne de François Mitterrand, il grognait parfois mais suivait toujours. Sous le gouvernement de Lionel Jospin (1997-2002), il se faisait entendre par la voix de son premier secrétaire, François Hollande. Aujourd'hui, il s'autonomise et revendique même, comme l'a fait M. Cambadélis dans le JDD, de ne pas être son «porte-parole». Cette prise de distance se retrouve pour la présidentielle. Le PS veut *«innover, en créant un champ d'idées et de débats»*, à travers neuf cahiers et conventions. Mais il a renoncé à élaborer un programme clés en main pour son candidat, «Camba» ayant expliqué, le 6 février, qu'il ne voulait pas *«rejouer la pièce des élections précédentes où le temps passé à discuter et à se disputer (...) est inversement proportionnel au temps que le candidat passe à le lire et à le reproduire»*.

Le PS ne se reconnaît pas dans son premier ministre, que certains soupçonnent de vouloir «casser» avec M. Hollande, et il s'identifie de moins en moins à son président qui hésite avant de répondre qu'il est toujours *«de gauche»* ... *«La gauche du réel n'a pas de leçons à recevoir de la part des théoriciens nostalgiques d'une gauche idéaliste qui, juchée sur l'Aventin des certitudes, regarde avec mépris la gauche de gouvernement qui agit sur le concret de la vie de ses concitoyens»*, écrit François Rebsamen dans *le Monde* du 23 février. L'ancien ministre du travail ne pense pas qu'à la gauche de la gauche. Pour lancer son appel, fin mars, sur l'alliance populaire, M. Cambadélis comptait sur des intellectuels et des syndicalistes. L'adhésion de nationalité a éloigné les premiers, la loi El Khomri risque d'écarter les seconds. En avril 2014, juste élu à la tête du PS, M. Cambadélis résumait l'enjeu: *«La glissade ou le renouveau, la dispersion ou le sursaut.»* La crise et la dérive ont pris le pas sur le dépassement. «Camba» est dans la pire situation d'un premier secrétaire depuis quarante-cinq ans.

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La prolongation des centrales nucléaires en question

Par [Frédéric De Monicault](#)

Publié le 23/02/2016 à 18:38

Selon plusieurs rumeurs, la programmation pluriannuelle de l'[énergie](#) (PPE), la feuille de route gouvernementale dans ce secteur, sera communiquée début mars. Avec la publication d'objectifs précis filière par filière (nucléaire, renouvelable...). Mardi, **Ségolène Royal, la ministre de l'Energie, a suscité une certaine excitation après qu'Europe 1 a repris des propos de la ministre selon lesquels EDF pourrait prolonger de dix la durée de vie de ses centrales nucléaires. Pour le moment, cette espérance de vie va jusqu'à 40 ans.**

Première précision: seule l'Autorité de sûreté nucléaire (ASN) peut décider d'une telle orientation. L'Autorité, qui examine chaque centrale au cas par cas, a déjà fait savoir qu'elle ne se prononcerait pas sur ce dossier avant 2018. Reste la question de l'amortissement comptable, un sujet important puisqu'il a un impact direct sur le bilan financier d'[EDF](#). Depuis longtemps, le groupe indique qu'il est favorable à l'inscription dans ses livres de comptes d'une durée de vie des centrales étendue à 50 ans. Mais seul son conseil d'administration peut se saisir de ce dossier, avec bien sûr l'aval des pouvoirs publics. Interrogé mardi sur ces questions, l'électricien renvoie simplement à la publication de la prochaine PPE.

Depuis longtemps, EDF indique qu'il est favorable à l'inscription dans ses livres de comptes d'une durée de vie des centrales étendue à 50 ans.

EDF est guetté également sur un autre sujet, à savoir l'insuffisance de provisions pour le démantèlement de ses sites nucléaires - selon un rapport de la Commission européenne divulgué mardi par *Les Échos*. Dans l'entourage d'EDF, on conteste cette interprétation car le système français d'actifs dédiés à ces provisions semble - selon l'entreprise - le dispositif à la fois le plus contraignant et le plus sécurisé.

Actuellement, pour faire face aux enjeux du démantèlement, EDF peut s'appuyer sur 23 milliards d'euros d'actifs dédiés (dont notamment 8 milliards d'euros d'actions diversifiées et 6 milliards d'euros d'obligation) qui ont une rémunération annuelle au cours des dernières années de 6%. Ces actifs dédiés couvrent entièrement le montant provisionné par EDF pour faire face au démantèlement du parc et à la gestion des déchets. Côté français, on s'étonne que le modèle anglais soit cité en référence alors que toutes les dépenses futures sont transférées. **Quant au modèle allemand, lui aussi mis en valeur par la Commission, il ne repose que sur les actifs industriels de l'entreprise.**

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/20/opinion/hats-off-to-the-circumflex.html?ref=international&_r=0&mtref=www.nytimes.com&gwh=62DB583C1D8C50D9C20BB8D367FE3715&gwt=pay&assetType=opinion

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edit

Hats off to the circumflex

By KEITH HOUSTON is the author of "Shady Characters" and the forthcoming "The Book: A Cover-to-Cover Exploration of the Most Powerful Object of Our Time."

22 février 2016

[International New York Times](#)

For me, learning French a quarter-century ago at high school in Scotland, the circumflex that perched atop certain vowels (ê) was an enigma. It lacked the flamboyance of the accent aigu (é) or accent grave (è), modifying pronunciation so subtly I could barely discern it. Nor did it possess the utility of the tréma, which divided vowel sounds in two (aï). **When I finally found out that the circumflex stood in for a discarded letter S, everything clicked into place: Opaque words like bête, coût and huître now morphed into their English equivalents before my eyes, resolving themselves into “beast,” “cost” and “oyster.”**

“Aha,” I thought. “That’s handy.”

As I stumbled onward through my French textbook, on the other side of the English Channel the venerable Académie Française was in the throes of a rather more significant exercise. Guardian of the French language since 1635, the academy in recent times has gained a reputation as being out of touch — and so, **when it issued recommendations in 1990 for the “rectification” of about 2,400 words, they did not stick.** Week-end should become weekend, said the academy to anyone who would listen. Oignon (onion) would be better off as ognon. Paraître (to appear) had no need for its silent circumflex. **But no one was listening, and all of this was quickly forgotten.**

Now, though, the academy’s reform has surged back to life. In November, the French government belatedly decided to revive the 1990 proposals, prompting educational publishers to announce new editions of their standard works; from there, the story snowballed into the biggest French language controversy since the advent of “freedom fries.” And though the academy’s tone-deaf spelling changes and hyphen cull have raised hackles, **what has become most apparent is that the French really, really love the circumflex.**

Aptly for a mark that commemorates lost letters, the circumflex started life as a mnemonic for the ancient Greeks. Sometime during the third century B.C., **Aristophanes of Byzantium**, chief scholar at the library of Alexandria, created a series of marks with which to record the complex intonations of spoken Greek. His acute (´) and grave (`) accents signaled rising and falling tones respectively, while a third mark, a combination of the first two (ˆ), marked either a longer vowel or a rise and fall in pitch. Aristophanes called it the perispomenos (bent around), after its shape. The Romans translated that to circumflexus.

The circumflex has prospered since then. From ancient Greek and Latin, it made its way into other languages as a symbol of lengthened vowels or omitted letters, and today it hovers over anointed vowels in Romanian, Turkish, Slovak, Portuguese and Vietnamese. (An outlier, Esperanto places the circumflex above consonants.) English is not quite so favored, and the circumflex is an infrequent visitor to these shores. **An American might enjoy a tête-à-tête or complain about a bête noire; a Brit might stretch to eating a crêpe at a fête or seeking a différent rôle at work.**

France, the source of most of our circumflex-bearing loan words, took Aristophanes’ little mark to heart. **It was the Académie Française that popularized the use of the mark in 1740 when it removed the so-called**

pre-consonantal S from a host of Old Latin words and added the circumflex to create **hôpital, hôtel, château and more**. The circumflex is also used in a handful of cases to distinguish homophones: du (of) is pronounced the same as dû (due), but the circumflex delivers readers from confusion. **Either way, for many French writers the circumflex is as much a badge of honor as it is a diacritical mark.**

All of which brings us back to the recent uproar over the circumflex's rough treatment. Arrêt! went the cry when the news broke, and **a protest hashtag was coined immediately: #JeSuisCirconflexe.**

Yet the plight of the circumflex is less dire than it at first appeared. The urgency leaked out of the debate when it emerged that **the academy's ruling was older than most Instagrammers, and a closer reading of the changes revealed that the mark was to be dropped only from î and û, where it makes no difference whatsoever to pronunciation. Even then, homophones such as du/dû would be spared.**

Ultimately, the revelation that the academy, the government and the textbook publishers **all consider the changes to be optional** — the sentiment had been buried under the initial avalanche of indignation — **exposed the whole affair as little more than a tempête in a teapot.** A week on from the initial reports of its death, the defenestration of the circumflex had been averted before it even began. Francophiles, typographers and spelling sticklers may justifiably rejoice: **The circumflex is in no danger of being tossed out the fenêtre any time soon.**

141,10

[ECONOMY](#)

[CENTRAL BANKS](#)

SNB's Jordan: Central Bankers Must Constantly Assess Effects of Their Policies

'Effects of monetary policy measures can wane with duration and dosage,' says SNB Chairman Thomas Jordan

By [BRIAN BLACKSTONE](#)

Feb. 23, 2016 6:20 a.m. ET

ZURICH—Central bankers must continuously assess the effects of their monetary policies which can weaken over time, the head of Switzerland's central bank said Tuesday.

“Despite the expanded set of monetary policy instruments available, **the options are not unlimited**,” said Swiss National Bank Chairman [Thomas Jordan](#) in prepared remarks to a conference in Frankfurt.

“The effects of monetary policy measures can wane with duration and dosage,” Mr. Jordan said, and the use of unconventional measures carries potential costs.

“The cost/benefit ratio of unconventional monetary policy instruments must be continually reassessed,” he said. “If an instrument is no longer having the desired effect after a change in prevailing conditions, monetary policy should be adjusted accordingly.”

Switzerland is among a growing number of countries that **have pushed interest rates into negative territory**. Others include **Denmark, Sweden, the eurozone and Japan**. Switzerland, which isn't a member of the euro, is highly sensitive to developments **in the eurozone because the region is a major destination for Swiss exports**.

The [European Central Bank](#) is expected by many analysts to reduce its -0.30% deposit rate when it meets on **March 10**. **If this leads to a significant weakening of the euro, then the SNB could come under pressure to reduce its own -0.75% deposit rate in a bid to weaken the franc**. The SNB meets next on March 17.

In January 2015, the SNB abandoned a ceiling it had maintained for more than three years on the Swiss franc's value against the euro. This led to an immediate jump in the franc's value against the euro, though the franc has weakened somewhat since and traded at around 1.0944 against the euro at 1045 GMT Tuesday.

Still, “the Swiss franc remains considerably overvalued against the euro in real terms,” Mr. Jordan said.

141,11

World

U.K.'s 'Brexit' Referendum Will Leave Deep Scars

Even if David Cameron does win, there will be no return to the status quo ante, Simon Nixon writes

[Simon Nixon](#)

22 février 2016

[The Wall Street Journal Online](#)

It is just nine months since [David Cameron](#) won a remarkable election victory. Yet the U.K. prime minister will be out of a job in four months if he fails to persuade the British public to back his campaign to keep Britain in the [European Union](#) in the referendum that he has now confirmed will be held June 23.

Mr. Cameron insists that he will cling to office even if he loses. **But defeat would split his party, potentially trigger the breakup of the U.K. and accelerate the disintegration of the [European Union](#).** It is hard to see how any leader could survive such monumental failure.

Mr. Cameron never wanted to be in this position. He tried hard his first three years as prime minister to avoid conceding the referendum but was outsmarted by euroskeptics in his own party whose overwhelming political objective has always been to secure a British exit from the [EU](#), or Brexit. Indeed, Mr. Cameron has been outsmarted by euroskeptics at almost every turn since he became leader of the Conservative Party, from his earliest decision to withdraw his party from the mainstream Conservative bloc in the [European Parliament](#) to this recent decision to allow members of his own cabinet to campaign for Brexit—and for his own political annihilation.

Mr. Cameron's most fateful concession to his euroskeptic colleagues may have been his rash promise to reform the UK's relationship with the [EU](#) before holding the referendum. **Whether he ever seriously believed he could secure the wholesale "repatriation of powers" that he claimed in 2013 were urgently needed to make Britain's [EU](#) membership tolerable is unclear.**

But by the time the negotiations began in earnest last year, he had clearly accepted that his chances of unilaterally rewriting the rules of the [EU](#) so that the U.K. could achieve all of the benefits and none of the obligations of membership were precisely zero. He scaled back his demands accordingly. And so the prime minister found himself in the small hours of Friday morning staking 70 years of British foreign policy on securing the right to discriminate against Polish expatriate workers.

Mr. Cameron claims that he secured all four of his negotiating objectives. But his opponents can argue persuasively that these will make little difference to Britain's relationship with the [EU](#)—and in most cases fall short of even his modest demands.

New EU citizens taking up jobs in the U.K. will now have to wait some years before they get full access to British welfare payments and tax breaks. New legal language has been adopted to make clear that the U.K. is now exempt from the creation of a new European superstate—as if that was ever in doubt—and that the interests of its financial services industry should be taken into account in the event of future eurozone integration. But the U.K. will receive no new veto or exemptions from [EU](#) rules and reclaim no powers.

Worse, Mr. Cameron's renegotiation failed to achieve the only objective that actually mattered: to provide a sufficient ladder for the bulk of his party to climb down and back his campaign to keep Britain in the [EU](#).

Instead, the split in the Conservative Party is far deeper than he ever imagined: as many as half of the party's backbench parliamentarians now look likely to back Brexit, including six cabinet members. Most alarmingly, his close friend, Justice Secretary Michael Gove will campaign to leave the EU, as will the super-ambitious Mayor of London Boris Johnson. Meanwhile, Mr. Cameron finds himself caught in a rhetorical trap, forced to keep up the pretense that the changes he has secured are meaningful, at significant cost to his own political capital.

Yet Mr. Cameron may ultimately prevail. Polls suggest the "remain" camp starts the campaign with either a small or substantial lead, depending on the methodology. If Mr. Cameron can move the debate on from his renegotiation, he has some powerful arguments to deploy based on the risks to economic prosperity and national security and the inability of euroskeptics to agree on an alternative to EU membership.

The "leave" campaign's best chance may be to run a populist, antiestablishment campaign, given the strong business backing for EU membership. But many of the most effective antiestablishment campaigners will be lined up in favor of remaining in the EU, including the Labour Party's new left-wing leadership and the Scottish Nationalist Party. In contrast, the anti-immigrant nature of euroskeptical populism may repel as many voters as it attracts.

But even if Mr. Cameron does win, there will be no return to the status quo ante. The referendum will leave scars that may never heal, not just on British politics but on the EU itself. At the heart of the European project is the notion that relations between sovereign states should be based on the rule of law, that big countries shouldn't be able to bully small countries, that all EU citizens should be treated equally.

On Thursday night, as Mr. Cameron threatened to blow up the postwar European order unless the EU changed its rules to help him settle a domestic political dispute, the nature of the European project changed. Mr. Cameron may not have achieved much in his renegotiation, but what he did achieve may prove to be momentous.

Age of European extremes

Predictions of EU boom are as hubristic as those of its bust.

By WALTER LAQUEUR

2/24/16, 5:30 AM CET

Updated 2/24/16, 7:07 AM CET

A song is heard these days in Washington, and endlessly repeated across Western capitals. It begins and ends with the words: Who could have known...

Who could have known that Europe would be in such poor shape? There are variations: Who could have known that the Arab Spring that held such promise would end so badly? Who could have known that so many refugees would try to enter Europe so suddenly?

The short answer is: We could have known. In fact, these things were known but considered, at the time, to be minority opinions.

Not so long ago most European politicians, academic experts and the media all agreed that the European Union was a tremendous success. Perhaps it was the accession of so many countries to the EU that caused such extreme optimism. Yet there was little readiness on the part of nation states to surrender any of their traditional prerogatives and proceed towards greater integration.

There was little progress on the road towards a common European policy on energy or foreign affairs. European defense policy was thought to be unnecessary because military power supposedly no longer counted in the modern world. What mattered now was only the economy and in this respect, as well as in modern technology, Europe was considered a leader.

International organizations once established have a tendency to survive by sheer inertia — even if their purpose is no longer obvious.

This extreme Euro-optimism found its expression in a statement issued by the presidents and prime ministers of Europe who met in Lisbon in 2000 to hammer out a plan of action for the EU economy. The mood did not significantly change in the years thereafter. Even after the economic crisis of 2008 it was considered bad form to express doubts about Europe's leading role in the world.

The crisis was only a temporary setback, many insisted, predicting in countless articles and books that the 21st century would be shaped by Europe: The Soviet Union had collapsed and the European dream of a society more just, civilized, humane and even more prosperous was gradually replacing the American dream. China was far away and often ignored. The whole world was looking up to Europe. The Continent was the model everyone else wanted to copy.

But was this a true image of the real state of Europe or was it a fantasy? True, the Continent overcame the worst consequences of the 2008 economic crisis and its aftermath. But recovery has been agonizingly slow, and its effects are still felt even now, eight years later. Gross domestic product and industrial production in the eurozone both rose by 1 percent during the last quarter of 2015, while unemployment, on average, hovers around 10 percent. (Not to mention a number of countries facing acute bankruptcy unless given massive immediate help).

Those who, like the present writer, expressed doubts about the European recovery were derided as “declinists” and prophets of doom and gloom. If they drew attention to Europe's political weaknesses it was argued that

military strength counted for nothing in the contemporary world anyway. We did not understand that the world had changed completely, our critics said.

Then, quite suddenly two or three years ago, the mood changed

dramatically. The very people who had maintained Europe was still a superpower — probably the only superpower — announced that we were “staring in the abyss.” Europe was not only weak, it was about to collapse. German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that the disintegration of Europe was a definite possibility, as did European Parliament President Martin Schulz. The French prime minister confirmed that it was not a distant prospect but could in fact happen quite soon. Commentators in the academic world pronounced similar opinions. Extreme and unwarranted Euro-optimism had been replaced by its opposite.

The idea of Europe as a political superpower was an illusion. But a disunited Europe would be even more starkly exposed to the harsh winds of today’s world.

And this switch was probably equally unwarranted. Why? To begin with, international organizations once established have a tendency to survive by sheer inertia — even if their purpose is no longer obvious. Secondly, to mention but one consequence of dissolving the EU, a return from the euro to old currencies would be expensive. What would be the economic benefits of a Europe divided? This is not at all clear. It is far more likely that considerable damage would be caused by the imposition of customs and other restrictions.

The idea of Europe as a political superpower was an illusion. But a disunited Europe would be even more starkly exposed to the harsh winds of today’s world, in which military power still counts. If the EU breaks down, it will in all likelihood be a partial and not a total process. It will be followed by a learning process, the length of which will probably vary from country to country. It will depend on the economic damage suffered and on the political pressure to which the various countries feel exposed.

If a new version of the EU comes into being, the original members, like France and Germany, will probably become the founding members once again. They will be joined early on by some East European and Scandinavian countries. Whether the new EU would be eager to have all Mediterranean and Balkan countries in their ranks is not certain.

Some of the founders of the original EU argued in retrospect that it would have been preferable to base the project not on common economic interests (which happened to be iron and steel at the time) but on a common European idea. In an ideal world this suggestion would have made perfect sense. But as past experience has shown, the extent of this common idea, its depth and potential impact should not be overrated.

A future European Union is also more likely to be based on economic interests than common traditions, ideas and emotions. If a new European Union comes into being it will above all have to investigate what went wrong with the present attempt, what mistakes were committed, why it did not stick. These lessons will take time to learn, but they are an obvious precondition for greater success in the future.

Walter Laqueur is a historian and author, inter alia, of “[Putinism: Russia and Its Future with the West](#)” (Thomas Dunne Books, 2015).

141,15

Welcome to a two-speed Europe

Desperate to keep the UK from leaving, Europe is inching towards a dual-track reality.

By [MATTHEW KARNITSCHNIG](#)

2/23/16, 5:30 AM CET

Updated 2/23/16, 11:42 AM CET

BERLIN — Europe’s leaders emerged from last week’s [marathon session](#) with David Cameron hoping they had just avoided a messy divorce.

They may yet discover that staying together can be just as traumatic.

Most of the focus in the wake of the deal has been on whether [British voters will endorse the plan](#) hammered out at the Brussels summit. As important as the deal is to the U.K., its impact on the EU may be even greater. Put simply, the agreement effectively rewrites the rules for member states’ dealings with Brussels.

“What it does is set a precedent that everything is up for renegotiation,” one Brussels official said.

Until now, members have generally been compelled to accept the full canon of EU rules and regulations, notwithstanding a few notable exceptions, such as the U.K.’s right to opt out of the euro.

The [EU’s agreement with London](#) goes much further, however, creating the political equivalent of an open marriage. While the two sides would retain their legal union, they wouldn’t be chained to one another. Such arrangements may sound good in the abstract. In practice, they can prove tricky.

After the summit, [Cameron left no doubt](#) about what the deal would mean: “Britain will be permanently out of ever-closer union, never part of a European superstate ... Britain will never join the euro and we’ve secured vital protections for our economy.”

Welcome to a two-speed Europe.

The idea of a closely integrated core Europe surrounded by more loosely linked affiliates isn’t new. Many would argue the dual-track already exists with the eurozone. But nearly all the non-euro countries, including all EU members in Eastern Europe, are obliged to work towards membership in the currency area. So to the degree that the two-speed Europe exists, it has been, at least nominally, temporary.

The EU’s proposed arrangement with the U.K. would go a step further by institutionalizing the so-called à la carte approach to membership.

Instead of a core group of like-minded countries coming together to embrace closer integration, one country is pulling way, opening the door for others to do the same.

With nationalism on the rise across much of Eastern Europe, it’s not inconceivable that countries such as Hungary and Poland will also ask for exemptions from joining the euro or other aspects of the EU.

Over time, such moves could further undermine public confidence in the EU, eroding its legitimacy.

Two speeds, no agreement

Many die-hard Europeans have long-argued a two-speed solution is the only way forward. Influential European politicians from Germany's [Wolfgang Schäuble](#) to Italy's Romano Prodi have endorsed the idea. The challenge has been in agreeing on what it means.

There's consensus, for example, that the [eurozone needs a finance minister](#). When it comes to defining the role, however, Berlin, Paris and Rome remain far apart.

So far, steps toward a two-speed Europe have been made under duress, such as when the eurozone created a bailout fund. With the common currency under the threat of collapse during the debt crisis in 2011, the then-17 eurozone countries agreed to pool resources to create the bailout fund. The U.K. refused to participate, however, forcing the euro countries to conclude the agreement outside the European treaty.

Unless the Stay camp wins by a wide margin, Brexit will likely remain on the political agenda in the U.K.

Now, desperate to keep the U.K. from leaving, Europe is again inching toward the two-speed reality.

But this isn't the model Europe's idealists had hoped for. Instead of a [core group](#) of like-minded countries coming together to embrace closer integration, one country is pulling away, opening the door for others to do the same.

Even if the British voted to remain in the EU, it's far from certain the agreement would actually work.

One aspect of the deal, for example, would allow London to object to regulatory moves in the eurozone that it believes could place the [City](#) at a disadvantage. But the remedy for such disputes is vague, suggesting they could easily escalate, again pushing the relationship to the brink.

More generally, unless the Stay camp wins by a wide margin, Brexit will likely remain on the political agenda in the U.K., especially given the support the Out camp has received from [popular establishment politicians](#).

Time for integration?

In some respects, a positive outcome would be the perfect moment for the core EU to pursue integration. One factor holding countries like Germany back has been the fear of offending the U.K.'s sensibilities. By clearly defining the U.K.'s position, the deal would appear to remove that obstacle.

The question is whether the U.K. would remain sanguine about a more tightly integrated EU once it became a reality or see it as a threat.

For now, that scenario remains remote. Europe, divided by the refugee crisis and its economic travails, is in no position to pursue "ever-closer union."

Despite those challenges, many Europhiles welcome the deal. The EU has been hobbled for more than a decade by uncertainty over the U.K.'s role and the pace of integration, they argue. Even if more countries follow its example, there is no other way for Europe to move forward.

"There will still be a core. The rest will opt out of certain aspects and won't have as much influence, but I don't think it's that dramatic," said Thorsten Benner, co-founder and director of the Global Public Policy Institute, a Berlin-based think tank. "That's sensible and it's the only way this can work."

141,17

L'Europe face à la montée des partis anti-migrants

Par [Jean-Jacques Mevel](#)

Mis à jour le 05/02/2016 à 19:49

Publié le 05/02/2016 à 19:25



INFOGRAPHIE - De la Suède à l'Italie en passant par l'Allemagne, la vague migratoire massive et la menace islamiste font progresser les partis populistes.

Les électeurs ont une humeur changeante et si les politiciens en place ne répondent pas à leurs attentes, ils vont voir ailleurs. La loi est implacable. Les années de récession et de crise de l'euro l'avaient montré avec l'alternance, rejetant dans la minorité la plupart des responsables politiques du Vieux Continent - à la notable exception d'Angela Merkel. Le choc est encore plus rude, après dix mois de déconfiture collective face à l'exode des réfugiés et des migrants. De la droite à la gauche, les partis traditionnels luttent désormais pour leur survie. Et c'est au tour de la chancelière de subir l'assaut.

Populistes? Extrémistes? Xénophobes? Anti-establishment? Démagogues? Les mots peinent à décrire ceux qui tirent les fils d'un dynamitage qui secoue les classes politiques, jusqu'aux États-Unis [avec les outrances de Donald Trump côté républicain](#). En Europe, les profils sont aussi contrastés, de [la renaissance de la Ligue du Nord en Italie](#) à [la progression foudroyante de Pegida](#), mouvement islamophobe qui prévoit de manifester samedi dans 14 pays, deux ans après son lancement à Dresde. Ou encore de Marine Le Pen, opposante tous azimuts, à Viktor Orban, solidement installé dans son fauteuil de chef du gouvernement hongrois.

Mais tous gagnent dans l'opinion, avec la même alchimie détonante. D'un côté, la peur, nourrie par le terrorisme, l'islamisme et le déferlement de plus d'un million de nouveaux venus [à travers la route des Balkans](#). De l'autre, la contestation d'élites politiques jugées aussi incapables qu'indifférentes, et le rejet de leur entreprise la plus ambitieuse: soixante ans de construction européenne.

L'hostilité aux migrants n'a rien de nouveau en Europe, mais il y a dix ans à peine, elle semblait avoir été évacuée

«Dans la crise de l'euro, ce sont les marchés qui ont imposé la marche à suivre aux gouvernants. Dans la crise des réfugiés, c'est à la fois plus grave et plus simple, constate l'eurodéputé Alain Lamassoure (les Républicains): aujourd'hui, ce sont les électeurs qui dictent leur loi» à la face des partis.

[Les images du chaos migratoire dans les îles de la mer Égée](#), suivies du carnage du 13 novembre à Paris, ont bien servi la propagande. L'hostilité aux migrants n'a rien de nouveau en Europe, mais il y a dix ans à peine, elle semblait avoir été évacuée. En Allemagne l'AfD, récente incarnation de l'extrême droite, semblait proche de l'extinction l'année dernière. Aujourd'hui sa patronne, Frauke Petry, fait scandale en affirmant que la police devrait «si nécessaire se servir de ses armes» pour protéger les frontières de la République fédérale. Le parti est désormais le troisième du pays, d'après les sondages. Devant les Verts. Devant la Gauche radicale.

Finlande

Populiste, plus proche de l'UKIP britannique que du Front national français, le **Parti des Vrais Finlandais** est entré au gouvernement après être arrivé en deuxième position aux législatives en 2015. Son chef, Timo Soini, est ministre des Affaires étrangères. L'arrivée en Finlande dans la deuxième moitié de 2015 de plus de 35 000 demandeurs d'asile a plutôt coté au parti sa popularité, et les Vrais Finlandais sont de plus en plus dégringolés dans les sondages.
AG.

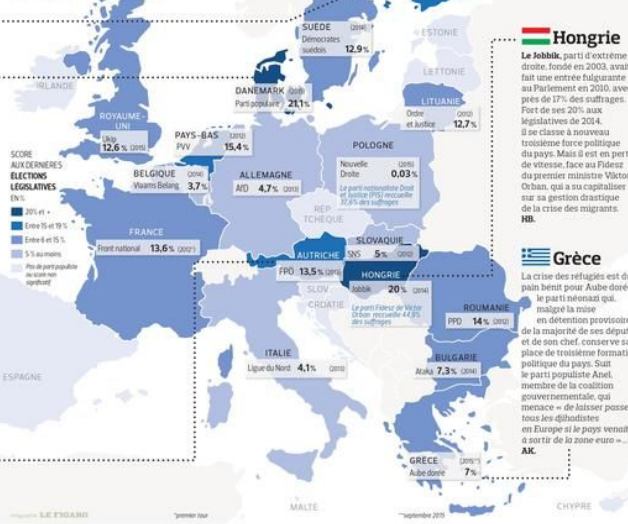
Danemark

Le **Parti du peuple danois (DF)**, avec ses positions anti-immigration et anti-islam, a réussi en 20 ans à sortir de l'isolement, pour devenir aux dernières élections de 2015, la deuxième formation du Parlement avec plus de 21 % des voix. La crise migratoire a dopé DF, considéré, selon ses partisans, comme « le rempart contre l'invasion étrangère » en exigeant le contrôle aux frontières.
SA.

Autriche

Les sondages récents donnent le parti d'extrême droite **FPÖ** soit en première, soit en deuxième position derrière les sociaux-démocrates, actuellement au gouvernement. Anti-européen, anti-immigrés, et anti-système, le FPÖ a su élargir son électoral de base à chaque élection. Il recueillait aujourd'hui plus de 30 % des suffrages.
MD.

Principaux partis populistes au sein de l'Union européenne



Hongrie

Le **Jobbik**, parti d'extrême droite, fondé en 2003, avait fait une entrée fulgurante au Parlement en 2010, avec près de 17 % des suffrages. Fort de ses 20 % aux législatives de 2014, il se classe à nouveau troisième force politique du pays. Mais il est en perte de vitesse, face au Fidesz du premier ministre Viktor Orban, qui a su capitaliser sur sa gestion drastique de la crise des migrants.
HB.

Grèce

La crise des réfugiés est du pain béni pour Aube dorée, le parti néonazi qui, malgré la mise en détention provisoire de la majorité de ses députés et de son chef, conserve sa place de troisième formation politique du pays. Sont le parti populisteANEL, membre de la coalition gouvernementale, qui menace « de laisser passer tous les djihadistes en Europe si le pays venait à sortir de la zone euro... »
AK.

[Cliquez ici pour agrandir l'infographie](#)

Séisme en Suède

La paisible Suède, championne du monde de l'asile, illustre le séisme. Le parti des Démocrates suédois, issu de la mouvance fasciste, drainait péniblement 2 ou 3 % des votes avant 2010. **Depuis, il est entré au Parlement et a arraché près de 13 % des voix aux dernières législatives.** Il dénonce l'immigration comme une menace sur l'identité nationale et gagne en adhésion, quand 15 % de la population suédoise est née hors des frontières. L'arrivée de 163.000 demandeurs d'asile a fait monter sa cote en flèche. Les derniers sondages le mettent à au moins 20 %. C'est le deuxième parti du pays et la survie du premier ministre social-démocrate, Stefan Löfven, dépend de son accord tacite.

Dans le nord de l'Europe, c'est loin d'être une exception. Aux Pays-Bas, le Parti pour la liberté de Geert Wilders (PVV) fait à nouveau jeu en tête depuis qu'il est revenu à sa vieille cible, l'islam, plutôt que l'euro. Au Danemark, le sort du gouvernement libéral de Lars Lokke Rasmussen dépend depuis huit mois de l'appui du Parti populaire (DF), formation que son chef, Kristian Thulesen Dahl, décrit ouvertement comme « antimusulmane ».

Les forces montantes du populisme scandinave ont partout le vent en poupe, mais elles ont aussi de bonnes raisons de se méfier de l'exercice réel du pouvoir: leur cousin, le parti des Finlandais, a vu son soutien fondre de moitié dans les sondages depuis qu'il est entré, l'an dernier, dans le gouvernement du centriste de Juha Sipilä. C'est l'épreuve des responsabilités. En Europe centrale, les options les plus radicales n'ont pas été dictées par des francs-tireurs, mais bien décidées par les équipes en place. Le Hongrois Viktor Orban, aux commandes depuis 2010, a été le plus loin pour stopper la vague des arrivants: **il a dressé une clôture à la frontière et sa popularité remonte vers les sommets.** En Pologne, le retour au pouvoir du parti Droit et Justice de Jaroslaw Kaczynski (PiS) scelle aussi le sort du seul palliatif décidé à Vingt-huit: un partage équitable des réfugiés entre Européens.

Frankreich und Syrien

Für Aleppo sterben?

Ausgerechnet in dem Augenblick, in dem Amerikaner und Russen eine Waffenruhe in Syrien vereinbaren, wollen Frankreichs Intellektuelle dort in den Krieg ziehen. Sie stehen ziemlich im Abseits.

24.02.2016, von JÜRIG ALTWEGG, GENÈVE

Auch eine Petition hat ihre Hierarchie. Ganz oben auf der Liste der Erstunterzeichner eines [„Offenen Briefes an François Hollande über Syrien“](#) steht der Name von Jack Lang, 77 Jahre alt. An zweiter Stelle folgt jener des Ex-Kommunisten Jack Ralite, der 88 ist. Beide saßen zusammen in der ersten Regierung nach der Wahl von [François Mitterrand](#) im Jahre 1981. Nach Lang und Ralite geht es weiter von A bis Z – unterschrieben haben einige der unsterblichsten Stars des französischen Theaters und Films: Arnaud Desplechin, Maguy Marin, Ariane Mnouchkine, Michel Piccoli, Denis Podalydès. „Alep vivra“ lautet die Überschrift ihres Aufrufs in „Libération“: Aleppo wird, Aleppo muss überleben.



Autor: Jörg Altwegg, Kulturkorrespondent mit Sitz in Genf. Folgen:

„Unsere Generationen kamen mit dem Schwur an die Verantwortung, keine Verbrechen mehr gegen die Menschlichkeit zuzulassen“. Tatsächlich hatten die Sozialisten und Kommunisten 1981 die Macht im Klima einer epochalen Wende übernehmen können. Die Intellektuellen bekehrten sich unter dem Einfluss der „Neuen Philosophen“ Lévy, Glucksmann, Bruckner vom Marxismus zum Antitotalitarismus. Die Verbrechen Stalins wie Maos und auch noch Pol Pots waren zuvor als Preis für die Revolution geschluckt und verniedlicht worden. Nach dem Niedergang des Kommunismus kam Vichy in den Fokus, die gewendeten Franzosen entdeckten die Dissidenten in Osteuropa und wollten nun unvermittelt für Danzig sterben. Der deutschen Friedensbewegung unterstellten sie eine defätistische Kollaborationsbereitschaft mit der Sowjetunion: „Lieber rot als tot.“ Nach diesem Muster des „Nie wieder“ und der Vergangenheitsbewältigung erfolgten die militärischen Einsätze gegen Milošević, [Saddam Hussein](#) und auch noch Gaddafi.

© AFP/Syrer glauben nicht an Waffenruhe

Lévy spricht von „Nazislamisten“

Bernard-Henri Lévy, der seinen Präsidenten Sarkozy zum verheerenden Angriff auf Libyen angestiftet hatte, spricht seit den Attentaten in Frankreich von den „Nazislamisten“, gegen die er den „kommenden Krieg“ propagiert. Doch die Schablonen der manichäischen Weltsicht werden der Wirklichkeit überhaupt nicht mehr gerecht. Schon gar nicht in Syrien, das eine Kolonie der Franzosen war und wo es viele Fronten und Feinde gibt.

Nach dem 11. September 2001 war es noch einfacher – und die Franzosen schickten ihre Truppen nach Afghanistan. Im Sommer 2013, als Assad chemische Waffen gegen seine Bevölkerung einsetzte, wollte [Hollande](#), gerade ein Jahr im Amt, auf den Spuren Sarkozys Syrien angreifen, auch über Bodentruppen wurde diskutiert. Die Amerikaner hielten Hollande davon ab – sie haben die Lektionen aus dem angerichteten Chaos schneller gelernt. Noch immer bedauern französische Experten, dass nach den Attentaten in Paris Raqqa, die Hochburg der Terrorgruppe Islamischer Staat, nicht umgehend erobert worden sei.



© AFP Jack Lang hat den Aufruf initiiert. Er verfügt über gute Kontakte nach Saudi-Arabien.

Die Autoren der Petition fordern den militärischen Angriff nicht direkt. Aber nur die Rebellen gegen Assad seien in der Lage, auch den IS zu besiegen. Diese Stoßrichtung kann man begründen. Aber hinterfragen muss man die Absichten von Jack Lang, der in Paris das „Institut du Monde Arabe“ (IMA) leitet. Nach den Attentaten von Paris verteidigte er Saudi-Arabien und Katar so ziemlich als Einziger gegen die Vorwürfe, sie würden den Terror unterstützen. Sie finanzieren zumindest teilweise die Renovierung seines Hauses und auch Ausstellungen. Lang hat das IMA unter seiner Leitung neu belebt, die Besucherzahlen verdoppelt. Warum aber mischt er sich in den berechtigten Kampf gegen Assad ein, was ihm unweigerlich den Vorwurf eintragen muss, dass er im Dienste der Saudis handle, deren Umgang mit Frauen und den Menschenrechten er in Paris keine Ausstellung widmen kann?

Nach der Regierungsumbildung hatte François Hollande eine Verstärkung der Bombenangriffe in Syrien gefordert: „Sie bleiben nicht wirkungslos.“ Er beschwor die Gefahr eines Krieges zwischen der Türkei und Russland, der zum Weltkrieg eskalieren könne, und warnte Putin, „dass er nichts erreichen wird, wenn er einseitig Assad unterstützt“. Dass Assad am Dienstag ein Waffenstillstandsabkommen akzeptierte, das die Amerikaner und die Russen ausgehandelt haben, ist für Paris eine Demütigung. Das pragmatische Vorgehen der Diplomaten stellt der neuphilosophischen Theorie des prophylaktischen Eingreifens zur Verhinderung weiterer Genozide wohl endgültig den Totenschein aus. Ein Armutszeugnis ist der offene Brief von Jack Lang und seinen Mitautoren nicht nur in intellektueller Hinsicht. Diese beklagen die Zehntausende von Opfern in Aleppo, aus denen „Hunderttausende“ zu werden drohten. Sagen aber kein Wort zu den Flüchtlingen in Europa. In Frankreich würden sich die Syrer wohl schneller heimisch fühlen können als in Deutschland. Doch man will sie nicht. „Frankreich steckt den Kopf in den Sand“, schrieb „Libération“ vor ein paar Tagen: „Der Mut von Merkel, die Feigheit von Valls.“

141,20

Par [Arthur Berdah](#), [Solenn de Rover](#)

Publié le 24/02/2016 à 11:33



LE SCAN POLITIQUE/VIDÉOS - Dans une tribune assassine publiée dans *Le Monde*, la maire de Lille tacle sévèrement l'exécutif. Elle cosigne ce texte avec notamment Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Benoît Hamon ou encore Christian Paul.

Les critiques n'en finissent pas. Depuis le début du quinquennat, François Hollande n'a eu de cesse d'être conspué par toute une partie de son aile gauche. Mais le cercle - initialement restreint - des «frondeurs» s'est peu à peu élargi, gagnant des personnalités socialistes de premier plan, telles que Martine Aubry. Ainsi la maire de Lille, qui a [peu à peu pris la tête de la fronde contre l'exécutif](#), vient de lancer une flèche supplémentaire: elle cosigne une tribune assassine dans *Le Monde* daté de jeudi.

Intitulé «Sortir de l'impasse», le texte se veut alarmant: «Ce n'est plus simplement l'échec du quinquennat qui se profile, mais un affaiblissement durable de la France qui se prépare, et bien évidemment de la gauche, s'il n'est pas mis un coup d'arrêt à la chute dans laquelle nous sommes entraînés», déplorent les auteurs, parmi lesquels figurent notamment l'écologiste Daniel Cohn-Bendit, l'ancien ministre de l'Éducation nationale Benoît Hamon, ou encore le député de la Nièvre Christian Paul.

«Pas ça, pas nous, pas la gauche!», implorent les signataires

«Trop, c'est trop!», s'agacent-ils encore, excédés par [les mesures portées par le gouvernement depuis le début du quinquennat](#). «Il est des vérités désagréables à dire, mais il est des moments où il faut savoir les mettre en pleine lumière. Les motifs d'insatisfaction sur les politiques menées depuis 2012 n'ont pas manqué, et nous-mêmes, comme d'autres, n'avons pas manqué d'alerter. Depuis quelques mois, ces désaccords se sont mués en une grande inquiétude», déplorent-ils encore.

Tous les sujets sont listés et dénoncés tour à tour: le pacte de responsabilité, qualifié de «pacte avec le Medef qui se révéla un marché de dupes», le «désolant débat sur la déchéance de nationalité», «la meurtrissure de l'indécent discours de Munich» de Manuel Valls sur l'accueil des réfugiés en Europe, ainsi que le plus récent projet de réforme du droit du travail, dit «loi El Khomri». «On y trouve des propositions puisées dans le camp d'en face, qui n'ont rien de moderne, et qui sont inefficaces».

C'est sur cette base que les signataires [s'inquiètent de voir leur camp être mis à feu et à sang par l'exécutif](#). «C'est toute la construction des relations sociales de notre pays qui est mise à bas en renversant la hiérarchie des normes (...). Pas ça, pas nous, pas la gauche! (...) Que restera-t-il des idéaux du socialisme lorsque l'on aura, jour après jour, sapé ses principes et ses fondements?», concluent-ils.

Sapin répond, mais l'entourage d'Hollande botte en touche

La réponse ne s'est pas fait attendre. Invité de l'émission «[Questions d'info](#)» sur LCP/France Info/AFP/LeMonde, le ministre des Finances, Michel Sapin, a appelé mercredi les signataires de cette tribune à «éviter les postures». «Quand on est dans une période difficile, (pour) la France comme (pour) la gauche, il faut éviter les postures», a lancé le locataire de Bercy. L'ancien élu de l'Indre a également dénoncé un «amalgame» d'un ensemble de sujets, qui vont de la réforme du droit du travail à l'accueil des réfugiés. Il estime que la tribune n'est «pas de l'argumentation politique».

Dans l'entourage du chef de l'État, en déplacement au Pérou, on indique que ce dernier ne devrait pas réagir à cette tribune, n'étant pas chef de parti politique.

141,22

Le Monde.fr

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mercredi 24 février 2016

Martine Aubry : « Un affaiblissement durable de la France se prépare »

Emmenées par Martine Aubry, des personnalités de gauche, dont Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Axel Kahn, François Lamy et Jean-Marc Germain, dénoncent la politique conduite par le gouvernement.

Martine Aubry, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Axel Kahn, François Lamy et Jean-Marc Germain, dénoncent la politique conduite par le gouvernement, dans une tribune devenue pétition populaire. Le Pacte de responsabilité, la déchéance de nationalité, le refus d'accueillir davantage de réfugiés et la réforme du code du travail leur font craindre un échec du quinquennat ainsi qu'un affaiblissement durable de la France et de la gauche.

Il est des vérités désagréables à dire, mais il est des moments où il faut savoir les mettre en pleine lumière. Trop, c'est trop! Les motifs d'insatisfaction sur les politiques menées depuis 2012 n'ont pas manqué, et nous-mêmes, comme d'autres, n'avons pas manqué d'alerter. Depuis quelques mois, ces désaccords se sont mués en une grande inquiétude. La colère populaire s'est confirmée sans appel par quatre défaites électorales successives. **Ce n'est plus simplement l'échec du quinquennat qui se profile, mais un affaiblissement durable de la France qui se prépare, et bien évidemment de la gauche, s'il n'est pas mis un coup d'arrêt à la chute dans laquelle nous sommes entraînés.**

Bien sûr, nous n'oublions pas les succès de la COP21, la priorité donnée à la lutte contre les inégalités à l'école, les avancées de la loi santé. Mais, à côté de cela, que de reculs!

La gauche avait déjà assisté, incrédule, en janvier 2014, au pacte avec le Medef qui se révéla un marché de dupes. Nos mises en garde avaient alors été ignorées. Nous aurions aimé nous tromper. Malheureusement, de l'aveu du premier ministre lui-même, la réalité, tellement prévisible, est là: **un million d'emplois promis, quelques dizaines de milliers tout au plus effectivement créés. Bien sûr, il fallait aider à la reconquête de la compétitivité de nos entreprises, mais pour cela il eût fallu cibler les aides sur celles exposées à la concurrence internationale et les lier à des contreparties précises.**

Ces 41 milliards d'euros mobilisés pour rien, ou si peu, auraient été si utiles à la nouvelle économie, à l'écologie, à l'éducation et à la formation, aux territoires, à l'accès à l'emploi de ceux qui en sont le plus éloignés, au pouvoir d'achat, aux investissements publics et privés et donc aux carnets de commandes des entreprises. A chaque étape et par des voies multiples, nous avons fait des propositions précises pour relancer la croissance et l'emploi dans le cadre d'un nouveau modèle de développement social et écologique, et d'une réorientation de l'Europe, attelons-nous-y!

Puis, nous nous sommes vu infliger, à l'hiver 2015, ce désolant débat sur la déchéance de nationalité. Pourtant la France, autour du président de la République, s'était montrée digne et forte après les attentats de janvier comme de novembre. Nous avons approuvé l'état d'urgence comme le renforcement des moyens d'action de nos forces de l'ordre et des services de renseignement face à une menace terroriste d'un niveau sans précédent. A Versailles, le président de la République a émis l'idée d'une peine de **déchéance de nationalité** pour les terroristes. **Très vite, chacun a compris l'impasse: réservée aux binationaux, elle est contraire au principe d'égalité; appliquée aux mono-nationaux, elle fabriquerait des**

apatrides. Et, si ce débat nous heurte tant, c'est qu'il touche au fond à notre conception de l'identité de la France. Pour la gauche, l'identité française doit être républicaine, elle se définit comme une communauté non pas d'origine, mais de destin, fondée sur les valeurs de liberté, d'égalité, de fraternité et de laïcité.

Evitons cette fêlure profonde

Le texte adopté par l'Assemblée nationale a gommé les aspérités sans en supprimer les effets, et en les aggravant en étendant la déchéance de nationalité aux délits. Mis entre les mains de gouvernements futurs mal intentionnés, il ouvre la voie à toutes les dérives. Aller au Congrès de Versailles dans ces conditions serait une fêlure profonde pour la gauche et d'ailleurs aussi pour certains démocrates. Evitons-la. Substituons à cette déchéance de nationalité une peine de déchéance de citoyenneté ou d'indignité nationale inscrite dans la loi, frappant tous les terroristes quelle que soit leur origine.

Par une regrettable accélération du temps, la semaine dernière, ce fut la meurtrissure de l'indécrottable **discours de Munich**, à propos des réfugiés. **Se revendiquer d'une liberté de ton n'autorise pas tout. Non, Angela Merkel n'est pas naïve, Monsieur le premier ministre. Non, elle n'a pas commis une erreur historique. Non, elle n'a pas mis en danger l'Europe, elle l'a sauvée.** Elle l'a sauvée du déshonneur qui aurait consisté à fermer totalement nos portes à toutes ces femmes, ces hommes et enfants fuyant les persécutions et la mort et en oubliant ceux qui chaque jour perdent la vie en Méditerranée.

La fermeté, c'est le langage qu'il faut tenir à ceux des Etats européens qui s'exonèrent de toute solidarité, de toute responsabilité à l'égard des réfugiés. La France ne doit pas être de ceux-là. La France, quand elle s'appuie sur ces valeurs comme elle l'a fait dans son histoire en accueillant les opposants des dictatures par exemple, est un pays respecté, admiré et aimé. Cela oblige les femmes et les hommes qui le dirigent. **La mission de la France n'est pas de dresser des murs, mais de construire des ponts. Sans nier un seul instant l'ampleur du problème, nous attendons de la France qu'elle se tienne aux côtés de ceux qui agissent.**

Et, aujourd'hui, voici que l'on s'en prend au code du travail! La gauche a appris des mouvements ouvriers qu'il n'y a pas de liberté sans égalité. Ce n'est pas une affaire de tabous. Le droit n'enferme pas, il libère. Il libère en arrêtant la liberté des autres où commence la sienne. Il libère en apportant aux plus faibles les droits qui visent à rééquilibrer les rapports dans l'entreprise.

C'est pour l'avoir ignoré que, partout au sein de la gauche, **l'avant-projet de loi dit «El Khomri» a provoqué non plus de la déception, mais de la colère!** C'est toute la construction des relations sociales de notre pays qui est mise à bas en renversant la hiérarchie des normes, et **en privilégiant l'accord dans l'entreprise dans un pays où le taux de syndicalisation est faible et où le patronat n'a jamais aimé la négociation.** Les salariés vont subir un chantage permanent et les entreprises seront soumises à des distorsions de concurrence, alors que l'accord de branche unifie les conditions générales de travail pour les entreprises d'un même secteur. Et, à qui fera-t-on croire qu'en multipliant les facilités de licenciements, comme le prévoit le projet de loi - **limitation du pouvoir d'appréciation du juge sur le motif économique, prise en compte des seules filiales françaises pour apprécier les difficultés économiques d'une multinationale, plafonnement à un niveau très bas des indemnités prud'homales pour licenciement abusif...** -, **oui, à qui fera-t-on croire qu'on favorisera ainsi l'emploi? Réduire les protections des salariés face au licenciement conduira plus sûrement à davantage de licenciements!**

Pas nous, pas la gauche!

