

FT June 24, 2012 6:41 pm

# Why Mario Monti needs to speak truth to power



By Wolfgang Münchau

Just imagine it is this Thursday evening in the European Council's gathering of Europe's heads of state, and the Italian prime minister stands up and says this: "Mr President, dear colleagues. We are confronted with a simple choice: we can today either save the euro and build the foundation for a future political union, or we could flunk it and achieve neither. We all know what we need to do to save the euro. We require a banking union for Spain, a fiscal union for Italy and a political union for Germany.

"We can, of course, disagree on details. But we have to settle some of these differences this weekend, and take a decision on the steps that are needed right now. Our crisis resolution policies have failed time and again. We now need something that works fast. If we fail, I can assure you that I can no longer be part of this group, and my country can no longer be part of this project."

Let me say first of all that I do not really expect Mario Monti to say such a thing, not even a more cryptic version. He is the leader of a technical government. His job is to fix things. Standing up to the German chancellor – grandstanding as some people might call it – let alone wagering Italy's future is not part of his remit. Italy's political parties appointed him because they needed a plumber to succeed the playboy, not a gambler. The last thing they wanted was a leader.

I believe there is a case for a calculated gamble. But its risks and pay-offs must be fully understood. The point is not so much to call Angela Merkel's bluff, as some of my Italian and Spanish friends have been urging. She is not bluffing, despite the fact that a break-up of the eurozone would clearly be disastrous for Germany. Joschka Fischer, the former foreign minister, said recently that by allowing the eurozone to break up, Germany would for the third time in a century have inflicted utter devastation on Europe and **on** itself.

Those who advocate the strategy of calling Germany's bluff often assume a degree of rationality that is plainly absent. The Germans have developed a strange narrative of the crisis. Following the debate there, as I do regularly, has a parallel universe feel about it. There is, for example, a denial that the current account surpluses are even remotely a factor. In the German narrative, the economy is like a football game, which Germany is winning. And the chancellor's job is to support the team against another team – as she did in Gdansk last Friday when Germany beat Greece. Germany, like Ms Merkel, looks unstoppable.

The small number of intelligent officials and the economic elite understand what is at stake, but are willing to take the risk of an accident. The preservation of the euro is not their primary objective.

When Otmar Issing, the former chief economist of the European Central Bank, categorically rejects any form of debt mutualisation, as he did in a recent newspaper article, he omits to mention what would happen if the government were to follow his advice. The eurozone would break up.

When the pressure for a break-up comes, it will come from Italy. Silvio Berlusconi said ominously last week that a departure from the euro would be no blasphemy. He gave a simple set of choices: either Italy gets bailed out, Germany leaves, or Italy leaves. It looks to me as though Mr Berlusconi is preparing his party to run on a eurosceptic ticket in the next elections to see off the challenge by the anti-euro Five Star Movement and its leader, Beppe Grillo. Mr Berlusconi is said to have studied his speeches and writings in detail. What we are seeing here is the process of how an anti-euro stance can turn mainstream.

And when that happens, it may already be too late to save the euro. Eurozone leaders had more than three years to act. They wasted them. They may be intelligent people individually, but as a group they displayed an

extraordinary degree of economic and financial illiteracy. Remember the notion of the expansionary fiscal contraction? Or the silly idea of leveraging the rescue fund? Or bailing in private investors on a voluntary basis? Do we really believe that these are the people who will do all the right things in a single day when they did all the wrong things in three years?

The only hope would be for someone from the inside to challenge Ms Merkel.

The challenger should veto the fudge that is likely to be proposed on Thursday. How credible is a political union in the future if we cannot save the eurozone today? This is our high noon.

No one is better placed to stand up to Ms Merkel than the Italian prime minister. He is the ultimate European insider. He is intelligent and eloquent. His country is next in line to be attacked by the markets. The European Union has no plan B.

A resignation threat would be credible, and would scare a lot of people. What has he got to lose anyway? His poll ratings have fallen, and he is also losing support within his coalition. Only by speaking truth to power can Mr Monti save his country, and the euro.

## Germany, Greece and the Marshall Plan, another riposte

The Economist Blogs Jun 25th 2012, 11:07 by Albrecht Ritschl | London School of Economics



In the [New York Times](#), Hans-Werner Sinn of Germany's Ifo Institute for Economic Research argued that Greece has already received far more help than Germany received under the post-war Marshall Plan. In a [guest post](#) on *Free Exchange*, Albrecht Ritschl of the London School of Economics argued that it had not, to which Mr Sinn responded [here](#). In this guest post, Mr Ritschl responds to Mr Sinn's response.

MARSHALL Plan deliveries to Germany were limited, the wider agenda of the Marshall Plan was big. [Professor Sinn draws](#) up a rather comprehensive list of aid programmes to Greece, compares these with the most restrictive possible list of aid programmes to post-war Germany (just one entry, the European Recovery Program deliveries) and then concludes that, lo and behold, the Marshall Plan was minuscule compared to his comprehensive list of aid to Greece.

The figures for Greece are indeed horrific, exceeding 200% of GDP. What makes them so particularly depressing is that there seems to be no coherent plan, or one that is based on illusions. That was very different after World War II. The Marshall Plan hatched out in 1947 had a simple goal, to give top priority to self-sustained recovery in Europe, and to minimise further transfers from the US. That's why ERP deliveries were so small. Indeed, they were only designed as a palliative, and a red herring for the European public, until the deep political agenda of the Marshall plan had played out. So, an outer shell, and a different inner core.

Here's the core. German public debt in 1944 amounted to 379 billion reichsmarks, roughly four times Germany's 1938 GDP. Currency reform under the auspices of the US Army in 1948 wiped out this debt. To zero. Now you cannot wipe out a country's national debt without causing a banking crisis. Therefore, all other nominal assets in Germany were converted at 10:1 (later raised to 6.5:1), and banks received compensating claims, zombie assets, against the state. These amounted to 18 billion deutschmarks, to be written off slowly. Other than that, the currency was converted at par. OK so far? From 379 billion reichsmarks to 18 billion deutschmarks in a situation of price stability.

Germany's external debt was blocked. All signatories to the ERP had to sign a waiver, giving ERP credits to Germany first rank over all other claims. Thus, from 1947 to 1952, the Marshall Plan bought West Germany a foreign debt holiday. According to German statistics, foreign debt in 1938 was at 14 billion reichsmarks. This accounted only very incompletely for interest accrued since 1933, the year of Germany's debt default. Even at low interest rates, the debt total in the late 1947s was closer to 25 billion reichsmarks/deutschmarks or even higher. To this added German wartime debt, mostly on clearing account. Officially valued at 30 billion reichsmarks, its actual value was somewhere at 90 billion reichsmarks/deutschmarks, including interest. That makes a foreign debt burden easily exceeding 100 billion reichsmarks/deutschmarks. 7.7 billion reichsmarks of these were listed in the public debt total of 379 billion reichsmarks, and would constitute double counting.

Now calculate the interest burden forgone. At 3%, this makes about 14-15 billion deutschmarks annually. Of these, 3 billion deutschmarks per year were interest payments abroad that Germany was sheltered from through the ERP's waiver. GDP in 1950 was close to 100 billion deutschmarks according to the more optimistic estimates available. Total exports of West Germany in that year were 8 billion deutschmarks. So, to pay for the

foreign debt without reducing imports, Germany would have had to increase exports by 40%. Alternatively, high transfers to Germany would have had to close the gap. Are we beginning to see why ERP deliveries to Germany were small, and could be kept small?

A long term settlement of these debts was reached in the London Agreement of 1953. Germany's pre-war debt was reduced to 7 billion deutschmarks and rescheduled to be paid at low interest rates until very recently. Article 5(2) lumped Germany's World War II debt together with reparations, and deferred its settlement until after a future reunification.

Now let's add it all up. Roughly 350 billion reichsmarks/deutschmarks of forgiven domestic debt plus, say, 15 billion deutschmarks of debt forgiveness in the London agreement plus another 90 billion reichsmarks/deutschmarks of wartime debt kicked into the long grass. That makes 465 billion reichsmarks/deutschmarks of cancelled debt, still not including all deferred interest payments. But to be sure and extra cautious, assume that only roughly two thirds of Germany's domestic debt accrued to West Germany—no, wait, let's be even more cautious and just make it 50%. Then we have 175 billion reichsmarks/deutschmarks in domestic debt and 105 billion reichsmarks/deutschmarks in foreign debt that Germany was spared. That exceeds 280% of West German GDP of 1950. Does that beat Greece? You bet.

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All data from Deutsche Bundesbank (1976) Deutsches Geld- und Bankwesen in Zahlen, Frankfurt: Knapp.

- WSJ
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## France Is Main Obstacle to a Euro Solution

- By SIMON NIXON

Two statements last week following the four-way summit in Rome between the German, French, Italian and Spanish leaders capture the essence of the euro crisis and show why a solution is as far away as ever.



*Bloomberg News*

French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel at a news conference in Rome on Friday.

Responding to the latest demands that euro-zone bailout funds be allowed directly to recapitalize Spanish banks, German Chancellor Angela Merkel replied: "If I give money to Spanish banks, I'm the German chancellor but I can't say what these banks do." Later, French president François Hollande was asked about his willingness to accept further political union as the price of greater pooling of debt, he replied: "There can be no transfer of sovereignty if there is not an improvement in solidarity." Boiled down, this is a debate over whether Germany should write blank checks.

There is no chance of this debate being resolved at this week's summit of European leaders. The euro zone is now at one minute to midnight. Its financial system has fragmented, confidence is evaporating, demand is drying up and deposits are leaking out of the banks. There is now an international consensus on the measures needed to halt the immediate crisis: Massive bond buying by the European Central Bank, the direct recapitalization of banks by bailout funds and the creation of common euro-zone bonds.

But none of this is likely to be agreed at Wednesday and Thursday's European Council meeting. Expectations are low and unlikely to be exceeded, according to people involved in preparations for the summit. At best, the leaders may agree a timetable for common supervision of euro-zone banks: Useful, but hardly enough to satisfy the markets.

The conventional wisdom blames Germany and its leader Ms. Merkel for this impasse. She has been harangued by world leaders, attacked in print and lampooned on magazine covers for saying "nein" to the pooling of euro-zone debt while focusing instead on long-term reforms. On Ms. Merkel's insistence, much of this week's summit will be taken up with discussions of proposals by the presidents of the European Council, European Commission, ECB and Eurogroup for banking, fiscal and political union. The case against Ms. Merkel is that this agenda is focused on preventing the next crisis rather than solving the current one.

But the idea that the euro zone can pool debt without a clear agreement on political union is a dangerous illusion. To create a fiscal and banking union without a political union would multiply the original mistakes in the creation of a monetary union. And there is one country that has historically said "non" to the transfers of sovereignty that might put the euro zone on a long-term stable footing: France.

France has always been reluctant to cede sovereignty to the European Union. It prefers intergovernmental—as opposed to supranational—solutions to European challenges, reflecting its long history as a centralized state. That is why the euro zone was largely designed along French lines, as a club of sovereign states.

In theory, it wasn't a bad plan: a no-bailout rule and a ban on the ECB financing governments were supposed to force countries to manage their economies prudently. Unfortunately, this plan didn't survive contact with reality. Governments didn't manage economies prudently during the boom and are unwilling or unable to address economic weaknesses now. But if France now believes the answer to the current crisis is a monetary union where responsibility for debts are shared then it follows that a new set of political arrangements are required in which responsibility for economic decision-making is also shared. The intergovernmental model in which one currency is backed by 17 sovereign nations is surely obsolete.

Nothing in the euro zone's history suggests the offer of blank checks, whether from the ECB or bailout funds, will do anything other than buy time—time that will be squandered rather than used to address deep structural problems arising from inflexible labor markets, inefficient bureaucracies and unaffordable welfare systems.

Greece has failed to implement many of the structural reforms agreed as a condition of its two bailouts. Italy's reform effort quickly ran out of steam the moment the ECB made its offer of cheap, long-term loans to banks, while Spain offered only a half-baked reform of its banks. Even when governments do try to be virtuous, voters may have other ideas. No incumbent has won re-election since the start of the euro crisis. The new Greek government is vowing not to lay off a single civil servant, despite the previous government's commitment to cut 150,000 jobs by 2015. Meanwhile President Hollande won election on a platform that made no concessions to the deep structural challenges facing the French economy, promising to lower the retirement age from 62 to 60 for some workers, introduce a new top rate of tax of 75% for the highest earners and make it even harder to fire workers.

Against this dysfunctional political backdrop, it makes no sense for Germany or the ECB to agree to pool debts, even assuming the legal obstacles could be quickly overcome. The markets will not be fooled for long if there is no robust mechanism to ensure countries address long-term solvency problems and or to allocate losses if all the debt sours remains unresolved.

Those calling for immediate action may be right that losses should fall mainly on creditors in the form of higher inflation and fiscal transfers since the alternative of forcing citizens of indebted countries to bear the cost of adjustment is politically impossible and likely to lead to a collapse in the euro. But this cannot be decided by stealth: The allocation of losses is an act of violence against individual property rights. Only a supranational body with a high degree of public trust can decide, for example, what proportion of the losses from Spain's banking bust should be borne by Slovakian pensioners as opposed to the investors, managers and employees of those banks. To allocate losses any other way would be a recipe for long-term political and financial instability.

Mr. Hollande is wrong: The debate over sovereignty is not a peripheral issue. It goes to the heart of the debate over solidarity. And France is the biggest obstacle to a solution.

06/25/2012 12:09 PM

## **SPIEGEL Interview with Finance Minister Schäuble**

### **'We Certainly Don't Want to Divide Europe'**

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble believes that only further EU integration can save the euro. SPIEGEL spoke with him about how the currency can be strengthened, the hurdles presented by Germany's constitution and what the 27-member club might look like in five years.

**SPIEGEL:** Minister Schäuble, the European Union is mired the worst crisis in its history with the euro [threatening to break apart](#). What is at stake?

**Schäuble:** Our prosperity. The world, with its globalized economy, is changing at a rapid pace. Those who want to keep up cannot go it alone. It only works in collaboration with other European countries and with a European currency. Otherwise we would fall far behind, and that would lead to a substantial loss of prosperity and societal security.

**SPIEGEL:** Would the EU survive the collapse of the monetary union?

**Schäuble:** There is certainly the risk that, in the event of a collapse of the euro -- which, by the way, I don't believe is going to happen -- much of what we have achieved and become fond of would be called into question, from the common domestic market to freedom of travel in Europe. But a collapse of the EU would be absurd. The world is moving closer together, and we're talking about the possibility of each country in Europe going its own way? This cannot, must not and will not happen!

**SPIEGEL:** Was it a mistake to introduce the euro?

**Schäuble:** No. The monetary union was the logical consequence of the advancing economic integration of Europe.

**SPIEGEL:** Nevertheless, the euro is a miscarriage. The necessary political union was absent.

**Schäuble:** To call it a miscarriage is nonsense. But it's clear that we wanted a political union at the time, but it wasn't possible. Germany would have been prepared to relinquish powers to Brussels, because it was only through Europe that we received a new chance after World War II. But other countries had trouble with the concept, because of special traditions, for example, or because they had only recently regained their national autonomy after the fall of the Iron Curtain. As such, we faced a fundamental question: Do we introduce the euro without having the necessary political union, and do we assume that the euro will bring us closer together, or do we abandon the idea?

**SPIEGEL:** And in that situation you preferred to take the risk.

**Schäuble:** If we had always said we would only take steps toward integration if they would immediately work 100 percent, we would never have advanced by so much as a meter. That's why we wanted to introduce the euro first and then quickly make the decisions needed for a political union. Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker was right when he said, at the time, that the euro would prove to be the father of future European developments.

**SPIEGEL:** In the meantime, however, the common currency has begun unleashing destructive forces more than anything else.



**Schäuble:** Now you're exaggerating. Europe has always worked on the basis of two principles: What isn't possible at first will happen over time, and what doesn't work will be corrected over time. That's why perfect solutions take so long in Europe. And that's why we are now improving the architecture of the monetary union.

**SPIEGEL:** It almost sounds as if you had longed for the crisis so that you could finally correct the birth defects of the euro.

**Schäuble:** Well, it isn't quite that bad, especially since I don't have a propensity for despair or even resignation. But the more people see what's at stake, the more they are willing to draw the right consequences.

**SPIEGEL:** What are the consequences that Europe now has to draw?

**Schäuble:** We need more and not less Europe.

**SPIEGEL:** You are clearly an advocate of the bicycle theory: Those who don't move fall over.

**Schäuble:** Yes, of course.

**SPIEGEL:** But you also seem to suggest that the design is unstable.

**Schäuble:** Excuse me, but the desire for improvement is a basic condition of human existence. In "Faust," Goethe writes: "If the swift moment I entreat: Tarry a while! You are so fair! Then forge the shackles to my feet, Then I will gladly perish there!" That's how it is.

**SPIEGEL:** The call for more Europe has become almost as much a classic as "Faust."

**Schäuble:** Perhaps, but that doesn't mean it's wrong. Unfortunately, Europe is complicated, and its structures are such that they inspire only limited confidence in citizens and the financial markets.

**SPIEGEL:** How do you intend to correct this deficit?

**Schäuble:** So far, member states have almost always had the final say in Europe. This cannot continue. In key political areas, we have to transfer more powers to Brussels, so that each nation state cannot block decisions.

**SPIEGEL:** You want nothing less than a United States of Europe.

**Schäuble:** Even though the term is used repeatedly, it doesn't make it any better. No, the Europe of the future will not be a federal state based on the model of the United States of America or the Federal Republic of Germany. It will have its own structure. It's an extremely exciting venture.

**SPIEGEL:** It sounds more like a new experiment, not unlike the introduction of the euro. And yet you want to transfer as much power as possible to Europe?

### **'The Most Important Thing Is a Fiscal Union'**

**Schäuble:** No, we must not and cannot ever make decisions in Europe that apply uniformly to all. Europe's strength is precisely its diversity. But there are things in a monetary union that are done more effectively at the European level.

**SPIEGEL:** What, for example?

**Schäuble:** The most important thing is that we create a fiscal union, one in which the nation states give up their jurisdiction in terms of fiscal policy. In addition, the problems of the Spanish financial institutions reveal, once again, that Europe would be [better off with a bank union](#). We need a European supervisory authority, at least over the major lenders, which can then influence the banks directly. Then we can also save them with joint funds.



**SPIEGEL:** For months, Germany has been under pressure to agree to joint government bonds, the so-called euro bonds. It would certainly be seen as a confidence-building measure if you complied with the wishes of the other European countries.

**Schäuble:** As long as we don't have a fiscal union, we cannot assume joint liability for debts.

**SPIEGEL:** Why are you [so uncompromising on this issue](#)?

**Schäuble:** Because you can't separate the responsibility for decisions and the liability. This applies to almost all areas, but especially to money. Someone who has the ability to spend money at someone else's expense will do so. You do it, and so do I. The markets know that. And that's why they too would not find euro bonds convincing in the end.

**SPIEGEL:** What would a fiscal union have to look like so that Germany could accept euro bonds?

**Schäuble:** In an optimal scenario, there would be a European finance minister, who would have a veto against national budgets and would have to approve levels of new borrowing. It would be up to the individual countries to decide how to spend the approved funds, that is, how to answer the question: "Should we spend more money on families or on road construction?"

**SPIEGEL:** And you seriously believe that this could work?

**Schäuble:** It's been working for a long time in competition policy. When the current Italian prime minister, Mario Monti, was the EU competition commissioner, he successfully tangled with major international corporations like Microsoft. A European finance minister would, should it become necessary, be forced to take on Italy, for example.

**SPIEGEL:** Or with Germany. Let's assume the finance minister in Brussels rejected your budget. People here would be incredibly outraged.

**Schäuble:** There is certainly the risk that there would be national reactions, and that's why all of this requires intensive discussion. But one thing is also clear: Those who want a strong Europe also have to be willing to surrender decisions to Brussels. But even then parliamentary responsibilities are needed.

**SPIEGEL:** Aside from fiscal policy, are there other areas that ought to be transferred to the European level?

**Schäuble:** In times of globalization, it's imperative that economic policy be part of it. Besides, there are still too many national competencies in foreign and security policy. Europe should speak more effectively and clearly with one voice in the world.

**SPIEGEL:** You propose the transfer of many national competencies. What happens to democratic legitimation?

**Schäuble:** Some things would have to change in that respect, too, because nowadays everyone has a say: the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, which consists of the national representatives, and the European Parliament. This is hard to figure out, even for political buffs. First the Commission has to develop into a real government. To that end, it ought to be elected directly, either by the parliament or through the direct election of a Commission president. I favor the second option.

**SPIEGEL:** What gives you the hope that a directly elected president would unite and not divide Europe?

**Schäuble:** The direct election would be preceded by a large-scale mobilization, and it would electrify all citizens from Portugal to Finland.

**SPIEGEL:** A directly elected president would be strong, but would only be monitored by a weak parliament.

**Schäuble:** No, the European Parliament has to be strengthened, of course. That's why it must finally be given to the power to enact bills. It's an anachronism that only the Commission has played this role until now.

**SPIEGEL:** In other words, there would be a directly elected president with his government and a parliament. What would happen to the member states, which currently make up the Council of Ministers and the European Council?

**Schäuble:** It would be best to have a body representing the countries that's based on the model of the German Bundesrat or the US Senate, with each country dispatching a certain number of representatives to this body. Of course, all laws would require a majority in the body, as well as in the parliament.

**SPIEGEL:** There is a two-speed Europe. On one side we have the EU, with its 27 members, and on the other the group of the 17 euro countries. Do all structures have to be duplicated?

**Schäuble:** We should try to achieve all of this for the entire EU. Germany has always stood for an EU of the 27 countries. But in light of Britain's continued resistance to further integration steps, as we saw with the fiscal pact, there are limits to my optimism in this regard. It's quite possible that we will have to create the new institutions for the euro zone first. But it's also clear that this would be an open club. Every member state of the EU would be more than welcome to participate. We certainly don't want to divide Europe.

**SPIEGEL:** With all due respect to your vision, is there truly more willingness today among EU member states to give up sovereignty than there was in the 1990s?

**Schäuble:** The recognition that this is necessary, and the willingness to do so, has certainly grown due to the crisis, and not just in Germany. I would much prefer that we not have so many crises, and particularly not such severe ones. But every crisis also includes the opportunity to recognize what is necessary. That's what led to the fiscal pact, in which 25 EU countries pledged to improve their fiscal discipline. And that's also how the new Europe will come about.

**SPIEGEL:** In your euphoria, you overlook the fact that most people in Southern Europe tend to see Brussels as a threat.

**Schäuble:** I'd be careful with statements like that. In the most recent election in Greece, more citizens voted for parties that support the course that was agreed to with Europe than in the first election.

**SPIEGEL:** Although voter turnout was lower.

**Schäuble:** That may be. Of course, a lot of people in Europe are worried about the future. But as far as I can see, the vast majority of Germans and people in other countries are pro-European. Aside from relatively small movements, there are no nationalist tendencies.

**SPIEGEL:** In Germany, the [Federal Constitutional Court has imposed tight restrictions](#) on the further relinquishment of sovereignty. Given the German constitution, how much more European integration is possible?

**Schäuble:** If the things that I've just outlined were in fact implemented and we reached the conclusion that the limits of the constitution had been reached, the Constitutional Court would be correct in saying: There's no problem with transferring more rights to Brussels, but the German people will have to make that decision.

**SPIEGEL:** Are you saying that we will soon have a referendum in Germany?

**Schäuble:** I don't know when that will happen, and I doubt anyone does. But I assume that it'll happen sooner than I would have thought a few months ago. At the EU summit at the end of this week, the heads of four European institutions plan to present concrete proposals for greater integration. We'll see what happens after that.

**SPIEGEL:** You believe that the Germans will vote on a new constitution within the next five years?

**Schäuble:** A few months ago, I would have said: In five years? Never! But now I'm not so sure. Do you want to know why?

**SPIEGEL:** Yes, please.

**Schäuble:** Many in Germany said that (former US President) Ronald Reagan was crazy when he stood at the Brandenburg Gate in 1987 and said: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" And then it happened two years later. At the time, I too didn't believe that German partition would soon come to an end. In the spring of 1989, I had just become the new interior minister in Bonn. The new US ambassador introduced himself to me and predicted that the Wall could come down in the next three years. I replied: "I would have doubted that a few months ago, but now I would say that with a little luck, it'll happen in the next 10 years." And how long did it really take? Less than half a year.

**SPIEGEL:** Minister Schäuble, thank you for this interview.

*Interview conducted by Sven Böll and Konstantin von Hammerstein*

*Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan*

# Was Sie schon immer über Austeritätspolitik in Europa wissen wollten

Fazit, Das Wirtschaftsblog, FAZ 25. Juni 2012, 10:22 Uhr

**Die Industrienationen müssen mittel- und langfristig ihre Staatsverschuldung zurückfahren. Darüber sind sich fast alle Ökonomen einig. Heftig umstritten ist die optimale kurzfristige Ausrichtung der Finanzpolitik in der aktuellen Krise. Hier gibt es Befürworter und Gegner von Austeritätspolitik - nicht zuletzt, weil kein Patentrezept für alle Länder existiert.**

Von [Gerald Braunberger](#)

In den bevorstehenden Gesprächen mit der neuen griechischen Regierung dürfte die seit einigen Monaten in Europa heiß diskutierte Frage "Austerität oder Wachstum?" eine wesentliche Rolle spielen. Soll ein Staat Austeritätspolitik auch dann konsequent durchziehen, wenn er sich in einer Rezession befindet? Ist eine Lockerung der finanzpolitischen Auflagen sinnvoll, um das Wirtschaftswachstum anzuregen? Gibt es überhaupt einen Gegensatz zwischen Austeritätspolitik und Wirtschaftswachstum?

Auf der englischsprachigen Ökonomenplattform [www.voxeu.org](http://www.voxeu.org) haben in den vergangenen Monaten namhafte Ökonomen\*) Beiträge über Austeritätspolitik veröffentlicht, die jetzt von Giancarlo Corsetti (University of Cambridge) in einem [sehr lesenswerten E-Book](#) mit dem Titel "Austerity: Too much of a good Thing?" herausgegeben wurden. Dieser Beitrag fasst wichtige Elemente der Debatte anhand von Corsettis Einleitung in wenigen Punkten zusammen.

## 1. "It is important to clarify from the start that the debate is not about the need for fiscal discipline."

Alle Teilnehmer an der Debatte sehen angesichts alternder Gesellschaften, steigender Gesundheitsausgaben und dem Anstieg der Staatsverschuldungen in der jüngsten Krise die Notwendigkeit, die Staatsschulden mittelfristig in den Griff zu bekommen. Nicht eindeutig ist allerdings, wie die Staaten sich in der aktuellen Krise kurzfristig verhalten sollen: "Rather, the debate is about the extent to which spending cuts and tax hikes in the short run are desirable and effective in containing the prospect of sovereign risk crises." ([Giancarlo Corsetti](#)). Hierüber existiert kein Konsens; fast alle hiernach angeführten Argumente aus der Diskussion sind umstritten und stehen zum Teil in Widerspruch. Das liegt nicht zuletzt daran, dass die Analyse kurzfristiger Wirkungen von Finanzpolitik in den vergangenen 30 Jahren auf den Hund gekommen war und jetzt nachgeholt werden muss. Immerhin scheint man sich in einer Hinsicht weitgehend einig zu sein: Gute Finanzpolitik reduziert Unsicherheit; schlechte Finanzpolitik erzeugt Unsicherheit.

## 2. Nicht alle Länder brauchen zwingend die gleiche Medizin.

Länder mit guter Bonität, die sich leicht und zu günstigen Konditionen an den Kapitalmärkten verschulden können, befinden sich in einer anderen Lage als Länder mit einem Defizit an Glaubwürdigkeit, die sich nur zu hohen Renditen an den Kapitalmärkten verschulden können und um ihren dauerhaften Zugang zu den Märkten fürchten.

Für Länder mit guter Bonität ist folgendes Muster denkbar: Kürzungen von Staatsausgaben werden im Falle einer voraussichtlich kurzen Rezession zunächst das BIP etwas drücken, längerfristig aber die Staatsverschuldung reduzieren, weil die Wirtschaft über niedrigere Zinsen stimuliert wird. Unter der Annahme einer langen und tiefen Rezession wirken Kürzungen von Staatsausgaben nachteiliger.

Für Länder mit schlechter Bonität, hohen Zinsen und der Aussicht auf eine unhaltbar hohe Staatsverschuldung können Kürzungen von Staatsausgaben positiv wirken, wenn sie für größere Glaubwürdigkeit des Schuldners sorgen und damit zu einem Fall der Zinsen für Staat und Wirtschaft führen.

## 3. In einer Liquiditätsfalle kann nur Keynes helfen.

Falls große Unsicherheit über die Zukunft verhindert, dass expansive Geldpolitik die Wirtschaft anregt, befindet man sich in einer zuerst von John Maynard Keynes beschriebenen sogenannten Liquiditätsfalle. Die

Aussicht auf eine weitere Verschlechterung der Lage trägt dann zu geringerer gesamtwirtschaftlicher Nachfrage und damit zur weiteren Verschlechterung der Lage bei; in einer solchen Situation wirkt Austeritätspolitik tödlich: "A sharp increase in unemployment and underemployment of capital activates adverse dynamics. As low employment today raises the probability of low employment tomorrow, job destruction today induces people to cut their consumption in anticipation of lower income today and in the future. This vicious spiral - destruction of jobs today generates expectations of persistently low employment tomorrow, thus causing even lower demand and more job destruction today - is a powerful, dangerous mechanism that can easily frustrate attempts to 'keep one's house in order' through immediate cuts." So argumentieren unter anderem [Brad de Long und Larry Summers](#), aber auch Paul Krugman, mit Verweis auf John Maynard Keynes. Das Bewusstsein für die Möglichkeit eines spiralförmigen Absturz einer Volkswirtschaft in eine tiefe Depression ist zuletzt wieder gewachsen (nachdem es völlig verschüttet war), aber es gibt unterschiedliche Ansichten darüber, ob Finanzpolitik eine geeignete Medizin bleibt. ([Hier ist eine moderne Kritik](#)). Zahlreiche empirische Schätzungen des "Multiplikatoreffekts" von Finanzpolitik, mit dessen Hilfe das BIP steigen soll, kommen nicht zu einem eindeutigen Ergebnis.

#### **4. Es kommt auf das "Wie" der Austeritätspolitik an.**

Man kann Staatsverschuldung durch sinkende Staatsausgaben oder durch höhere Steuern (oder eine Kombination von beidem) anpacken. Empirisch spricht manches dafür, dass sinkende Staatsausgaben längerfristig die bessere Möglichkeit darstellen. So hat vor allem Alberto Alesina argumentiert. Diese These ist zuletzt sehr eingehend diskutiert worden, unter anderem vom IWF und bei der BIZ, und nach wie vor sehr umstritten.

#### **5. Die politische Ökonomik von Austeritätspolitik ist nicht eindeutig.**

Heiß debattiert wird auch die Frage, wie Politiker und Bevölkerungen auf die Forderung nach Austeritätspolitik reagieren. Gegen eine etwas populistische Idee, schuldensüchtige Staaten im Süden seien natürliche Gegner von Austerität, während vermeintlich solide Staaten wie Deutschland dafür seien, ließe sich einwenden: In Deutschland sind vor der Krise die Staatsausgaben mit einer höheren Rate gewachsen als in Spanien oder Griechenland (Paolo Manasse). Und auch Deutschland nimmt immer noch neue Schulden auf und betreibt keine Austeritätspolitik. Generell nehmen die Zweifel an starrer Austeritätspolitik zu: "Citizens rightly feel that sacrifices do not deliver the promised results. Even the IMF, long criticised for its stern advocacy of procyclical austerity, is now asking Eurozone nations that can to go slow" (Charles Wyplosz). Daraus folgt aber nicht zwingend, dass die Austeritätspolitik bereits zu weit gegangen ist. (Manfred J.M. Neumann)

#### **6. Hohe Jugendarbeitslosigkeit ist kein Produkt der Krise**

Die hohe Jugendarbeitslosigkeit vor allem im Süden hat in der Krise zugenommen. Sie ist aber kein Produkt der Krise, sondern ein langfristiges Produkt eines "geteilten Arbeitsmarkts": "The problem has deep roots in a policy that attempted to overcome rigidities in the labour market and the production structure by creating a deeply divided labour market, with 'ins' and 'outs'. The 'outs', mostly young people, provided the necessary flexibility to adjust in the years before the crisis, where domestic expansion coexisted with increasing competition from the Asian and Central European producers." (Marco Annunziata)

#### **7. Finanzpolitik alleine löst die Krise nicht.**

Hierüber besteht ein breiter Konsens. Auch andere Bereiche der Politik sind gefordert; so besteht wohl kein Dissens darüber, dass vor allem der Süden Europas Strukturreformen benötigt.

\*) Darunter Alberto Alesina, Brad de Long, Charles Wyplosz, Manfred J.M. Neumann und Giancarlo Corsetti

*Foto: Helmut Fricke*

## Fallacies of composition

Posted on 22 October 2011 by [Simon Taylor](#) • [1 Comment](#)

On this morning's BBC Radio Four "Today" programme, a generally unimpressive interviewee from HSBC said that "you don't solve a debt problem by borrowing more" or something to that effect. He also used that dreary cliché about kicking the can down the road, an American expression which lost its power to impress many months ago. Leaving aside the question of whether HSBC is the first place you would go for an expert view on the bond market, this statement is both true and false.

In the long run, a country with too much debt must find a way to reduce its debt to GDP ratio. Obviously. But this is not a helpful piece of advice to Greece or other indebted countries. I don't mean in the trivial or pedantic sense that what matters is debt relative to GDP, so you can increase your debt level if you increase your GDP even faster. The sense in which it is not true is that if every country tries to cut its debt at once the collective result may be more debt and a lower GDP.

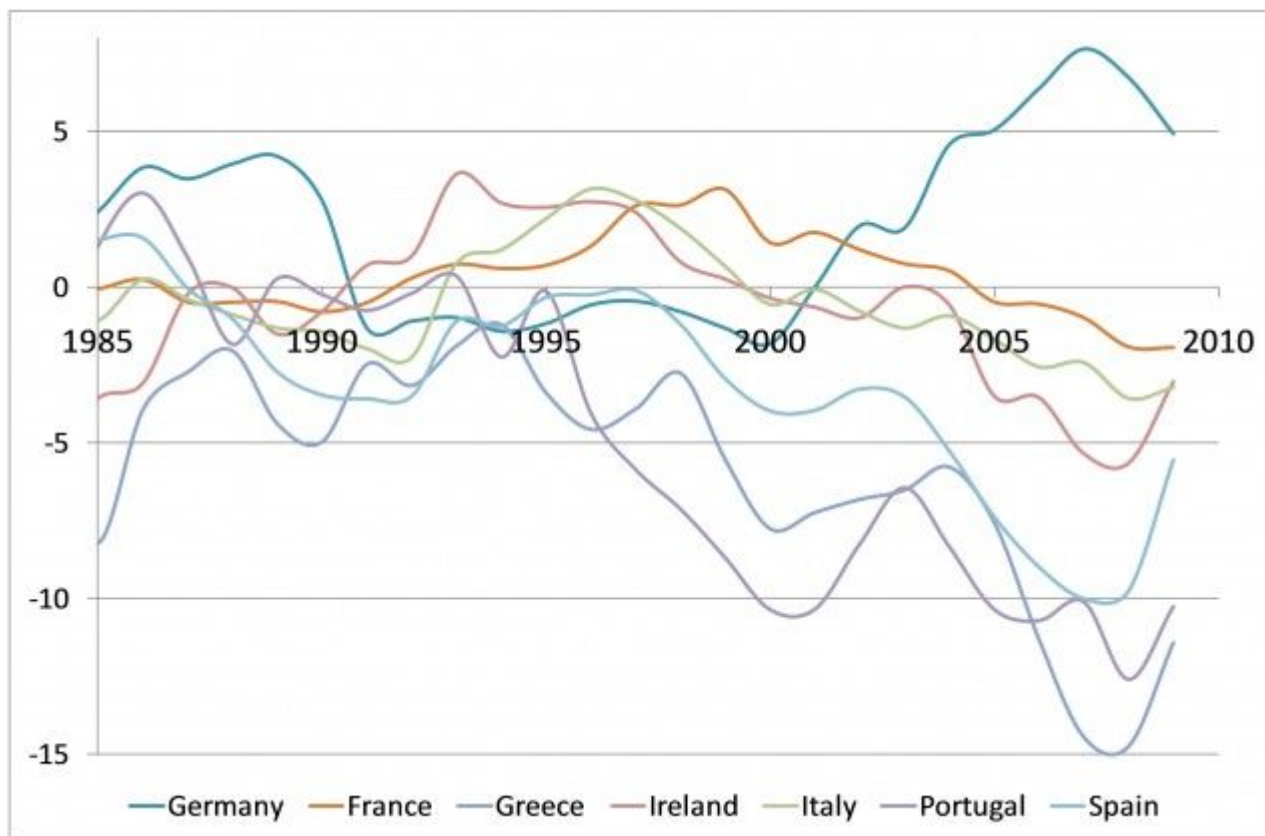
As many commentators have rediscovered in recent months, what is true for an individual Euro member country is not necessarily true for the whole Eurozone. More generally, German and other experts on the Euro crisis have been guilty of a fallacy of composition. This means falsely assuming that what is true of the parts is true for the whole. Concretely, since the Eurozone is more or less a closed economy (it has a roughly zero balance of payments with respect to the rest of the world, which is not the same thing but is near enough for this purpose) policy measures which are rational for individual open economies are potentially disastrous for the whole zone. This argument was nicely put by [Wolfgang Munchau](#) in his excellent weekly Financial Times column last week.

As is so often the case, the origin of this line of thinking in economics goes back to Keynes, who more or less invented macroeconomics. He gave the example of the paradox of thrift. If everyone in an economy tries to save more by cutting his or her spending, the result is that everyone's income falls and overall saving is reduced not raised. This is because everyone's income comes from someone else's spending. So what is rational for one person is collectively irrational.

So German advice for all Eurozone nations to be like Germany and run a surplus is both unhelpful and to some extent rather stupid. It is possible in principle for the whole Eurozone to run a surplus with respect to the rest of the world economy but as this is one of the three largest economies in the world, it would downward pressure on global GDP and be very unwelcome to both the US and China, the other two large economies in the world. Either the German politicians understand this and are therefore dishonest or they don't in which case they are criminally ignorant. I'm not sure which is the case.

This chart shows the balance of payments deficits and surpluses of the main Eurozone economies (expressed as a percentage of GDP). Since about 2001 Germany has been in surplus and the other countries in deficit. Overall they sum roughly to zero. It is not feasible for all the economies to copy Germany and the attempt would lead to an even deeper European recession. (Note that Germany also had a surplus until reunification imposed a massive cost on the economy through the 1990s.)





As for Greece, even though the government has done more than could have been expected in terms of restructuring and raising taxes, it finds itself losing the battle to hit its deficit to GDP target because GDP keeps shrinking. But the economy is contracting at least partly because of the attempt to shrink the government deficit. A relatively closed economy with few sources of export income beyond tourism, Greece is therefore more likely to achieve long term debt to GDP stability if it eases off its deficit reductions and allows the economy to recover. But this is politically infeasible given the understandable distrust by others of Greek governments. Greece is therefore condemned to more cuts, shrinking GDP and continued failure to hit its targets. In the near term it will get more debt from the Eurozone bailout process until the inevitable happens and it is allowed to default on at least half of its debt.



# BIZ warnt vor Überlastung der Zentralbanken

FAZ 24.06.2012 · Seit fünf Jahren kämpfen die Zentralbanken mit einer ungewöhnlich lockeren Geldpolitik gegen die Finanz- und Schuldenkrise. Jetzt spricht die Bank für Internationalen Zahlungsausgleich - die „Zentralbank der Zentralbanken“ - von Grenzen der Belastbarkeit.

Von [Jürgen Dunsch](#) und [Markus Frühauf](#)



© Hauri, Michael Gebäude der BIZ in Basel

Die Bank für Internationalen Zahlungsausgleich (BIZ) warnt vor den Gefahren der lockeren Geldpolitik mit Niedrigzinsen und aufgeblähten Bilanzen der Notenbanken. In ihrem am Sonntag veröffentlichten Jahresbericht hält die „Zentralbank der Zentralbanken“ die Beibehaltung der ungewöhnlich lockeren Geldpolitik in den Industrieländern angesichts der Konjunkturflaute bis auf Weiteres zwar für „naheliegend und unvermeidlich“. Gleichzeitig sei unverkennbar, dass damit nur Zeit gekauft werde und die tiefer liegenden Solvenz- oder Strukturprobleme in diesen Ländern durch Entscheidungen der Politik gelöst werden müssten.

In seiner Rede vor der Generalversammlung in Basel sagte BIZ-Generaldirektor Jaime Caruana, dass die Bilanzen der fünf großen Notenbanken in den Industrieländern nun mehr als 9 Billionen Dollar oder 13 Prozent der jährlichen Wirtschaftsleistung auf der Welt ausmachten. Vor der Finanzkrise kamen die Europäische Zentralbank (EZB), die amerikanische Federal Reserve, die Bank of Japan, die Bank of England und die Schweizerische Nationalbank zusammen auf eine Bilanzsumme von 4 Billionen Dollar. Caruana verwies auch auf die drastisch veränderte Zusammensetzung der Bilanzen. Die Federal Reserve halte inzwischen 11 Prozent der insgesamt ausstehenden Staatsschulden der Vereinigten Staaten, die Bank of England mehr als 18 Prozent der britischen Staatsschulden.

## Lockere Geldpolitik führt zu zahlreichen Verzerrungen

Die aktuelle Geldpolitik führt nach Ansicht der BIZ zu zahlreichen Verzerrungen. Politiker könnten versucht sein, die notwendigen Haushaltssanierungen und Strukturreformen in ihren Staaten zu verzögern. Dabei müssten die Staaten im Gegenteil entschlossen daran arbeiten, wieder zu risikofreien Schuldnern zu werden, da Realwirtschaft und Finanzsystem auf die erstklassige Bonität von Staatspapieren angewiesen seien.

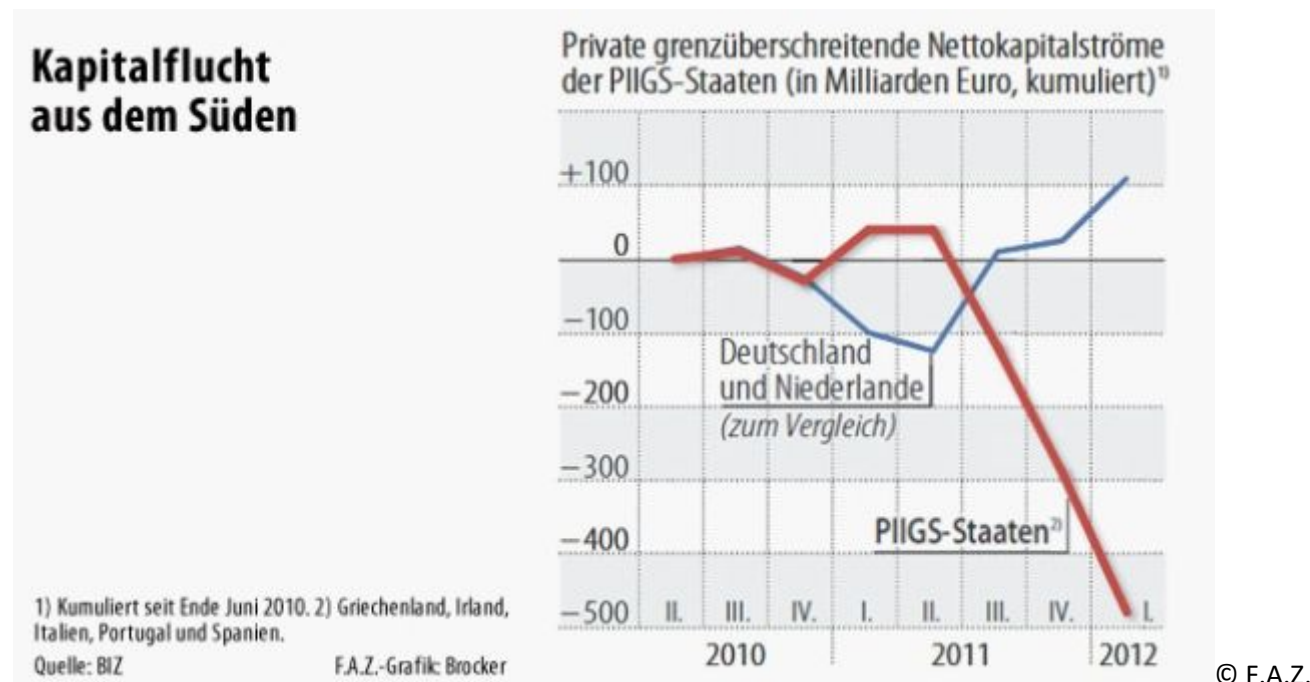
Nach Ansicht der BIZ erleichtert die expansive Geldpolitik die Bilanzsanierung der Banken. Uneingeschränkte Liquiditätshilfen, Ankäufe von Vermögenswerten und niedrige Zinsen der Notenbanken könnten die Geschäftsbanken aber dazu verleiten, die Qualität ihrer eigenen Aktiva wie auch die Schuldendienstfähigkeit ihrer Kunden zu überschätzen.

## Lage der Banken wie nach Lehman-Zusammenbruch

Die aktuelle Lage der Banken vergleicht die BIZ mit der Situation nach dem Lehman-Zusammenbruch 2008. Viele Banken seien weiterhin überschuldet, hätten keinen Zugang zu den Märkten für unbesicherte Finanzierungen und zu ungewiss sei der Wert ihrer Vermögenspositionen, sagte Caruana.

Langfristig befürchtet die BIZ eine Einschränkung der Unabhängigkeit der Notenbanken, falls die unterstützenden Maßnahmen für die Staatshaushalte über einen längeren Zeitraum liefen, gerade weil sich die öffentliche Verschuldung in vielen Ländern auf einem untragbaren Pfad befindet. Wachsende finanzielle Risiken in den aufgeblähten Bilanzen könnten die finanzielle Unabhängigkeit der Notenbanken beeinträchtigen, wenn diese aufgrund von Verlusten nicht mehr ihre geldpolitischen Ziele verfolgen könnten, ohne finanzielle Ressourcen der Regierungen in Anspruch zu nehmen.

Größere Inflationsgefahren sieht die BIZ in den Industriestaaten vorerst nicht. Anders sieht es in vielen Schwellenländern aus. Die dort höheren Zinsen lockten Kapital und Kredite und setzten die Währungen unter Aufwertungsdruck. Damit könnten die aufstrebenden Märkte die Zinsen nicht so stark anheben, wie dies zum Teil nötig wäre.



Die schädliche Rückkopplung zwischen angeschlagenen Banken, hoher privater und öffentlicher Verschuldung und den strukturellen Ungleichgewichten sei nirgendwo so deutlich zu spüren wie im Euro-Raum, sagte Caruana. Die Probleme könnten auch anderswo auftreten, falls es der Politik nicht gelinge, diesen Teufelskreis zu durchbrechen. Dabei verweist die BIZ auf die Vereinigten Staaten, Japan und Großbritannien. „Es wäre ein Fehler zu glauben, dass die Situation im Euro-Raum eine Ausnahme sei“, sagte Caruana. Die jüngsten Vorschläge zur Bankenunion wertete er als vielversprechend. Die unterschiedlichen nationalen Aufsichtsregeln für Banken würden harmonisiert. Diese müssten durch gemeinsame Regeln für Aufsicht, Einlagensicherung und Liquidierung ergänzt werden. „Solch ehrgeizige Veränderungen werden Zeit erfordern“ sagte Caruana.

## Talks May Test Partnership Between a Weak France and a Strong Germany

By [STEVEN ERLANGER](#)

PARIS — Armed with a new mandate and a solid legislative majority, [France's François Hollande](#) is off to do battle with [Germany's](#) Iron Chancellor in the name of growth, prosperity and human decency. Or that's the popular image, at least, of what is in fact a more delicate and nuanced relationship between the new French president and the German chancellor, [Angela Merkel](#).

The partnership between Europe's two largest economies — the fourth- and fifth-largest in the world — has been vital to the functioning of the European Union and the 17-nation euro zone. And it has thrived under leaders from similar parties or different ones; the euro itself is a French-German confection.

But the marriage is now under considerable strain, and France is very much on the defensive, not just because of the endless euro crisis, which is now undermining its southern European allies Spain and Italy, but because of the growing weakness of the French economy as well, which makes the French-German couple less than equal.

Pascal Malville, 49, selling pastries at a Paris market, said he thought the Germans had it essentially right. "Hollande will be obliged to yield to German power," Mr. Malville said, "because it's Germany that's on the good path."

On Friday, Mr. Hollande will go to Rome to meet with Ms. Merkel and the Italian and Spanish prime ministers, Mario Monti and Mariano Rajoy, and discuss the euro zone crisis before next week's European Union summit meeting. On the agenda are plans to develop cross-border banking supervision and a proposal from Mr. Monti to use the union's bailout funds to buy sovereign debt to help hold down interest rates for countries like Italy and Spain.

It is not a new idea — there are not many of those — and Ms. Merkel has been reluctant to accept the proposal because it could be another form of blank check signed by German taxpayers.

Mr. Hollande is determined to show the French that he is willing to stand up to Berlin, to push Ms. Merkel to contribute even more than before toward a lasting solution of the euro mess, which is both financial and institutional. He believes that the German prescription — heavy on fiscal discipline, light on new spending — does not fit the euro disease in a [recession](#). And he sees himself as the leader of what he hopes will be a new wave of left-leaning social democratic governments in Europe after a long period of right-wing leadership.

The problem for Mr. Hollande is that Ms. Merkel, while expressing support for some of his milder growth initiatives, is pushing back in a way that challenges France to the core.

Mr. Hollande brings to the table an argument for collectivized debt, or so-called [euro bonds](#), and for the European Central Bank to be able to loan directly to banks and to the European bailout funds. In general, he wants the bank to operate more like the United States Federal Reserve, able to act as a lender of last resort to guarantee the debts of euro zone countries.

In response, Ms. Merkel contends that these steps must be a result of a closer political and economic union, not a precursor to it. Shared debt can work only if there is shared decision-making over budgets, taxes and pensions, she says.

That is why Ms. Merkel is pushing to move ahead with the long-stalled process of European integration. As Joschka Fischer, a former German foreign minister and Green party stalwart, said, "**You can't mutualize the debt without mutualizing sovereignty; you can't have the financial benefits of a state without having one.**"

But “more Europe” would mean a considerable loss of French sovereignty over its national budget and the French financial system, an extraordinarily delicate issue for Mr. Hollande and his Socialist Party, which split badly on a similar issue in 2005.

“Merkel’s call for fuller political, fiscal and budgetary union in the euro zone, though without details, creates problems for Hollande,” said Thomas Klau of the European Council on Foreign Relations. “Hollande will have to accept or reject a course to euro zone integration sooner rather than later, and that will revive the French debate over how much sovereignty to transfer to Brussels.”

In his tango with Ms. Merkel, Mr. Hollande is seeking support not just in Rome and Madrid, but even in Ms. Merkel’s backyard: last week, he invited leaders of Germany’s Social Democrats to Paris for talks.

By inviting her opposition, Mr. Hollande was judged to be sending a barbed message to Ms. Merkel, who openly supported his predecessor, President Nicolas Sarkozy, and refused to meet with Mr. Hollande while he was campaigning this year.

There are dangers, of course, in too much antagonism. “Without a partner in Paris ready to cooperate, overcoming the crisis is not conceivable,” a front-page editorial in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung said this week.

So at the same time, Mr. Hollande has sent softer signals, wanting to modify the French-German equation, but not destroy it. His first visit, within hours of taking office, was to Berlin — despite a lightning storm that threatened to stop his flight. He has named German speakers to major posts, including Jean-Marc Ayrault as prime minister, and he has spoken often of the need to work with Berlin. His actual proposals for a “growth pact” to go alongside the German-inspired fiscal treaty are modest, making it easy for Ms. Merkel to accept most of them.

But any moves toward a deeper union within Europe will require constitutional change. Because Mr. Hollande does not have the necessary three-fifths majority in Parliament, he would face an almost irresistible demand for a public referendum. “That’s the one scenario where the French president loses his power to French politics and the voters,” said Mr. Klau of the European Council on Foreign Relations. The Gaullist center-right would attack him, and a referendum would reopen the political arena to more extreme anti-European voices on the far right and far left.

The issue of sovereignty is real for France, in part because it is so much weaker economically than Germany, which has emerged bigger and stronger than ever, having overcome many of its problems from creating a united Germany after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

**France has always wanted what Charles de Gaulle called “L’Europe des patries,” or the Europe of homelands or nations, which keeps important decisions firmly in the hands of national leaders. But “more Europe means more centralized institutions with more power, and that means more Germany,” said a senior diplomat, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the delicacy of the issue. “To agree to a more supranational Europe is also to agree to more German leadership in Europe.”**

Despite all the attention on the growth versus austerity debate, Ms. Merkel has already signaled she will accept the major elements of Mr. Hollande’s modest proposal for a “growth pact” at next week’s European summit meeting.

And it will not cost her much to do so. Total spending in the program is about 120 billion euros, or \$152 billion, but it involves very little new money. The French package redirects 55 billion euros in existing European Union funds, or about \$70 billion, for job creation, calls on the European Investment Bank to make an additional 60 billion euros or \$76 billion in loans to private businesses and creates five billion euros or \$6.3 billion in “project bonds” for infrastructure.

At best, the sum represents less than 1 percent of annual European Union economic activity, too little to make much of an impact.

More important will be proposals pushed by the European Central Bank and the European Commission for European-wide banking regulation and deposit insurance. It is not clear whether Germany will accept either one.

At their first news conference in Berlin, Mr. Hollande and Ms. Merkel said that they would come forward with joint proposals before the summit meeting on June 28 and 29. So far, they have not.

But there is still time. On Monday, the German deputy press secretary, Georg Streiter, said that “she does not associate France with concern, but with hope.” Ever since the end of [World War II](#), Germany has enjoyed “very close, trusting and friendly relations” with France, Mr. Streiter said. “That is not going to change.”

Melissa Eddy and Nicholas Kulish contributed reporting from Berlin, and Palko Karasz from Paris.

## Leaders Vow to Defend Euro, but Hint at Rifts on How

By [ELISABETTA POVOLEDO](#) and [STEVEN ERLANGER](#)

ROME — The leaders of the euro zone's four largest economies vowed Friday to defend the common currency with all means necessary, trying to reassure jittery financial markets before yet another summit meeting of the [European Union](#) next week in Brussels. But clear disagreements remained on what those mechanisms ought to be.

Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#) of Germany gave little indication of heeding calls for pooling the region's debt or using European bailout funds to prop up the government bonds of Spain and Italy, despite increasing pressure from the European leaders and the International Monetary Fund.

She said that she and the leaders of Spain, France and Italy had agreed on a \$160 billion growth plan, but that is a modest effort that largely redirects existing money, adding so-called project bonds through which the euro zone will provide credit to private companies for infrastructure projects and job creation.

“There was an agreement among all of us to use any necessary mechanism to obtain financial stability in the euro zone,” Spain's prime minister, Mariano Rajoy, said at a joint news conference with Ms. Merkel; Mario Monti, his Italian counterpart; and President François Hollande of France.

“The euro is here to stay, and we all mean it,” Mr. Monti broke into English to say. But he added that although much had been done to stem the euro crisis, the measures were still insufficient. Markets are sure to agree.

And so the impasse remains, even after a sharp public rebuke Thursday evening by the monetary fund's managing director, Christine Lagarde, who urged European leaders to get on with fixing the euro zone's economic problems. The Obama administration has likewise made clear its fears that the slow pace of rectifying the crisis is dragging down the global economy and hampering the American recovery, with the fallout including damage to Mr. Obama's re-election campaign.

The next chance for a major change will be the larger meeting in Brussels next Thursday and Friday, with the leaders of all 27 European Union members present and an agenda that is supposed to concentrate on “growth,” as opposed to simply the fiscal discipline Germany insists on.

Also on the Brussels agenda will be measures to support European banks and their supervision, including ideas for a European-wide federal deposit insurance program, to try to eliminate bank runs in troubled countries like Greece and Spain.

Ms. Merkel opposes the idea of using the European Union's bailout funds as a bank, to buy the bonds of strained countries to rein in their soaring borrowing costs. And she has opposed letting the European Central Bank lend directly to the bailout funds or to individual governments. She argues that the rules as written allow neither, and risk making Germany, the union's largest and most creditworthy country, liable for the uncontrollable debts of others.

Mr. Hollande, recently elected, and Mr. Monti have been pressing for a method to collectivize debt and reduce borrowing costs for weakened countries. But Ms. Merkel insists that mutualized debt can work only on the basis of mutualized responsibility, sovereignty and oversight.

On Friday, Mr. Hollande put the emphasis differently, saying that there could be “no transfer of sovereignty without an improvement in solidarity” and that he would continue to push for euro bonds. Ms. Merkel answered that solidarity was possible only with serious controls and collective oversight and that “we have existing treaties and they must be respected.”



The bailout funds are “instruments of solidarity,” but “you cannot have guarantees without control,” Ms. Merkel said tersely. “If I simply gave money to a Spanish bank, or other bank, I can’t say what that bank should change because I’m not responsible. I’m the German chancellor; I can only say that to my banks.”

At a meeting of euro zone finance ministers in Luxembourg on Thursday, Ms. Lagarde of the International Monetary Fund urged the euro area to move swiftly toward a fiscal union that would include the issuance of some form of collective euro zone debt, arguing that the currency’s viability was being put into question. The monetary fund would like bailout money to be lent directly to struggling banks rather than through national governments, to avoid adding to their sovereign debt. That distinction is at issue in the \$126 billion bailout package for Spain: the European lenders are so far insisting that the payback obligation be on Madrid’s books.

Ms. Lagarde also appealed to the European Central Bank to take more aggressive measures to quell volatile financial markets, whether by increasing the money supply or by resuming the purchase of the bonds of troubled countries like Spain and Italy.

“Christine Lagarde is throwing down the gauntlet,” said one euro zone official, requesting anonymity because of the political sensitivities involved.

The markets want reassurance, Mr. Monti said in comments published Friday in a joint interview with five European newspapers. After the Brussels meeting next week, he said, “there may not be — indeed, there will not be — a fully fledged, detailed blueprint, but there will be some strong elements and a short road — I hope short, a few months — to get from there to the overall project” of tighter integration in the euro zone. Mr. Monti has pushed to use the European bailout funds to buy sovereign debt without conditions on the recipients’ budgets or spending. Germany regards that as a blank check, while others think the funds are too small unless they are guaranteed by the European Central Bank itself.

Both leaders are constrained by domestic political considerations. Ms. Merkel faces more dissent in her governing coalition and a softening of the exports that drive Germany’s economy. Mr. Monti, considered a technocrat, was charged last fall with solving the economic problems that worsened under Silvio Berlusconi, his predecessor, but Italian parties have watered down his efforts. The chief measures he has carried out — a significant pension overhaul, increases in property and other taxes, and a crackdown on tax evasion — have been alienating Italians.

In Rome on Friday, there was one other point of agreement: a new tax on financial transactions, which might be used to pay for future bank rescues. Ms. Merkel said she and the other three leaders would pursue it.

Britain has adamantly opposed such a tax, given that London is Europe’s financial center. But London alone cannot block it. Under European Union rules, the tax could be adopted within a subgroup of countries.

On Friday, the German finance minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, said that 10 of the relevant countries were prepared to move forward with the tax.

Elisabetta Povoledo reported from Rome, and Steven Erlanger from Paris. Stephen Castle contributed reporting from London, and James Kanter from Luxembourg.



## Greek-German Tensions Over Finances Spill Into Another Arena

By [NICHOLAS KULISH](#)

GDANSK, Poland — The giant blue-and-white flag blotted out the overcast Baltic sky on Friday as the Greek fans pounded their drums and cheered at the foot of the centuries-old City Hall here. The Germans took up a chant in honor of their chancellor, [Angela Merkel](#).

“Without Angie, you wouldn’t be here,” bellowed the German fans, referring to the multibillion-dollar bailouts [Greece](#) has received from European partners, first and foremost [Germany](#).

“We’ll never pay you back,” countered the Greeks. “We’ll never pay you back.”

The leaders of Germany and Greece may be scrambling to hold Europe together, but on the popular level the strain of a three-year-old financial crisis is beginning to tear it apart. And while the European soccer championships have often served as a safe outlet for channeling nationalist passions into Europe’s favorite pastime, for thousands of Greeks and Germans — brought together by chance in the quarterfinals here — this encounter turned into something more than a game.

“They’ve provoked us with all of this terrible talk about Greece,” said Dimitrios Gorovelis, 33, part of a group from Aachen, in the far west of Germany, that had rented two silver vans and driven overnight to Poland. Some were originally from Greece and others were born in Germany, but they all were there to support the motherland.

For Greeks, Germany now represents austerity and foreign diktats. For Germans, the Greeks represent tax-dodging wastrels looking for handouts. “Goodbye Greeks,” declared the front page of the daily newspaper Bild on Friday; the paper has previously published calls for Greek islands and even the Acropolis to be sold. “Today we can’t rescue you,” the paper said.

“A lot of people, including myself, would have never thought even just a few short years ago that the relationship could deteriorate the way that it has,” said Janis A. Emmanouilidis, a senior analyst at the European Policy Center who is half-Greek and half-German. He cited the ties of migration and tourism and the regard Germany held for Greece as the cradle of democracy and Greece for Germany as a model of efficiency. “You have these reflexes, like defending oneself,” Mr. Emmanouilidis said.

Everyone from soccer experts to political analysts to fans cautioned that, in the end, the only thing on the line was the right to move on to the semifinals against the winner of the game between England and Italy. And for the most part, the mood before the game on Gdansk’s historic Długa Street was peaceful and joyous.

Still, one middle-age Greek implored Germans in their own language, his voice quavering with anger, to stop teasing about pensions and poverty “before things escalate into violence.” A man in a German jersey rushed from the crowd and gave him a hug.

Outside the stadium after the game, which Greece lost handily to heavily favored Germany, a group of Greek men dressed as Olympians of myth clapped and sang, while one danced in the aisle. “We Greeks don’t have money, but we have a big heart,” said Christos Mistridis, 33. The dancer shushed him and said, as if sharing a secret, “Angela Merkel thinks we’re at work.”

The penalty kick that gave Greece its consolation goal near the end of the game was “a little present on top of the money we gave them,” said Hendrik Grote, who wore a German soccer jersey and lederhosen. “That’s enough now though.”

The tournament is held every four years, but this time around has been scrutinized from the very beginning through the kaleidoscope of the Continent's crisis, with Twitter users, headline writers and barroom wits comparing the records of bailout countries to triple-A-rated ones with more than a hint of schadenfreude.

Portugal, which was forced to seek financial assistance, was the first country to qualify for the semifinals. The Netherlands, a soccer powerhouse with a sterling credit rating, lost all of its matches. But nothing quite compared to this match, between the major antagonists of the crisis, who have been trading barbs for more than two years.

Gdansk, with its intertwined Polish-German history and recent Communist past, is a fitting location to realize how far Europe has moved from the old cleavages of the cold war and East-West thinking. The new reality is a paradigm of a hard-money north led by Germany that is starkly at odds with a soft-money south, which would not be such a problem if they did not also share a currency and a central bank.

A mere eight years ago, Germans and Greeks alike celebrated Greece's dark horse run to the title under a German coach, Otto Rehhagel, whom many took to calling "King Otto," a reference to the Bavarian who became king of Greece in the 19th century. Greeks have made clear that they want Ms. Merkel as neither coach nor queen. Every time she appeared on the monitors in the stadium here cheering Germany on, the Greeks booed and whistled with gusto.

In Germany, there is frustration over what is perceived as insults in exchange for assistance. Nazi taunts at protests and in newspapers against the Germans, who invaded Greece during [World War II](#), have not gone unnoticed in Berlin.

As for the game itself, enthusiasm and hope followed Greece's equalizing goal to tie the score at one apiece. But Germany came back with three second-half goals before Greece managed a penalty kick at the end. The final score: 4 to 2.

In Berlin, fans waving the country's flag packed sidewalk cafes and a mile-long outdoor site where the game was broadcast live in the shadow of the Brandenburg Gate.

"The Greeks were hungrier, but it was not enough," said Sebastian Schmidt, who had staked out a table with his friends two hours before the game.

Across Athens, thousands watched the match on television in cafes and on large screens in squares festooned with Greek flags. In the working-class district of Kaisariani, near central Athens, Costas Kourountanos, 52, a car mechanic, was defiant to the end. "They make beer, and we drink it," he said. "That's why they don't like us, because we know how to enjoy ourselves."

But at a cafe in the more expensive Kolonaki district, fans were more resigned to defeat. "We missed a good opportunity to take friendly revenge on Germany," said Yiorgos Fakanas, 50, a musician and composer. "There was a big symbolism in this game: Merkel has been pressing austerity on everyone. But all we could do is defend ourselves and keep our dignity."

The disputes off the field, though, were little in evidence on the pitch.

"If you're thinking about politics on the field," Günter Netzer, a German soccer legend and commentator for German public television, said, "you're in the wrong profession."

Reporting was contributed by Niki Kitsantonis and Liz Alderman in Athens, and Melissa Eddy in Berlin.

## Zone euro : Berlin incrédule face à la stratégie d'Hollande

Figaro Par [Patrick Saint-Paul](#) Mis à jour le 22/06/2012 à 19:50 | publié le 22/06/2012 à 16:15 [Réactions](#) (384)



Wolfgang Schäuble ne décolère pas contre le retour partiel à la retraite à 60 ans mis en place par les socialistes français.  
Crédits photo : GEORGES GOBET/AFP

### Ni la chancelière et son entourage ni la presse outre-Rhin ne parviennent à s'expliquer l'attitude de la France.

Lasse d'incrédulité, l'[Allemagne](#) ne cache plus son irritation à l'égard de [François Hollande](#). La stratégie du président français pour sortir la [zone euro](#) et la [France](#) de la crise dépasse l'entendement pour la classe dirigeante outre-Rhin. Alors qu'elle n'est plus immunisée contre la tempête, l'Allemagne multiplie les appels à la raison. Berlin se désole de ne pouvoir compter sur son partenaire historique dans la construction européenne au moment crucial où la zone euro doit se réorganiser pour affronter l'avenir.

En fustigeant la «médiocrité», qui ne doit pas devenir l'étalon» en [Europe](#), la semaine dernière, [Angela Merkel](#) visait bien la France, qui a délaissé son alliance avec l'Allemagne pour se rapprocher des pays du sud de l'Europe. Comme son ministre des Finances, [Wolfgang Schäuble](#), la chancelière s'agace de voir le président français étaler ses désaccords avec Berlin et insister sur des mécanismes visant à mutualiser la dette aux frais de la première économie européenne. Elle s'inquiète de voir que la France persiste à esquiver les réformes structurelles qu'elle juge indispensables pour restaurer la compétitivité et la confiance des marchés.

Écrasée par le poids de son histoire, l'Allemagne s'est toujours refusée à assumer pleinement sa puissance économique. Sans rechigner, elle a mis son carnet de chèques au service de la construction européenne, laissant à Paris le premier rôle politique. Ces dernières années, alors qu'elle creusait l'écart avec la France, l'Allemagne avait pris soin de conserver un [partenariat équilibré](#) avec son allié historique. «Sarkozy avait su saisir la chance de cette alliance Merkozy», pour arracher des concessions à Merkel, souligne le *Financial Times Deutschland* dans un article intitulé: «Monsieur le président, rompez vos promesses!»

Le retour partiel à [la retraite à 60 ans](#) a provoqué un électrochoc à Berlin. Schäuble ne digère pas ce qu'il considère comme un coup de canif dans le contrat franco-allemand. «Nous avons été abasourdis, confie un haut fonctionnaire allemand. Nous ne comprenons pas l'acharnement avec lequel Hollande cherche à rallier la France au club des PIGS ([Portugal](#), [Italie](#), [Grèce](#), [Espagne](#)). Le contrat était pourtant équitable. La solidarité allemande consistait à payer pour maintenir le navire euro à flot. En échange de quoi, nos partenaires devaient faire les réformes nécessaires».

### Seuls les ex-communistes applaudissent!

Au départ, ce haut responsable allemand croyait à du bluff électoral. Mais l'insistance avec laquelle Hollande s'est accroché aux [eurobonds](#) ne laisse de l'étonner. «Lorsque nous disons que l'Allemagne n'a pas les moyens d'assumer les [dettes](#) de toute l'Europe, Hollande pense-t-il vraiment que l'état des finances de la France le lui

permet?, s'interroge ce ténor de la coalition. Nous ne comprenons pas l'empressement de la France à vouloir payer des taux d'intérêts plus élevés alors qu'elle doit déjà lutter pour réduire ses déficits.»

Dans un article intitulé «François, le cauchemar des entreprises», le quotidien de centre gauche *Süddeutsche Zeitung* s'alarme des projets du président français visant à «étouffer» l'industrie française avec des «[impôts](#) plus élevés», pour tenir les engagements de réduction des déficits. Et la *Süddeutsche* de s'interroger: «Cette redistribution rendra-t-elle les entreprises plus compétitives? La France espère-t-elle ainsi créer des emplois? Il n'y a pas le début d'une réforme structurelle, bien que la croissance et l'emploi soient les priorités du gouvernement.»