Qui peut imaginer que, en généralisant les possibilités de ne plus payer les heures supplémentaires en heures supplémentaires - calcul sur trois ans de la durée du travail, rémunération au forfait dans les PME, possibilité de déroger à un accord de branche pour les majorations... -, on améliorera la situation de l'emploi en France? **Qui peut faire croire qu'augmenter le temps de travail va diminuer le chômage?**

Moins de pouvoir d'achat pour les salariés, moins d'embauche pour les chômeurs en cas de surcroît d'activité, est-ce bien cela que l'on veut dans un pays de plus de 3,5 millions de chômeurs et dont les entreprises souffrent de carnets de commandes trop peu remplis?

Que le patronat institutionnel porte ces revendications, pourquoi pas, même si elles nous paraissent en décalage avec ce que nous disent les entreprises sur le terrain. Mais qu'elles deviennent les lois de la République, sûrement pas! Pas ça, pas nous, pas la gauche!

Bien sûr, comme tout texte de régulation, le code du travail doit évoluer, au regard des changements du monde, mais sans affaiblir sa force protectrice. La gauche doit porter en la matière de grandes réformes sources de compétitivité pour les entreprises et de progrès social pour les salariés, telles que la sécurité sociale professionnelle, qui permettent à chacun au XXI^e siècle de rebondir en cas de difficultés, sans passer par la case chômage, et de progresser tout au long de sa vie professionnelle.

Et puis, disons-le, la méthode n'est plus supportable. On brandit à nouveau la menace de l'article 49-3. Et alors, nos députés en désaccord doivent-ils dire que, dans ce cas, ils voteraient la censure? Tout cela est déraisonnable. **Une France gouvernée sans son Parlement est mal gouvernée.** La démocratie est atteinte. Redonnons tout son pouvoir au Parlement, respectant ainsi la Constitution, les textes qui en sortiront n'en seront que meilleurs et leur légitimité renforcée.

Les valeurs, l'ambition sociale, les droits universels de l'homme, l'équilibre des pouvoirs, que restera-t-il des idéaux du socialisme lorsque l'on aura, jour après jour, sapé ses principes et ses fondements? Nous n'ignorons rien des difficultés du moment, la crise économique, la montée du terrorisme, le réchauffement climatique, les migrations, la crise agricole... Nous n'ignorons rien des difficultés de l'exercice du pouvoir, nous l'avons montré. De l'idéal au réel, il y a toujours une distance que, depuis Jaurès, nous assumons d'accepter.

Mais prendre le monde tel qu'il est n'est pas renoncer à le transformer pour le rapprocher sans cesse de ce qu'il devrait être. Encore moins de l'éloigner de toute idée de justice. C'est pourtant ce qui est en train de se passer. Il ne suffit pas de se revendiquer du réformisme social pour en mériter le titre. **Il n'y a ni vraie réforme ni social dans nombre de politiques qui sont menées depuis deux ans. On y trouve des propositions puisées dans le camp d'en face, qui n'ont rien de moderne, et qui sont inefficaces.** Et, puisqu'on nous parle du serment de Versailles, rappelons-nous de celui du Bourget, mis à mal une fois de plus, et qui pourtant fonde la légitimité au nom de laquelle le pouvoir est exercé depuis 2012.

Pour sortir de l'impasse, il faut de vraies réformes, synonymes de progrès économique, social, écologique et démocratique. Elles doivent être porteuses d'émancipation pour chacun et de vivre-ensemble pour tous. C'est ce chemin qu'il faut retrouver! **Celui de la gauche tout simplement!**

Les signataires de ce texte sont: Claude Alphandéry (résistant, économiste engagé dans l'insertion), Martine Aubry (maire de Lille, PS), Daniel Cohn-Bendit (ancien député européen écologiste), Daniel Cohen (économiste, membre du conseil de surveillance du «Monde»), Laurence Dumont (première vice-présidente de l'Assemblée nationale, députée du Calvados, PS), Yann Galut (député du Cher, PS), Jean-Marc Germain (député des Hauts-de-Seine, PS), Annie Guillemot (sénatrice du Rhône, PS), Benoît Hamon (député des Yvelines, PS), Yannick Jadot (député européen, EELV), Bruno Julliard (premier adjoint à la maire de Paris, PS), Axel Kahn (généticien, essayiste), Chaynesse Khirouni (députée de Meurthe-et-Moselle, PS), François Lamy (député de l'Essonne, PS), Gilles Pargneaux (député européen, PS), Christian Paul (député de la Nièvre, PS), Laura Slimani (présidente des Jeunes socialistes européens) et Michel Wieviorka (sociologue).

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«Alep vivra», Lettre ouverte à François Hollande sur la Syrie

Par [Jack Lang, Ancien ministre, président de l'institut du monde arabe](#), [Ariane Mnouchkine, Metteure en scène, directrice du Théâtre du soleil](#), [Jack Ralite, Ancien ministre](#), [Emmanuel Wallon, Professeur de sociologie politique](#), [Arnaud Desplechin, Réalisateur](#), [Denis Podalydès, Comédien, sociétaire de la Comédie-Française](#), [Maguy Marin, Chorégraphe](#), [Anne Alvaro, Comédienne](#), [Dominique Blanc, Comédienne](#), [Marcel Bozonnet, Metteur en scène](#) et [Michel Piccoli, Comédien](#) — 21 février 2016 à 18:01

Depuis cinq ans, une guerre est menée par un dictateur contre son propre peuple. Les frappes russes, l'offensive du régime, les attaques du Hezbollah et des milices irakiennes, soutenues par l'Iran, ne visent Daech que de manière très marginale. Des personnalités du monde de la culture interpellent le Président.

Monsieur le président de la République,

Nos générations ont accédé aux responsabilités sous le serment de ne plus laisser commettre dans l'impunité des crimes contre l'humanité. Pourtant, après Srebrenica 1995 ou Grozny 2000, Alep 2016 s'annonce comme un nouveau reniement. Devant les massacres en cours en Syrie et les terribles scènes qui se déroulent dans le nord du pays, nul ne pourra dire : «Nous ne savions pas.» Voici cinq ans que nous sommes les témoins de la guerre menée par un dictateur contre son propre peuple, dont les décomptes macabres dépassent les 260 000 morts, un nombre considérable de blessés et de mutilés, ainsi que des millions de réfugiés et de déplacés.

Chaque jour voit s'accumuler de nouvelles preuves des bombardements aveugles sur les habitations, les écoles et les hôpitaux, des blocus implacables, des arrestations arbitraires, des tortures de masse, de l'extermination des prisonniers et autres pratiques que le régime de Bachar al-Assad a érigées en politique d'Etat. Leur qualification de crimes contre l'humanité est si patente que Moscou et Pékin ont accepté d'y faire référence dans les résolutions 2 254 et 2 258 du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, votées en décembre 2015, mais aussitôt bafouées par la Russie, qui a déployé tout le cynisme de sa diplomatie pour couvrir les assassins et toute la puissance de son aviation pour écraser leurs opposants. Au supplice des populations civiles s'ajoute donc l'humiliation des institutions internationales.

Face à cet assaut de barbarie, la France proteste par votre voix, mais l'Europe est absente, l'Otan muette, et la coalition internationale contre Daech détourne le regard comme s'il s'agissait d'un problème secondaire. Après avoir torpillé les négociations de Genève en encourageant Al-Assad à refuser tout préalable d'ordre humanitaire, Moscou prétend, maintenant, avoir un plan pour imposer un cessez-le-feu, auquel le Département d'Etat américain a fait mine de croire à Munich, au risque d'être aussitôt démenti par les faits. En réalité, ce projet est assorti de conditions qui en rendent l'application hautement improbable. La Russie est en train de commettre l'irréparable, et tout porte à penser qu'il s'agit d'une énième manœuvre pour leurrer les Occidentaux le temps que ses armes tranchent le sort de la bataille. Si Vladimir Poutine veut faire croire à un désir de paix, si ténu soit-il, et faire avancer une solution politique, si fragile soit-elle, il lui suffit d'ordonner l'arrêt immédiat des bombardements et de contraindre son protégé à la retenue. Recep Erdogan, qui a pris part à l'escalade en bombardant les combattants kurdes, doit aussi faire taire ses canons.

De nombreuses villes de Syrie sont encerclées, mais le siège d'Alep promet des souffrances et des massacres qui excéderont, en ampleur, les tueries déjà déplorées à Homs ou à Deraa. S'agit-il d'un mal inévitable, de sacrifices nécessaires pour combattre le terrorisme ? Bien au contraire, la stratégie arrêtée entre Moscou, Damas et Téhéran vise, en priorité, les rebelles de l'Armée syrienne libre et leurs associés, les administrations locales qu'ils avaient pu mettre en place dans les zones sous leur contrôle et les civils qui parvenaient, tant bien que mal, à y goûter les rares fruits d'une précaire liberté. Les frappes russes, l'offensive du régime, les attaques du Hezbollah et des milices irakiennes, soutenues par l'Iran, ne visent Daech que de manière très marginale, car ceux qui

les mènent ont besoin de cet épouvantail pour déguiser la dictature en recours. Elles favorisent, outrageusement, le Front al-Nusra, la filiale régionale d'Al-Qaeda, qui prend désormais l'avantage sur le terrain. Pire encore, elles assurent aux jihadistes de toutes obédiences la victoire dans les esprits, tant il leur est aisé de dénoncer la complaisance des nations démocratiques envers l'homme fort du Kremlin et le despote de Damas comme une preuve de mépris à l'égard des musulmans sunnites.

Le président Obama veut espérer que les Etats-Unis ne subiront pas sur leur sol les conséquences fâcheuses de leur stratégie de désengagement, mais, depuis le 13 Novembre, nous savons que notre pays y est exposé dans sa chair. Si notre discernement était affaibli au point de nous cantonner dans l'attentisme, notre intérêt vital ne nous commanderait pas moins d'agir. Il est clair, en effet, que les désespérés qui fuient les environs d'Alep aujourd'hui par dizaines - demain par centaines - de milliers ne se contenteront pas de grossir les rangs des réfugiés qui se pressent aux portes de l'Europe. Plutôt que périr sous les bombes ou dépérir dans les camps, beaucoup préféreront troquer l'espoir contre la haine, et retourner celle-ci vers les spectateurs passifs de leur ruine.

L'histoire a donné à la France des responsabilités particulières à l'égard de la Syrie. L'avenir commande à l'Europe de s'en soucier sans tarder davantage. Les experts qui, de tous côtés, pressent nos gouvernements de ne rien faire, au nom d'un réalisme sans mémoire ou d'une complexité sans lumière, évacuent une fois de plus le sort des populations dont les cris ne résonnent guère dans les enceintes feutrées où se négocie leur survie. Il est temps que la France entraîne ses voisins européens, ceux du moins qui se disent encore attachés à la maison commune, dans des initiatives propres à faire cesser le feu.

La saisine du Conseil de sécurité et, à travers celui-ci, de la Cour pénale internationale relève de l'urgence. L'ouverture de la frontière turque et la création d'une large zone d'exclusion aérienne partout où les civils sont en péril doivent être mises à l'ordre du jour dans les discussions avec Ankara. Il faut imposer, sans condition, la levée de tous les sièges et la liberté de circulation pour les convois humanitaires, requises dans les résolutions de l'ONU, et organiser, sans délai, des largages de vivres et de médicaments sur les quartiers affamés. Il convient, enfin, d'associer aux consultations le Haut Comité des négociations représentant l'opposition au régime, sans laquelle le peuple syrien n'aurait pas voix au chapitre. Car, qui d'autre, hormis ces hommes et ces femmes, pourrait regagner le terrain conquis par Daech et ensemercer les terres brûlées par les Al-Assad. Et, qui d'autre, que leurs enfants, saurait dans un futur proche, construire une Syrie libre et pacifique ?

Mais rien de cela ne sera possible si nous abandonnons aux meurtriers les centaines de milliers de personnes qui subsistent dans ce carrefour des cultures et des religions qu'est la grande cité du nord depuis plus de quatre mille ans. Alep vivra.

Premiers signataires : Jack Lang, ancien ministre, président de l'Institut du monde arabe, Jack Ralite, ancien ministre, Anne Alvaro, comédienne, Dominique Blanc, comédienne, Marcel Bozonnet, metteur en scène, Arnaud Desplechin, réalisateur, Maguy Marin, chorégraphe, Ariane Mnouchkine, metteuse en scène, directrice du Théâtre du Soleil, Michel Piccoli, comédien, Denis Podalydès, comédien, sociétaire de la Comédie-Française, Emmanuel Wallon, professeur de sociologie politique.

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WIRTSCHAFT

"Wir sind nicht im Krisenmodus"

Martin Greive

27 février 2016

[Die Welt](#)

Auf dem G-20-Gipfel diskutieren die großen Industrienationen, was für einen Aufschwung zu tun ist. Die USA und Deutschland sollen den anderen helfen, doch Finanzminister Schäuble ist dagegen

Martin Greive

Shanghai

Ölpreisverfall, Tumulte an Aktien-, Finanz- und Devisenmärkten, taumelnde Schwellenländer, schwächelnde Weltwirtschaft, Flüchtlingskrise - die Finanzminister der 20 wichtigsten Industrienationen (G 20) haben viel zu bereden auf ihrem Gipfel in Shanghai an diesem Wochenende.

Ob er schon einmal so viele Krisen auf einmal erlebt habe, wird Wolfgang Schäuble am Rande des Treffens gefragt. Der Finanzminister muss lächeln. "Ist doch schön, so bleibt das Leben spannend." Für das G-20-Treffen in China hat sich Schäuble eine klare Rolle auf den Leib geschrieben: Die des Gelassenen, des Ruhepols in diesen stürmischen Zeiten. "Wir sind nicht im Krisenmodus", sagt Schäuble stoisch. Flüchtlingskrise? Schafft Europa. Chinas Wachstumsschwäche? Ein normaler Anpassungsprozess. So blickt Schäuble in Shanghai auf die Welt.

Viele andere Teilnehmer sind da weniger entspannt. Christine Lagarde etwa. Die Chefin des [Internationalen Währungsfonds](#) (IWF) rechnet offenbar mit einer weiteren Abschwächung der Weltwirtschaft. Am Rande der G-20-Konferenz fügte sie mit Blick auf die jüngste Rücknahme der Wachstumsschätzung des IWF hinzu: "Das muss nicht notwendigerweise das Ende der Geschichte sein." Umso wichtiger sei es für die G-20-Länder, jetzt die Wachstumsaussichten zu verbessern, forderte Lagarde. "Wir müssen unsere Strukturreformen beschleunigen." Die mehr als 800 einzelnen Maßnahmen müssten umgesetzt werden, die man schon 2014 unter der australischen G-20-Präsidentschaft definiert habe. Diese Forderung ist ganz im Sinne Schäubles. Die chinesische G-20-Präsidentschaft hat Strukturreformen zum Schwerpunktthema des diesjährigen G-20-Treffens gemacht und Schäuble damit einen großen Gefallen getan.

Der deutsche Finanzminister drängt schon lange darauf, die Probleme der Weltwirtschaft und einzelner Länder nicht länger über Notenpresse und höhere Staatsausgaben zuzukleistern, sondern sich stattdessen endlich daran zu machen, die Sozial- und Wirtschaftssysteme zu reformieren. **Auch in Shanghai fehlte Schäubles Spruch "It's the implementation, stupid - Es ist die Implementierung, Dummkopf", deshalb nicht. Mit dieser Aussage hatte Schäuble vor einigen Wochen bei einem gemeinsamen Auftritt Griechenlands Premier Alexis Tsipras provoziert, seitdem gehört sie zu seinem Stammvokabular.**

Den deutschen Finanzminister wird allerdings weniger gefreut haben, dass IWF-Chefin Lagarde im Vorfeld des Treffens auch nach einem globalen Konjunkturprogramm gerufen hatte. Ebenso fordern die USA Länder mit finanziellem Spielraum auf, sich mit höheren Staatsausgaben gegen einen drohenden Wirtschaftsabschwung zu

stellen. Damit ist auch Deutschland gemeint, das seine zwölf Milliarden Euro an Haushaltsüberschuss aus dem vergangenen Jahr für die Flüchtlingskrise zur Seite legt, anstatt sie zu investieren.

Schäuble erteilte Konjunkturprogrammen auf Pump in Shanghai eine klare Absage. "Über weitere Stimulierungsmaßnahmen zu sprechen, lenkt nur von den wirklichen Aufgaben ab, die sich uns stellen. Das schuldenfinanzierte Wachstumsmodell ist an seine Grenzen gestoßen." Noch mehr Schulden verursachten neue Probleme und Blasen. **"Wenn wir auf diesem Weg weitergehen, brauchen wir nicht mehr Fernsehen zu sehen. Dann sind wir die Walking Dead"**, sagte der Finanzminister in Anspielung an die TV-Serie "Walking Dead" ("Die wandelnden Toten"). Die Frage ist, ob sich Schäuble mit seiner Haltung auf dem G-20-Gipfel am Ende durchsetzen können. Zu Beginn des Treffens war viel von Strukturreformen die Rede, weil dies eben das zentrale Thema in Shanghai ist. Doch die weltwirtschaftliche Lage verdüstert sich. Und kaum jemand ist da, der sich noch gegen einen drohenden Abschwung stemmen könnte.

Die Geldpolitik hat ihre Instrumente nahezu ausgereizt, allenfalls könnte die US-Notenbank ihre Zinserhöhungen verschieben. Halb Europa steckt noch immer tief in der Krise. Und die Schwellenländer können die globale Konjunktur aufgrund ihrer schwierigen finanziellen Lage dieses Mal auch nicht herausreißen, auch wenn chinesische Spitzenpolitiker auf dem Gipfel bekräftigten, noch Spielraum für weitere Konjunkturstützen zu haben.

In der Runde der G 20 wird daher schnell auf die USA und Deutschland gezeigt, wenn es darum geht, welche Länder noch finanziellen Spielraum haben, um über höhere Staatsausgaben die Weltwirtschaft am Laufen zu halten. Doch der deutsche Finanzminister bleibt auch hier gelassen. Er kennt die Forderungen schon aus den vergangenen Jahren und freut sich fast schon auf die Auseinandersetzung. **Dann kann Schäuble den anderen Ländern vorhalten, dass eine solide Finanzpolitik das Wachstum nicht schwächt, sondern im Gegenteil - wie in Deutschland - stärkt.** "In solchen Momenten", witzelt ein SPD-Finanzpolitiker, "läuft Schäuble doch immer zur Höchstform auf."

America's New Libyan War

Obama orders a tepid fight against Islamic State in North Africa.

652 mots

26 février 2016

President Obama has been learning the hard lesson that, in war, you can't declare premature victory and go home. That's the story of Iraq, where the U.S. has returned thousands of troops to fight Islamic State long after the President declared the Iraq War over and done. It's also true in Afghanistan, where he has quietly abandoned plans to withdraw all U.S. forces in the face of major gains by the Taliban.

The same story now seems to be unfolding in Libya. On Tuesday the Italian government acknowledged that it had given permission for armed U.S. drones based in Sicily to carry out operations against Islamic State in Libya. The Italians will grant approval on a "case-by-case" basis, and then only for what they deem "defensive operations." On Tuesday the Journal cited U.S. officials saying that the drones would be used "to protect U.S. special-operations forces in Libya and beyond."

That's the closest we've heard to official confirmation that the U.S. has special forces operating in Libya, though in December an undercover team conducting "key leader engagements" was accidentally outed on social media, leading to their hasty departure. What isn't a secret is that the U.S. last week hit an Islamic State training camp near the city of Sabratha in western Libya, killing dozens of terrorists. That follows November's U.S. air strike that killed Islamic State leader Abu Nabil.

Islamic State has an estimated 6,000 fighters in Libya and controls a broad stretch of coastline centered on the city of Sirtre. On Wednesday Islamic State fighters stormed the security headquarters of Sabratha's government and beheaded 12 officers. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the Islamic State leader, is said to have taken personal charge of Islamic State operations in Libya, no doubt because it puts him in striking range of European targets across the Mediterranean.

Aware of the growing threat, the Pentagon has been pushing the White House to hit Islamic State in Libya, with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Joe Dunford saying the U.S. wants to "take decisive military action" against the group. But Mr. Obama has resisted, on the view that it's up to the Europeans to take the lead. French special forces are already on the ground in Libya, but **Mr. Obama's hesitation is the same lead-from-behind approach that led to Libya's descent into chaos.**

Mr. Obama is also hoping that a political settlement between Libya's two competing governments might pave the way for some kind of European-led peacekeeping force. But a unity government by itself won't be able to eliminate Islamic State in Libya, and it's far-fetched to believe that a European stabilization force will have any more success in bringing peace than similar forces did in the Balkans in the mid-1990s.

The only way Islamic State will be defeated in Libya is if the U.S. leads an effective air and ground campaign to destroy it. Local forces aren't going to retake and hold territory without a sustained U.S. commitment. The world shouldn't have to wait for a major terrorist attack against a Western target directed by Islamic State in Libya before taking action. The worst approach is to procrastinate, as the Administration did in Iraq, until the threat becomes too big to ignore.

Mr. Obama has spent his Presidency under the illusion that he can withdraw America from the Middle East's traumas. The result has been to make those traumas worse. The President wants to play down this new Libyan war because it would be another admission of failure. So add Libya to the rising tide of war this President will leave to his successor.

The real danger of Brexit

Leaving the EU would hurt Britain—and would also deal a terrible blow to the West

Feb 27th 2016 | [From the print edition](#)



THE battle is joined, at last. David Cameron has called a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union for June 23rd, promising to campaign hard to stay in. What began as a gambit to hold together his divided Tory party is turning into an alarmingly close contest. Betting markets put the odds that Britons opt to leave at two-to-one; some polls suggest the voters are evenly split; several cabinet ministers are campaigning for Brexit. There is a real chance that in four months' time Britain could be casting off from Europe's shores.

That would be grave news—and not just for Britain. A vote to leave would damage the economy, certainly in the short term and probably in the long run. (As financial markets woke up to the prospect, the pound this week fell to its lowest level against the dollar since 2009.) It would imperil Britain's security, when threats from terrorists and foreign powers are at their most severe in years. And far from reclaiming sovereignty, Britons would be forgoing clout, by giving up membership of a powerful club whose actions they can influence better from within than without. Those outside Britain marvelling at this proposed act of self-harm should worry for themselves, too. Brexit would deal a heavy blow to Europe, a continent already on the ropes. It would uncouple the world's fifth-largest economy from its biggest market, and unmoor the fifth-largest defence spender from its allies. Poorer, less secure and disunited, the new EU would be weaker; the West, reliant on the balancing forces of America and Europe, would be enfeebled, too.

Dreams, meet reality

The Brexiters' case is that Britain is held back by Europe: unshackled, it could soar as an open economy that continued to trade with the EU and all round the world. That is possible in theory, but as our briefing (see [Briefing](#)) explains, it is not how things would work in practice. At a minimum, the EU would allow full access to its single market only in return for adherence to rules that Eurosceptics are keen to jettison. If Norway and Switzerland (whose arrangements with the EU many Brexiters idolise) are a guide, the union would also

demand the free movement of people and a big payment to its budget before allowing unfettered access to the market.

Worse, the EU would have a strong incentive to impose a harsh settlement to discourage other countries from leaving. The Brexit camp's claim that Europe needs Britain more than the other way round is fanciful: the EU takes almost half Britain's exports, whereas Britain takes less than 10% of the EU's; and the British trade deficit is mostly with the Germans and Spanish, not with the other 25 countries that would have to agree on a new trade deal.

To some Eurosceptics these hardships would be worth it if they meant reclaiming sovereignty from Europe, whose bureaucrats and judges interfere with everything from bankers' bonuses to working-time limits. Yet the gain would be partly illusory. In a globalised world, power is necessarily pooled and traded: Britain gives up sovereignty in exchange for clout through its memberships of NATO, the IMF and countless other power-sharing, rule-setting institutions. Signing up to treaties on trade, nuclear power or the environment involves submitting to regulations set jointly with foreigners, in return for greater gains. Britain outside the EU would be on the sidelines: notionally independent from, but in fact still constrained by, rules it would have no role in formulating. It would be a purer but rather powerless sort of sovereignty.

One exception is immigration, the area over which many Eurosceptics most long for control. Half of Britain's migrants come from the EU, and there is little the government can do to stop them. If Britain left the union, it could. But doing so would have a double cost. Gaining the right to stop immigration from the EU would almost certainly mean losing full access to the single market. And reducing the numbers of immigrants would hurt Britain's businesses and public services, which rely on French bankers, Bulgarian builders and Italian doctors.

A global concern

The longer-term costs would go beyond economics. Brexit might well break up the United Kingdom itself. Scotland, more Europhile than England, is again agitating for a divorce; if Britain decides to leave Europe, then the Scots may at last have a point. Brexit could also dangerously unsettle Northern Ireland, where the peace process over two decades has depended on the fact that both Ireland and Britain are members of the EU. The Irish government is among the most vocal foreign supporters of the campaign for Britain to stay in.

Ireland is not the only country that would suffer. European leaders know Brexit would weaken a club already in deep trouble over such issues as migration and the euro crisis. And Europe would be poorer without Britain's voice: more dominated by Germany; and, surely, less liberal, more protectionist and more inward-looking. Europe's links to America would become more tenuous. Above all, the loss of its biggest military power and most significant foreign-policy actor would seriously weaken the EU in the world.

The EU has become an increasingly important part of the West's foreign and security policy, whether it concerns a nuclear deal with Iran, the threat of Islamist terrorism or the imposition of sanctions against Russia. Without Britain, it would be harder for the EU to pull its global weight—a big loss to the West in a troubled neighbourhood, from Russia through Syria to north Africa. It is little wonder that Russia's Vladimir Putin is keen on Brexit—and that America's Barack Obama is not. It would be shortsighted for Eurosceptics to be indifferent to this. A weakened Europe would be unambiguously bad for Britain, whose geography, unlike its politics, is fixed.

A lot thus rests on the tight race now under way. For those who believe, as this newspaper does, in free trade and freedom of movement, the benefits to Britain of its membership of the EU have never been in much doubt. What more sceptical sorts must now recognise is that Brexit would also weaken Europe and the West. The stakes in Mr Cameron's great gamble are high; should he fail, the losses would be widely felt.

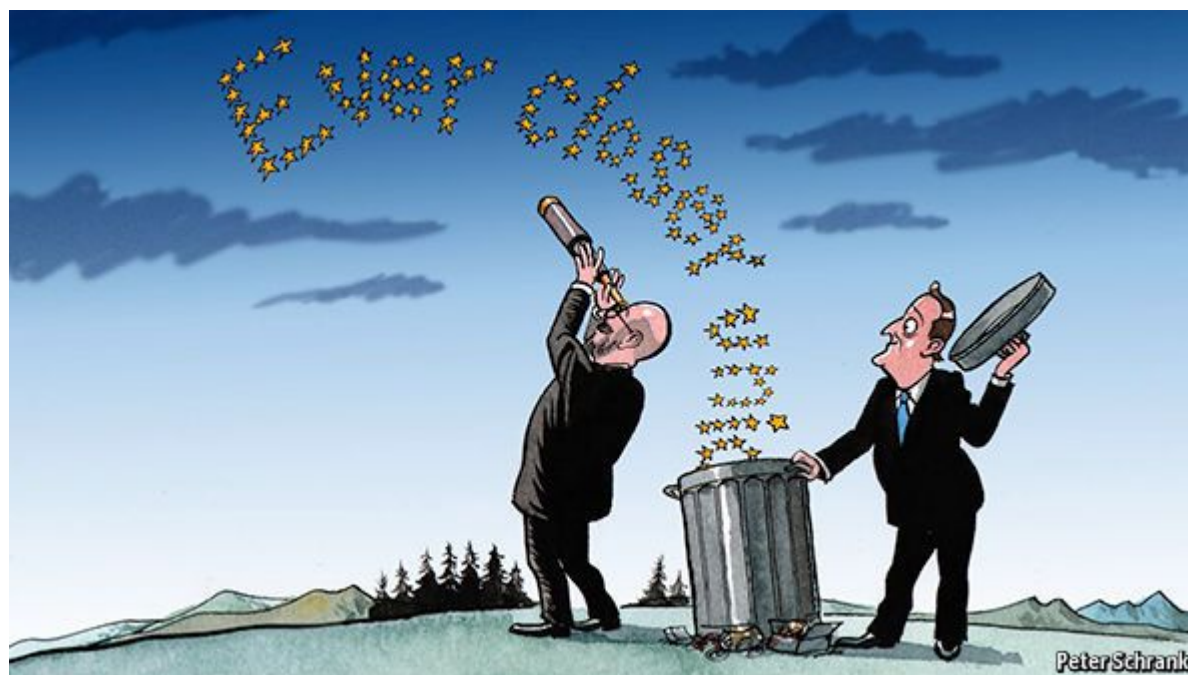
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Charlemagne

Ever farther union

The principle of “ever-closer union” died long before Britain demanded an exemption

Feb 27th 2016 | [From the print edition](#)



OLD habits die hard. So it proved with David Cameron, Britain’s prime minister, after his mini-victory at last week’s European Union summit in Brussels. Bounding energetically to the press-conference lectern after two gruelling days of talks over the terms of Britain’s EU membership, Mr Cameron opened his post-summit remarks not by trumpeting the emergency brake on euro-zone integration he had just secured, nor by crowing over his success in denying benefits to EU migrant workers. Instead, he highlighted the carve-out he had won for Britain from the EU treaty commitment to “ever-closer union”, a golden oldie that has infuriated British Eurosceptics for decades.

Like a vestigial piece of junk DNA in the genome, this phrase has survived every change to the EU treaties, exerting no influence on its host today but providing a window to its past. The ambition of fostering “ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe,” inserted into the preamble of the 1957 Treaty of Rome, the EU’s founding document, speaks to the post-war need for reconciliation in a scarred continent. Its deliberate ambiguity—defining a journey, not a destination—is well suited to a club that prefers debating the scope of its power to exercising it. Defending the phrase is the last test of the classical Euro-federalist.

Chief among this dwindling crowd is Belgium, which has long seen a federal Europe as an antidote to its own national and linguistic divisions. Charles Michel, the Belgian prime minister, feared that a British exemption to ever-closer union could kill the idea for the rest, and vowed to defend it to the hilt. Messrs Cameron and Michel therefore disagreed on whether ever-closer union was a good thing, but very much agreed that it mattered. (Angela Merkel, Germany’s chancellor, joked that Mr Michel would be better off pursuing an “ever-closer Belgium”).

That their theological struggle was quickly solved shows how Europe has changed. Once, Britain would have joined an almighty battle against the perfidious federalisers, as several of Mr Cameron's predecessors did. Today he is happy for the rest to get on with the job, so long as Britain is left out; indeed, Mr Cameron acknowledges that the euro zone must integrate further to guarantee its survival. Thus did Mr Michel win his tweaks to the text and Mr Cameron his special dispensation for Britain (and a promise that the exception would be inserted into a future EU treaty).

Some old-timers wrung their hands to see a founding European principle jettisoned so easily, if only for one troublesome member. But the debate left other European leaders confused, and rightly so. "Ever-closer union" has never been more than the weathervane of the European project, whipped about by the prevailing political winds. The grand projects of integration, such as the single currency or the passport-free Schengen area, have sprung from the ambitions of leaders and the mood of the times, not from any mystical force of treaty language.

If lofty phrases have never driven Europe's integration, they can scarcely slow its unravelling. The migrant crisis has tugged at European unity like nothing before, and the treaty provides little protection against unilateral border closures or the failure of some European countries to accept refugees from others. It is this, rather than a trio of fine words in an increasingly threadbare document, that should trouble the federalists. Instead, we are left with two peculiar phenomena. The Belgians cling to the comforting maxims of yesteryear just as events render them obsolete. And Mr Cameron brags, as he did to the House of Commons this week, that thanks to his deal Britain will never become part of a "European superstate" that no one is trying to build.

Back in the real world, the migrant crisis has exposed differences between European countries that will linger long after the immediate danger has passed. The bonds of trust that hold together projects like Schengen have frayed. Governments no longer merely disagree; some seem unable even to understand each other. That could jeopardise the traditional instruments of solidarity inside the EU, such as transfers from rich countries to poor.

Retreat to the core

All is not lost, say optimists. There is an old maxim in Brussels that the European project advances only in times of crisis. And such is the despair that the German notion of *Kerneuropa*, or "core Europe", is resurfacing, in which those countries willing to forge ahead should not be hamstrung by the reluctance of others. "It has become impossible to work together at 28 [member states]," says one EU diplomat. "Perhaps we have to think about smaller groups." The foreign ministers of the six original signatories to the Treaty of Rome met recently for a discussion on Europe's future, and further such gatherings are planned. Some think a departure of the foot-dragging Brits could hasten a process of tighter but smaller integration—although a Brexit seems at least as likely to embolden Eurosceptics elsewhere.

In any case, the appetite for big steps seems diminished. The euro zone is an obvious candidate for integration. Worries over wobbly lenders, especially in Italy, highlight the need to complete the half-built banking union (although there remain big differences over a common European deposit-insurance fund). There are plenty of other ideas, from a tougher central fiscal authority to common debt instruments. But many are incompatible with one another, and creditor countries like Germany have no desire to increase their liabilities. The migrant crisis, which has made a mockery of borders, looks tailor-made for a common European approach on interior as well as foreign policy. No one wants Schengen to die. But for now those countries affected by the flows are unable to co-ordinate their response and those that are not see no reason to trouble themselves.

So crises may present opportunities for Europhiles, but they are still crises. Instead of the hoped-for integration and stability, the EU's troubles might just lead to exhaustion and collapse.

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German right-wingers

Radikale Rechte

After falling for years, xenophobic extremism in Germany is on the rise

Feb 27th 2016 | BERLIN | From the print edition



ANTI-MIGRANT violence in Germany has become so severe over the past year that it is a miracle that no refugee has yet been killed. In one case, inebriated thugs threw a Molotov cocktail through a window into a room where an 11-year-old refugee would have been sleeping, had he not crept into bed with his mother in another room. Another xenophobe fired a gun into a refugee home and hit a Syrian man in the leg. Elsewhere, someone lobbed a hand grenade into a processing centre for asylum seekers. It did not go off.

There were 13,846 “right-extremist” crimes in Germany in 2015, according to preliminary estimates, about 30% more than in 2014. Of those, 921 were violent. This year the pace has accelerated, especially in the former East Germany. On February 18th about 100 people in Clausnitz, in the eastern state of Saxony, tried to block a bus carrying 20 refugees, including children. In another Saxon city a cheering crowd interfered with firefighters dousing flames in a building being converted into an asylum home. One police chief warns of a “pogrom atmosphere”.

Fears of a xenophobic backlash in otherwise-tolerant societies have been rising since the refugee crisis began, and not only in Germany. Right-wing populism is also growing in the Netherlands, as well as in Sweden, which like Germany entered the crisis with liberal asylum policies that are now being tightened. But Germany has taken by far the most refugees, with 1.1m arriving last year alone. And because of its history, Germany is extra-vigilant about extremism on the far right. The supreme court will soon consider an attempt by the 16 federal states to ban the NPD, a party that looks and smells like a neo-Nazi party. Germany also has a small subculture of violent, explicitly neo-Nazi networks.

When it comes to less extreme populism on the right, however, Germany is an exception in the European Union: it has no far-right party as firmly established as France’s National Front or Austria’s Freedom Party. Germany’s political mainstream long seemed to have been inoculated by the Nazi past. As recently as 2014, a biannual survey of right-wing attitudes in Germany found that xenophobia, chauvinism, anti-Semitism and authoritarian longings were declining. Rightist worldviews were held by just 2.4% of the population, down from almost 10% in 2002. Yet even at the time, Andreas Zick of the University of Bielefeld, a co-author of the study, said the middle was fragile: xenophobia could increase again in a crisis.

It probably started growing in 2014, even before refugee numbers surged, when the “Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident” movement, or Pegida, began weekly marches through Dresden. After

waning last spring, it has waxed again with the refugee crisis. Meanwhile the populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, founded in 2013 to oppose euro-crisis bail-outs, has veered to the xenophobic right.

Pegida and the AfD have similar supporters. Pegida marchers tend to be older middle-class men anxious about social decline and cultural alienation, says Hans Vorländer, co-author of a new book on the movement. Pegida and the AfD have not merged, he says, only because their leaders loathe each other. But the AfD has ridden the anti-refugee backlash to score more than 10% in national polls. It is likely to do well in three regional elections on March 13th and to enter the federal parliament in 2017. Mr Zick thinks it has a potential voter share of 20%. Germany seems at last to be like the rest of Europe in having an entrenched populist party on the right.

Worse, the data Mr Zick is collecting for his next study, due in May, suggest that the middle of society is becoming radicalised. This is most evident in the rise of verbal aggression. A leader of the AfD recently suggested that border guards should “make use of their firearms” to keep refugees out. Facebook and Twitter are abuzz with hate speech. This “radicalisation of rhetoric blurs the boundaries between physical and verbal violence,” says Mr Vorländer.

Heiko Maas, Germany’s justice minister, is worried. He has invited his counterparts in the 16 states to a summit on March 10th to think up strategies against extremism. But as refugees continue to arrive, Germany’s tolerance and moderation are being tested as never before in its post-war history. The firewall it has built between respectable conservatism and the extreme right may be breaking down.

[From the print edition: Europe](#)

<http://www.politico.eu/article/francois-hollande-schroder-moment-valls-france-elections-president/>

141,36

François Hollande's Socialist revolution

French president takes big political risk by pushing a radical labor rules shake-up.

2/26/16, 5:37

PARIS — François Hollande is making a last-ditch bid for posterity — one that could see him booted out of office.

Fourteen months before the end of his term in power, the deeply unpopular French president is defying senior members of his Socialist party with a controversial plan to overhaul the country's labor rules.

Unlike previous labor market reforms, this one is far-reaching: It covers working hours, overtime, redundancy pay and social rights, all areas French workers hold dear.

Economists and some of France's closest partners are applauding a move they say follows in the footsteps of former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's "Agenda 2010" reform program, albeit on a more modest scale.

Agenda 2010 was a sweeping program of economic reforms focused on the labor market that many economists credit with helping to lower unemployment in Germany, often referred to at the time as the "sick man" of Europe. Despite that, Schröder lost his reelection bid after bringing in the reforms, and Hollande may be setting himself up as a sacrificial lamb: a leader who acts for what he believes to be his country's best interests, only to be thrown out of office at the first chance by leftist voters who feel betrayed by one of their own.



German Chancellor and social democrat Gerhard Schröder | Sean Gallup/Getty Images

"Hollande is perfectly aware of the risks," said a presidential aide who asked not to be named. "He is convinced that what is important is to keep reforming France, not to prepare for the election, because that's what the French expect of him."

In a country where previous attempts to change labor rules resulted in mass street protests and overthrown governments, opposition to the bill is spreading fast.

The hardline CGT trade union gathered other workers' groups this week to discuss an [organized response](#), threatening to stage protests of the type that killed previous reform attempts in 1995 and 2006.

But unions are likely to think twice about causing a ruckus under a center-left president.

Aubry attacks

The real threat for Hollande is political. His labor reform bill deepens a longstanding split within the Socialist party between those who support the Hollande line and those who see their future outside the government.

On Wednesday, the mayor of the northern city of Lille, **Martine Aubry**, and several other Socialist bigwigs signed an open letter that [condemned the labor bill](#) and a separate, highly contested measure to strip convicted terrorists of their French nationality. "Enough is enough!" they wrote.

The text, which has been turned into an [online petition](#), had gathered more than 500,000 signatures as of Thursday, while a poll by Elabe showed that [seven out of 10 people considered the bill a "threat to workers' rights" and less than a third thought it would create jobs.](#)

“The structure of our social relations are being laid low,” read the letter, signed by veteran Green politician Daniel Cohn-Bendit and sociologist Michel Wieviorka, among others. “Not this, not us, not the Left!”

Socialist insiders said opposition to the reform bill extended into Hollande’s cabinet, with Health Minister Marisol Touraine and Jean-Marc Ayrault, the newly appointed foreign minister, both opposed, albeit quietly.

Neither is likely to raise their voice, or pose any serious threat to the bill becoming law. Touraine just survived a cabinet reshuffle, and Ayrault has just been appointed to a high-profile position. **Also, despite opposition to Hollande’s bill among the Socialist majority in parliament, there is next to no chance that opponents will stop the bill from passing.**

Unlike with the nationality stripping measure, which must be approved by both chambers of parliament, **Prime Minister Manuel Valls can use an executive decree to force through the labor bill, if needed.** And while Hollande reined in his labor minister, Myriam El Khomri, for suggesting that such a decree would be used, a Socialist deputy close to Valls told POLITICO that its use was almost guaranteed.

A more likely outcome, two labor experts said, was that the bill’s more controversial aspects — notably an easing of rules for firing workers — would be watered down before heading to parliament.

Valls scheming for 2017?

Beyond the specific issue of the bill, growing opposition to Hollande reflects deep reluctance among many left-wingers to see him launch another presidential bid.

Socialist Party chief Jean-Christophe Cambadélis last week **threw his weight behind calls** for the center-left to hold a party primary to pick its candidate — a significant change in a system where the incumbent runs for reelection unchallenged in their own camp.

The potential candidate that most eyes are on is Valls, who would be first in line if Hollande dropped out.

Hollande has repeatedly said that if unemployment does not start to drop in 2017, he will not run for reelection — a strong possibility given the current jobless figures and which gives a window of opportunity for potential contenders such as Aubry and former Industry Minister Arnaud Montebourg.

Aubry has not clarified if she would run. She did attend a meeting in Lille devoted to discussing the primary.

The potential candidate that most eyes are on is Valls, who would be first in line if Hollande dropped out.

Some party members argue that the prime minister, by pushing unpopular measures such as nationality stripping and labor reform, is trying to force a split in the party ahead of 2017.

The prime minister himself has said that France’s Socialists, who unlike many of their European peers never became social democrats, was due for what he called “clarification.” A Socialist Party implosion would make his candidacy at the head of a broadened centrist platform almost inevitable.

However, a Valls ally said **the most likely scenario was for the Socialist Party to break up after defeat in 2017, not before.**

“We would end up with reformists on one side, and a (Jeremy) Corbynesque far-left movement on the other,” said deputy Christophe Caresche. **“The problem is that would seriously weaken the left, and probably keep us out of power for a long time.”**

Meanwhile, he said, Valls was loyal to the president. “The idea that there is some kind of evil genie at Matignon (the prime minister’s office) is false. All that Valls is doing is applying the president’s will. He doesn’t come up with the plans himself.”

141,38

Crise des réfugiés : l'Europe vit un moment historique

LE MONDE | 26.02.2016 à 13h41 • Mis à jour le 27.02.2016 à 10h55

Réagir Classifier

Editorial. On ne sait plus quelle expression utiliser. Sous le choc de la vague migratoire, l'Europe se disloque, se désintègre, se déconstruit. Sauf sursaut d'ici à un prochain « sommet » européen en avril, les historiens dateront certainement de cette affaire, de ces années 2015-2016, le début de la décomposition de l'Europe. Ils diront que ce fut un beau projet commencé au milieu des années 1950 et qui s'achève avant le premier quart du XXI^e siècle.

L'esprit européen aura soufflé, avec le soutien des peuples, plus d'un demi-siècle, avant que le projet ne s'éteigne, devenu impopulaire, victime de son incapacité à se renouveler, plombé par l'absence de dirigeants politiques européens d'envergure.

Encore une fois, il ne faut pas désespérer d'une possible rémission. Mais les faits sont là, durs, irréductibles à l'un de ses communiqués « communs » débiles dont Bruxelles a le secret. Les Européens se déchirent sur la crise des migrants. Les Européens soit ne veulent pas, soit ne peuvent pas faire face ensemble. Ils savent qu'il n'y a pas de solution unilatérale – sauf à sacrifier l'un d'eux, la Grèce, qui se transformerait en un immense camp de réfugiés. Ils n'ignorent pas que les questions posées par l'afflux de ces cohortes de malheureux fuyant les guerres d'Irak et de Syrie sont par nature transnationales.

La panique gagne

Mais à Vingt-Huit, ils sont devenus inaptes à l'action collective, hormis la gestion du marché unique. La tragédie des réfugiés a brisé les Européens politiquement, avec une Europe de l'Est qui n'éprouve aucunement le besoin d'une action collective solidaire : les pays dits « de Visegrad » ne voient pas en quoi ils sont concernés. La tragédie les a aussi brisés juridiquement : même votées dans les règles, les décisions prises par les sommets des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement sont violées sans vergogne par des pays membres qui ne s'estiment aucunement liés par leur signature.

Le spectacle donné ces derniers jours est bien celui d'une Europe en pleine rupture. En principe, les pays membres se sont mis d'accord en septembre sur la « relocalisation » de quelque 160 000 réfugiés, chaque Etat membre en accueillant selon ses possibilités. Mais sous la force d'un flux migratoire – plus d'un million de personnes l'an passé, autant attendues cette année –, la panique gagne. Un par un, les Etats suspendent les accords de Schengen sur la libre circulation au sein de l'Union européenne (UE). Les quotas de relocalisation ne sont pas respectés. Certains des pays qui furent des plus généreux comme l'Autriche – avec l'Allemagne et la Suède – referment leurs portes.

Référendum pour quelques centaines de réfugiés

Ridiculisant les décisions prises lors des réunions européennes, l'Autriche a convoqué cette semaine à Vienne une sorte de sommet informel rassemblant neuf pays qui forment la « voie des Balkans ». C'est cette route qu'empruntent les réfugiés pour gagner la frontière autrichienne à partir de la Grèce. Les représentants de la Bulgarie, de la Roumanie, de la Croatie et de la Slovénie, membres de l'UE, et ceux de l'Albanie, de la Bosnie, du Kosovo, de la Macédoine, du Montenegro et de la Serbie se sont retrouvés pour « isoler » la Grèce : en clair, contenir autant que possible les réfugiés en deçà des frontières grecques.

Ni la Grèce ni la Commission européenne, pas plus que l'Allemagne, voisine de l'Autriche, n'ont été prévenues. **Tout s'est passé en dehors du cadre de l'UE, comme si elle n'existait pas.** Colère de la Grèce, qui a rappelé son ambassadeur en Autriche. A Budapest, le premier ministre, **Viktor Orbán**, veut organiser un référendum pour approuver ou non l'accueil des quelques centaines de réfugiés attribués à la Hongrie. **Il en va, a-t-il dit, de la préservation du « profil culturel, religieux et ethnique » de son pays.** Cependant que la Belgique, amie de la France, rétablissait des contrôles aux frontières de crainte d'un afflux de migrants provoqué par le démantèlement partiel de la « jungle » de Calais...

Bref, une addition de réflexes nationaux, conflictuels et querelleurs. Comme avant « l'Europe »...

141,40

Vienna resolutions aim to stop refugees

The Balkan states and Austria have agreed in Vienna on joint measures for reducing the number of refugees on the Balkan route. Some commentators see the cooperation as a step in the right direction. Others complain that such unilateral action undermines European solidarity.

Greece being left in the lurch

Austria and the Balkan countries have washed their hands of the refugee crisis at their summit and put the entire blame on Greece, the centre-left daily Delo criticises:

“The Balkan states have simply waved the refugees northward as quickly as they could, passing the buck on to other countries. Yet another reason why their punishment of Greece, which is already so in ruins, is inappropriate. Athens is right to complain about the lack of solidarity. And it's completely unclear what Greece is supposed to do with tens of thousands of stranded refugees. International organisations warn of an imminent humanitarian crisis - a consequence of the Vienna-Balkans summit 'of reason'. The refugees will be forced to seek out even more dangerous routes, meaning that this is not the end of tensions in the EU.”

- **Peter Žerjavič**
- [Original article](#)

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FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG (DE) / 25 February 2016

Austria's step in the right direction

The collaboration between the Balkan countries and Austria won't reduce refugee numbers immediately but it will defuse tensions in these countries, the conservative daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung comments approvingly:

“Any step that quickly reduces the number of refugees arriving in Germany will produce a tailback elsewhere on the migration routes. ... If there is a consensus on decreasing the number of new arrivals the goal must be to ensure that conditions are as humane as possible for migrants stranded on the routes and that this doesn't cause political upheavals in the affected countries. So Austria's collaboration with the Balkan states is a step in the right direction: these are politically and economically fragile countries that until recently were themselves quite high up in the statistics on migrants' states of origin.”

- **Reinhard Veser**
- [to the homepage](#)

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DER STANDARD (AT) / 25 February 2016

Domino effect won't stop the flood

The Austrian daily Der Standard bemoans the lack of a clear approach in Austria's refugee policy:

“The goal must be to stop people starting out on the journey in the first place, because they know they stand no chance of reaching their desired destination. Nevertheless a repetition of the horror scenario of August 2015, when tens of thousands of desperate refugees were left stranded in Hungary, must be prevented at all costs. Yet this is exactly the effect the government's current strategy will have. The numbers - and the means of achieving them - have been chosen in such a way as to leave the door open a crack and keeps hopes alive. The domino effect Austria is hoping for won't be enough to stop the flood of refugees. Because it will take a long time for the message that there is an upper limit on the number of refugees [to be let through at the border] to reach Afghanistan, Morocco and Turkey.”

- **Eric Frey**
- [Original article](#)

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DIMOKRATIA (GR) / 25 February 2016

No solidarity left

The results of the Balkan conference in Vienna highlight the collapse of solidarity in Europe, the conservative daily Dimokratia laments:

“The EU members are nation states and they demonstrate this at every opportunity. No one thinks in European terms because no one sees themselves as simply European - apart from those [in Brussels] clinging to the mechanisms that created the power of those greedy and ruthless epicentres [the nation states]. ... As soon as the refugee crisis escalated, the rules, values and all those important things that supposedly make the EU what it is disappeared. Borders are being sealed and the Schengen Agreement and all those pages of text stipulating how the states should behave towards each other and their citizens have morphed into empty phrases.”

- [Original article](#)

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PRÁVO (CZ) / 25 February 2016

Fear of FPÖ prompted Vienna's turnaround

There is one reason in particular why Austria has stopped supporting Germany on refugee policy, the left leaning daily Právo explains:

“Polls from the end of January show that if parliamentary elections were held now the anti-refugee FPÖ party would win, claiming a third of the votes. Only a few weeks back it was at just 27 percent. The MPs won't be elected for another two years, but the Austrians elect a new president at the end of March. That president probably won't be from the FPÖ but if the ruling parties suffer major losses many a politician's seat could become wobbly. And every member of the political elite wants to avoid that at all cost - refugees or no refugees.”

141,42

- [WORLD](#)
- [EUROPE](#)
- [EUROPE FILE](#)

Merkel Says Greece Must Not be Left Alone in Migration Crisis

German Chancellor makes her comments after several nations decide to tighten their borders
By [ANDREA THOMAS](#)

Feb. 28, 2016 6:57 p.m. ET

BERLIN--German Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#) said Sunday Greece must not be left alone in the current migration crisis after several countries tightened their borders and started returning migrants to Greece.

The decision by Austria and several Balkan countries last week came in an effort to reduce the flow of refugees and asylum seekers across the Continent. But it has prompted fears cash-strapped Greece might turn into a holding pen for thousands of migrants fleeing war and poverty.

Ms. Merkel said [European Union](#) leaders will discuss the situation at their planned summit on March 7 and discuss ways to return to applying the rules of its Schengen border-free zone in Europe.

"I believe we simply can't leave Greece alone now," Ms. Merkel said in an interview German public broadcaster ARD.

"Do you seriously believe that all eurozone states--and we were the strictest one--fought tooth and nail for Greece to stay in the eurozone last year in order to plunge the country so to speak into chaos one year later?"

During the interview, Ms. Merkel said closing national borders and setting limits on the number of migrants allowed to enter a country is the wrong approach, insisting that a pan-European policy to help resolve the migration crisis is the only reasonable solution.

She also said she sees no reason to change her own pro-refugee policy despite criticism that the arrival of roughly one million migrants in Germany last year has divided the society.

"No, I won't change course," Ms. Merkel said about her migration policy. "I don't see anything that might prompt this because it's well thought out and logical. Nobody doubts this logic...unfortunately many don't believe in it, not as much as I do."

She said she is working toward reducing the number of migrants coming to Germany and Europe by fighting the causes of migration, by helping migrants attain legal status, by fighting human trafficking and by protecting the [EU](#)'s external borders.

Ms. Merkel's open-door refugee policy faces criticism in Germany because her efforts to get other [EU](#) countries to accept more migrants has so far been unsuccessful.

Bavaria's state governor Horst Seehofer, chairman of the sister party to Ms. Merkel's Christian Democrats, over the weekend refreshed calls to limit the number of migrants allowed to enter Germany to 200,000 this year, compared with the over one million asylum seekers who entered Germany last year.

The migration crisis is also a topic in the three upcoming German state elections on March 13.

Opinion polls suggest that Ms. Merkel's conservative Christian Democratic Union and the junior coalition partner, the Social Democrats, might lose votes, while the right-wing Alternative for Germany party, known for its opposition to Ms. Merkel's policy, is forecast to gain support.

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U.K. Euroskeptics Under Pressure to Offer Alternate Vision for Europe

Those willing to risk setting off the EU's disintegration need to say what should replace it, Simon Nixon writes

By [SIMON NIXON](#)

Feb. 28, 2016 4:28 p.m. ET

British euroskeptics are under pressure to set out their alternatives to European Union membership for the U.K., to which they have so far given contradictory answers. But a much more important question is: What is their alternative to the EU for the whole of Europe?

If, as many political leaders across the continent fear, a British exit from the EU, or "Brexit," triggered a wider disintegration of the EU, how should relations between European nations be managed in the future? What is the euroskeptical alternative to the "European project"? This should concern not only British voters but anyone who cares about the stability of the Western alliance.

True, few talk about the European project these days with much enthusiasm. What was once seen as the highest expression of post-World War II idealism—an attempt to bring peace and prosperity based on common values and the rule of law to a continent that had known centuries of conflict—is now widely derided as a hubristic attempt by unelected bureaucrats to undermine national identities and trample over national sovereignty. Yet, what is often missing from these critiques is any acknowledgment that the current European project is merely the latest in a long line of European projects that have over the centuries tried to bring some semblance of order to what has been historically a profoundly unstable multiethnic space.

The current European project at least tries to learn the lessons of past calamities. Recognizing the poisonous nationalisms that destroyed the European order in the 19th century, it is built around respect for nation states. Recognizing the catastrophic failure of the post-World War I experiment in a European order based on autonomous nation states, it is based on common rules supervised by supranational institutions. And recognizing how European order has frequently been undermined by ethnically-based projects and ruthless political repression, the current project insists on respect for democracy, personal liberty and human rights.

No one believes the current European project is perfect, not least those battling every day to try to prevent it from falling apart amid tensions over migration or the eurozone's continuing debt crisis. The U.K. isn't a member of the single currency and the Schengen passport-free travel zone, so it is shielded from the EU's biggest challenges. But British euroskeptics argue that the pursuit of common rules has allowed EU institutions to intrude too far on the prerogatives of government, depriving the British Parliament of its sovereign right to decide on apparently vital national issues such as the appropriate size of olive oil cans or the thickness of a latex condom—to pick two examples highlighted by leading Brexit campaigners last week.

In fact, the EU is struggling with the same dilemmas that proved fatal to many past European projects: how to balance the demands of the core and the periphery and how to find common solutions to common problems when political power and legitimacy exist only at national level.

The EU struggles to find solutions to the migration and eurozone crises not because the center is too strong, but because it is too weak. The stability of the whole depends on the capacity of poorly equipped national governments to deliver competent public administration. A related criticism is that the EU vision of an open,

free-trading continent is an elite, liberal—even neo-liberal—project that has never been fully accepted by many of its citizens, particularly in Southern and Eastern Europe.

The collapse of this EU project can't be ruled out—and a Brexit would surely make it more likely, potentially triggering similar nationalist revolts. That may not be sufficient reason for the U.K. to remain a member, or “to remain shackled to a corpse” in the vivid phrase used by euroskeptics. But it does mean that those willing to take the risk of setting off the EU's disintegration need to say what should replace it.

Do they have an alternative rules-based project to manage Europe and if so, how is this to be achieved? Or is Europe's destiny to be shaped once again by raw power and the bullying of smaller states? After all, this is far more than a dispute over trading arrangements. Most EU member states are also members of NATO, whose Article 2 commits its members to “eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and encourage economic collaboration.”

Over the weekend, finance ministers and central bankers from the Group of 20 largest industrialized nations warned that a Brexit would likely cause a severe global economic shock. And only last week, Greece temporarily withdrew its ambassador from Vienna in protest of fellow NATO member Austria's actions in response to the migration crisis. A rancorous EU breakup would risk putting the greatest strain on the relationships that underpin the Western alliance's collective security—at a time when that security has scarcely been more threatened.

141,45

OPINION

• COLUMNISTS

• DECLARATIONS

Trump and the Rise of the Unprotected

Why political professionals are struggling to make sense of the world they created.

By PEGGY NOONAN

Feb. 25, 2016 8:02 p.m. ET

We're in a funny moment. Those who do politics for a living, some of them quite brilliant, are struggling to comprehend the central fact of the Republican primary race, while regular people have already absorbed what has happened and is happening. Journalists and politicians have been sharing schemes for how Marco parlay a victory out of winning nowhere, or Ted roars back, or Kasich has to finish second in Ohio. But in my experience any nonpolitical person on the street, when asked who will win, not only knows but gets a look as if you're teasing him. Trump, they say.

I had such a conversation again Tuesday with a friend who repairs shoes in a shop on Lexington Avenue. Jimmy asked me, conversationally, what was going to happen. I deflected and asked who he thinks is going to win. "Troomp!" He's a very nice man, an elderly, old-school Italian-American, but I saw impatience flick across his face: Aren't you supposed to know these things?

In America now only normal people are capable of seeing the obvious.

But actually that's been true for a while, and is how we got in the position we're in.

Last October I wrote of the five stages of Trump, based on the Kubler-Ross stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Most of the professionals I know are stuck somewhere between four and five.

But I keep thinking of how Donald Trump got to be the very likely Republican nominee. There are many answers and reasons, but my thoughts keep revolving around the idea of protection. It is a theme that has been something of a preoccupation in this space over the years, but I think I am seeing it now grow into an overall political dynamic throughout the West.

There are the protected and the unprotected. The protected make public policy. The unprotected live in it. The unprotected are starting to push back, powerfully.

The protected are the accomplished, the secure, the successful -- those who have power or access to it. They are protected from much of the roughness of the world. More to the point, they are protected from the world they have created. Again, they make public policy and have for some time.

I want to call them the elite to load the rhetorical dice, but let's stick with the protected.

They are figures in government, politics and media. They live in nice neighborhoods, safe ones. Their families function, their kids go to good schools, they've got some money. All of these things tend to isolate them, or provide buffers. Some of them -- in Washington it is important officials in the executive branch or on the Hill; in Brussels, significant figures in the European Union -- literally have their own security details.

Because they are protected they feel they can do pretty much anything, impose any reality. They're insulated from many of the effects of their own decisions.

One issue obviously roiling the U.S. and Western Europe is immigration. It is the issue of the moment, a real and concrete one but also a symbolic one: It stands for all the distance between governments and their citizens.

It is of course the issue that made Donald Trump.

Britain will probably leave the European Union over it. In truth immigration is one front in that battle, but it is the most salient because of the European refugee crisis and the failure of the protected class to address it realistically and in a way that offers safety to the unprotected.

If you are an unprotected American -- one with limited resources and negligible access to power -- you have absorbed some lessons from the past 20 years' experience of illegal immigration. You know the Democrats won't protect you and the Republicans won't help you. Both parties refused to control the border. The Republicans were afraid of being called illiberal, racist, of losing a demographic for a generation. The Democrats wanted to keep the issue alive to use it as a wedge against the Republicans and to establish themselves as owners of the Hispanic vote.

Many Americans suffered from illegal immigration -- its impact on labor markets, financial costs, crime, the sense that the rule of law was collapsing. But the protected did fine -- more workers at lower wages. No effect of illegal immigration was likely to hurt them personally.

It was good for the protected. But the unprotected watched and saw. They realized the protected were not looking out for them, and they inferred that they were not looking out for the country, either.

The unprotected came to think they owed the establishment -- another word for the protected -- nothing, no particular loyalty, no old allegiance.

Mr. Trump came from that.

Similarly in Europe, citizens on the ground in member nations came to see the EU apparatus as a racket -- an elite that operated in splendid isolation, looking after its own while looking down on the people.

In Germany the incident that tipped public opinion against Chancellor Angela Merkel's liberal refugee policy happened on New Year's Eve in the public square of Cologne. Packs of men said to be recent migrants groped and molested groups of young women. It was called a clash of cultures, and it was that, but it was also wholly predictable if any policy maker had cared to think about it. And it was not the protected who were the victims -- not a daughter of EU officials or members of the Bundestag. It was middle- and working-class girls -- the unprotected, who didn't even immediately protest what had happened to them. They must have understood that in the general scheme of things they're nobodies.

What marks this political moment, in Europe and the U.S., is the rise of the unprotected. It is the rise of people who don't have all that much against those who've been given many blessings and seem to believe they have them not because they're fortunate but because they're better.

You see the dynamic in many spheres. In Hollywood, as we still call it, where they make our rough culture, they are careful to protect their own children from its ill effects. In places with failing schools, they choose not to help them through the school liberation movement -- charter schools, choice, etc. -- because they fear to go up against the most reactionary professional group in America, the teachers unions. They let the public schools flounder. But their children go to the best private schools.

This is a terrible feature of our age -- that we are governed by protected people who don't seem to care that much about their unprotected fellow citizens.

And a country really can't continue this way.

In wise governments the top is attentive to the realities of the lives of normal people, and careful about their anxieties. That's more or less how America used to be. There didn't seem to be so much distance between the top and the bottom.

Now it seems the attitude of the top half is: You're on your own. Get with the program, little racist.

Social philosophers are always saying the underclass must re-moralize. Maybe it is the overclass that must re-moralize.

I don't know if the protected see how serious this moment is, or their role in it.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/opinion/sunday/could-the-internet-do-what-the-euro-couldnt.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=opinion-c-col-right-region®ion=opinion-c-col-right-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-right-region&r=0&mtref=international.nytimes.com&gwh=0E6BAD3D599DBBE67351EA48DF0A6FA8&gwt=pay&assetType=opinion>

141,47

Could the Internet Do What the Euro Couldn't?

By MARK SCOTT FEB. 26, 2016

ROME — WHEREVER you look in Europe, the 60-year project to unite the Continent is starting to show its age.

Almost a decade of financial crises — including multibillion-dollar bailouts for Greece and Cyprus, often accompanied by onerous repayment terms — have eroded people's trust in many of the institutions that underpin the European Union. And the mass influx of migrants has tested the core tenets of the 28-member bloc, including the freedom to travel unhindered between countries.

Despite such challenges, Europe's policy makers — not typically known for risk taking — are forging ahead with a new plan to align the Continent's disparate, and often contradictory, digital interests. The outcome, though, is far from assured.

The goal is to create a so-called digital single market across a region with more than 60 languages and a population of more than 500 million. Such a market, officials say, would offer unfettered access to services like movie streaming, online shopping and cloud computing no matter where one lived.

The plan is the brainchild of the European Commission, the Brussels-based executive arm of the European Union. The digital single market involves a raft of new policies that would come into force — if everything goes according to plan — by the end of the decade. The proposal has been championed by many political leaders, including Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission.

By allowing anyone from Ireland to Bulgaria to tap into the same digital marketplace, policy makers argue, Europeans could access a more diverse — and often cheaper — set of online services, from discounted online shopping to video-on-demand programming. Right now, for instance, someone in Spain cannot legally view (or buy) digital movies or sports events that are streamed online by companies based in other European countries.

The hope is that a unified digital marketplace would help improve Europe's moribund economy by creating new businesses and tens of thousands of engineering and other technology-related jobs, according to European Union estimates. And it would help local start-ups harness the combined wealth of one of the world's largest economies.

Already, technology communities have sprouted up in London and Berlin. And while Europe is a long way from competing with Silicon Valley as an incubator for innovation, several European companies, including the German e-commerce giant Zalando, are already worth billions of dollars.

For a new generation of politicians here, the goal — despite the absence of bonhomie among many countries — is nothing short of a digital United States of Europe. “There are going to be no easy victories,” said Andrus Ansip, a former Estonian prime minister who is leading the European Commission's digital campaign. “It will be an uphill struggle.”

As a straight-talking Estonian, Mr. Ansip does not do exaggeration. And he's right about the obstacles, given renewed anxiety about the global economy and the growing number of migrants on Europe's doorsteps. After

all, if politicians can't agree on who should be let across their borders, some question how much time they will spend on ensuring that Amazon purchases or iTunes subscriptions are delivered efficiently.

And many vested interests could still scupper the plans. National television producers, for example, have long supported regulations that restrict people in France, say, from buying video-on-demand services from neighboring Germany. "As soon as you go across a border, it becomes complicated and costly," said Paul Todd, head of [eBay](#)'s European operations, adding that basic hurdles like high shipping costs limit people from reaching new customers. "There are annoying barriers to doing business."

A potentially deeper problem is that basic Internet skills — along with other essential services like high-speed mobile networks — vary drastically among European countries, as does understanding of e-commerce and general familiarity with the online world.

In Sweden, for instance, where the government pushed investment heavily in the 1990s for a fast nationwide Internet network and subsidized personal computers at home, roughly 85 percent of the population surfs the Web each day, based on [European Union](#) statistics. Three-quarters of Swedes also bought goods online last year, close to Americans, at around 78 percent, according to the [data provider comScore](#). It is no wonder, then, that Sweden has become the [launching pad](#) for global tech giants like Spotify, the music-streaming service, and King Digital, the mobile gaming company behind the Candy Crush franchise.

Compare that with Italy, where high-speed broadband infrastructure is only now being rolled out, and fast mobile connection outside big cities like Rome is patchy at best. Just over half of Italians are daily Internet users, and fewer than one in four bought something online last year, according to [European statistics](#).

As a result, experts say, those countries accustomed to living in an online world may well plow ahead with Europe's plans for a digital single market, while less tech-savvy neighbors — including Portugal and Spain — could easily be left behind.

"Everyone says we need a single digital market," said [Giuseppe Recchi](#), chairman of Telecom Italia, the country's former telecom monopoly. "But how do you make that happen so that everyone prospers?"

[Mark Scott](#) is the European technology correspondent for The New York Times.

141,49

Can Cameron keep Britain in the EU?

The British are set to vote on whether to stay in the EU or not on June 23. The UK and its EU partners have agreed on compromises regarding London's reform demands but the deal will only bolster those who want a Brexit, some commentators write. Others say that even if Britain doesn't leave Cameron has already done irreversible damage to the EU.

February 24

Brexit deal another nail in the EU's coffin

Regardless of the outcome of the referendum the deal between Britain and Brussels is another nail in the coffin for the EU, the liberal daily Público concludes:

“It's a deal that once again demonstrates that there is no equality in the EU and that different rights apply for individual member states. The agreement proves that any principle enshrined in the treaties can be ignored or amended when it suits the interests of a rich and powerful member state. ... But it is not just the content of this agreement (whether and how it will be implemented no one knows) that highlights how willing the EU is to go against a fundamental principle like equality among member states. It is also the way in which the negotiations were conducted.”



PRÁVO (CZ) / 24 February 2016

After the Brexit: the Czexit?

Speaking in an interview on Tuesday, Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka expressed concern that a Brexit could spark a chain reaction in Europe and also oblige his country to leave the EU. He's absolutely right, the daily Pravo believes:

“If you believe the polls, many Czechs still haven't cottoned on to the fact that being in the EU brings us numerous advantages. ... Emotions are particularly resistant to facts. After a Brexit more politicians here in the Czech Republic would start saying: Time to say goodbye, and good riddance. So leaving the EU could become a topic in the 2017 parliamentary elections. ... Common sense, however, tells another story. Things will be no better for us outside the EU, and for the same reasons that the dream of a neutral Czechoslovakia was dashed in August 1968. Sobotka said it loud and clear: The less EU, the more Russia.” **Alexandr Mitrofanov**

DIENAS BIZNESS (LV) / 24 February 2016

Britain's dreams of glory naive

Not the EU but the British will lose out if they vote for a Brexit on June 23, the business paper Dienas bizness argues:

“The UK is a state with a long-established democratic tradition, and its economic contribution to the EU is by no means negligible. So of course a Brexit would weaken the EU to some extent. Nevertheless the Brits will be the biggest losers. Because although the British still dream of their past glory, today Britain is only really powerful in military terms. Economically the country is no more than average: China has long since overtaken the former colonial power. ... And soon Indonesia and Brazil will follow suit.” **Līva Melbārzde**

LE MONDE (FR) / 22 February 2016

Concessions to Cameron were indispensable

The participants of the EU summit should be commended for their efforts to keep Britain in the EU, the centre-left daily Le Monde writes in praise:

“Were the 27 right to give David Cameron the special status he was after, allowing him to keep the promise he made to the British three and a half years ago and hold a referendum on EU membership? The answer is yes. The departure of the UK, the second-strongest economy in the EU - behind Germany but ahead of France - would be a fatal blow to the Union at a time when it is already in an advanced state of decay. If Europe loses one of its few members with a world-class diplomacy and an army that deserves the name, it would be drastically weakened at a time when it faces major challenges in a context of chaotic globalisation.”

- **Original article**

FINANZ UND WIRTSCHAFT (CH) / 23 February 2016

British won't sacrifice their economy

The British will vote to stay in the EU for economic reasons, the London-based economist and entrepreneur Anatole Kaletsky writes in the weekly paper Finanz und Wirtschaft:

“The economic challenges of Brexit would be overwhelming. The Out campaign’s main economic argument - that Britain’s huge trade deficit is a secret weapon, because the EU would have more to lose than Britain from a breakdown in trade relations - is flatly wrong. Britain would need to negotiate access to the European single market for its service industries, whereas EU manufacturers would automatically enjoy virtually unlimited rights to sell whatever they wanted in Britain under global World Trade Organization rules. ... Britain would therefore need an EU association agreement, similar to those negotiated with Switzerland or Norway, the only two significant European economies outside the EU. From the EU’s perspective, the terms of any British deal would have to be at least as stringent as those in the existing association agreements.”

Anatole Kaletsky

DAILY MAIL (GB) / 20 February 2016

Rotten compromise bolsters Brexit camp

The EU and David Cameron have missed a historic chance to radically improve the Union, the conservative paper Daily Mail laments:

“The tragedy is that the renegotiation offered a golden opportunity to address the myriad structural problems afflicting the EU, which have left its over-regulated firms at the mercy of international competitors. Yet the euro-elite has opted instead for business as usual, tinkering with the small print and fiddling while the founding Treaty of Rome burns. One thing is clear. Nothing agreed in Brussels will tempt a single voter to cross from the Out to the In camp (though it may swing some people the other way).”

- **Original article**

LE FIGARO (FR) / 20 February 2016

Cameron has already ruined the EU

Cameron has done irreversible damage to the EU no matter how the referendum pans out, the conservative daily Le Figaro criticises:

“If Britain remains in the EU on the terms it has now been granted, it will kill the Union. If it leaves, it will kill it too. In the event of a Brexit the political and economic setback will be brutal. But even if the agreement just reached does prevent a divorce, it will nevertheless usher in a gradual process of destruction. Because it is not

associated with any form of collective recovery project, the Brussels compromise only puts the worm in the apple: no one has any reason to abide by the common rules anymore, seeing as they can be avoided with a bit of blackmail.”

Philippe Gélie

BASLER ZEITUNG (CH) / 22 February 2016

On course for a "Neverendum"

From the outset Cameron was intent on maintaining his grip on power with the referendum but he has severely miscalculated, the conservative Basler Zeitung comments:

“Cameron was never an EU reformer and nor has he turned into one in the negotiations that have been going on since last summer. His goal was never a new EU but a few concessions that would enable him to win the referendum on the UK remaining in the EU. His priority is staying in power. With the referendum he kept his Conservative Party together and won the election last May that made him British prime minister until 2020. ... The purely cosmetic changes to the relationship between the UK and the EU won't produce a clear result at the ballot at the end of June. If the British vote to stay in the EU but the result is close, a 'Neverendum' looms. Then the demands from within Cameron's party for another referendum will grow loud.”

- **Dominik Feusi**

LIDOVÉ NOVINY (CZ) / 22 February 2016

British debate culture exemplary

David Cameron has everything under control even if members of the cabinet are opposing him and the chances of Britain staying in the EU don't seem great, the conservative daily Lidové noviny is confident:

“It's a kind of guided opposition. When the refugee crisis broke out in Germany the entire political class threw its weight behind Angela Merkel and her 'welcome culture'. Then they were all taken aback by how quickly the anti-system Alternative for Germany party and the protest group Pegida gained support. Cameron is keeping the debate about for and against the EU within his own party. When Justice Secretary Michael Gove spoke out for a Brexit Cameron simply said, 'I am disappointed that we are not going to be on the same side as we have this vital argument about our country's future,' but added that each would respect the other's position. This debate culture alone is a good reason why the UK should stay in the EU.”

JUTARNJI LIST (HR) / 22 February 2016

Summit was just a big show

All the drama and suspense of the EU summit were just a show and the outcome was decided before it even got started, the centre-left daily Jutarnji list comments:

“In fact the participants spent more time discussing the refugee crisis than the Brexit. There was no drama or suspense at the last supper, as the [tweet of the Lithuanian president](#) at the start of the dinner proves. Angela Merkel held back the whole time as agreed, and even had time to pop out for a portion of chips. ... The summit was a set-up so that Cameron could proclaim his triumph over Brussels back home even though no one ever really put up a fight for what he is now selling to his countrymen as the booty. It was all just a show, but now he must fight the real battle at home.”

141,52

Boris Johnson backs Brexit

London's Mayor Boris Johnson has announced that he will campaign for Britain's exiting the EU. He just wants to improve his chances of becoming prime minister, critics write. Others fear his decision to back the Out camp has made a Brexit all the more likely.

February 25

Brexit would suit the Kremlin's interests

Even if London Mayor Boris Johnson has thrown his weight behind the Brexit campaign the risks the UK leaving the EU entails cannot be dismissed, the centre-right daily Postimees comments:

“The money markets reacted to Boris Johnson's support for a Brexit with a drop in share prices - not just because exiting the EU would be more harmful for the British economy than remaining in it, but also because it would entail many imponderables. ... These also have to do with Russia. The analyses put out by [publisher and propaganda researcher] Ben Nimmo on how Russian media are reporting on the Brexit leave no doubt that Britain's leaving the EU would be entirely in the interests of the Kremlin.”

Urve Esias

LIETUVOS RYTAS (LT) / 24 February 2016

No wonder the British are Eurosceptics

It's easy to understand why the campaign for a Brexit is falling on fertile ground in the UK, the liberal daily Lietuvos rytas notes:

“Even in those countries of Central and Eastern Europe that receive financial support from the EU, there are plenty of Eurosceptics. ... And it's even easier to foment frustration in the donor states. It's logical that the UK has turned out to be the weakest link in the EU chain. The British have always seen themselves as somewhat detached from the continent, they joined the community later, and their transatlantic ties with the US are especially strong. Under these circumstances the British are prone to believe that Britain has to give a lot for its EU membership but doesn't get much much back.”

FINANCIAL TIMES (GB) / 23 February 2016

Churchill would see the big picture

Boris Johnson's decision is petty and narrow-minded in view of the global challenges Europe faces, the conservative daily Financial Times complains:

“A modern Churchill, which is what Boris clearly aspires to be, would immediately understand that Britain's decision about whether to stay in the EU has to be seen as part of a wider global picture. And that big picture is very worrying - with Russia rediscovering its taste for war, the Middle East disintegrating, violent jihadism on the rise, China flexing its muscles in the Pacific and the US flirting with the lunacy of 'Trumpism'. ... Given all that, it is depressingly small-minded of Mr Johnson to justify campaigning for Brexit partly on the grounds that Britain might save a bit of money on its contributions to the EU budget.”

Johnson's move makes EU exit more likely

A Brexit is even more likely now that Johnson has sided with the Out camp, the conservative daily Die Welt fears:

“His message is seductively simple: the European Union cannot be reformed in its current form and stands in the way of Britain's aspirations to sovereignty. ... British democracy gives a vital role to the umbilical cord between MPs and their voters. Unelected European decision-makers are considered foreign and objectionable. ... Nowhere in Europe is the question of democracy scrutinised as meticulously as in Britain. The British have retained a sense of their distinctive national traits and are even ready to take the leap into independence to preserve them. Already in a precarious state, the EU must now prepare for this eventuality.”

• Thomas Kielinger

Brexit as a lift to power

By openly campaigning for a Brexit London Mayor Boris Johnson could end up becoming the next British prime minister, speculates the liberal daily Hospodářské noviny:

“The affable mayor of London is very popular. He has a reputation for saying what he thinks on all subjects even if they have nothing to do with his office, the party or his areas of competence. A former Labour minister described Johnson as an 'intelligent Donald Trump', and he wasn't entirely wrong there. ... On the other hand he isn't regarded as a passionate Eurosceptic. It's more that he sees the Brexit as a lift that will raise him to power. ... If the British vote to leave the EU on 23 June, which can't be excluded, that would be the end for Cameron as prime minister. And the UK should perhaps already start getting used to the idea of a blonde prime minister with a Russian-sounding name.”

Jiří Hošek

London's mayor lacks credibility

The Mayor of London's support for the Brexit campaign looks very much like a calculated move, the liberal conservative daily Neue Zürcher Zeitung finds:

“Johnson's strategy of using the Brexit as a personal vehicle that will bring him into Downing Street is all too transparent. According to this logic if Cameron suffers a defeat in the June referendum it will free the way for his most prominent rivals to seek the party leadership and the office of prime minister. And this is something the enormously ambitious Johnson has been reaching out for some time now. ... It's not surprising that Johnson was immediately accused of lacking political credibility. Why is he suddenly ignoring the interests of the City of London, which for the most part wants the UK to stay in the EU? Why did he keep mum for so long if he's as fierce an opponent of the EU as he claimed to be in his column in the Daily Telegraph on Monday?”

The Brexit delusion

David Cameron will struggle to win a referendum on Britain's EU membership. If he loses, the result will be messy at best and at worst disastrous

Feb 27th 2016 | [From the print edition](#)



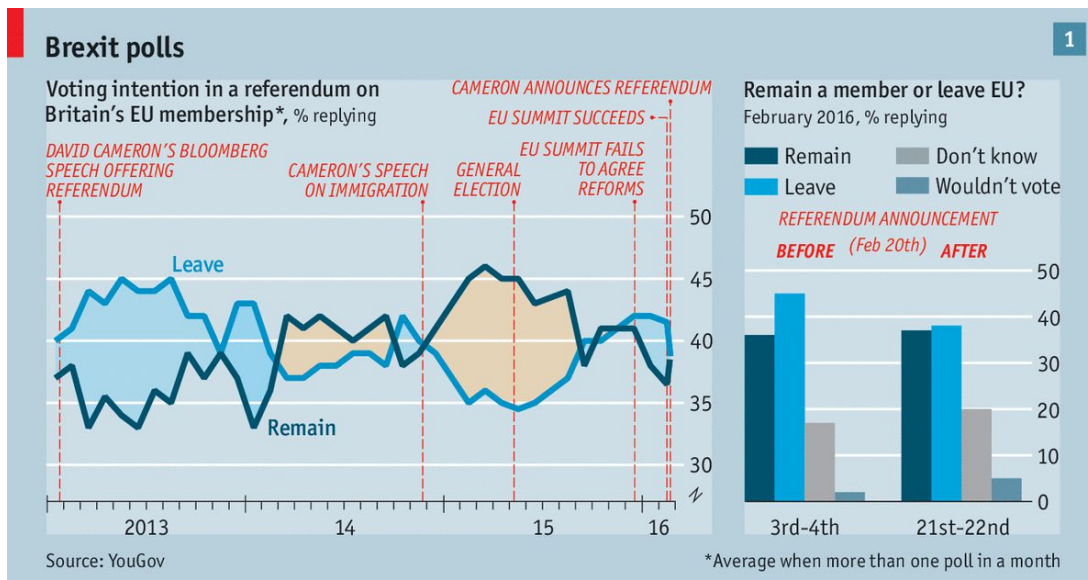
THE referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union that David Cameron has called for June 23rd will be not only the most crucial event in this parliament but the most important in Europe in years. It will determine the prime minister's future, for a start: it is hard to see him staying in office if he fails to win his campaign to remain in the EU. It may be decisive for the future of the United Kingdom, as Scottish Nationalists have said a Brexit would trigger another vote on Scottish independence. And the departure of one of the heavyweight members would have a huge impact on the future of the EU.

The referendum was called after Mr Cameron completed his promised renegotiation of the terms of Britain's membership at a marathon EU summit in Brussels that ended late on February 19th. In all four areas where he demanded change, he won concessions that could prove useful, even if they do little to swing the result of the referendum (see [article](#)).

Yet it is hard to portray these relatively small reforms as the fundamental change in Britain's relationship with Europe that Mr Cameron once promised. Nor did he secure the "full-on" treaty change he once said he needed. As a result, his deal suffered a predictable trashing in Britain's Eurosceptic press and from many backbench Tory MPs. This was a blow to Mr Cameron. But the referendum will be decided not on the details of his deal but on the far bigger issue of whether voters believe that Britain is better off in or out of the EU.

On this, a heavier blow for the prime minister came when six of his 29 senior ministers confirmed, after a special cabinet meeting on February 20th, that they would campaign to leave. Besides such usual suspects as Iain Duncan Smith, the work and pensions secretary, their number included Michael Gove, the justice secretary and a close friend of the prime minister. And on February 21st came the biggest setback to Mr Cameron, when Boris Johnson, the popular mayor of London and aspirant to the Tory leadership, announced that he too would campaign to leave (see [article](#)).

Even before these leading Tories had come out, opinion polls suggested the outcome of the referendum would be close. Since Mr Cameron first promised an in/out referendum in a speech at the London office of the Bloomberg news agency in January 2013, there has usually been a clear lead for staying in (see chart 1). As worries have grown over Europe's economic woes and its migration crisis, the gap has narrowed. The adverse reception of Mr Cameron's Brussels deal and the decision of Mr Johnson to throw his weight behind the leave campaign may shift opinion further.



Economist.com

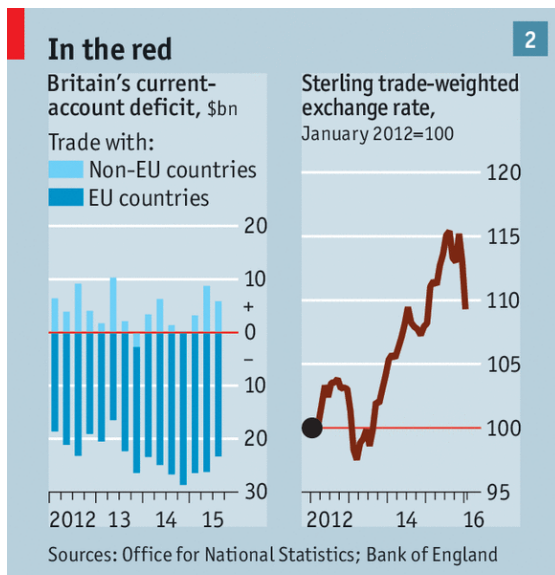
Belatedly business and the financial markets have woken up to the rising danger of Brexit. This week sterling slid to its lowest level against the dollar in eight years. Bosses of many of the biggest companies in Britain have come out strongly in favour of remaining in. Yet the chances that Brexit may happen look greater than at any time in the past five years. And that makes it worth dwelling on what Brexit would entail—and how it measures up to the promises of would-be leavers.

An infernal article

The merits of the claims of the leavers are hard to judge because nobody can be sure what relationship a departing Britain would have with the EU. There is no precedent aside from Greenland. It left the club in 1985, but it is tiny and remains a dependency of Denmark, which is still in the EU. The assumption, now confirmed by Mr Cameron, is that a vote for Brexit would trigger an application to withdraw under article 50 of the Lisbon treaty.

Article 50 provides that the EU will negotiate a new agreement with the withdrawing country over two years. That can be extended, but only by unanimous agreement. The article also specifies that, when agreeing a new deal, the EU acts without the involvement of the country that is leaving. To get a feel for the negotiating dynamic, imagine a divorce demanded unilaterally by one partner, the terms of which are fixed unilaterally by the other. It is a process that is likely to be neither harmonious nor quick—nor to yield a result that is favourable to Britain.

Indeed, the incentive for other EU countries is not to act with generosity. A decision to leave will be seen by many as a hostile and destabilising act for a union that is already in deep trouble. Voters across Europe are disillusioned with Brussels. Populist parties in France, the Netherlands, Italy and elsewhere are watching the Brexit debate closely. The EU will be desperate to show that a decision to leave does not have a painless outcome.



Economist.com

The immediate effects of a Brexit vote are likely to be bad. Prolonged uncertainty over Britain's new relationship with the EU will discourage investment, especially foreign direct investment, of which Britain is the biggest net recipient in the EU. This is particularly worrying for a country with a large current-account deficit that must be financed by capital inflows. Fears about the current account, Britain's credit rating and Brexit have been drivers of the pound's recent fall (see chart 2).

The longer-term effects of Brexit are also likely to be adverse. Most studies suggest that economic growth would suffer. A detailed analysis from the Bank of England in October found that EU membership had benefited the British economy. Attempts to model the consequences of Brexit point to economic damage. Two American banks, Goldman Sachs and Citigroup, recently warned that growth and the pound would fall further after a vote to leave the EU.

The trickiest issue for a post-Brexit Britain would be how to maintain full access to the EU's single market, the world's biggest. This is crucial since almost half Britain's exports go to the rest of the EU. It matters greatly for the fastest-growing component of exports, services (including financial services). It will not be simple.

Norway and Iceland have access to the single market through their membership of the European Economic Area (EEA). But they are obliged to observe all the EU's single-market regulations without having a say in them, to make payments into the EU budget (in Norway's case, around 90% of Britain's net payment per head) and to accept free movement of EU migrants. As a Norwegian minister once put it, "if you want to run Europe, you must be in Europe. If you want to be run by Europe, feel free to join Norway."

Switzerland, which is not in the EEA, has negotiated bilateral agreements that give access for goods but not most services. It has to keep to most single-market rules, contribute to the budget and accept free movement of people. The Swiss have been warned that, if they try to implement a 2014 referendum demand for limits on the latter, their trade agreement with the EU will lapse.

Countries such as South Korea and, now, Canada, have free-trade deals with the EU that do not require observing all its rules, paying into the budget or accepting migrants. But such deals do not circumvent non-tariff barriers, nor do they cover financial services. Moreover, the EU has or is negotiating free-trade deals with America, China and India, from which a post-Brexit Britain would be excluded. The EU has 53 such deals. Britain would have to try to replicate them, a huge challenge given its lack of trade negotiators and the length of time even simple trade talks take.

Heading for the Brexit

The Brexit lobby responds with three arguments. The first is to assert that both sides have a strong interest in a free-trade deal. This is true but any deal is unlikely to cover services. The second is to claim that, because Britain runs a big trade deficit with other EU countries, they need the British market more than Britain needs theirs. This is a fallacy: Britain accounts for only 10% of EU exports, while the EU takes almost half of Britain's. Moreover, most of the British trade deficit with the EU is with just two countries, Germany and Spain—yet a trade agreement must be endorsed by the other 25 members too.

The third argument is that a post-Brexit Britain could strike new free-trade deals swiftly. Yet experienced trade diplomats are doubtful. Tough negotiators like the South Koreans are unlikely to offer Britain the same deal they gave the EU. America, China and India have made clear that they would be more interested in a deal with the EU than one with Britain alone. When it comes to opening China to more trade, say, the negotiating clout of the world's biggest market far outweighs Britain's alone.

The next issue is regulation. The leave campaign claims that EU red tape hobbles Britain's firms and strangles growth. Yet studies by the OECD, a rich-country club, find that, despite being in the EU, Britain's product and labour markets are among the rich world's least regulated. Moreover, a post-Brexit bonfire of market-unfriendly rules is fanciful. Britain led the charge for environmental rules, for example. The biggest interventions in the market, such as tight planning laws and a new living wage that will reach £9 (\$13) an hour by 2020, are home-grown.

Immigration policy, on the other hand, would surely change post-Brexit. Although libertarians who want to leave favour more, not less migration, most Brexiters do not. Indeed, the big selling-point of their campaign is to restore British control of the frontiers by stopping free movement of people. It will be hard to do this and keep full access to the EU's single market; it may also compromise the position of 2m British citizens who live in other EU countries. But the bigger point is that immigration curbs would do economic damage. Studies find that immigrants are net contributors to the economy because they pay far more in taxes than they take out in benefits.

Brexit would also have implications for the survival of the United Kingdom. The Scottish National Party is campaigning to stay in. If the leave side wins thanks to English votes, which is quite possible, the SNP will demand another independence referendum, which it expects to win. Northern Ireland is also troubled by Brexit: Britain's economic, trade and political relations with Ireland depend heavily on both belonging to the EU. This helped underpin the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Then there are the implications for the EU's place in the world. As opinion polls have shown, voters in other EU countries agree with their governments in wanting Britain to stay in. Besides its size, global reach and free-trade instincts, Britain is a useful counter to the dominance of Germany and France. And, as the biggest military power in the EU, it is central to the club's foreign-policy and security clout.

Less clout if it's out

The growing role of the EU in global diplomacy, ranging from the imposition of sanctions on Russia through a nuclear-weapons deal with Iran to action against piracy off Somalia, would be severely diminished were Britain no longer in the club. The fight against terrorism would also be harder. It may be possible to try to replicate the police, security-service and judicial co-operation built up within the EU to fight terrorism, but it would take time and might not work as well.

Brexiters answer that NATO, not the EU, is the guarantor of the West's security. A post-Brexit Britain could still co-operate with the EU on security issues, including the European arrest warrant and exchanges of information. They also see no reason why leaving the EU should upset either Northern Ireland or the union with Scotland. Mr Cameron disagrees. In Brussels he said firmly that Britain would be safer and stronger, not just

more prosperous, in the EU. In the coming weeks, he will make domestic and national security a large part of the argument for remaining in.

The strongest argument for Brexit is that it is the only way to restore sovereignty to Parliament and escape the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. Mr Cameron's plan to counter this with an act that reasserts parliamentary sovereignty will not convince many, for the ECJ would still stand supreme. In a world with a network of international treaties and obligations, sovereignty is not a completely binary matter; as Mr Cameron put it this week, it would be possible to regain the illusion of sovereignty but without real power.

The conclusion is that the purported benefits from Brexit are uncertain and may prove illusory, while the risks are much greater if voters choose to leave. Similar sentiments led Britons to vote to stay in the European project in 1975, and Scots to remain in the union in 2014. And yet the outcome in June seems more uncertain.

That is partly because the leave side has had a good few weeks. But it is also because voters will be influenced not by a cool calculation of costs and benefits but by their general view of Europe. And in the midst of a huge refugee crisis and stuck in the economic doldrums, Europe does not look inviting. Referendums are always unpredictable: a sudden shock in the markets, or even a terrorist incident, could swing voters. There is all to play for.

From the print edition: Briefing

141,59

Britain's EU reforms

A change of status

Britain's prime minister got his deal—but it will make little difference

Feb 27th 2016 | BRUSSELS | [From the print edition](#)



AFTER 48 hours of hard bargaining and little sleep David Cameron, Britain's prime minister, emerged from a summit meeting of European leaders at midnight on February 19th to announce a deal on his four demands for reforms to the European Union. Donald Tusk, the European Council president, declared the creation of a "special status" for Britain. Whether it will count for much in the referendum is much less certain.

Agreement came most easily on competitiveness and the promise of more free-trade deals, to which all EU countries pay lip service, even when obstructing them in practice. Mr Cameron's demands on sovereignty were harder to settle. All agreed to give the EU's 28 national parliaments a "red card" whereby support from 55% of them could block EU laws. But several leaders were hostile to Mr Cameron's insistence on an exemption for Britain from the EU's goal of "ever closer union". He won it by what he called a "live and let live" approach: Britain will not impede others' desire for deeper integration so long as it can opt out.

The most important change Mr Cameron wanted was a guarantee that the bigger euro-zone block could not gang up on non-euro countries. The 19-strong euro area, with votes weighted according to the size of countries, now has the power to legislate for the entire EU. He has secured agreement for enhanced observer status for non-euro countries in euro-zone meetings and an understanding that a non-euro country can appeal to an EU summit if it objects to decisions taken at such meetings.

The most heated argument came over Mr Cameron's desire to stop new EU migrants to Britain from claiming in-work benefits for four years, and to cut the level of benefits paid for children whom they have left in their home countries. As a compromise, he secured an "emergency brake" that will let Britain delay paying benefits for a seven-year period and cut child benefits for existing migrants after 2020. East Europeans are unhappy with these changes. Yet they seem unlikely to reduce the numbers of EU migrants, since most come to Britain to work, not to claim benefits.

Mr Cameron insists his changes are legally binding and irreversible. But though promises were made to change the treaties in future and the European Parliament said it would help with legislation, some may still be challenged either politically or in the European Court of Justice. One proposal he was, however, happy to accept: that if Britons vote for Brexit, the entire deal will lapse. This is meant to bolster Mr Cameron's insistence that a vote to leave is just that—and not as Boris Johnson, the mayor of London, suggests, merely a prelude to getting a better deal from Brussels. [From the print edition: Briefing](#)

Boris Johnson is wrong. Parliament has the ultimate authority



Philip Stephens

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How does a sovereign country make itself more sovereign by declaring itself, well, sovereign?



The neuralgic word in the [British debate about Europe](#) is sovereignty. [Boris Johnson](#) has joined those arguing that the authority of parliament can be restored only if Britain quits the EU. The nation can then take back control of its destiny.

This is a beguiling pitch but the London mayor has a shaky grasp of Britain's unwritten constitution. In or out of the EU, Westminster has always been sovereign. The British parliament has been described as an elective dictatorship. The serious discussion is about how well it deploys its sovereignty.

Never over-impressed by inconvenient detail, [Mr Johnson](#) is not alone in his confusion. To win over wavering sceptics to the In camp, David Cameron has promised [a new law](#) putting beyond doubt the sovereignty of the legislature. The prime minister is in the realm of tautology here. How does a sovereign parliament make itself more sovereign by declaring itself, well, sovereign?

Britain has long been a prolific signer of treaties and an energetic joiner of international institutions. Dominic Grieve, a Conservative former attorney-general, once asked the Foreign Office how many such international documents bore the British seal or signature. The FCO went back as far as 1834 and counted 13,200, ranging from bilateral defence pacts and arrangements delineating, say, fishing rights to treaties marking UK accession to the UN and Nato.

Many of these will have fallen by the wayside but several thousand remain in operation. Each in its way chips away at notional sovereignty, whether by providing for binding third-party resolution of disputes or imposing voluntary restraints and reciprocal obligations. Torture is made illegal by Britain's signature on the UN Convention against Torture. The courts enforce human rights on the basis of UK accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Yet even as authority is delegated, the sovereignty of parliament remains unfettered. What Westminster devolves it can reclaim. International treaties and commitments bind Britain only in so far and for so long as a majority of parliamentarians so decide. Each and every one could be abrogated by a simple legislative act. Britain is free to leave the UN, quit Nato and renounce its human rights commitments whenever it so chooses.

The same is true of the EU. [Membership of the union](#) represents the most extensive and complex exercise in the delegation of authority to a supranational organisation. The European Court of Justice adds a dynamic legislative interpretation mostly absent elsewhere. The basic principle remains, however: the accession treaty can be revoked at the whim of parliament.

Sir Nicholas Macpherson, the permanent secretary of the Treasury, made just this point when Whitehall mandarins gathered in Brussels recently to discuss the implications of Brexit. No problem, Sir Nicholas told colleagues, parliament could simply repeal the 1972 [European Communities Act](#), which gave legal force to the EU accession treaty.

Nor is there any need for Westminster to wait for a referendum. Come to think of it, the self-declared champions of parliamentary sovereignty have rather undercut their case by demanding that a Brexit decision be settled by a referendum rather than parliament.

The choice is about how to advance the prosperity and security of the nation

So much for the constitutional niceties. The important distinction is between sovereignty and power. International agreements mark a recognition that sovereignty and real-world capacity to pursue the national interest are divisible — that a seeming subtraction from the former can increase the latter.

Britain's enthusiasm for such agreements is unsurprising. Its interests, economic and strategic, have for centuries been global. So are its vulnerabilities. Even in the heyday of empire, its politicians recognised that, while gunboats were sometimes jolly useful, Britain was often better served by international rules and treaties. That is why during the 1870s it agreed to submit territorial disputes with Washington to independent arbitration. The castaway alone on a desert island may be sovereign over all she or he surveys — and impotent.

What was true for an empire is all the more compelling for a significant European power seeking to navigate the age of 21st century global interdependence. The choice is not a binary one between sovereignty outside the EU and serfdom within but the hard-headed one about how to advance the prosperity and security of the nation. In the case of the EU what some consider a diminution of sovereignty is an addition to authority.

The prime responsibilities of government — safeguarding the security and liberty of the citizen and providing the framework for individuals to prosper — militate against the hoarding of sovereignty. The threats from nuclear proliferation, a revanchist Russia, Islamist terrorists, environmental degradation and international crime present one set of challenges; securing access to global trade, investment, and technological innovation another. None is susceptible to national unilateralism.

So to take back sovereignty can be to surrender control. Viscount Palmerston, the 19th century British prime minister, is often quoted for remarking that Britain did not have permanent allies but rather permanent interests. High on his list today would be the security of the European continent. These interests are best pursued, Palmerston might have added, through alliances.

141,62

How do Brexiteers justify the claim that the EU will give us a good deal when we leave?

Leave campaigners need to argue their case on the basis of years of painful negotiation, or accept that the EU isn't as bad as they claim.



Is leaving the EU going to be complicated or not? Photo: Will Oliver/EPA

By [Rupert Myers](#)

11:48AM GMT 29 Feb 2016



[1489 Comments](#)

The first sign of desperation from those campaigning to leave the European Union may have been the moment that Nigel Farage dismissed the collective concern of the G20 at their summit in China over the global economic shock posed by Brexit. The agreed wisdom of the world's major economies was

The reliance placed by the spokesmen for Leave on the international community is one of this referendum's many, increasingly tedious contradictions. "We can forge trade deals and partnerships with nations across the globe" proclaimed Michael Gove, but when [America](#), China, the International Monetary Fund and the world's developed economies side with the Prime Minister, then the same nations who will agree deals with us to save us from economic ruin are, to quote Lord Lawson, being "absurd".

"The Brexit campaign's current position on the EU is contradictory, and self-defeating."

The Brexiteers can spend the next few months alternately dismissing the international community's wisdom while pinning our economic future to it, but voters will be left with a feeling of cognitive dissonance. The biggest problem with Leave's present strategy isn't their problem with global opinion, however, it is their narrative on the European Union itself. The EU is a dreadful, sclerotic, intransigent organisation they insist, and with the next breath they assure us that our exit negotiations will be painless, and rapid. The Brexit campaign's current position on the EU is contradictory, and self-defeating.