Après avoir offert à Hollande un soutien cosmétique, ses alliés sociaux-démocrates allemands se sont empressés de rallier Merkel et son pacte budgétaire, au prix de maigres concessions sur la croissance. Les plus optimistes continuent d'espérer qu'il saura se muer en un social-démocrate à la française... En attendant mieux, les premières mesures d'Hollande ont au moins trouvé grâce aux yeux de Sahra Wagenknecht, l'égérie des ex-communistes de [Die Linke](#), qui loue son parcours «sans faute».

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### Nouveau contretemps pour le pacte budgétaire

L'Allemagne se veut exemplaire dans la mise en place des mécanisme de sauvetage de l'[euro](#). Mais Angela Merkel doit s'accommoder d'un fâcheux contretemps dans la ratification du pacte budgétaire et du MES ([mécanisme européen de stabilité](#)). La Cour constitutionnelle allemande a demandé au président de la République fédérale, [Joachim Gauck](#), de surseoir à sa signature pour pouvoir examiner un éventuel recours contre le texte de la gauche radicale, Die Linke. Gauck a accédé à la demande des sages de Karlsruhe, dont les arrêts [eurosceptiques](#) inquiètent de plus en plus Berlin.

Ce délai empêchera l'entrée en vigueur du MES début juillet, comme prévu. Le vote du Parlement allemand est prévu le 29 juin, après que la chancelière a réussi à rallier l'opposition. Mais, sans la signature du président Gauck, le texte approuvé par les parlementaires n'a aucune portée juridique. La signature ne pourra intervenir que lorsque le recours aura été examiné par la Cour constitutionnelle, ce qui devrait prendre entre deux et trois semaines.

L'entrée en vigueur du MES est d'autant plus importante que ce mécanisme servira à aider le secteur bancaire espagnol dès qu'il sera activé. En attendant, la zone euro aura recours au [FESF](#).

# Immer mehr Akademiker in Deutschland

FAZ 22.06.2012 · Jeder zweite Jugendliche in Deutschland erlangt die Hochschulreife: Das geht aus dem neuen Bildungsbericht 2012 hervor. Die Studie warnt wegen der hohen Kosten eindringlich vor der Einführung des Betreuungsgeldes.

Von [Heike Schmall](#), Berlin



© dpa

### In Deutschland gibt es immer mehr Studenten

In Deutschland gibt es immer mehr Abiturienten und Studenten. Immer häufiger erreichen Schüler den mittleren Bildungsabschluss. Jung-Akademiker haben auf dem Arbeitsmarkt gute Chancen und auch die Lage auf dem Lehrstellenmarkt entspannt sich langsam. Das geht aus dem neuen Bildungsbericht 2012 mit dem Schwerpunkt „Kulturelle/musisch-ästhetische Bildung im Lebenslauf“ hervor, den am Freitag in Berlin die Kultusministerkonferenz, das Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung und das federführende Deutsche Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung (DIPF) vorstellten. Fast alle drei- bis fünfjährigen Kinder besuchen demnach Kindertagesstätten, mehr als ein Viertel der Schüler geht auf Ganztagschulen.

Während fast jeder zweite Jugendliche die Hochschulreife erlangt, haben andererseits von den Zwanzig- bis Dreißigjährigen in Deutschland 1,5 Millionen keinen Schul- oder Berufsabschluss. In der Altersgruppe der Dreißig- bis Fünfunddreißigjährigen ist der Anteil der Ungelernten und Schulabbrecher erheblich größer als in der Altersgruppe der Sechzig- bis Fünfundsechzigjährigen, die jetzt langsam aus dem Arbeitsleben ausscheiden. Der Bildungsstand der Frauen ist stetig gestiegen, der Anteil junger Männer ohne beruflichen Abschluss hat sich hingegen weiter erhöht.

Eindringlich warnt der neue Bildungsbericht vor der Einführung des Betreuungsgeldes. Der Ausbau der Kindertagesstätten, der Rechtsanspruch auf einen Betreuungsplatz für Kinder unter drei Jahren sowie qualitative Verbesserungen in Kinderkrippen und Kindergärten verursachten schon jetzt erhebliche Kosten für Länder und Kommunen. Sollte das Betreuungsgeld eingeführt werden, gehe das möglicherweise zu Lasten der anderen Ziele. Während in Ostdeutschland voraussichtlich kein neuer Platzbedarf für unter Dreijährige besteht, fehlen im Westen noch 174.300 Plätze in Tageseinrichtungen, sowie 87.000 in der Tagespflege, die bis zum Jahr 2013 geschaffen werden müssten. Das sind mehr als in den vergangenen fünf Jahren zusammen ausgebaut wurden. Während im Westen 20 Prozent der unter Dreijährigen Tageseinrichtungen besuchen, sind es im Osten 47 Prozent.

Die Autoren des Bildungsberichts rechnen nicht mehr damit, dass bei den unter Dreijährigen in Tageseinrichtungen der angestrebte Anteil von 25 Prozent im Westen überhaupt erreicht wird. Aktuelle Untersuchungen belegen, dass Kinder, die vor ihrer Einschulung mindestens drei Jahre eine Kita besucht haben, in der vierten Grundschulklasse beim Lesen und beim Textverständnis in der Regel über einen Lernvorsprung von gut einem Schuljahr verfügen. Offenbar kann der mehrjährige Kita-Besuch selbst für zuhause wenig geförderte Kinder aus bildungsfernen oder ausländischen Familien kompensatorisch wirken. Vor allem profitieren allerdings die Kinder aus Familien mit hohem Bildungsstand vom mehrjährigen Kita-Besuch, deren Eltern sich ohnehin um Lesen, Wortspiele und Geschichtenerzählen kümmern, selbst wenn sie beide berufstätig sind.



Kinder ohne solche häusliche Unterstützung und ohne Kita-Besuch seien in ihrer Bildungsentwicklung deshalb doppelt benachteiligt, heißt es in dem Bericht. Wenig förderlich wird sich demnach auswirken, dass Kinder, die zuhause nicht Deutsch sprechen, auch noch Kindertageseinrichtungen besuchen, an denen die Hälfte der Kinder ebenfalls kein Deutsch spricht. Vor allem in solchen Einrichtungen gebe es erheblichen sprachlichen Förderbedarf. Die Betreuerinnen brauchten dafür zusätzliche Kenntnisse, um Deutsch als Zweitsprache zu vermitteln, die sie selten in ihrer Ausbildung erwerben konnten, zumal der Anteil der Jugendlichen aus eingewanderten Familien zunimmt: Unter den 24 Jahre alten Jugendlichen liegt er bei 23 Prozent, bei den unter Einjährigen bei 35 Prozent.

Etwa ein Viertel der Drei- bis Sechsjährigen wird nach dem Bildungsbericht als sprachförderbedürftig eingestuft. Weder die Sprachstandserhebungen noch die Sprachförderung würden in den Ländern auch nur einigermaßen einheitlich gehandhabt. Durch welche Konzepte Kinder beim Zweitspracherwerb am wirkungsvollsten unterstützt werden könnten, „ist eine fachlich nach wie vor ungeklärte Frage, die aufgrund des offensichtlichen Handlungsbedarfs zentral bleiben wird“, stellen die Bildungsforscher fest. In der Schule hat sich die Lesefähigkeit zwar gebessert, dennoch ist der Anteil schwacher Leser weiterhin hoch. Er liegt bei 19 Prozent, Schüler aus bildungsfernen Schichten und ausländischen Familien sind überdurchschnittlich oft vertreten. Der Anteil der funktionalen Analphabeten, die den Textsinn nicht erfassen, liegt noch immer bei 7,5 Millionen.

### **Kinder aus eingewanderten Familien häufiger musikalisch aktiv als einheimische**

Kinder aus eingewanderten Familien sind nach dem Bericht wesentlich häufiger musikalisch aktiv als einheimische Kinder. Vor allem Familien der ersten und zweiten Migrantengeneration scheinen verstärkt innerhalb der Familie zu musizieren, etwa ein Drittel gibt an, regelmäßig Musik zu machen, bei deutschen Familien liegt der Anteil bei 22 Prozent. Zur frühkindlichen Musikerziehung melden ausländische Eltern ihre Kinder dagegen selten an. Nur wenn ein Elternteil in Deutschland geboren ist, nehmen sie kostenpflichtige Musikangebote so häufig wahr wie deutsche Kinder. Während 33 Prozent der Eltern mit hohem Bildungsstand eine musikalische Früherziehung für ihre Kinder in Anspruch nehmen, sind es unter den Eltern mit mittlerem Bildungsstand nur 17 Prozent und nur 9 Prozent der Eltern mit niedrigem Bildungsstand. Vor allem in der frühkindlichen Phase, aber auch bei Kindern bis neun Jahre spielt die Anregung der Eltern eine entscheidende Rolle für alle kulturell-musischen Aktivitäten.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

# Euro-Rettung Ins richtig tiefe Wasser

FAZ 22.06.2012 · Ein Gericht kriegt die Krise: Die Rettungspolitik stößt an die Grenzen des Grundgesetzes.

Von [Berthold Kohler](#)

Die deutsche Opposition hatte sich nicht schlecht in Szene gesetzt als die Macht, von der in Europa alles abhängt. Würden SPD und Grüne dem Fiskalpakt und dem Rettungsfonds ESM noch vor der Sommerpause zustimmen? Was würden sie der Kanzlerin abringen können als Gegenleistung für die Unterstützung, ohne die Frau Merkel ihre Rettungspolitik im eigenen Land nicht durchbringen würde? Doch noch während sich die Oppositionsparteien darüber freuten, dass ihnen die Kanzlerin die Finanztransaktionssteuer geschenkt hatte, verhagelte ein Unwetter aus Karlsruhe die Berliner Freilichtaufführung - zum Unmut und zur Überraschung der Regisseure, die das Bundesverfassungsgericht nicht auf ihrer Rechnung hatten, obwohl es zuletzt gerade in Sachen Rettung Europas oft und laut seine Stimme erhoben hatte.

Karlsruhe ließ die große Rettungscoalition und sicherheitshalber auch gleich noch die Öffentlichkeit wissen, dass es sich weder an Berliner noch an Brüsseler Terminpläne gebunden fühle. Und dass es auch vom Bundespräsidenten erwarte, dass dieser sich nicht in einer Weise vereinnahmen lasse, die die Prüfungsmöglichkeiten des Bundesverfassungsgerichts aushebele.

Das Spektakuläre an diesem Vorgang ist nicht, dass der Bundespräsident Gesetze nicht sofort unterschreibt, die ihm vorgelegt werden - insbesondere dann nicht, wenn schon Klagen gegen diese Gesetze und Anträge auf einstweiligen Rechtsschutz beim Verfassungsgericht vorliegen oder angekündigt sind. Es ist Staatspraxis, dass der Bundespräsident in solchen Fällen die vorläufige Entscheidung in Karlsruhe abwartet. Kein Bundespräsident will das Risiko eingehen, ein Gesetz zu unterzeichnen, das vom Bundesverfassungsgericht später für verfassungswidrig erklärt wird.

In diesem Fall aber soll Karlsruhe den Bundespräsidenten ausdrücklich aufgefordert haben, von einer sofortigen Ausfertigung abzusehen, nachdem es von einer solchen Absicht erfahren habe. Es drohe gar eine „Verfassungskrise“, wenn weitreichende Gesetze mit Bindungswirkung nach außen verabschiedet würden, ohne dass die vorliegenden Eilanträge und Klagen dazu geprüft werden könnten. Das ist schon sehr hoch gehängt. Von einer Verfassungskrise sollte man nur sprechen, wenn es eine solche auch gibt.

Die begriffliche Eskalation kann man aber als Zeichen dafür nehmen, dass, umgangssprachlich gesprochen, zumindest das Bundesverfassungsgericht inzwischen die Krise kriegt. Es hadert schon lange mit der Kompetenzverschiebung auf dem Feld der Europapolitik zugunsten der Regierungen. Vergangene Woche hat es nicht zum ersten Mal die Mitwirkungsrechte des Parlaments hervorgehoben und gestärkt. Doch laufen seine Ermahnungen ins Leere, wenn die Parlamentarier sich nicht selbst als die zentrale politische Entscheidungs- und Kontrollinstitution verstehen wollen. Die bereits ergriffenen Maßnahmen und erst recht die im Raum stehenden Vorschläge zur Bewältigung der Schuldenkrise greifen zu weit in den Kernbereich nationaler Souveränität und in die Königsrechte der nationalen Parlamente ein, als dass ein Abgeordneter die Entscheidung, wie er abstimmen solle, seinem Fraktionsgeschäftsführer, seinem Parteivorsitzenden oder der Bundeskanzlerin überlassen könnte.

Auch die Dissonanzen zwischen Karlsruhe und Berlin belegen, dass die Staatsschuldenkrise den Europäern nicht nur materiell das Äußerste abverlangt. Mit dem Fiskalpakt haben nun auch Nationen strikte Haushaltsdisziplin zu üben, denen das bislang politisch fremd war. Für den ESM musste eine spezielle Vertragskonstruktion geschaffen werden, weil er anders nicht realisiert werden konnte. Grundregeln der europäischen Einigung werden ignoriert, gebeugt und gebrochen, um eine Rückabwicklung des Erreichten zu verhindern.

## Im Grenzbereich des Grundgesetzes

Geblichen aber ist die Überzeugung, dass die Krise dauerhaft nur mit einem Sprung nach vorne, ins richtig tiefe Wasser überwunden werden könne. Die Konzepte dafür verlangen jedoch eine Bereitschaft zu finanzieller Solidarität und zu einem Souveränitätsverzicht, die nur die Völker selbst und direkt erklären können. Bis dahin



gelten die nationalen Verfassungen mit ihren Regeln und Beschränkungen, an die sich Regierungen und Parlamente zu halten haben. In Deutschland wacht darüber das Bundesverfassungsgericht, das zu Recht darauf hinweist, dass der schleichende Prozess der Souveränitätsabtretung langsam aber sicher an die dafür vom Grundgesetz gezogenen Grenzen stößt.

Fiskalpakt und ESM befinden sich, auch was die (Nicht-)Beschäftigung des Bundestages und des Bundesrates mit dieser komplexen, von kaum zu überblickenden Verpflichtungen durchwirkten Materie angeht, im Grenzbereich. Da ist es beruhigend, dass wenigstens das Bundesverfassungsgericht sich die Zeit dazu nimmt, den nächsten unumkehrbaren Schritt hin zu einer immer engeren Schicksalsgemeinschaft auf seine Vereinbarkeit mit dem Grundgesetz zu prüfen. Die Aufgaben der Legislative aber kann das Bundesverfassungsgericht nicht übernehmen, selbst wenn mancher überstimmter (oder auch nur überforderter) Abgeordneter dankbar wäre, so es sich dieser Versuchung ergäbe.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

# IWF fordert „kreative Geldpolitik“ der EZB

22.06.2012 · IWF-Chefin Christine Lagarde hat die Europäische Zentralbank zu einem stärkeren Eingreifen in die Schuldenkrise aufgefordert. Eine „kreative, innovative Geldpolitik“ sei nötig.

[Artikel Bilder \(1\)](#) [Lesermeinungen \(14\)](#)



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IWF-Chefin Christine Lagarde mit dem Eurogruppen-Chef Jean-Claude Juncker

Der Internationale Währungsfonds hat die Europäische Zentralbank zu einem aktiveren Eingreifen in die Euro-Schuldenkrise aufgefordert. Kurzfristig sei eine „kreative, innovative Geldpolitik“ notwendig, erklärte IWF-Chefin Christine Lagarde am Donnerstag nach Beratungen mit den Euro-Finanzministern in Luxemburg.

Dazu gehöre nicht nur eine Zinssenkung, sondern auch der erneute Einsatz unkonventioneller Instrumente. Die Zentralbank könne ihr Anleihekaufprogramm wieder auflegen, den Banken erneut massive Liquiditätsspritzen geben oder andere Formen einer quantitativen Lockerung einführen.

In seinem neuesten Bericht zur Lage in der Euro-Zone stellte der IWF einen langen Katalog an Empfehlungen auf. Auf kurze Sicht könne die Krise am besten bekämpft werden, wenn sich die Mitgliedstaaten bei der Haushaltskonsolidierung Ziele für die konjunkturbereinigten Defizite setzten statt für das Gesamtdefizit. Lagarde drängte außerdem die Euro-Länder dazu, den Euro-Rettungsfonds den Banken direkt unter die Arme greifen zu lassen, statt die Hilfen wie jetzt bei Spanien über den Staat zu lenken. Sonst könne die fatale Verbindung zwischen strauchelnden Banken und verschuldeten Staaten nicht durchbrochen werden.

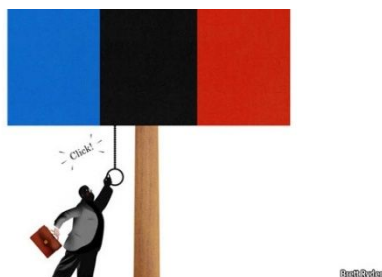
Eurogruppen-Chef Jean-Claude Juncker erklärte, er sei mit den Ratschlägen des IWF weitgehend einverstanden. Die Forderungen dürften aber auf Widerspruch der deutschen Bundesregierung stoßen. Finanzminister Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) wollte sich am Freitag noch nicht ausführlich dazu äußern. Diplomatisch sagte er: „Das ist ein wichtiger Beitrag, so wie der IWF immer sehr hilfreiche Beiträge leistet.“ Wie die Euro-Zone durch institutionelle Reformen mittelfristig gestärkt werden müsse, sei Thema des EU-Gipfels in einer Woche, sagte er.

Zu Wochenbeginn hatte schon Italiens Regierungschef [Mario Monti die Idee eines durch den Rettungsfonds ESM abgesicherten Anleiheaufkaufprogramms](#) durch die Europäischen Zentralbank eingebracht. Bundesfinanzminister Wolfgang Schäuble hatte das am Donnerstag aber [abgelehnt](#).

Quelle: Reuters/AP

# France's new Socialist government is embarking on a series of risky experiments in business

The Economist Jun 23rd 2012 | from the print edition



AFTER the French Socialists last came to power in 1981, under François Mitterrand, the new government went on a spree of nationalisations, taking over 36 banks and several industrial groups, before quietly abandoning the policy and even reprivatiseing a few firms. Small wonder that French bosses greeted François Hollande's election as president with more than a *frisson* of foreboding. What would the Socialists do this time?

The answer is that Mr Hollande seems to want to put a break on the Schumpeterian forces of creative destruction in order to conserve the country's business landscape in aspic. Even before the parliamentary elections on June 17th, at which the Socialists won a majority of seats, rhetoric against factory closures had been mounting. Arnaud Montebourg, a left-wing politician who is now minister for "productive recovery", fought hard against closures during the campaign. When Lejaby, a lingerie brand, made plans to shut its last French plant and move production to Tunisia, he came out in support of the *brassière tricolore* (in the end LVMH, a luxury-goods group, rescued the bra factory). He even wants to keep companies from moving within France. He protested loudly when Kawan Villages, a struggling camping operator, recently tried to shift its tents from Burgundy down to the south-west, taking all its workers with it.

Now the new government is going beyond rhetoric. Michel Sapin, the labour minister, has promised to make it so expensive for companies to lay off workers that it will no longer be worth their while. Firms that fire people while still paying dividends may be penalised. Another planned ruse is to force companies to sell factories, presumably along with the brands manufactured there, to competitors rather than close them down.

But the government will struggle to contain market forces. Many companies put off restructuring plans during the election campaign, so as to avoid controversy. Now an avalanche of lay-offs is in prospect. The Confédération Générale du Travail, a powerful union, has given warning that as many as 45,000 jobs are under threat as firms such as PSA Peugeot-Citroën, a car manufacturer with falling sales, and Carrefour, a struggling retailer, prepare to retrench. In some cases, firms could founder if they are not allowed to cut costs.

The Socialists are unlikely to be terribly successful at preventing the destruction of jobs, but they may be all too effective, however unintentionally, at stifling job creation. Among the party's most popular campaign promises was to tax incomes of more than €1m at a marginal rate of 75%. The likely consequences will be much less admired. Some big companies will leave France or move management abroad in order to shield their executives from the tax. That will lead them to invest and hire more overseas rather than at home. Already, top foreign executives no longer want to join French firms. A new extra tax on dividends has further angered the business world.

## Don't forget to turn out the lights

Paris is full of rumours of hasty departures. PPR, a luxury-goods group which owns Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent, is reported to have plans to move its entire executive committee to offices in London as soon as this

summer. Technip, a global oil-services firm, is rumoured to be about to move its official headquarters across the Channel. (PPR declined to comment, and Technip said it has no plans to move for now.) To the fury of a French member of parliament, David Cameron, Britain's prime minister, this week promised to "roll out the red carpet" for French companies on the run from the new tax.

But the most important consequence of stratospheric taxes will be less visible, at least at first. Marc Simoncini is one of France's best-known entrepreneurs—and one of the few business leaders to denounce the new measures publicly. Why, he recently asked, would anyone want to start a business, invest and succeed in the most taxed country in the world?

Tax is not the only threat to executive pay. Last week Pierre Moscovici, the finance minister, announced that pay for bosses of companies in which the French state holds the majority of shares will be capped at a flat rate of €450,000, or roughly 20 times the wage of the lowest-paid worker. The French experiment will no doubt be watched with interest around the rich world. In some cases it will lead to a 70% pay cut. Over time, the quality of management at these state firms, which had become more professional over the past decade, will surely suffer. Executives such as Guillaume Pepy, the boss of SNCF, the national railways, for instance, could secure a top position anywhere in his industry. Measures to limit pay at fully private firms are expected before long.

Most French business leaders don't think that the government is deliberately targeting them. They reckon that its motives are purely political—and that the Socialists are simply not aware of the damage their plans will do (most ministers have hardly any experience of business). Besides, the 75% tax rate might never be implemented: France's highest court may rule it unconstitutional later this year.

Yet French bosses have partly themselves to blame for the way they are being treated. Almost all have benefited from the tight bond that exists between the top ranks of France's civil service and the country's senior executives. Many are alumni of the same *grandes écoles*, such as the Ecole Nationale d'Administration. Government aides are regularly parachuted into jobs, even at firms not controlled by the government. And some bosses later become ministers. If both groups were not part of the same elite, and if French companies were more independent from the state, they would be much less vulnerable to its whims.

[Economist.com/blogs/schumpeter](http://Economist.com/blogs/schumpeter)

# Powerful as well as dangerous

## Investors beware: François Hollande is set to take France in the wrong direction even faster than you feared

The Economist Leader Jun 23rd 2012 | from the print edition

THE French president has more power than any other European leader. And, after the second round of the parliamentary elections on June 17th, François Hollande has, on paper, more power than any other president in the Fifth Republic's history. His Socialist Party now controls both houses of the legislature, all but one French region and most of the country's departments, big towns and communes. The question is: what will this studiously modest man do with such dominance?

Mr Hollande has spent a year campaigning, first for his party nomination, then for the presidency and lastly for the legislative elections. Only now can he turn to governing (see [article](#)). He has had a warm reception around the European Union. His fans say he is more moderate and pro-European than most of his party. They point to his commitment to cut France's budget deficit below 3% of GDP in 2013. They talk up his links with German and Scandinavian Social Democrats. They note the broad welcome for his plan to add pro-growth measures to the euro zone's fiscal austerity. His €120 billion (\$152 billion) "European growth pact", consisting of project bonds, more capital for the European Investment Bank and reallocated EU money, is backed by Italy and Spain.

Yet those who hoped that the French president would swiftly dump his more outrageous campaign promises are in for a disappointment. Mr Hollande may be moderate by the standards of the French Socialist Party, but that is mainly because his party is unreconstructed. In Germany and Scandinavia the centre-left parties share a desire for equality and generous welfare states. But they also embrace the benefits of competition and liberal economic policies: policies that the French president and his supporters strenuously oppose.

This is why Mr Hollande will start by cutting the retirement age for some workers to 60, putting the top marginal income-tax rate up to 75%, raising taxes on wealth, inheritance and dividends, increasing the minimum wage and making it much harder for employers to fire workers. Far from curbing the size of the public sector, at 56% of GDP the biggest in the euro zone, he seems likely to expand it. With these policies he is acting against the grain of change in the rest of the EU. This will do nothing to improve France's competitiveness which, as its gaping trade deficit shows, has declined fast. Nor will it make the business climate any friendlier (see [Schumpeter](#)).

### François v reality in 2012, as in 1981

France is a rich country. But it is more vulnerable now than in 1981, when Mr Hollande's Socialist predecessor, François Mitterrand, tried and failed to implement a form of socialism in just one country. French public debt is almost 90% of GDP, compared with just over 20% back then. It has already been downgraded by one ratings agency. Nervous markets see France as more like Spain or Greece than Germany or Austria. That view is only reinforced when Mr Hollande joins the leaders of Spain and Italy in pressing Germany to be unconditionally generous with its credit, a tactic that seems sure to mar his relations with Germany's Angela Merkel.

In the end Mr Hollande will meet reality, just as Mitterrand did. A weakened France has no alternative but to embrace structural reforms and liberalise its economy. And it will surely take less than the two years Mitterrand had before changing course. In the meantime a powerful President Hollande could wreak much damage on his country.

# L'euro et les "méchants Anglo-Saxons"

LE MONDE | 21.06.2012 à 14h19 • Mis à jour le 21.06.2012 à 14h19

Par Alain Frachon

Comme dans les bonnes histoires, le héros finira par s'en [sortir](#). L'euro survivra, sans doute, n'en déplaise à la presse anglo-saxonne qui depuis plus de deux ans annonce la mort de la monnaie unique. De *Newsweek* à *The Economist*, du *Wall Street Journal* au *Financial Times*, pas un mois sans un [titre](#) sur les derniers jours de l'euro ; pas une semaine sans la promesse de l'avis de décès imminent. C'est "Apocalypse euro" à toutes les pages économiques.

Moral chaque jour un peu plus vacillant, le piéton de la zone euro se presse au kiosque pour connaître la date de l'enterrement - ou le nombre d'heures qu'il lui reste avant d'[aller vider](#) son compte bancaire des dernières espèces encore libellées dans la monnaie maudite.

Ce n'est pas sans importance. Cette presse en anglais, *Global Media*, qui comprend aussi nombre de chaînes de télévision, est la seule vraiment universelle. C'est elle qui donne le ton à la [City de Londres](#), mais aussi sur toutes les autres grandes places financières, de Hongkong à [New York](#). Les banques sont plus pessimistes encore que les éditoriaux du *Financial Times*. Marchés et commentateurs se nourrissent aux mêmes sources. Et s'auto-intoxiquent ?

Jusqu'à présent, ils se sont trompés sur l'euro. Il y a de bonnes chances qu'ils se trompent à nouveau. Les Européens, et plus particulièrement les dix-sept membres de l'union monétaire, trouveront un nouveau compromis pour [passer](#) les six prochains mois. On va [assouplir](#) un peu les conditions d'emprunt faites à la [Grèce](#). Au sommet européen des 28 et 29 juin, on devrait s'[entendre](#) sur une feuille de route vers une plus grande intégration entre les Dix-Sept : l'esquisse d'une union bancaire, doublée d'un début de trésor commun. Pour quelque temps au moins, l'[Espagne](#) et l'[Italie](#) devraient [financer](#) leur dette à meilleur prix.

La monnaie unique devrait [survivre](#) - en principe. L'[Union européenne](#) (UE) progresse à coups de psychodrames. Ce qui est vrai pour les vingt-sept membres de l'UE l'est plus encore pour son noyau le plus intégré, la zone euro.

Pour autant, il y a quelque chose de vrai dans la sinistrose véhiculée par une partie des [médias](#). L'incapacité des Européens à [venir](#) à bout de la [crise de l'euro](#), en gros l'absence de mécanismes de solidarité entre eux, serait le reflet d'un malaise plus large - celui qui, depuis quelques années, mine le projet européen.

La crise financière est venue de [Wall Street](#) en 2008, merci l'Amérique ! Mais les [Etats-Unis](#) et l'Asie ont mieux résisté que l'[Europe](#), où le mal est venu se [greffer](#) sur une tumeur préexistante, l'endettement, et a tout spécialement déstabilisé la zone euro.

Elle a d'autant moins résisté qu'elle cumule les inconvénients : elle réunit des économies asymétriques sans le moindre mécanisme institutionnel pour les [forcer](#) à l'harmonisation. Les économistes américains, qui ne croyaient pas à l'euro, avaient vu juste : la monnaie unique a bien des avantages, mais elle a vacillé au premier choc extérieur.

"La première conséquence de la crise de l'eurozone est la dégradation de l'image de l'[Europe](#) dans le monde ", écrit le chercheur [Michael Emerson](#), du Center for [European Policy](#) Studies (*Financial Times* du 19 juin).

Au sommet du G20 réuni cette semaine au [Mexique](#), les tableaux de bord de l'Europe clignotaient d'une lumière crépusculaire : des perspectives de croissance nulle pour les années à [venir](#) ; l'Etat-providence, fierté du "modèle" européen, qui n'est plus financé que par un endettement devenu paralysant ; une démographie vieillissante ; des budgets recherche-développement à la baisse ; des budgets militaires neutralistes ; des indices boursiers en chute libre. Bref, autant d'indices que les historiens scrutent habituellement quand ils s'interrogent sur la santé d'un empire. Et qui pourraient bien [laisser entendre](#) que l'Europe est sur la pente déclinante.

Pour [paraphraser](#) un tout jeune député, Henri Guaino, on dira que l'homme européen a bien du mal à [entrer](#) dans le XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Il faut [regarder](#) les chiffres en face, avertit l'ancien premier ministre Gordon Brown. Sauf sursaut, la part de l'Europe dans la production mondiale devrait dans les dix ans qui viennent [passer](#) de 20 % à 11 %, cependant que celle des Etats-Unis restera proche de 20 %...

Si l'on ne se paye pas de mots, le début de gouvernement économique qui devrait s'[esquisser](#) les 28 et 29 juin à Bruxelles a une signification très précise. Il s'agit de [remettre](#) l'euro sur une trajectoire gagnante.

Cela implique une supervision communautaire dans des domaines sensibles, jusque-là du seul ressort des Etats membres : marché du travail, âge de la retraite, financement de la santé, fiscalité des [entreprises](#), par exemple. La gouvernance de l'euro requiert d'être moins intergouvernementale et plus fédérale.

Mais, comme ne manque pas de le [rappeler](#) Hubert Védrine - dans un excellent dossier de l'hebdomadaire *Marianne* cette semaine -, les Européens sont opposés à tout sursaut fédéral. Publiée fin mai, la dernière [enquête](#) de l'institut Pew auprès des opinions européennes est sans appel : la majorité des sondés dans huit des principaux pays de l'UE ne veut pas d'une telle évolution. Pas question de [confier](#) le moindre [pouvoir](#) supplémentaire à Bruxelles.

Telles qu'elles existent, les institutions communautaires ont une légitimité des plus faiblardes - Paris y est pour quelque chose, où, depuis les années 1990, l'on n'a cessé de les diaboliser et d'en [confier](#) la responsabilité à des personnalités qui n'étaient pas de premier plan. Mais, les précédents étant ce qu'ils sont, personne n'a envie de [rouvrir](#) le débat institutionnel en Europe.

**Casse-tête [politique](#) : les Européens souhaitent [garder](#) l'euro et refusent les conditions nécessaires à son épanouissement. Ils veulent la monnaie unique, pas les institutions qu'elle réclame. Dans *Libération* (19 juin), l'économiste [Daniel Cohen](#) a une jolie formule : "L'économie tire dans un sens, la politique dans l'autre." Où est le point de compromis ? Question difficile, encore sans réponse. L'europessimisme de la "méchante presse anglo-saxonne" n'est pas sans fondement.**

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Alain Frachon



# Why Germany Cannot Save the Euro

EconoMonitor Author: [Edward Harrison](#) · June 21st, 2012 · [Comments \(0\)](#) Share This Print 57 13

*As Charles Wyplosz has recently written, the euro zone's rescue strategy adopted in May 2010 has failed. Like his column, this column argues that it was folly for the euro zone to believe the bailout approach would succeed because the problems in the euro zone run much deeper than just Greece. Further, this column argues that if this approach continues for any longer, the entire euro zone will break apart.*

Yesterday, we re-published [an excellent piece by Charles Wyplosz](#) that originally appeared at VoxEU. After we published it, I also tweeted an excerpt which I felt representative of the tone of the piece:

[“Chancellor Angela Merkel has sent word that Germany cannot save the euro. She is right.” bit.ly/Mzew7v](#)“.

I got some pushback, however, from a journalist I respect. She pinged me, writing that she enjoyed my tweets but that the quote of Wyplosz's piece was misrepresentative of what he was saying.

This article is an extended response as to why I think the Merkel quote is important.

## The problem in Euroland

The main reason the IMF is involved in Europe aside from the desire to get more firepower than Europe alone can muster is that Europe's crisis is a balance of payments crisis. [The euro zone is one giant vendor financing scheme](#). The persistent current account imbalances are a dangerous form of vendor financing, whereby surplus nations finance the purchases of deficit nations. And yes, vendor financing can work successfully – but only so long as the lender makes sure the customer can pay back the loans. And clearly, they cannot at this point. Now the question is what to do about it.

When the crisis first hit, I thought the Germans would realise – at least because of the vociferously anti-bailout stance in the German public – that Germany cannot save the euro, that violating the EU's anti-bailout clause would be a mistake. I even wrote a piece in March 2010 saying that they wouldn't do so, laughably entitled [“The Germans will not bail out Greece”](#). I like to remind myself of this miscue not only because it is Merkel's choosing the bailout approach which is why we are in a policy cul-de-sac now, but also because the reasoning in the post still holds. Let me repeat some of that article here with some follow on commentary:

Now, it has to be remembered that the Euro was adopted in Germany without any democratic vote by the German electorate. It was imposed by fiat from the Federal Government unlike in Denmark where the Euro was put to vote before the electorate and rejected. In fact, there was a lot of concern in Germany at the time that the Germans would have rejected the Euro had it been voted upon – and this is the very reason a vote was not held.

Many ordinary Germans feel their good money is now being trashed. They already had a currency union between Ostmark and Deutsche Mark, with Western Germans submitting to a “solidarity tax” in order to finance the upgrading of Eastern Germany's infrastructure. So, to this day, many German look at larger Euro notes to determine if they were printed by the Germans, Italians, or Greeks – sometimes rejecting notes printed in countries viewed with suspicion like Italy (see the [Telegraph's 2008 story on this here](#)).

With this as background, you should see the 2009 election of the CDU/CSU/FDP coalition as a signal that the German government is unlikely to submit to a bailout. With the FDP replacing the SPD in government, the likelihood of a Greek bailout decreases. The FDP is the libertarian junior partner in this new coalition (the same coalition which produced the SGP, by the way) and they are under enormous pressure from their constituents not to permit any bailouts. If Germany allows German tax dollars to go to the EU in order to bail out the perceived profligacy of Italy or Greece, there would be riots. Spain is another story – but Greece is known as fiscally profligate in Germany – so bailing them out is unacceptable politically. Let's not forget that Germany has its own problems in banking as well.

Here's the problem. Yes, it was electoral suicide for the German coalition to do as they did. But Merkel did it anyway. The CDU and the FDP have repeatedly been destroyed in every single regional election since the fateful bailout decision. The FDP probably won't make the 5% hurdle in next year's elections to even be represented in next Bundestag. And this is exactly why Angela Merkel has been forced to bargain with the SPD and the Greens over the fiscal pact she has championed. In order to get the sign off in the Bundesrat, she needs a two-thirds majority and that means she needs to get the SPD and Greens on side as their regional electoral strength gets represented in the Bundesrat. Of course, she also wants to make nice just in case she has to enter a Grand Coalition when her FDP partners fail to make it in 2013.

Moreover, when I wrote, "Let's not forget that Germany has its own problems in banking as well," that was an error. Actually, it is exactly because Germany had its own banking problems that the bailouts have happened. As Wyplosz puts it:

As we know, poor bank supervision is what drove Ireland and Spain into the camp of guilty countries. Here again, the story is not over and several countries may soon be found guilty of forbearance.

- Top of the list are [France](#) and Germany.
- Had Greece not been rescued then some large French and German banks, already fragilised by the subprime crisis, could well have been ripe for costly bailouts.

### **The lack of democracy is troubling**

So, to sum up here: German elites entered a monetary union in what many Germans perceive as a very undemocratic way, hiding behind their representative democracy to allow German politicians to railroad Germany into the euro despite fierce domestic opposition to this move. German banks then went on a speculative binge in Euroland, in effect giving the eurozone periphery vendor financing to fund Germany's [export](#) boom which replaced Germany's anaemic domestic demand. You see, [Germany was in a soft depression](#) after re-unification, demographic challenges, and the low wage growth that resulted from structural reforms killed domestic consumer demand growth.

Then, suddenly the whole euro experiment ran into trouble. And so, even after the German government increased its debt to GDP to well above 80% in violation of the Maastricht Treaty to bail out its reckless banks which binged on American subprime debt, a sceptical German public was told more bailouts were coming with Greece, Portugal, Ireland and now Spain. Ostensibly this was because of the desire to maintain "European solidarity". But everyone knows its to protect the undercapitalised German banks again. Meanwhile 59% of [Germans polled say they are struggling or suffering](#).

The German government is [attempting to use 'the representative democracy' excuse with the ESM](#), the new European bailout fund, and with the new fiscal compact to make "more Europe, not less". They have received a free pass on the ESM but the second one is running into problems in the Bundesrat.

I hope you sense the indignation in this summary because, if you are a German voter, this is the problem with Euroland.

I'll repeat my tweet here: "Chancellor Angela Merkel has sent word that Germany cannot save the euro. She is right."

Let's hope she acts on this information.

### **What should Europe do then?**

Charles Wyplosz does a good job of outlining a reasonable approach to the euro zone crisis. There are a number of ways to achieve the desired outcome but what should be clear here is that Germany's hot-cold on-off approach to Europe is very passive aggressive in both tone and implementation. It sews the seeds of a resurgent [economic nationalism](#). The German government has maintained the no-bailout mentality which is behind the euro zone's strictures. Yet, out of fear of having to recapitalise its banks and to contend with economic

depression, the German government has been forced to violate the no-bailout clause repeatedly. And so, you get this strange mix of aid packages to peripheral governments as the crisis flares again and again combined with austerity to show adherence to the no-bailout mentality that German voters demand. It won't work.

Germany cannot save the euro. It does not have the financial resources to do so, even with the ESM and IMF in tow. Many of us have been warning for some time that [the strategic approach of bailouts and austerity is all wrong](#). If German politicians want the euro to survive, they must recognise that defaults, credit writedowns and bank recapitalisations will be inevitable. The sooner this occurs, the better. But, if Europe is to survive, we will also need to change the European institutional architecture to integrate Europe [in a way that smoothes business cycles with supranational automatic stabilizers instead of exacerbating them with procyclical austerity](#). The ECB will be a big part of the transition to this approach. And so the ECB will be the subject of the second part of my weekly column.

*This post originally appeared at [Credit Writedowns](#) and is posted with permission.*

## Germany, Greece and the Marshall Plan, a riposte

The Economist Blogs Jun 21st 2012, 11:19 by Hans-Werner Sinn | Ifo Institute



*In the [New York Times](#), Hans-Werner Sinn of Germany's Ifo Institute for Economic Research argued that Greece has already received far more help than Germany received under the post-war Marshall Plan. In a [guest post](#) on *Free Exchange*, Albrecht Ritschl of the London School of Economics argued that it had not. In this guest post, Mr Sinn responds to Mr Ritschl's response.*

I HAVE read with great interest Mr Ritschl's criticism of my article in the *New York Times*, in which I argued that Marshall aid to West Germany was low compared to the outside world's recent assistance to Greece. I pointed out that aid from the European Recovery Program (ERP), commonly known as the Marshall Plan, amounted to 2% of German GDP over four years. Mr Ritschl asserts that my figure does not include the debt relief programme.

I will certainly not contradict the fact that Germany's debts amassed during the second world war as well as those existing before the conflict were forgiven. But usually historians attribute this to the London Debt Agreement of 1953 rather than to the Marshall Plan, although the Plan might have implicitly included such debt relief, as Mr Ritschl points out. I'm inclined to doubt that those who allude to the Marshall Plan have in mind war debt forgiveness instead of the post-war aid given to the European countries, including defeated Germany.

I kept to what is customary amongst historians and quoted the figures as historians usually list them. As an example of more recent research on the issue I would like to refer Mr Ritschl to his own work:

A. Ritschl und H. Berger, "Die Rekonstruktion der Arbeitsteilung in Europa. Eine neue Sicht des Marshall-Plans in Deutschland 1947 – 1951", Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte 43, 1995, p. 473 – 519, Table p. 479.

The table on page 479 shows in the ERP row exactly the figures on which I based my assertion. There is no footnote or any other explanatory text in Mr Ritschl's paper saying that the ERP also included forgiveness of war debts or of other, earlier debts. Mr Ritschl appears to have now changed his mind somewhat. I beg to be excused for my not being able to follow forthwith every new twist in his opinion on the matter.

The same seems to be occurring among his historian colleagues. I would like to call Mr Ritschl's attention to an article by historian Jan-Otmar Hesse of the University of Bielefeld ("[Es gibt keine ökonomische Wunderheilung](#)", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of 12 March 2012, p. 12). He mentions the same figures as those shown in Ritschl and Berger. According to those figures, the Marshall Plan represented 0.5% of Germany's GDP for four years, a total of 2%. Mr Hesse shows that, applied to the Greek case, that would amount to €4 billion today. That is the figure I also used in my article with the NYT. In the meantime I have reviewed a number of works by other historians who also share this view and have not adopted Mr Ritschl's wider definition of the Marshall Plan. He is surely familiar with them.

When it comes to Greece I resort to my own figures. The help for Greece can be broken down into the following components (see chart):

## International financial help for Greece

Source	Aid	€bn
ECB	Total	148
	<i>of which: purchases of government bonds</i>	45*
	<i>Target liabilities</i>	103
Euro-area members	Greece 1st rescue package; disbursed	53
	Greece 2nd rescue package (with rest of 1st package)	145
IMF	Greece 1st rescue package	30
	Greece 2nd rescue package	18
Banks and others <sup>†</sup>	Haircut	66*
<b>Total</b>		<b>460</b>

Source: Hans-Werner Sinn, Ifo Institute

\* Estimate <sup>†</sup>Excluding participation of Greek banks and insurance companies

The total of €460 billion amounts to 214% of Greek GDP for 2011. Dividing €460 billion euros by the Ritschl-Berger-Hesse figure of €4 billion, we have 115 Marshall Plans for Greece.

Mr Ritschl writes that Germany's foreign debt before the war amounted to 300% of GDP. This I find surprising as during the London Debt Agreement of 1953 the negotiations referred to 30 billion deutschmarks, or 22% of the German GDP of that year (Ch. Buchheim, "Das Londoner Schuldenabkommen", L. Herbst, Ed., Westdeutschland 1945-1955.

Unterwerfung, Kontrolle, Integration, Munich 1986, p. 219-229). This figure includes the pre-war debts, the clearing debts and the post-war debts. If one adds the 4% from the Marshall help to this 22%, you would get 26% at most. Even using this expanded definition of help from the Marshall Plan one comes to barely one-eighth of the relative assistance being provided today to Greece.

## Germany, Greece and the Marshall Plan

The Economist Jun 15th 2012, 13:48 by Albrecht Ritschl | London School of Economics



*Albrecht Ritschl is professor of economic history at the London School of Economics and a member of the advisory board to the German ministry of economics.*

OLD myths die hard, and the Marshall Plan is one of them. In the *New York Times* of June 12th German economist Hans-Werner Sinn [invokes comparisons](#) with the Marshall Plan to defend Germany's position against Eurobonds, the pooling of sovereign debt within the euro zone. His worries are understandable, but the historical analogy is mistaken, and the numbers mean little. All this unnecessarily weakens his case.

Mr Sinn argues against Germany's detractors that Marshall Aid to postwar West Germany was low compared to Germany's recent assistance, debt guarantees etc. to Greece. While Marshall Aid cumulatively amounted to 4% of West German GDP around 1950 (his figure of 2% is too low but that doesn't matter), recent German aid has exceeded 60% of Greece's GDP, and total European assistance to Greece is now above 200% of Greek GDP. That makes the Marshall Plan look like a pittance. And it strips all the calls for German gratitude in memory of the Marshall Plan off their legitimacy. Or does it?

What Mr Sinn is invoking is just the outer shell of the Marshall Plan, the sweetener that was added to make a large political package containing bitter pills more palatable to the public in Paris and London. The financial core of the Marshall Plan was something much, bigger, an enormous sovereign debt relief programme. Its main beneficiary was a state that did not even exist when the Marshall Plan was started, and that was itself a creation of that plan: West Germany.

At the end of World War II, Germany nominally owed almost 40% of its 1938 GDP in short-term clearing debt to Europe. Not entirely unlike the ECB's Target-2 clearing mechanism, this system had been set up at Germany's central bank, the Reichsbank, as a mere clearing device. But during World War II, almost all of Germany's trade deficits with Europe were financed through this system, just as most of Southern Europe's payments deficits towards Germany since 2008 have been financed through Target-2. Incidentally, the amount now is the same, fast approaching 40% of German GDP. Just the signs are reversed. Bad karma, that, isn't it.

Germany's deficits during World War II were mostly robbery at gunpoint, usually at heavily distorted exchange rates. German internal wartime statistics suggest that when calculated at more realistic rates, transfers from Europe on clearing account were actually closer to 90% of Germany's 1938 GDP. To this adds Germany's official public debt, which internal wartime statistics put at some 300% of German 1938 GDP.

What happened to this debt after World War II? Here is where the Marshall Plan comes in. Recipients of Marshall Aid were (politely) asked to sign a waiver that made U.S. Marshall Aid a first charge on Germany. No claims against Germany could be brought unless the Germans had fully repaid Marshall Aid. This meant that by 1947, all foreign claims on Germany were blocked, including the 90% of 1938 GDP in wartime clearing debt.



Currency reform in 1948—the U.S. Army put an occupation currency into circulation, and gave it the neutral name of Deutsche Mark, as no emitting authority existed yet—wiped out domestic public debt, the largest part of the 300% of 1938 GDP mentioned above.

But given that Germany's debt was blocked, the countries of Europe would not trade with post-war Germany except on a barter basis. Also to mitigate this, Europe was temporarily taken out of the Bretton Woods currency system and put together in a multilateral trade and clearing agreement dubbed the European Payments Union. Trade credit within this clearing system was underwritten by, again, the Marshall Plan.

In 1953, the London Agreement on German Debt perpetuated these arrangements, and thus waterproofed them for the days when Marshall Aid would be repaid and the European Payments Union would be dissolved. German pre-1933 debt was to be repaid at much reduced interest rates, while settlement of post-1933 debts was postponed to a reparations conference to be held after a future German unification. No such conference has been held after the reunification of 1990. The German position is that these debts have ceased to exist.

Let's recap. The Marshall Plan had an outer shell, the European Recovery Programme, and an inner core, the economic reconstruction of Europe on the basis of debt forgiveness to and trade integration with Germany. The effects of its implementation were huge. While Western Europe in the 1950s struggled with debt/GDP ratios close to 200%, the new West German state enjoyed debt/GDP ratios of less than 20%. This and its forced re-entry into Europe's markets was Germany's true benefit from the Marshall Plan, not just the 2-4% pump priming effect of Marshall Aid. As a long term effect, Germany effortlessly embarked on a policy of macroeconomic orthodoxy that it has seen no reason to deviate from ever since.

But why did the Americans do all this, and why did anyone in Europe consent to it? America's trauma was German reparations after World War I and the financial mess they created, with the U.S. picking up the bill. Under the Dawes Plan of 1924, Germany's currency had been put back on gold but Germany went on a borrowing binge. In a nutshell, Germany was like Greece on steroids. To stop this, the Young Plan of 1929 made it riskier to lend to Germany, but the ensuing deflation and recession soon became self-defeating, ending in political chaos and German debt default. A repetition of this the Marshall Planners were determined to avoid. And the U.S. led reconstructions of Germany and Japan have become the classical showcases of successful liberal intervention.

So does Greece, does Southern Europe need a Marshall Plan? Is Sinn right to say that Greece has already received one—or a 115-fold one, as he argues? The answer to first question may be yes, in the limited sense that a sweeping debt relief programme is needed. The answer to the second question is a resounding no. Greece has clearly not received a Marshall Plan, and certainly not 115 of them. Nor has anyone else. As far as historical analogies go, what Southern Europe received when included in the euro zone was closer to a Dawes Plan. And just like in Germany in the 1920s, the Southern Europeans responded with a borrowing spree. In 2010 we didn't serve them a Marshall Plan either, but a deflationary Young Plan instead.

This latter-day Young Plan is not even fully implemented yet. But we see the same debilitating consequences its precursor had around 1930: technocratic governments, loss of democratic legitimacy, the rise of political fringe parties, and no end in sight to the financial and economic crisis engulfing these states, no matter how many additional aid packages are negotiated. Woe if those historical analogies bear out.

Europe should learn from history. But it needs to learn fast. There might be no recovery unless debts are reduced to manageable proportions. That is what ended the Great Depression in Europe in the 1930s, and that is what in all likelihood is needed again. Professor Sinn is right to resolutely ask for action on this, even if his take on the Marshall Plan is wrong.

**Deutsche Bank: Jain und Fitschen raten von Eurobonds ab**



FAZ 21.06.2012 · In ihrem ersten gemeinsamen Interview plädieren die neuen Vorstandsvorsitzenden der Deutschen Bank gegen gemeinsame Anleihen aller Euroländer. Eurobonds würden nicht helfen, die Probleme Europas kurzfristig zu lösen, sagten Anshu Jain und Jürgen Fitschen der F.A.Z. Sie wollen ihre Bank wieder zum voll akzeptierten Partner der Realwirtschaft machen.

Von [Gerald Braunberger](#), [Carsten Knop](#), [Holger Steltzner](#)



© Lüdecke, Matthias Anshu Jain und Jürgen Fitschen im Gespräch

Eurobonds, also gemeinsame Anleihen aller Euroländer, und eine Bankenunion, die große europäische Banken unter eine gemeinsame Aufsicht stellen würde, sind zur kurzfristigen Lösung der Probleme innerhalb der Währungsunion ungeeignet. Dieser Überzeugung sind Anshu Jain und Jürgen Fitschen, die neuen Vorstandsvorsitzenden der Deutschen Bank. „Sie helfen nicht bei der Lösung der Probleme, die Europa derzeit in den Augen internationaler Investoren so schwach aussehen lassen und kurzfristig gelöst werden müssen“, sagten Jain und Fitschen in ihrem ersten gemeinsamen Interview.

Sie warnen davor, Dinge, die Europa kurzfristig anpacken müsse, mit Entscheidungen zu vermischen, die man erst in einer „wirklich politisch und wirtschaftlich integrierten“ Europäischen Union treffen könne. Kurzfristig gelte es allein, Vertrauen zurückzugewinnen. Das könne gelingen, wenn die stark verschuldeten Länder jeweils zu einer soliden Finanzpolitik zurückkehrten und tiefgreifende Reformen ihrer Arbeitsmärkte auf den Weg brächten. „Die Sozialisierung der Verantwortlichkeiten ist keine kurzfristige Lösung, gerade auch aus deutscher Sicht. Das wäre erst dann denkbar, wenn wir wirklich eine Politische Union hätten. Aber das ist noch nicht der Fall“, betonten beide im Gespräch mit dieser Zeitung.

## Deutsche Bank will unter die fünf führenden Universalbanken

Unter ihrer neuen Führung strebt die Deutsche Bank an, in den kommenden fünf bis zehn Jahren zu den fünf führenden Universalbanken zu zählen. Anshu Jain und Jürgen Fitschen wollen die Bank zudem zu einem wieder voll akzeptierten Partner der Realwirtschaft machen. „Die künstliche Trennung zwischen Bank und Realwirtschaft in der öffentlichen Diskussion muss wieder verschwinden“, sagten Jain und Fitschen. Die Kapitalausstattung ihrer Bank halten sie für gut, den Aktienkurs für unterbewertet. „Wir sind sehr zuversichtlich, dass wir die Kapitalanforderungen, also vor allem Basel III, aus eigener Kraft erfüllen werden – und das nicht erst im Jahr 2018“, sagten sie.



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„Wir haben von den Mitarbeitern das klare Signal bekommen, nicht auf der Basis von Quoten, sondern weiterhin auf der Basis von Leistung zu entscheiden“, sagt Jürgen Fitschen.

Zugleich spiegele sich im Aktienkurs der Deutschen Bank ein großes generelles Misstrauen gegenüber den Banken des Euroraums wider. „Wir werden mit einem Abschlag auf unseren Buchwert gehandelt, den es aufzuholen gilt.“ Sie seien vom Aufsichtsrat berufen worden, um langfristig den Wert der Bank zu steigern, betonten beide: „Wir werden das nicht auf eine Kennzahl reduzieren. Aber wir werden im Herbst klare Ansagen machen, wie wir die Leistungsfähigkeit und damit die Bewertung der Bank verbessern wollen.“

## Jain und Fitschen wollen weiterhin Geschäfts- und Investmentbank verbinden

Dabei setzen Jain und Fitschen weiterhin auf das Modell einer Universalbank, also die Verbindung von Geschäfts- und Investmentbank. „Die Universalbank ist aus der Perspektive des Kunden ein sehr effektives Geschäftsmodell.“

Das Investmentbanking sei ein Herzstück der Deutschen Bank, aber es stehe außer Frage, dass dieser Bereich einige herausfordernde Jahre vor sich habe. „Als Stichwort nenne ich nur die Kapitalvorschriften rund um Basel III, mit denen das Kapital, mit dem bestimmte Investmentbanking-Aktivitäten zu unterlegen sind, möglicherweise verdoppelt oder gar verdreifacht werden muss“, sagte Jain. Mit der Postbank wiederum, werde man andere Kunden ansprechen als mit der Deutschen Bank, und man werde die Marken weiterhin klar trennen.

## Jain weist die Unterstellung zurück, Londons Investmentbanker übernähmen die Deutsche Bank

Jain wies die Unterstellung zurück, die Bank werde nun von den in London beheimateten Investmentbankern übernommen, also von „[Anshus Army](#)“. Es gebe nicht eine Entscheidung, über die zuvor nicht gemeinsam lange diskutiert worden sei und über die Fitschen und er zuvor nicht vollständiges Einvernehmen erzielt hätten. „Diejenigen, die letztlich in oberste Führungspositionen berufen worden sind, arbeiten im Durchschnitt seit 15 Jahren für die Deutsche Bank.“



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„Diejenigen, die letztlich in oberste Führungspositionen berufen worden sind, arbeiten im Durchschnitt seit 15 Jahren für die Deutsche Bank“, sagt Anshu Jain.

Bewusst wurden keine Externen in die neue Führung aufgenommen, um langjährige Loyalität gegenüber der Deutschen Bank zu honorieren. Weit oben auf der Tagesordnung stehe aber, die Zahl der Frauen in diesen Gremien zu steigern. Dies solle aber nicht durch eine Quote geschehen. „Wir haben von den Mitarbeitern das klare Signal bekommen, nicht auf der Basis von Quoten, sondern weiterhin auf der Basis von Leistung zu entscheiden“, sagte Fitschen.

## Fitschen und Jain setzen sich selbstkritisch mit dem Geschäftsgebaren der Bankenwelt auseinander

Die rechtlichen Auseinandersetzungen, in die die Bank verwickelt ist, hätten die beiden lieber schon gestern mit Vergleichen beendet, doch müssten zuweilen viele Interessen berücksichtigt werden. Sehr selbstkritisch setzten sich Fitschen und Jain auch mit dem Geschäftsgebaren der Bankenwelt in den vergangenen Jahren auseinander: „Dass der Abstand zwischen dem, was wir tun, und dem, was in der sogenannten Realwirtschaft geschieht, in den Augen vieler Menschen zu groß geworden ist, sehen wir natürlich.“ Die Antwort müsse sein, die Bankgeschäfte nachhaltig zu machen, und zwar nicht nur im ökologischen Sinne. „Uns muss es auch um die sozialen und finanziellen Aspekte der Nachhaltigkeit gehen.“ Immerhin hätten viele Menschen inzwischen schon bemerkt, dass die Gehälter in der Industrie durchaus noch sehr viel höher sein können als in der Finanzwirtschaft.

Mit Blick auf Griechenland erkennen Jain und Fitschen an, dass es „viele gute Gründe“ gebe könne, dass Griechenland den Euro verlassen solle. „Aber wenn wir Griechenland im Euro halten könnten, wäre das ein gutes Zeichen.“ Wie groß die Ansteckungsgefahr für Italien und Spanien sei, hänge von der Entwicklung in Griechenland ab. „Ich glaube, das Programm des IWF ist sehr gut. Es wird in diesem Zusammenhang auch viel zu negativ über die erforderlichen Sparmaßnahmen gesprochen. Dieses Sparen ist ein Muss. Welche Wahl hat Europa denn?“ Sparen müsse natürlich mit Wachstumsimpulsen Hand in Hand gehen. „Wenn der Arbeitsmarkt reformiert wird, wirkt sich das positiv auf die Wirtschaft aus.“

Weitere Artikel

- [Die Liste der Euro-Krisenländer wird länger](#)
- [Deutsche Bank: Eine schwierige Mission](#)
- [Ackermanns Abschied: Eine deutsche Bank](#)
- [Anshu Jains Berlin-Premiere](#)
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Zugleich müssten unbedingt Maßnahmen ergriffen werden, die es möglich machten, Staatsanleihen sehr bald wieder als attraktiv einzustufen, auch unter Risikoaspekten. „Ein Modell, wie Banken ohne ein solches Szenario bestehen können, kann ich mir nur schwer vorstellen“, sagte Jain. Das würde ja bedeuten, dass man sich nur noch auf amerikanische, britische oder deutsche Staatsanleihen stützen könne – das wäre aber keine nachhaltig tragfähige Lösung.

Ihrem [Vorgänger Josef Ackermann](#) weinen die beiden keine Träne nach: „Er wird uns als jemand in Erinnerung bleiben, der die Bank erfolgreich durch schwierige Zeiten geführt hat. Jetzt schlagen wir ein neues Kapitel auf.“ Das wollen beide in großem Einvernehmen tun: „Wir hören einander zu und entscheiden dann, wenn der eine den anderen überzeugt hat, gemeinsam. Am Ende sprechen wir mit einer Stimme – in der Bank und außerhalb der Bank.“

*Das komplette Interview mit Anshu Jain und Jürgen Fitschen lesen Sie am Freitag in der F.A.Z.*

Quelle: F.A.Z.

## **Anatomie einer Hintergehung**

FAZ 21.06.2012 · Das jüngste Karlsruher Urteil ist eine präzise und dichte Beschreibung des Regierungsstils von Angela Merkel in Zeiten der europäischen Staatsschuldenkrise. Wir lesen eine Warnung vor drohender Entdemokratisierung.

Von [Christian Geyer](#)



© argus Die Richter nahmen sich die Zeit, um die Hektik der Regierung ganz genau zu beschreiben

Wir sehen vor uns eine Unbelehrbare, der man ständig auf die Finger schauen muss, damit sie uns nicht unter der Hand ein X für ein U vormacht. Die Kanzlerin erscheint im jüngsten, vorgestern verkündeten Urteil des Bundesverfassungsgerichts als eine Art Schorschel Schachermann, jener Makler bei Donald Duck, der, seine Rechtstreue preisend, wacker dem Gesetz zuwiderhandelt. Systematisch habe die Bundesregierung unter Führung Angela Merkels die Rechte des Deutschen Bundestages verletzt, indem sie es unterlassen habe, das Parlament „umfassend und zum frühestmöglichen Zeitpunkt“ über bestimmte wichtige Angelegenheiten der Europäischen Union zu unterrichten, wie es Artikel 23 des Grundgesetzes vorsieht. Der Bundestag sei daher, was die EU-Politik Merkels zur Lösung der Schuldenkrise angeht, immer wieder um seine Mitwirkungsrechte gebracht und vor vollendete Tatsachen gestellt worden.

Tatsächlich liest sich der Karlsruher Schriftsatz in weiten Strecken wie ein Observationsbericht. Akribisch wird für die erste Jahreshälfte 2011 unter Zitation von regierungsamtlichem E-Mail-Verkehr, Tischvorlagen, Pressekonferenzen, Auftritten der Kanzlerin vor Parlamentsausschüssen dargelegt, dass der Bundestag weder umfassend noch zum frühestmöglichen Zeitpunkt über die EU-Aktivitäten der Regierung unterrichtet wurde. Die Richter stellen im einzelnen Merkels Sprachregelungen zur Verschleierung ihrer Berichtspflicht bloß, dekonstruieren ihre Rede vom „Gesamtpaket“, über das erst informiert werden könne, wenn es schon geschnürt sei (und nicht etwa „kleckerweise“, wie ein Beamter des Finanzministeriums hilfsweise erläutert); geschildert wird ihr forciert evolutionäres Verständnis von Ergebnissen als „Ergebnisoptionen“; und beinahe verspottet wird ihr Wort von der „endlichen Halbwertzeit“ von Informationen, die sich zu schnell verflüchtigten, um noch kommunizierbar zu sein. Das alles liest sich wie eine politische Genealogie der Desinformation, seitenweise ausgebreitet und zunächst kommentarlos protokolliert, als setze man erst einmal auf die Evidenz des Dokumentarischen.

### **Quasseln statt handeln**

So heißt es über den Auftritt der Kanzlerin vor dem Ausschuss für die Angelegenheiten der Europäischen Union am 10. März 2011: „Auf die Rüge eines Abgeordneten, das Parlament habe auf der Grundlage der Unterrichtspraxis der Bundesregierung keine ausreichende Möglichkeit, die Entscheidungen zum Themenkreis der Eurostabilisierung nachzuvollziehen, erklärte die Bundeskanzlerin, die gegenwärtige Situation sei aufgrund täglicher Änderungen der Umstände und Tatsachen einzigartig, so dass die Bundesregierung dem Parlament nur Informationen mit einer ‚endlichen Halbwertzeit‘ geben und für den Europäischen Rat am 24./25. März 2011 lediglich Ergebnisoptionen benennen könne.“ Die dann freilich - da ja immer nur Optionen statt Ergebnisse - gar nicht erst mitgeteilt wurden.

Wo nur Latenzen und keine Fakten walten, gibt es faktisch auch nichts zu berichten. Mit anderen Worten: Im reißenden Strom der europäischen Integration gibt es kein parlamentarisches Halten mehr. Weltfremd, wer die Einzigartigkeit der Situation nicht bemerkt, den rasanten Wandel der Umstände, die stündliche Verflüssigung der Tatsachen - und immer noch quasseln statt handeln will.

## Aus einem Lehrbuch der Betriebskommunikation

Dieses Narrativ des Kanzleramts greifen die Richter auf, um es im Detail der Grundgesetzwidrigkeit zu überführen. Und entwerfen eine verfassungskonforme Theorie der politischen Kommunikation derart minutiös, dass man den Eindruck bekommt, jedes denkbare Schlupfloch solle der Kanzlerin verstopft werden. Denn was heißt schon „endliche Halbwertzeit“ eines an „Dichte“ mangelnden Informationsstroms? Für ein dynamisches Politikverständnis kommt es einer Trivialität gleich, dass die Pflicht zur umfassenden Unterrichtung des Parlaments nicht statisch, sondern dynamisch zu verstehen sei, also die Ansprüche an die Kommunikation steigen statt absinken. Die Richter spielen auch mit Merkels physikalischem Dichte-Begriff, um ihn dann gezielt der Regierungschefin zu entwenden und gegen ihre opake Informationstheorie zu richten: „Wissensstand und Haltung der Bundesregierung im Hinblick auf einen Vorgang bleiben im Regelfall nicht gleich, sondern sind im Laufe der Zeit Veränderung unterworfen“, heißt es nicht ohne Anflug von Ironie.

Und weiter, beinahe wie aus einem Lehrbuch der Betriebskommunikation der Kanzlerin auf die europapolitische Agenda gesetzt: „Mit zunehmender Konkretisierung eines Vorhabens ist jedoch typischerweise auch eine Zunahme der Informationsdichte auf Seiten der Bundesregierung verbunden. Dabei entsteht mit jedem Erkenntnisgewinn der Regierung zunächst eine Informationsasymmetrie im Verhältnis zum Bundestag, die - soll die verfassungsrechtliche Vorgabe einer umfassenden Unterrichtung nicht wirkungslos bleiben - grundsätzlich ausgeglichen werden muss.“ Langsam und zum Mitschreiben für politische Physikerinnen kommt die Karlsruher Dichtebestimmung an ihr Ziel: „Diese Pflicht zum Ausgleich von Informationsungleichgewichten zwischen Bundesregierung und Bundestag verdichtet sich mit zunehmender Komplexität und Bedeutung eines Vorgangs sowie mit der zeitlichen Nähe zu einer förmlichen Beschlussfassung oder zum Abschluss einer Vereinbarung.“

## Aus informellen Quellen

Nichts soll, wenn es um die Stärkung des Bundestags in Europa-Fragen geht, künftig dem Zufall überlassen bleiben. So sei denn auch im Grundsatz eine schriftliche, keine mündliche Unterrichtung durch die Bundesregierung gefordert. Zwar sei die Schriftform im entsprechenden Artikel des Grundgesetzes nicht unbedingt vorgesehen. „Angesichts der Anforderungen an Klarheit, Verstetigung und Reproduzierbarkeit, die an eine förmliche Unterrichtung des Parlaments zu stellen sind, erscheint die Schriftform gegenüber der mündlichen Unterrichtung als das vorrangige Medium zur effektiven Information des Bundestags. Der mündlichen Unterrichtung des Plenums, des Ausschusses für die Angelegenheiten der Europäischen Union wie auch der Fachausschüsse kommt vor diesem Hintergrund nur eine ergänzende und erläuternde Funktion zu.“ Ein weiterer schwerer Schlag für die Merkelsche Ad-hoc-Politik in letzter Sekunde.

Und so geht es Schlag auf Schlag, der analysierende, die Rechtslage klärende Teil wechselt mit dokumentarischen Passagen, detektivisch hergeleitet, im Ton einer Anklageschrift. Der Kanzlerin wird keine Textarchäologie geschenkt: „Einen auf den 6. April 2011 datierenden Entwurf des Vertrags über den Europäischen Stabilitätsmechanismus hat der Deutsche Bundestag lediglich aus informellen Quellen erhalten, obwohl dieser oder jedenfalls eine frühere Textstufe des Vertragsentwurfs der Bundesregierung zu diesem Zeitpunkt vorlag. Dies ergibt sich aus dem Inhalt mündlicher Ausschussunterrichtungen vom selben Tag.“

## Eine inhaltliche Einflussnahme abschneiden

In immer neuen Wendungen stellen die Richter die temporale Dimension der Berichtspflicht klar: Die Bundesregierung ist verpflichtet, dem Parlament „nicht nur einen abschließend beratenen oder sogar bereits beschlossenen Vertragstext“ zuzuleiten. Sie muss ihm zum frühestmöglichen Zeitpunkt ihr vorliegende Zwischenergebnisse und Textstufen übermitteln. Dass sich Entwürfe ändern und daher Aktualisierungen erforderlich werden, solche Informationen mithin eine „kurze Halbwertzeit“ aufweisen können, rechtfertigt es



nicht, die schriftliche Unterrichtung auf einen Zeitpunkt zu verschieben, zu dem die Ergebnisse bereits feststehen. Denn damit wird der Bundestag gerade in jene für völkerrechtliche Verträge charakteristische Ratifikationslage gebracht, die ihm eine inhaltliche Einflussnahme abschneidet.

Das aber ist ein Unding: „Wie sich bereits aus dem kumulativen Erfordernis frühzeitiger und umfassender Information ergibt, kann bei prozesshaften Vorgängen der vorliegenden Art die Unterrichtungspflicht nicht in einem Gesamtpaket erledigt werden.“ Karlsruhe macht sich das evolutionäre Politikverständnis der Kanzlerin zu eigen, zieht aber, was die Mitwirkungsrechte des Bundestags betrifft, nicht erst seit dem Lissabon-Urteil entgegengesetzte Schlüsse. Auch eine Geheimhaltungspflicht ändert daran nichts: „Sollten Gründe für eine Geheimhaltungsbedürftigkeit gegenüber der Öffentlichkeit im Hinblick auf einzelne Informationen oder Dokumente ausnahmsweise anzuerkennen sein, wäre die Bundesregierung verpflichtet, die Unterlagen dem Deutschen Bundestag unter Hinweis auf das Erfordernis einer vertraulichen Behandlung zuzuleiten.“ Die Voraussetzungen hierfür habe das Parlament mit dem Erlass seiner Geheimschutzordnung geschaffen.