While the government warns that the negotiated deal with the European Union following our exit [could take a decade](#), the fiercest critics of the EU suggest that after we leave, Brussels could become the treaty equivalent of an F1 pitstop. For years the EU's critics have rightly slammed the bureaucracy of European institutions, and painted a picture of an organization that only ever moves quickly towards a buffet table. Now, because it suits them, they argue that Nigel will drive up into the pit lane, and without even getting out, the EU's engineering team will replace the wheels, engine and exhaust before Team GB is overtaken, and before our economy judders to a halt. If nobody believes that such a rapid deal is possible, it won't just be because they prefer to trust the government and the experience of negotiating other deals, it will also be because years of colourful Eurosceptic criticism still rings in their ears.

Apparently, the eurocrats are poised to work speedily in the British interest, but only if we do the one thing designed to put their noses out of joint. Stay, and we'll remain part of the immobile super-tanker that is the

European Union, bound to a system which never gives us what we want. Leave, and they'll do precisely what we ask them to do in record time. No lost decade of growth and productivity.

If I were a eurocrat set on creating a federalist super state, which is apparently what they all are, despite the UK's negotiated special status excluding us from an "ever closer union", then I'd use the example of Brexit to set a pretty off-putting precedent. For the version of the EU described by its loudest critics, the way to ensure ever closer union for the remaining countries is for Britain to suffer pain. Of course they wouldn't be acting in their own economic interest, but we know that countries don't always act rationally – France's President Charles De Gaulle was dead-set against the UK joining the common market. What does it say about Brexiters if they think the EU is dreadful with us in it, but cheerfully accommodating and efficient when we have gone?

Leave campaigners are muddled on the EU. They can make a case for an independent UK being worth the economic price of lost productivity, jobs and growth. Splendid isolation and an independent future may, for many, be worth the cost of years spent renegotiating our position with the European Union, but they can't have it both ways. Brexiteers need to argue their case on the basis of years of painful negotiation, or accept that the EU isn't as bad as they claim.

141,64

We cannot trust the Europhile elite to hold a fair referendum

Even Hitler held referenda – although only ones he was sure he would win. Is the EU referendum heading the same way?



Are we being manipulated by the Remain campaign? Photo: Getty Images

By Nigel Jones

2:45PM GMT 29 Feb 2016



2 Comments

Coasting towards his landslide victory over Winston Churchill's Conservative party in 1945, Labour leader Clem Attlee had a typically robust response to the idea of holding a referendum to decide whether to extend Churchill's wartime coalition. Referenda were, he said, "alien to British traditions" and "a device for despots and dictators".

"Referenda, supposedly an expression of direct democracy and the people's free will, are usually only held by repressive Governments who control all the organs of persuasion and propaganda to ensure that the referendum achieves the outcome that they desire."

Attlee had a point. Ever since December 1851, when Napoleon's nephew Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte – later Emperor Napoleon III – held a referendum in France to rubber stamp his bloody coup d'etat that month overthrowing the Second Republic, referenda in Europe had repeatedly been used to give a spurious democratic fig-leaf to vicious dictatorships.

No wonder, then, that until Labour's Harold Wilson supplanted the staunchly Eurosceptic Hugh Gaitskell as Attlee's successor and imported the referendum from Europe in 1975, Britain had put its trust in Parliamentary democracy rather than an easily manipulated poll to resolve debates on the great questions of state.

For referenda, supposedly an expression of direct democracy and the people's free will, are usually only held by repressive Governments who control all the organs of persuasion and propaganda to ensure that the referendum achieves the outcome that they desire.

Already there are worrying signs in the early stages of our own referendum campaign to decide if we remain inside the European Union or leave, that the immensely powerful Downing Street machine is [tilting the level playing field to make absolutely sure that Britain remains locked inside the EU's burning building with the fire escape removed](#).

Every move by David Cameron, from the [gagging of his pro-Brexit Ministers](#); the [mobilisation of the officially neutral Civil Service on behalf of the Remain campaign](#); to the orchestration of the great and the good industrialists and [retired Generals to write to the newspapers](#) advocating Remain, shows that he has taken a leaf from the EU's playbook for running referendums. And the EU itself has always followed Europe's darkest and dodgiest historical precedents to either rig referenda, or overturn and re-run them if by some mischance they go the "wrong" way.

Most notoriously, Adolf Hitler, who openly despised democracy, used the device of a referendum to legitimise his repressive rule and approve his aggressive foreign adventures. In 1935 a referendum returned the Saarland (confiscated after World War One), to Hitler's Germany. The following year, with a turnout of 99%, a similar

majority of intimidated Germans approved Hitler's takeover of the Rhineland; and in 1938 the Reich's by now thoroughly cowed citizens overwhelmingly hailed the Anschluss – Hitler's occupation of his Austrian homeland.

"Even when referenda are held rather than scrapped, the EU has a failsafe position to fall back upon: ignore them or re-run them until the "right" result is obtained."

But Hitler only held referenda that he was sure he would win. Earlier in 1938, Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg, bullied and browbeaten by the Fuhrer, called his own referendum to decide whether Austria should remain an independent state or be absorbed into Hitler's Germany. Hitler, enraged by this defiance, promptly ordered the Wehrmacht to cross the border, cancelled the referendum, abolished Austria, and added it as a directly ruled new province of the Third Reich called the Ostmark.

Germany's current Chancellor, Angela Merkel, clearly knows her history. In November 2011, when Greek Premier George Papandreou had the temerity to call a referendum questioning the German-inspired EU austerity programme crushing his country, Merkel forced him to cancel it. Papandreou resigned within days and vanished into obscurity – though thus far he has avoided Schuschnigg's fate of confinement in a concentration camp.

Even when referenda are held rather than scrapped, the EU has a failsafe position to fall back upon: ignore them or re-run them until the "right" result is obtained. In 2001 the Irish voted in a referendum to reject the Treaty of Nice which allowed the expansion of the EU's tentacles into eastern Europe. Within a year Ireland was made to vote again – and [this time referendum voters wearily accepted the Treaty](#).

In 2005 France, followed by the Netherlands, voted in referenda to reject the EU's new federalising constitution giving yet more power to its unelected shiny-bottomed bureaucrats to override nation states. The EU panicked. Fearing that a democratic contagion was about to spread across Europe, planned referenda on the constitution in Ireland and the Czech republic were swiftly cancelled. The constitution was hastily tweaked and promptly made over into the Lisbon Treaty which came into force without the inconvenience of holding any further referenda with the faint chance that it might be rejected altogether by Europe's ungrateful voters.

So, as he sets out on the campaign trail to hoodwink us all into believing that the mirage of EU "reform" really is the fresh water of "safety" and "security", David Cameron has plenty of European examples to draw on of how to steamroller voters into submission to the will of their rulers. And plenty of evidence that whatever else it is, the European Union is the complete antithesis of democracy and freedom.

141,66

What are David Cameron's four EU reform demands, and do they matter?

David Cameron has set out four broad objectives for his renegotiation of Britain's European Union membership. What are they, how might he achieve them, and what would it mean if he did?

By [James Kirkup](#)

12:01AM GMT 10 Nov 2015



1023 Comments

Objective one: protect the single market for Britain and others outside the Eurozone.

Ministers' biggest fear in the EU is that the 19 countries that use the euro will use their majority in the 28-member EU to change the rules to the detriment of non-euro nations such as Britain, especially on the financial regulations that are vital to the City of London.

Mr Cameron wants new "binding principles" to ensure this will not happen. They could include an "emergency brake" allowing the UK to pause moves towards new regulations.

His problem is that to be binding, those new rules must be written into the EU's fundamental treaties, a process that will not be completed before Britain votes on membership by the end of next year.

Objective two: write competitiveness into the DNA of the whole European Union.

This is the easiest target to hit, not least because it is relatively nebulous. It is also an area where Britain has considerable support from reform-minded northern European nations, especially the Netherlands. The European Commission and its powerful vice-president, Frans Timmermans, is also committed to reducing red tape on European businesses.

So Mr Cameron will likely be able to declare victory by listing the regulations that are being abolished, though he is likely to stay away from rules around employee rights that some critics say hold back companies.

Objective three: exempt Britain from an "ever closer union" – and bolster national parliaments.

Ministers insist those three words, from the EU's founding Treaty of Rome, are not just symbolic and have been used to justify EU policies and laws that have reduced the scope for MPs at Westminster to set the rules for Britain. As such, they seek a formal legal exemption from "ever closer union" for Britain.

An agreement here is quite likely, partly because some other **EU leaders** do regard this as a question of symbolism not substance. But ministers privately admit that meeting the demand of some Tory MPs to give Parliament at Westminster a veto over all EU rules is effectively impossible.

Objective four: tackle abuses of the right to free movement, and enable us to control migration from the European Union, in line with my manifesto."

The issue that matters most to British voters, and the one where it is hardest to meet their expectations. Despite hints from ministers such as Theresa May, Mr Cameron is not seeking the right to limit the number of EU nationals who enter Britain. Instead, he wants agreement to limit such nationals' right to claim British benefits, requiring them to work for four years before being eligible for child benefit, tax credits or council housing. Ministers say benefits are a "pull factor" for EU migrants. Agreement there may be possible, not least since Germany may accept that such changes are already permissible under existing rules. But some economists suggest tougher rules may not significantly reduce EU immigration, since most EU migrants in the UK work and do not claim welfare.

141,67

David Cameron joue l'Europe à quitte ou double

LE MONDE | 22.02.2016 à 11h29

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Editorial du « Monde ». On croyait que les Britanniques avaient inventé la notion de «club» et, ce qui va avec, des «règles du jeu» auxquelles souscrivent tous ceux qui, précisément, rejoignent un club. Hélas, ce qui s'applique à nombre des merveilleuses activités inventées outre-Manche, du tennis au rugby, ne marche plus dès lors qu'il s'agit de l'appartenance des Britanniques à l'Europe : au sein du club, ils veulent un statut d'exception, toujours et encore. Ce n'est pas fair-play.

Le sommet européen des 18 et 19 février a conforté le statut de «membre à part» du Royaume-Uni dans l'Union européenne (UE). Au risque non seulement d'écorner quelques-uns des principes de l'UE mais aussi de susciter un effet domino, certains des autres membres du club réclamant les mêmes dérogations que celles concédées aux Britanniques. En toile de fond de ces aménagements à répétition se profile la menace d'une «Europe à la carte», c'est-à-dire une Union encore un peu plus vacillante qu'aujourd'hui.

Nouvelles exemptions

Au bout du compte, les Vingt-Sept ont-ils eu raison d'accorder à David Cameron ce qu'il demandait, ce statut spécial permettant au premier ministre conservateur de tenir une promesse faite aux Britanniques il y a trois ans et demi : un référendum sur l'appartenance du pays à l'UE ? La réponse est oui. Le départ du Royaume-Uni, deuxième économie de l'UE, derrière l'Allemagne mais devant la France, porterait à l'Union un coup à l'impact peut-être fatal au moment où elle est déjà en déliquescence avancée. L'Europe privée d'un de ses rares membres ayant encore un appareil militaire digne de ce nom et une diplomatie d'envergure serait singulièrement diminuée à l'heure où elle rencontre des défis majeurs dans une mondialisation chaotique.

M. Cameron obtient de nouvelles exemptions. Parmi les plus importantes, il y a cette faculté, accordée dans certaines circonstances, de limiter pour un temps les prestations sociales aux ressortissants européens venant travailler outre-Manche. Sans qu'il s'agisse d'un droit de veto, les Etats membres peuvent réclamer un sommet européen pour contester, et réformer, une décision prise par les Dix-Neuf de l'eurozone en matière de réglementation financière. Le pouvoir des Parlements nationaux est renforcé, là encore à la demande de Londres. S'ajoutant aux exemptions déjà décidées – qu'il s'agisse de l'euro, des accords de Schengen ou de la coopération policière et judiciaire –, ces dispositions dessinent le régime très spécial accordé aux Britanniques au sein de l'UE.

Humeur protestataire

Cela sera-t-il suffisant pour garantir le oui au référendum du 23 juin ? Rien n'est moins sûr. M. Cameron a eu les mots justes pour dire que son pays, en ces temps de globalisation économique et de menaces stratégiques renouvelées, serait moins à même de préserver sa souveraineté hors de l'UE que dedans. Mais il a contre lui un parti eurosceptique, un gouvernement divisé et une presse europhobe. Incapable de s'entendre sur un projet d'avenir, le camp du «Brexit» est porté par l'humeur protestataire de l'opinion et, depuis samedi, par un chef de file peu scrupuleux, le maire de Londres, Boris Johnson.

Le premier ministre joue gros. Si le non l'emporte, il n'y a pas que l'UE qui souffrira. Proeuropéenne, l'Ecosse pourrait décider de sortir du Royaume-Uni. M. Cameron restera comme l'homme qui, pour satisfaire un nationalisme anglais étreint, a pris le risque de démanteler l'UE et son propre pays. *Too much!*

Warum Frankreich keine Islam-Kritik duldet

Der algerische Schriftsteller Kamel Daoud ist für seine Köln-Kommentare scharf von französischen Soziologen attackiert worden. Ein Lehrstück über die Schwierigkeiten, den Islam zu kritisieren.

Von Martina Meister, Paris



Kritisiert den Islam und steht nun selbst in der Kritik: der algerische Schriftsteller Kamel DaoudFoto: picture alliance / Gattoni/Leema

"Wofür steht der Name Kamel Daoud?", fragt eine Handvoll französischer Soziologen. Ihre Antwort lautet: für Islamophobie, genauer gesagt für arabischen Selbsthass, der in Islamophobie umgeschlagen ist. Kamel Daoud zeigt sich in einem persönlichen Brief an seinen amerikanischen Kollegen Adam Shatz zutiefst schockiert von diesem "nicht legitimen, skandalösen" Vorwurf.

Welchen Verbrechens hat sich der algerische Journalist und Schriftsteller Daoud in den Augen der Pariser Akademiker schuldig gemacht? Er hat es gewagt, den Islam und seine eigene Kultur zu kritisieren. Er hat gewagt auszusprechen, was viele auch in Deutschland gedacht haben: Dass die sexuellen Übergriffe während der [Kölner Silvesternacht](#) womöglich kein Zufall, kein Unfall, kein von besonderen Umständen oder vom Alkoholexzess ausgelöstes Ereignis waren, sondern als Symptom gelesen werden müssen.

Als Symptom wofür? Daoud meint, als Symptom eines religiös inspirierten, krankhaften Verhältnisses zur Sexualität. Daoud sieht wie der Dichter Adonis im Verhältnis des Islam zur Frau eine Art "gordischen Knoten". In seinem Anfang Februar in "Le Monde" veröffentlichten Beitrag schreibt Daoud: "Die Frau wird verleugnet, abgewiesen, getötet, vergewaltigt, eingeschlossen oder besessen."

”

Das für die westliche Moderne so fundamentale Verhältnis zur Frau wird zumindest dem Durchschnittsmann unter den Flüchtlingen lange unverständlich bleiben

“

Kamel Daoud

Algerischer Journalist und Autor

Man sehe im Flüchtling nur das Opfer, nicht denjenigen, der alles außer seiner Kultur verloren hat, an der er festhalten will: "Das für die westliche Moderne so fundamentale Verhältnis zur Frau wird zumindest dem Durchschnittsmann unter den Flüchtlingen lange unverständlich bleiben." Mit anderen Worten: Wo sexuelle Befreiung auf unterdrückte Sexualität, wo Gleichberechtigung auf Missachtung und Unterdrückung der Frau stoßen, wo Werte des Westens mit religiösen Idealen des Islam kollidieren, kann es zu einer Katastrophe wie der in Köln kommen. Seine Kritiker werfen Daoud vor, Argumente für Pegida und Co. zu liefern. "Die herrschende Theokratie bei uns zu kritisieren wird für die [Islamophoben](#) anderswo ein Argument", entgegnet Daoud.

Daoud spricht Tabus an, die alle anderen meiden

Seine Analyse ist nicht naiv, wie ihm jetzt gerne unterstellt wird. Denn natürlich hat er die Gefahr gesehen, dass die sexuellen Übergriffe die Stereotypen des fremdenfeindlichen Europäers bedienen, der in den Flüchtlingen eben keine Opfer, sondern nur eine Horde wilder, unzivilisierte Barbaren sieht. Aber was man vor wenigen Jahren gefahrlos kritisieren konnte, provoziert jetzt Empörung. "Die Zeiten haben sich geändert", schreibt Daoud, "die Spannungen regen zum Interpretieren an, die Interpretationen führen zum Prozess." In diesem Fall hat er etwas Stalinistisches.

Daoud hat mit diesem Text an einem Tabu gerührt. Wie mächtig es auch in Deutschland wirkt, hat der hilflose Umgang der Medien mit der Kölner Silvesternacht gezeigt. Noch immer wird in deutschen Medien auf die Silvesternacht vorwiegend als "Kölner Ereignisse" Bezug genommen, als entzöge sich das, was geschah, dem rationalen Verständnis oder als versuchte man, es hinter diffusen Begrifflichkeiten zu verstecken.

Die französischen Kritiker Daouds sprechen in ihrem Pamphlet sogar von einem "fait divers", einer Meldung aus dem Vermischten. Sie werfen ihm eine kulturelle, psychologisierende Interpretation vor, wo es in ihren Augen doch um "soziale, politische und wirtschaftliche Faktoren" geht, dabei beweisen die 19 Unterzeichner, darunter elf Frauen, nur linksideologische Treue, für die sie selbst die Errungenschaften der Gleichberechtigung zu verscherbeln bereit sind.

Am Montag ist Daoud die franko-tunesische Schriftstellerin Fawzia Zouari zur Seite gesprungen. In einem Gastbeitrag in "[Libération](#)" kritisiert sie die ideologischen Scheuklappen der französischen Linken und fordert einen Diskurs ein, der sich nicht vor dem Vorwurf der Islamophobie ängstigt: "Ja, es gibt eine Psychologie der arabischen Masse. Ja, die Frauen werden bei uns als Objekte wahrgenommen, deren Körper versteckt werden müssen. Ja, es gibt in unseren Gesellschaften ein pathologisches Verhältnis zur Sexualität, das die religiöse Moral diktiert", schreibt Zouari.

Ja, die Frauen werden bei uns als Objekte wahrgenommen [...]. Ja, es gibt in unseren Gesellschaften ein pathologisches Verhältnis zur Sexualität, das die religiöse Moral diktiert

Schriftstellerin, die Daoud in der Debatte unterstützt

Fawzia Zouari

Daoud war es bislang gewohnt, in seiner Heimat unter Beschuss zu stehen, während er in [Frankreich](#) gefeiert wurde. Seine Kolumnen, angesiedelt zwischen Regimekritik und arabischer Selbstausslotung, stoßen in Algerien regelmäßig auf Ablehnung, werden aber in europäischen Medien gerne gedruckt. Gerade ist er mit dem französischen Jean-Luc-Lagadère-Preis für seine Mitarbeit im Magazin "Le Point" als bester Journalist des Jahres 2015 ausgezeichnet worden. Sein erster Roman hat sich in Frankreich über 100.000-mal verkauft.

Als er im Dezember 2014 auf Buchtour in Paris war, um den von der französischen Kritik vielgepriesenen Roman "Der Fall Meursault – Eine Gegendarstellung" vorzustellen, erntete er allerdings mehr als nur heftige Kritik in [Algerien](#). Im Dezember 2014 rief Abdelfattah Hamadache, ein salafistischer Imam, im Internet dazu auf, Daoud öffentlich hinzurichten. Als "[Facebook Fatwa](#)" erlangte der Aufruf schnell internationale Aufmerksamkeit. Die algerische Regierung beunruhigte er indes nicht weiter.

Kritiker schaffen es, Daoud zum Schweigen zu bringen

Was die Facebook-Fatwa nicht erreicht hat, ist absurderweise Daouds französischen Kritikern jetzt gelungen. Sie haben ihn zum Schweigen gebracht. Der Rückzug in die Literatur bietet sich ihm an als sicherer Ausweg aus dem ideologischen Dilemma, das Eigene nicht kritisieren zu dürfen. Für Daoud ist der Angriff von den "sicheren Terrassen der Pariser Cafés", während er in Oran täglich seine Haut riskiert, ein weiterer Beleg der Fortsetzung postkolonialer Herrschaft, weil die französischen Kollegen dem arabischen Intellektuellen die Freiheit des Denkens noch immer nicht zugestehen.

"Wofür steht der Name Kamel Daoud?", fragen seine Kritiker inquisitorisch. Für Islamophobie? Nein. Er steht für ein verworrenes Verhältnis zum Islam. Für Unsicherheit. Für die Unfähigkeit, die arabische Kultur oder den Islam als Religion zu kritisieren. Es ist wie eine Fortsetzung einer anderen, alten Geschichte. So, wie die Deutschen nicht in der Position sind, die Politik Israels zu kritisieren, sind die Franzosen unfähig, ein unverkrampftes Verhältnis zum Islam zu entwickeln.

Die Debatte über Daoud ist symptomatisch für das schlechte Gewissen des ehemaligen Kolonialherren gegenüber der arabischen Welt. Frankreich hat dieses Kapitel seiner Geschichte noch nicht aufgearbeitet. Dabei ist es die Sehnsucht nach Freiheit und Selbstbestimmung, die Daoud antreibt: "Ich schreibe, getrieben von der Scham und der Wut gegen die Meinen und weil ich in diesem Land, weil ich auf diesem Boden lebe."

141,71

Pour Macron, la politique budgétaire de Bruxelles est «mauvaise»

Par [Marie Visot](#)

Publié le 29/02/2016 à 19:37



S'il ne remet pas en question leur application, le ministre français de l'Économie appelle à «redéfinir» les exigences «beaucoup trop restrictives» de la politique budgétaire commune.

Ce n'est pas forcément une sortie que l'on attendait que la part d'Emmanuel Macron, venu à Bruxelles lundi pour un conseil sur la compétitivité. **Alors que le ministre de l'Économie a une image de sérieux et de rigueur auprès de nos partenaires européens, il a estimé que les exigences de la Commission en matière de déficit public étaient «beaucoup trop restrictives». Même s'il est de bon ton, en France, d'estimer que davantage de souplesse pourrait être intégrée dans les règles, personne ne s'était jusqu'alors aventuré à estimer ces mêmes règles «mauvaises», comme le locataire de Bercy l'a fait ce lundi.**

Mais comme elles existent, il faut les appliquer, a en substance dit Emmanuel Macron. **«Il ne s'agit pas d'ouvrir des négociations bilatérales, il faut rester dans les règles qu'on a définies, c'est important pour la crédibilité de chacun»,** a répondu le ministre, interrogé sur le sujet. **Et de citer le cas de la France - qui recule depuis des années l'échéance d'un déficit public sous la barre des 3 % du PIB -, forcée de «faire des efforts, légitimes, comme d'autres», pour se conformer aux exigences du pacte de stabilité.**

Mais, toujours selon lui, «nous faisons fausse route sur la politique budgétaire commune» et «redéfinir» les exigences serait judicieux.

Si Emmanuel Macron vient sur ce terrain, c'est en raison du contexte économique difficile que connaît l'Europe. **«Nous avons une politique budgétaire aujourd'hui, en consolidé, de type déflationniste, donc elle est mauvaise»,** a-t-il explicité. De fait, l'inflation dans la zone euro a baissé plus fortement que prévu en février, passant en territoire négatif, selon Eurostat. Les prix à la consommation dans les 19 pays de la zone ont baissé de 0,2 % sur un an, après avoir progressé d'à peine 0,3 % en janvier.

«Notre politique budgétaire, en même temps que la politique prudentielle, bancaire, assurantielle, doit être plus expansionniste, c'est un débat à avoir en commun», a conclu Emmanuel Macron.

141,72

[The Opinion Pages](#) | EDITORIAL

From 'Je Suis Charlie' to Attacks on Free Speech

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD FEB. 29, 2016

After the murderous attack on the offices of the satirical French magazine Charlie Hebdo in January 2015, “Je suis Charlie” became a rallying cry in France and across much of Europe in support of free speech and freedom of expression. It is a sad and depressing sequel to that display of solidarity that so many European nations seem willing today to curtail those same freedoms in the name of fighting terrorism.

As Raphael Minder of The Times [reported](#) from Madrid last week, a “lengthening string of prosecutions” across Europe offer alarming evidence that laws hurriedly enacted in the wake of terrorist attacks are being misused to stifle legitimate protest.

He cited the example of [two puppeteers](#) arrested in Madrid for a show that included a play on the names of Al Qaeda and ETA, the Basque separatist organization, as well as the conviction of the comedian [Dieudonné M'bala M'bala](#) in France for a Facebook post suggesting sympathy with one of the Charlie Hebdo gunmen.

Meanwhile, up to 100 people are under investigation in France under a new antiterrorism law for posting comments that appear to support terrorism; in Spain, a 21-year-old woman was recently [convicted of inciting terrorism](#) after she posted messages on Twitter calling on a radical far-left group to kill politicians.

These are not isolated cases, but the problem they point to is not simply one of misguided laws. The rise of international terrorist organizations and the ability of the terrorists to recruit and indoctrinate via the Internet and social media have created an indisputable threat to democratic societies, one that tests traditional boundaries between security and freedoms.

Even in the United States, where the Constitution proclaims that freedom of speech may be curbed only if it poses a “clear and present danger,” there is a legitimate debate about what this means in the context of the sort of horrific propaganda that ISIS has spread. In Europe, limits on what can be said or done in specific categories are not uncommon, such as laws in more than a dozen European nations that ban denial of the Holocaust.

Yet laws hastily adopted in the aftermath of a terror attack have a tendency to come back in forms not intended or foreseen. More dangerously, it seems an inevitable extension of Murphy’s law that if a government is given unintended powers, those powers will be misused. The [National Security Agency’s misuse](#) of its surveillance powers, as revealed by Edward Snowden, are a notorious example, and what future leaders might do is chillingly demonstrated by Donald Trump’s suggestion that the United States should close parts of the Internet to combat terrorism — and his postscript: “Somebody will say, ‘Oh freedom of speech, freedom of speech.’ These are foolish people.”

On the contrary, what is foolish is the rush to exploit fear and crisis to suppress the freedoms that define democracy — the very freedoms Charlie Hebdo stood for and its attackers sought to undermine. There is no question that terrorism requires a robust response, but it cannot be used as justification for arbitrary and unfair laws.

141,73

WIRTSCHAFT

STABILITÄTSPAKT

12:11

Diese faulen Ausreden zerstören die Basis des Euro

Der Stabilitätspakt sollte dafür sorgen, dass Europa klug wirtschaftet – und der Euro stabil bleibt. Doch nun behaupten die Staaten, sie könnten nicht sparen. Und finden dafür immer neue Ausreden.

Von Jan Dams, Martin Greive, Andre Tauber

In Shanghai sitzt Wolfgang Schäuble auf einem Podium der chinesischen Handelskammer. Eine Hand auf dem Tisch, die andere auf dem Bein. Ob China in diesem Jahr als Marktwirtschaft in der Welthandelsorganisation anerkannt werde, fragt der Moderator den Bundesfinanzminister. Das sei eine Entscheidung der EU-Kommission, sagt Schäuble vor 400 Wirtschaftsvertretern. "Bei der EU-Kommission ist man vor Überraschungen nie ganz sicher." Selbst in China lachen die Zuschauer, wenn Schäuble die Chance nutzt, Brüssel einen mitzugeben.

Er lässt selten so eine Gelegenheit aus. Während Angela Merkel gemeinsam mit EU-Kommissionspräsident Jean-Claude Juncker eine europäische Lösung in der Flüchtlingskrise sucht, ist Schäuble auf Brüssel schlecht zu sprechen. Nicht hart genug würden dort Reformen eingefordert. "Forderungen nach mehr Wettbewerbsfähigkeit", schimpft der Minister, "werden ja oft als deutsche Belehrung verstanden."

Gehör findet er mit diesen Warnungen kaum. Europa steht vor der härtesten Bewährungsprobe in der Einigungsgeschichte. Die Flüchtlingskrise zerreißt den Kontinent. Grenzzäune werden da errichtet, wo sie früher gestanden haben. Sogar über das Scheitern des europäischen Projekts wird gesprochen.

Angesichts dieser Probleme rückt die Frage nach der Haushaltsdisziplin in den Hintergrund. Mit womöglich katastrophalen Folgen: Einige warnen, dass schon bald eine neue Finanzkrise um sich greifen könnte. In Berlin wird gar das Ende des Euro heraufbeschworen, sollte [der Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspakt zerfallen](#).

Italien greift den Stabi-Pakt frontal an

"Der Stabilitätspakt wird von vielen Seiten angegriffen, im Moment vor allem aus Italien", sagt Clemens Fuest, Präsident des Zentrums für Europäische Wirtschaftsforschung (ZEW). "Die Akzeptanz für den Pakt ist nicht groß." Er sei durchlöchert und gleichzeitig mit Themen überfrachtet worden. "Das hat der Sache nicht gut getan."

Schuld ist daran nicht nur die EU-Kommission. Sie gab der Entwicklung aber richtig Schwung. Anfang 2015 präsentierte sie Pläne, wie die Regeln des Pakts flexibler ausgelegt werden könnten. Das Ziel: Investitionen und Arbeitsplätze zu fördern. Wenig überraschend war damit Begierde bei den meisten Regierungen geweckt.

Seitdem melden viele Euro-Staaten immer neue Notlagen, die weitere Flexibilität rechtfertigen könnten. Die Liste der Ausnahmen werde länger als die Liste der Posten, die noch angerechnet werden, lästern Gegner dieser Entwicklung, die es auch in der Kommission gibt. "Der Pakt ist wie ein Haus, das langsam von Termiten zerfressen wird", klagt ein EU-Diplomat in Brüssel.

Ganz genau schaut man derzeit in Europa nach Rom. Am Freitag reiste Kommissionspräsident Juncker nach Italien. In den vergangenen Wochen hatte er sich mit [Premierminister Matteo Renzi](#) gestritten. Der Italiener möchte Steuergeschenke verteilen und verlangt, dass Brüssel die Sparauflagen lockert. Die Ausgaben für Flüchtlinge in den vergangenen Jahren sollen nicht auf das Defizit angerechnet werden. Seine Forderung verband er mit der zeitweiligen Blockade von Hilfsmilliarden an die Türkei. [Juncker zürnte](#).

Am Freitag demonstrierten die beiden öffentlich ihre Nähe. Als sie im Palazzo Chigi, dem Sitz des italienischen Regierungschefs, gemeinsam vor die Presse traten, tätschelten sie sich herzlich. "Wir teilen die Meinung der Kommission zur Flexibilität", sagte Renzi. Er trete für ein "Europa der Werte und nicht der Zahlen" ein. Juncker lobte ein Papier zur Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion, das Italien erstellt hatte.

Andere Regierungen in Europa werden diese Entwicklung mit Interesse registrieren. Denn viele haben ähnliche Wünsche. Frankreichs Staatspräsident François Hollande forderte nach den Terrorattacken von Paris gleich, dass Sicherheitsausgaben nicht auf die Neuverschuldung aufgeschlagen werden sollten. Sicherheit sei wichtiger als das Regelwerk hinter dem Euro, stellte Hollande fest.

Wo ist das Ende dieser Entwicklung? Vor wenigen Wochen segnete die Europäische Kommission das portugiesische Budget ab, obwohl das Land zwar Zugeständnisse macht, aber nicht die nötigen strukturellen Anpassungen in Höhe von 0,6 Prozentpunkten der Wirtschaftsleistung bringt. Einige EU-Kommissare warnen, das sei ein falsches Signal. Doch EU-Währungskommissar Pierre Moscovici, der für die Bundesregierung längst so etwas wie ein rotes Tuch ist, setzte sich durch.

Deutschland ist erbost über die Entwicklung

In Berlin zürnt man hinter den Kulissen. Die Kommission sei schuld, sollte Portugal ein neues Hilfsprogramm brauchen. Man habe das Brüssel mitgeteilt. Offizielle Einsprüche jedoch sind nicht bekannt. Stattdessen attestieren die Euro-Finanzminister Lissabon, "keine ernsthafte Verletzung" des Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspakts zu planen. Weder Schäuble, noch seine Ministerkollegen möchten als die Bösen dastehen, die [in Portugal eine Regierungskrise](#) auslösen. "Es kämpft niemand mehr für die Einhaltung der Kriterien", klagt ein EU-Beamter. Die Kommission nicht und auch nicht die Regierungen. Ist das nur Panikmache, weil einige die Politik einer linken Regierung nicht akzeptieren? "Die jüngsten Ausschläge an den Anleihemärkten, insbesondere in Portugal, müssen ein Alarmsignal sein", warnt EU-Kommissar Günther Oettinger (CDU). Europa dürfe nicht das Zeichen aussenden, dass der Pakt nicht mehr gelte. Ohnehin seien die besten Zeiten vorüber, um die Staatshaushalte zu sanieren. "Die Maßnahmen der Europäischen Zentralbank verlieren allmählich an Wirkung."



Wir riskieren derzeit, dass Europa unter die Räder gerät



Gianni Pittella

Chef der Socialists-& Democrats-Fraktion im Europäischen Parlament

Neben Frankreich, Italien und Portugal könnten auch Länder wie Belgien, Irland, Finnland, Spanien und Österreich weitere Ausnahmen anmelden, wird befürchtet. Einerseits, weil es bequem ist. Andererseits, um den Populisten von rechts und links die Wahlkampfthemen zu nehmen.

Europas Sozialdemokraten fordern eine flexible Auslegung des Pakts. Gianni Pittella ist einer der Mächtigsten von ihnen. "Wir riskieren derzeit, dass Europa unter die Räder gerät", warnt der sozialdemokratische Chef der Socialists-& Democrats-Fraktion im Europäischen Parlament. "Wenn es uns nicht gelingt, die Migration zu regulieren und der Wirtschaft aufzuhelfen, dann werden wir in den Händen von Marine Le Pen (Front National), Matteo Salvini (Lega Nord) und Nigel Farage (Ukip) landen. Dann geht es um die Frage, ob wir Europa erhalten oder es der extremen Rechten überlassen."

Die Regierungen sollten sich um Wachstum und Arbeitsplätzen kümmern, weniger um die Sanierung der Haushalte. Das dürfte die zentrale Botschaft sein, wenn sich Mitte März Europas Sozialdemokraten in Paris treffen. "Wer Politik macht, kann nicht hart wie die Wand sein. Er muss seine Lektionen lernen", sagt Pitella

Frankreich wird den Haushalt straflos überziehen können

In der Bundesregierung hält man wenig von diesen Sprüchen. Weder in Italien noch in Paris habe die Sanierung der Haushalte jemals Priorität gehabt. Dennoch gehe es beiden Ländern schlecht. Schäuble glaubt an Strukturreformen. Nur durchsetzen kann er sie nicht. "Wir werden nichts gegen Frankreich machen", gibt man in Berlin für den Fall zu, dass Frankreich kommendes Jahr wieder nicht die Haushaltsziele erreicht. Schon aus historischen Gründen nicht. Angesichts der Flüchtlingskrise sei man auch nicht in der Lage dazu. Das sei Aufgabe von Brüssel.

Guntram Wolff, Chef des Brüsseler Thinktanks Bruegel, verteidigt den Stabilitätspakt gegen Kritik. "Der Pakt wird als eine Beschränkung wahrgenommen. Damit hat er sein Ziel erreicht." Wichtig sei, dass die Euro-Staaten künftig gemeinsam ihre Haushaltspolitik festlegten und sich Länder, denen es besser gehe, wie Deutschland, zu Investitionen verpflichteten.

Europa tief im Minus

Defizitquoten der EU-Länder, in Prozent

Prognose

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*
Dänemark	-2,1	-3,6	-1,3	1,5	-2,0
Ungarn	-5,5	-2,3	-2,5	-2,5	-2,1
Polen	-4,9	-3,7	-4	-3,3	-3,0
Schweden	-0,1	-0,9	-1,4	-1,7	-1,0
Großbritannien	-7,7	-8,3	-5,7	-5,7	-4,4
Bulgarien	-2	-0,6	-0,8	-5,8	-2,5
Rumänien	-5,4	-3,2	-2,2	-1,4	-1,1
Kroatien	-7,8	-5,3	-5,4	-5,6	-4,2

Maastricht-Kriterium verletzt

welt

Quelle: EU, Eurostat

Foto: Infografik Die Welt

Weich wie Pudding sollte der Pakt allerdings nicht werden. Wenn er zerbräche, dann müsste man auch den Euro nicht mehr verteidigen, sagt ein deutscher Koalitionspolitiker. So schlimm werde es kurzfristig nicht kommen, meint Ökonom Clemens Fuest. Er sehe eher die Gefahr, dass Europa versuchen könnte, sich mit weichen Budget-Restriktionen durch die Krise zu wursten. "Japanisierung der Euro-Zone", nennt er das. Ermutigend klingt das nicht.

Bye-bye Europe?

Großbritanniens Zukunft in der EU ist so ungewiss wie noch nie. In einem historischen Referendum stimmen die Briten über einen Ausstieg ab. Die Wirtschaft könnte am Ende den Ausschlag geben.

06.01.2016, von **MARCUS THEURER**, LONDON

Der Büroturm steht in bester Londoner Innenstadtlage: direkt an der Themse und schräg gegenüber von Big Ben. Vom siebten Stock aus hat man einen prachtvollen Panoramablick über das Häusermeer der britischen Hauptstadt. Die Büroetage ist damit eine standesgemäße Adresse für eine Bewegung, die dieses Jahr Geschichte schreiben könnte – und zugleich womöglich ein europapolitisches Erdbeben auslöst. Denn hier oben ist seit September das Hauptquartier von „Vote Leave“ untergebracht, eine der beiden Kampagnen, die dafür streiten, dass Großbritannien als erstes Mitgliedsland in der Geschichte der **EU** den Staatenbund verlässt.

„Im vergangenen Frühjahr dachte die Regierung noch, dass sie das Europareferendum leicht gewinnen wird“, sagt Robert Oxley, der Sprecher von „Vote Leave“. Er grinst. „Da haben sie sich wohl getäuscht.“ Glaubt man den Wahlforschern, dann hat die Europaskepsis auf der Insel einen neuen Rekordpegel erreicht: Im Herbst ergab eine Meinungsumfrage erstmals, dass mehr als die Hälfte der Briten für den sogenannten „Brexit“ stimmen will. Nicht zuletzt das Flüchtlingschaos jenseits des Ärmelkanals dürfte seit dem Sommer viele Briten darin bestärkt haben, dass die EU ein sinkendes Schiff sei, das man schnellstmöglich verlassen sollte.

2016 soll das Jahr der Entscheidung werden: Der britische Premierminister **David Cameron** hat seinen Landsleuten einen Volksentscheid über den EU-Austritt versprochen – spätestens bis Ende 2017, mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit aber bereits innerhalb der nächsten neun Monate. Der Regierungschef, der selbst ein Befürworter der EU ist, gab damit dem Druck der europapolitischen Hardliner in seiner konservativen Partei nach. „Cameron wollte mit dem Referendum Parteimanagement betreiben“, sagt der Antieuropa-Aktivist Oxley. „Aber er hat die Sprengkraft dieses Themas komplett unterschätzt.“

„Die Zeit arbeitet gegen Cameron“

Viele Beobachter erwarten, dass Cameron für das historische Referendum einen Termin im September 2016 wählen wird. Oxley tippt dagegen auf den Juni: „Die Regierung wird alles dafür tun, den Volksentscheid so schnell wie möglich über die Bühne zu bringen“, sagt er. Denn jede weitere Woche des Abwartens werde noch mehr Fernsehbilder von der Flüchtlings-Völkerwanderung auf dem Kontinent bringen, und die führten den Briten das wahre Gesicht der EU vor Augen. „Die Zeit arbeitet gegen Cameron und für uns“, hofft Oxley. Für den proeuropäischen Premierminister steht auch persönlich viel auf dem Spiel: Nach einem **Brexit** wäre Cameron vermutlich zum Rücktritt gezwungen.

Die Briten und Europa – das war immer schon eine schwierige Beziehung. Erst im Jahr 1973 und damit mehr als anderthalb Jahrzehnte nach der Gründung der damaligen Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft ist Großbritannien dem Staatenbund beigetreten. Das Verhältnis ist aus Sicht der Briten immer eine nüchterne Geschäftsbeziehung geblieben: Die EU, das ist für viele auf der Insel in erster Linie eine Freihandelszone, die wirtschaftliche Vorteile bringt. Alles andere wurde über die Jahrzehnte mit mehr oder weniger Gegrummel in Kauf genommen. Keinem anderen Mitglied hat die EU so viele Ausnahmen und Sonderregeln eingeräumt wie Großbritannien.

Doch mittlerweile ist die Vernunftfehe vergiftet, und es ist vor allem ein Thema, das die EU zum Feindbild vieler Briten gemacht hat: die Einwanderer, die insbesondere seit der Osterweiterung der EU vor elf Jahren in großer Zahl ins Land geströmt sind. In den zwölf Monaten bis Juni ist die Zahl der Einwanderer netto um ein Drittel auf den Rekordwert von 336.000 Neuankömmlingen gestiegen. Darunter waren, anders als etwa in Deutschland, nur wenige Flüchtlinge, dafür aber viele Bürger anderer EU-Staaten. Im Vergleich zur Jahrtausendwende hat sich der Einwandererstrom damit verdoppelt. Es ist ein Klima der Fremdenfeindlichkeit entstanden: Millionen Briten fürchten, dass die Neuankömmlinge ihnen die Jobs, die Krankenhausbetten und ihren Kindern die Schulplätze wegnehmen.

Großbritanniens Zukunft in der EU: So ungewiss wie noch nie

Um seine skeptischen Landsleute in der EU zu halten, versprach Cameron ihnen, in Brüssel vor dem Volksentscheid ein Paket von Reformen durchzusetzen. Es geht dabei um alles mögliche, doch wichtig für den Ausgang des Referendums

wird vor allem ein Punkt in Camerons Forderungskatalog sein: Er will die Einwanderung aus anderen EU-Staaten nach Großbritannien spürbar eindämmen. Dumm nur, dass dieser Punkt zugleich der brisanteste ist, denn damit meutern die Briten gegen ein Grundprinzip der EU.

Allein in der Terminologie liegen Welten zwischen Brüssel und London: „Für uns sind das keine Einwanderer, sondern Europäer, die von ihrem Recht auf Freizügigkeit Gebrauch machen“, stellte kürzlich Jonathan Faull bei einem Besuch an der Themse klar. Der Leiter der Task Force der EU-Kommission für das Großbritannien-Referendum ist zwar selbst Brite, wenn er von „uns“ spricht, meint der EU-Funktionär aber Brüssel. Allen ist klar: Wenn es nicht gelingt, den Briten in der brisanten Zuwanderungsfrage eine Brücke zu bauen, rückt der Brexit in greifbare Nähe. Aber bisher gibt es keinen tragfähigen Kompromiss. Cameron hofft, auf dem Gipfeltreffen der EU-Regierungschefs im Februar eine Einigung zu erzielen.

Großbritanniens Zukunft in der EU ist also so ungewiss wie noch nie. Aussichtslos ist die Sache der britischen Proeuropäer dennoch nicht: Der schwache Punkt der Gegenseite ist die wirtschaftliche Ungewissheit, die der Brexit zwangsläufig mit sich brächte. Die anderen EU-Staaten sind der mit Abstand größte Handelspartner Großbritanniens – und die britischen Europagegner haben keinen überzeugenden Plan, wie es mit diesen Handelsbeziehungen nach dem Brexit weitergehen würde. Man werde sich schon irgendwie arrangieren. Viel mehr haben Britanniens Europagegner als Antwort bisher nicht parat.

Ausschluss aus dem europäischen Binnenmarkt?

Dabei sind sich die meisten Ökonomen darüber einig, dass ein EU-Ausstieg ein Spiel mit dem Feuer wäre. „Dieses Thema ist so heiß, dass es heißer nicht geht“, sagt der Volkswirt Robert Wood, Großbritannien-Spezialist der Bank of America. Ein Brexit wäre eben nicht nur europapolitisches, sondern auch wirtschaftliches Neuland – und diese Ungewissheit könnte zu einer Welle der Kapitalflucht und einer Zahlungsbilanzkrise führen. Großbritannien ist verwundbar: Es importiert viel mehr, als es exportiert, und ist deshalb auf das Vertrauen ausländischer Kreditgeber angewiesen. Hinzu käme ein weiteres Großrisiko. Das proeuropäische Schottland würde sich womöglich vom Rest des Vereinigten Königreichs abspalten, um weiter in der EU bleiben zu können.

Vor allem die britischen Exportunternehmen wären durch den Brexit gefährdet, allen voran die stark international ausgerichteten Finanzdienstleister im Londoner Bankenviertel, warnt die Ratingagentur Standard & Poor's. Denn falls die Briten aus der EU austräten, drohte ihnen auch der Ausschluss aus dem europäischen Binnenmarkt, der größten Freihandelszone der Welt.

Exporte in die EU würden womöglich mit Zöllen belegt. Zwar haben beispielsweise Norwegen und die Schweiz freien Zugang zum Binnenmarkt, obwohl sie keine EU-Mitglieder sind. Doch beide Länder müssen im Gegenzug die freie Zuwanderung von Arbeitskräften aus der EU akzeptieren. Genau diese aber wollen ja viele europamüde Briten beenden.

© REUTERS, REUTERSEU und Cameron nach Reform-Gesprächen optimistisch

„Nach einem EU-Ausstieg neue Handelsspielregeln festzulegen, das ist leichter gesagt als getan“, warnt Markus Kerber, der Hauptgeschäftsführer des Bundesverbands der Deutschen Industrie (BDI). „Diese Ehescheidung wäre ganz bestimmt keine freundliche“, erwartet auch der Oberhausabgeordnete David Hannay, einer der erfahrensten britischen Diplomaten. Die EU hätte wenig politischen Anreiz, den Briten in dem Scheidungsprozess entgegenzukommen. Denn dadurch könnte ein brisanter Präzedenzfall geschaffen werden: Wenn Großbritannien gestattet würde, die wirtschaftlichen Vorteile der EU weitgehend ungeschmälert zu nutzen, ohne den Pflichten der Mitgliedschaft nachzukommen, warum sollten andere Mitgliedstaaten dann nicht dasselbe versuchen und ebenfalls austreten?

Quelle: F.A.Z.

141,77

Kann Cameron Großbritannien in der EU halten?

Die Briten sollen am 23. Juni über den Verbleib in der EU abstimmen. Großbritannien und seine EU-Partner einigten sich zuvor auf Kompromisse zu Londons Reformforderungen. Doch diese stärken nur die Austrittsbefürworter, meinen einige Kommentatoren. Für andere hat Cameron der EU irreparablen Schaden zugefügt - auch wenn das Land in der Union bleibt.

Debatte teilen auf



ALLE ZITATE ÖFFNEN/SCHLIESSE

PÚBLICO (PT) / 23. Februar 2016

Brexit-Abkommen ist Sargnagel der Union

Die Einigung zwischen Großbritannien und Brüssel ist unabhängig vom Ausgang des Referendums im Juni der Sargnagel der EU, findet die liberale Tageszeitung Público:

„Es handelt sich um eine Vereinbarung, die erneut gezeigt hat, dass es innerhalb der EU einfach keine Gleichstellung gibt und dass unterschiedliche Rechte für die einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten gelten. Das Abkommen beweist, dass jedes in den Verträgen verankerte Prinzip einfach ignoriert oder abgeändert werden kann, wenn es dem Wohle eines reichen und mächtigen Mitgliedsstaates dient. ... Es ist aber nicht nur der Inhalt dieses Abkommens (ob und wie es umgesetzt werden soll, weiß noch niemand), der verdeutlicht, wie sehr die EU bereit ist, auf etwas so Grundlegendes wie das Prinzip der Gleichheit zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten zu verzichten. Es ist auch die Art und Weise wie diese Verhandlungen geführt wurden.“

- José Vítor Malheiros
- [Zum Originalartikel](#)

Teilen auf



PRAVO (CZ) / 24. Februar 2016

Kommt nach Brexit der Čexit?