Politischer Zeitdruck ist auch in Zeiten der europäischen Staatsschuldenkrise kein Argument, die Demokratie auszuhebeln. Das ist der Leitsatz über dem Urteil, das sich - zugespitzt - auch als Phänomenologie des Merkelschen Regierungsstils lesen lässt. Wie ein vorgezogener Kommentar dazu aus dem Off des Bundesverfassungsgerichts liest sich ein Interview, das dessen Präsident Andreas Voßkuhle unlängst der „Zeit“ gab. Eigentlich, so sinniert Voßkuhle, brauchte die Politik mehr Momente der Entschleunigung, Reflexionsschleifen, um über grundlegende Entscheidungen nachzudenken, aber auch, um bereits getroffene Entscheidungen zu bewerten. Da es in der Politik dafür notorisch zu spät sei, so versteht man Voßkuhle, muss Karlsruhe einspringen, um von der Demokratie zu retten, was zu retten ist: „Das Bundesverfassungsgericht ist tatsächlich einer der ganz wenigen Orte, an denen man abgeschirmt von äußeren Einflüssen Entscheidungen so intensiv durchdenken kann, wie man es für erforderlich hält. Es hat mitunter fast etwas Klösterliches. Das heißt nicht, dass wir uns nicht beeilen, wir nehmen uns aber gerade in den großen Verfahren die Zeit, die wir brauchen.“

Dem Vorwurf, das Bundesverfassungsgericht gelte als Bremsklotz der europäischen Integration, wenn es die Kanzlerin zur demokratischen Langsamkeit zwingt, begegnet Voßkuhle gelassen: „Gerade unsere Entscheidungen, die darauf abzielen, die demokratischen Strukturen zu stärken, haben breite Akzeptanz gefunden. Wir dringen darauf, dass die Regeln, die wir uns im Grundgesetz für die Entscheidung wichtiger politischer Fragen gegeben haben, eingehalten werden, auch in der Krise. Das heißt vor allem: das Parlament muss informiert, es muss beteiligt werden. Das ist der rote Faden, der alle unsere Entscheidungen durchzieht.“ Von diesem Faden sieht sich die Kanzlerin zunehmend eingewickelt.

# La Cour de Karlsruhe lie les mains d'Angela Merkel

Par [Patrick Saint-Paul](#) Publié le 19/06/2012 à 19:02 [Réagir](#)



Tandis qu'Angela Merkel plaide pour une intégration plus poussée, avec la création d'une union politique et des transferts de souveraineté vers Bruxelles, la décision de la Cour constitutionnelle allemande sonne comme une mise en garde. Crédits photo : Mario Vedder/AP

## La Cour constitutionnelle allemande impose à la chancelière de consulter le Parlement avant toute avancée européenne.

Les juges de Karlsruhe s'invitent dans le débat au moment où l'[Europe](#) entre dans une phase cruciale. Les sages de la Cour constitutionnelle allemande ont critiqué, mardi, la gestion de la crise de la [zone euro](#) par [Angela Merkel](#). Ils ont jugé que la chancelière n'avait pas suffisamment consulté le Parlement sur la configuration du [Mécanisme européen de stabilité financière \(MES\)](#) et du traité budgétaire européen. À l'avenir, le gouvernement fédéral devra consulter le [Bundestag](#) en amont de ses prises de décision, notamment pour tout futur pas en avant dans l'intégration européenne.

Le jugement ne devrait donc avoir aucun impact sur les votes prévus le 29 juin. Députés du Bundestag, la Chambre basse du Parlement, et représentants du [Bundesrat](#), la Chambre haute, doivent se prononcer sur le mécanisme de secours permanent dont va se doter la zone euro, le MES, et sur le [pacte budgétaire](#) européen. Sa ratification est une étape indispensable à la mise en place du MES le 1er juillet.

Les sociaux-démocrates ([SPD](#)), principal parti d'opposition, ont déclaré qu'il s'agissait d'un «bon jour pour la démocratie parlementaire. Le mécanisme européen de sauvetage doit être plus transparent et plus responsable devant le peuple», selon le chef du parti, Thomas Oppermann. Mais les experts estiment que cette décision devrait avoir peu d'impact sur les actions du gouvernement allemand face à la crise de la dette dans la zone euro, contrairement à la décision l'année dernière sur l'actuel mécanisme du Fonds européen de stabilité financière ([FESF](#)), qui avait limité la capacité de l'Allemagne à réagir.

### Mauvais point pour Hollande

Cependant, alors que la chancelière plaide pour une intégration plus poussée, avec la création d'une union politique et des transferts de souveraineté vers Bruxelles, la décision de la Cour constitutionnelle allemande sonne comme une mise en garde. «Davantage d'Europe», comme le réclame Merkel avec insistance, ne pourra se faire qu'avec la participation en amont des députés, pas seulement avec leur feu vert.

Le verdict est surtout une mauvaise nouvelle pour [François Hollande](#). Les juges viennent de porter un coup d'arrêt à toute forme de mutualisation de la dette, ainsi qu'à la possibilité de voir le MES refinancer directement les banques, comme le réclame le président français, sans transferts de souveraineté décidés par le Bundestag. Dans l'esprit de la Cour de Karlsruhe, cela ne peut se faire qu'en coiffant l'édifice européen d'une structure fédérale et en renforçant la représentativité de la [Commission européenne](#) et du [Parlement européen](#). En effet, selon la loi fondamentale, le citoyen allemand doit garder un droit de regard et de contrôle sur l'utilisation des deniers publics.



Pour le quotidien de centre gauche *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, les juges de Karlsruhe ont «libéré le Parlement du rôle de mendiant» réduit à «ramasser les miettes qui tombent de la table du Conseil» européen. «La Cour constitutionnelle explique à Merkel que la démocratie représentative ne consiste pas à ce qu'elle en soit la seule représentante», se réjouit le journal... La mise au point vaut aussi pour Hollande.

## **Time to Pay Up and End This Crisis**

EconoMonitor Author: [Charles Wyplosz](#) · June 20th, 2012 · [Comments \(3\)](#) Share This Print 201 12

*The EZ rescue strategy adopted in May 2010 failed to restore debt sustainability, avoid contagion, or reduce moral hazard. This column argues that a volte face is needed. The debt of Greece, Portugal and Italy – and perhaps Ireland, Spain and France as well – must be restructured to restore growth and end the crisis. All EZ nations should pay since their leaders' decision to violate the Maastricht Treaty's no-bail out clause is what brought us here.*

Chancellor Angela Merkel has sent word that Germany cannot save the euro. She is right.

From the very start of the Eurozone crisis, it was clear that a domino game was under way and that a highly indebted German government should not be seen as the residual saviour. But keeping the euro will be costly and Germany will have to share the burden.

The solution will have to combine debt structuring and ECB lending in last resort to banks and governments. Angela Merkel needs now to lift the German veto.

All Eurozone leaders, including Mrs Merkel, are to blame for today's predicament.

- The politically expedient decision of May 2010 – to bailout Greece but promise that it would be “unique and exceptional” – was officially sold as necessary to avoid contagion.
- Two years later, it is obvious that this has been a historical but predictable policy mistake (Wyplosz 2010).

The crisis has engulfed three small countries – Greece, Ireland and Portugal – and is now on its way towards Spain and Italy. France might well be next. These six countries' public debts amount to 200% of German GDP. With its own debt of 80% of GDP, Germany cannot indeed stop the rot.

### **Moralistic rather than economic reasoning**

The public debate in Germany and elsewhere is often moralistic, matching the economists' concern with moral hazard.

- Countries that have long considered the government budget as a purely theoretical constraint cannot now simply ask for help.
- The same applies to countries that have allowed their banks to fuel a housing price bubble and now socialize the resulting private losses.

There is no case against the view that bad policies must have consequences. In this the moralisers are right.

But the issue is more complicated than meets the eye. We must ask:

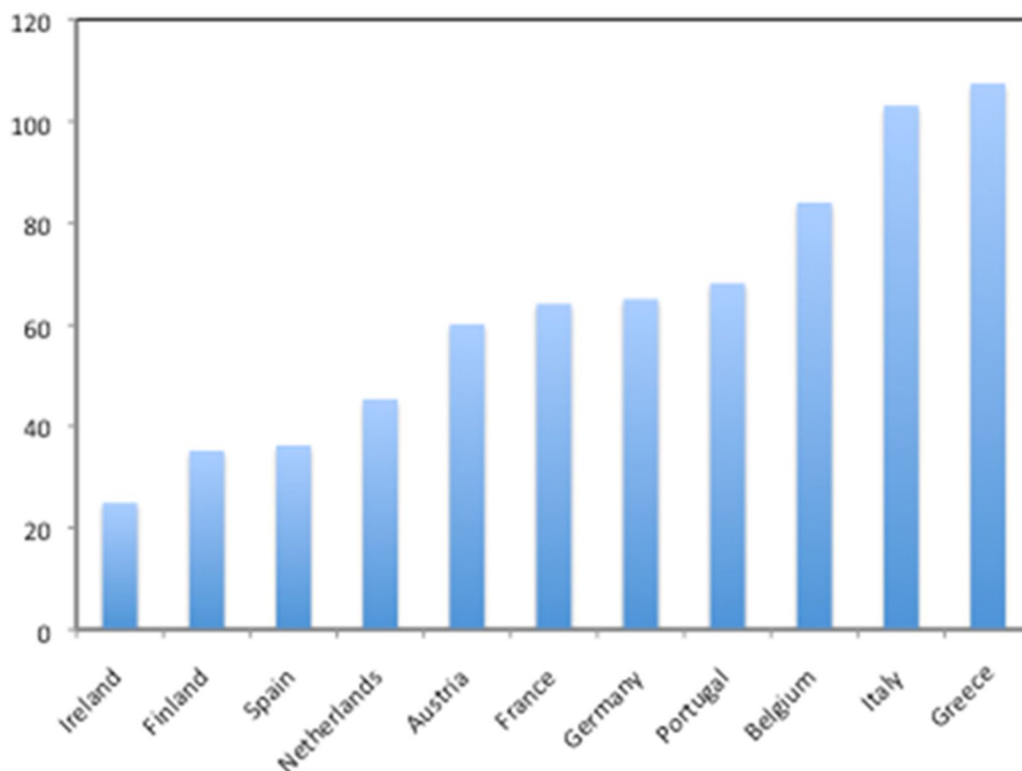
- Which countries trampled the Eurozone's fiscal discipline?
- What should be the consequences? and
- What are the costs for the monetary union as a whole?

### **Many 'debt sinners' in 2007**

Right before the financial crisis of 2007-8, few Eurozone countries could claim to have been fiscally disciplined. The figure below shows that Finland, Spain and Ireland could, but not Greece and Italy. Most other Eurozone nations – including Germany – were in the grey zone. Then the wheels of fortune that drive self-

fulfilling crises started to spin, leaving us with an impression that strong moral judgments have to be terribly relative.

**Figure 1.** Public debts in 2007 (% of GDP)



*Source:* AMECO, European Commission

## **Banking supervision laxity**

As we know, poor bank supervision is what drove Ireland and Spain into the camp of guilty countries. Here again, the story is not over and several countries may soon be found guilty of forbearance.

- Top of the list are France and Germany.
- Had Greece not been rescued then some large French and German banks, already fragilised by the subprime crisis, could well have been ripe for costly bailouts.

The debt reduction scheme applied to Greece effectively provided these banks with an exit strategy, and was delayed long enough for them to dispose of a large part of their initial holdings of Greek public debt. Even so, these same banks remain on the danger list if more defaults are needed, which is in fact the case. The list of truly innocent countries includes a small number of small countries.

## **The consequences of bad debt and banking policy**

As for consequences, the issue is incredibly difficult. Austerity has been the accepted norm for punishment.

Austerity proponents at first sought to characterise austerity as only moderately painful – and this a ‘good pain’ that would provide a useful lesson for future generations.

But the facts have now completely undermined this view.

- The myth of expansionary fiscal contractions, also known as the negative multipliers, has now been proven disastrously wrong.
- Its last proponents point to Latvia as proof that it works, but it unclear where this assessment comes from.

The Latvian public debt is still rising as a percentage of GDP and GDP is now 15% lower than in 2007 before the stabilization plan. True, this is up from a loss of 20% in 2010, but this merely illustrates how positive the multipliers are.

The costs to Latvia have been massive.

- Unemployment jumped to a rate 20% and still is at 16% and emigration has apparently been massive.
- Banks are foreign-owned and the owners decided to stay and absorb the losses.
- The only good news from Latvia is that the economic collapse only lasted three years, largely because wages have been quite flexible in this very small and very open economy, leading Blanchard (2012) to conclude that “the lessons are not easily exportable”.

## Greece

The Greek experience is one of never-ending economic decline, massive unemployment and intense social hardship. Sure, the Greeks are being taught a lesson, but which one?

- Resistance to economic reforms is as intense now as it was before the crisis but xenophobia and the appeal of populist politicians is rising spectacularly.
- The multiplier debate tends to conceal the political consequences of austerity in the midst of a recession.

As economists, we also need to look slightly beyond our pond.

When these aspects are factored in, the consequences of the strategy adopted in 2010 are simply not justifiable, even on moral grounds. This is so especially as those who are punished most are not those that benefitted most from fiscal indiscipline in the run up to the EZ crisis.

## **The May 2010 strategy is a disaster: Admit mistakes and move on**

The strategy adopted in May 2010 has not just failed to achieve its aims: restore debt sustainability, avoid contagion and reduce moral hazard. It has not produced a solution that is likely to bring the crisis to its end. A 180-degree turn is still needed.

Unfortunately it will be costly.

- A number of countries will never be able to achieve sustainable growth under the weight of their current public debts.
- This is the case of Greece, Portugal and Italy,
- The list may eventually widen to include Ireland, Spain and France.

Their governments will have to restructure their debts, totally in the case of Greece, partially – if done early enough – in the other cases.

- As the banks in these nations fail (because they did not adequately diversify their portfolios), bank bailouts will also have to be financed from outside.

Who will pay?

- Foreign banks will, of course, end up writing down the restructured sovereign debt; they, in turn, may have to be bailed out by their own governments.
- Official creditors too will suffer losses.

This includes the ECB, to the extent that it imposed insufficient haircuts in its various refinancing programs, and the shareholders of the EFSF and the ESM, which also happen to be the shareholders of the ECB.

## **Waiting only raises the eventual price**

The more we wait, the deeper the economic deterioration – more lending to governments and more non-performing loans in banks – and the bigger the eventual costs.

- Importantly, the list of ‘bailer outs’ shrinks as the list of ‘bailed outs’ expands, so the costs of the rescue become concentrated on a decreasing number of healthy countries.
- Waiting too long implies that there is no healthy country left or no Eurozone any more, probably both.

## The moral question reconsidered

Why should German and other taxpayers, mostly from the north, pay for the others, mostly from the south? Because their governments are responsible for the disastrous situation we are in.

- The rather well-crafted Maastricht Treaty had a no-bailout clause that was designed to protect all Eurozone taxpayers from fiscal indiscipline in other countries.
- Under Merkel’s leadership, this clause was first violated in May 2010, and then again to bail out Ireland, and again for Portugal and now for Spain.

This was an economic policy ‘crime’. It looked cheap at the time, at least under the assumption that there would be no contagion.

A basic moral principle is that criminals must be held responsible for the consequences of their acts, even if those acts are unintended. Eurozone taxpayers are the victims of their elected leaders. They now face the choice between breaking up the Eurozone and paying up. Paying up still is the cheaper alternative, but not for long.

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# Europe Needs a Federal Reserve

By AARON TORNELL and FRANK WESTERMANN

AS the world economy teeters again, pressure is mounting on central banks to reopen their spigots, make it even cheaper for companies and households to borrow money, and prop up commercial banks to prevent another financial crisis. On Wednesday, the [Federal Reserve](#), which had already promised to keep short-term interest rates near zero until the end of 2014, [extended its latest, modest strategy](#) to keep long-term rates down, too.

The Fed's counterpart, the [European Central Bank](#), was [created in 1998](#) to maintain price stability in the new euro zone. With so many depositors taking their money from troubled banks in Greece and Spain, observers are urging the central bank, based in Frankfurt, to fire another round of the "big bazooka" — the roughly 1 trillion euros in cheap loans that it granted to banks in December and February.

But even if it is willing to do this, the central bank is not equipped to do so without putting Europe's financial system at risk. Its design is flawed. To save [the euro](#), the [17 countries](#) that use the shared currency will not only need a more unified fiscal policy. They will also need a single institution to tide over troubled financial institutions, and a single banking authority to supervise banks and, if necessary, close or merge them.

Bizarrely, although the deutsche mark, franc and lira are gone, members of the euro zone still have their own national central banks, which can step in and lend euros. Since 2007, the credit extended by the central banks of Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal and Ireland has increased tenfold, in part because the criteria for the collateral put up in exchange for central-bank loans were [relaxed significantly](#) in 2008 (and later, in [Greece](#), [Ireland](#) and [Portugal](#), almost completely discarded).

What ails the euro zone is not a Teutonic allergy to inflation, or a timidity about extending loans, but what economists call the tragedy of the commons. Here's an example: A group of people go for a drink and agree to split the tab. They tend to drink a bit more than when each goes alone. Each person gets to enjoy 100 percent of the marginal benefit of an additional drink, yet she is responsible only for a portion of that drink's cost. So she has an incentive to outdrink her friends and exploit the common pool of money that will be used to pay the tab.

The central bank system in Europe is akin to letting the government of California issue bonds, pledge them as collateral at the San Francisco branch of the Fed, and then get fresh dollars to pay for its budget deficit. If this were reality, imagine the strong temptation for California to tap Fed resources to indulge imbalanced spending and borrowing.

If the system isn't fixed, it will lead to another financial crisis. In the past, many countries that pursued expansionary credit policies to avoid economic turmoil precipitated only a deeper crisis. In 1994, for example, Mexico's central bank significantly increased loans to private banks, in an attempt to forestall a [recession](#) before a presidential election. The result: capital flight, a speculative attack on the peso and a financial crisis.

Europe is heading toward a similar mess. Since 2008, hardly any banks have been shut down in the euro zone, while American regulators have closed hundreds of institutions. Bank "stress tests" in countries like Spain continue to underestimate the true extent of bad loans. Greek banks were deemed solvent — and therefore eligible for loans from Greece's central bank — even as nervous depositors withdrew hundreds of millions of euros.

Only the European Central Bank, not national regulators, should have the power to decide if a bank is financially sound, and eligible for central-bank loans.

If the European Central Bank were to gain this power, it could shut down insolvent (zombie) banks, limit excessively high levels of central-bank credit, and make it clear to the euro zone's members that help from Frankfurt cannot go on forever.

Under [Jean-Claude Trichet](#) and now [Mario Draghi](#), the European Central Bank has forestalled a panic and avoided setting off inflation so far — a priority for Germany, Europe's largest economy. But it has been powerless as bank insolvencies mount, and it has failed to pressure governments to lower their budget deficits and implement economic reforms.

The national central banks — including Germany's Bundesbank and the Bank of France — should become subsidiaries of the European Central Bank like the 12 Federal Reserve Banks (in New York and San Francisco, etc.). Voting rights at the European Central Bank should be reorganized so that they are proportional to the share of the loss that each country would bear in case of default. Those who bear the largest share of the cost should have greater say as to when the drinking should stop.

To bolster ailing banks in southern Europe, some have called for the European Central Bank to insure deposits. Fine, but in exchange, all banks, not only the biggest ones, should be under the supervision of regulators in Frankfurt. They should have the sole authority to shut down, or merge, failing banks. When they offers credit, they should accept only marketable securities as collateral.

Without these reforms, zombie banks represent another financial crisis waiting to happen.

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## Euro-Rettung Auf dem Weg in Dantes Hölle

Eine Kolumne von Wolfgang Münchau

**Sollten wir in der Euro-Krise statt auf einen Schrecken ohne Ende auf ein Ende mit Schrecken setzen? Niemals! Das wäre ruinös, gerade für Deutschland. Doch mit ihrer Politik führt uns Kanzlerin Merkel genau dorthin - schnurgerade in Dantes Hölle.**



Vor vielen Jahren erzürnte ich in einem Schulaufsatz eine Lehrerin, weil ich die [SPD](#) dafür kritisierte, die Deflationspolitik Heinrich Brüning in der Weimarer Republik mitgetragen zu haben. Eine derartige Bemerkung war in einer SPD-geführten Stadt, einem SPD-geführten Land und einem - damals - SPD-geführten Staat politisch unkorrekt. Ich hatte mir als Konsequenz auf die Reaktion - und die schlechte Note - fest vorgenommen, auch weiterhin gegen den Konsens anzustinken.

Auch heute fällt es den Linken schwer, gegen die dominante konservative Narrative der [Euro-Krise](#) eine deutliche Gegenposition zu beziehen. Es ist die Narrative, wonach die Krise durch fehlende Haushaltsdisziplin verursacht wurde, dass man in die Krise hineinsparen muss, dass das Grundübel in Südeuropa fehlende Reformen sind, und dass man keine Fiskalunion oder Bankenunion braucht. Und alles wird gut, solange man sich an die Regeln hält.

Die These ist einleuchtend, plausibel und falsch. Genauso wie die in den frühen dreißiger Jahren beliebte These des Gesundheitschumpfens - mit den bekannten Folgen. Genauso plausibel und falsch ist [Thilo Sarrazin](#) mit seinen einfachen Lösungen: "Lasst [Griechenland](#) aus dem Euro austreten, und alles wird gut."

Diese dominanten Narrativen werden leider auch von vielen meiner Leser hier geteilt. Oft genug liest man die Binsenweisheit: "Lieber ein Ende mit Schrecken als ein Schrecken ohne Ende." Ich bestreite diese Behauptung energisch. Der Wahrheitsgehalt dieses Satzes hängt logischerweise von der Natur des Schreckens ab, dem man in dem einen oder in dem anderen Falle ausgesetzt ist. In Deutschland endete schließlich die Depression mit einem Schrecken.

Wer heute das Ende des Schreckens fordert, unterschlägt wie seine ideologischen Blutsbrüder aus den dreißiger Jahren die wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und politischen Kosten eines solchen Gewaltaktes. In der Ermittlung der vermeintlichen Kosten der Rettungsprogramme oder einer Fiskalunion zählt hingegen jede Erbse, die meisten doppelt und dreifach.

### Wir haben nur noch acht Tage Zeit

Ein Ende mit Schrecken wäre ruinös, gerade für Deutschland. Zunächst würde der europäische Binnenmarkt eine Rückkehr zu flexiblen Wechselkursen nicht überleben. Die deutsche Exportindustrie würde sich nicht davon erholen. Es droht auch ein finanzieller Kollaps. Die [Bundesbank](#) hat gegenüber der Europäischen [Zentralbank](#) Forderungen von rund 700 Milliarden Euro, die sich aus dem Zahlungssystem Target 2 ergeben. Diese Forderungen steigen jeden Monat. Kommt der Bruch Ende des Jahres, droht ein Gesamtverlust in der Größenordnung von ein bis zwei Billionen Euro, einschließlich der Risikoleistungen aus den Schutzschirmen und der Rettung der dann bankrotten deutschen Banken. Das sind rund 40 bis 80 Prozent unseres jährlichen Bruttoinlandsprodukts.

[Angela Merkels](#) Politik des Aufschiebs ist noch ruinöser. Mit jedem Monat werden die Belastungen Deutschlands im System höher. Ein Beispiel für diesen Wahnsinn ist Griechenlands Schuldenexplosion. Als die Krise begann lag Griechenlands Schuldenlast gerade mal bei 100 Prozent. Nach mehreren Jahren des Sparens und trotz Schuldenschnitts ist der Schuldenstand mittlerweile höher. Wenn jetzt [Spanien](#) und [Italien](#) ebenfalls unter den Schirm rutschen sollten, dann bürgen Deutschland und Frankreich zusammen für mehr als vier

Billionen Euro Schulden. Das ist mehr als das jährliche Einkommen beider Länder zusammen. Wir steuern schnurgerade auf den größten Staatsbankrott der Weltgeschichte zu.

Ich kenne nur zwei Lösungen, die das vermeiden:


- eine Übernahme der Schuld durch die Europäische Zentralbank,
- oder eine teilweise Vergemeinschaftung der Schulden durch Euro-Bonds und eine Bankenunion.

Merkels Politik führt uns in Dantes Hölle. "Wer hier eintritt, lasse alle Hoffnung fahren."

Um eine Reform auf den Weg zu bringen, haben wir acht Tage Zeit - bis zum nächsten EU-Gipfel. Wenn die Kanzlerin nicht ihre bislang größte Kehrtwende hinlegt, dann kommen meine Kritiker in den Genuss, dass man ihre Thesen vom Ende mit Schrecken experimentell umsetzt. Es erinnert mich an den schadenfrohen Kommentar des keynsianischen Ökonomen [John Kenneth Galbraith](#) über den Monetaristen [Milton Friedman](#): "Es war Miltons Pech, dass man seine Theorien ausprobierte."

Als ich damals den Schulaufsatz schrieb, war ich einfach nur entsetzt über die wirtschaftspolitische Position der Sozialdemokraten. Was ich damals nicht wirklich verstand, wie die SPD so was tun konnte. Im Zug dieser Krise habe ich begriffen, wie schnell eine irrationale Massenhysterie in einem demokratischen Land auftreten kann, und wie sie die gesamte Politik bis tief in das linke Spektrum vereinnahmt.

# Combien coûte la dissuasion nucléaire française ?

Par  Théo Corbucci Publié le 20/06/2012 à 17:49 [Réactions](#) (9)



Le *Charles De Gaulle* et le sous-marin nucléaire *Saphir* en rade de Toulon en 2004 Crédits photo : PATRICK GARDIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Bien que très complexe à calculer, le coût de la dissuasion nucléaire française est estimé entre 3 et 4 milliards d'euros par an. Bien loin des 16 milliards annoncés par Michel Rocard, qui prône la suppression de cette force pour réaliser des économies.**

«Seize milliards d'euros d'économies par an». Interrogé mardi sur BFMTV, l'ancien premier ministre socialiste [Michel Rocard](#) a déclaré «avoir une idée» pour faire des économies: «on supprime la force de dissuasion nucléaire, 16 milliards d'euros par an qui ne servent absolument à rien». Problème: la dissuasion nucléaire, qui suppose qu'un État n'utilise pas sa force nucléaire envers un autre État la possédant également par peur de réciprocité, est très loin de coûter autant à l'Hexagone.

Sur la question du coût, [le projet de loi de finances pour 2012](#) reste assez évasif, parlant de «plus de 3 milliards d'euros» consacrés annuellement à la dissuasion nucléaire française. Pour Patrice Bouveret, directeur de [l'Observatoire des armements](#), le coût de la dissuasion nucléaire est actuellement de 3,4 milliards d'euros: «C'est environ 10% du budget total de la Défense. C'est assez stable depuis la fin des essais nucléaires [en janvier 1996, NDLR], qui coûtaient beaucoup en termes de matière première utilisée et d'entretien des infrastructures». Bruno Tertrais, maître de recherche à la [Fondation pour la recherche stratégique](#), estime quant à lui que la dissuasion coûte actuellement «entre 3 et 4 milliards d'euros par an».

Auditionnée sur la question alors qu'elle était ministre de la Défense, [Michèle Alliot-Marie](#) affirmait déjà en 2006 que les dépenses nucléaires représentaient alors [moins de 10% du budget total de la Défense](#). «Dans les années 60/70, le nucléaire pouvait représenter jusqu'à 30% du budget de la Défense» note cependant Patrice Bouveret. Mais aujourd'hui, «nous ne sommes plus dans des programmes d'investissements importants». [Un rapport du Sénat](#) sur le projet de loi de finances 2005 estimait d'ailleurs être passé de 4,89 milliards d'euros en 1990, à 3,15 milliards d'euros en 2005. L'Audit atomique de Bruno Barrillot avançait qu'entre 1945 et 1998, près de 275 milliards d'euros ont été dépensés dans l'armement nucléaire. Soit 5,2 milliards d'euros par an en moyenne sur plus de 50 ans.

## Un coût impossible à calculer de manière précise

Mais pour Patrice Bouveret, certaines dépenses ne sont qu'imparfaitement prises en compte: «Certaines données sont complexes à analyser, comme l'hébergement du personnel par exemple ou la part d'utilisation conventionnelle ou nucléaire de certains appareils». Selon lui, «le porte-avions *Charles De Gaulle* est parfois utilisé dans le domaine nucléaire, mais pas toujours. Le coût d'investissement n'est pourtant pas compris dans les dépenses nucléaires ou n'est pas indiqué». Et il en va de même pour certains Rafale, qui ont une fonction tantôt conventionnelle, tantôt nucléaire. Sans parler des coûts liés au démantèlement ou à la gestion des déchets nucléaires qui, selon lui, ne sont également pas pris en compte dans ces calculs.

La dissuasion nucléaire française coûte donc environ 16 milliards d'euros sur cinq ans, et non sur une seule année comme l'a annoncé Michel Rocard. Pour Bruno Tertrais, «si l'on devait abandonner la dissuasion

aujourd'hui, aucune économie ne serait à attendre avant très longtemps étant donné le coût du démantèlement des installations». Ce que confirme Patrice Bouveret: «Avec le nucléaire, on ne peut pas tourner la clé dans la porte et dire “c'est fini!”».

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# Eurobonds : la France s'incline face à l'Allemagne

Par [lefigaro.fr](http://lefigaro.fr) Mis à jour le 20/06/2012 à 18:56 | publié le 20/06/2012 à 17:51 [Réactions](#) (7)

**Le premier ministre Jean-Marc Ayrault a reconnu que les euro-obligations, c'est-à-dire la mise en commun d'une partie des dettes des États européens, «prendra sans doute plusieurs années».**

Le premier ministre français [Jean-Marc Ayrault](#) vient d'effectuer une grande manœuvre de rétropédalage dans le dossier européen. Il a admis que l'une des mesures anticrises affichées comme prioritaires jusqu'à présent, les [euro-obligations](#), ne verront pas le jour avant «plusieurs années».

«Je souhaite que nous parlions des eurobonds (ou euro-obligations) à Bruxelles comme d'une perspective. Le système de mutualisation de la dette exige une plus grande intégration politique qui est nécessaire. Cela prendra sans doute plusieurs années. Cependant, sans attendre, il faut agir», a-t-il dit à l'hebdomadaire allemand [Die Zeit](#) à paraître jeudi.

Ces derniers jours, les relations franco-allemandes s'étaient fortement tendues. Jean-Marc Ayrault fait donc une concession majeure aux Allemands, 24 heures avant la réunion des ministres des finances de la zone euro et une semaine en amont d'un sommet européen des chefs d'État très attendu. Les euro-obligations étaient un des principaux points de tension avec Berlin. Les socialistes au pouvoir en France les voulaient tout de suite, les Allemands n'y consentant qu'à la fin du fin, seulement si les États de la zone euro acceptent de transférer d'importants pans de souveraineté budgétaire à Bruxelles.

«Les euro-obligations arriveront en dernier», avance Guillaume Menuet, économiste responsable de la zone euro à la banque Citi. «Ils ne seront mis en place que lorsque le Mécanisme européen de stabilité (MES, chargé de prêter des fonds aux États en difficulté, doté de 500 milliards d'euros), sera à sec. En attendant, la première roue du carrosse, ce sera l'union bancaire», explique-t-il. Et ce, même si l'Allemagne [s'y oppose fermement](#).

## Union bancaire et MES

Paris entend d'ailleurs faire du dossier de l'union bancaire sa priorité. «Nous devons aller vers une supervision bancaire commune, avec un système européen de garantie des dépôts. Nous pouvons aussi trouver des solutions pour faciliter l'accès au financement des États, par exemple par des émissions à court terme ou par la proposition des Sages allemands sur le fonds d'amortissement», a-t-il détaillé.

Le premier ministre a également évoqué le renforcement du MES. Il doit pouvoir agir comme une banque «à certaines conditions», a prôné le Français. En clair, Paris aimerait que le MES, qui servira à prêter aux États en difficulté, puisse emprunter directement auprès de la Banque centrale européenne (BCE) et non plus uniquement sur les marchés financiers. Berlin s'y oppose au motif que le mandat de la BCE exclut un financement des déficits publics.

### Schwierige Wende

FAZ 20.06.2012 · Fast drei Viertel der Deutschen halten den Ausstieg aus der Kernenergie für richtig. Höhere Strompreise wollen sie für den Ausbau erneuerbarer Energien aber nicht bezahlen.

Von Professor Renate Köcher



© dapd Photovoltaikanlage in Hessen: Wie klappt die Energiewende?

Mehr als ein Jahr nach dem Beschluss, in einer überschaubar kurzen Frist aus der Kernenergie auszusteigen, gibt es noch kein überzeugendes Konzept für den Aufbau der neuen Versorgungsarchitektur, die Anpassung der Infrastruktur im vorgegebenen Zeitraum und die Sicherung eines für Industrie und Bevölkerung annehmbaren Preisniveaus. Der Bevölkerung ist durchaus bewusst, dass die sogenannte Energiewende seit den eiligen Beschlüssen unmittelbar nach der Katastrophe von Fukushima nur schleppend vorangekommen ist. Lediglich ein Fünftel der Bürger sieht große Fortschritte; die überwältigende Mehrheit hat dagegen den Eindruck, dass die Energiewende bisher nur langsam vorankommt, und macht dafür in erster Linie die Politik verantwortlich.

Das Ziel, binnen zehn Jahren ganz aus der Kernenergie auszusteigen, wird von der überwältigenden Mehrheit der Bürger mitgetragen. Während Führungskräfte aus der Wirtschaft nach wie vor mit großer Mehrheit bezweifeln, dass die Festlegung auf den Ausstieg noch vor der Entwicklung einer überzeugenden neuen Versorgungsstruktur sinnvoll sei, stehen 73 Prozent der Bevölkerung hinter dem Ausstiegsbeschluss, nur 16 Prozent halten ihn für falsch. Die Anhänger der verschiedenen Parteien unterscheiden sich seit dem Wendemanöver von CDU/CSU und FDP nur noch wenig. So halten 79 Prozent der Anhänger der SPD, aber auch 64 Prozent der Anhänger der Unionsparteien den Ausstiegsbeschluss im Rückblick für richtig.

Gleichzeitig glaubt jedoch nur eine Minderheit, dass der Beschluss tatsächlich in den vorgesehenen Fristen verwirklicht wird. Die große Mehrheit war stets überzeugt, dass es keinen schnellen Ausstieg aus der Kernenergie geben kann. Der Anteil, der glaubt, dass Deutschland schon in kurzer Zeit aussteigen könnte, schwankt seit Beginn der politischen Ausstiegsplanung Ende der neunziger Jahre in der engen Bandbreite zwischen 18 und 22 Prozent der Bevölkerung. Bemerkenswert ist jedoch, dass auch der für 2022 anvisierte Zeitpunkt von den meisten für unrealistisch gehalten wird. Lediglich 28 Prozent glauben, dass Deutschland tatsächlich innerhalb der nächsten zehn Jahre vollständig aus der Kernenergie aussteigen wird; 51 Prozent sind dagegen überzeugt, dass die Kernenergie auch nach 2022 weiter genutzt werden wird.

### Die Bevölkerung ist skeptisch

Schon der erste Ausstiegsbeschluss der damaligen rot-grünen Bundesregierung traf auf eine ambivalente Reaktion: Die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung begrüßte den Beschluss, war aber gleichzeitig überzeugt, dass er nicht wie geplant umgesetzt werden würde. Auch darin gibt es zwischen den Anhängern der verschiedenen Parteien nur begrenzte Unterschiede; in allen politischen Lagern rechnet nur eine Minderheit fest mit einem Ausstieg innerhalb von zehn Jahren.





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Wer mag die Energiewende tragen?

Die Bürger verbinden die Energiewende bei allem Wohlwollen auch mit beträchtlichen Risiken und Unsicherheiten. So befürchtet knapp die Hälfte der gesamten Bevölkerung, dass es im Zuge des sukzessiven Ausstiegs zu Versorgungsengpässen kommt; lediglich die Anhänger der Grünen und der Piraten halten dies mehrheitlich für unwahrscheinlich.

Hinsichtlich der Entwicklung der Energiepreise ist die Bevölkerung mehr als skeptisch - dies allerdings nicht erst seit dem Ausstiegsbeschluss. 75 Prozent haben registriert, dass die Strompreise in den vergangenen sechs Monaten gestiegen sind; 50 Prozent meinen, dass diese Preissteigerungen sie persönlich merklich belasten. Dies gilt insbesondere für die Bezieher unterdurchschnittlicher Einkommen; so konstatieren 61 Prozent der Bevölkerungskreise mit einem Haushaltsnettoeinkommen unterhalb von 1750 Euro, dass sie die Preissteigerungen für Strom stark belasten, von den Kreisen mit Haushaltseinkommen von netto 3000 Euro und mehr 39 Prozent.

## Große Sympathie für regenerative Energien

Für die Zukunft können sich die Bürger nur eine Richtung der Preisentwicklung vorstellen: 91 Prozent nehmen an, dass die Strompreise in den nächsten Jahren steigen werden, nur 3 Prozent hoffen auf stabile, 1 Prozent auf fallende Preise. Zurzeit überdecken die gute Konjunktur und die steigenden Einkommen vieler Haushalte die Sorgen über die Entwicklung der Energiepreise. In einer Schwächephase erhielte dieses Thema einen deutlich höheren Rang.

Trotz der ausgeprägten Präferenz für eine Energieversorgung, die sich so weit wie möglich auf regenerative Energien stützt, ist lediglich eine Minderheit bereit, dafür höhere Energiepreise in Kauf zu nehmen. Nur unmittelbar unter dem Eindruck von Fukushima änderte sich diese Haltung zumindest begrenzt; damals erklärten sich 38 Prozent bereit, für einen weiteren Ausbau der regenerativen Energien höhere Preise zu akzeptieren, während 41 Prozent dies entschieden ablehnten. Seither ist die Bereitschaft auf 32 Prozent gesunken, die Ablehnung wieder auf 53 Prozent angestiegen. Es gibt jedoch keine Revolte gegen den Beitrag, der den Bürgern schon seit längerem für den Ausbau der regenerativen Energien auferlegt wird. Die Zusammensetzung des Strompreises ist den meisten nicht bewusst, interessiert viele auch nicht aus der Überzeugung heraus, darauf kaum Einfluss nehmen zu können.

Die großen Sympathien für die regenerativen Energien führen auch nicht dazu, dass die meisten es für eine leichte Übung halten, den bisherigen Beitrag der Kernenergie sukzessive durch regenerative Energien zu decken. Nur 26 Prozent der Bürger halten dies für ohne weiteres möglich, zwei Drittel dagegen für schwierig. Der Mehrheit ist bewusst, dass der Ausbau der regenerativen Energien alleine die Versorgungslücke nicht schließen kann. Nur 24 Prozent halten dies für machbar, während 51 Prozent überzeugt sind, dass die Kernenergie auch durch konventionelle Energien wie Kohle und Gas substituiert werden muss.

## Mehrheit gegen Kohlekraftwerke

Aus dieser Einschätzung leitet allerdings nur eine Minderheit die Folgerung ab, dass Deutschland mehr Gas- oder Kohlekraftwerke bauen müsste. Nur 29 Prozent halten den Bau neuer Gaskraftwerke für notwendig, 25 Prozent den Bau neuer Kohlekraftwerke.

In Bezug auf Gaskraftwerke ist das Meinungsbild jedoch wesentlich offener als mit Blick auf Kohlekraftwerke. 30 Prozent sind dezidiert der Ansicht, dass Deutschland keine zusätzlichen Gaskraftwerke braucht, 46 Prozent vertreten diese Position in Bezug auf Kohlekraftwerke. Wenn ein Bau in der näheren Region zur Diskussion stünde, würden bei einem Gaskraftwerk immerhin 39 Prozent den Bau unterstützen, 27 Prozent ablehnen. Noch 2010 überwog die Gegnerschaft im Verhältnis 2 zu 1. Völlig anders verläuft die Entwicklung des Meinungsbildes bei Kohlekraftwerken: Lediglich 16 Prozent würden ein solches Projekt in ihrer Region unterstützen, 61 Prozent jedoch bekämpfen. Während die Bereitschaft, Gaskraftwerke zu tolerieren, signifikant angestiegen ist, treffen Kohlekraftwerke auf immer größere Ablehnung.

Wenn sich die Bürger entscheiden müssten, wie die Energieversorgung vor allem sichergestellt werden soll, solange die regenerativen Energien den Beitrag der Kernenergie nicht vollständig ersetzen, bevorzugen 32 Prozent neue Gaskraftwerke, 30 Prozent eine verlängerte Nutzung der Kernenergie, 15 Prozent vermehrte Stromimporte und 15 Prozent neue Kohlekraftwerke.

## **Geringer Widerstand gegen „Verspargelung“**

Die ostdeutsche Bevölkerung nimmt hier interessanterweise eine von der westdeutschen deutlich abweichende Position ein, sie favorisiert mit großem Abstand eine Verschiebung des Ausstiegs aus der Kernenergie, während die westdeutsche noch am ehesten einen Ausbau von Gaskraftwerken präferiert. 46 Prozent der ostdeutschen, 26 Prozent der westdeutschen Bevölkerung möchten die Versorgungslücke mit einer längeren Nutzung der Kernenergie decken, 34 Prozent der westdeutschen, 25 Prozent der ostdeutschen mit mehr Gaskraftwerken. Gleichzeitig ist die Gegnerschaft gegenüber neuen Kraftwerken in den neuen Ländern signifikant niedriger als in Westdeutschland. Dies gilt besonders für neue Kohlekraftwerke, die zwei Drittel der Westdeutschen, aber nur 44 Prozent der Ostdeutschen ablehnen würden.

Während neue Kraftwerke mit erheblichen Vorbehalten zu kämpfen haben, teilt nur eine Minderheit das Unbehagen über die „Verspargelung“ der Landschaften durch die wachsende Zahl der Windparks. Entsprechend ist die Bereitschaft groß, eine Ausweitung solcher Anlagen auch in der näheren Region zu tolerieren. Käme es zu einer Abstimmung über die Errichtung von Windrädern im eigenen Umfeld, würden 64 Prozent das Projekt unterstützen, nur 16 Prozent dagegen opponieren. Die breite Unterstützung kommt vor allem aus Westdeutschland, während sich die ostdeutsche Bevölkerung weitaus weniger dafür ausspricht.

## **Gegen umfangreichen Ausbau von Stromleitungen**

Eine der Herausforderungen der Energiewende ist der Ausbau der Energietrassen, da die Energie künftig vermehrt offshore und in Regionen erzeugt wird, die weit von den Räumen entfernt liegen, wo sie gebraucht wird. Die Mehrheit der Bürger weiß, dass die Energiewende erhebliche Investitionen in die Versorgungsinfrastruktur erfordert. 51 Prozent ist dies bewusst, während immerhin 30 Prozent (noch) annehmen, dass es mit der Pflege und Ausbesserungen der bestehenden Infrastruktur getan ist. Gleichzeitig scheint den meisten der Ausbau der Infrastruktur jedoch nicht sonderlich dringlich. 59 Prozent sind überzeugt, dass die Infrastruktur für die Energieversorgung, sei es die Ausstattung mit Kraftwerken oder das Leitungsnetz, zufriedenstellend ist.

Entsprechend hält sich die Bereitschaft, einen Ausbau des Leitungsnetzes zu unterstützen, in Grenzen. Wenn neue oberirdische Leitungen zur Diskussion stehen, würden 34 Prozent der Bürger ein solches Projekt in ihrer Region unterstützen, 35 Prozent dagegen votieren.

Wie viele politische Herausforderungen, die langfristig die Zukunft des Landes gravierend beeinflussen, sind die Dringlichkeit und der Zeitbedarf der notwendigen Maßnahmen vielen Bürgern nur eingeschränkt bewusst. Das heißt im Umkehrschluss, dass sich Energiepolitik so wenig wie zum Beispiel die Bewältigung des demographischen Wandels für populistische Aktionen eignet, sondern neben Kompetenz bei der Bewertung der Optionen auch oft Mut zur Durchsetzung wenig populärer Maßnahmen erfordert.

Quelle: F.A.Z.



# Markets are fast, but democracies slow – that's why solving the eurozone crisis is proving so difficult

The Telegraph By [Mats Persson Economics](#) Last updated: June 19th, 2012



Changing ever so slowly

Guillermo Ortiz – a former Mexican central banker – provided one of the better comments at this week's G20 summit. "The European decision-making process is really slow" he said, "designed for process, not decisions." By contrast, markets can change in a second and expect instant resolutions. This is nothing new, of course, but the mis-match between what markets demand and what the eurozone can realistically deliver is growing increasingly wider. The EU's slow, tedious decision-making process works well when dealing with [trade](#) and regulation – which is what the EU primarily did (and did quite well) up until the creation of the euro. But it's an appalling structure for managing a single currency where the ability to quickly call out the fire brigade (usually in the form of central bank liquidity) when things get hot is absolutely vital.

In a roundabout way, the Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso was therefore at least partially right when he [snapped back](#) at the barrage of criticism he and other EU leaders face over the failure to get their act together. He said, "Not all the members of the G20 are democracies but we are democracies and we take decisions democratically. Sometimes this means taking more time." Ultimately, this is why the tensions between G20 leaders now run so high: there's no way that the eurozone can deal with this crisis with the swiftness and decisiveness that Cameron, Obama and others demand without effectively re-defining the concept of democracy within the Westphalian model of [national sovereignty](#).

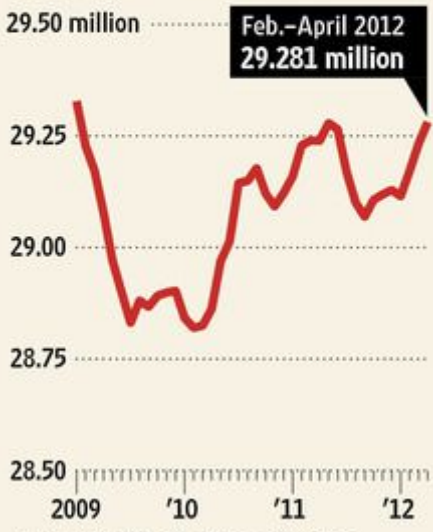
Though eurozone countries have cut some corners in terms of the normal democratic process during the crisis, any major decision – on bailout funds, lending terms, budget supervision – still has to be approved by 17 government cabinets, and to differing degrees, by [national parliaments](#) and constitutional courts as well. But the euro's absence of swift crisis management runs even deeper due to differing political cultures. The most important actor of them all – Germany – has a [constitutional set-up](#) specifically put in place after World War II to prevent the hasty centralisation of power, ironically at the behest of the Americans and British. Significant systemic circuit breakers such as the [Constitutional Court](#) were put into place to counter rash decision-making, while the modern German constitution got rid of the Federal government's 'emergency' powers allowed under the Weimar Republic. Political deliberateness is encoded in the DNA of the [German constitutional fabric](#), meaning the eurozone as a whole is bound to be even slower.

This is also why the eurozone continues to resist solutions that for other G20 leaders seem like the obvious short-term fix: debt pooling, starting the ECB printing presses and getting off the back of the world economy. It sounds simple, but per definition, joint and several cross-border liabilities are incompatible with national democracy – at least without a new, grand bargain which sees, say, Germany lending weaker eurozone countries its credit rating in exchange for a veto over these countries' budgets. As I've argued before, that's an incredibly tough electoral sell, whether you sit in Athens or Amsterdam (think [Spanish regions](#)).

Thomas Jefferson famously observed, "democracy is cumbersome, slow and inefficient". Not for the last time has the G20 summit reminded us of just what this means in practice.

## Back to Work

Number of employed people in the U.K., three-month moving average



Source: U.K. Office for National Statistics

## The euro zone crisis

### Old maid

The Economist Blogs Jun 11th 2012, 14:51 by Buttonwood

THE Spanish debt deal may relieve the short-term pressure on the country's financial system but one thing it doesn't do is reduce the country's debt burden. And that is a persistent theme of the crisis; in most countries, there has been [no deleveraging](#) at all. Rather than destroy the debt, we have reshuffled it; initially from struggling homeowners to banks, then from banks to governments, and then from weak governments to stronger ones.

It is rather like the game of Old Maid, where the loser is the player who ends up with the Queen of Spades; we all try to pass on the card to someone else. Why not write off the debt entirely? That has happened in the past; for example there was the Hoover moratorium on war reparations in the early 1930s and, more recently, there has been the forgiveness of what used to be called third world debt.

But it is easiest to forgive the debt if it is concentrated in a few small countries or if there is one strong country (like America in the mid-20th century) which can afford to take the hit. What we have now is a debt crisis in much of the rich world; what Jerome Booth of Ashmore dubs HIDCs (highly indebted developed countries). We can afford the default of Greece but not Spain or Italy. Or to go back to the analogy, we have a pack with a dozen Old Maids rather than just one.

And if we do write off the debt, who takes the hit? Not, by and large, top-hatted capitalists but the taxpayers of other nations, explicitly or implicitly. States clearly stand behind the ECB, the various bailout funds and the IMF. And if most of the rest of the debt is held by banks, insurance companies or pension funds, then any hit to their balance sheets may end up being replenished by the taxpayer.

This is why this is such a pernicious problem. There is no "solution" to the debt crisis that is pain-free; we are merely arguing about how the pain is distributed. Who ends up with the Old Maid?

## The euro zone crisis

### Disunited nations

The Economist Blogs Jun 13th 2012, 14:42 by Buttonwood

THE American economy may have its faults but it works pretty well as a currency union. Everyone is happy to accept the dollar, workers can move freely between states in search of the best jobs, there is a national banking regulator, and so on. So why can't the euro-zone be more like the US? As has often been argued, in aggregate the EU has a lower debt-to-GDP ratio than America, a smaller budget deficit and a better current account position. Let us simply move to a fiscal union in which rich countries like Germany subsidise the rest.

The trouble with this proposition is that America has a tax and welfare system that is also national. There may be separate state income, sales and property taxes, but there is one federal income tax rate, one corporate tax rate, one pensions system with the same retirement age, one Medicare, one minimum wage and so on.

If you want a contrast, look at the recent OECD pensions [outlook](#). Everyone knows that the Germans and Greeks have different retirement ages, and the former resent paying money so the latter can retire earlier. But it's not just pension ages. One chart (on p101 for those who have access to the full report) shows the replacement rate for average earners under various pay-as-you-go pension schemes; until 2010, the Greek replacement rate was 110%! You were better off retiring than working. Even after a reform package, the OECD says the Greek replacement was 85%. At the other end of the extreme, Irish workers get less than 40%. The Germans are in the middle at 60%; for contrast, the US is around 50%.

Under a proper fiscal union, it would only be proper for all these rates to be equalised; for Greeks to retire later and earn less, for example. Over time, one would expect other tax rates to equalise as well, with perhaps a supplementary levy (like the state income tax) in those countries having difficulty balancing their books. Does anybody actually want that? It seems like there is a democratic deficit either way; either you make German voters unwillingly subsidise other nationalities to have better benefits, or you make voters in other countries change their benefits to bring them in line with a European norm.



## The euro zone crisis

### The Germans will pay

The Economist Blogs Jun 20th 2012, 8:42 by Buttonwood

ARE we seeing a new phase in the markets? A poor Spanish T-bill auction yesterday, accompanied by a sharp fall in the ZEW index of German economic sentiment, led to a *fall* in Spanish 10-year yields and a *rise* in bund yields. Rabobank suggests that we might be witnessing

*“a perverse reaction function. This, namely, being that good news is Bund positive/periphery negative as it reduces the likelihood of an imminent solution while bad news is Bund negative/periphery positive as it heightens expectations Germany will underwrite a crisis resolution”.*

In a way, it is an ironic echo of the French slogan about reparations after the First World War "The Germans will pay". Or as the joke currently goes "A Greek, a Spaniard and a Portuguese walk into a bar. Who pays for the drinks? The Germans."

The argument is that the Germans have done so well out of the euro (because it gave them a cheap currency), and that the costs of break-up will be so huge that they might as well foot the bill for the rest of Europe either by tax transfers or by lending other countries for long periods at low rates (which amounts to the same thing). Sometimes the tone of this discussion seems rather sanctimonious; it is very easy to lecture someone else on their moral duty to pay the bill for your dinner. It is also worth remembering that Germany actually joined the euro at quite a high rate and went through several years of sluggish growth while its costs came down.

Of course, some would turn the argument round and point to the Keynes argument against German reparations. The only way that the Germans could repay, he pointed out, was to run a current account surplus; did Britain and France really want to run years of current account deficits? Similarly, the southern Europeans will need to run surpluses to bring down their debts; these need not be solely with Germany (all of Europe could run a surplus with the rest of the world) but it would help if the Germans ran a bilateral deficit with the south.

Actually the Germans have moved quite a long way from their initial position, albeit more slowly than the markets have liked. But their underlying rationale is understandable; southern European countries need reform and funding pressures are the most likely way of forcing them into action. So if the Germans are guilty, so are other countries for not pursuing reforms before the crisis occurred.

## More European power for the Bundestag

19 June 2012

Presseurop

Der Spiegel

The German parliament must play a role in decisions on European policy: this is substance of the message which the German Constitutional Court has addressed to the government in Berlin on three separate occasions over the last three years. On 18 June, judges in the court in Karlsruhe ruled on an action filed by the Green party concerning the failure to effectively inform MPs about negotiations on the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). From now on, [notes Der Spiegel](#),

... the government will have to inform parliament as early as possible about international negotiations that are in progress, like those that are currently underway on the European Stability Mechanism, and make certain that parliament plays a role in those negotiations. The reasoning behind the ruling is that more a extensive involvement of the parliament in decision making on European treaties will ensure a balanced approach to the transfer of competencies [both political and legal] to the EU.

The Karlsruhe court already expressed this position on the occasion of [the ratification](#) of the Lisbon treaty in 2009, and once again [last September](#), during the debate on plans for European bailouts.

G20

## Europe's place



19 June 2012 [L'Echo](#) Brussels

## Germany driving up wrong side of the road

19 June 2012

[Der Spiegel](#) Hamburg



Presseurop based on Heinz-Helmut Maaß

**Angela Merkel and Germany's quality and tabloid press would have have it that the world is out only for the Bundesrepublik's riches. Not only untrue, laments the editor of German weekly Der Freitag, but also dangerous for the future of Europe and democracy.**

[Jakob Augstein](#)

Merkel and the tabloids like Bild are telling the Germans that everybody wants their money. Firstly, this is wrong. And secondly, there's a lot more at stake. If the Germans turn their backs on Europe, democracy itself will be at risk.

A woman takes a wrong turn and drives up the wrong lane into oncoming traffic. The radio traffic updates broadcast a warning of a "wrong-way driver". "Just one?" thinks the woman tuning in. "There are hundreds of them!" Angela Merkel is this woman, and Germany under Merkel's leadership is this wrong-way driver. We are going against the tide of economic and political sense, and we're proud of it. We talk ourselves into believing that the whole world wants "our money". This is, first of all, wrong, and secondly, much more is at stake than our money.

Angela Merkel is at work on a dangerous project: she is loosening the Germans' commitment to Europe. She would have us believe that Europe is something that the Germans can "do" or leave, depending on whether they benefit from it directly or not. Europe will become a *res publica amissa*, a neglected affair of state. We went through this once before, and we all know what happened then. Europe is Weimar. And when the Germans turned away from Weimar, it was the end of democracy.

*No panicking, please*

The talk about "our money", which everyone supposedly wants, is a bad argument. The Chancellor does not herself say it in so many words: she can leave that to her imperial attendants at the *Bild-Zeitung*. Both care too little about Europe. They think and feel "Atlantic". But America has become weak and an unreliable partner. *Bild* and Merkel would be making a big mistake if they were to undermine the sense of post-war Germany within Europe that, outside our common destiny, Germany has no future as a middle power.

They pretend that we could choose between a European and a German path. But there is no German path. What will Merkel do if the euro collapses, or the Schengen area, or perhaps the entire *acquis communautaire* – everything that has been built up in 60 years of European integration? Shift focus to China?

After Hitler took power, Sebastian Haffner, looking back, wrote that "one cannot call it anything other than a very widespread feeling of liberation and salvation from democracy." What feeling would spread if the euro collapses – and with it, Europe? One of redemption, perhaps? The Germans should finally begin to size up the crisis by just such benchmarks. Maybe the country can save itself from its self-injurious selfishness.

But no panicking, please: No one seriously wants Germany to pay the debts of Europe. The days of the gold standard ended when the payments between the central banks were cleared in Fort Knox, and the gold bars were shifted from one vault to another. A banking union and euro-bonds should integrate Germany into a system of mutual security. Without such a system, Europe will break down.

### *Merkel the Tentative*

It is a historical shame that during this crisis we have a chancellor for whom Europe is not an affair of the heart. In such moments, moments that one can in good conscience call historic, it is important to recognise the political realities – but only in order to change them.

So it's worth thinking about what might have been under different circumstances. Nietzsche wrote: "The question 'What would happen if this and not that occurred' is almost unanimously rejected, and yet it is precisely the cardinal question." We like to put the march of history down to impersonal forces. But at the turning points of history there always stands an individual. Had the "99-day Emperor" Frederick III not died of throat cancer, and had Bismarck stayed longer by his side, would the Great War perhaps have been prevented?

One can assume that an SPD [German Social Democrat Party] Chancellor would have behaved differently at the start of the crisis than Merkel the Tentative. And one can hope that a new chancellor – or a new woman chancellor – will behave differently after the next election. Small note: Hannelore Kraft has replaced Angela Merkel as the most popular politician in the country. Europe just needs to hold out till then.

Translated from the German by **Anton Baer**

# The Trouble With Ms. Merkel

After their two-day meeting ended on Tuesday, leaders of [the Group of 20 top economies](#) managed to say some of the right things. Focusing on the euro-zone debt crisis — clearly, the largest threat to the global economy — they pledged to do more to spur growth, ensure financial stability and support a stronger European fiscal union.

The question now is whether these words will ever [translate into effective action](#). If the past two years of the euro crisis is any guide, the likely answer is no. As recession and banking crises have enveloped Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy, the crisis response, led by Germany, has been dominated by a relentless insistence on self-defeating austerity and piecemeal rescue plans.

The result has been deeper recession, social unrest and political upheaval in Europe's weaker economies and increasing mistrust between the strong and weak nations of Europe — precisely the wrong conditions for integrating the banks, budgets and politics of Europe in a way that is needed for the long-term survival of the euro.

Will this time be different?

There are mounting reasons for Germany to alter its stance. For one, the stakes are higher. No sooner did [the elections in Greece on Sunday](#) ease fears of a disorderly Greek exit from the euro than borrowing costs spiked in Spain and Italy. Both countries must sell government bonds to refinance heavy debt loads, but investors, spooked by recession and financial instability, are instead pulling money out of the countries. That presages far bigger challenges than Europe has faced thus far and underscores the failure of policies to stem the crisis.

Against that backdrop, the world leaders had a chance to press Angela Merkel, Germany's chancellor, to provide stronger and more flexible bailout support — for example, by allowing Greece more time to meet the backbreaking terms of its bailout package or injecting capital from the euro zone directly into Spain's banks or seeking more aggressive ways to lower interest rates for vulnerable borrowers, including issuance of a common Eurobond or direct bond purchases by the European Central Bank.

Ms. Merkel has long rejected such steps. But, next week, when leaders of the European Union meet for a planned summit meeting, the discussions from the G-20 could provide a foundation and political cover for her to begin to take bolder action.

Then again, she could hold firm to her current stance. She has repeatedly insisted on austerity for hard-pressed countries, even when it has been a demonstrable failure. And, while she has correctly asserted that more aid on better terms should be accompanied by greater European unity, the lack of unity appears to be an excuse to delay steps to ensure that adequate aid is available on workable terms. Under current policies, the euro zone and the global economy have been put at high risk.

By next week we will find out whether world leaders at the G-20 got through to Ms. Merkel.

- Mathias Weitz      Butzbach, Hessen, Germany

Funny, how our german newspaper tell a totally different story.

How our tabloids tell about the BRIC-Countries are pressing for reforms, how they criticize the declining productivity of europe. Our magazines show charts, that all europe countries are importing cheap stuff from

everywhere, but contribute nothing for themselves to the global trade, that they are losing the global competition. You can get Mercedes, BMW, Audi, Porsche, VW in every country of the world, but most countries outside Europe don't even know that the French are also building cars.

Our newspapers tell about how countries press Merkel to be much harder, including a lot of countries in the Euro-zone. They tell about the envy of the crisis-countries, how Portuguese getting angry about Greeks, about their incompetence to collect taxes.

They tell about Christine Lagarde blowing her vessels about the sloppy work in some European governments, and get backup from some politicians from these very countries. How heads of state get presented like hobos because they do not even know some basic economical facts.

Our tabloids tell about Chinese buying abandoned shipyards in Rostock and put them back to work, creating 8000 jobs, while government-owned shipyards in Greece build nothing but some trawlers. How GE wants to invest 1 Trillion Euro, but only in Germany.

Europe is a mess because a lot of people took it too easy, and calling for deficit spending as ubiquitous solution is exactly this kind of failed simplicity.

- [June 20, 2012 at 8:03 a.m.](#)



- Prof. Jai Prakash Sharma,
- Jaipur, India

Left to herself, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel perhaps knows well as to what ails the Euro-zone, but it's her compulsion of pandering to her voters, and seeking protection for the European bankers and investors, that's driving her to adopt the tough stance of self-defeating austerity, and piecemeal rescue plans. Thus, apart from familiar chantings of spurring growth, ensuring financial stability, and promote stronger fiscal union for Europe, the G-20 leaders couldn't probably do much which could dissuade Ms. Angela Merkel from going to the fiscal cliff. It's the populist politics, combined with the clout of European capital, and its impact on decision making at Brussels, that's preventing the much needed fiscal and political integration of the Euro-zone, resulting into the looming spectre of double dip recession in Europe and beyond. [June 20, 2012 at 5:39 a.m.](#)



1.
  - cgehner
  - Seattle

"her compulsion of pandering to her voters" -

Ms. Merkel has forced through huge guarantees, backed up with German taxpayers money, to support European bailouts, AGAINST dominant popular sentiment. The German Supreme Court just reprimanded her government for NOT informing the parliament sufficiently about these commitments. Among the banks agreeing to take a significant "haircut" on reek debt are most large German banks; this was also pushed by Ms. Merkel.

Moving through various European legislative branches is the ratification of the "Fiscal Pact", which implements the first set of new treaty agreements to provide better fiscal coordination among EU governments, spearheaded by Ms. Merkel.

Do you have any idea what you are talking about??? [June 20, 2012 at 8:19 a.m.](#)



## Parisot : les entreprises risquent «l'étranglement»

Le Figaro Par [Marc Landré](#) Mis à jour le 19/06/2012 à 19:23 | publié le 19/06/2012 à 13:05 [Réactions](#) (253)



### Taxe sur les dividendes distribués, hausses de cotisations, relèvement du smic, durcissement des conditions de licenciement... La présidente du Medef s'alarme des projets du gouvernement Ayrault.

«Moment historique... angoisse palpable... inquiétude immense... étranglement programmé... climat de survie... risque sur l'emploi.» [Laurence Parisot](#) a multiplié mardi matin, lors de sa conférence de presse mensuelle, les formules chocs pour alerter sur la situation de l'économie européenne en général et française en particulier. «Nous avons tous le sentiment aujourd'hui que nous vivons un moment grave, historique, un moment de vérité», a expliqué sur un ton très solennel la présidente du [Medef](#), à son retour du sommet des responsables patronaux mondiaux - le «B20», qui s'est tenu juste avant le G20 des chefs d'État à Los Cabos, au Mexique.

S'ajoutant à l'incertitude sur l'avenir de la [zone euro](#) (et le sentiment, selon la patronne des patrons, que le Vieux Continent n'est plus un marché d'avenir pour nombre de pays étrangers), les projets de réformes économiques et sociales du gouvernement de [Jean-Marc Ayrault](#) se traduisent par «une angoisse palpable et une inquiétude immense chez tous les entrepreneurs», a ainsi insisté la patronne des patrons.

«Le nouveau gouvernement et le nouveau Parlement doivent prendre la mesure des circonstances», a martelé la présidente du Medef, dont la veste pimpante tranchait avec la dureté du discours et des messages. Pour elle, les projets du nouvel exécutif sont totalement «déconnectés de la vie de l'entreprise, de ce que peut supporter une entreprise». Et la patronne des patrons de dresser alors un tableau on ne peut plus noir de la situation. «De partout on a les mêmes informations: effondrement des marges, chute des carnets de commandes, tensions sur les trésoreries, gel des projets d'embauche, suppression des projets d'investissements... Il existe une grande part de désarroi actuellement.»

#### Revêtir «la PME attitude»

Si le Medef se félicite que le gouvernement soit allé moins loin que prévu dans la hausse des cotisations retraite pour financer le retour partiel à la retraite à 60 ans, Laurence Parisot considère toutefois que «c'est déjà trop». Et ce d'autant que le gouvernement ambitionne encore d'augmenter bien d'autres taxes: les cotisations accidents du travail-maladie professionnelle (AT-MP), la [fiscalité sur les dividendes](#)...

«Ces augmentations ne vont pas être supportables longtemps», a prévenu la patronne des patrons pour qui tous ces prélèvements vont «toucher beaucoup de TPE-PME» déjà mal en point et font surtout «courir le risque que les investisseurs privés investissent moins ou ailleurs» à l'avenir. L'alignement de la fiscalité du capital sur celle du travail «assécherait» de surcroît l'économie et le coup de pouce programmé du smic, au-delà de sa revalorisation automatique, fera peser «un risque sur l'emploi», lui aussi en berne. «Nous avons peur d'un étranglement programmé», a-t-elle estimé, face à l'accumulation de nouvelles taxes à l'horizon contre les entreprises.



La patronne des patrons s'inquiète enfin de deux projets de lois en préparation au gouvernement, sur «les licenciements abusifs» (pour ne pas dire «licenciements boursiers») et sur l'obligation de «cession d'un site en cas de fermeture». Deux chantiers qui doivent relever, selon elle, de la seule négociation entre les partenaires sociaux.

«Attention à ne pas transformer notre pays en une sorte d'enclave déconnectée du reste du monde», a donc prévenu la présidente du Medef en appelant une fois de plus l'exécutif à revêtir «la PME attitude». Avant de lâcher un ultime avertissement à qui veut bien l'entendre, [François Hollande](#) en tête: «Nous sommes dans un climat de survie.»

# Investissements étrangers : l'Allemagne double la France

Par [Yann Le Galès](#) Publié le 19/06/2012 à 18:01 [Réactions](#) (5)



Des tours du quartier de La Défense, près de Paris. Crédit: Vincent Boisot/Le Figaro

## La France attire de moins en moins les investisseurs étrangers. L'Allemagne lui ravit la deuxième place en Europe. Le Royaume-Uni reste le pays européen qui attire le plus d'implantations internationales.

Attractivité. La [France](#) a de plus en plus de mal à convaincre les investisseurs étrangers. Selon le onzième baromètre de l'[attractivité](#) de la France, présenté par le cabinet d'audit et de conseils Ernst & Young, dans le cadre de la dixième édition de la World Investment Conférence Europe qui se déroule jusqu'au 22 juin à La Baule, la France a certes attiré 540 projets étrangers représentant 13.000 emplois l'an dernier contre 562 projets et 14.922 emplois en 2010. Mais elle a perdu pour la première fois depuis 2002 la deuxième place européenne au profit de l'[Allemagne](#).

La patrie de la chancelière [Angela Merkel](#) a réussi à séduire 597 projets créant 17.276 emplois. «L'Allemagne a gagné la bataille des réformes de compétitivité. Elle est portée à l'export par ses PME et ses entreprises familiales. Elle bénéficie d'une cohorte de sous-traitants qui rendent son territoire attractif. Ces atouts convainquent les investisseurs internationaux», explique Marc Lhermitte, associé Ernst & Young Advisory. Malgré un léger recul, le [Royaume-Uni](#) demeure le pays européen qui continue d'attirer le plus d'implantations internationales avec 679 projets et 29.888 emplois. Soit presque autant d'emplois que la France et l'Allemagne réunies.

Le recul de la France est d'autant plus inquiétant que l'Europe conserve la confiance des investisseurs étrangers. Malgré la crise, celle-ci a attiré 4% de projets en plus l'an dernier par rapport à 2010. Soit un total de 3906 projets représentant 157.824 emplois. Les États-Unis demeurent le premier investisseur sur le Vieux Continent.

### «Une vision du monde obsolète»

Mais être une terre d'accueil pour les Américains ne suffit plus. La France recule car elle perd de son crédit auprès des investisseurs des pays à forte croissance comme le Brésil, la Russie, l'Inde et la Chine. Elle n'a attiré que 23 implantations en provenance de ces pays alors que l'Allemagne a convaincu 69 investisseurs de ces pays. Même le crédit impôt recherche ne suffit plus pour attirer les investissements en recherche. Les groupes étrangers sont également de plus en plus indécis sur la volonté de maintenir ou de renforcer leurs activités dans l'Hexagone.

Plus d'un investisseur sur deux (56%) font de l'Allemagne le champion de l'attractivité en Europe. Ils ne sont qu'un sur quatre (25%) à croire en la France. 43% des investisseurs jugent que la France est moins adaptée aux exigences de la mondialisation que ses concurrents. Ils lui reprochent le coût du travail, un droit du travail contraignant, une recherche et une innovation insuffisantes, l'absence de coopération entre les grands groupes et les PME. Ils portent un jugement sévère sur la formation des diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur. «Les

Chinois estiment que les Français ont trop souvent une vision du monde obsolète», résume François Quentin, président de Huawei France.