Tschechiens Premier Bohuslav Sobotka hat sich am Dienstag in einem Interview besorgt gezeigt, dass ein möglicher Brexit eine Kettenreaktion in Europa auslösen könnte und etwa auch sein Land den EU-Austritt forcieren könnte. Seine Befürchtungen sind durchaus berechtigt, glaubt die linke Tageszeitung Pravo:

„Das Bewusstsein, dass uns die EU eine Menge bringt, ist bei uns laut Umfragen nicht gerade ausgeprägt. ... Emotionen ist durch Fakten schwer beizukommen. Nach einem Brexit werden auch Politiker bei uns lauter sagen: Gehen wir, es wird besser so. Der Austritt aus der EU könnte so zum Thema der Parlamentswahlen 2017 werden. ... Der gesunde Menschenverstand sagt aber etwas anderes: Außerhalb der EU werden wir es nicht besser haben. Und zwar aus dem gleichen Grund, aus dem auch der Traum von einer neutralen Tschechoslowakei im August 1968 enden musste. Sobotka formulierte es klar: Je weniger EU, desto mehr Russland.“

- Alexandr Mitrofanov
- [zur Homepage](#)

Teilen auf



Britische Großmachtsträume sind naiv

Die Briten wären dumm, wenn sie sich wirtschaftlich mächtig wähnen und deshalb am 23. Juni für den Brexit stimmen, glaubt die Wirtschaftszeitung Dienas bizness:

„Da Großbritannien ein Staat mit langjährigen demokratischen Traditionen und sein wirtschaftlicher Beitrag für Europa nicht unbedeutend ist, würde sein Austritt die EU durchaus schwächen. Dennoch würden die Briten die großen Verlierer sein. Denn obwohl sie noch immer von ihrer vergangenen Großmacht träumen, ist Großbritannien nur in militärischer Hinsicht wirklich mächtig. Wirtschaftlich ist das Land nur Durchschnitt: ... China hat die frühere koloniale Großmacht längst überholt. Und bald werden auch Indonesien und Brasilien Großbritannien überflügeln.“

- **Līva Melbāržde**
- **Zum Originalartikel**

Teilen auf



Zugeständnisse an Cameron waren unerlässlich

Lob für ihre Anstrengungen, Großbritannien in der EU zu halten, bekommen die Teilnehmer des EU-Gipfels von der linksliberalen Tageszeitung Le Monde:

„War es von den 27 richtig, David Cameron das zuzugestehen, was er verlangt hat? Diesen Sonderstatus, der dem konservativen britischen Premier erlaubt, das Versprechen einzuhalten, das er den Briten vor dreieinhalb Jahren gegeben hat, ein Referendum über die Mitgliedschaft des Landes in der EU? Die Antwort lautet Ja. Ein Austritt Großbritanniens, der zweitstärksten Volkswirtschaft der EU nach Deutschland und vor Frankreich, würde der Gemeinschaft einen Schlag versetzen, der angesichts ihres bereits fortgeschrittenen Zerfalls fatale Folgen haben kann. Verliert Europa eines seiner wenigen Mitglieder, das noch über einen echten Militärapparat und eine umfassende Außenpolitik verfügt, würde dies die Gemeinschaft drastisch schwächen und dies in einer Phase, in der sie in der chaotischen Globalisierung mit enormen Herausforderungen konfrontiert ist.“

- **Zum Originalartikel**

Teilen auf



Briten werden ihre Wirtschaft nicht opfern

Die Briten werden aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen für den Verbleib in der EU stimmen, schreibt der Londoner Ökonom und Unternehmer Anatole Kaletsky in der Wochenzeitung Finanz und Wirtschaft:

„Die wirtschaftlichen Schwierigkeiten im Zuge des EU-Austritts wären enorm. Das Hauptargument der Brexit-Kampagne - Grossbritanniens grosses Handelsdefizit sei seine Stärke, da die EU bei einem Einbruch der Handelsbeziehungen mehr zu verlieren habe - ist falsch. Grossbritannien müsste für seine Service-Branchen den Zugang zum europäischen Markt neu verhandeln. EU-Produzenten hingegen könnten ihre Waren unter den Regelungen der Welthandelsorganisation WTO nach Belieben und ohne jegliche Einschränkungen in Grossbritannien verkaufen. ... Grossbritannien bräuchte also ein Assoziierungsabkommen mit der EU, ähnlich wie dasjenige der Schweiz oder Norwegens, der einzigen beiden bedeutenden Volkswirtschaften Europas ausserhalb der EU. Aus Sicht der EU müssten die Bedingungen eines solchen Abkommens mindestens ebenso strikt sein wie diejenigen der bestehenden Assoziierungsverträge.“

- **Anatole Kaletsky**
- **Zum Originalartikel**

Teilen auf



Fauler Kompromiss stärkt Austrittsbefürworter

Die EU und David Cameron haben eine historische Chance verpasst, die Union grundlegend zum Besseren zu verändern, klagt die konservative Tageszeitung Daily Mail:

„Die Tragödie besteht darin, dass die Reformverhandlungen eine einmalige Gelegenheit boten, die unzähligen strukturellen Probleme der EU anzugehen, durch die deren überregulierte Unternehmen den internationalen Konkurrenten schutzlos ausgeliefert sind. Doch die Euro-Elite hat sich entschieden, den gewohnten Gang weiterzugehen, sie spielte tricksend mit dem Kleingedruckten herum, während der Gründungsvertrag von Rom in Flammen steht. Eines ist klar: Nichts von dem, was in Brüssel vereinbart wurde, wird auch nur einen einzigen Wähler dazu bewegen, vom Lager der EU-Austrittsbefürworter zu dem der EU-Anhänger zu wechseln. Vielmehr könnte es einige Menschen dazu bewegen, den umgekehrten Weg einzuschlagen.“

- [Zum Originalartikel](#)

Teilen auf



Cameron hat die EU schon ruiniert

Cameron hat der EU irreparablen Schaden zugefügt - unabhängig vom Ausgang des Referendums, analysiert die konservative Tageszeitung Le Figaro:

„Wenn Großbritannien zu den Bedingungen, die ihm eingeräumt werden, in der EU bleibt, tötet es die Union. Wenn das Land austritt, tötet es sie ebenfalls. Im Falle eines Brexit wäre der politische und wirtschaftliche Rückschlag brutal. Auch wenn die frisch errungene Einigung die Scheidung verhindern kann, wird trotzdem ein langsamer Rückbauprozess in Gang gesetzt. Da es kein gemeinsames Projekt gibt, um der EU neuen Schwung zu geben, setzt der Brüsseler Kompromiss den Wurm in die Frucht: Für niemanden gibt es mehr einen Grund, sich an die gemeinsamen Regeln zu halten, weil man sich diesen durch ein bisschen Erpressung entziehen kann.“

- **Philippe Gélie**
- [zur Homepage](#)

Teilen auf



Auf dem Weg zum "Neverendum"

Die Volksabstimmung über den Verbleib in der EU diente von Anfang an Camerons Machterhalt, doch hat er sich damit politisch verrechnet, meint die rechts-konservative Basler Zeitung:

„Cameron war nie ein Reformder der EU und ist es auch in den seit letztem Sommer laufenden Verhandlungen nicht geworden. Sein Ziel war nicht eine neue EU, sondern ein paar Zugeständnisse, um das angekündigte Referendum über einen Verbleib Grossbritanniens in der EU zu gewinnen. Es geht ihm um die Erhaltung seiner Macht. Mit dem Referendum hielt er seine konservative Partei zusammen und erreichte letzten Mai den Wahlsieg, der ihn bis 2020 zum britischen Premier macht. ... Die bloss kosmetischen Korrekturen im Verhältnis von Grossbritannien mit der EU werden Ende Juni kaum zu einem klaren Ergebnis an der Urne führen. Bleiben die Briten aber nur knapp in der EU, droht ein 'Neverendum'. Dann wird gerade in Camerons Partei die Forderung erst recht laut, dass schon in einigen Jahren eine neue Abstimmung durchgeführt wird.“

- **Dominik Feusi**
- [zur Homepage](#)

Teilen auf



Britische Debattenkultur vorbildlich

Die Aussichten für ein Ja der Briten zum Verbleib in der EU scheinen auf den ersten Blick nicht groß zu sein, wenn sich schon Kabinettsmitglieder von Premier David Cameron absetzen, analysiert die konservative Tageszeitung Lidové noviny, ist aber zuversichtlich, dass Cameron alles unter Kontrolle hat:

„Es handelt sich um eine Art gelenkter Opposition. Als in Deutschland die Flüchtlingskrise begann, stellte sich die ganze politische Klasse hinter Angela Merkel und ihre Willkommenskultur. Und dann staunte man, wie stark die Antisystempartei AfD und die Protestgruppe Pegida wurden. Cameron hält die Debatte über das Für und Wider zur EU in seiner eigenen Partei. Als sich Justizminister Gove für den Brexit aussprach, sagte Cameron einfach: 'Schade, dass mein enger Freund im anderen Lager argumentieren wird. Wir werden aber die Position des Anderen gegenseitig respektieren.' Allein diese Debattenkultur ist ein Grund dafür, dass Großbritannien in der EU bleiben sollte.“

- **Zbyněk Petráček**

- [zur Homepage](#)

Teilen auf



Gipfel war eine einzige Show

Die Dramatik und proklamierte Ungewissheit des EU-Gipfels war reine Inszenierung und das Ergebnis stand schon vorher fest, kritisiert die linksliberale Tageszeitung Jutarnji list:

„Tatsächlich wurde mehr Zeit über die Flüchtlingskrise diskutiert, als über den Brexit. Die Dramatik und Ungewissheit beim gemeinsamen Abendessen gab es nicht wirklich, wie der Tweet der litauischen Präsidentin zu Beginn des Dinners beweist. Angela Merkel hielt sich verabredet die ganze Zeit zurück und hatte sogar Zeit, das Tagungsgebäude zu verlassen und sich zwischendurch Pommes zu holen. ... Der Gipfel war eine Inszenierung, damit Cameron zu Hause seinen Sieg in Brüssel verkünden kann, obwohl ihm das, was er nun als Siegesbeute verkauft, niemals wirklich verwehrt worden war. Das war alles Show, doch jetzt muss er zu Hause die wahre Schlacht führen.“

141,81

Boris Johnson exclusive: There is only one way to get the change we want – vote to leave the EU

David Cameron has done his very best, but a vote to Remain will be taken in Brussels as a green light for the further erosion of democracy



By [Boris Johnson](#)

6:55AM GMT 22 Feb 2016

 [5190 Comments](#)

I am a European. I lived many years in Brussels. I rather love the old place. And so I resent the way we continually confuse Europe – the home of the greatest and richest culture in the world, to which Britain is and will be an eternal contributor – with the political project of the European Union. It is, therefore, vital to stress that there is nothing necessarily anti-European or xenophobic in wanting to vote Leave on June 23.

"We are seeing a slow and invisible process of legal colonisation, as the EU infiltrates just about every area of public policy"

Boris Johnson

And it is important to remember: it isn't we in this country who have changed. It is the European Union. In the 28 years since I first started writing for this paper about the Common Market – as it was then still known – **the project has morphed and grown in such a way as to be unrecognisable**, rather as the vast new Euro palaces of glass and steel now loom over the little cobbled streets in the heart of the Belgian capital.

When I went to Brussels in 1989, I found well-meaning officials (many of them British) trying to break down barriers to trade with a new procedure – agreed by Margaret Thatcher – called Qualified Majority Voting. The efforts at harmonisation were occasionally comical, and I informed readers about euro-condoms and the great war against the British prawn cocktail flavour crisp. And then came German reunification, and the panicked efforts of Delors, Kohl and Mitterrand to “lock” Germany into Europe with the euro; and since then the pace of integration has never really slackened.

As new countries have joined, we have seen a hurried expansion in the areas for Qualified Majority Voting, so that Britain can be overruled more and more often (as has happened in the past five years). We have had not just the Maastricht Treaty, but Amsterdam, Nice, Lisbon, every one of them representing an extension of EU authority and a centralisation in Brussels. According to the House of Commons library, **anything between 15 and 50 per cent of UK legislation now comes from the EU**; and remember that this type of legislation is very special.

It is unstoppable, and it is irreversible – since it can only be repealed by the EU itself. Ask how much EU legislation the Commission has actually taken back under its various programmes for streamlining bureaucracy. The answer is none. That is why EU law is likened to a ratchet, clicking only forwards. We are seeing a slow and invisible process of legal colonisation, as the EU infiltrates just about every area of public policy. Then – and this is the key point – the EU acquires supremacy in any field that it touches; because it is one of the planks of Britain's membership, agreed in 1972, that any question involving the EU must go to Luxembourg, to be adjudicated by the European Court of Justice.

"At a time when Brussels should be devolving power, it is hauling more and more towards the centre, and there is no way that Britain can be unaffected"

Boris Johnson

It was one thing when that court contented itself with the single market, and ensuring that there was free and fair trade across the EU. We are now way beyond that stage. Under the Lisbon Treaty, the court has taken on the ability to vindicate people's rights under the 55-clause “Charter of Fundamental Human Rights”, including such peculiar entitlements as the right to found a school, or the right to “pursue a freely chosen occupation” anywhere in the EU, or the right to start a business.

These are not fundamental rights as we normally understand them, and the mind boggles as to how they will be enforced. Tony Blair told us he had an opt-out from this charter.

Alas, that opt-out has not proved legally durable, and there are real fears among British jurists about the activism of the court. The more the EU does, the less room there is for national decision-making. Sometimes these EU rules sound simply ludicrous, like the rule that you can't recycle a teabag, or that children under eight cannot blow up balloons, or the limits on the power of vacuum cleaners. Sometimes they can be truly infuriating – like the time I discovered, in 2013, that there was nothing we could do to bring in better-designed cab windows for trucks, to stop cyclists being crushed. It had to be done at a European level, and the French were opposed.

Sometimes the public can see all too plainly the impotence of their own elected politicians – [as with immigration](#). That enrages them; not so much the numbers as the lack of control. That is what we mean by loss of sovereignty – the inability of people to kick out, at elections, the men and women who control their lives. We are seeing an alienation of the people from the power they should hold, and I am sure this is contributing to the sense of disengagement, the apathy, the view that politicians are “all the same” and can change nothing, [and to the rise of extremist parties](#).

Democracy matters; and I find it deeply worrying that the Greeks are effectively being told what to do with their budgets and public spending, in spite of huge suffering among the population. And now the EU wants to go further. There is a document floating around Brussels [called “The Five Presidents Report”](#), in which the leaders of the various EU institutions map out ways to save the euro. It all involves more integration: a social union, a political union, a budgetary union. At a time when Brussels should be devolving power, it is hauling more and more towards the centre, and there is no way that Britain can be unaffected.

[David Cameron has done his very best, and he has achieved more than many expected](#). There is some useful language about stopping “ever-closer union” from applying to the UK, about [protecting the euro outs from the euro ins](#), and about competition and deregulation.

There is an [excellent forthcoming Bill that will assert the sovereignty of Parliament](#), the fruit of heroic intellectual labour by Oliver Letwin, which may well exercise a chilling effect on some of the more federalist flights of fancy of the court and the Commission. It is good, and right, but it cannot stop the machine; at best it can put a temporary and occasional spoke in the ratchet.

There is only one way to get the change we need, and that is to vote to go, because all EU history shows that they only really listen to a population when it says No. The fundamental problem remains: that they have an ideal that we do not share. They want to create a truly federal union, e pluribus unum, when most British people do not.

It is time to seek a new relationship, in which we manage to extricate ourselves from most of the supranational elements. We will hear a lot in the coming weeks about the risks of this option; the risk to the economy, the risk to the City of London, and so on; and though those risks cannot be entirely dismissed, I think they are likely to be exaggerated. We have heard this kind of thing before, about the decision to opt out of the euro, and the very opposite turned out to be the case.

I also accept there is a risk that a vote to Leave the EU, as it currently stands, [will cause fresh tensions in the union between England and Scotland](#). On the other hand, most of the evidence I have seen suggests that the Scots will vote on roughly the same lines as the English.

We will be told that a Brexit would embolden Putin, though it seems to me he is more likely to be emboldened, for instance, by the West's relative passivity in Syria.

Above all, we will be told that whatever the democratic deficiencies, we would be better off remaining in because of the “influence” we have. This is less and less persuasive to me. Only 4 per cent of people running the Commission are UK nationals, when Britain contains 12 per cent of the EU population. It is not clear why the Commission should be best placed to know the needs of UK business and industry, rather than the myriad officials at UK Trade & Investment or the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

If the “Leave” side wins, it will indeed be necessary to negotiate a large number of trade deals at great speed. But why should that be impossible? We have become so used to Nanny in Brussels that we have become infantilised, incapable of imagining an independent future. We used to run the biggest empire the world has ever seen, and with a much smaller domestic population and a relatively tiny Civil Service. Are we really unable to do trade deals? We will have at least two years in which the existing treaties will be in force.

"This is a moment for Britain to be brave, to reach out – not to hug the skirts of Nurse in Brussels, and refer all decisions to someone else"

Boris Johnson

The real risk is to the general morale of Europe, and to the prestige of the EU project. We should take that seriously.

We should remember that this federalist vision is not an ignoble idea. It was born of the highest motives – to keep the peace in Europe. The people who run the various EU institutions – whom we like to ply with crass abuse – are, in my experience, principled and thoughtful officials. They have done some very good things: I think of the work of Sir Leon Brittan, for instance, as Competition Commissioner, and his fight against state aid.

They just have a different view of the way Europe should be constructed. I would hope they would see a vote to leave as a challenge, not just to strike a new and harmonious relationship with Britain (in which those benefits could be retained) but to recover some of the competitiveness that the continent has lost in the last decades.

Whatever happens, Britain needs to be supportive of its friends and allies – but on the lines originally proposed by Winston Churchill: interested, associated, but not absorbed; with Europe – but not comprised. We have spent 500 years trying to stop continental European powers uniting against us. There is no reason (if everyone is sensible) why that should happen now, and every reason for friendliness.

For many Conservatives, this has already been a pretty agonising business. Many of us are deeply internally divided, and we are divided between us. We know that we do not agree on the substance, but I hope we can all agree to concentrate on the arguments; to play the ball and not the man.

At the end of it all, we want to get a result, and then get on and unite around David Cameron – continuing to deliver better jobs, better housing, better health, education and a better quality of life for our constituents for whom (let's be frank) the EU is not always the number one issue.

It is entirely thanks to the Prime Minister, his bravery and energy, and the fact that he won a majority Conservative government, that we are having a referendum at all. Never forget that if it were down to Jeremy Corbyn and the so-called People's Party, the people would be completely frozen out.

This is the right moment to have a referendum, because as Europe changes, Britain is changing too. This is a truly great country that is now going places at extraordinary speed. We are the European, if not the world, leaders in so many sectors of the 21st-century economy; not just financial services, but business services, the media, biosciences, universities, the arts, technology of all kinds (of the 40 EU technology companies worth more than \$1 billion, 17 are British); and we still have a dizzyingly fertile manufacturing sector.

Now is the time to spearhead the success of those products and services not just in Europe, but in growth markets beyond. This is a moment to be brave, to reach out – not to hug the skirts of Nurse in Brussels, and refer all decisions to someone else.

We have given so much to the world, in ideas and culture, but the most valuable British export and the one for which we are most famous is the one that is now increasingly in question: parliamentary democracy – the way the people express their power.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to vote for real change in Britain's relations with Europe. This is the only opportunity we will ever have to show that we care about self-rule. A vote to Remain will be taken in Brussels as a green light for more federalism, and for the erosion of democracy.

In the next few weeks, the views of people like me will matter less and less, because the choice belongs to those who are really sovereign – the people of the UK. And in the matter of their own sovereignty the people, by definition, will get it right.

141,84

Près de 60% des réacteurs nucléaires français ont plus de 30 ans

Par [Guillaume Errard](#)

Publié le 02/03/2016 à 06:00



INFOGRAPHIE - La ministre de l'Écologie s'est dite favorable à la prolongation de dix ans de la durée de vie des centrales nucléaires. Le dernier mot reviendra à l'Autorité de sûreté nucléaire. En France, quels sont les réacteurs les plus anciens ? Réponse en images

De 40 à 50 ans. La ministre de l'Écologie a donné son feu vert à la prolongation de dix ans de la durée de vie des centrales nucléaires françaises. A condition que l'Autorité de la sûreté nucléaire (ASN), **qui a le dernier mot sur ce dossier**, donne son aval. «(La déclaration de Ségolène Royal) ne change rien pour nous, déclare au Figaro l'ASN. Nous donnerons un avis générique en 2018 avant une approbation pour chaque réacteur dès 2020». Exploitées par EDF, les centrales «sont déjà amorties, donc produiront une électricité meilleur marché», selon Ségolène Royal.

Le Figaro a répertorié l'ensemble des réacteurs nucléaires français par centrale. **Il en ressort que près de 60% des réacteurs nucléaires ont plus de 30 ans:**

Cette éventuelle prolongation s'inscrit dans le contexte de la baisse de la part du nucléaire de 75 à 50% dans la production d'électricité, objectif fixé par la loi de transition énergétique (LTE) à l'horizon 2025 pour favoriser les énergies renouvelables. **Ce qui a provoqué la colère des écologistes.** Pour eux, cet objectif de la loi phare du quinquennat de François Hollande, promulguée en août 2015, n'est pas atteignable sans fermer de réacteurs.

Dans son rapport publié début février, la Cour des comptes a évalué à 100 milliards d'euros le coût de la maintenance du parc actuel jusqu'en 2030. Toujours selon les Sages, la mise en œuvre de la loi pourrait conduire EDF à fermer 17 à 20 de ses 58 réacteurs hexagonaux dans l'hypothèse d'une consommation de courant stable. **Le groupe a chiffré à 55 milliards d'euros le «grand carénage» nécessaire à la modernisation et au renforcement de la sûreté de ses installations.**

Le ministère de l'Énergie doit présenter lundi prochain, en comité de suivi de la loi, le texte de la Programmation pluriannuelle de l'énergie (PPE), qui détaillera les trajectoires de développement des différentes sources d'énergie (nucléaire, gaz, éolien, solaire, etc.) jusqu'en 2023

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/02/business/international/europes-new-border-controls-exact-a-cost.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=first-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&_r=0

141,85

Europe's New Border Controls Exact a Cost

By LIZ ALDERMAN and JAMES KANTER MARCH 1, 2016



A police checkpoint on the A8 motorway, one of Europe's busiest, near the Austria-German border. Traffic, which used to flow unimpeded, now often backs up for miles. CreditGordon Welters for The New York Times

FREILASSING, Germany — Traffic along one of Europe's busiest highways, which used to flow unimpeded, now often backs up for miles at a newly installed checkpoint, where a phalanx of German police officers screens trucks and cars for hidden migrants.

At this border crossing, as a result, Austrians who work in Germany have trouble getting to their jobs. Many companies in Germany must wait days longer for deliveries of food, machine parts and other goods. Shoppers who made quick weekend jaunts to Freilassing's stores now mostly stay away.

"It's really bad," said Karl Pichler, the owner of a large gardening center here in Freilassing, whose sales of tulips, rose bushes and other plants has slumped as longtime customers from Austria have stopped coming.

More than two decades after much of Europe began [abolishing border controls](#) under the so-called [Schengen Agreement](#), the free movement of people and products between countries has helped transform the [European Union](#) into the world's largest economy.

But as the bloc now grapples with the biggest migration crisis since World War II, the revival of checkpoints on some of the region's most important transport routes is crimping commerce and threatening to cost billions of euros in lost business just as Europe is recovering from a six-year economic slump.

With no end to the migrant crisis in sight, some national governments are pushing to expand the number of checkpoints around Europe and extend their use for up to two years. The shift is not only straining political and social cohesion, but also threatening the region's postwar principle of peace through prosperity.

While some calls for suspending Schengen might be political posturing, critics worry that border controls will become a fact of life.

"One after another, we close the borders, and once they are all closed, we will see that the economic cost is huge," Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the [European Commission](#), warned the European Parliament in January.

Of the 28 countries in the European Union, 22 have passport-free arrangements, with Britain as one of the notable exceptions. But the lines are quickly being redrawn across Europe.

Since autumn, Austria, Denmark, France, Norway and Sweden have joined Germany in imposing and extending temporary border checks. Belgium last week temporarily shut its border with France. Fences have

gone up on various other borders including ones in Hungary, Serbia and Croatia, and along the Austrian-Slovenian frontier.

European governments and research institutions have started tallying the potential damage.

With 57 million vehicles a year and 1.7 million workers a day crossing Europe's frontiers, the European Union could face up to 18 billion euros, or \$19.6 billion, each year in lost business, steeper freight and commuter costs, interruptions to supply chains, and government outlays for augmented border policing, according to [a recent report](#) by the European Commission, the bloc's administrative arm.

Should the European Union revert to permanent border checks to slow Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi migrants traveling through Greece and the west Balkans toward Northern Europe, the long-term cost could exceed €100 billion, the French government calculated in a separate [study](#).

Open borders drive growth, economic efficiency and jobs, said Vincent Aussilloux, the director of France Stratégie, the French government's economic planning agency. "That's what we'd put in danger," Mr. Aussilloux said, "if we abandoned Schengen indefinitely."

For Doruk Tumer, a truck driver for a Turkish delivery company, the trip to Germany has become a roadblock-riddled odyssey.

Previously, his route from Turkey and Greece through the west Balkans — a path similar to the one used by nearly one million migrants last year — took about five days. Now, Mr. Tumer said, it can last up to 12 days, while the former two-hour drive through Austria sometimes takes more than a day.

"Time is money," he said, noting that costs have risen 30 percent because of longer delivery times, higher refrigeration charges for perishable goods and the occasional use of a second driver to overcome delays.

It is not clear that the European Union is ready to shelve Schengen just yet. Officials are seeking ways to secure Europe's outer boundaries, so that countries within the bloc do not have to seal theirs.

In particular, European officials are pressing Greece, which constitutes Europe's southern frontier, to sharply strengthen its refugee controls by mid-May. Should Greece fail to comply, border controls like the one at Freilassing could be imposed through 2018 or beyond.

For big companies operating through Europe, the impact has been manageable thus far.

Ikea, the Sweden-based furniture group, said border controls had, so far, not disrupted its European commerce because it has worked closely with transport companies to ensure deliveries.

Amazon, which has 29 hubs in the European Union, is ready to make sure its operations continue "regardless of external factors," said Roy Peticucci, vice president of the company's European business.

But in many corners of Europe, border checks are already having a costly impact. At the Oresund bridge, an eight-mile span that carries truck, car and train traffic between Sweden and Denmark, more than 15,000 commuters now contend with two identification checks daily, because both countries are requiring frontier inspections.

The delays are costing the Danish Rail Company, or DSB, €1.2 million a month in lost business as trains are canceled and commuters opt to drive, said Tony Bispeskov, a spokesman for DSB.

This month, the Copenhagen offices of Ferring Pharmaceuticals started providing buses to take employees home to Sweden so they would not have to endure train delays. Weekend shoppers heading from Copenhagen to Malmo, Sweden, "have been scared away," Mr. Bispeskov added.

The Netherlands, home to some of Europe's biggest exporters and importers, is also feeling vulnerable. While the Dutch have not yet ordered border checks, companies warn that costs would surge if Germany blocked their common border or if roadblocks continued elsewhere.

The Dutch company FleuraMetz, which delivers roses, tulips and orchids to shops elsewhere in Europe and in North America, has already faced backups of at least 12 hours at Calais, France, near the road entrance to the Eurotunnel that links the Continent to Britain.

The company, based in Aalsmeer, sends trucks through the tunnel to reach Heathrow Airport near London for shipments to the United States. At one point, the bottlenecks were so bad that FleuraMetz decided to fly flowers to Heathrow to catch connecting flights, raising costs on deliveries to New York by around 25 percent.

In Germany, at the border near Freilassing, the police said they were working to limit the damage.

"It's not in our interest to cause huge delays," said Rainer Scharf, a police spokesman. At the single-line checkpoint, police waved through trucks that bore inspection stickers from Austria, but stopped vehicles containing "people who look Arabic," Mr. Scharf said.

Today, the temporary border facility looks permanent, with offices and computer terminals, and a soaring white tent sheltering dozens of police officers. So many officers have been sent here that every local hotel is fully booked.

Other local merchants are not faring so well. "Most business in town has dropped tremendously," said Mr. Pichler, the florist, who worries he may soon have to lay off employees.

Still, Mr. Pichler said, given the influx of migrants to Germany, the border controls are necessary.

"It's the right thing to do, even if we take a hit," he said. "We need to get this migrant situation under control."

141,88

• [OPINION](#)

• [REVIEW & OUTLOOK](#)

Overtime in French

Hard-line Socialists cling to labor regulations that kill employment.



ENLARGE

Lille's mayor and former Socialist party first secretary Martine Aubry in Lille, France on Sept. 8, 2014. PHOTO: PHILIPPE HUGUEN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

March 1, 2016 7:32 p.m. ET

[3 COMMENTS](#)

France's labor unions have found one thing for which they're willing to work overtime: killing a measure that would permit employees to work overtime. On Monday, hardliners in the ruling Socialist Party forced the government to delay a cabinet debate over the reform bill.

Under a 1999 law, the French workweek is capped at 35 hours, after which firms are required to pay overtime. Paris thought shortening the per-employee workweek would encourage firms to hire more workers. Not quite. Instead, the measure raised the costs and decreased the efficiency for businesses in France, depressing investment and job creation. Today the unemployment rate is 10.6%, the highest in nearly two decades. A quarter of young people are out of work.

Despite its failure, this measure has become so sacred to the French left that Socialist President François Hollande and his reformist Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, don't dare eliminate it. But they want to allow employees and employers to negotiate over a longer workweek of 46 hours maximum, for no more than 16 weeks a year.

Firms struggling to compete due to technological innovation in their industry would be allowed to negotiate longer working hours and implement such changes over the opposition of union leaders if a majority of workers agree. The bill would set limits on payouts to dismissed workers.

All of France's major unions and their allies in the Socialist Party oppose the bill. Martine Aubry, the former Labor Minister who created the 35-hour workweek, is among the hard-left Socialists leading the charge to defeat it.

Messrs. Hollande and Valls can still push ahead with the reforms, and the government has already hinted that it may use a constitutional loophole that allows bills to bypass the lower house of Parliament. That could trigger a no-confidence vote, which the government is likely to survive.

Bon courage to them, if such parliamentary jiu-jitsu is what it takes to start reviving France's moribund economy. Still, this would be the second time in as many years the government has resorted to this constitutional trick to pass pro-growth reform. If there's going to be any hope for France, at some point a broad majority of French voters and politicians will have to admit the necessity of sweeping reform.

En France, «il faut des réformes plus ambitieuses et plus durables»

Visot, Marie

INTERVIEW - Jean Pisani-Ferry, le commissaire général à la prospective, veut nourrir les débats de la prochaine présidentielle.

Ce n'est pas un programme clés en main. Mais France Stratégie veut faire réfléchir les futurs candidats à l'élection présidentielle. Ce jeudi, en proposant une note sur la croissance mondiale dans les dix années à venir, l'organisme de réflexion lance le premier thème d'une série de douze, qui veut «éclairer» les débats des mois à venir. «Les nouvelles formes du travail et de la protection sociale», «Tirer parti de la révolution numérique», «Investir dans la jeunesse face au vieillissement», «Modèle de développement et répartition du revenu», «Compétitivité: que reste-t-il à faire?», «Dynamiques et inégalités territoriales»... Autant de sujets sur lesquels les politiques de gauche et de droite devront se pencher avant de dévoiler leurs choix au citoyen. Le commissaire général à la prospective, Jean Pisani-Ferry, explique au Figaro la nécessité d'un diagnostic et d'un inventaire des options.

LE FIGARO. - Quel rôle veut jouer France Stratégie dans le débat présidentiel à venir?

Jean PISANI-FERRY. - Celui d'un apporteur de matériaux pour un débat à la mesure des enjeux. Les candidats vont devoir offrir une lecture de la situation du pays, sélectionner des priorités, formuler des propositions... Le contexte dans lequel va se tenir cette élection rend d'autant plus nécessaire le débat: l'avenir européen est incertain ; le niveau de richesse par tête d'avant-crise n'a pas été retrouvé ; le pays est divisé entre des Français prospères et des Français appauvris. Nous voulons mettre sur la table des sujets à l'horizon dix ans, poser des diagnostics, cerner les options. L'élection présidentielle doit être l'occasion d'une délibération, pas d'une pluie d'invectives comme actuellement outre-Atlantique.

Pensez-vous que nous puissions y échapper de ce côté-ci?

Ce genre de dérive nous menace, tout simplement parce que cela marche, que certains vont jouer sur les peurs d'une société méfiante. L'antidote à l'invective, ce doivent être, espérons-le, des controverses sur les orientations d'avenir. Des controverses qui respectent les faits, sans enfermer dans une lecture univoque bien sûr. Pour y aider, nous allons fournir des éléments objectifs aux candidats et aux citoyens. Et soumettre nos propres analyses au débat, sur le site francestrategie1727.fr

Quels sont les sujets sur lesquels vous voulez faire réfléchir dans les mois à venir, qui seront déterminants dans la campagne?

Le contrat social d'abord. La société française est aujourd'hui inquiète, au-delà de ce que montrent les indicateurs. Il n'y a pas d'effondrement de la classe moyenne et, pourtant, il y a un sentiment de déclassement. Ensuite l'avenir du travail. Nous ne sommes pas seuls à devoir y réfléchir, la question se pose partout avec l'arrivée des plateformes collaboratives, la robotisation, l'intelligence artificielle... Le contrat commercial va-t-il remplacer le contrat de travail? Quelles conséquences pour les revenus, les statuts? Nous vivons sur la distinction entre le salarié qui cotise et qui est protégé, et l'indépendant sans protection et propriétaire de son patrimoine. Quel sens aura-t-elle demain? L'emploi se polarise entre faibles et fortes qualifications, avec un

évidemment au milieu, comment y répondre? C'est une question partout. Elle vient se surajouter à celle du chômage, qui n'est pas générale mais touche particulièrement certains pays, dont le nôtre. Nous n'avons évidemment pas tout essayé. En matière de régulation salariale, de formation professionnelle, d'indemnisation ou encore de formation, nous ne pouvons pas nous satisfaire des mécanismes en place.

Nous allons également faire le point sur les enjeux de compétitivité, d'éducation, de numérique ; en d'autres termes, sur notre capacité à nous saisir des transformations.

La France est-elle en retard sur ce point?

Elle est bien positionnée en matière d'infrastructures, d'ouverture des données publiques, les innovateurs remportent des succès. Mais dans leur ensemble, les entreprises ne se sont pas saisies de toutes les opportunités offertes par le numérique. Si la France ne se rattrape pas sur ce point, elle peut décrocher. Cela renvoie à l'investissement, au management, aux compétences des actifs et donc à la formation.

Comment expliquer que l'Hexagone ait tant de mal à se réformer?

Nous faisons beaucoup de réformes mais nous ne les faisons pas bien. Chaque gouvernement ouvre un ensemble de dossiers, modifie une série de paramètres et passe le bâton au suivant... Imaginez que nous avons fait cinq réformes des retraites en vingt ans et trois réformes de la formation professionnelle en dix ans. Ce n'est pas rassurant pour les Français, et ça leur donne l'impression que chaque réforme ne fait que préparer la suivante. Cela ne crée pas de stabilité. Un jeune aujourd'hui n'a aucune idée de ce que sera sa retraite, s'il s'attend à en avoir une! C'est grave en termes de sécurité personnelle et de relations intergénérationnelles.

Ce qui veut dire qu'il faudrait faire des réformes plus radicales...

Plus ambitieuses, plus durables. La bonne réforme est celle qui met les choses en place pour une durée longue, et qui clarifie les règles du jeu en sorte que les citoyens les comprennent et s'en saisissent. C'est aussi un moyen d'éviter la méfiance. Pour beaucoup, la complexité qui nous entoure, dans le système fiscal, social, de retraites, du travail, etc., cache forcément des inégalités, des privilèges ou des prébendes...

La question des finances publiques a-t-elle, elle aussi, besoin de règles plus claires?

Il y a deux sujets. Celui de la dépense publique, qui est nettement plus élevée qu'ailleurs, à la fois pour de bonnes raisons (des choix collectifs) et de mauvaises (de l'inefficacité). Les options proposées sur ce point seront différentes, c'est normal, il faudra qu'elles apparaissent clairement. Et puis celui du déficit et de la dette. Notre histoire sur ce plan est ancienne et peu glorieuse: depuis les débuts de l'euro, nous sommes si souvent revenus sur nos engagements que nous y avons perdu beaucoup de crédibilité. Mais ce qu'il faut comprendre, c'est que la responsabilité budgétaire n'est pas l'affaire d'un pacte avec Bruxelles ou Berlin, mais d'abord d'un pacte avec les citoyens et entre les générations. Plus ce pacte est solide, moins Bruxelles a besoin de surveiller, et plus la politique budgétaire peut être active quand il faut soutenir la conjoncture.

Les Français sont-ils demandeurs de davantage d'État?

Ils sont demandeurs d'un État qui remplisse ses missions en matière d'éducation, de santé, de sécurité, etc. Ils veulent une action publique capable de prendre des problèmes à bras-le-corps et de les résoudre. Les attentes sont donc fortes. Mais, dans les années qui viennent, l'État va devoir faire face à de nouvelles priorités: affronter la transformation numérique, qui n'est pas qu'une affaire de télédéclaration, et gérer la crise de la solidarité. Suspicion de fraude, de chômage volontaire, de privilèges indus... La défiance est inégalée. Cette situation n'est pas tenable: si on n'y répond pas un jour, les citoyens ne voudront plus payer.

141,91

Chômage: les jeunes et les moins diplômés fortement touchés

Par [Marie Théobald](#), Service infographie du Figaro

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LE SCAN ÉCO - En France métropolitaine, les hommes sont plus touchés que les femmes, la catégorie des 15-24 ans est la plus impactée. La durée du chômage s'étend sur plus d'un an en moyenne, et près de la moitié des chômeurs viennent de terminer un emploi à durée limitée.

L'Insee, l'institut français des statistiques, publie ce matin un taux de chômage en légère baisse pour l'année 2015. Il est ainsi redescendu à 10% de la population active au quatrième trimestre - 10,3% avec l'Outre-mer. L'insee revoit également à la baisse le taux de chômage pour le troisième trimestre 2015 à 10,1% - au lieu de 10,2% - et 10,4% avec l'Outre-mer. Mais quel est le profil des demandeurs d'emploi en France?

Certes, le chômage n'épargne aucune catégories socio-professionnelles, ni tranche d'âge. Reste que certaines sont plus touchées que d'autres. Selon les [Tableaux de l'Economie Française](#) publiés mardi 1er mars - qui se tablent sur des données disponibles de 2014 - le taux de chômage est à cet égard désormais plus élevé pour les hommes que pour les femmes (respectivement 10,2% contre 9,6% en 2014). Les ouvriers et employés restent les catégories sociales les plus touchées par le chômage. Ainsi, le taux de chômage des ouvriers est plus de trois fois plus élevé que celui des cadres. Cette tendance se poursuit dans le temps. Néanmoins, toutes les catégories socioprofessionnelles sont touchées par l'augmentation du chômage.

Parmi les différentes qualifications, les personnes qui ont un brevet des collèges, CEP ou sans diplôme sont plus au chômage (16,5%) que les autres, notamment celles qui détiennent un diplôme supérieur (6,5% en 2014) ou un Bac+2 (6% en 2014).

La durée moyenne de chômage passe de 13,6 mois en 2013 à 14,2 mois l'année d'après. D'après l'Insee, 43,5% des chômeurs sont arrivés dans cette situation, en 2014, à la suite d'une fin d'emploi à durée limitée tandis que 18,6% ont été licenciés et 6,2% ont démissionné. En deux ans, même si ces tendances sont les mêmes, les personnes qui se retrouvent au chômage sont moins nombreuses à avoir démissionné (6,2% en 2014 contre 7,5% en 2012) mais un plus grand nombre a été licencié (18,6% en 2014 contre 18% en 2012). En revanche, la part de ceux qui ont achevé un contrat à durée limitée a peu varié.

Il faut aussi noter que les 15 à 24 ans sont les plus touchés par le chômage (23,4% en 2014). Ce taux augmente de façon continue. En 35 ans il a été multiplié par deux. Pour les autres catégories d'âge, même si le taux de chômage est moins élevé, la part des chômeurs a presque triplé, à l'instar des 25-49 ans (9,3% en 2014 contre 3,5% en 1980).

European Union Plans Emergency Aid to Help Trapped Refugees

The \$760 million plan would be the first emergency humanitarian program to alleviate suffering inside the 28-country bloc's borders.

By JAMES KANTER

BRUSSELS — For the first time in its history, the European Union on Wednesday announced plans for an emergency aid package to alleviate large-scale suffering inside its borders, where tens of thousands of migrants are trapped in Greece as they seek asylum in northern Europe.

“The crowded conditions are leading to shortages of food, shelter, water and sanitation,” Adrian Edwards, a spokeswoman for the United Nations refugee agency said in a statement this week. “Tensions have been building, fueling violence and playing into the hands of people smugglers.”

About 9,000 asylum seekers are stuck along the Greek-Macedonian border, according to monitoring groups. Migrants who have made it to Athens are crowded into camps and refugee centers that are either full or nearly so.

The spending proposal — 700 million euros, or about \$760 million, which the bloc's member governments have yet to approve — is intended to help those migrants trapped in Greece and, if needed, in other countries on the front lines of the migration crisis, such as Bulgaria and Italy.

Thousands of people continue to reach Greece every day, most of them via Turkey, only to be blocked from traveling on to countries like Germany and Sweden, where many intend to claim asylum.

The migrants have been halted by countries like Macedonia, which has imposed tougher border controls and where violence has erupted in recent days as armed police officers confront those seeking to cross through the country.

With the weather turning warmer and the sea crossing from Turkey to Greece becoming more navigable, the number of migrants making the trip is expected to rise in coming weeks. This may put even more pressure on Greece, which could become a giant holding center for migrants who cannot go forward, but who will not, or cannot, go back.

Greece risks becoming a “new Lebanon for Europe, a warehouse of souls,” Ioannis Mouzalas, a Greek minister for immigration policy, warned last week at a meeting in Brussels of the European Union's interior ministers.

The aid proposal was announced Wednesday by the European Commission, the executive arm of the European Union, and it requires the approval of a majority of governments.

Normally, the bloc reserves humanitarian aid from its budget to spend on things like tents and food in poorer parts of the world that are struck by natural disasters or conflicts. It has paid for humanitarian aid missions in Iraq, South Sudan and Syria in the past decade. Yet the number of migrants reaching Greece has forced Europe to adapt its aid policies to try to avert a catastrophe on the Continent.

The number of migrants arriving in Greece in January was about 68,000, or 38 times higher than a year earlier, according to Frontex, the bloc's border control agency.

Approximately 108,000 migrants arrived on the Greek islands in the first two months of the year, Frontex said.

“No time can be lost in deploying all means possible to prevent humanitarian suffering within our own borders,” Christos Stylianides, the European commissioner for humanitarian aid and crisis management, said in a statement before a news conference on Wednesday. The “proposal will make €700 million available to provide help where it is most needed,” he said.

The so-called Emergency Assistance Instrument would allow for a faster, more targeted response to major crises, including helping member states cope with large numbers of refugees, according to the commission.

The money, to be disbursed over the next three years, would go to organizations such as United Nations agencies and aid groups, the commission said. The program would be structured so that existing humanitarian aid programs outside the bloc would not lose funding, it said.

At least initially, a majority of the funding is expected to go to help the situation in Greece, and the move highlights the uncertain future for that country, where a debt crisis that began six years ago threatened to sink the euro, the European Union’s flagship economic project.

Like the crisis over migration, the euro crisis became a battle over how to keep the Continent unified in the face of severe challenges in nations such as Greece and Cyprus on the bloc’s periphery. Yet the migration crisis has rapidly developed into an even more severe test of the unity of the European Union.

The crisis also has a geopolitical dimension that has led to stark warnings about the potential consequences for the European Union if the war in Syria, where Russia is supporting the government of President Bashar al-Assad, cannot be tamped down.

On Tuesday, the top NATO commander in Europe, Gen. Philip M. Breedlove of the United States Air Force, warned lawmakers that Russia and the Assad government were “deliberately weaponizing migration in an attempt to overwhelm European structures and break European resolve.”

General Breedlove, addressing the Senate Armed Services Committee, suggested that the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, was taking advantage of the crisis to infiltrate the migrants “like a cancer,” and to threaten Europe and the United States.

"Es ist Aufgabe der Kanzlerin, Staatsgebiet zu schützen"

Angela Merkel habe fatale Fehlentscheidungen getroffen, sagt Ifo-Chef Sinn. Zuerst in der Euro-Krise, dann in der Flüchtlingskrise. In beiden Fällen schade sie den Bürgern des eigenen Landes.

Von Tobias Kaiser, Dorothea Siems



Foto: Martin U. K. Lengemann/Hans-Werner Sinn geht in den Ruhestand. Der ordoliberal Ökonom ist seit 1999 Präsident des Münchner Ifo-Instituts für Wirtschaftsforschung, das unter seiner Leitung stark an Bedeutung gewann

Nach einem Vierteljahrhundert legt Hans-Werner Sinn Ende des Monats sein Amt als Ifo-Präsident nieder. Kein anderer Ökonom hat die wirtschaftlichen Debatten der vergangenen Jahrzehnte so stark geprägt wie er. Ob Wiedervereinigung, Sozialstaatsdebatte, Klimapolitik oder Finanzkrise – stets bezog der Wissenschaftler klare, nicht immer mehrheitsfähige Positionen. Mit der Flüchtlingspolitik und der ungelösten Euro-Krise sieht Sinn auf Deutschland gewaltige Probleme zukommen.

Die Welt: Die Europäische Union droht an der Flüchtlingskrise zu scheitern. Auch in Deutschland wird der Ruf nach Grenzsicherungen immer lauter. Die Wirtschaft und Ökonomen warnen vor horrenden Kosten. Zu Recht?

Hans-Werner Sinn: Wieso die EU scheitern sollte, wenn man die Grenzen kontrolliert, ist mir schleierhaft. Die EU gab es auch schon ohne Schengen, und einige EU-Länder machen bei Schengen sowieso nicht mit. Wenn man genug Zöllner parallel arbeiten lässt, gibt es keine Staus. Die Zöllner sind billig. Wir reden hier über einen winzigen Bruchteil dessen, was die Flüchtlinge kosten.

Die Welt: Machen Sie es sich damit nicht ein wenig einfach? Würden geschlossene Grenzen nicht insgesamt den Handel in Europa belasten?

Sinn: Diese Debatte ist ziemlich verquer. Grenzkontrollen heißen doch nicht, dass man die Grenzen schließt. Nur entscheidet der deutsche Staat, wen er hereinlässt. Ich bin dafür, erst einmal die Schengengrenze von Slowenien und Italien gemeinschaftlich zu kontrollieren und die Flüchtlinge dort einem einheitlichen Asylverfahren zu unterwerfen. Wenn das nicht gelingt, dann muss Deutschland eigene deutsche Kontrollen vornehmen. Jedes Fabrikgelände ist durch Schranken und Zäune geschützt. Auch Staaten müssen sich vor einer unberechtigten Zuwanderung schützen.

Die Welt: Das klingt so, als halten Sie Schengen für einen Fehler.

Sinn: Ein Fehler ist, dass kein gemeinsames Asylrecht mit einem Quotensystem vereinbart wurde und die Grenzländer Schengen nicht ernst nehmen. Sie kommen ihrer Kontrollfunktion nicht nach, lassen alle Flüchtlinge rein und winken sie dann durch. Daran wird sich nichts ändern, solange Deutschland jeden reinlässt, der kommen will. Schon um die Verhandlungsbereitschaft der Grenzländer zu stärken, sollten wir damit drohen, die eigenen Grenzen zu kontrollieren. Das Willkommenssignal in die weite Welt zu senden war ein schwerer politischer Fehler.

Die Welt: Sie würden also akzeptieren, dass es notfalls innerhalb des Schengen-Raums wieder Grenzen gibt.

Sinn: Ja. Wenn es keine funktionierenden Grenzen nach außen gibt, ist das die zweitbeste Lösung. Denn die schlechteste aller Lösungen ist es, weder Grenzen nach innen noch nach außen zu haben.

Die Welt: So wie im Moment.

Sinn: Ja. Es ist nicht akzeptabel, dass Hunderttausende nach Deutschland kommen, von denen man gar nicht weiß, wer sie sind. Dass die Kanzlerin sagt, sie könne die Grenzen nicht kontrollieren, hat mich verwundert. Das ist ihre Aufgabe als Kanzlerin. Das deutsche Staatsgebiet zu schützen und das Eigentum der Deutschen an den öffentlichen Gütern hierzulande zu sichern, darauf hat sie einen Eid geleistet, und dazu ist sie verpflichtet.

Wirtschaftsinstitut fordert gesteuerte Zuwanderung

Die Welt: Wie lässt sich das Dilemma lösen, ohne dass Flüchtlinge irgendwo in den Grenzgebieten stranden?

Sinn: Wir können diese Willkommenskultur nicht fortsetzen, indem wir sagen, Bürgerkriegsflüchtlinge, egal woher, nehmen wir auf. Dazu ist Afrika mit seinen 1,1 Milliarden Menschen zu groß, und dazu gibt es dort zu viele Bürgerkriege. Denken Sie nur an den Bürgerkrieg in Nigeria, wo 170 Millionen Menschen leben. Das deutsche Asylrecht gewährt Schutz vor politischer Verfolgung durch einen Staat und nicht etwa Schutz vor den Parteien eines Bürgerkriegs. Und die Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention, die großzügiger ist und auch Bürgerkriegsflüchtlingen Schutz verspricht, gilt für die jeweiligen Nachbarländer. Die sind zunächst einmal zuständig, nicht Deutschland. Das deutsche Asylgesetz sagt klipp und klar, dass Flüchtlinge, die über sichere Drittländer nach Deutschland kommen, zurückzuweisen sind, weil sie hier kein Asylrecht haben. Die Bundesregierung hat diese Regelung unter Bezug auf eine dort vorgesehene Notstandsregelung außer Kraft gesetzt. Sie kann sich aber nicht dauerhaft auf den Notstand berufen.

Die Welt: Diese Einschränkungen würden praktisch alle Asylsuchenden betreffen. Mit solchen Forderungen werden Sie ganz schnell als kalter herzloser Ökonom abgestempelt.

Ich werde dafür bezahlt, dass ich die Wahrheit sage. Das ist mein Anspruch, und mir ist es egal, ob das Leuten gefällt oder nicht.



Sinn: Wie weit ist dieses Land gekommen, wenn der Hinweis auf die Rechtslage schon kritikwürdig ist. Jeden, der herkommen will, kommen zu lassen, ist nicht nur rechtswidrig, sondern auch nicht wirklich humanitär. Schauen Sie nach Spanien. Spanien hatte in den vergangenen Jahren auch eine Flüchtlingswelle. Erinnern Sie sich doch an die Bilder von den Kanarischen Inseln; von gekenterten Schlauchbooten und Toten, die vor Touristen in ihren Badehosen lagen. Heute sucht die spanische Marine von Booten, gewährt den Passagieren Schutz und bringt sie dann zurück nach Afrika. Die spanische Polizei verfolgt gleichzeitig in Afrika Schlepperbanden.

Wegen dieser scheinbar harten Politik kommt keiner mehr, und deshalb stirbt kaum noch jemand auf der Passage nach Spanien. Im vergangenen Jahr gab es dort 106 Tote. Währenddessen zählte man vor Italien und Malta 2892 Tote und vor Griechenland 805 Tote. Die italienisch-griechische Durchwinkerei verleitet die Menschen dazu, Schlepper zu bezahlen und sich in überfüllte Schlauchboote zu wagen, von denen ein gewisser Teil untergeht. Das ist eine unbeabsichtigte Konsequenz der Willkommenskultur, an der man nicht vorbeisehen darf.