Mais la France peut regagner les parts de marché perdu. Malgré ses handicaps, elle est le premier pays européen pour les implantations industrielles avec 170 projets créateurs de 7800 emplois en 2011 contre 121 en Allemagne et 92 au Royaume-Uni. Elle dispose de réels atouts dans des secteurs industriels comme l'aéronautique, le luxe et les biotechnologie. «La France doit jouer la carte de l'ouverture et de la flexibilité. Elle ne doit pas se laisser aller aux tentations du repli. Elle doit accueillir les talents, promouvoir la culture de l'innovation et de l'entrepreneuriat dès le secondaire. Elle doit aussi se lancer à la conquête de nouveaux marchés émergents en appuyant les entreprises à l'export», analyse Marc Lhermitte.

# Passing the Bailout Buck

Mises Daily: Friday, June 15, 2012 by [Philipp Bagus](#)

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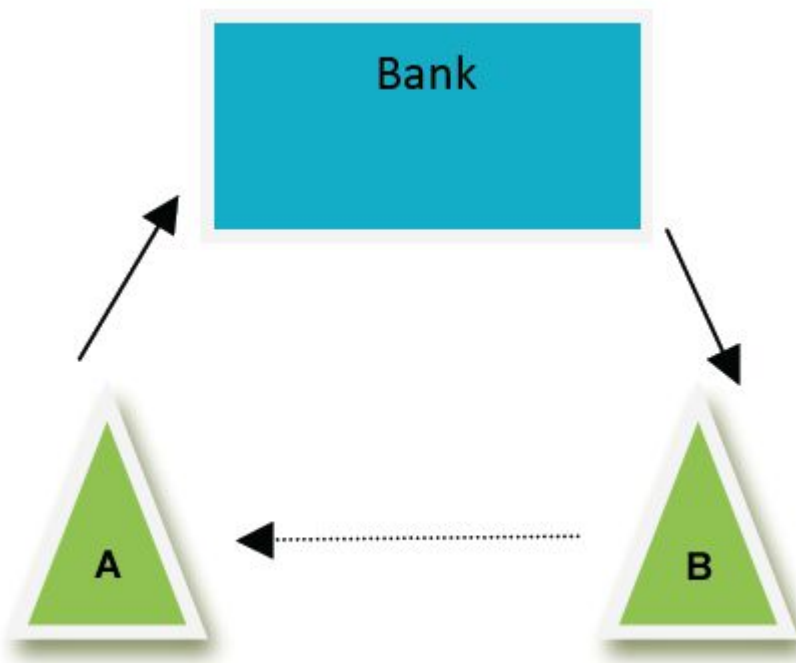
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Recently, there has been an intense debate in Europe on the [TARGET2 system](#) (Trans-European Automated Real-time Gross Settlement Express Transfer System 2), which is the joint gross clearing system of the eurozone.<sup>[1]</sup> The interpretation of this system and its balances has provoked divergent opinions. Some economists, most prominently Hans-Werner Sinn, have argued that TARGET2 amounts to a bailout system. Others have vehemently denied that. Jürgen Stark of the European Central Bank (ECB) even said that some commentators could lose their reputation as serious academics by claiming that TARGET2 functions as a bailout system.

Indeed, TARGET2 debits and credits have been built up since the beginning of the financial crisis. While peripheral countries accumulated TARGET2 debits, in April 2012 TARGET2 claims of the Bundesbank amounted to almost €644 billion. That is almost €8,000 per German.

But does TARGET2 really amount to an undercover bailout system for unsustainable living standards in the periphery? Let us start our analysis with a simple example of two individuals using a bank to clear their payments.



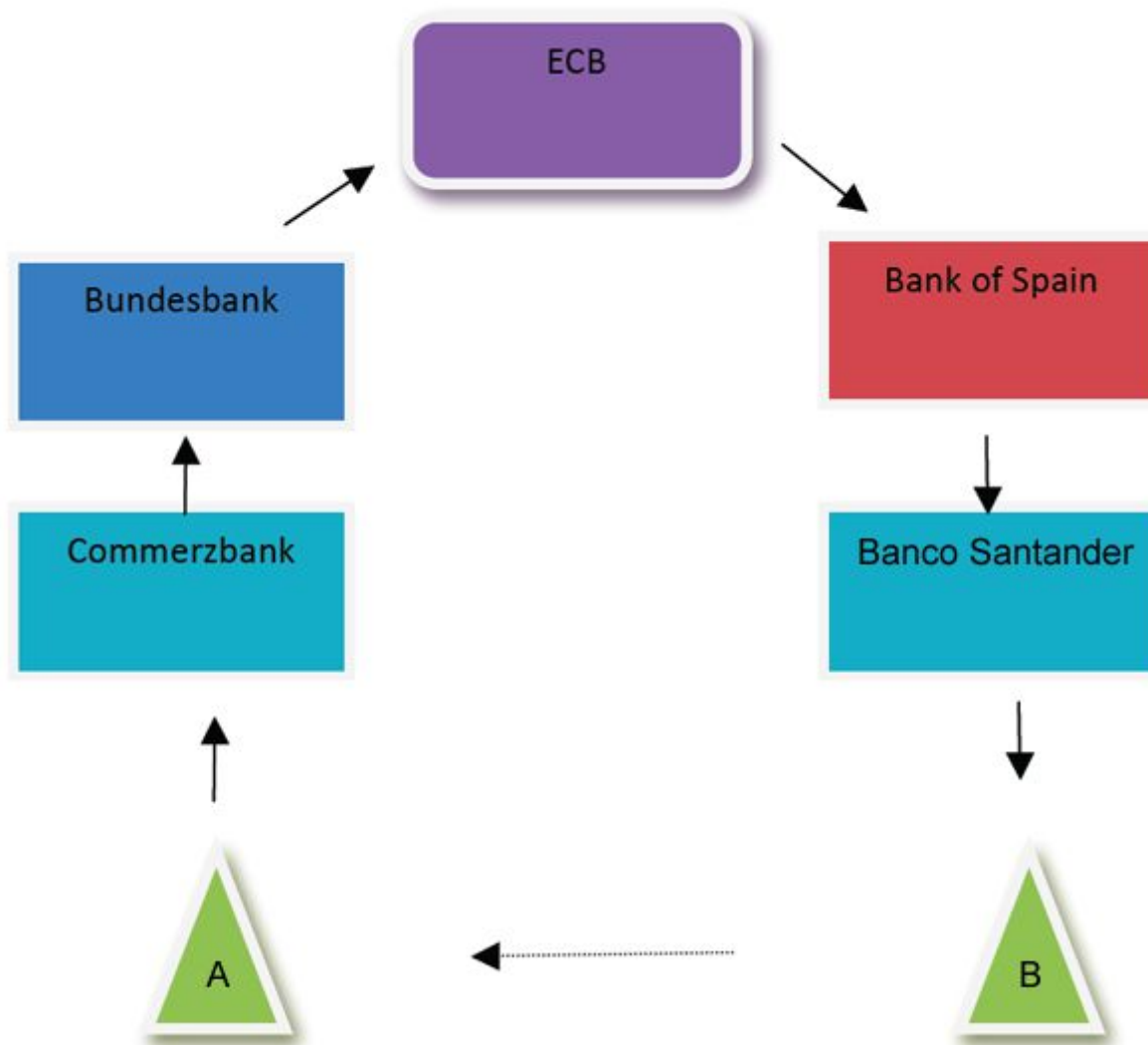
Person A sells a good or service to person B for €100. In international trade terms, A has a current account surplus while B has a current account deficit. A receives a claim or credit against the bank of €100 when the payment is made (the broken line in figure 1). B has a debt and owes the bank €100. The debt relationships are shown by solid arrows pointing in the direction of the debtor.

A now has some money saved in his bank that he may plan to use, for instance, for retirement. B has to produce something of value to be able to pay back his debt. A will finally be paid by B's production of real goods (that may maintain him at retirement).

For A it is important that the bank's loan to B is secured by a good guarantee or collateral such as a high-quality security or real estate. In the absence of collateral for B's loan, problems arise if B does not pay his debt because he dies or for other reasons. If the bank does not hold other property to make up for the bad loan, A will be left with a claim against a bankrupt bank.

Of course, if the bank has the privilege of printing (legal-tender) bank notes, the bank will not go bankrupt but can pay back A. But A will then be paid back merely in paper, a worthless claim in our scenario, because B has not produced anything and has died. So what should A buy with the newly printed paper? A's standard of living will fall at retirement as his wealth is based just on paper.

Let us now assume that A lives in Germany and B lives in Spain. Furthermore, we introduce Commerzbank as A's German bank, and Banco Santander as B's Spanish bank. In addition, we add the two national central banks and the ECB.



We again assume that A exports goods worth €100 to B. When the payment is made, A receives a claim against Commerzbank. A's bank account increases €100. B gets a €100 loan from Banco Santander (alternatively he could run down his deposit account at Banco Santander). Commerzbank gets a claim against the Bundesbank (or reduces its refinancing from it), while Banco Santander increases its refinancing with the Bank of Spain (or reduces its excess reserves).

On the level of central banks, the Bundesbank receives a credit against the ECB while the Bank of Spain gets a debit. Underlying this procedure is an import of goods to Spain that has been financed by Banco Santander creating new money in form of a loan to B. The money creation results in TARGET2 debits for the Bank of Spain and TARGET2 credits for the Bundesbank.

Let us compare the TARGET2 method with the financing of imports in a gold standard. In both systems, import surpluses may be financed by capital imports, i.e., A or Commerzbank buys a bond from B. If there is no private capital financing in a gold standard, the import must be paid by transferring gold. In contrast, in the Eurosystem, import surpluses can simply be financed by producing claims against the ECB. Instead of gold, the Bundesbank receives TARGET2 credits. While in a gold standard, the payment of imports (if not financed by private loans) is limited to the outflow of gold, there is no limit for TARGET2 credits, i.e., the import surpluses may be financed without any limit by the creation of Euro claims.

How do TARGET2 debits and credits disappear? The balances disappear if A imports from B or if B sells a bond to A or borrows from him on the private market. There is nothing to assert against financing the import surplus through private loans or bonds. TARGET2 debits, however, are not private loans but amount to public central-bank loans. Without TARGET2, someone in the Spanish economy would have had to find private investors to finance the trade deficit paying potentially high interest rates, especially if no high-quality collateral for such loans can be provided.

In this sense, the TARGET2 system indeed amounts to a bailout of an uncompetitive economy with too high prices. Thanks to this bailout mechanism, the country does not have to deregulate labor markets, and reduce government spending to adjust prices relatively but can continue its spending spree and maintain its uncompetitive internal structure.

But are the TARGET2 debits and credits really never settled? Surprisingly, there is indeed neither a limit for the TARGET2 bailouts, nor are the accounts ever settled. In contrast, in the Federal Reserve System debits are backed by gold certificates and each year balances are settled. If the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond has a debit with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the former settles its account sending gold certificates to the latter.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Eurosystem not only allows the financing of import surpluses via money creation; it also enables "capital flights." In the current situation, a default of the Greek government would bankrupt its banking system. In order to prevent losses, Greek depositors have sent and are sending their money from accounts at Greek banks to accounts of banks in Germany and other countries. Through this transfer, the Greek bank loses reserves while the German one increases its reserves. The Greek bank increases refinancing from its national central bank (i.e., receives newly created money) while the German bank can decrease its loans from the Bundesbank. The Bundesbank earns a TARGET2 credit, the Bank of Greece a TARGET2 debit. If the Greek government defaults, and the Bank of Greece default on its debits, losses mount for the ECB. Thus, the risk of a Greek default is now shared by German savers through the TARGET2 credit.

### What Is the Essence of TARGET2 Balances?

TARGET2 credits ultimately represent claims of savers, while TARGET2 debits represent debts of companies, governments, and individuals. TARGET2 accounts are just a consequence of an ongoing redistribution and of bailouts. For instance, TARGET2 accounts may mirror the [tragedy of the euro](#), i.e., the monetization of government deficits. Take the following example. A Spanish bank creates new money to buy a Spanish government bond. This allows the Spanish government to maintain its government spending and to delay reforms of the labor market. It may increase public-sector wages and unemployment benefits. The competitiveness of the Spanish economy is hampered due to too high wages resulting in a trade deficit: a Spanish minister buys a German car. In the beginning, the trade deficit may be financed by private entities, for instance, by loans from German banks to Spanish banks. Yet after some time the Spanish banks will run out of good collateral. The increasing government debts and the overindebtedness of the private sector reduce the quality of Spanish debt as collateral. At some point, private investors do not want to continue to finance Spanish banks and the Spanish trade deficit because they do not have good collateral (we are already beyond this point). Yet thanks to TARGET2 the party can continue. Spanish banks can use bad collateral (Spanish government bonds) and refinance with the Bank of Spain, which accepts Spanish government bonds as collateral for new loans. As a result of this indirect monetization of government bonds, TARGET2 debits to the ECB increase. Bad risks (collateral) are shifted to the Eurosystem and socialized. TARGET2 thereby allows to finance the trade deficit through public central bank loans.

Not only public debts may be monetized through the Eurosystem and their risk socialized through TARGET2 but also private debts. This possibility augmented importantly in February 2012, when the ECB allowed national central bank on their own risk to determine eligible collateral for central-bank loans.<sup>[3]</sup> Depending on the exact collateral rules, a Spanish bank may now loan to a Spanish company to import from Germany. The Spanish bank may take the loan to the importer as collateral for a new loan from the Bank of Spain (of course, applying a haircut). In this way, the private loan (in this case used for consumption), has been monetized. As an effect there will be also TARGET2 debits for the Bank of Spain and TARGET2 credits for the Bundesbank.

### What Are the Risks Exactly for a TARGET2 Credit Country Such as Germany?

If Greece leaves the euro, it most probably will not pay its debits to ECB with gold or hard assets. The ECB will suffer a loss, and through its capital contribution 27 percent of such a loss falls on the Bundesbank. If more countries leave the euro, the loss is correspondingly higher. In the opposite case of a German exit of the euro, the Bundesbank will suffer important losses if the new German currency appreciates as the Bundesbank's main



assets are now TARGET2 credits denominated in euros. Moreover, the remaining eurozone countries might resist paying for the TARGET2 credits.

But is the liquidation of TARGET2 credits a real loss? If we take our initial example of the two individuals with a clearing bank, the conclusion is straightforward. If B defaults, the bank goes bankrupt and A loses his savings. The same happens in the case of the Eurosystem. If the peripheral governments default, their banks default, their national central banks default and the ECB goes bankrupt. The Bundesbank then has a TARGET2 claim on the bankrupt ECB and goes bust too. Commerzbank loses its claims on the Bundesbank (or is not refinanced anymore) and defaults as well. Then the German saver is left with nothing but empty hands. The purpose of the visible bailouts of peripheral countries such as Greece is to maintain the illusion that no losses are to be suffered for savers in Germany and other countries.

But can the ECB or the Bundesbank really go bankrupt? Can they not always pay, just by printing more money? It is true that the ECB can always pay its bills by producing money. However, creating money does not take away the fact that the wealth is gone when the periphery defaults. It is like B not paying with real goods because he dies. A may receive new paper money from his bank, but this will not feed him through retirement. Unfortunately, as long as the European periphery remains uncompetitive relative to Germany, nothing will be produced to settle the German TARGET2 credits. Most likely, their real value is gone forever. To think that they will represent real wealth is an illusion that will be ended in one of three possible ways. The first is the already-mentioned inflation when the ECB just prints money to keep the system afloat.

Second, in the case of a peripheral default, the quality of the assets of the ECB is impaired, its capital consumed. The ECB loses options to reduce the quantity of money in circulation and defend the value of the euro. The ECB simply has no good assets to sell; they have evaporated. There is the danger that the confidence in the currency evaporates also, first on international currency markets and later internally. The value of the currency may collapse and the wealth illusion of currency holders and savers ends.

Third, another alternative is to recapitalize the ECB by transferring high-quality assets to it. The ECB can then use these assets to maintain confidence in the currency and defend its value. The recapitalization, of course, requires also an expropriation of wealth holders in Germany and other countries. After default and inflation, fiscal expropriation means an alternative end to the wealth illusion.

### TARGET2, Eurobonds, European Stability Mechanism: What Is the Difference?



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Eurobonds are jointly issued and guaranteed by all 17 eurozone members but have been very controversial. For instance, Eurobonds have been vehemently resisted by the German government until today. However, TARGET2 has not been resisted by the German government. TARGET2 is just the reflection of a substitute bailout. When governments issue bonds bought by their banks leading to a trade deficit, the result is a

TARGET2 debit. The TARGET2 imbalances are just a sign of euros created in the periphery used to pay for goods from abroad.

The European Stability Mechanism (ESM) is another substitute for Eurobonds, as the ESM may grant loans to struggling governments issuing bonds guaranteed collectively. The difference between the three is merely of degree. There is more parliamentary control for Eurobonds or the ESM. In the ESM, creditor countries have more control over bailouts than with Eurobonds. Interest rates differences are also more pronounced with the ESM than with Eurobonds. The ECB wants to shift the bailout burden from TARGET2 to the ESM. Governments prefer to hide the losses on taxpayers as long as possible and prefer the ECB to aliment deficits. However, all three devices serve as bailout systems and form a transfer union.

[Comment on this article.](#)

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Notes

[1] The best short introduction and analysis of TARGET2 may be found in Stefan Homburg, "Anmerkungen zum Target-2-Streit," *Wirtschaftsdienst*, volume 91, numer 3 (2011): pp. 536–530. Our analysis and graphs follow Homburg's line of argumentation closely.

[2] At least these rules appear in the Federal Reserve accounting manual. It seems, though, as if the Fed has suspended settlements ultimately. See Michiel Bijlsma and Jasper Lukkezen "[Target-2 of the ECB vs. Interdistrict Settlement Account of the Federal Reserve](#)" (2012).

[3] Jens Weidmann criticized the change in collateral rules and demanded collateral for TARGET2 debits in March 2012. However, only central banks and governments could provide good collateral such as gold for TARGET2 debits. Most banks have no good collateral left. Otherwise they would have used it to refinance themselves on the private markets and not through the Eurosystem with its low collateral standards.

## Europäische Krise

### Schuldentopf ohne Sachverstand

FAZ 19.06.2012 · Europa soll gemeinsam Anleihen ausgeben - das fordern viele Leute, auch der deutsche Wirtschafts-Sachverständigenrat hat ein ähnliches Konzept. Doch es richtet großen Schaden an.

Von [Heike Göbel](#)



© dpa Gemeinsame Anleihen als Rettung für die Währungsunion? Daran kann man mit Fug und Recht zweifeln

So viel Resonanz hat lange kein Vorschlag des Sachverständigenrats mehr gefunden. Der „[Schuldentilgungspakt](#)“ zieht Kreise, seit ihn die fahrlässig oft als „Weise“ bezeichneten Ökonomen vergangenen November in ihrem Gutachten überraschend als Ausweg aus der Euro-Schuldenkrise empfohlen. Auf fruchtbaren Boden fiel die Idee bei allen, die nach einem Weg suchen, den deutschen Widerstand gegen „Eurobonds“ zu brechen - gegen die komplette Vergemeinschaftung der Schulden im Euroraum durch gemeinsame Staatsanleihen. Schnell haben die Eurobonds-Trommler das Potential des neuen Vorschlags erkannt: Auch der Schuldentopf vom Sachverständigenrat eignet sich, **um das Prinzip zu untergraben, dass jedes Euroland für die Folgen verfehlter Wirtschafts- und Finanzpolitik selbst haftet. Das ist nicht irgendein Prinzip, sondern der tragende Pfeiler der Europäischen Währungsunion.**

### Gemeinsame Haftung für Zins und Tilgung

Die Zerstörungskraft sieht man der Idee zunächst nicht an. Der verführerische Name „Schuldentilgungspakt“ macht glauben, hier gehe es bloß um eine Stärkung der Haushaltsdisziplin. Man wird einigen Ökonomen des Rats auch zubilligen, dass dies ihre Absicht war. Doch gut gemeint ist noch lange nicht gut. Tatsächlich organisiert der Tilgungspakt einen großen Schuldentopf, in den Euroländer einen erheblichen Teil ihrer Altlasten - 2,3 Billionen Euro - abschieben könnten. Für Zins und Tilgung der Summe haften alle beteiligten Länder gemeinsam.

**Deswegen hat die Bundesbank jetzt kräftig Alarm geschlagen: Insgesamt stelle der Vorschlag „eine umfassende Einführung von gemeinschaftlicher Verschuldung in den nächsten Jahren da, ohne dass hiermit eine ausreichende Abgabe nationaler Souveränitätsrechte verbunden wäre“, schreibt sie in ihrem Monatsbericht.** Im Klartext: Der gemeinsamen Haftung steht kein entsprechender Einfluss auf das Finanzgebaren der beteiligten Euro-Staaten gegenüber. Die Commerzbank nennt das ganze schlicht „Eurobonds durch die Hintertür“. Auch der frühere Deutsche Bank-Chef Hilmar Kopper warnt mit drastischen Worten vor dem Pakt, der „neuerdings wie ein Zauberspruch“ verkauft werde, **aber dazu führe, dass „brave deutsche Steuerzahler für Gelder haften, die in Länder gepumpt werden, deren reiche Bürger es dann wieder raus schleppen.“**

### Wer säumt, fliegt raus?

Um der Ehre des Rats genüge zu tun: Die fünf Wirtschaftsprofessoren haben sich natürlich Vorkehrungen ausgedacht, die in der Theorie sicherstellen, dass alle Teilnehmer über ein Vierteljahrhundert brav Haushaltsdisziplin halten. Etwa so lange soll es nämlich dauern, bis die gebündelten Schulden getilgt sind. Danach soll der Schuldentopf auf Nimmerwiedersehen verschwinden. Als Gegenleistung für die Verbilligung

des Schuldendienstes - zu der die gemeinsame Haftung für die schlechten Schuldner führt, weil sie von der Bonität der guten wie Deutschland profitieren - sollen die Teilnehmer Devisen oder Gold als Pfand hinterlegen und die Steuern erhöhen. Wer säumt, fliegt raus.

Nichts davon dürfte den politischen Praxistest bestehen. Und weil alles schnell gehen soll - ohne Verfassungsänderungen oder gar Änderungen der EU-Verträge - gibt es keine zusätzliche rechtliche Verbindlichkeit, geschweige denn Durchgriffsmöglichkeiten auf die nationalen Haushalte. Es ist befremdlich, dass sich für ein derart windelweiches Konstrukt selbst Teile der FDP stark machen, allen voran Alexander Graf Lambsdorff. Der Chef der FDP-Fraktion im Europaparlament glaubt, der Pakt schaffe eine „echte Stabilitätskultur in Europa“.

## Blauäugig in die Welt gesetzt

Viel näher an Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit ist die Bundesbank, die selten so über Kreuz lag mit dem Sachverständigenrat. Sie befürchtet, dass der Pakt den Zinsdruck der Kapitalmärkte aushebelt. Mit der Haftungsübernahme entfalle daher für schwache Euroländer „der Druck der Kapitalmärkte und damit der zentrale Anreiz für solide Finanzpolitik.“ An die Befristung des Paktes glauben übrigens nicht mal seine Erfinder: In diesem relativ langen Zeitraum dürfte immer wieder die Versuchung bestehen, den Tilgungsfonds in eine permanente Einrichtung zu transformieren, schreibt der Rat. Auch spreche Erfahrung dagegen, dass nach oben verlagerte Kompetenzen in Föderalstaaten je zurückgegeben würden. Am planmäßigen Auslaufen hängt aber die Einschätzung, dass die Sache vom Grundgesetz gedeckt ist. Der Tilgungspakt sei verfassungsfest, weil er die deutsche Haftung zeitlich und im Umfang begrenze, argumentieren seine Befürworter.

Spätestens nach dem Widerspruch der Bundesbank sollte der Sachverständigenrat begreifen, welchen Schaden sein blauäugig in die Welt gesetztes Konzept anrichtet und in welchem Maße es instrumentalisiert wird. Der ehrwürdige Rat ist zum Kronzeugen verantwortungsloser Eurobonds-Befürworter geworden. Die sitzen nicht nur in Rom, Paris, Athen oder London, sondern auch in Berlin. SPD und Grüne treiben die Bundesregierung mit dem Modell vor sich her. Je schneller daher die Ökonomen ihren Tilgungspakt zurückziehen, desto besser für die Währungsunion. Diese wird nur bestehen, wenn der Zins als Indikator für die Qualität der Finanzpolitik in Kraft bleibt. Auch der Rat hat einen Ruf zu verlieren: Als Anwalt einer auf Stabilität angelegten marktwirtschaftlichen Ordnung, in der Risiko und Haftung zwingend zusammengehören.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

### An der Karlsruher Grenze

FAZ 18.06.2012 · Das Verfassungsgericht stuft die Rechte des Parlaments immer wieder hoch ein. Was das für den ESM heißt, darüber hat das Gericht nun entschieden. Über den Vertrag ist damit noch nichts gesagt.

Von [Reinhard Müller](#)



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#### Urteilsverkündung des Bundesverfassungsgerichts zu ESM und Euro-Plus-Pakt

So schlimm war es nun auch wieder nicht, was Joachim Gauck da in Brüssel über die Lippen kam. Gefragt nach den Plänen der Bundesregierung, den Euro-Rettungsschirm auszuweiten, und nach der Rolle Karlsruhes dabei, sagte der Bundespräsident im April: „Ich sehe das noch nicht, dass diese Bereitschaft der Regierung konterkariert werden wird vom Bundesverfassungsgericht.“

Nun hat das Bundesverfassungsgericht entschieden, und zwar genau, wie Gauck es nicht erwartet hatte. Die Bundestagsfraktion der Grünen hatte in Karlsruhe geklagt, weil sie sich in den Verhandlungen über den ESM und den sogenannten Euro-Plus-Pakt nicht ausreichend informiert sah. In diesen Fällen handelte die Regierung intergouvernemental und nicht nach den verfassungsrechtlichen Beteiligungsvorgaben, die für europäische Angelegenheiten gelten. Bisher hatte das Bundesverfassungsgericht stets eine möglichst starke parlamentarische Legitimation angemahnt.

#### Verfahren bisher selten „konterkariert“

Doch hat es zugleich die Politik der Bundesregierung(en) bisher nicht grundlegend „konterkariert“ - so dass man in der Äußerung des Bundespräsidenten eine Prognose auf gesicherter Tatsachengrundlage sehen kann. Zwar haben die Richter des Zweiten Senats in Karlsruhe manches Regierungsmitglied und auch manchen Parlamentarier zur Weißglut getrieben. Doch sie blockierten nicht die europäische Integration. Das Bundesverfassungsgericht äußerte weder gegen den Vertrag von Lissabon noch gegen die Euro-Rettung prinzipielle Einwände. Wohl aber gegen die überkommene Art und Weise exekutivischer Europapolitik.

Das Parlament muss demnach die wesentlichen Entscheidungen treffen - wie übrigens auch auf anderen Feldern. Und sogar die Befugnisse des Parlaments sind nicht grenzenlos: Sollte sich Deutschland dereinst einem europäischen Bundesstaat eingliedern, also seine souveräne Staatlichkeit aufgeben, so müsse darüber das Volk entscheiden.

#### Größere Maßnahmen müssen bewilligt werden

Natürlich lässt sich darüber sehr gut streiten - etwa ob sich diese Grenze so einfach setzen lässt. Da mag Gerichtspräsident Andreas Voßkuhle noch so sehr betonen, wie etwa in der mündlichen Verhandlung im vergangenen Juli zur Euro-Rettung: „Es geht um den Rechtsrahmen.“ Die Karlsruher Richter hätten „die Grenzen auszuloten, die das Grundgesetz der Politik setzt“. Dabei kam für die Euro-Rettung heraus: Die Entscheidung über Einnahmen und Ausgaben der öffentlichen Hand muss in der Hand des Bundestages bleiben. Dem Parlament ist es untersagt, finanzwirksame Mechanismen zu begründen, „die zu nicht



überschaubaren haushaltsbedeutsamen Belastungen ohne erneute konstitutive Zustimmung des Bundestages führen können“.

Es ist dem Gesetzgeber auch verwehrt, „dauerhafte völkervertragsrechtliche Mechanismen zu etablieren, die auf eine Haftungsübernahme für Willensentscheidungen anderer Staaten hinauslaufen“. Vor allem, so fügt das Verfassungsgericht hinzu, „wenn sie mit schwer kalkulierbaren Folgewirkungen verbunden sind“. Jede „ausgabenwirksame solidarische Hilfsmaßnahme des Bundes größeren Umfangs“ muss demnach vom Bundestag im Einzelnen bewilligt werden.

## **Detaillierte Vorgaben**

Gleichwohl kam das Gericht zu dem Schluss, dass die Beurteilung des Gesetzgebers, die damaligen Gewährleistungsermächtigungen in Höhe von insgesamt rund 170 Milliarden Euro seien für den Bundeshaushalt tragbar, nicht seinen Einschätzungsspielraum überschreite. Diese Rechtsprechung setzte sich damit fort, dass die Karlsruher Richter das Neuner-Gremium untersagten, auf das das Parlament Entscheidungen zur Euro-Rettung delegieren wollte.

Was heißt das nun für die Rechte des Bundestages - wenn etwa die Regierung intergouvernemental handelt, wie beim ESM, und nicht nach den verfassungsrechtlichen Beteiligungsvorgaben, die für europäische Angelegenheiten gelten? Diese sind nämlich recht detailliert und regeln eine parlamentarische Mitwirkung; demgegenüber kann der Bundestag völkerrechtliche Entscheidungen nur noch nachträglich billigen oder ablehnen.

## **„Regierung braucht freie Hand“**

Die Regierung pocht demgegenüber darauf, freie Hand bei solchen Verhandlungen zu benötigen und darauf, dass auf sensiblen finanzwirksamen Feldern nicht jede Überlegung öffentlich gemacht wird. Schließlich, so die Bundesregierung, gebe es auch zahlreiche „Non-Papers“, die nur eine Halbwertszeit von wenigen Stunden hätten. Die Regierung habe sich bemüht, die Rechte des Parlaments zu wahren, ohne die eigene Position zu schwächen. Der ESM wurde demnach bewusst außerhalb der EU-Strukturen gehalten.

Freilich wiesen die Grünen darauf hin, dass die Entwürfe für den ESM die EU-Kommission geschrieben habe - „und das soll nichts mit der EU zu tun haben?“. Es sei aber der Öffentlichkeit nicht vermittelbar, dass Maßnahmen zur Euro-Rettung keine Angelegenheit der EU sein sollen. Das österreichische Parlament habe den deutschen Kollegen „Amtshilfe“ geleistet und Entwürfe zur Verfügung gestellt. Die österreichische Regierung, so sehen es jedenfalls die deutschen Grünen, habe eine stärkere Position wegen des starken Parlaments. „Alle hatten die Dokumente, nur der Deutsche Bundestag nicht.“

## **Verständnis für beide Seiten**

Informierte Mitwirkung wünschen die Kläger, die der Regierung durchaus ihre Sphäre des Handelns lassen wollen. Die Richter des Zweiten Senats zeigten in der mündlichen Verhandlung für beide Seiten Verständnis - also auch für die unter dauerhaftem Handlungszwang stehende Regierung. Doch dürfte der Zweite Senat seiner Linie treu bleiben, die zentrale Rolle des Bundestags hervorzuheben. Versuche, das Parlament zu umgehen, haben damit keine Chance.

Über den Inhalt des ESM ist damit noch nichts gesagt. Deutschland hat noch nicht ratifiziert, deshalb konnte noch niemand Karlsruhe einschalten. Doch sind schon Verfassungsbeschwerden angekündigt. Es fällt auf, dass mehr darüber diskutiert wird, wann der ESM-Vertrag ratifiziert wird, ob mit Fiskalpakt und Finanztransaktionssteuer oder nicht. Über seinen Inhalt wird auffallend wenig geredet.

Dabei sehen Fachleute darin eine unbefristete und unwiderrufliche Ermächtigung der Finanzminister der Euro-Gruppe, deutsches Steuergeld zu fordern. Das könnte in die verfassungsmäßig garantierte Haushaltsautonomie des Deutschen Bundestages eingreifen, die das Bundesverfassungsgericht zuletzt so stark hervorgehoben hat. Ist wirklich sichergestellt, dass der Deutsche Bundestag jede grundlegende Entscheidung trifft? Oder liegt hier

nicht genau der von den Karlsruher Richtern als grundgesetzwidrig gerügte Mechanismus vor, der zu „nicht überschaubaren Belastungen führt“? Das sollte sich auch der Bundestag noch überlegen. Sonst könnte sich die Prognose von Bundespräsident Gauck als falsch erweisen - und Karlsruhe Berlin wieder einmal in die Schranken weisen.

Jetzt geht es um „informierte Mitwirkung“, bald um nicht überschaubare Belastungen.

Quelle: F.A.Z.



# Le PS sans majorité avec la proportionnelle intégrale

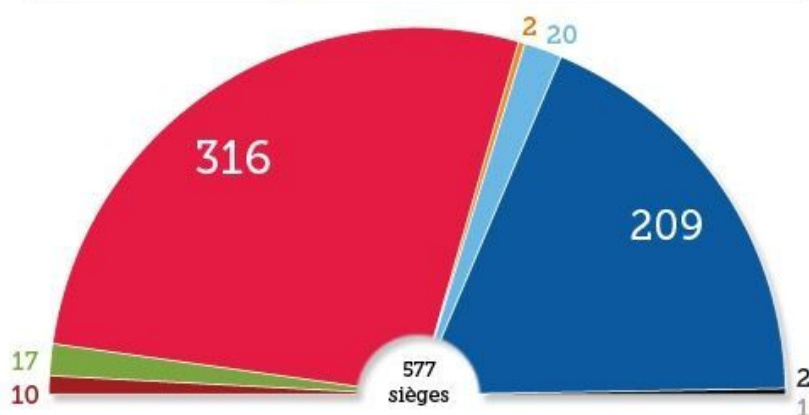
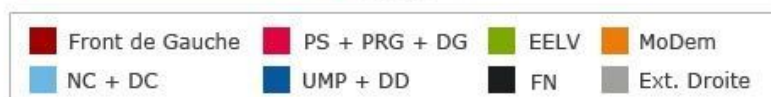
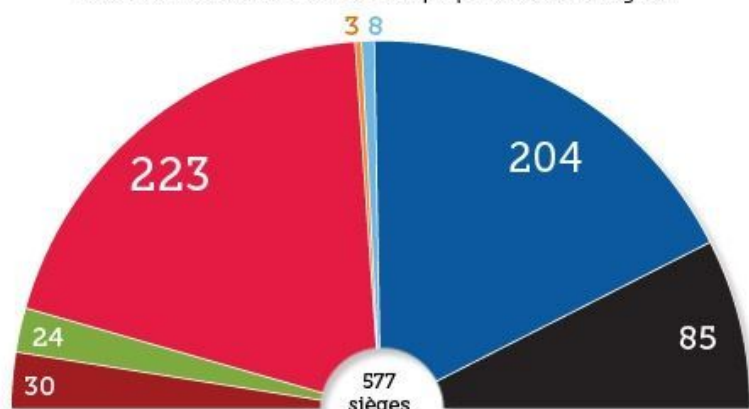
Le Figaro Par [Tristan Vey](#) Publié le 19/06/2012 à 12:18 [Réactions](#) (3)

**INFOGRAPHIE - Le scrutin uninominal à deux tours renforce le bipartisme. Une simulation de proportionnelle intégrale montre que le FN aurait récolté 85 sièges et le Front de gauche 30.**

Faut-il introduire la proportionnelle aux législatives? Le [débat revient à chaque élection](#). Les Verts, le Front de gauche et le FN y sont favorables. Il faut dire qu'en l'absence d'accord avec les deux grands partis majoritaires, le PS et l'UMP, ces formations politiques peinent à se faire représenter. Le Front de gauche n'a que dix députés, insuffisant pour constituer un groupe parlementaire, et le FN deux. Les deux partis avaient pourtant rassemblé respectivement 6,9% et 13,6% des suffrages au premier tour. En revanche, grâce à l'accord conclu avec le PS, Europe écologie - Les Verts, dont le score national n'est que de 5,5%, a réussi à faire élire 17 de ses candidats.