Die Welt: Sie machen seit 25 Jahren Politikberatung: Ihnen müsste doch klar sein, dass Sie für solche Aussagen heftige Kritik ernten werden. Sind Sie unbelehrbar?

Sinn: Wer sich daran stört, dass ich empirische und rechtliche Fakten nenne, ist selbst schuld. So jemanden würde ich als Ideologen bezeichnen. Ich werde dafür bezahlt, dass ich die Wahrheit sage. Das ist mein Anspruch, und mir ist es egal, ob das Leuten gefällt oder nicht. Das ist doch das Problem an vielen Debatten hierzulande, dass alle überlegen, wem was gefällt und was noch politisch korrekt ist. Was wahr ist, ist wahr, und das muss man so sagen, sonst macht doch die ganze Wissenschaft keinen Sinn.

Die Welt: Wie viel Sinn macht denn die verkehrte Wirtschaftswelt in der wir gegenwärtig leben? Die Negativzinsen belohnen Konsum und bestrafen Sparer. Was ist mit unserem Geld los?

Sinn: Die Europäische Zentralbank ist dabei, ihr letztes Pulver zu verschießen. Die Wirtschaft in Südeuropa kommt nicht in Schwung, und die Staaten dort sind überschuldet. Die EZB reagiert darauf, indem sie immer günstigere Kredite zur Verfügung stellt und jetzt sogar die Gläubiger im Norden zwingt, den Schuldnern im Süden die Zinsen zu zahlen.

Die Welt: Dadurch wird auf den Kopf gestellt, was im Wirtschaftsleben normalerweise gilt. Das muss doch Folgen haben.

Sinn: Es hat vor allem für Deutschland erhebliche Konsequenzen, weil Deutschland der zweitgrößte Nettogläubiger der Welt ist. Für unser Auslandsvermögen erhalten wir immer weniger Zinsen, und vielleicht müssen wir dafür in Bälde sogar selbst Zinsen zahlen. Die Schuldnerländer werden auf diese Weise von ganz alleine entschuldet, und vielleicht werden die Schulden auch noch zusätzlich durch eine Inflation reduziert, wie sie von der EZB offen angestrebt wird. Die Deutschen denken, dass sie später, wenn sie in Rente gehen, das Geld zurückbekommen, das sie ans Ausland verliehen haben. Aber die Schuldner haben bei der EZB das Sagen und versuchen, ihre Schulden mit deren Hilfe erträglicher zu machen, wenn nicht gar zu verringern.



Die EZB greift mit ihrer extrem expansiven Geldpolitik nach dem letzten Strohalm. Die gefährliche Entwicklung in Deutschland nimmt sie in Kauf.



Die Welt: Wie gefährlich ist denn dieser Zustand für die Volkswirtschaft?

Sinn: Diese Politik verteilt gewaltig um: Im Vergleich zum Jahr 2007, dem letzten Jahr vor der Krise, verliert Deutschland, Staat und Private zusammen, derzeit wegen der niedrigen Zinsen pro Jahr etwa 50 Milliarden Euro, wobei nicht klar ist, was davon durch die EZB und was durch die Krise an verursacht ist. Die Null- und Negativzinspolitik führt außerdem dazu, dass der Wert von Immobilien und Aktien künstlich aufgeblasen wird, weil die Anleger aus den reinen Finanzanlagen in reale Objekte fliehen.

Die Welt: Mit welchen Folgen?

Sinn: Wir bauen in Deutschland allmählich eine Immobilienblase auf. Seit 2010 sind die Immobilienpreise in den Großstädten um 50 Prozent gestiegen und in den Städten insgesamt um etwa 35 Prozent. Das droht sich zu einer Blase zu entwickeln. Es wäre höchste Zeit, jetzt schon mal die Luft rauszulassen. Wir bräuchten dringend in Deutschland wieder normale Zinsen, um den Übertreibungen am Immobilienmarkt eine Grenze zu setzen. Doch dem steht das Ziel der EZB entgegen, Südeuropa zu retten, indem man die Schuldner durch Null- und Negativzinsen entlastet. Die EZB greift mit ihrer extrem expansiven Geldpolitik nach dem letzten Strohalm. Die gefährliche Entwicklung in Deutschland nimmt sie in Kauf.

Die Welt: Was wird passieren?

Sinn: Jede Blase platzt. Meistens passiert das nach etwa ein bis zwei Jahrzehnten. Die ersten zehn Jahre, von denen wir nun fünf hinter uns haben, sind in der Regel ganz erbaulich. Aber danach begibt man sich in sehr gefährliches Territorium. Wenn eine Blase platzt, wird es schrecklich. Es gibt Konkurse, die Arbeitslosigkeit steigt, und Vermögen wird vernichtet. Das ist der Kater, der nach der großen Party unweigerlich folgt. Wir haben das in Japan nach 1990, in den USA und Irland nach 2006 und in Südeuropa nach 2008 gesehen. Vor dieser Gefahr muss man heute eindringlich warnen und eine andere Politik der EZB verlangen.

Die Welt: Werden wir also wieder eine Finanzkrise bekommen, oder stecken wir immer noch in der gleichen?

Sinn: Die Euro-Krise ist nicht bewältigt, sondern wurde nur unterdrückt und flammt immer wieder auf. Neben Griechenland, das pleite ist, haben wir aktuell ein weiteres großes Problem: die italienischen Banken, die auf einem riesigen Bestand an faulen Krediten sitzen.

Die Welt: Was muss geschehen, um die Krise endgültig zu beenden?

Sinn: Es wäre richtig, Pleiten in einem möglichst frühen Stadium zuzulassen. Das gilt sowohl für Länder als auch für Finanzinstitute. Je früher sie kommen, desto kleiner sind die Folgewirkungen. Die Gläubiger müssten dann Verluste hinnehmen. Nach so einem klaren Schnitt kann sehr schnell die Erholung einsetzen. Wenn dagegen die Konkurse verschleppt werden, profitieren zwar die Gläubiger, doch es entstehen chronische Krankheiten, die zum Schluss nicht mehr heilbar sind. 2010 hätte man Griechenland pleitegehen lassen sollen. Ein offener Konkurs wäre besser gewesen als dieses fortgesetzte Siechtum. Im vergangenen Juli hat der Europäische Rettungsschirm EFSF die Pleite Griechenlands offiziell festgestellt. Doch Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel fürchtete den klaren Schnitt und hat stattdessen ein drittes Rettungspaket durchgesetzt. Weil sie den Ökonomen misstraut und bei schwerwiegenden ökonomischen Entscheidungen kein sicheres Gespür hat, macht sie weiter wie bisher. Das permanente Herauspauken Griechenlands auf Kosten der Steuerzahler ist nicht nur wirtschaftlich unsinnig, sondern steht auch im Widerspruch zu dem Vertrag von Maastricht.

Die Welt: Wird man Griechenland seine Schulden erlassen?

Sinn: Natürlich, es wird wieder Umschuldungen zulasten der hiesigen Steuerzahler geben. Und so wird es immer weitergehen. Denn die Machthaber gestehen ungerne ihre Fehler ein. Die meisten klammern sich an die alten Positionen. Bundesfinanzminister Schäuble gehört zu den wenigen, die Fehler zugeben. Er wollte Griechenland im vergangenen Sommer pleitegehen lassen. Die Märkte hätte das nicht erschüttert, die hatten das längst eingepreist.

Die Welt: Wird der Euro langfristig zu retten sein?

Sinn: Ich weiß es nicht. Die Spannungen sind sehr groß, und sie werden viel zu langsam abgebaut. Bisher hat noch keine Währungsunion ohne die Gründung eines gemeinsamen Staates überlebt. Nur eine Währungsunion, die mit einer politischen Union einhergeht, also mit einer Staatengründung, hat Bestand.

Die Welt: Ist dieses Ziel für Europa nicht erreichbar?

Sinn: Es wäre wünschenswert, diesen Weg zu gehen. Doch weil der Euro vor der politischen Union eingeführt wurde, ist das Erreichen der politischen Union ungeheuer erschwert, wenn nicht gar unmöglich geworden. Die Streitigkeiten, die zwischen den EU-Mitgliedern herrschen, zeigen das. Das Klima wird immer giftiger. Der Grund sind die strukturellen wirtschaftlichen Probleme in Südeuropa und Frankreich, die direkt ursächlich auf den Euro zurückzuführen sind.

Die Welt: Braucht die EU ein neues Projekt?

Sinn: Ja, wenn man eine wirkliche Integration will, dann muss man das über eine Sicherheitspartnerschaft machen. Dafür muss man die Armeen zusammenlegen. Wir haben 25 nationale Armeen für 28 Länder. Eine Verteidigungsunion könnte geeignet sein, der europäischen Idee wieder neue Kraft zu verleihen.

Die Welt: Also ist "weniger Europa" die falsche Antwort in der jetzigen Krise?

Sinn: Auf ökonomischen Feldern sollten wir in der Tat wieder mehr auf Abstand voneinander gehen. Denn die vor allem von Frankreich und Italien forcierten Ideen für eine gemeinsame Einlagenversicherung, eine europäische Arbeitslosenversicherung oder einen EU-Finanzminister wären allesamt kontraproduktiv. Wenn wir Deutschen unsere Geldbörse auf den Tisch legen, haben wir später gar keine Verhandlungsmasse mehr, um das Ziel einer politischen Union zu erreichen, die von den Franzosen nicht gewünscht wird. Wenn wir die fiskalische Union im Sinne gemeinsamer Kassen jetzt schon akzeptieren, bekommen wir die politische Integration nie.

Die Welt: Wären die Briten schlau, wenn sie demnächst für einen EU-Ausstieg votierten?

Sinn: Ökonomisch wäre der Brexit für die Briten, insbesondere für den Finanzplatz London, nachteilig. Doch Premierminister Cameron hat mit seiner Kritik an der EU in vielen Punkten recht. Es lässt sich kein Sozialstaat bei freier Wanderung und Aufnahme der Migranten in den Sozialstaat des Ziellandes aufrechterhalten. Deshalb fordert er zu Recht eine Karenzzeit von vier Jahren, bevor EU-Bürger in Großbritannien Sozialleistungen beanspruchen können. Merkel hätte sich in dieser Frage viel offensiver an die Seite Camerons stellen sollen. Denn auch Deutschland könnte solche Regelungen gebrauchen. Wir können nur hoffen, dass die Briten gegen den Brexit stimmen, denn wir brauchen sie dringend als Gegengewicht zu den allzu staatsgläubigen Franzosen.

L'atome fissuré

Editorial.

La demande de fermeture de la centrale de Fessenheim par l'Allemagne soulève la question de la sûreté d'une filière dont la France reste la championne, quand nos voisins ont choisi d'y renoncer.

Editorial du «Monde» Une fois encore, l'Allemagne demande la fermeture, au plus vite, de la centrale nucléaire de Fessenheim. Cette exigence, maintes fois réitérée, est étayée par un incident survenu voilà presque deux ans sur le site alsacien, bénin aux yeux de l'Autorité de sûreté française, mais minimisé selon certains médias allemands. Simple prétexte ou argument solide, peu importe en réalité. **Car la question soulevée, par nature transfrontalière, est celle de la sûreté d'une filière atomique dont la France reste la championne, quand nos voisins ont choisi d'y renoncer après la catastrophe de Fukushima de mars 2011, voici tout juste cinq ans.**

L'Autorité de sûreté ne l'a jamais caché: un accident nucléaire majeur est possible en France, et ses conséquences s'étendraient bien au-delà des limites hexagonales, outre-Rhin, au Luxembourg ou en Suisse. Genève vient du reste de déposer une plainte contre X, visant le site du Bugey, dans l'Ain, pour *«mise en danger délibérée de la vie d'autrui»*.

Or, le parc atomique français est vieillissant. Pour la plupart, ses 58 réacteurs ont été mis en service entre la fin des années 1970 et celle des années 1980, si bien que, dans la décennie à venir, la moitié d'entre eux atteindront la limite de quarante ans pour laquelle ils ont été conçus. A commencer par ceux de Fessenheim, les plus âgés, dont il est donc logique qu'ils focalisent les inquiétudes, même s'ils ne sont pas forcément les plus dangereux.

Un mur d'investissement

Rien n'interdit bien sûr de pousser les chaudières nucléaires jusqu'à cinquante ou soixante ans, comme le prévoit EDF, qui souhaite ainsi mieux amortir son investissement, et comme le gouvernement français y semble lui aussi déterminé. Rien sinon, d'abord, l'aval de l'Autorité de sûreté, seule habilitée à autoriser cette prolongation, et dont le président, Pierre-Franck Chevet, a clairement annoncé que son feu vert n'était à ce stade «nullement acquis».

Rien sinon, ensuite, le coût de l'indispensable remise à niveau des installations, un «grand carénage» qu'EDF a évalué à plus de 50 milliards d'euros d'ici à 2025, tandis que la Cour des comptes chiffre la facture, dépenses de fonctionnement comprises, à 100 milliards d'euros d'ici à 2030. **Un mur d'investissement** qui représente, pour une entreprise publique lourdement endettée, une gageure. *«Le contexte est particulièrement préoccupant»*, alertait au début de l'année le gendarme du nucléaire qui, pour faire face à l'ensemble de ses missions, a en vain réclamé à l'Etat des moyens humains supplémentaires. Faute de les avoir obtenus, il va être contraint, prévient-il, de hiérarchiser ses priorités.

Rien sinon, enfin, la cohérence des choix de l'exécutif. **La loi de transition énergétique** pour la croissance verte a fixé un cap clair: réduire de 75% à 50%, à l'horizon 2025, la part de l'atome dans le bouquet électrique, et promouvoir fortement les ressources renouvelables, vent, soleil, mer ou biomasse. **Or, ces filières vertes ou bleues, qui souffrent encore d'un déficit de compétitivité, même si celui-ci se résorbe à vive allure, ne pourront pas réellement s'épanouir dans un paysage énergétique dont la fission resterait le centre de gravité.**

En décembre, Paris se félicitait, à juste titre, du succès «historique» de la conférence sur le climat, la COP21. **Si elle veut réellement se montrer exemplaire, la France ne peut étouffer dans l'oeuf les énergies alternatives. Pas davantage que transiger avec la sûreté nucléaire.**

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France's labour reforms

Working nine to four

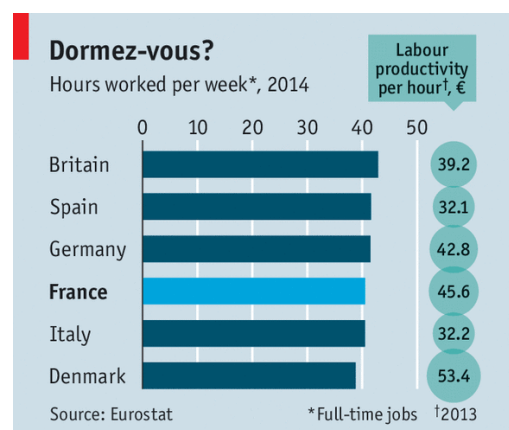
The Socialists are torn over a move to dismantle the 35-hour week

Mar 5th 2016 | PARIS | [From the print edition](#)

IN THE eyes of many foreigners, two numbers encapsulate French economic policy over the past decade or so: 75 and 35. The first refers to the top income-tax rate of 75%, promised by François Hollande to seduce the left when he was the Socialist presidential candidate in 2012. The second is the 35-hour maximum working week, devised by a Socialist government in 2000 and later retained by the centre-right. Each has been a totem of French social preferences. Yet, to the consternation of some of his voters, Mr Hollande applied the 75% tax rate for only two years, and then binned it. Now he has drawn up plans that could, in effect, demolish the 35-hour week, too.

Mr Hollande's government is reviewing a draft labour law that would remove a series of constraints French firms face, both when trying to adapt working time to shifting business cycles and when deciding whether to hire staff. In particular, it devolves to firms the right to negotiate longer hours and overtime rates with their own trade unions, rather than having to follow rules dictated by national industry-wide deals. The 35-hour cap would remain in force, but it would become more of a trigger for overtime pay than a rigid constraint on hours worked. These could reach 46 hours a week, for a maximum of 16 weeks. Firms would also have greater freedom to shorten working hours and reduce pay, which can currently be done only in times of "serious economic difficulty". Emmanuel Macron, the economy minister, has called such measures the "de facto" end of the 35-hour week.

At the same time, the law would lower existing high barriers to laying off workers. These discourage firms from creating permanent jobs, and leave huge numbers of "outsiders", particularly young people, temping. For one thing, it would cap awards for unfair dismissal, which are made by labour tribunals. Laid-off French workers bring such cases frequently; they can take years and cost anything from €2,500 to €310,000 (\$2,700 to \$337,000) by one estimate.



Economist.com

The underlying principle, laid out in government-commissioned reports over the past six months, is simple and radical. The country's ponderous labour code, currently longer than the Bible, should limit itself to basic protection of workers, and leave bosses and unions within firms to hammer out finer details. This is based on

the belief that French employees—only 8% of whom belong to a union—are more pragmatic and flexible than the national union leaders in Paris who supposedly negotiate on their behalf. At a car factory making Smart vehicles in eastern France, for instance, a recent deal to work 39 hours a week was approved by most employees, yet blocked by the firm’s unions. Under the new law, if no deal can be reached with a company’s unions, employees may vote in a binding internal referendum.

The draft law does not deal with all the rigidities of the French labour code. Nonetheless, “it’s the most important piece of labour-market legislation for 15 years,” says Ludovic Subran, chief economist at Eurler Hermes, a credit-insurance firm. It is the closest France has got to the reformist Jobs Act rammed through in Italy by Matteo Renzi’s government. And it could be the legacy that Manuel Valls, the ambitious centre-left prime minister, seeks as he and Mr Macron try to steer the Socialists in a more market-friendly direction.

The great difficulty is political. For much of the left, the 35-hour week remains not only a badge of progress but the mark of a preference: for shorter hours, more holidays and higher productivity—even at the price of fewer jobs. French productivity per hour remains far higher than Britain’s and even a touch above Germany’s (though yearly hours worked in France are lower, and the unemployment rate twice as high). In fact, the French already work more than 35 hours a week on average, partly because so many employees get extra holidays to compensate. White-collar employees at EDF, an energy firm, average 39 working hours a week, but until recently got 23 extra days off each year on top of the statutory five weeks’ holiday. (A hard-won deal has reduced this to a mere 16.) Managing so much absence has become an art. “Employees prefer to work less, earn less and have more time,” says Pierre Vauterin, who runs a firm that makes ball bearings on the outskirts of Paris.

Challenging this doctrine is becoming a stinging headache. Already, Mr Valls has postponed the presentation of his draft law to the cabinet, thanks to an uproar within his own party and the threat of street protests by unions and students. In a barbed article in *Le Monde*, Martine Aubry, mayor of Lille and architect of the 35-hour week, accused him of selling out socialist ideals. “Who could imagine”, she asked, “that making redundancies easier...will encourage employment?” Mr Hollande is enfeebled. Even France’s more moderate unionists are wary. If Mr Valls waters down the draft, his reformist credentials will be damaged. If he pushes ahead, he could find himself with a choice between unmanageable unrest—or resignation.

[From the print edition: Europe](#)

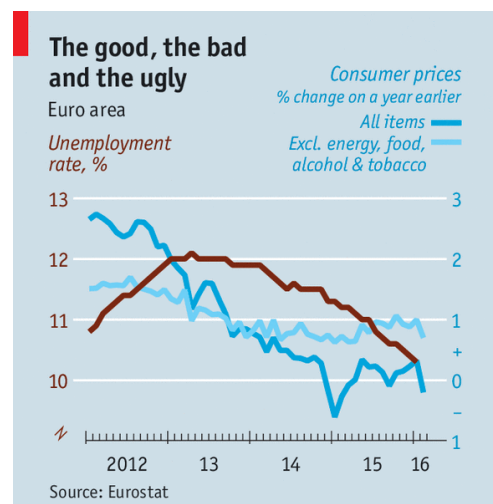
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The euro-zone economy

The new mediocre

The ECB will do something at its meeting next week, but to what effect?

Mar 5th 2016 | [From the print edition](#)



Economist.com

THE launch, a year ago, of the European Central Bank's programme of quantitative easing (QE—creating money to buy bonds) sparked elation. Growth was picking up, consumers had a spring in their step and stockmarkets were jubilant. A year later spirits are sombre as the recovery flags, stockmarkets languish and deflation returns. After prescribing more medicine in December, the ECB is expected to increase the dose again on March 10th. But there are increasing doubts about its effects.

Consumer prices fell by 0.2% in the year to February (see chart), reinforcing the case for greater stimulus. Though this fall was driven by a renewed collapse in oil prices, the core inflation index, which excludes volatile items such as energy, is also looking wan. Prices rose by just 0.7% in the year to February, among the lowest readings since the euro was born 17 years ago. Despite a year of QE, during which the ECB has bought €60 billion (\$65 billion) of bonds a month, it appears to be no closer to its goal of inflation of nearly 2% than when it started.

Unemployment has at least carried on falling, to 10.3% in January, reflecting the continuing economic recovery since the spring of 2013. But the upturn has failed to live up to the promise of early 2015, when GDP growth reached 0.5% (an annualised rate of 2.2%). That turned out to be the (not very) high point. Expansion subsequently slowed, to 0.3% (an annualised rate of 1.1%) in the final quarter of last year. GDP in the single-currency club is still below its peak in early 2008, whereas America's is almost 10% above its pre-crisis high from eight years ago.

Consumers have sustained the euro-zone recovery as household budgets have stretched further thanks to lower energy prices. But investment growth lacks the vitality of previous upturns. That has left the currency union vulnerable to the recent setback in emerging economies, especially in China, which is hurting exporters. Industrial output fell in December in Germany, France and Italy, the three biggest economies in the euro area.

Whereas European stockmarkets were buoyant in early 2015, they sank in the first six weeks of 2016, with particularly sharp falls in bank shares. Though they have since recovered some of their poise, the Stoxx Europe 600 index remains 7% down this year; its banking component has fallen by 15%. An index of business and consumer sentiment compiled by the European Commission, which tends to mirror GDP growth, has fallen from a recent high of 106.7 in December to 103.8 in February, with especially big declines among French and Italian consumers. German industry and trade is more worried about business prospects than at any time since late 2012, not long after the euro zone skirted a break-up, according to the latest Ifo survey.

All this will probably spur the ECB to do more when its monetary-policy council meets this month. In December it extended QE by six months until March 2017, raising the programme's total size from €1.14 trillion to €1.5 trillion (14% of euro-zone GDP). It also cut interest rates, which first fell below zero in 2014, deeper into negative territory. The deposit rate was lowered from -0.2% to -0.3%.

At its March meeting, the ECB is likely to keep pulling on more than one lever. The deposit rate looks set to fall again, to -0.4%. The central bank may also extend another programme that it introduced in 2014, in which it has offered ultra-cheap long-term funding (stretching until September 2018) to banks that improve their lending to the private sector. Most important, the ECB may step up the pace of QE for the next six months or so, from €60 billion a month to, say, €75 billion. It may also extend the programme again, until September 2017, a full year after it was first supposed to end.

The markets had expected more from Mario Draghi, the ECB's president, back in December. But even if he comes up with the goods on March 10th, they are likely to remain sceptical. The effects of negative interest rates on inflation are hard to discern, but banks and insurers are obviously suffering. The ECB could introduce tiered negative rates, protecting most of banks' reserves from the lowest rate, but that did not spare Japanese banks from a stockmarket beating. Moreover, twiddling the dials of QE will not have the same impact as its introduction. Mr Draghi won a reputation as a magician when he cast his "whatever it takes" spell to save the euro, but now even he seems to be running out of tricks.

[From the print edition: Finance and economics](#)

The problem with populism

Cas Mudde

Mass political movements such as Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain have an obvious appeal, but in their illiberalism there is an undeniable dark side

Podemos supporters gathered in Puerta del Sol square in Madrid, 31 January 2015.
Photograph: David Ramos/Getty Images

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Tuesday 17 February 2015 09.14 GMT

The recent electoral success of leftwing populist parties such as [Syriza in Greece](#) and [Podemos in Spain](#) has given a new impulse to the debate on populism in Europe. **Until now, populism was almost exclusively linked to the radical right, leading to an incorrect conflation of populism and xenophobia. In its original form, populism is an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups: “the pure people” and “the corrupt elite”, and argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people. Practically, populist politicians almost always combine it with other ideologies, such as nativism on the right and socialism on the left.**

Up until a couple of years ago **the consensus among European elites on the left and right was that populism was inherently bad.** It was dismissed as a “pathology of democracy” or, as the [American historian Richard Hofstadter](#) wrote in the 1960s, “the paranoid style of politics”. The rise of leftwing populist movements and parties has seen a shift in the public debate, particularly pushed by followers of Chantal Mouffe and the late [Ernesto Laclau](#), who argue that populism actually constitutes the essence of democratic politics. **In their view populism is good for democracy; it is liberalism that is the real problem.** Simply stated, both are right and wrong. **The relationship between populism and liberal democracy is complex and includes the good, the bad and the ugly.**

The main good is that populism brings to the fore issues that large parts of the population care about, but that the political elites want to avoid discussing; think about immigration for the populist right or austerity for the populist left. Leaders from different parties can come together to keep issues that divide their respective electorates off the agenda – such as European integration and immigration.

In other cases they take it even a step further, excluding controversial areas from the democratic process altogether by putting independent, technocratic institutions in charge (such as the courts or central banks). In many cases political elites have worked hand in glove with cultural and economic elites, leaving virtually no space for democratic opposition. **To paraphrase the Mexican political theorist [Benjamin Arditi](#), in those cases populism behaves like the drunken guest at a dinner party, who doesn’t respect the rules of public contestation but spells out the painful but real problems of society.**

The main bad is that populism is a monist and moralist ideology, which denies the existence of divisions of interests and opinions within “the people” and rejects the legitimacy of political opponents. As the populists are the *vox populi*, ie the voice of all the people, anyone with a different view speaks for “special interests”, ie the elite. **Given that the key distinction is between the pure people and the corrupt elite, any compromise would lead to the corruption of the people and is therefore rejected. This uncompromising stand leads to a polarised political culture, in which non-populists turn into anti-populists.**

Populism tends to get ugly when it gets into power. If it has to share power with non-populists the effects, positive or negative, tend to be small (think about the Schüssel governments with the populist, radical right FPÖ in Austria). Even when populists dominate the government, as is now the case in Greece, the negative aspects of populism often are limited, although not for a lack of trying. Populists like Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, the [Kaczyńskis](#) in Poland, or [Vladimír Mečiar](#) in Slovakia regularly tried to circumvent or undermine the power of countervailing forces, including independent judges and the political opposition. In most cases they were successfully opposed by other parts of the political structure – often with help from outside influences, most notably the European Union.

However, **the current situation in Hungary and Venezuela shows us what populism can do when it takes full control of a country.** Supported by impressive popular majorities in elections, populist leaders like **Viktor Orbán and Hugo Chávez** have introduced new constitutions that significantly undermine the checks and balances of liberal democracy. In addition, loyalists have been put at the head of non-majoritarian institutions, such as the courts and other oversight committees, often for periods that extend well beyond the legislative term. Any opposition is frustrated by a combination of legal and extra-legal pressures, from raids by tax agencies to the rejection of renewals of media licences.

In short, populism is an illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism. It criticises the exclusion of important issues from the political agenda by the elites and calls for their repoliticisation. However, this comes at a price. Populism's black and white views and uncompromising stand leads to a polarised society – for which, of course, both sides share responsibility – and its majoritarian extremism denies legitimacy to opponents' views and weakens the rights of minorities. While leftwing populism is often less exclusionary than rightwing populism, the main difference between them is not whether they exclude, but whom they exclude, which is largely determined by their accompanying ideology (eg nationalism or socialism).

141,104

Europe Faces Pension Predicament

Mismatch of lifespans and birthrates means too few workers are paying into state pension plans

By Juliet Samuel | Photographs by Piotr Malecki for The Wall Street Journal

ZARASZÓW, Poland— Krystyna Trzcińska, 68 years old, has farmed a strip of land in this corner of eastern Poland for more than four decades. Retired now, she grows clover between neat rows of raspberry bushes to feed her rabbits. The rabbits she eats, the berries she sells.

The berries bring in the equivalent of about \$1,300 a year. To survive, she and her husband depend on pensions provided by Poland's government.

State-funded pensions are at the heart of Europe's social-welfare model, insulating people from extreme poverty in old age. Most European countries have set aside almost nothing to pay these benefits, simply funding them each year out of tax revenue. Now, European countries face a demographic tsunami, in the form of a growing mismatch between low birthrates and high longevity, for which few are prepared.

Europe's population of pensioners, already the largest in the world, continues to grow. Looking at Europeans 65 or older who aren't working, there are 42 for every 100 workers, and this will rise to 65 per 100 by 2060, the European Union's data agency says. By comparison, the U.S. has 24 nonworking people 65 or over per 100 workers, says the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which doesn't have a projection for 2060.

While the problem has long been building, it is gaining urgency as European countries' debt troubles, growing out of the 2008 crisis, push governments to reassess their priorities. Greece, the worst off, has had to reduce the generosity of its pension system repeatedly. Though its situation is unusually dire, Greece isn't the only European government being forced to acknowledge it has made pension promises it can ill afford.

"Western European governments are close to bankruptcy because of the pension time bomb," said Roy Stockell, head of asset management at Ernst & Young. "We have so many baby boomers moving into retirement [with] the expectation that the government will provide."

Even the U.S., with a Social Security trust fund of \$2.8 trillion, faces criticism for promising more than it can afford. That is because the fund—which is mostly in the form of IOUs from the Treasury—is projected to fall short of the sums needed to cover all benefits in a dozen years or so, and run out in 2035. Europe's situation is much worse.

The demographic squeeze could be eased by the influx of more than a million migrants in the past year. If many of them eventually join the working population, the result could be increased tax revenue to keep the pension model afloat. Before migrants are even given the right to work, however, they require housing, food, education and medical treatment. Their arrival will have effects on public finances that officials have only started to assess.

The pension squeeze doesn't follow the familiar battle lines of the eurozone crisis, which pits Europe's more prosperous north against a higher-spending, deeply indebted south. Some of the governments facing the toughest demographic challenges, such as Austria and Slovenia, have been among those most critical of Greece.

Germans, meanwhile, "are promoting fiscal rules in Spain and other countries, but we are softening the pension rules" at home, said Christoph Müller, a German academic who advises the EU on pension statistics. He pointed to a recent change allowing some workers to collect benefits two years early, at 63. A German labor ministry spokesman called that "a very limited measure."

Europe's state pension plans are rife with special provisions. In Germany, employees of the government make no pension contributions. In the U.K., pensioners get an extra winter payment for heating. In France, manual laborers or those who work night shifts, such as bakers, can start their benefits early without penalty.

While a few countries—including Norway, the U.K. and the Netherlands—have considerable savings in public funds or employer-sponsored pension plans, many others have little. Governments' annual costs for public pensions equal a tenth of gross domestic product, according to the EU data agency Eurostat. That GDP percentage should be stable in coming decades, Eurostat estimates, though its forecast depends on numerous economic assumptions.

Across Europe, the birthrate has fallen 40% since the 1960s to around 1.5 children per woman, according to the United Nations. In that time, life expectancies have risen to roughly 80 from 69.

In Poland, birthrates are even lower, and here the demographic disconnect is compounded by emigration. Taking advantage of the EU's freedom of movement, many Polish youth of working age flock to the West, especially London, in search of higher pay. A paper published by the country's central bank forecasts that by 2030, a quarter of Polish women and a fifth of Polish men will be 70 or older.

In 2012, the Polish government launched a series of changes in its main national pension plan to make it more affordable. One was a gradual rise in the age to receive benefits. It will reach 67 by 2040, marking an increase of 12 years for women and seven for men. The changes mean the main pension plan now is financially sustainable, said Jacek Rostowski, a former finance minister and architect of the overhaul.

The party that enacted the changes lost an election in October, however, and a central promise of the winning party is to undo them. Recently, Poland's president introduced a bill to reverse some of the measures.

"You have to take care of people, of their dignity, not finances," said Krzysztof Jurgiel, agriculture minister in the current Law & Justice Party government.

Ms. Trzcińska, the retired grower of berries and rabbits, doesn't follow politics too closely. She switches channels when political debates such as the one over pensions appear on her TV screen. "They are all yelling at each other, I don't understand it, and it's unpleasant," she said.

When she was young and living under communist rule, she recalls, her family worked the fields with horse-drawn plows and rarely left the village. She remembers winters so cold that a glass of hot tea placed on a window sill would freeze. For decades Ms. Trzcińska tilled a tiny farm of about 17 acres with her husband, Józef, retiring at 55, then the age when women could start collecting state pensions. They eventually gave most of their land to their son and two daughters.

For most of her working years, Ms. Trzcińska made no contributions to Poland's special pension scheme for farmers. Modest though its payouts are—she receives the zloty equivalent of about \$225 a month—barely a tenth of the plan's benefits are covered by contributions from current farmers. Government budgets fill the gap.

Because her husband worked in a shop in addition to farming, he draws his benefit from the main national pension plan. After taxes, it equals about \$200 a month. With their berry sales, the two have a combined posttax income equal to \$6,400, about 60% of Poland's median for two people.

"I'm not worried about myself," Ms. Trzcińska said. "They already decided about my pension. But sometimes I see the debate and worry about what [my children's] pensions will be."

Her first daughter, 46-year-old Anna Mazurek, lives across the lane in Zaraszów. She teaches school—earning about \$1,375 a month—cares for two children and spends many hours minding a shop she and her husband built. He too works at the shop, as well as growing wheat, barley and oats on their piece of the farm. “To live in the countryside, you have to have five jobs,” Ms. Mazurek said.

Once a year, the pension plan sends her an estimate of her benefits when she retires. The most recent was about \$138 a month. A spokesman for the plan said it would provide at least \$224 before taxes, a legal minimum the calculator doesn’t take into account.

An hour’s drive away in Lublin, a picturesque medieval town close to the Ukrainian border, her sister, Małgorzata Olechowska, works as an office manager for an EU-funded nonprofit for about \$1,600 a month. She pays at least a third of her income in taxes, including 9.76% that is earmarked for retiree pensions. Her employer chips in an equal amount. The government pays all of that straight out to current pensioners, supplementing it with other tax revenue.

The system is “a mysterious machine,” Ms. Olechowska said. To her, it feels as if “there’s a huge black hole, and our money is going inside, and we get nothing from it.”

What both sisters do understand is that they will have to work long past the age at which their parents stopped, contribute more and likely retire with a less-generous pension.

It may be a more secure one, however, thanks to the 2012 overhaul that made the plan financially sounder. The changes mean that contributions from current workers and their employers now fund 84% of benefits provided by Poland’s national social security system, which includes not just pensions but also health-care and disability benefits.

Ms. Olechowska, 41, has considered investing in property to help fund her retirement but has taken no action. Her older sister, Ms. Mazurek, doubts she will be up to managing schoolchildren in her 60s but isn’t sure what to do about it. When the government raised the age for receiving a pension, she said: “I wasn’t angry, but I felt helpless.”

The EU has pressed European governments to be more upfront about their pension costs. They are required to publish forecasts of each year’s pension payouts. Only a few countries estimate the total debt burden of the pension promises they have made. In political discussion, most governments treat this as a kind of costless debt held off public balance sheets.

Higher Pension Bills

Starting in 2017, EU rules will require European governments to calculate the total amount they must pay current and future pensioners. Making this obligation more visible could spur them to deal with it, said Hans Hoogervorst, chairman of the International Accounting Standards Board and a former Dutch finance minister. “It will make clear that the current situation is unsustainable.”

That realization could trigger some tough decisions. Moritz Kramer, chief ratings officer for sovereigns at Standard & Poor’s, said European governments will have to admit at some point that current workers won’t receive as much from public pension plans.

Ernst & Young’s Mr. Stockell says he regularly asks a son in his 20s how much he is saving for his retirement. The answer is nothing. Mr. Stockell, who is 57, says even he hasn’t saved enough. “My expectation was that the company I worked for would provide,” he said.

—*Martin Sobczyk and Andrea Thomas contributed to this article.*

[HTTP://WWW.WSJ.COM/ARTICLES/THE-ECBS-MARIO-DRAGHI-TO-THE-EUROZONES-RESCUE-AGAIN-1457301407](http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-ecbs-mario-draghi-to-the-eurozones-rescue-again-1457301407)

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[EUROPE FILE](#)

The ECB's Mario Draghi to the Eurozone's Rescue Again

The pressure is on Draghi to prove the European Central Bank has tools left to fight deflationary forces, Simon Nixon writes



ENLARGE

European Central Bank President Mario Draghi, facing right, greets Argentina's Finance Minister Alfonso Prat-Gay, second from right, on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Shanghai in late February. PHOTO: ROLEX DELA PENA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

By [SIMON NIXON](#)

March 6, 2016 4:56 p.m. ET

[Mario Draghi](#) already has saved the eurozone twice. Now the European Central Bank president must do so a third time.

If that sounds melodramatic, there are those in the markets who believe that the survival of Europe's single currency is as much at stake at this week's meeting of the ECB's Governing Council as it was when Mr. Draghi promised in 2012 to do "whatever it takes" to save the euro, and when the ECB in January 2015 launched a major government bond-buying program.

Only two weeks ago, Mr. Draghi helped quell a market panic fanned by fears that central banks had run out of ammunition to tackle deflationary forces. He insisted that the ECB retained plenty of tools and was prepared to use them. Now the market expects him to prove it.

Mr. Draghi has ramped up the pressure on himself and the ECB. He has argued that since "inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon," there is no excuse for the ECB not hitting its inflation target of just under 2% in the medium term—implicitly defined as its two-year forecast period.

He has also spelled out the consequences of failure: the longer inflation is below target, the greater the risk the market loses confidence in the ECB's ability to deliver on its target. Lower inflation expectations mean higher real interest rates, weaker borrowing and investment and slower growth.

On this analysis, the ECB has little choice but to deliver a substantial further stimulus, given the weakness of recent economic data. Headline inflation fell well below target to minus 0.2% in February, while core inflation also unexpectedly fell to 0.7%. That suggests that falling energy prices alone weren't to blame. At the same time, growth forecasts are also being revised lower, reflecting the weaker global picture. Recent surveys show falls in new orders and business confidence. This data suggests there is little prospect of slack in the eurozone economy being eroded quickly enough to bring inflation back to its target within two years.

Not everyone is happy with the rhetorical trap that Mr. Draghi has set. No one disputes that falling inflation expectations are a concern and that the credibility of the ECB's target is important. The debate instead centers over the definition of the medium term, the urgency of responding to the latest fall in inflation and the effectiveness of possible policy tools.

There is little evidence that disinflation is giving way to full-blown deflation. Growth expectations have been only modestly trimmed, domestic demand and consumer spending continue to drive the recovery, and eurozone unemployment fell in January to 10.3%, its lowest level since August 2011.

Prices have been falling for two years in Spain, yet the economy is growing at an annual rate of 3%.

Nonetheless, Mr. Draghi is likely to get his way. Although ECB policy makers have tried to avoid the mistake they made in December, when additional stimulus fell short of expectations, no one will want to risk further undermining fragile market confidence.

Their challenge will be to work out how best to deliver the extra stimulus. Given growing concerns that negative interest rates risk doing more harm than good as banks seek to pass on the higher costs, the best bet is to buy more government bonds.

But to do that, the ECB must find a way to boost the pool of bonds that it can buy. It could do that either by lifting its 33% cap on the proportion of a single issue it is allowed to own or by changing its rules so that it can buy a bond even when it is certain to make a loss. Another option is to ignore its national bond-buying quotas to allow larger purchases of riskier bonds such as those of Italy and Spain. Each of these options risks accusations that the ECB is illegally financing governments.

Meanwhile, Mr. Draghi faces a second challenge: having bet the ranch on the ECB's ability to bring inflation swiftly back to target, can he deliver even with an expanded bond-buying, or quantitative easing, program?

History is hardly encouraging: Japan has failed despite two decades of extraordinary stimulus. The ECB's efforts to date have hardly been any more successful. The kind of growth levels needed to bring down slack in the eurozone requires businesses to boost their investment.

But monetary policy alone can't deliver that: It requires determined structural reform at both national and eurozone level to boost business confidence. Yet the political conditions for deeper reforms across the European Union appear to be deteriorating, following a series of inconclusive elections, most recently in Slovakia and Ireland, and the continuing challenge of the migration crisis.

Does that mean Mr. Draghi's efforts to save the eurozone are doomed to failure? Not necessarily. If the ECB commits to buying enough bonds, it can at least remove doubts over the debt sustainability of some of the eurozone's most indebted governments, including his native Italy.

That addresses one of the biggest risks to confidence in the single currency—and it ensures that if the eurozone does collapse, no one can blame him.

141,109

Bagehot

Unity in disunity

Conservative splits on Europe belie the reality: Eurosceptics have already taken over the party

Mar 5th 2016 | [From the print edition](#)



EYES hooded, features blade-sharp and shoulders square, Margaret Thatcher looked every bit her caricature as she addressed the House of Commons on October 30th 1990. Just returned from a European summit in Rome, she sounded it, too. The prime minister took aim at the Commission's federal ambitions and boomed her dissent: "No. No. No." So stark was this objection to the continent's integration that Geoffrey Howe, her former foreign secretary, resigned two days later, triggering her fall from office. Partly because of the drama of those days, Europe has since transfixed and sundered the Conservative Party.

That seems especially so now, as Britain's in-out referendum campaign gets rolling. Having promised the vote three years ago in an (apparently vain) attempt to cure the Tories of their neurosis, David Cameron hoped to limit support for Brexit to his party's margins. But at the latest count a little under half of his 330 MPs are for Out, among them two big names: Michael Gove, the justice secretary, and Boris Johnson, London's mayor. Merely disappointed in the former (a convinced eurosceptic), the prime minister is incandescent at the latter (a political opportunist). In a statement to the Commons on February 22nd he issued a string of barely veiled attacks on Mr Johnson's arguments and motives as his target looked on, rather sheepishly, from the back benches.

The family feud will only intensify in the months leading up to the referendum on June 23rd. Piqued by Mr Cameron's barbs, the popular mayor is now throwing his full weight behind the Out campaign. On March 1st he dismissed dire government warnings about the risks of Brexit as baloney. Meanwhile otherwise loyal MPs mock the prime minister's "renegotiation" of Britain's EU membership with Trump-esque scorn. Out in the country some six in ten Tory members plan to vote to leave the EU according to YouGov. Strategists worry about how to "heal the wounds" after the referendum.

So it is tempting to see the surprisingly sudden and vitriolic confrontation between parts of the party as the latest chapter in its long history of eruptions over Europe. That story encompasses first Thatcher and her Europhile assassins, then John—now Sir John—Major and the anti-Brussels "bastards", as he called them, in his cabinet and later the party's irritable 13 years in opposition.

But what is happening now is different. Take the comparison with the Major years. In the 1990s the Conservative fringe was calling for Brexit, but a significant section of the party also remained wedded to the European ideal. In 1994, two years after Britain's humiliating crash out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism, the

forerunner to the euro, almost a third of Tory members supported further integration and almost a quarter wanted a federal Europe. Although Sir John insisted that Britain must remain at the “heart of Europe”, in 1996 party bigwigs chided him for being insufficiently pro-European.

In the intervening years Europe’s economic woes—combined with the drum beat of the anti-EU newspapers, Mr Cameron’s ill-advised Eurosceptic overtures to his base and the rise of the UK Independence Party—have transformed the picture. Look past today’s theatrics and it is clear that almost the whole party has rallied around what, two decades ago, would have counted as its anti-EU pole. On one extreme are hard nationalists who want a complete breach. On the other are a handful of convinced Europhiles. But the vast majority, spanning In and Out camps, agrees that Britain should be in the EU’s outermost orbit: beyond the euro zone and the (notionally) borderless Schengen zone, exempt from as many rules and costs as is practical and under no circumstances subject to further integration.

The referendum debate, however bad-tempered, merely concerns the most beneficial way to achieve this semi-detachment; it is about procedure more than principle. Most Conservative supporters of membership argue that Britain’s interests are best served by remaining a member and securing opt-outs reinforcing its “special” position on the edge of a multi-speed union. Some on this side (like Oliver Letwin, who runs the Cabinet Office) actually support Brexit but think now the wrong time. Their opponents generally want the country to quit, retain its access to the single market—perhaps at the price of some continued pooling of power—and assume an observer status in the European institutions. “We’re all Eurosceptics now,” reckons Michael Fallon, the defence secretary (and a typically unsentimental In voter).

The best example of the muddy reality of what at first glance looks like a binary divide is Mr Johnson who, by his own admission, has been “veering all over the place like a shopping trolley” on the subject. Having initially endorsed Out on the grounds that it would enable Britain to demand and secure a bespoke form of half-membership, he switched to admitting “out means out” when Mr Cameron refuted his claim, but still hints at the possibility of some sort of intermediate option.

Bastards get the last laugh

The Tory party’s convergence on this territory will continue beyond June. Whatever the result of the vote, London’s mayor stands a good chance of succeeding Mr Cameron (YouGov gives him a 21-point lead among party members) whenever the prime minister chooses, or is forced, to step down. The elevated salience of the EU question means it will dominate candidate selections, propelling the parliamentary party in a yet more Eurosceptic direction. Even if the country votes In there could be talk of a new referendum in the near future. And either way, any notion of Britain being at the heart of Europe will be dead. Thus although today’s campaign will bruise egos and break friendships, the bigger story is of a creeping consensus: over years of squabbling a once keenly pro-European party has gradually embraced a peripheral status in the union. In 1990 Thatcher’s Euroscepticism shocked her party. Now it looks restrained.

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Brexit brief

In, out, find a fib to shout

Voters want facts about Britain and the European Union—but these are elusive

Mar 5th 2016 | [From the print edition](#)



“WHAT I want is facts...facts alone are wanted in life.” Thomas Gradgrind’s grim message in Charles Dickens’s “Hard Times” is echoed in the debate ahead of the referendum on June 23rd about whether Britain should leave the European Union. Voters confused by claims made by opposing sides and in the media are asking for plain facts on Britain’s EU membership so they can make up their minds. Sadly, hard facts are hard to find.

There is a good reason for this: nobody knows what would happen post-Brexit. That is especially true of the trade deal that Britain would have to negotiate with the EU—and how long that might take (the government this week suggested up to ten years). But there is also a bad reason: that the uncertainty lets all sides distort, exaggerate or simply make up their own facts.

Three examples illustrate this. The first is an old assertion that 3m jobs in Britain depend on trade with the EU. In fact, because of the close links among European economies, many economists reckon the true figure is higher. Yet the claim sometimes made by pro-EU voices that all these jobs would be at risk post-Brexit is a nonsense. Nobody can plausibly argue that all trade with the EU would cease. Anyway, job creation depends more on demand, wage levels and labour laws than on membership of a trade block.

The second example concerns the British contribution to the EU budget. Leavers claim that Britain pays an unfairly large amount of almost £20 billion (\$28 billion) a year to Brussels, or £55m a day. In fact this is the gross amount before deducting both the rebate won by Margaret Thatcher in 1984 and the money the EU spends in Britain. Adjusting for these, and for the funnelling of some foreign-aid spending via Brussels, the net payment is less than one-third as big, at £17m a day—and Britain is only the eighth-largest contributor per head.

The third example is competing claims about trade patterns. Remain campaigners say the EU takes 45-50% of British exports, whereas Britain accounts for a tenth or less of the EU’s. Yet Nigel Farage, leader of the anti-EU UK Independence Party, has said Britain takes 20% of EU exports, giving it a stronger hand in future trade talks.

One issue here is which source to use: Europe’s statistical office, the British government and the IMF all have different figures. Another is whether to cover just goods or to add services. But the biggest question is whether to count the EU as a block, discounting all intra-EU exports. Doing that puts the share of EU exports going to Britain at almost 16%. But John Springford of the Centre for European Reform, a think-tank, points out that, in trade negotiations, individual countries, not the EU as a whole, decide what to accept. Britain’s share of all other EU countries’ exports is only around 8%, he says (our chart, using IMF figures, puts it even lower), and in many individual cases a lot less, leaving it in a weaker bargaining position.



The arguments over facts in these areas are as nothing compared with the differences on migration and sovereignty—nor compared with the bitter rows within the Tory party (see [article](#)). What should undecided or poorly informed voters do?

Fortunately, there are some good sources they can turn to. Two websites, the broadly neutral [fullfact.org](#) and the pro-EU [infacts.org](#), both puncture myths in the debate. The House of Commons library produces excellent reports, which are available online. And a group of academics led by Anand Menon of King’s College, London, have set up “The UK in a Changing Europe”, financed by the Economic and Social Research Council, which has a lively [website](#).

The Economist is not neutral in this debate: we believe Brexit would be bad for Britain, Europe and the world. But we also want to explain the issues and present the facts. So over the next four months, we will publish a series of Brexit briefs that seek to do this, as dispassionately as possible—in the hope of satisfying even the Gradgrinds among our readers.

From the print edition: [Britain](#)

Time for Helicopter Money?



[Kemal Derviş](#)

Kemal Derviş, former Minister of Economic Affairs of Turkey and former Administrator for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), is a vice president of the Brookings Institution.

WASHINGTON, DC – “[Out of ammo?](#)” *The Economist* recently asked of monetary policymakers. [Stephen Roach](#) has called the move by major central banks – including the Bank of Japan, the European Central Bank, and the Bank of Sweden – to negative real (and, in some cases, even nominal) interest rates a “futile” effort that merely sets “the stage for the next crisis.” And, at the February G-20 finance ministers meeting, Bank of England Governor Mark Carney reportedly called these policies “ultimately a zero-sum game.” Have the major advanced economies’ central banks – which have borne the burden of sustaining anemic post-2008 recoveries – really run out of options?

It certainly seems so. Central-bank balance sheets have swelled, and policy rates have reached their “near zero” lower bounds. There is plenty of cheap water, it seems, but the horse refuses to drink. With no signs of inflation, and growth still tepid and fragile, many anticipate [chronic slow growth](#), with some even fearing another global recession.

But policymakers have one more option: a shift to “purer” fiscal policy, in which they directly finance government spending by printing money – a so-called “helicopter drop.” The new money would bypass the financial and corporate sectors and go straight to the thirstiest horses: middle- and lower-income consumers. The money could go to them directly, and through investment in job-creating, productivity-increasing infrastructure. By placing purchasing power in the hands of those who need it most, direct monetary financing of public spending would also help to improve inclusiveness in economies where inequality is rising fast.

Helicopter drops are currently proposed by both leftist and centrist economists. In a sense, even some “conservatives” – who support more public infrastructure spending, but also want tax cuts and oppose more borrowing – *de facto* support helicopter drops.

Recently, more radical proposals have surfaced, reflecting a sense of urgency and widespread disappointment with the impact of current monetary policy. Beyond advocating higher minimum wages, some are [calling](#) for “reverse income policies,” with governments imposing across-the-board wage increases on private employers – a move that would drive up prices and defeat deflationary expectations. The fact that economists whose views typically fall nowhere near those of the far left are even thinking about such interventionism shows just how extreme circumstances have become.

I favor all of these proposals, in some form. The details of their implementation would obviously have to vary, depending on each economy’s circumstances. Germany, for example, is in a strong position to implement a reverse income policy, given its huge current-account surplus, though there would undoubtedly be major political barriers. More spending on education, skills upgrading, and infrastructure, however, is a no-brainer almost everywhere, and is politically more feasible.

But there is another dimension of the challenge that has so far not been emphasized nearly enough, despite the warnings of Carney, Roach, and others. Zero or negative real interest rates, when they become quasi-

permanent, undermine the efficient allocation of capital and set the stage for bubbles, busts, and crises. They also contribute to further income concentration at the top by hurting small savers, while creating opportunities for large financial players to benefit from access to savings at negative real cost. As unorthodox as it may sound, it is likely that the world economy would benefit from somewhat higher interest rates.

Raising interest rates cannot, however, be a stand-alone policy. Instead, small policy-rate increases must be incorporated into a broader fiscal and distributional strategy, implemented alongside more public spending on infrastructure and skills upgrading, as well as some gentle forms of income policies, employing, for example, “moral suasion.”

Even with such an approach, however, major central banks would have to coordinate their policies. If a single major central bank attempted to introduce higher interest rates, its economy would immediately be “punished” through currency appreciation, declining competitiveness, and falling exports, all of which would undermine aggregate demand and employment.

If the major central banks decided to increase their policy rates simultaneously, these spillover effects would cancel one another out. A coordinated move, perhaps raising rates in two modest 25 or 30 basis-point increments, would be neutral in terms of exchange rates and short-term competitiveness, even as it moved real interest rates back into positive territory. If successful, this effort could eventually be followed by further small increases, creating space for more traditional monetary-policy “ammunition” to be deployed in the future.

Success also hinges on the simultaneous pursuit of fiscal expansion worldwide, with each country’s efforts calibrated according to its fiscal space and current-account position. The expansion should finance a global program of investment in physical and human infrastructure, focusing on the two key challenges of our time: cleaner energy and skills for the digital age.

A coordinated and well-timed policy package could boost global growth, improve capital allocation, support a more equitable income distribution, and reduce the danger of speculative bubbles. The various meetings in the run-up to the G-20 summit in China, including the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, would be ideal forums for designing such a package, and advancing its implementation.

Economic orthodoxy and independent actions have clearly failed. It is time for policymakers to recognize that innovative international policy cooperation is not a luxury; sometimes – like today – it is a necessity.

Read more at <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/coordinated-monetary-policy-revive-growth-by-kemal-dervis-2016-03#FzOvvOZGDSICtJA.99>

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EUROPE | LETTER FROM EUROPE

If Britain Leaves E.U., Some Fear France Would Stop Blocking Migrants at Calais

By CELESTINE BOHLENMARCH 7, 2016

Prime Minister David Cameron said France might abandon a 13-year-old treaty that moved immigration controls to the French side of the English Channel.

PARIS — Long before the [large-scale migrant crisis](#) began to haunt Europe, the camp at Calais in northern France was the object of political contention and humanitarian indignation.

Now the camp, known as [the Jungle](#) and home to thousands of desperate people hoping against all odds to cross the English Channel to Britain, has become an issue in the debate about whether Britain should leave the [European Union](#). Or is it a scarecrow?

Last month, Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain used the Calais camp as a crucial part of his argument that voters should vote to stay in the European Union during a referendum in June.

If Britain were to leave, he said, France might abandon a 13-year-old bilateral treaty that, for the purposes of immigration, effectively moved the border with Britain to the French side of the channel.

Last week, President François Hollande chimed in with vague warnings about “the consequences” of a British departure. He mentioned trade and finances but also “people,” namely “immigration.” By that, he meant Calais.

Many experts and politicians, particularly in Britain but also in France, doubt that France would revisit the 2003 treaty of Le Touquet, which shifted the border controls.

They note that it is in France’s interests to control the border on its territory, not only to protect a vital trade route across the channel but also to avoid an even greater flood of migrants huddling on its shores.

That is the stated position of Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve, who has predicted a “humanitarian disaster” if the border agreement changes.

In Britain, supporters of a departure said the French position was a bluff. “I would say, ‘[Donnez-moi un break](#),’ ” said the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, a member of Mr. Cameron’s party, the Conservatives, who has become one of the leading campaigners for an exit. “There’s absolutely no reason why that treaty should be changed.”

Yet some in France maintain that the Touquet treaty, negotiated by Nicolas Sarkozy, then the French interior minister, and his British counterpart at the time, David Blunkett, is deeply flawed and against the nation’s interest.

Alain Juppé, the mayor of Bordeaux and a leading candidate — against Mr. Sarkozy — for the presidential nomination of France’s main opposition party, called the current situation unsustainable.

“We must negotiate to re-examine the 2003 treaty,” he told La Voix du Nord, a regional newspaper, in January.

Olivier Cahn, a law professor at the Cergy-Pontoise University and an expert on French-British relations, considers the Touquet treaty to be “very disadvantageous” to France.

He said the annual cost of managing both the security and the humanitarian situation at Calais is 80 million euros, or about \$88 million. Britain last week increased its contribution to €57 million from €35 million.

More important than the money is the principle, Mr. Cahn said. “France has to receive these people and determine who they are,” he added. “The British just say they are not welcome.”

[The number of asylum seekers in Britain dropped](#) to just 32,414 last year, of which 61 percent were initially refused, from about 80,000 in 2003.

A recent British court decision in favor of five migrants at Calais who were seeking to join family members in Britain could open a new path for others, particularly several hundred unaccompanied children, now stranded in France.

“We have done our best to make it as hard as possible,” said Jonathan Portes, a senior fellow at [U.K. in a Changing Europe](#), a research organization.

Still, even in the event of a British departure, Mr. Portes says France is unlikely to challenge the 2003 treaty, a view that he thinks is quietly shared by even pro-European Union policy makers.

“It is scaremongering,” he said, “but this is politics, and it is getting dirty. A lot of things are being said on both sides that are dubious, exaggerated or factually inaccurate.”

Mr. Cahn said France might be seeking to use the issue as leverage for British concessions in other spheres, perhaps cooperation in the fight against terrorism. But, he said, that will not do much to help the migrants stuck in Calais, fenced into one of the most heavily secured corners of France.

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• [EUROPE](#)

Hollande's French Labor Reforms Win Over Firms but Anger Socialist Base

Proposals aim to boost France's anemic economy by making it easier to lay off workers

By [WILLIAM HOROBIN](#)

March 7, 2016 5:49 p.m. ET

[6 COMMENTS](#)

French President François Hollande is winning the praise of business leaders with plans to make it easier to hire and fire workers but is on a crash course with his party's leftist base.

PARIS—President François Hollande is winning the praise of business leaders like Jean-Marc Rieger for the first time in years with a recipe to fix France's anemic economy: make it easier to hire and fire.

"You can't recruit when things are going well if you can't lay off when things are going badly," said Mr. Rieger, chief executive of Chimirec, an industrial waste-management company.

By the end of March, Mr. Hollande's government plans to introduce legislation that would create clearer, simpler rules for cutting staff in difficult times while capping court-ordered severance pay. Under the plan, firms would also have more flexibility to negotiate lower overtime pay and other workarounds to France's hallowed 35-hour workweek.

The proposals aim to loosen the regulatory straitjacket that many businesses leaders, economists and officials in other European capitals blame for choking growth in the eurozone's second-biggest economy.

In recent years, Spain and Italy have both taken steps to follow Germany in making their economies more competitive by loosening labor restrictions. But in France, the threat of paralyzing street protests has made a revamp of labor rules a taboo for successive governments, despite an unemployment rate that stubbornly remains above 10%.

With the end of his term approaching in 2017, Mr. Hollande is charting a path similar to Gerhard Schröder, the center-left former German chancellor who, about a dozen years ago, pushed through unpopular overhauls that many now credit with transforming Germany into Europe's economic powerhouse. While the moves ultimately cost Mr. Schröder re-election, Mr. Hollande is hoping his plan will do the opposite. "I've made employment my priority," Mr. Hollande said last week. "Action is the only possible path."

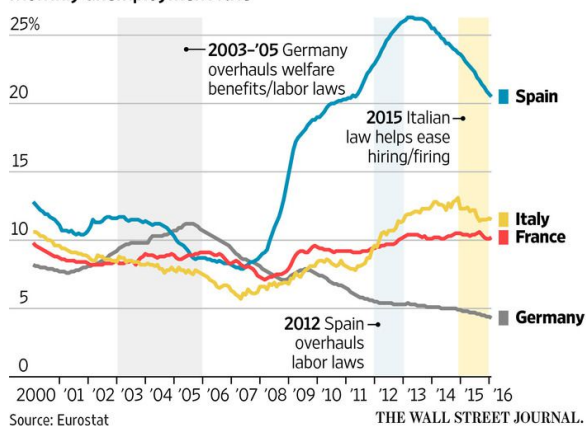
The hurdles to carrying out the plan are high.

The strategy places Mr. Hollande on a crash course with his leftist base. Fractious student organizations have united with labor unions to call for demonstrations, beginning on Wednesday—the first time in Mr. Hollande's presidency. That raises the specter of protests similar to those that forced the government of former President Jacques Chirac back down on labor overhauls in 2006.

Stubborn Unemployment

Once on par with Germany, France's unemployment rate has slowly climbed. The country is considering labor reforms like those enacted in Italy and Spain, whose jobless rates have fallen from recent peaks.

Monthly unemployment rate



ENLARGE

“This labor law is the final straw,” said Carole Couvert, the head of the white-collar CFE-CGC union that until now backed Mr. Hollande’s pro-business overhauls.

Mr. Hollande is also facing strong resistance from the left wing of his own Socialist Party, which has cast the labor overhaul as an existential threat to its political identity.

“Enough is enough,” Martine Aubry and other Socialist Party heavyweights recently wrote in French daily *Le Monde*. “It’s no longer simply a question of the failure of the five-year presidential term, but the preparation of a long-lasting weakening of France, and of course the Left.”

In an attempt to quell the criticism, Mr. Hollande’s government agreed last week to consult with unions and left-wing lawmakers on how to make the overhaul more palatable to the Socialist base.

In its draft form, the bill is designed to allay the fears of employers that have left France’s labor market split in a two-tier system. Afraid to hire under permanent contracts loaded with benefits and job protections, many companies have resorted to using temporary contracts, creating a constant churn of job seekers.

More than 80% of new recruits are on temporary contracts, making it harder for those workers—often young people—to take out loans or rent homes.

“This is what’s at stake: The capacity of our country to create jobs,” said Pierre Gattaz, the head of France’s largest business lobby, Medef, and chairman of French electronic equipment maker [Radiall SA](#).

A key plank of the bill would cap the amount labor tribunals can order companies to pay people who are deemed unfairly fired. Baudoin de Moucheron, a lawyer specializing in labor litigation, said he has seen companies ordered to pay as much as seven times an annual salary.

“This law goes further than others,” Mr. de Moucheron said. “These are measures that will reassure business.”

The bill also seeks to rectify previous attempts to give businesses more say in when their employees work and how long.

The government passed measures in 2013 and 2015 aimed at allowing distressed companies to negotiate cost-cutting measures as part of special “job preservation” agreements. [The initiative flopped](#), though, because it was too complex and forced companies to prove to their employee councils that their economic situation was sufficiently dire. The new bill would allow healthy firms to adopt the agreements.

At Chimirec, Mr. Rieger said he stands to benefit from all of the proposed measures. Every summer, the manager faces spikes in demand for the company's services when industrial plants shut down. Mr. Rieger tends to hire temporary staff to handle the extra work or decline extra business when he can't.

More flexibility on working hours, he said, would allow Chimirec to hire and train more staff on permanent contracts. But Mr. Rieger is concerned political wrangling will leave the bill toothless.

Already, the draft includes sweeteners such as a proposal to introduce special accounts in which workers can clock up rights to training and vacation. The government also plans to create a "right to disconnect" from electronic devices outside of working hours.

"I'm worried the bill will be picked apart," Mr. Rieger said.

141,120

How Turkey held the EU for ransom

Accepting the Turkish terms on migration raise fears of a dangerous precedent.

3/8/16, 5:25 AM CET

Shopping in a Turkish bazaar is never wise for the novice.

The EU learned that lesson the hard way when it discovered the [carefully crafted refugee deal](#) it believed it had sold to Turkish leaders in the run-up to Monday's summit turned out to be little more than the beginning of the negotiation.

[Turkey made Europe a counter offer](#) early Monday that six months ago would have prompted EU negotiators to get up and walk out. To European eyes, the proposal Ankara put on the table read more like a ransom note: €3 billion in refugee aid in addition to the €3 billion already pledged, full-scale visa liberalization for Turkish citizens in the EU by June, an acceleration of Turkey's application to join the bloc as well as a pledge to resettle many of the Syrian refugees Turkey takes in.

Turkey's message to Europe was clear: You need us more than we need you.

That Europe is not just considering the Turkish proposal, but is likely to end up accepting most, if not all of it, is testament to the desperation of the Union and its largest member, Germany, to secure a deal to limit the flow of refugees and end a crisis that is testing EU solidarity like nothing in its history.

[Angela Merkel](#), who sees a sweeping agreement with Turkey as the only viable way out of the quagmire, tried into the early hours of Tuesday to cajole her fellow leaders into accepting the framework. In the end, they agreed to delay a decision until the next regular EU summit, scheduled for next week.

What worried some in the room is that accepting the Turkish terms would set a dangerous precedent, signaling that the bloc's core democratic principles are up for sale. Giving Ankara what it wants, just as President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been tightening his grip on power, turning Turkey into what many consider a dictatorship, could do irreparable harm to the EU's credibility, critics argue.

And yet for Europe, the likely alternative — the collapse of Europe's open borders and public trust in its institutions — would be even worse.

Speaking after the summit, Merkel stressed that given the war in Syria and the “geostrategic” situation, a deal with Turkey is “absolutely in Europe's interest.”

Convincing the rest of Europe won't be easy.

Cooperation, not sanctions

It was only on Friday that Turkish authorities seized control of the [country's largest newspaper](#), Zaman, dispersing protestors with tear gas. Such an action would normally prompt censure from Brussels.

Europe's dry official commentary at the end of the summit: “The EU heads of state or government also discussed with the Turkish prime minister the situation of the media in Turkey.”

Instead of weighing sanctions, the EU is considering accelerating Turkey's negotiations for EU membership. That process, which has been stalled for years, normally requires a candidate country meet basic standards on everything from the independence of its judiciary to [press freedom](#). Acceding to Turkey's demand that the EU open talks in five key areas linked to its membership bid would force the Union to ignore Turkey's record on human rights, intimidation of the media and manipulation of the judiciary.

"We certainly can do all of that. The only question is what it will do to the EU," one official involved in the deliberations said.

The irony is that [Erdoğan](#) likely has little intention of joining the EU. Membership in the EU is simply not compatible with his strongman style. But by forcing European countries to invite Turkey back to the table, he can show his people that Turkey is still accepted by the West and slap down domestic critics who say otherwise. Winning visa-free travel to Europe would offer further affirmation of Turkey's place in the first world.

European officials tried to sell the summit as a success, arguing that the commitments Turkey was willing to make in terms of taking back refugees and helping to shut down human smuggling would amount to a major "breakthrough."

"This is a real game-changer," European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said afterwards. "We will make clear that the only viable way to come to Europe is through legal channels."

In some respects, Turkey's new offer goes further than the original plan it had discussed with the EU, particularly concerning the numbers of refugees Ankara would take back and the measures it would adopt to deter human smuggling.

But the price is higher than anyone in Brussels thought they'd have to pay.

Best laid plans

Just last week, a parade of European officials, led by Council President Donald Tusk, visited Turkey to lay the groundwork for a deal.

Under his blueprint, Turkey would have agreed to take back refugees intercepted in the Aegean, including Syrians, as well as some of the refugees now stranded in Greece. In return, the EU would release more of the €3 billion in aid it pledged last fall to help Turkey take care of the refugees.

Berlin believed that the deal, combined with other recent measures, such as a beefing up of coast guard patrols and the involvement of NATO ships in the effort, would help choke the flow of refugees.

Tusk's entourage was encouraged by the progress they made. After months of foot dragging on the so-called EU-Turkey Action Plan, the Turks were finally moving forward.

The Europeans concluded Erdoğan had come around because he needed EU support in his confrontation with Russia and in dealing with the broader security challenges Turkey faces in the Middle East.

"For the first time since the beginning of the migration crisis, I can see a [European consensus emerging](#)," Tusk tweeted after meeting Erdogan, the final stop in a weeklong tour of the Balkans.

The first sign the EU's read on Turkey was off the mark came just minutes after Tusk's plane departed Istanbul. Late Friday, a Turkish court approved the government's seizure of the Zaman newspaper. Shortly thereafter, riot police moved in.

Caught off guard, Europe's leaders said little about the crackdown for the next 48 hours, beyond the usual boilerplate about the importance of a free press.

Behind the scenes, officials worried that any criticism of Erdoğan could derail the deal ahead of Monday's summit. They suspected the move against Zaman was a provocation meant to show Europe who was in control.

What the Europeans didn't know was that the deal they thought they had was already dead.

A surprise at dinner

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu invited Merkel for dinner at the Turkish embassy in Brussels Sunday evening. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, also attended.

The dinner was set to prepare for the next day's summit. But instead of ironing out the details of what had been negotiated over the previous weeks, Davutoğlu dropped a bombshell.

Turkey, he told them, had a new set of demands. Over the next several hours, the three discussed Ankara's new conditions.

Merkel quickly realized it would be impossible to reach a deal at Monday's summit, given the scope of the deal Davutoğlu had put on the table.

On Monday morning, Merkel arrived early to the Council headquarters to meet with other leaders. The focus turned to damage control.

The schedule called for lunch with Turkey followed by a meeting of the EU-28 to work out the final details of an agreement. The Turkish move threw the summit into disarray. **The meeting with the Turks lasted for hours. Dinner was announced only to be canceled so leaders could hammer out a mealy-mouthed statement. The highlight: "We need to break the link between getting in a boat and getting settlement in Europe." **

Merkel, who faces a string of important regional elections in Germany on Sunday, had hoped to leave Brussels with a solid deal she could present to an electorate increasingly skeptical of her government's handling of the crisis.

Instead, all she can offer them is a vague promise that a comprehensive agreement with Turkey is near.

Other EU leaders, meanwhile, were shocked. Tusk complained that all his efforts over the past week had been for nothing.

Some national delegations blamed the Germans for bungling the negotiations with Turkey by allowing Davutoğlu the opportunity to recut the deal.

Merkel was at pains after the summit to put a positive spin on the day's events.

"This Turkish proposal is a breakthrough if realized," she insisted.

"Yes, this has made things more difficult ... But I honestly think it's better to have such a proposal now than not at all."

141,123

One in, one out – the EU's simplistic answer to the refugee crisis

The proposal that Europe will resettle every Syrian that Turkey allows in from Greece is morally and legally complex

It is unclear whether a readmission agreement with Turkey would have any legal or moral basis

.....
Patrick Kingsley Migration correspondent

Monday 7 March 2016 19:41 GMT Last modified on Tuesday 8 March 2016 02:52 GMT

One in, one out. That was the unexpected compromise occupying EU and Turkish leaders in Brussels as they sought a means of managing Europe's refugee crisis.

Details were still being hammered out on Monday as the talks reached witching hour, and the plan may yet fold. But at one point European top brass were at least considering the orderly resettlement of one Syrian directly from Turkey in exchange for each asylum seeker it readmits after they land on the shores of neighboring [Greece](#).

For some, it felt like progress. Such a scheme could see an end to the chaos in the Aegean, while ensuring that Europe lived up to its humanitarian obligations. Syrians could still have a future in [Europe](#), while being discouraged from trying to get there haphazardly. Suddenly the hubristic claims made at the start of the day by Donald Tusk, the European council president, seemed to make more sense.

“With that,” **he said**, with an energy that seemed to belie the severity of the situation, “we will close the western Balkans route.”

Closer inspection suggests Tusk may have spoken too soon. For a start, it is unclear whether a readmission agreement with Turkey will have a legal or moral basis. An Amnesty International spokesman said the deal was “worth exploring” in principle, but added that the concept of returning people to a country that does not respect human rights – in particular, the rights of refugees – was “exceedingly problematic”. It also risks contravening the UN's refugee convention, which was **one of the seminal achievements of the post-Holocaust era**.

In practical terms, a one in, one out proposal also encourages people to make the Aegean crossing – and discourages the Turkish government from stopping them. If the EU will accept only as many refugees who reach Greece and are then returned to [Turkey](#), then both the refugees and the Turks have even more incentive to make sure as many migrants reach Greece in the first place.

And even if such a deal emerges, it may take months before Turkey is able to reaccept the large numbers of asylum seekers who continue to land on the Greek islands. Turkey must in turn arrange readmission agreements with the countries where the non-Syrian asylum seekers come from, and this kind of wrangling is bound to take time.

In the interim, increasing numbers of asylum seekers will continue to reach Greece. **If Tusk's plan to seal the Macedonian border is upheld, then Greece faces a dystopian nightmare.** It will become a cage for hundreds of thousands of people, with the local authorities lacking the resources needed to house or process them.

But that's only if the Balkans can be sealed off from Greece.

“With that”, Tusk says, the Balkans can be shut. Yet past experience suggests it cannot. In the early 90s, following the collapse of the dictatorship in Albania, at least 250,000 Albanians made the perilous crossing over the mountainous border with Greece. Aid workers say a few Syrians, 25 years later, are beginning to try the same route . Some may reinvigorate the Albanian-Italian maritime smuggling route, which was once a major thoroughfare for asylum seekers.

Then there is the Greek-Bulgarian border, which was still impregnated by about 30,000 people in 2015, despite the construction of a fence along parts of its length. Finally, some analysts expect a spike in illegal crossings of the Black Sea from northern Turkey towards Ukraine and the eastern Balkans. **Where there is a wall, there is usually a way of getting round it.**

Rising Global Debt and the Deflation Threat

Years of deficit spending and near-zero interest rates have led to massive borrowing but little growth.

By GEORGE MELLOAN

March 7, 2016 7:02 p.m. ET

[68 COMMENTS](#)

Franklin D. Roosevelt's March 1933 inaugural line "that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself" was inspiring, but wrong. There was plenty to fear, not least the deflation that then gripped the nation.

Today we're in a new age of anxiety, with voters opting for anti-establishment outsiders like [Donald Trump](#) and Bernie Sanders. Americans are not experiencing deflation, but there are some early symptoms. More important, the potential cause is apparent.

Among symptoms, dollar prices of oil and many other commodities have slumped; the U.S. consumer-price index hardly budged in 2015. The European Central Bank and central banks in Japan, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden are now charging commercial banks interest on their reserve deposits (negative interest rates) to try to stimulate lending.

The decline in energy prices is appropriately celebrated, but the big question is whether the Federal Reserve and other central banks can arrest a slide into a general deflationary malaise. Here is a possible reason why they can't: Years of government "stimulus" spending are working against them.

Irving Fisher, a prominent monetary economist in the 1920s and '30s, explained how deflation could result from an abnormal buildup of debt. A debt bubble, he wrote ([Econometrica](#), 1933) ultimately would burst "through the alarm of either debtors or creditors or both." Debt will be liquidated by the distress sales of assets, the contraction of bank deposits as bank loans are paid off, and the slowing down of monetary velocity (the turnover from account to account that modulates the effective supply of money).

With falling prices come plummeting profits that force employee layoffs. The resulting pessimism and loss of confidence leads to "hoarding and slowing down still more of velocity of [monetary] circulation." The effective money supply contracts, hence deflation. In Fisher's view, that's why the American economy sank into Depression in the early 1930s. (Why it stayed depressed for a decade is another story.)

When global stock markets crashed in 2008, Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke was determined not to repeat a mistake made in 1929. After that crash the Fed failed to create enough money to compensate for the sudden loss of bank liquidity and a deflationary contraction of the money stock. And so Mr. Bernanke in December 2008 lowered the Fed's interest-rate target to an upper bound of a quarter of a percentage point and a lower bound of zero. There it stayed until the quarter point increase in December 2015.

Unfortunately, Congress also passed, at President Obama's urging, a massive and highly politicized \$831 billion "stimulus" bill a few months later. The spending did not lead to much if any growth, but it was followed by a string of trillion-dollar-plus deficits. Federal debt, a bit over \$10 trillion in 2009, has ballooned to more than \$18 trillion.

In other words, while Mr. Bernanke and Ms. Yellen were trying to prevent deflation, the federal government was engineering its cause, excessive debt. And the Fed abetted the process by purchasing trillions of dollars of government paper, aka quantitative easing.

Near-zero interest rates also have encouraged consumers and business to releverage. Cars are now financed with low or no-interest five-year loans. With the 2008 housing debacle forgotten, easier mortgage terms have

made a comeback. Corporations also couldn't let cheap money go to waste, so they have piled up debts to buy back their own stock. Such "investment" produces no economic growth, but it has to be paid back nonetheless.

Amid the Great Recession, many worried that the entire economy of the U.S., or even the world, would be "deleveraged." Instead, we have a new world-wide debt bubble. "The billions of taxpayer dollars that have been spent on bailing out the banks," Aaran Fronda recently wrote in London's [World Finance magazine](#), "combined with huge amounts of quantitative easing and reducing interest rates to rock-bottom levels resulted in advanced economies holding the highest public debt-to-GDP ratios that had ever been seen."

Global debt of all types grew by \$57 trillion from 2007 to 2014 to a total of \$199 trillion, the [McKinsey Global Institute](#) reported in February last year. That's 286% of global GDP compared with 269% in 2007. The current ratio is above 300%. The big boost came from governments. The debt load, McKinsey noted, "poses new risks to financial stability and may undermine global economic growth."

The Fed says it wants to "reflate" to the tune of 2% annual inflation—which would let the U.S. Treasury, among others, work off its debt with cheaper dollars. But the Fed isn't getting the inflation it wants and the deflation risk persists. Its desperation can be deduced from Ms. Yellen's suggestion that she would consider negative rates. "Helicopter money"—with the Fed bypassing the banks and somehow funneling money directly to consumer accounts—is even being discussed in the press.

Ironically, voters are turning toward a developer, Donald Trump, who never met a highly leveraged project he didn't like. As for Bernie Sanders, his wishes are simple: more federal spending and borrowing on welfare programs. Should we be worried about any of this?

Mr. Melloan is a former deputy editor of the Journal editorial page. His book "When the New Deal Came to Town" will be published by Simon & Schuster in the fall.

Slogans

Par [Laurent Joffrin](#) — 7 mars 2016 à 20:01

ÉDITO

Sur un point au moins, le Medef se trompe - ou bien nous ment : non, la réforme du marché du travail n'est pas la panacée qui nous guérira à elle seule du chômage. L'observation calme des expériences européennes montre que c'est d'abord la croissance - verte si possible - qui détermine le nombre d'emplois. Le recours à plus de flexibilité joue un rôle second et souvent difficile à mesurer. Aussi bien, certaines dispositions de la loi El Khomri doivent être révisées, comme le demandent la CFDT et plusieurs autres syndicats. Sans ces modifications, le texte n'a aucune chance d'être accepté par le pays.

En revanche, ceux qui demandent son retrait pur et simple doivent auparavant répondre à quelques questions dérangeantes. Quid, d'abord, des avancées incontestables contenues dans le projet, par exemple la création du compte personnel d'activité, qui donne plus de droits au salarié qui change d'entreprise ? A la poubelle ? Pourquoi, en second lieu, tous les pays européens - tous - sociaux-démocrates ou conservateurs, ont-ils réformé leur marché du travail ? Trahison générale ? Aveuglement collectif ? Ou tentative de chercher de nouvelles solutions à ce problème lancinant, quitte à admettre des concessions ? Et pourquoi les pays où les protections sont les plus fortes sont-ils si souvent ceux où le taux de chômage est le plus élevé ? Coïncidence ? Au vrai, la plupart des études vont dans le même sens, notamment celle du Conseil d'orientation de l'emploi : un marché du travail assoupli favorise en général la baisse du chômage, quoique dans des proportions limitées. Les premiers succès enregistrés sur ce front par le gouvernement Renzi en Italie sont éloquentes. Voilà sur quoi il faut méditer, plutôt que de s'en tenir, dans un sens ou dans l'autre, à des slogans simplificateurs.

[Laurent Joffrin](#)

141,128

Droit du travail : les fautes du gouvernement

LE MONDE | 01.03.2016 à 11h37 • Mis à jour le 01.03.2016 à 20h33

Editorial du « Monde ». Pour la seconde fois en trois mois, le pouvoir exécutif expérimente une méthode de gouvernement inédite : on se tire d'abord une balle dans le pied gauche, ensuite dans le pied droit. La claudication est assurée, voire l'immobilisation. Le président de la République et le premier ministre avaient pourtant constaté, avec la réforme de la Constitution et sa disposition sur la déchéance de la nationalité, que cela pouvait faire de sérieux dégâts. Ils sont en train de récidiver avec le projet de loi sur le droit du travail.

Dans un pays miné par le chômage de masse, chacun savait que cette réforme était indispensable pour moderniser et assouplir le marché du travail, en adapter les règles aux réalités spécifiques de chaque entreprise et, en contrepartie, accorder aux salariés de nouvelles protections. Mais personne n'ignorait que le sujet était hautement inflammable et qu'il faudrait beaucoup de doigté pour trouver le bon point d'équilibre entre flexibilité et sécurité.

Le gouvernement avait d'ailleurs soigneusement préparé le terrain. Dès septembre 2015, le rapport de Jean-Denis Combrexelle avait doté le gouvernement d'une solide boîte à outils pour adapter les règles d'organisation du travail. De même, le comité présidé par Robert Badinter avait, à la demande du gouvernement, gravé dans le marbre les principes essentiels du droit du travail. Jusque-là, tout semblait sous contrôle et le président de la République pouvait, à bon droit, plaider qu'entre ceux qui ne veulent rien changer et ceux qui veulent tout démolir, il y a place pour une réforme intelligente et équilibrée.

Périlleux front du refus

C'est ensuite que les choses se sont gâtées. Sur le fond, un certain nombre de dispositions ont été introduites, de façon précipitée, brouillonne et opaque, au moment des derniers arbitrages sur l'avant-projet de loi, à la mi-février. Qu'il s'agisse de la fixation du temps de travail, du plafonnement des indemnités prud'homales, de la définition des motifs de licenciement économique, ou encore du recours au référendum salarial, le gouvernement a fait pencher nettement la balance du côté de la flexibilité, au détriment de la sécurité. Au point de susciter l'opposition de la CFDT, son partenaire syndical pourtant indispensable.

La méthode a été tout aussi cafouilleuse. En laissant entendre, le 18 février – et elle ne s'était évidemment pas engagée sans l'aval de l'Elysée et de Matignon –, que le gouvernement pourrait recourir à l'article 49-3 de la Constitution pour forcer la main à une majorité rétive, la ministre du travail, Myriam El Khomri, a braqué tout le monde. En deux semaines, le gouvernement a donc réussi à provoquer un périlleux front du refus, qui rassemble les syndicats, une grande partie de la gauche, ulcérée ou déboussolée, la société civile, qui pétitionne à grande échelle sur Internet contre le projet, et jusqu'aux étudiants de l'UNEF, qui menacent de descendre dans la rue.

En décidant, le 29 février, de reporter de quinze jours la présentation du texte en conseil des ministres, le premier ministre tente de faire baisser la pression. Mais on sait d'expérience ce qu'il en est : ou bien le gouvernement ne cherche qu'à gagner du temps et il cristallisera un peu plus les oppositions de la gauche politique et syndicale; ou bien il est prêt à remettre en discussion, sur des points importants, ce projet mal emmanché et c'est le patronat et la droite qui l'accuseront de pusillanimité. Beau gâchis !

VOX

Désespérant

du Limbert, Paul-Henri

L'éditorial de Paul-Henri du Limbert

Hélas, les sceptiques avaient raison. L'ambitieuse réforme Hollande-Valls-El Khomri sur l'assouplissement du Code du travail ne verra pas le jour. Effrayé par sa propre audace, l'exécutif s'est finalement résigné à confier le texte aux partenaires sociaux et au groupe socialiste, lesquels vont s'empresse de le déchiqueter à belles dents. Autant dire qu'il n'en restera plus grand-chose et que cette tentative de réforme ira rejoindre le grand cimetière - plein à craquer - des occasions perdues. Sur cette affaire, il serait injuste d'accabler excessivement le chef de l'État et son premier ministre. Après tout, ils ont essayé, et on se souviendra que François Hollande, après quatre années d'apathie, aura montré une brève velléité réformatrice.

Mais là n'est pas l'essentiel. Cette fin programmée de la loi El Khomri semble donner de nouveau raison à ceux qui nous expliquent que la France est irréformable et que le pire y est toujours certain. Contre le chômage de masse, bien avant François Hollande, Édouard Balladur avait proposé le contrat d'insertion professionnelle (CIP). Échec. Puis, Dominique de Villepin avait défendu le contrat première embauche (CPE). Échec. À chaque fois, des syndicats surannés et une jeunesse aveugle et/ou manipulée avaient dit non. Désespérant.

Jugent-ils le «modèle social» français si admirable qu'ils souhaitent avec tant de véhémence le préserver? Mais préserver quoi, au juste? Un système qui, depuis trente ans, a amplement fait la preuve de son inefficacité: chômage record, impôts records, déficits records, dette record, désespoir record. Qui dit mieux? Quand, grâce à des réformes courageuses, tant d'autres pays sont au plein-emploi, ou s'en approchent, la France continue d'exprimer bruyamment, selon l'expression consacrée, sa «préférence pour le chômage».

Avis à ceux qui, à droite, ambitionnent de diriger le pays l'an prochain. Il leur faudra une force d'âme peu commune pour tenir tête à ces étranges exaltés qui, depuis trop longtemps, raisonnent à l'envers et jugent que la meilleure façon de sortir de l'échec, c'est encore de ne rien faire.

141,130

Arbeitsmarkt in Frankreich

Länger arbeiten, leichter entlassen

Der Vorstoß von Präsident Hollande für Arbeitsreformen löst eine Protestwelle aus. Er geht weiter denn je auf die Arbeitgeber zu. Doch rebelliert nun die Linke?

19.02.2016, von **CHRISTIAN SCHUBERT**, PARIS



© AFP François Hollande: Folgt jetzt die Auseinandersetzung mit den Gewerkschaften?

Während der französische Präsident **François Hollande** am Freitag in Brüssel um den Zusammenhalt der EU kämpfte, hatte er zu Hause um die Einheit einer anderen Truppe zu fürchten: die seiner Regierung und ihrer sozialistischen Parlamentsabgeordneten. Hollandes Reformvorschlag für Arbeitszeit und Arbeitsrecht in den Unternehmen (F.A.Z. 19. Februar) hat im Lager der Linken nicht nur eine Protestwelle ausgelöst, sondern auch für Verwirrung gesorgt, denn so viel Reformeifer hatte man Hollande gut ein Jahr vor der Präsidentenwahl gar nicht mehr zugetraut.



Autor: Christian Schubert, Wirtschaftskorrespondent in Paris, Folgen:

Die Initiative des Präsidenten enthält für Sozialisten mehrere schwer zu schluckende Kröten: Die Arbeitszeit, bislang 35 Stunden in der Woche, soll in Ausnahmefällen sogar bis auf 60 Stunden erhöht werden können; Lohn- und Arbeitszeitanpassungen in den Betrieben sollen auch dann erleichtert werden, wenn es den Unternehmen noch gar nicht schlecht geht; und die Macht der Arbeitsgerichte soll zurückgedrängt werden, damit die Kosten von Entlassungen für die Arbeitgeber, sinken und Verfahren besser abschätzbar werden.

Der sozialistische Abgeordnete Pascal Cherki fasste seinen Ärger am Freitag in diese Worte: „Einige aus meiner Familie waren Arbeiter. Ich werde das Gedenken daran nicht beleidigen, indem ich für diesen Vorschlag stimme. In die sozialistische Partei bin ich nicht eingetreten, um soziale Rechte abzuschaffen“. Selbst der als eher liberal geltende Ökonom und frühere Präsidentenberater Jacques Attali hat seinen Widerstand angemeldet. Arbeitszeiten von bis zu 60 Wochenstunden oder 12 Stunden am Tag seien nicht akzeptabel. „Man sieht in dem Reformvorschlag nur, was die Arbeitgeber und nicht was die Beschäftigten gewinnen können“, klagt Attali. Er ist überzeugt, dass der Entwurf niemals durchkommen werde.

Viel Unterstützung von den Unternehmen

Die Regierung gibt sich indes entschlossen angesichts einer Monat für Monat steigenden Arbeitslosigkeit. Hollande hat angekündigt, dass er sich nur bei sinkenden Arbeitslosenzahlen im Mai 2017 zur Wiederwahl stellen werde. Zusammen mit Premierminister **Manuel Valls** schickt er nun die 38 Jahre alte und gerade erst nominierte Arbeitsministerin Myriam El Khomri in ein schweres Gefecht. Sie deutete in einem Zeitungsgespräch bereits an, dass die Regierung ihr Projekt auch mit dem Notparagrafen 49,3 ohne Abstimmung durchs Parlament boxen könnte. Das hat die linke Opposition noch mehr in Rage gebracht. Doch

das letzte Wort ist noch lange nicht gesprochen. Am 9. März soll das Kabinett den Gesetzentwurf verabschieden, und im April soll das Parlament darüber debattieren.

Grundprinzip der jüngsten Regierungsvorschläge ist der Dialog zwischen den Arbeitgebern und den Beschäftigten in den Betrieben. Wenn sie sich einig werden, soll die gesetzliche Regulierung deutlich gelockert werden. Dabei will die Regierung sogar den Vertretungsanspruch einiger reformunwilliger Gewerkschaften aushebeln. Wenn die Beschäftigten zustimmen, bei gleichem oder sogar geringerem Lohn mehr zu arbeiten, um im Gegenzug längerfristige Arbeitsplatzgarantien zu erhalten, dann sollen die einzelnen Gewerkschaften in den Betrieben nicht mehr blockieren dürfen. In betrieblichen Referenden, beantragt von einer Gewerkschaft, soll die Gemütslage der Beschäftigten künftig gemessen werden. Schon in jüngerer Zeit gab es einige Abstimmungen in Unternehmen, auch zur Sonntagsarbeit. Sie gingen mal zugunsten der Vorschläge von Arbeitgebern, mal dagegen aus.

Von der Unternehmerseite kommt jetzt auf jeden Fall viel Unterstützung für den Vorstoß einer großen Arbeitsmarktreform der Regierung. Bei den Arbeitszeitgrenzen erwarten viele zwar noch Abschwächungen, doch sie hoffen vor allem auf einen Wandel bei den mühsamen Prozessen vor den Arbeitsgerichten. So sieht die Regierung relativ geringe Obergrenzen für Abfindungen vor, die das Gericht festlegt: Nach 2 Jahren Betriebszugehörigkeit nur drei Monatsgehälter, bei 20 Jahren und mehr maximal 15 Monatsgehälter. Das ist für die Unternehmen deutlich günstiger als ein vorheriger Gesetzentwurf der Regierung, den das französische Verfassungsgericht im vergangenen Sommer abgelehnt hatte. Er sah für größere Unternehmen eine Abfindungsobergrenze bei mindestens 10 Jahren Betriebszugehörigkeit von 27 Monatsgehältern vor. Obendrein will die Regierung den rechtlichen Rahmen für Entlassungen aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen klarer definieren. Das würde den Spielraum der Arbeitsrichter einengen, die in Frankreich gerne zugunsten der Beschäftigten urteilen.

Arbeitsministerin El Khomri betont indes, dass ihr Gesetzesvorschlag nicht nur auf Arbeitgeberforderungen eingehe. Die 35-Stunden-Woche bestehe fort, weil von der 36. Stunde an Überstundenzuschläge gezahlt werden müssten. Für die Beschäftigten will die Regierung Ausbildungskonten einführen, mit denen sie ungenutzte Ansprüche bei einem neuen Arbeitgeber geltend machen können. Außerdem ist ein „Recht auf Unerreichbarkeit“ für Beschäftigte vorgesehen, die von der Firma abends und am Wochenende elektronisch oder telefonisch behelligt werden.

141,132

Arbeitsmarktreform in Frankreich

Rütteln an der 35-Stunden-Woche

Frankreichs Arbeitsministerin El Khomri will den Unternehmen die Angst vor der Einstellung neuer Mitarbeiter nehmen und dazu das Arbeitsrecht flexibilisieren.

- von **Nikos Tzermias, Paris**
- 19.2.2016, 05:30 Uhr
- [Kommentare](#)

Ist es nur ein Versuchsballon, um immerhin den Reformwillen der Regierung zu markieren? In den hiesigen Medien wird intensiv über die Tragweite eines Reformentwurfs der französischen Arbeitsministerin Myriam El Khomri spekuliert. Mehreren Zeitungen wurde ein «Arbeitspapier» zugespielt, in dem angeblich eine praktische Aushöhlung der kostspieligen 35-Stunden-Woche und eine Entschärfung des Kündigungsschutzes anvisiert wird. In einem am Donnerstag publizierten [Interview der Wirtschaftszeitung «Les Echos»](#) erklärte El Khomri, dass es ihr darum gehe, den Unternehmen die Angst vor der Einstellung neuer Mitarbeiter zu nehmen und die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der Wirtschaft zu verbessern.

Mut zum Risiko

Dabei signalisierte die Ministerin bereits, dass die Regierung das Vorhaben notfalls ohne formelle Abstimmung des Parlaments verabschieden könnte und sich einem allfälligen Misstrauensvotum stellen würde.

Ob es der Regierung gelingen wird, eine bedeutungsvolle Arbeitsmarktreform noch im letzten Jahr der fünfjährigen Amtszeit von Staatspräsident François Hollande durchzubringen, ist ungewiss. Gegen den bisherigen Reformentwurf haben sich nicht nur Vertreter der Linksgewerkschaften und des linken Flügels des regierenden Parti socialiste ausgesprochen. Auf Distanz ging am Donnerstag auch Parteisekretär Jean-Christophe Cambadélis. Er könne dem gegenwärtigen Entwurf nicht zustimmen. Es fehle das Gleichgewicht zwischen Flexibilität und Sicherheit.

Der Präsident des Unternehmensverbands Medef, Pierre Gattaz, lobte dagegen diese Schritte in die richtige Richtung. Positiv beurteilt werden in Unternehmerkreisen im Besonderen die Pläne zur Plafonierung der von Schiedsgerichten festlegbaren Abfindungen für ungerechtfertigte Entlassungen sowie die Erleichterung eines Personalabbaus auch zur Meisterung des Strukturwandels. Sehr zweifelhaft ist dagegen, ob die Reform wirklich zu einer weitreichenden Aushöhlung oder sogar zu einem De-facto-Ende der 35-Stunden-Woche führen wird. Laut dem Papier des Arbeitsministeriums bleiben die 35 Stunden die gesetzliche Wochenarbeitszeit, doch sollen die Sozialpartner auf Betriebsebene mehr Flexibilität bei der Gestaltung der effektiven Arbeitszeit und der Festlegung der Überstunden-Löhne erhalten. Inwieweit der Spielraum aber tatsächlich ausgeschöpft werden kann, ist sehr ungewiss. Denn für Ausnahmen von der notabene per Gesetz festgelegten 35-Stunden-Regelung müssen Referenden in den Betrieben durchgeführt werden, was erstens nicht einfach und zweitens sehr zeitraubend sein dürfte.

Zwei Schritt vor, einer zurück

Für Überstunden muss auch weiterhin ein Mindestzuschlag von 10% bezahlt werden; und wenn sich die Sozialpartner nicht einmal darauf einigen können, gilt weiterhin der 25%ige Aufschlag für die ersten acht Überstunden, wonach gar ein Zuschlag von 50% gilt. Neu ist nur, dass für den Satz von 10% nicht mehr eine Branchenvereinbarung, sondern bloss noch eine solche auf Betriebsebene nötig ist.

141,133

Reformen in Frankreich

Zu späte Einsicht

Frankreichs Staatspräsident hat die Notwendigkeit von Reformen zu spät erkannt.

- **Kommentar**
- von **Nikos Tzermias, Paris**
- 4.3.2016, 06:00 Uhr
- **2 Kommentare**

Als die EU-Kommission Frankreich vor einem Jahr abermals mehr Zeit zur Konsolidierung der Staatsfinanzen gewährte, verband sie das mit der Auflage zusätzlicher Spar- und Reformanstrengungen der zweitgrössten Volkswirtschaft der Euro-Zone. Die sozialistische Regierung in Paris hat aber seither an beiden Fronten kaum Fortschritte erzielt. Frankreich droht das Ziel, bis 2017 die Neuverschuldung unter die Grenze von 3% des Bruttoinlandprodukts zu drosseln, zu verfehlen, wie kürzlich der hiesige Rechnungshof monierte; und vor allem auch reformpolitisch kommt das Land nicht richtig vom Fleck.

Selbst Jean Pisani-Ferry, ein Wirtschaftsberater der Regierung, hat soeben in einem Interview mit «Le Figaro» eingeräumt, dass die bisherigen Reformen zu wenig tief griffen und radikalere Schritte erforderlich wären. Zwar propagiert nun die Arbeitsministerin Myriam El Khomri eine Arbeitsmarktreform, die für eine Lockerung der 35-Stunden-Woche sowie für eine Plafonierung der Entschädigungen bei ungerechtfertigten Entlassungen sorgen soll, um den Arbeitgebern die Angst vor Neueinstellungen zu nehmen.

Doch ob selbst diese graduelle Reform im letzten Jahr des Quinquennats von Präsident François Hollande noch durchgesetzt werden kann, ist zweifelhaft. Der Staatschef selber hat bisher genau das Gegenteil der nunmehr anvisierten Neuerungen vertreten und Steuererleichterungen seines Vorgängers Nicolas Sarkozy zur Linderung der Kosten der 35-Stunden-Woche wieder annulliert. Entsprechend schwer dürfte es für Hollande sein, den Parti socialiste und die Gewerkschaften nun plötzlich davon zu überzeugen, dass alte linke Zöpfe gekappt werden müssen. Im Regierungslager hat sich eine Rebellion zusammengebraut, die Premierminister Manuel Valls bereits dazu zwang, die Verabschiedung des Regierungsentwurfs von Anfang März auf Ende des Monats zu verschieben.

141,134

FRANKREICH

Hollande macht den Schröder

Von STEFAN BRÄNDLE



Die größte Gewerkschaft des Landes, die CGT, hat bereits massiven Widerstand angekündigt

Der französische Präsident plant eine Arbeitsmarktreform, die für französische Verhältnisse geradezu revolutionär - und alle linken Tabus bricht.

Endlich hat er es geschafft: François Hollande wird mit Gerhard Schröder verglichen. Seit seinem Amtsantritt 2012 galt der französische Präsident als Zauderer, der nur lauwarmer Reförmchen zustande bringt; auch die sehr vorsichtig geplante Revision des französischen Arbeitsrechts schob er immer wieder auf die lange Bank. Jetzt aber legt er durch seine Arbeitsministerin Myriam El Khomri ein Projekt vor, das für französische Verhältnisse geradezu revolutionär ist – und sowohl die Gewerkschaften wie die politische Rechte überrumpelt. „Der Präsident ist zur Transgression bereit, so wie es der deutsche Ex-Kanzler Gerhard Schröder um 2005 vorgemacht hat“, kommentiert die Zeitung „Le Figaro“. Und Gewerkschaftschef Jean-Claude Mailly droht wutentbrannt: „Es wird Sport geben.“ – soll heißen: Die Debatte wird nicht nur mit Worten ausgetragen werden.

Mit dem Gesetzesprojekt bricht die Pariser Linksregierung in gleich drei Tabuzonen der Linken ein. Die 35-Stundenwoche, die der sozialistische Premier Lionel Jospin 1999 eingeführt hatte, soll faktisch ausgehebelt werden: Während 16 Wochen im Jahr könnte die Arbeitszeit bis zu 46 Stunden betragen; „unter außerordentlichen Umständen“ könnte sie sogar bis auf 60 Stunden erhöht werden. Und die Unternehmen wären frei, die Lohnhöhe dieser Überstunden – über einem gesetzlichen Mehrverdienst von zehn Prozent – selbst festzulegen.

Auch das Kündigungsrecht würde in dem „El Khomri-Gesetz“ stark aufgeweicht: Eine Entlassung soll schon zulässig sein, wenn der Umsatz, das Auftragsvolumen oder – nicht: und – der Betriebsgewinn „während mehrerer Monate“ sinkt. Die in Frankreich vergleichsweise hohe Abfindung wird plafonniert: Wer zum Beispiel zehn Jahre in einem Unternehmen gearbeitet hat, erhält nicht mehr als neun Monate Lohn zusätzlich.

Der dritte Kernpunkt der Gesetzesvorlage betrifft die gewerkschaftliche Mitbestimmung in den Firmen. Heute können die Gewerkschaften, die mindestens 30 Prozent der Betriebsratsstimmen vertreten, Lohn- oder Arbeitszeit-Abkommen zwischen der Direktion und der Belegschaft verhindern. Die Neuerung würde den Einfluss empfindlich beschneiden.

Das hatte sich kürzlich in der Smart-Werkstätte in Hambach (Lothringen) gezeigt, wo die Gewerkschaften das Veto gegen eine Übereinkunft zur Einführung der 39-Stundenwoche einlegten. Der zum Daimler-Konzern gehörige Autohersteller konnte sich nur durchsetzen, indem er die Arbeitszeitverlängerung (bei halber Lohnerhöhung) individuell regelte.

Die Hollande-Regierung will das neue Gesetz am 9. März offiziell vorstellen und es noch vor dem Sommer durch das Parlament bringen. Der Unternehmerverband Medef spricht durch seinen Vorsteher Pierre Gattaz von

einem „Schritt in die richtige Richtung“, der den Firmen die „Angst vor dem Einstellen“ nehme. Gérard Filoche, Sozialist und Arbeitsinspektor, twitterte dagegen: „60-Stundenwoche und Zwölfstundentag – eine thermonukleare Bombe gegen das Arbeitsrecht. Ein Jahrhundert an Rechten zerstört.“

Die wichtigste Landesgewerkschaft CGT meinte am Freitag, das von El Khomri erwähnte dänische Modell der „Flexisécurité“ – mehr Flexibilität für die Firmen gegen mehr Sicherheit für die Arbeitnehmer – bewirke in Wirklichkeit „mehr Flexibilität und weniger Sicherheit“. Auch andere Gewerkschaften versprechen massive Protestaktionen, falls die vorliegende Form des Gesetzes beibehalten wird.

Sozialisten distanzieren sich

Hollande ergreift seit längerem ausgesprochen „rechte“ Maßnahmen. Als Reaktion auf die Pariser Terroranschläge von November übernahm er die Idee des rechtsextremen Front National, Terroristen die Staatsbürgerschaft abzuerkennen. Die Arbeitsreform hat einen ganz ähnlichen Effekt. Einzelne Vertreter der Sarkozy-Partei „Les Républicains“ signalisierten am Freitag bereits ihre Zustimmung dazu. Hollande spaltet damit die bürgerliche Rechte – aber auch sein eigenes Lager. Sogar Sozialistenchef Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, der dem Präsidenten bisher treu ergeben war, geht auf Distanz und meinte, er hätte „Mühe“, für das Gesetz zu stimmen.

Klar ist nur, dass Hollande die Präsidentschaftswahlen 2017 vor Augen hat. Offensichtlich hofft er, die politische Mitte für sich zu gewinnen, ohne die Linke zu verlieren. Vielleicht glaubt er aber auch nur, dass er nichts mehr zu verlieren hat – wie sein Vorbild Schröder, der nach seinen Hartz-Reformen die Bundestagswahlen verloren hatte.

141,136

L'Union européenne épingle le manque de réformes de la France

Par [Cyrille Pluyette](#)

Publié le 08/03/2016 à 20:01



La Commission européenne juge toujours «excessifs» les déséquilibres économiques de l'Hexagone.

La France fait partie des mauvais élèves de l'Europe. La Commission européenne a jugé mardi que notre pays appartenait encore à la catégorie de ceux présentant des déséquilibres économiques «excessifs». La Bulgarie, la Croatie, l'Italie et le Portugal complètent ce groupe des «lanternes rouges», alors même que le nombre d'États enregistrant des déséquilibres est moindre que l'an dernier.

Dix-huit pays sur les vingt-huit membres de l'Union européenne (UE) ont été passés au crible depuis novembre. Ils ont été répartis en trois catégories: cinq, dont la France, donc, se situent dans la plus basse, **pour laquelle des réformes structurelles doivent être particulièrement «intensifiées»**. Six autres, comme la Grande-Bretagne, ne souffrent pas de déséquilibres ; et pour sept d'entre eux, dont l'Allemagne et l'Espagne, ces déséquilibres ne sont pas considérés comme excessifs.

«Aujourd'hui, nous voyons clairement que des pays qui sont parvenus à réformer leur économie rapidement et en profondeur recueillent les fruits de leurs efforts. D'autres doivent passer à la vitesse supérieure pour pouvoir offrir plus de croissance et d'emplois à leurs citoyens», a insisté Pierre Moscovici, le commissaire européen chargé des Affaires économiques.

La Commission s'inquiète à nouveau du poids de la dette publique française, «qui continue à augmenter» (et devrait, selon elle, grimper à 96,8 % du PIB cette année, puis à 97,1 % l'an prochain). Une situation d'autant plus préoccupante que, parallèlement, la compétitivité et la productivité «ne se redressent pas clairement».

Autre faiblesse, Bruxelles, **pour qui la croissance française n'atteindra que 1,3 % cette année**(alors que le gouvernement a bâti son budget sur une hypothèse de 1,5 %), n'attend pas une reprise de l'investissement avant 2017. Et ce, malgré l'amélioration des marges des entreprises, sous l'effet des allègements d'impôts et de charges.

La Commission conclut que des «réformes structurelles» sont nécessaires pour lever les blocages, notamment en ce qui concerne le mécanisme de fixation des salaires ou les normes qui freinent le développement des entreprises

La Commission en conclut que des «réformes structurelles» sont nécessaires pour lever les blocages, notamment en ce qui concerne le mécanisme de fixation des salaires ou les normes qui freinent le

développement des entreprises. Elle insiste aussi sur la nécessité d'accélérer la revue des dépenses, alors que cette procédure initiée l'an dernier n'a permis que moins de 500 millions d'euros d'économies, selon Bercy.

La classification rendue publique ce jeudi s'appuie sur un rapport, diffusé le 26 février, sur les difficultés économiques de certains États pays membres de l'UE. La Commission n'avait alors pas épargné l'Hexagone. Elle a certes reconnu que la France s'était quelque peu améliorée dans certains domaines, mentionnant l'accord conclu entre les partenaires sociaux pour rationaliser des régimes de retraites complémentaires ou les contraintes budgétaires imposées aux collectivités locales. Mais Bruxelles avait jugé les progrès «limités» pour «améliorer le système fiscal, inciter davantage à embaucher en contrat à durée indéterminée» ou «supprimer les restrictions injustifiées à l'accès aux professions réglementées». Le fonctionnement du marché du travail, qui entraîne trop peu de modération salariale alors que la productivité ralentit, est jugé «peu satisfaisant» dans un contexte de chômage élevé. D'autant plus que les 35 heures «pèsent sur les coûts du travail». Aux yeux de la Commission, «l'adoption et la mise en œuvre» de la loi El Khomri sur le travail, critiquée par les syndicats et une partie de la majorité, sont donc «déterminantes».

«Mesures correctives»

Prochaine étape: la France, qui fait face à une équation budgétaire compliquée par la faible inflation et des dépenses nouvelles, devra transmettre en avril son «programme de stabilité» (sa trajectoire des finances publiques) et son programme national de réformes. La Commission formulera au mois de mai ses recommandations. Aucun pays concerné par des déséquilibres excessifs n'est pour l'heure contraint de prendre des «mesures correctives», mais «tous peuvent être concernés par cette procédure à n'importe quel moment», a menacé Valdis Dombrovskis, le vice-président de la Commission.

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LE FIGARO

Le Figaro, no. 22263

Le Figaro, mercredi 9 mars 2016, p. 15



études politiques

Le Front national peut-il devenir un parti de gouvernement ?

Se heurtant à un « plafond de verre » électoral, le parti de Marine Le Pen affiche un déficit de crédibilité en maintenant les ambiguïtés sur les dossiers économiques et sociaux.

Abonneau, Josseline

Depuis des mois, les sondages d'intentions de vote à l'élection présidentielle de 2017 font état d'une candidature de la présidente du Front national rassemblant environ un quart de l'électorat et arrivant, la plupart du temps, en tête des divers candidats susceptibles de se présenter au premier tour.

Dans le dernier baromètre Ifop de l'élection présidentielle, réalisé du 17 au 19 février dernier, les intentions de vote en faveur de Marine Le Pen oscillent entre 25 et 28 %. Cela lui permet d'être en tête de tous les candidats dans cinq des sept scénarios de candidatures envisagés et d'être toujours sélectionnée pour le second tour.

Face aux candidatures de Nicolas Sarkozy et François Hollande, Marine Le Pen serait aujourd'hui, avec 25 %, largement en tête devant le président des Républicains (21 %) et le président de la République sortant (18 %). Ce haut niveau atteint par la présidente frontiste dans la perspective de la prochaine élection présidentielle s'inscrit dans la continuité des performances électorales enregistrées, depuis trois ans, par son parti : 24,9 % aux élections européennes de 2014, 25,2 % aux élections départementales de mars 2015, 27,7 % aux élections régionales de décembre 2015.

Cependant, dans la perspective du second tour, Marine Le Pen reste, quel que soit le candidat qui lui serait opposé, largement distancée. Ce constat relance la question du « plafond de verre » auquel le FN se heurte au second tour de toutes les élections. À cet égard, le second tour des élections régionales a été tout à fait emblématique de cette difficulté puisque dans aucune région, même là où il était largement arrivé en tête au premier tour, le FN n'a été capable de passer la barre des 50 %.

Le FN a conscience de cette difficulté et tous les efforts de « dédramatisation » n'ont pas suffisamment porté leurs fruits pour briser ce verrou. Ce constat répété a déclenché à la fois introspection et débat au cœur même du parti. Début février, la direction du FN s'est réunie en un séminaire fermé dans l'Essonne et, quelques semaines plus tard, Jean-Marie Le Pen, président d'honneur du Front national, a envoyé une lettre ouverte à la présidente du parti pour lui rappeler l'urgence de « *faire l'unité de son mouvement et de la mouvance nationale* ». Au-delà des manifestations extérieures d'unité et d'harmonie, les tensions qui traversent l'univers frontiste sont fortes et peuvent donner l'image d'une formation divisée, n'ayant pas fait le clair sur des dossiers économiques et sociaux importants (sortie de l'euro, maintien des 35 heures, retour à l'âge légal de 60 ans pour la retraite...) et en déficit de crédibilité sur sa capacité à gouverner. Interrogés du 28 janvier au 1er février 2016, 36 % seulement des Français (37 % des sympathisants des Républicains) considèrent que le Front national est « un parti qui a la capacité à participer à un gouvernement » (Baromètre d'image du Front national, TNS Sofres pour *Le Monde*, France Info, Canal +).

Au-delà de l'appareil, l'électorat FN est traversé de lignes de tension. Si cet électorat, avec les succès qu'il a connus au cours des dernières années, est devenu de plus en plus « national », il n'en connaît pas moins de fortes polarisations internes. Sur le terrain économique et social, le FN pénètre fortement les milieux « dominés » que ce soit sur le plan économique, culturel ou socioprofessionnel. Toutefois, il peine à convaincre dans les milieux davantage favorisés. Ses performances chez les cadres supérieurs (14 % d'intentions de vote) ou les diplômés à niveau bac + 4 ou plus (12 %) restent modestes et montrent une difficulté à conquérir ces milieux décisifs dans toute société moderne marquée par le rôle central de « l'économie de la connaissance ». Ces polarisations souvent très fortes se retrouvent, à un degré moindre, dans des fractures territoriales entre le cœur de l'urbanité et ses périphéries, entre des régions en difficulté (Picardie, Lorraine...) et des régions davantage dynamiques (Île-de-France, Bretagne...) mais aussi dans des fractures identitaires (Français de naissance, Français par acquisition), générationnelles ou encore « genrées ». La « France âgée » reste encore davantage réticente que la « France jeune » à accorder ses faveurs à Marine Le Pen or, dans les élections décisives, on sait le poids politique d'un électorat âgé davantage mobilisé que l'électorat jeune.

Outre ces difficultés démographiques, sociales et économiques pour « rassembler » un électorat large à vocation majoritaire, l'électorat du FN connaît jusqu'en son sein des divisions et des fractures importantes. Certes, les électeurs de Marine Le Pen sont largement unis sur les questions de l'immigration, de l'islam, de la répression et du sentiment de décadence. Depuis des décennies, ces ingrédients constituent le ressort central de la réussite du FN mais dès que l'on quitte ce « noyau dur », l'unité de façade se fracture.

Les électeurs de Marine Le Pen sont plutôt divisés sur le plan politique ou encore sur des questions comme l'appartenance à l'Union européenne ou la place à accorder à la fonction publique. Même si le tropisme reste majoritaire, l'affirmation de l'appartenance à la droite, le refus du compromis, le discours antieuropéen ou encore l'antienne antifonctionnaire ne font pas l'unanimité dans les rangs des électeurs frontistes. Enfin, dans le domaine économique et social qui reste souvent le cœur de la construction de la « capacité gouvernante », de véritables fractures font éclater l'électorat de la présidente FN. Celui-ci est divisé en deux parts quasiment égales entre « défenseurs du système capitaliste » et « réformateurs » vigoureux de celui-ci, entre « libéraux » et « partageux » ou encore entre « tolérants » et « traditionalistes ».

En accroissant sa pelote électorale, le Front national a accru les divisions qui le traversent. Le « virage social » et le lifting politico-idéologique de la nouvelle direction ont permis l'expansion tout en avivant les tensions. Telle est la « rançon du succès » mais aussi les limites d'un parti qui préfère plutôt accumuler les contradictions, maintenir les ambiguïtés que les résoudre à des fins de lisibilité politique dans la perspective du grand rendez-vous politique de 2017.

En accroissant sa pelote électorale, le Front national a accru les divisions qui le traversent PASCAL PERRINEAU

Note(s) :

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EU referendum: Mark Carney warns Brexit is biggest risk to Britain's financial stability

The Bank of England's Mark Carney faces the wrath of eurosceptic MPs as he announces banks will be offered billions of pounds of extra liquidity to avoid a post-Brexit financial crisis

By [Michael Wilkinson](#), Political Correspondent

5:30PM GMT 08 Mar 2016

Latest

How the day unfolded: Mark Carney warns of Brexit risk to financial stability

In the event of a vote for Brexit, Mr Carney said the Bank "will do everything in our power to discharge our responsibility to achieve monetary stability and financial stability".

But he added that he could not "provide a blanket assurance that there would not be issues in the short term with respect to financial stability and that potential reduction in financial stability could be associated - and normally would be associated - with poor economic outcomes, as we have seen in the past".

The scale of the impact of Brexit on the financial sector would depend largely on the relationship negotiated following a vote for UK withdrawal, said Mr Carney.

Outcomes could range from full mutual recognition of regulations and standards - which would allow UK-based financial services companies to operate in the remaining EU under terms similar to the current "passporting" arrangements - to a scenario in which Britain would seek access to European markets in a similar way to any other third country, he said.

There would also be questions over whether the UK would lose its "substantial influence" over the development of EU financial regulations and would retain the flexibility enshrined in the renegotiation settlement secured by David Cameron.

Asked whether uncertainties of this kind might lead companies to relocate business activities away from the City in the event of Brexit, Mr Carney said: "One would expect some activity to move. Certainly, there is a logic to that.

"There are views that have been expressed publicly and privately by a number of institutions that they would look at it. I would say a number of institutions are contingency planning for that possibility - major institutions, foreign headquartered, which have their European headquarters here.

"There would be an impact. I can't give you a precise number in terms of institutions or jobs or activity, because we don't know where we would be on that continuum between full mutual recognition or pure third-country access."

Asked if some degree of loss of business could be expected if full mutual recognition was not retained, Mr Carney said: "Without question."

He told the MPs: "It is reasonable to expect that certain firms would take a view in terms of relocation."

Mr Carney added: "Mutual recognition arrangements are possible to achieve, but in general they take a very long time to achieve and the challenge is the degree of freedom one retains in setting one's own path, rules, approach, and maintaining that mutual recognition."

Britain would have to think through the benefits of seeking to preserve as much as possible of the City's existing business at the cost of "in effect ceding sovereignty over this aspect of our authorities" and losing flexibilities in the realm of prudential and macro-prudential regulation and supervision, which have just been reinforced by Mr Cameron's renegotiation, he said.

In a letter to the committee released as he appeared to give evidence, Mr Carney said the renegotiation deal - which will come into effect only if the UK votes to remain in the EU - "delivers a number of protections and additional tools that will help safeguard the Bank's ability to continue to achieve its statutory objectives".

He welcomed the settlement's "important commitment" to the principle that the interests of non-euro states must be safeguarded as the single currency area integrates.

Provisions allowing central banks of non-euro countries to regulate in a different way from those within the Banking Union deliver "precisely the flexibility the Bank sought ... given its responsibilities to oversee the prudential aspects of the UK's very large and complex financial sector", added Mr Carney.

"Particularly welcome" was a recognition that responsibility for the implementation of regulations on financial institutions and markets and macro-prudential responsibilities will remain with the central banks of non-euro states, he said.

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Frankreich

Wahlkampf mit Fiktionen

Marine Le Pen wird zur Staatspräsidentin gewählt, Frankreich bildet eine Allianz mit Putin, und Demonstrationen werden verboten: Ein französischer Soziologe alpträumt von Marine Le Pen.

09.03.2016, von JÜRIG ALTWEGG



© AFP Was würde passieren, wenn die Vorsitzende des Front National zur Staatspräsidentin gewählt würde?

Der Albtraum wird Wirklichkeit. Am Sonntag um 20 Uhr, es ist der 7. Mai 2017, verkündet das Fernsehen: Ein französischer Soziologe alpträumt von Marine Le Pen ist zur Staatspräsidentin gewählt worden, sie hat François Hollande in der Stichwahl besiegt. Der Pariser Korrespondent des amerikanischen „Morning Star“, Michael W. Squirrel, berichtet vom Machtwechsel. Noch am Wahlabend kommt die Nachricht, dass Jean-Marie Le Pen nach einem Herzinfarkt in ein Krankenhaus eingeliefert wurde. Ihn hat die Tochter auf dem Weg ins Elysée der „Entdämonisierung“ geopfert. Die Strategie ist aufgegangen.



Autor: Jürg Altwegg, Kulturkorrespondent mit Sitz in Genf, Folgen:

Bei einer Protestaktion wird ein junger Araber erschossen - in der Folge werden Demonstrationen verboten. Investoren und Unternehmer fürchten den Ausstieg aus dem Euro und verlassen das Land. Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage verschärft sich. Frankreich bildet eine Allianz mit Putin. Prognosen zur Rolle konservativer Intellektueller, die man immer wieder als Wegbereiter des Front National anklagt, werden eingestreut. Alain Finkielkraut will die Präsidentin als Botschafter nach Israel schicken.

[Michel Houellebecq](#) inszeniert in „Unterwerfung“ den Sieg eines Muslims im Jahre 2022. Verfasser der Fiktion von Le Pens Triumph bereits in der nächsten Präsidentenwahl ist der Soziologe Michel Wieviorka: „Le Séisme. Marine le Pen Présidente“ (Editions Robert Laffont). Im Vorwort analysiert sein erzählender Statthalter, der amerikanische Korrespondent, die französische Entwicklung seit 1945. In einer ersten Phase erholte sich das Land von der Niederlage 1940 und der Kollaboration. Es trieb seine Industrialisierung voran und beendete - „unter Schmerzen“ - den Kolonialismus. Es gab Wachstum und Reformen.

Wahrsagerei und Wahlkampf

Seit den „dreißig glorreichen Jahren“ erfolgen die Veränderungen in Form von „Krisen“: Arbeitslosigkeit, Einwanderung, Islamisierung. „In dem vom Christentum geprägten Land, das sich als ‚älteste Tochter der Kirche‘ fühlte, wurde der Islam zur zweitstärksten Religion.“ Dem nach Vichy und Pétain verpönten Rechtsextremismus frönten zunächst „vereinzelte verirrte Grüppchen“, dann wurde er zur „Protestbewegung“ gegen die politische Korrektheit - und schließlich zur führenden Macht, ideologisch zuerst und mit Marine Le Pens Triumph auch politisch.

Michael W. Squirrel stilisiert ihn zur „autoritären Revolution“ - Vichy war eine „nationale“ - und vergleicht sich ungeniert mit Alexis de Tocqueville, der über die Demokratie in Amerika schrieb wie er selbst nun über

den Niedergang Frankreichs. Ausgiebig befasst er sich mit den Medien. Auf „Le Monde“ stimmt er einen Abgesang an. Seine Kritik an den Newssendern bleibt so oberflächlich, wie es deren Programme sind. Politik und Medien seien ein „obszönes Paar“, oft ist der Mann Minister und die jüngere Geliebte TV-Journalistin. Auch einen einflussreichen Intellektuellen namens Michel Wieviorka lässt er in Erscheinung treten. Der kleine Scherz ist wohl selbstironisch gemeint. Aber den Pulitzer-Preis, den Wieviorka seinem amerikanischen Alter Ego verleiht, hat der mit seinem merkwürdigen Zwitterbuch in keiner Weise verdient.

Es ist Wahrsagerei und Wahlkampf zugleich. „Das Erdbeben“ erscheint wenige Tage nach einem Aufruf, den der Verfasser zusammen mit der Sozialistin Martine Aubry und ein paar Vertretern der Linken und Grünen - auch Daniel Cohn-Bendit - veröffentlichte, natürlich in „Le Monde“. Das Pamphlet ist eine Kampfansage an die Regierung. Es könnte zur Spaltung der Sozialistischen Partei führen. Die Verfasser fordern eine Vorwahl für die Bestimmung des Präsidentschaftskandidaten im linken Lager.

Die Inszenierung eines Intellektuellen

Amtsinhaber Hollande ist an dieser Demütigung alles andere als unschuldig, aber Wieviorkas Vorgehen ist keineswegs besser. Er treibt den antifaschistischen Kampf der Linken, der dem Front National seit dreißig Jahren sehr viel mehr nützt als schadet, auf die Spitze. Skrupellos lässt er das historische Schreckgespenst als Schimäre eines amerikanischen Ghostwriters auferstehen. Ausgerechnet ein Soziologe nimmt den Spuk als erster zum Nennwert. Zur Abschreckung? Die ist verpufft.

Michel Wieviorka inszeniert einen Wahlkampf, wie ihn noch nie ein französischer Intellektueller für einen Politiker betrieb. Seine Fiktion ist eine Kampfansage an Präsident Hollande, den er als Verräter (am linken Programm) und Verlierer (im voraus) vorführt. Um seine politische Leitfigur Martine Aubry an die Macht zu bringen. Nur sie kann von einer Vorwahl profitieren.

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Le Monde
Le Monde

Dialogues, samedi 5 mars 2016, p. 13

Débats

La loi sur le travail peut-elle relancer l'économie?

Cette réforme est une avancée pour les plus fragiles

En levant les incertitudes des chefs d'entreprise face à la justice, ce texte leur permettra d'embaucher davantage en contrat à durée indéterminée

collectif

OUTIL EFFICACE DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PRÉCARITÉ POUR LES UNS, RECU MENAÇANT LES ACQUIS SOCIAUX POUR LES AUTRES, LE PROJET DU GOUVERNEMENT DIVISE

Le chômage, désormais au plus haut niveau depuis l'après-guerre, ne frappe pas tout le monde de la même manière. Il se concentre sur les jeunes et les moins qualifiés. Un chômeur sur quatre a moins de 25 ans, un sur trois n'a aucun diplôme et 80 % n'ont pas dépassé le bac. Ces publics sont les grands perdants d'un marché du travail qui exclut les plus fragiles ou les relègue dans des emplois précaires, tant les entreprises craignent d'embaucher en CDI. Ces inégalités sont insupportables. En réduisant l'incertitude qui entoure le CDI, le projet de loi El Khomri est de nature à changer la donne : c'est avant tout à ces publics défavorisés qu'elle va donner accès à un emploi durable. Une réforme d'ampleur est nécessaire.

Le code du travail ne donne aujourd'hui aucune définition précise des difficultés économiques justifiant un licenciement, et n'encadre pas non plus le montant des indemnités en cas de licenciement non fondé. Il est devenu une source d'insécurité pour l'entreprise comme pour le salarié, car il laisse au juge un champ d'appréciation qui va bien au-delà de ses compétences juridiques. Aujourd'hui, ni le salarié ni l'employeur ne sont capables de savoir si les difficultés économiques seront considérées comme suffisantes par le juge pour justifier un licenciement. Ils sont également incapables de prévoir précisément le coût des fins de CDI, tant le montant des indemnités octroyées par les prud'hommes relève d'une logique difficilement prévisible. Un salarié dont l'ancienneté est comprise entre deux et cinq ans peut se voir proposer entre un et dix mois de salaire aux prud'hommes si son licenciement est considéré comme non fondé. Cette incertitude est lourde de conséquences pour les salariés autant que pour les entreprises, notamment les plus petites, souvent incapables d'affronter de longues périodes de contentieux juridiques en s'offrant les services de cabinets d'avocats spécialisés.

Par crainte d'embaucher en CDI, les entreprises ont massivement recours au CDD, bien au-delà des cas prévus par la loi. Les CDD représentent 90 % des embauches. Les jeunes et les moins qualifiés ne connaissent pratiquement que ce type de contrat, parfois durant de nombreuses années. Or, outre la précarité, les CDD proposent moins de formation professionnelle, offrent des salaires plus faibles, et pénalisent l'accès au crédit et au logement.

l'exemple espagnol

Un barème plus précis des indemnités octroyées par les prud'hommes et une définition objective des situations pouvant justifier un licenciement sont de nature à inverser ces tendances. C'est ce que propose le projet de loi El Khomri. L'exemple de l'Espagne devrait faire réfléchir ses détracteurs. Ayant adopté une loi similaire en 2012, ce pays a connu un surcroît de 300 000 embauches en CDI dès l'année suivante. Ces embauches sont surtout le fait de PME pour lesquelles la crainte du conflit prud'homal pèse le plus sur les décisions d'embauche. Ces embauches en CDI ont bénéficié en priorité aux personnes abonnées au CDD, ce qui a permis de *réduire* les pertes d'emploi.

Pour que la réforme du licenciement devienne un pilier d'un « Jobs Act » à la française permettant d'en finir avec le chômage de masse, il y aurait urgence à la compléter dans plusieurs directions. L'une concerne la formation professionnelle : elle doit être profondément refondée pour devenir opérationnelle, en particulier en instaurant un système individualisé qui laisse l'employé ou le chômeur choisir son prestataire de services de formation. Cela suppose la mise en place d'un système d'évaluation des formations transparent et indépendant. Une autre serait d'améliorer les garanties de revenus pour les chômeurs en formation et la recherche d'un nouvel emploi.

Enfin, il faudrait renforcer les avantages des contrats longs, notamment à travers un système de bonus-malus des cotisations à l'assurance chômage incitant les entreprises à privilégier de telles embauches. En attendant ces réformes indispensables, le projet de loi El Khomri représente néanmoins une avancée pour les plus fragiles. En réduisant fortement l'incertitude attachée à la rupture des contrats de travail, il incite les entreprises à revenir vers des embauches en CDI. C'est un moyen de lutter efficacement contre les inégalités et la précarité.

Note(s) :

¶ Philippe Aghion, professeur au Collège de France; Yann Algan, professeur à Sciences Po; Agnès Bénassy-Quéré, professeure à Paris School of Economics (PSE); Olivier Blanchard, Senior Fellow au Peterson Institute for International Economics; François Bourguignon, professeur à PSE; Pierre Cahuc, professeur à l'École polytechnique; Arnaud Chéron, directeur de recherche à l'Edhec; Stéphane Carcillo, professeur au département d'économie de Sciences Po; Elie Cohen, directeur de recherche au CNRS; Antoine d'Autume, professeur à PSE; Marc Ferracci, professeur à l'université Paris-II; François Fontaine, professeur à PSE; Robert Gary-Bobo, professeur à l'Ensaë; Pierre-Yves Geoffard, professeur à PSE; Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, professeur à UC Berkeley; Jean-Olivier Hairault, professeur à PSE; Hubert Kempf, professeur à l'École normale supérieure de Cachan; Francis Kramarz, professeur à l'École polytechnique; Augustin Landier, professeur à Toulouse School of Economics; François Langot, professeur à l'université du Mans; Yannick L'Horty, professeur à l'université Paris-Est-Marne-La Vallée; Thomas Philippon, professeur à New York University; Richard Portes, professeur à la London Business School; Hélène Rey, professeure à la London Business School; Katheline Schubert, professeure à PSE; Claudia Senik, professeure à PSE; Jean Tirole, professeur à Toulouse School of Economics, Prix Nobel d'économie (2014); Alain Trannoy, directeur de recherche à l'EHESS; Marie Claire Villeval, directrice de recherche au CNRS; Radu Vranceanu, professeur à l'Essec; Etienne Wasmer, professeur à Sciences Po; André Zylberberg, directeur de recherche émérite au CNRS.



La " loi travail " ne réduira pas le chômage

Non, la baisse des coûts du licenciement ne fera pas gagner la bataille de l'emploi, comme le croient ceux qui défendent le projet El Khomri. Il y a urgence à changer de politique économique

Le débat sur le projet de loi El Khomri a focalisé l'attention sur les coûts de -licenciement, proposant une réforme en profondeur des prud'hommes. Priver un travailleur de la protection d'un juge et y substituer un barème n'est pas anodin. C'est le rapport de l'employé à l'employeur qui en est profondément affecté. C'est sans doute pour cette raison que 70 % des Français - de droite et de gauche - y sont opposés. L'opinion publique n'a certes pas forcément raison, et il y a la place pour un -débat raisonné, sans a priori. C'est celui que nous proposons dans ce texte.

Le chômage a augmenté du fait de la crise et de la politique macroéconomique qui l'a accompagnée. En 2007, le taux de chômage français était de 7 %. La crise l'a propulsé à 10 %. En 2011-2012, une légère reprise économique semblait se dessiner. Suivit en France une politique de redressement budgétaire visant à ramener le déficit sous la barre des 3 % : de 2013 à 2015, la croissance moyenne s'est établie à 0,4 %. Il ne faut pas chercher plus loin la cause de la hausse du chômage. C'est la conduite de la politique macroéconomique, et en l'occurrence la tentative de réduire beaucoup trop vite le déficit budgétaire, qui explique le niveau actuel du chômage, relativement en tout cas à celui de 2007. Parmi les réformes qui ont été engagées, sur les horaires d'ouverture des magasins, les lignes d'autocars, le marché du travail, certaines peuvent être utiles, d'autres moins. Ce qui est certain, c'est que ces questions ne sont pas liées à l'aggravation du chômage ces dernières années. Il serait plus facile de débattre de ces réformes si le gouvernement commençait par reconnaître ses erreurs et par lancer une véritable renégociation du traité budgétaire européen de 2012.

Les coûts de licenciement, selon la littérature macro et microéconométrique, ne sont pas un facteur majeur du chômage. La littérature économique est extrêmement prolix sur le sujet. Il faut toutefois distinguer les raisonnements à base de modèles et ceux à base de données. Les modèles aident l'économiste à forger des expériences de pensée. Ils peuvent être très utiles. Mais -l'arbitre d'un débat, c'est le test empirique. Et, dans l'état actuel des connaissances, rien ne permet d'affirmer, comme cela a pourtant été fait par un certain nombre de nos collègues dans une tribune récente - voir " Cette réforme est une avancée pour les plus fragiles ", *Le Monde* du 5 mars -, qu'une baisse des coûts de licenciement permettrait de réduire le chômage en France.

Citons une étude récapitulative de nombre de travaux en ce domaine réalisée par Giuseppe Bertola, auteur d'un rapport pour l'Organisation internationale du travail en 2009 : " *D'un point de vue empirique, il n'y a aucune preuve convaincante d'une relation entre la protection de l'emploi et le chômage. Il y a en revanche des preuves nettes que la protection de l'emploi réduit la réactivité de l'emploi aux chocs affectant la demande de travail ou les salaires.* " Les protections contre le licenciement conduisent à amortir les chocs, à la hausse comme à la baisse. L'écrasante majorité des études macro ou microéconomiques confirment ce point.

aucun impact significatif L'OCDE, qu'on ne peut accuser de vouloir masquer les causes " structurelles " du chômage, souligne dans le rapport Bassanini et Duval de 2006 : " *En accord avec un grand nombre d'études antérieures, nous ne trouvons aucun impact significatif des mesures de protection de l'emploi sur le chômage.* " Cette conclusion est réaffirmée dans le rapport " Les perspectives de l'emploi " de 2013. Le mécanisme à l'oeuvre est simple. Les coûts de licenciement conduisent les entreprises à gérer

dans la durée la main-d'oeuvre : moins de licenciements en période de crise, moins d'embauches en période de booms. La crise française a ainsi été étonnamment peu destructrice d'emplois : selon certaines estimations de l'OFCE, la France aurait dû compter 200 000 chômeurs de plus, compte tenu de la sévérité du ralentissement économique.

Le cas de l'Allemagne est particulièrement éclairant : la protection de l'emploi en CDI y est plus forte qu'en France, toujours selon l'OCDE, et cela n'empêche pas la performance économique, bien au contraire. Les entreprises allemandes ont relativement peu licencié pendant la crise, ce qui leur a permis de conserver les qualifications et les investissements individuels nécessaires pour la reprise. Plutôt que de vouloir copier la réforme des CDI menée en Espagne, pays dont la performance en termes de chômage est particulièrement mauvaise, il serait plus pertinent de regarder de près ce qui se passe outre-Rhin, en acceptant l'idée qu'il existe plusieurs façons de réguler le capitalisme, et que le modèle anglo-saxon de salarié jetable n'est pas le seul possible.

Un mal plus profond que le contrat Derrière les statistiques du chômage agrégées, il y a évidemment une autre réalité, celle de la segmentation du marché du travail, concernant notamment le chômage des jeunes et des non-qualifiés. L'idée selon laquelle il y aurait une spécificité strictement française est vite réfutée en comparant la situation française et américaine. Les chiffres sont identiques pour les non-qualifiés, dont le taux de chômage dans les deux pays est 1,5 fois supérieur à la moyenne. Concernant les jeunes, les Français travaillent moins que leurs homologues américains. Mais, comme chacun sait, un bon nombre de ces derniers sont des étudiants qui doivent payer leurs études. Si l'on s'intéresse aux jeunes qui ne sont ni en études ni en emploi, les chiffres français et américains redeviennent quasiment identiques, autour de 15 % des 15-29 ans dans les deux cas - mais cependant bien en deçà des 24 % observés en Espagne. Le mal est donc plus profond que le contrat de travail.

La France est certes une grosse consommatrice de CDD pour l'embauche de nouveaux travailleurs. Le CDD crée des effets pervers, car une entreprise préférera remplacer un CDD par un autre plutôt que d'embaucher un CDI. Pour autant, la masse des CDD est stable depuis vingt ans, comprise entre 8 % et 9 % de l'emploi total. Le problème central est que leur durée de vie est extrêmement courte : 70 % des embauches en CDD se font pour moins d'un mois ! Il est difficile de penser qu'un CDI allégé changerait radicalement la donne. Il serait plus pertinent de restreindre drastiquement l'usage des CDD aux cas où ils se justifient vraiment - remplacement d'un salarié en congé, emploi véritablement temporaire, etc. Un système de bonus-malus peut être utile mais ne suffit pas.

Certains éléments du projet de loi El Khomri vont dans le bon sens, comme le compte personnel d'activité (CPA). Le fait de l'avoir séparé de la réforme de l'Unedic - dont on a laissé entendre qu'elle pourrait donner lieu à la dégressivité des allocations - le vide toutefois de l'un de ses objectifs qui est de garantir aux chômeurs un ensemble de droits en matière de formation et de revenus.

Concernant le dialogue social, la mesure essentielle devrait viser à renforcer la légitimité des syndicats pour déboucher sur une véritable démocratie sociale, avec notamment une meilleure représentation des salariés au sein des conseils d'administration, comme cela se fait là encore en Allemagne avec succès - 50 % des sièges, contre 10 % en France. La mise en place du chèque syndical irait dans ce sens, en permettant aussi de mener une grande réforme de la formation professionnelle. Les procédures de licenciement peuvent certainement être améliorées : les délais devraient être raccourcis, en augmentant les moyens qui leur sont affectés. Il serait bon aussi que les statistiques concernant les cas passés soient publiées, de manière à favoriser un accord au sein de l'entreprise.

Une politique effective de lutte contre le chômage durable ne peut se résumer à quelques slogans. Elle exige un travail de longue haleine, à base de politiques actives à mener en direction des personnes vulnérables, dans le domaine de la formation notamment, une politique du logement qui favorise la mobilité et évite les

ghettos, une politique de l'emploi qui lutte véritablement -contre les discriminations à l'embauche, et plus généralement une politique visant à promouvoir la cohésion sociale et la réduction des inégalités. On en est loin.

Collectif

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141,149

LE FIGARO

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Politique

Les jeunes, vrais exclus du marché de l'emploi

La loi El Khomri entend favoriser les embauches en CDI des moins de 25 ans, pour qui le marché du travail est fermé.

Landré, Marc

POUR L'INSTANT, l'élément de langage - produit par la Rue de Grenelle pour convaincre la jeunesse que la loi El Khomri ne joue pas contre elle - n'a pas atteint sa cible. « *L'objet de cette réforme n'est pas de précariser la jeunesse, mais de favoriser les embauches en CDI des exclus du système, notamment les jeunes* », a encore une fois martelé lors des questions au gouvernement la ministre du Travail. « *Aujourd'hui, l'essentiel des jeunes et des peu qualifiés entrent en CDD (sur le marché du travail, NDLR)* », avait rappelé un peu plus tôt Emmanuel Macron, son collègue de l'Économie, sur France Inter. Avant de dérouler son argumentaire choc : « *Quelle est la différence pour passer du CDD au CDI ? Ce sont les conditions de la rupture. C'est ça, la clé. Et donc, oui, aujourd'hui, quand on regarde les conditions de la rupture, c'est une barrière à l'entrée dans le contrat à durée indéterminée.* »

Les ministres ont raison. La jeunesse, que François Hollande avait érigée en priorité lors de sa campagne en 2012, demeure un des grands exclus du marché du travail. Un jeune - et encore plus quand il n'est pas diplômé ou qualifié - voit les portes des entreprises se fermer au motif qu'il manque d'expérience. Pour en acquérir et avoir une chance de séduire un recruteur, il doit alors cumuler des stages et des CDD, souvent de courte durée et mal rémunérés. Résultat, un jeune obtient en moyenne son premier CDI à... 27 ans, un âge supérieur à la moyenne européenne.

Trois données permettent de mieux mesurer la « galère » structurelle de la jeunesse pour pénétrer le monde du travail, et donc la nécessité de flexibiliser les modalités d'entrée dans la vie active. D'abord, le taux de chômage des jeunes actifs (en emploi ou au chômage, à l'exclusion, donc, de ceux qui poursuivent leurs études), qui fluctue en moyenne entre 20 et 25 % depuis le début du quinquennat, n'est jamais redescendu sous la barre symbolique des 15 % depuis... 1989. Il est surtout, depuis plus de trente ans, entre deux et trois fois supérieur au taux de chômage général. Ensuite, 85 % des embauches - à commencer par celles des jeunes, diplômés ou non - se font aujourd'hui en CDD, généralement de courte durée (moins de six mois). Ce niveau dépasse même les 90 % - Emmanuel Macron avance le chiffre de 93 % - en y ajoutant les missions d'intérim, qui demeurent le premier recruteur de jeunes en France.

Enfin, autre statistique alarmante, un peu plus de 27 % des jeunes en emploi l'étaient, en juin 2015, grâce à une subvention de l'État. Ce taux, qui est l'un des plus élevés des pays occidentalisés, a connu un plus haut historique (au-delà de 30 %) à la fin des années 1990 sous Lionel Jospin, lors de l'apogée des emplois-jeunes. La décennie suivante, il a été ramené sous la barre des 25 %, avant de repartir à la hausse sous la présidence Hollande. Début 2012, il était de 23,5 %.

Il faut dire que le président de la République a multiplié les mesures de soutien à la jeunesse depuis son élection. Emplois d'avenir, garantie jeunes, contrats aidés, service civique, écoles de la deuxième chance, Civis (contrat d'insertion dans la vie sociale)... tous les dispositifs d'aide à l'emploi, public ou parapublic, leur sont destinés. Et ce, pour un coût qui frôle les 6 milliards d'euros par an. Obtenu au prix fort, le résultat, bien que jugé insatisfaisant par les intéressés, est incontestable : depuis mai 2012, le nombre de jeunes de moins de 25 ans inscrits en catégorie A (sans aucune activité) à Pôle emploi en France métropolitaine n'a progressé que de 13 100, soit 50 fois moins que celui de toutes les classes d'âge (+ 660 100).

141,150

POLITIK

FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE

18:18

Der einsame König ruiniert sein Reich

Frankreichs Präsident Hollande wirkt wie der Konkursverwalter seines Landes, das an allem leidet. An Arbeitslosigkeit, Reformschwäche und Salafisten. **Vor allem aber an der eigenen Bedeutungslosigkeit.**

Von Martina Meister, Paris



Auto Start: anjaus

Immer dieser Regen. Es ist, als würde er François Hollande verfolgen. Schon beim Amtsantritt hatte der neue Präsident Frankreichs das Schiebedach seiner grauen Limousine öffnen lassen und sich bei der Fahrt über die Champs-Élysées in den strömenden Regen gestellt, mitten im Mai. Seine Brille war beschlagen, sein Anzug klebte am Körper, klatschnass. Es war ein Bild des Elends. Aber Hollande schien glücklich.

Wenn dieser Präsident nach Athen reist, wo der Wetterdienst sechs Tage Niederschlag im Jahr zählt, regnet es. Es regnet in Marokko, wenn er dort auftaucht, und selbst auf den Südseeinseln Wallis und Futuna, die als Sonnenparadiese gelten. Dort, in Französisch-Polynesien, haben sie ihm so fette Blumenkränze um den Hals gehängt, dass er wie ein Häuptling aussah. Trotz des Regens.

Das schlechte Wetter kann sein Gutes haben. Der einsame Mann im strömenden Regen steht als Stoiker da, der auch schlimmsten Stürmen trotzt, ein unbeirrbarer Wanderer. Einmal hat Hollande, dessen Humor eher trocken ist, gesagt: "Ich kann den Regen auch als Präsident der Republik nicht abschaffen." Das hatte allerdings auch niemand erwartet.

Die Arbeitslosenkurve umzudrehen, das hatte er versprochen, darauf wurde gehofft. Aber er hat nicht geliefert. Und so regnen nun auch noch Flüche auf ihn nieder. Vor einer Woche, als er den "Salon international de l'agriculture", die große Pariser Landwirtschaftsmesse eröffnete, flog Kuhmist und es hagelte Schimpfwörter. **Mistkerl. Idiot. Nichtsnutz. "Tritt zurück", schrien wütende Bauern, die schwarze T-Shirts mit der Aufschrift trugen: "Ich bin Viehzüchter, ich sterbe."**

Hollande trank auf diesen Schreck ein **Glas Milch. 27 Cent bekommen die Milchbauern für einen Liter. Im Pariser Supermarkt kostet er 1,30.** Niemand scheint zu wissen, wo auf dem Weg von der Kuh in den Markt der Rest hängen bleibt. Die Bauern denken, Europa ist schuld. Und natürlich der Präsident, der dieses Europa nicht in ihrem Sinne verändert, der nicht kämpft für sie.

Unfähig zur Reform, willig nur zur Revolte

Das Scheitern Hollandes bekommt in diesen Wochen etwas Phänomenales. Kein Präsident vor ihm, der so glücklos, so unbeliebt war. Nach vier Jahren im Amt, ein gutes Jahr vor den Präsidentschaftswahlen, steht er als Unglücksfall da. Hinter ihm zerlegt sich seine Partei, die Sozialisten, ihnen laufen die Wähler davon, es ist ein politisches Desaster. Hollande wirkt wie ein Konkursverwalter, der die Pleite Frankreichs zu Ende bringt.

Das Land repräsentiert ein Prozent der Weltbevölkerung, 3,7 Prozent der weltweiten Produktion, aber 15 Prozent der sozialen Transferleistungen. Das Wirtschaftswachstum dümpelt bei 0,3 Prozent, die Arbeitslosenquote liegt bei zehn. **Zum ersten Mal seit 40 Jahren ist Frankreich nicht mehr Deutschlands erster Handelspartner. Eine Petition gegen das neue, deutlich liberalere Arbeitsgesetz, das die Regierung im Zweifelsfall per Dekret und ohne Abstimmung durchdrücken will, hat an diesem Wochenende die Schwelle von einer Millionen Unterschriften erreicht. Streiks und Demonstrationen sind angekündigt. Frankreich wirkt wie so oft: unfähig zur Reform, willig nur zur Revolte.**

Hollandes größter Fehler ist sicher sein mangelndes Gefühl für Dramaturgie. Jedes Fußballspiel, jedes Theaterstück, jeder Marathon hat seine eigene Abfolge. Von ihr hängt ab, ob man gewinnt oder verliert, ob der Zuschauer mitgeht oder sich abwendet. **Hollande hat den Fehler gemacht, seine Amtszeit mit Gesellschaftsreformen wie der Homoehe zu beginnen, um erst am Ende die großen Sozialreformen anzupacken. Nun fehlt die Zeit, und es fehlt die Ruhe, in Zeiten des Terrors.**

Nach den Attentaten hat er Statur bewiesen, hat die Worte zu formulieren gewusst, die der Nation kurzzeitig Trost gaben. Nach jedem Anschlag gewann er prompt Sympathien, seine Beliebtheitskurve ging hoch. **Doch in dem Augenblick, wo aus der tröstenden Vaterfigur eine autoritäre wurde, wandte sich das Volk wieder ab.**

Nichts hat der französischen Politik in jüngster Zeit mehr geschadet als die nutzlose Debatte um den Entzug der Staatsbürgerschaft von verurteilten Terroristen, in der Hollande den Sturkopf gab. Sie beleuchtete grell, was aus dem Land der Menschenrechte geworden ist: ein Gebiet im Ausnahmezustand.

Die Attentate waren für Hollande die Herausforderung, die ihn als Präsidenten für Momente paradoxerweise groß wirken ließen, ehe sie ihn zu seinen **schlimmsten politischen Fehlern** veranlassten. **Und nebenbei hat er das alte Klischee zementiert, dass Frankreich eine unzeitgemäße Republik sei. Eine Republik, an deren Kopf noch immer der Monarch steht.** Seit Charles de Gaulle die V. Republik nach seinen Vorstellungen formte, war sie eine schiefe Monarchie mit parlamentarischen Mitspracherechten.

Kein "normaler Präsident", wie sich Hollande im Wahlkampf selbst bezeichnet hatte, ist dieser Allmachts-Fantasie gewachsen. **Die Kleider sind zu groß. Das Schloss ist zu golden.** François Mitterrand und Jacques Chirac waren die letzten Präsidentendarsteller, die ihre Rolle mit Bravour spielten. Man nahm sie ihnen ab. Die Enttäuschungen kamen später. **Nicolas Sarkozy verwandelte das Élysée endgültig in die Kulisse einer TV-Serie, angesiedelt irgendwo zwischen "House of Cards" und "Dallas".** Seit Hollande wird "Lindenstraße" gespielt.

Frankreich müsste seine politische Kultur von Grund auf reformieren, weg vom Personenkult, hin zur parlamentarischen Demokratie, weg vom Zentralismus, hin zum Föderalismus, raus aus den Links-rechts-Schemata, hin zu Gespräch und Kompromiss.

Es ist nur eine Hoffnung. Spätestens seit dem Brandbrief von der einstigen Sozialministerin und Parteichefin **Martine Aubry**, die ihm Verrat an den linken Idealen vorwirft, **weiß Hollande, dass die Partei nicht mehr hinter ihm steht; dass seine Chancen, 2017 erneut gewählt zu werden, gleich null sind.** Wären morgen Wahlen, würde Hollande in jedem Fall in der ersten Runde rausfliegen, es sei denn, die Linke hätte nur einen einzigen Kandidaten. Das ist nicht der Fall.

Der Trotzlistendarsteller **Jean-Luc Mélenchon** will wieder ins Rennen gehen. Es ist gut möglich, dass Hollande kein zweites Mal antreten wird. Täte er es doch und wäre sein konservativer Gegner Sarkozy, ginge **Marine Le Pen** mit 25 Prozent als Siegerin aus der ersten Runde hervor.

Die Rechtspopulistin würde in jeder Konstellation die meisten Stimmen bekommen, nur in einem Fall nicht: Wenn der Kandidat der Konservativen Alain Juppé wäre. **So steht es um Frankreich.** **Der siebzigjährige Bürgermeister aus Bordeaux, der einst per Gerichtsurteil für unwählbar erklärt wurde, der für Korruption und Verfilzung stand, ist der einzige Hoffnungsschimmer am Horizont.**

"Frankreich ist von der großen Geschichte abgehängt worden", sagt der Historiker Pierre Nora. Es habe diplomatischen Einfluss verloren, habe nicht mal in Europa noch eine Führungsrolle. Seit den Attentaten sei das anders: "Frankreich steht wieder im Wind der großen Geschichte", sagt Nora, "aber leider ist es ein großer Sturm." Mittendrin François Hollande ein kleiner Mann, in starkem Regen.