Après ce constat, qui fait écho aux revendications de plusieurs partis pour une meilleure prise en compte de leur poids politique réel à l'Assemblée, *Le Figaro* vous propose de visualiser le visage d'une Assemblée élue au scrutin proportionnel plurinominal départemental à un tour. En d'autres termes, quand les partis présentent dans chaque département une liste de candidats pour les différents sièges à pourvoir plutôt qu'un candidat dans chaque circonscription comme c'est le cas aujourd'hui (scrutin majoritaire uninominal à deux tours). Nous nous sommes basés sur les résultats du premier tour en introduisant dans chaque département un seuil de représentation lié au nombre de postes disponibles (10% des suffrages dans un département de 5 sièges, 5% dans un département à 10 sièges, 2,5% si 20 sièges sont à pourvoir, etc). Les résultats, à prendre avec prudence dans la mesure où le changement du mode de scrutin pourrait modifier les pratiques de vote, sont présentés ci-dessous:

Projection de l'Assemblée Nationale  
si le mode de scrutin avait été la proportionnelle intégrale



Assemblée Nationale élue le 17 juin 2012  
selon le scrutin majoritaire uninominal à deux tours

Les enseignements que l'on peut tirer de cette simulation sont nombreux. Tout d'abord, le scrutin proportionnel aurait été bien plus défavorable à la gauche qu'à la droite (près de 90 sièges perdus contre 25). Dans cette configuration, le gouvernement Ayrault n'aurait même pas pu s'appuyer sur ses alliés EELV et Front de Gauche pour obtenir la majorité absolue. En 1986, seule fois où le scrutin proportionnel avait été mis en place pour des législatives dans la Ve - dans une forme départementale proche de celle envisagée ici -, l'objectif de François Mitterrand était au contraire de limiter la casse chez les socialistes et d'éviter une majorité écrasante de la droite. La proportionnelle intégrale semblerait donc, de façon plus générale, porter préjudice au parti majoritaire.

### **Simulation avec une dose de proportionnelle**

Les grands gagnants de ce mode de scrutin sont à chercher aux extrêmes de l'échiquier. Le Front de gauche compte dans notre simulation 30 députés élu ; le FN, 85! Le parti d'extrême-droite serait d'ailleurs devenu l'incontournable arbitre de l'Assemblée. En 1986 déjà, [35 députés frontistes avaient bénéficié de la proportionnelle intégrale](#). Sans nul doute une des raisons qui avait poussé Jacques Chirac à revenir au scrutin uninominal à deux tours dès sa prise de fonction à Matignon.

Si la proportionnelle intégrale peut effrayer, pourquoi ne pas envisager une dose de proportionnelle? La formule était notamment défendue par François Hollande et Nicolas Sarkozy pendant la présidentielle. D'après [les calculs de FTVi](#), si 100 des 577 députés avaient été élus à la proportionnelle, le FN n'aurait eu «que» 19 sièges, le Front de gauche 16. Là encore, c'est le PS et ses alliés (à l'exception d'EELV) qui en auraient principalement fait les frais.

### Karlsruhe befreit das Parlament aus der Rolle des Bettlers

19.06.2012, 12:04

*Ein Kommentar von Heribert Prantl*

Die Parlamente sind nicht die Bettler unter dem europäischen Tisch, die darauf warten müssen, welche Krümel herunterfallen. In diese Rolle drängt sie die EU-Krisenpolitik. Das Verfassungsgericht erklärt Merkel nun, dass repräsentative Demokratie nicht darin besteht, dass sie allein Repräsentantin ist. Mit einer fulminanten Entscheidung holt es die Parlamente wieder an den Tisch - dorthin, wo sie in einer Demokratie hingehören. Denn Politik lebt vom Vertrauen der Menschen, nicht vom Vertrauen der Märkte.

Auf dem Weg nach [Europa](#) leidet die [Demokratie](#); sie leidet so wie der Euro: Jede Aktion, die die Währung kräftigen soll, entkräftet die Parlamente. Am Europäischen Parlament gehen die Rettungsmaßnahmen komplett vorbei; die europäischen Volksvertreter sind nur Zuschauer.



Die Regierung hat mit dem Rettungsschirm die Bundestagsrechte verletzt - so entschied es der Zweite Senat beim Bundesverfassungsgericht in Karlsruhe: die Richter (v.l.) Sibylle Kessal-Wulf, Monika Hermanns, Michael Gerhardt, Peter Huber, Andreas Voßkuhle (Vorsitz), Gertrude Lübke-Wolff, Herbert Landau und Peter Müller bei der Urteilsverkündung. (© dpa)

Den nationalen Parlamenten geht es wenig besser; die dortigen Volksvertreter dürfen immerhin genehmigen, was ihre Regierungen beschlossen haben. Der Deutsche [Bundestag](#) darf jeweils "passt schon" sagen zu dem, was eigentlich nicht passt: zur Entparlamentarisierung der Politik, die im Lauf der Euro-Krise vom schleichenden ins galoppierende Stadium übergegangen ist.

In Deutschland stellt sich das [Bundesverfassungsgericht](#) dieser Tendenz zur Entparlamentarisierung entgegen. Immer und immer wieder mahnen und warnen die höchsten Richter, dass aus [Europa](#) keine antiparlamentarische Veranstaltung werden darf. Sie versuchen, Entscheidung für Entscheidung, das Parlament wieder in seine Rechte einzusetzen. [Soeben haben sie es wieder getan, einstimmig und besonders eindringlich.](#)

Die Verfassungsrichter erklären der Kanzlerin, dass die repräsentative [Demokratie](#) nicht darin besteht, dass sie allein die Repräsentantin ist. Sie erklären der Bundesregierung, dass der Bundestag weder Störer noch Zuschauer bei der Politik ist, sondern ihr Mitgestalter - dass der Bundestag deshalb über europäische Pakte, Verträge, Aktionen und Maßnahmen rechtzeitig und umfassend informiert werden muss. [Karlsruhe](#) proklamiert so etwas wie ein Grundrecht des Parlaments auf umfassende Kommunikation in allen europäischen Angelegenheiten.

## Demokratie ist keine exklusive Veranstaltung

Die Parlamente sind nicht die Bettler unter dem europäischen Tisch, die darauf warten müssen, welche Krümel vom Tisch des Rates herunterfallen. In diese Rolle drängt sie die europäische Politik, diese Rolle weist die Merkel-Politik den Bundestagsabgeordneten zu. Das [Bundesverfassungsgericht](#) setzt sie wieder an den Tisch - dorthin, wo sie in einer Demokratie hingehören.

Demokratie ist keine exklusive Veranstaltung. Wenn in europäischen Angelegenheiten die Volksvertreter ausgeschlossen werden, muss man sich nicht wundern, wenn das Volk erst murt und dann rebelliert. Es geht um das Vertrauen in den demokratischen Prozess: Die Wertschöpfungsanlage für dieses Vertrauen ist das Parlament.

## Wer Parlamente abschaltet, verstärkt die Krise

Vor einem knappen Jahr, bei der Entscheidung zum Euro-Stabilisierungsmechanismus, haben die Richter - wie schon früher in den Urteilen zu den Verträgen von Maastricht und Lissabon - gefordert, dass dem Deutschen [Bundestag](#) "Aufgaben und Befugnisse von substantiellem Gewicht verbleiben" müssen. Man könnte, ob der Vielzahl der einschlägigen Urteile, das Gefühl haben, dass es sich um vergebliche Liebesmüh handelt.

Ganz so ist es nicht: Beim Fiskalpakt, um den derzeit im [Bundestag](#) gerungen wird, hat die Regierung, eingedenk der andauernden Mahnungen des [Bundesverfassungsgerichts](#), die parlamentarischen Beteiligungsrechte, die die Richter jetzt wieder einfordern, schon beachtet.

Erstens: Keine Zeit, keine Zeit. Zweitens: Noch schneller noch mehr Milliarden ausgeben. Drittens: Keine Rücksichten nehmen auf Parlamente, die Märkte sind wichtiger. Viertens: Die alten demokratischen Regeln sind untauglich für das neue [Europa](#). Nach diesen Geboten ist nun gut zwei Jahre EU-Krisen- und Euro-Rettungspolitik betrieben worden.

## Ein Urteil, das ein dramatischer Appell ist

Es war keine gute Politik. Erfolg hatte sie auch nicht. Sie hat sich viel um das Vertrauen der Märkte, aber wenig um das Vertrauen der Menschen gekümmert.

Das Urteil des [Bundesverfassungsgerichts](#) zu [ESM](#) und zum Euro-Plus-Pakt ist ein eindringlicher, dramatischer und richtiger Appell: Demokratie ist keine Veranstaltung nur für gute Zeiten. Sie muss sich auch in Krisenzeiten bewähren. Wer die Parlamente - zur angeblichen Bewältigung von Krisen - umgeht oder abschaltet, der verstärkt die Krise, die er bewältigen will.

URL:

<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/esm-urteil-des-bundesverfassungsgerichts-karlsruhe-befreit-das-parlament-aus-der-rolle-des-bettlers-1.1386876>

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# Biderman On Europe: "Germany Must Say No To Greece, Spain, & Italy"



zerohedge, Submitted by [Tyler Durden](#) on 06/18/2012 20:48 -0400

- [Charles Biderman](#)

*After offering his condolences for the loss today of Dan Dorfman, Charles Biderman, of TrimTabs, takes the Greeks (and Germans) to task. Charles remains long-term bearish on European stocks (and the big US banks). Greeks, it appears from Charles perspective, want to stay in the Euro but on easier terms. This, at first glance, perplexes the less-than-sanguine Sausalitan, given the disastrous economic situation they remain in. However, on reflection, Biderman realizes that the simple fact is that **the Greeks like the ability to borrow money to pay their bills and even better, never having to repay the loan** - which makes perfect sense. If the Germans are willing to keep lending to Greece, even if most goes to repay old loans, then Greeks keep getting *some* new cash - which would disappear if the Greeks left the Euro. This situation, he opines, would seem 'horrible' as **"Greeks might have to go and do something for a living and even pay some taxes"**. Concluding on the three types of creditors that exist, it is little wonder that the Greeks, in their ponzi state, would want to keep the dream alive and hold the M.A.D. grenade over Germany's head just a little longer. The **brutal truth is that Greece (and Spain and Italy) will take as much cash as they can until there is no more given and then-and-only-then will they act for change**. The disastrous end-result will be the same as if Germany left the Euro and first mover advantage in this case may well prove exceptionally valuable.*

[Video here:](#)

<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/biderman-europe-germany-must-say-no-greece-spain-italy>

# Kommentar: Wildwest in Europa

FAS 16.06.2012 · Staatliche Souveränität ist ein hohes Gut. Man darf sie nicht der Krise opfern. Doch genau das droht in Europa zu geschehen. Dabei gäbe es eine bessere Alternative.

Von [Rainer Hank](#)

Mitten in einer Nacht des Jahres 1876 bekommt Seth Bullock, der Sheriff von Lewis and Clark County in Montana, Besuch von einem Mob aufgebrachter Bürger. Sie fordern die Auslieferung des bereits abgeurteilten Pferdediebs Clell Watson, der im Gefängnis auf seine Hinrichtung wartet. Es entwickelt sich Streit darum, wer den Delinquenten exekutieren darf: Der Mob sinnt auf Lynchjustiz; der Sheriff auf Staatsvollzug. Von zornigen Männern umzingelt, vollzieht Bullock kurzerhand die Strafe an Ort und Stelle: Er legt dem Kriminellen eine Schlinge um den Hals und lässt ihn auf einen Schemel steigen, den er selbst wegtritt. Den Mob kann Bullock nur mit einem Gewehr in Schach halten - den Rechtsstaat aber hat er gerettet.

Die Geschichte von Seth Bullock ist die Urszene der Souveränität (nacherzählt in einer gerade erschienenen Studie des Philosophen Daniel Loick). Dem Pferdedieb ist ziemlich wurscht, wer ihn zur Strecke bringt; dem Rechtsstaat aber kann das nicht egal sein. Er und nur er verfügt über das Gewaltmonopol, das nicht nur Polizei und Militär, sondern zum Beispiel auch das Recht, Steuern einzutreiben (eine Art Zwangsenteignung) umfasst. Nur der Staatsgewalt (einerlei ob durch Gott, Geburt oder das Volk legitimiert) billigen wir dieses Recht zu. Staatssouveränität ist der Preis, den wir zahlen zur Vermeidung des permanenten Bürgerkriegs (Mob!).

## Nicht nur das Prinzip Haftung erodiert

In der Staatsschulden- und Euro-Krise erodiert nicht nur das Prinzip Haftung, sondern, bislang nur unzureichend wahrgenommen, auch die strikte Achtung der Souveränitätsrechte. Wer aus dem Schuldensumpf „gerettet“ werden will, wer gar seine Schulden vergemeinschaften lassen will (Eurobonds), müsse auch bereit sein, nationale Souveränität abzugeben, heißt es. Mit anderen Worten: Über die Staatsausgaben (die Löhne der Beamten) oder die Staatseinnahmen (Steuern und Abgaben) entscheidet dann nicht mehr die demokratisch gewählte nationale Regierung. In der Euro-Krise wollen die Südländer (allen voran der Grieche Alexis Tsipras) vor allem die Schulden vergemeinschaften, ihre Souveränität aber nicht kastrieren lassen, während die Nordländer (allen voran die Deutschen) den Souveränitätsverzicht zur Voraussetzung für Transferinstitutionen (Bankenunion) machen.

Bundesbankpräsident Jens Weidmann geht noch weiter, wenn er jetzt für eine Fiskalunion plädiert (fairerweise als „Second-best-Lösung“), in der ein Land „automatisch“ seine Souveränität verliert, wenn es sich nicht an die Haushaltsregeln hält. Das Souveränitätsrecht soll dann eine „unabhängige EWU-Institution“ (also keine Regierung) übernehmen, die „umfassend demokratisch legitimiert“ (wie immer das gehen soll) sein müsse. In Wirklichkeit ist das die Aushebelung der Souveränität, die vom Grundsatz „Keine Besteuerung ohne Mitbestimmung“ (no taxation without representation) lebt. Die Delegation der Fiskalgewalt an eine anonyme EWU-Institution (einen Diktator-Apparat) ist das hilflose Eingeständnis eines Souveränitätsdefizits. Symptom dafür ist, dass bei Weidmann (ein „Schlimmeresverhinderer“) aus dem liberalen Begriffspaar „Haftung und Entscheidung“ die autoritäre Doppelung „Haftung und Kontrolle“ geworden ist. Wer nationale Souveränität demontiert, muss Bürgerkrieg und Mob fürchten.

Die bessere Alternative traut sich offenbar niemand mehr auszusprechen: Die Deutschen sollen aufhören, anderen Staaten ihre Souveränität zu stehlen. Doch wer Souveränität behält, muss auch für seine Entscheidungen (seine Schulden! seine Banken!) gradestehen und darf sich nicht aus der Verantwortung stehlen. Das Prinzip Souveränität und das No-Bail-out-Prinzip gehören zwingend zusammen. No-Bail-out ist kein unsolidarischer Anschlag auf Europa, sondern, ganz im Gegenteil, die Einhaltung des Erbes der europäischen Aufklärung und ihres Souveränitätsprinzips.



06/18/2012 05:17 PM

## Interview with World Bank President Robert Zoellick

### 'Time Is of the Essence' in the Euro Crisis

World Bank President Robert Zoellick believes Europe needs to be more decisive in its response to the euro crisis. In an interview with SPIEGEL, he speaks of his sympathy for German reluctance to bail out its neighbors and explains why Chancellor Angela Merkel needs to take the lead.

**SPIEGEL:** Mr. Zoellick, as World Bank president your core mission is to promote developing nations. But currently we see developed nations in economic crisis while developing nations are booming. Has success in the global economy shifted?

**Zoellick:** Whether the issue is trade or development or investment, countries that used to be considered the 'third world' and cases for charity are now very influential players, such as China, India, or Brazil and parts of Africa. There still are many poor people in those countries, but their growth and their success can help. Developing countries have provided two-thirds of global growth over the past five years.

**SPIEGEL:** We are currently witnessing an economic slowdown, even in India and China. But emerging nations seem to be much less affected by the aftermath of the global financial crisis that has hit Europe and the US so hard.

**Zoellick:** Developing countries have recovered better, but they recognize the need to continue to adjust. Look at China: This is a country that had grown 10 percent a year for 30 years and yet Chinese policy-makers are recognizing that the current model of growth will not work for the next 30 years. So the Chinese are starting to consider changes, such as opening up the service sector, changing the nature of the state-owned enterprises and launching fiscal reforms. When this global crisis hit, many developing countries were quicker than developed countries in understanding the need for structural reforms. There is an irony that the need for structural reforms is well understood in emerging markets, but in the US and Europe, people are not paying enough attention to the need for structural reforms for future productivity.

**SPIEGEL:** When representatives of developing nations meet European counterparts, they must think: "Oh, you were the countries lecturing us before, and now look what difficulties you are in."

**Zoellick:** As important as the economic challenges for Europe may be, the political stakes are even higher. For the past 60 years, the international order has been loosely guided by the trilateral system, consisting of the US, Europe and Japan. In the case of Europe, its influence and ability to shape ideas globally is at stake.

**SPIEGEL:** Has the global balance already shifted? The European Union has gone as far as to ask China for contributions to the Euro rescue fund.

**Zoellick:** I think that was a mistake. That is not how to work with China -- it showed weakness. Also, the average per capita income in China is about \$5,000 a year. In Europe, it is close to \$40,000 a year. So it would be hard for Chinese leaders to explain to their people why China is bailing out Europe when they still have about one-eighth the income. On the other hand, Chinese investments in the private sector could be of mutual benefit.

**SPIEGEL:** If the euro were to fail, could Europe remain an influential global player?

**Zoellick:** That would depend how it happened. Europe was a player on the international stage before it had a common currency. But having created a common currency, the spectacular failure of that project could significantly undermine the European project and lead to the re-nationalization of policies in Europe. That would be a big backward step and decrease the EU's global influence.



**SPIEGEL:** What impact would Greece's departure from the euro zone have?

**Zoellick:** Nobody knows. I wrote a piece suggesting it could be like a "Lehman moment." I meant that no one could have predicted in advance all the aftershocks of the failure of Lehman Brothers. Some countries in southeastern Europe have 30 percent of their deposits in Greek banks. However, the uncertainty does not mean other Europeans should give the Greeks whatever they want. If the Greek government threatens others with departure, the rest of the euro zone needs to have tools to be prepared to cope with the exit.

**SPIEGEL:** Legendary investor George Soros has warned that Europe has only three months window to overhaul its institutions. Would you agree?

**Zoellick:** I am uncomfortable with such predictions. But time is of the essence. I will give you examples: The European Commission is sitting on over €80 billion of cohesion and structural funds. If I were running the European Commission, I would have meetings every morning and every night, trying to figure out how I could move that money out more quickly to help people. Additional capital for the European Investment Bank could create demand and also political support for countries taking tough reform decisions. Deeper integration of the service sector markets could boost productivity and opportunities while strengthening the single market. The EU could make the movement of people easier. The EU is never going to have labor mobility like the United States because of language differences. But there are things the EU can do to help people to be able to move to where the jobs are.

**SPIEGEL:** In dealing with the euro crisis, the Europeans take many steps -- but most of them seem half-hearted.

**Zoellick:** They seem a day too late and a euro short. In general, the European response to this crisis has been to rely on additional liquidity when pushed to the brink. The ECB has bought time, but the time must be used. Countries have to address the underlying fundamental issues.

**SPIEGEL:** What else needs to be done?

**Zoellick:** If contagion strikes, euro-zone leaders need to be prepared - psychologically and through the European Stability Mechanism -- to recapitalize banks. Governments would have to guarantee bank deposits. They have to urge banks to make loans to business borrowers. It is far from clear that euro-zone leaders have steeled themselves for these steps if a crisis hits with full force.

**SPIEGEL:** It is hard to find quick, common solutions when one has to coordinate among 17 independent governments.

**Zoellick:** The European political process waits until pushed to the brink, and then Europe finds a partial solution. That is not sufficient. Time is now of the essence. The challenge in the euro crisis is not only Greece, but Spain and Italy. Spain and Italy are big. They are influential. Governments in both countries are trying to do the right things, but they are losing political support.

**SPIEGEL:** Meanwhile, support for further bailout measures is slipping in Germany. Half of Germans now think that the euro is more of a negative.

**Zoellick:** My own economic philosophy leads me to have very strong sympathies with the concerns in Germany. Frankly, if I were a German citizen, I would be very frustrated about other people that had not taken steps to reform their economies.

**SPIEGEL:** With that in mind, how would you go about convincing German voters to agree to more bailout money?

**Zoellick:** Germany has a strategic aim to deepen the integration of Europe with sound economic policies and the right disciplines going forward. Germany has to lead this process. For historical reasons, Germans are reluctant to do so. As soon as Germany leads, some people criticize Germany for being too pushy. But Berlin

has to do it anyway. Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski gave a remarkable speech a few months ago. He said: "We have moved into a different era and a different phase. We need Germany to assume a leadership role."

**SPIEGEL:** Has Chancellor Angela Merkel been too reluctant to lead?

**Zoellick:** I have a lot of respect for Chancellor Merkel. I have known her since she was an opposition leader. I think she is highly intelligent. I also think she has been very effective as a politician in taking the pulse of the German public.

**SPIEGEL:** Are you trying to say she is a mere politician, not a leader?

**Zoellick:** I do not put down politicians. People who get elected take on responsibilities, and we need a mixture of policy and politics, as we have seen elsewhere in the world. Technocrats do not succeed without political skills. However, I think it is very important to speak up as a leader and to clearly explain what Germany's strategic aims are in the euro crisis.

**SPIEGEL:** And what should a German vision for Europe look like?

**Zoellick:** Germany needs to continue to emphasize fiscal and structural reforms. It can do so while fostering deeper integration. But Germany also needs to be clearer about how it will assist reforming countries as they take the necessary steps. Step-by-step, Germany is offering a lot. But it loses the political value by not getting ahead of the crisis and explaining what it will do if reforms are made.

**SPIEGEL:** Many Germans are concerned that the countries in crisis will simply take the aid money and postpone reforms indefinitely.

**Zoellick:** Spain and Italy are undertaking very difficult reforms. These are the types of reforms that German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble and others have welcomed. These reforms will take time to show their benefits, because they involve both fiscal consolidation and structural reforms. So you need to balance these medium-term reforms with a medium-term assurance of finance.

**SPIEGEL:** A blank check from Germany can't be the solution. The worst case scenario could make Germany responsible for \$500 billion in debt.

**Zoellick:** There are many options. I would not favor blanket euro bonds either, because then you lose the discipline of the market. However, there have been proposals to use euro bonds for debt up to 60 percent of GDP, so that any amount that countries borrow above that depends on national credit.

One could also draw from US history, the so-called Hamiltonian model. After our Revolutionary War, Alexander Hamilton, as the new Treasury Secretary, had the new United States assume the debts of the states once. Since then, our states have had to rely on their own credit. In the 19th century, we had states in the US that defaulted. Europe could introduce a similar system. I believe the Breugel Institute and the Chancellor have also suggested joint financing of states' debts above 60 percent of GDP, if countries make reforms. It does not so much matter which option one chooses. But choose one. And quickly. Don't be dragged grudgingly to the solution.

**SPIEGEL:** Germans still remember how they transferred massive amounts of money into former East Germany following reunification. These transfers failed to produce the "blooming landscapes" promised by the then Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

**Zoellick:** I think German unification was a historic success. One cannot view the world solely in economic terms; German unification was an achievement for freedom, democracy and the people of Germany. True, there are lessons to be learned from some costly economic steps taken during unification. One lesson is the need to increase productivity in countries, so that the investments will have a greater payoff.

**SPIEGEL:** A bailout for the rest of Europe would be much more expensive than German reunification.

**Zoellick:** Well, it is up for Germans to decide. It is not my place to decide this for Germans, but what I can say is that if one does not take the right steps, you run a serious risk for the future of Europe.

**SPIEGEL:** Who could be Angela Merkel's European ally in this process?

**Zoellick:** When Helmut Kohl and Francois Mitterrand worked together, they also worked through then-European Commission President Jaques Delors to shape the views of the other Europeans. Can the current EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso play the role that Delors played? I do not know. Also, French President Hollande is now walking a very fine line. On the one hand, he could be influential with Germany in coming up with a combination of actions that create the incentives and encouragement for the fundamental reforms that Germany seeks, but also assures economic support for the reformers. On the other hand, if President Hollande pursues economic policies that frighten businesses and investors, he will add France to the problem.

**SPIEGEL:** Americans, even President Barack Obama, are quick to blame the current slowdown of the global economy on Europe. But the debt load of the US is actually higher than the European one.

**Zoellick:** Australian Foreign Minister Robert Carr, a very good friend of America, visited me about 5 weeks ago. His main message was the United States is one budget agreement away from restoring its global preeminence. The president put the overhaul and expansion of the health care system as his number-one priority. Perhaps if his White House had known earlier more about the current challenges of the budget, they would have put some of these other fundamental economic issues first. I would have started with that as opposed to health care. So just as what goes on in Europe is important for Europe's role in the world, solving the United States' budget problem is important for the United States' ability to remain influential in the world.

**SPIEGEL:** Mr. Zoellick, we thank you for this interview.

*Interview conducted by Marc Hujer and Gregor Peter Schmitz*

**URL:**

- <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/interview-with-world-bank-president-robert-zoellick-a-839562.html>

## Griechen, Euro und die deutsche Schuld

FAS 17.06.2012 · Thilo Sarrazin wirft vor der Parlamentswahl der Mehrheit der Griechen eine verzerrte Wahrnehmung der Wirklichkeit vor. Die Griechen sähen sich „als quasi wirtschaftlich Verfolgte“ an, schreibt der frühere Berliner Finanzsenator in einem Gastbeitrag für die Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung.



© Pein, Andreas Thilo Sarrazin: Der deutsche Sparer soll durch die Entwertung seiner Geldvermögen für die Konsolidierung der Südländer bezahlen.

An diesem Sonntag findet in Griechenland eine Parlamentswahl statt, die darüber entscheidet, ob erstmals ein Land aus dem Währungsverbund des Euro ausscheidet. 71 Prozent der Griechen wollen nach einer aktuellen Umfrage den Euro als Währung behalten, gegenüber 69 Prozent in Frankreich, 66 in Deutschland oder 60 in Spanien. Die Mehrheit der Griechen sieht zudem keinen Zusammenhang zwischen ihrem bankrotten Staatswesen und heillosen wirtschaftlichen Verhältnissen einerseits und der gemeinsamen Währung andererseits.

Schon gar nicht will diese Mehrheit erkennen, dass nur eine reale Kostenreduktion von 30 bis 50 Prozent dem Land die Chance gibt, wieder auf eigenen Beinen zu stehen. Das Leistungsbilanzdefizit Griechenlands von 10 Prozent des Bruttoinlandsprodukts zeigt nämlich, dass das Land trotz des Schuldenerlasses und der Umschuldung immer noch weit mehr verbraucht als es produziert. Die Summe der Hilfsleistungen an Griechenland und seine Gläubiger beläuft sich mittlerweile auf 150 Prozent des griechischen Sozialprodukts. Auf Deutschland übertragen würde das bedeuten: Ein wirtschaftlich außer Kontrolle geratenes Deutschland erführe eine vergleichbare Hilfe, wenn es vier Billionen Euro erhielte. Das ist etwa das Doppelte der deutschen Staatsverschuldung.

### Verzerrte Wahrnehmung

Nun ist es aber nicht so, dass die Griechen für diese Hilfen dankbar wären. Die Mehrheit von ihnen glaubt, dass Deutschland sich an den Griechen bereichert habe. Zunächst habe es durch einen Exportboom zu Lasten der griechischen Verschuldung sein Wachstum gefördert, jetzt verdiene es durch niedrige Zinsen für seine Kredite am Leiden der Griechen. Das mit Griechenland vereinbarte Konsolidierungsprogramm sehen die Griechen mehrheitlich als willkürliches deutsches Spardiktat.

Aus dieser verzerrten Wahrnehmung ergibt sich, dass sich die Griechen als quasi wirtschaftlich Verfolgte ansehen und ernsthaft glauben, sie könnten den Euro behalten, auch wenn sie das Reformprogramm nicht umsetzen. Möglicherweise hat jene Mehrheit der Griechen sogar Recht. Es gibt starke Kräfte in der Europäischen Union, die einen Austritt der Griechen aus dem Euroraum um nahezu jeden Preis verhindern wollen. Eine erfolgreich bewältigte Rückkehr Griechenlands zur eigenen Währung würde nämlich zeigen, dass für ein Land die Welt auch nach dem Euro weitergeht, und könnte zu einem attraktiven Modell für Länder mit großen Wettbewerbsproblemen werden.

### Probleme sind hausgemacht

Im Falle des Austritts würde Griechenland wahrscheinlich eine schwere Wirtschaftskrise durchmachen, aber das Wachstum würde nach spätestens zwei Jahren zurückkehren. Eine reale Abwertung um 30 bis 50 Prozent

ist in Griechenland sowieso unumgänglich - entweder durch Rückkehr zur eigenen Währung oder durch eine viele Jahre währende Deflation. Nur eines könnte die schmerzliche Anpassung vermeiden: Der Euroraum schreibt alle Hilfen und Kredite an Griechenland vollständig ab und richtet sich auf dauerhafte Zuschüsse von 30 bis 50 Milliarden Euro jährlich ein. Woher aber sollen die kommen, wenn nicht direkt oder indirekt aus deutschen Kassen? Auch dann wäre Griechenland ein ewiger Zuschussempfänger in der Hand korrupter Eliten, eine Region ohne Perspektive.

Griechenland hat zwar nur drei Prozent Anteil an der Bevölkerung und zwei Prozent Anteil an der Wirtschaftskraft des Euroraums. Ein Stück Griechenland ist aber überall dort, wo Länder der Währungsunion aufgrund fehlender Strukturreformen und Fehlern in der Finanzpolitik Schwierigkeiten mit ihrer Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und Leistungsbilanz haben. Das gilt für die Südstaaten in der Währungsunion, einschließlich Frankreichs. Ihre Probleme sind hausgemacht. Niemand hört dort aber gern, dass alle Probleme, die sie von den Nordstaaten unterscheiden, eigenen Fehlentscheidungen und eigenem Unvermögen entspringen.

## Forderung nach deutschem Geld

Darum gab es die Behauptung, Deutschland und die anderen Nordländer hätten von der Währungsunion besonders profitiert und stünden in einer besonderen Pflicht, von diesem Profit etwas zurückzugeben. Das aber ist falsch: Die gemeinsame Währung hat den Nordstaaten wirtschaftlich nicht genützt, den Südstaaten nach einer Phase kreditfinanzierten Booms deutlich geschadet. Mit der Vertiefung der Eurokrise hat ein anderes Argument an Gewicht gewonnen: Deutschland habe die Krise durch seine egoistische Haltung wenn nicht verursacht, so doch verschärft, und wenn es nicht bereit sei, für die Schulden der Südländer mitzuhafte, dann trage es nicht nur die Verantwortung für ein Auseinanderbrechen des Euroraums, sondern für eine Weltwirtschaftskrise, die jene Anfang der dreißiger Jahre in den Schatten stellen könne. Ausgerechnet Deutschland, das durch Brüning'sche Sparpolitik die Machtergreifung der Nazis, den Zweiten Weltkrieg und den Holocaust verursacht habe, sei anscheinend bereit, die Welt abermals in den Untergang zu treiben. Das war der Tenor eines Aufsatzes des britischen Historikers Niall Ferguson und des amerikanischen Ökonomen Roubini. Der bekannte amerikanische Historiker Charles Mayer forderte, Deutschland müsse seine Verpflichtung für Europa in ähnlicher Weise wahrnehmen, wie vor 20 Jahren für Ostdeutschland. Historiker müssen nicht zahlenfest sein: Aber 17 Millionen Ostdeutsche kosteten Westdeutschland 1,5 bis 2 Billionen Euro. Das lässt erahnen, was 300 Millionen Menschen kosten mögen.

Es ist auffallend, wie unbefangen, ja unverschämt viele angelsächsische Diskussionspartner, aber nicht nur sie, bei der Forderung nach deutschem Geld mit der deutschen Schuld an den Katastrophen des vergangenen Jahrhunderts spielen. 70 Jahre nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg haben die Deutschen das Recht (und die Pflicht), sich in der internationalen Zusammenarbeit bei finanziellen Fragen von ihrem vernünftigen Eigeninteresse leiten zu lassen, ohne ständig die Moralkeule fürchten zu müssen.

Wir selbst sind allerdings nicht unschuldig an der übersteigerten Erwartungshaltung der anderen. Angela Merkels Kernsatz „Scheitert der Euro, dann scheitert Europa“ lässt sich auch übersetzen: Einem Scheitern Europas ist eine Pleite Deutschlands allemal vorzuziehen. Und wenn Deutschland dieses Scheitern verhindern will, wird seine Zahlungsbereitschaft unbegrenzt sein. Dazu passt ein Finanzminister Schäuble, der schon im Herbst 2009 räsionierte, notfalls müsse man Griechenland eben helfen. Die erste öffentliche Ankündigung des Bruchs des No-Bail-Out-Prinzips ging also von Deutschland aus!

Der italienische Ministerpräsident Monti bemerkte vor einigen Tagen zutreffend, dass Reformvorschriften von außen Abneigung gegen das europäische Einigungsprojekt schaffen könnten. Er sprach damit das Kerndilemma all jener Auflagen gegenüber Mitgliedstaaten an, in denen die europäischen Führer zunehmend ihr Heil suchen. Ich finde alle diese Absichten löblich. Ich glaube allerdings nicht, dass es in historisch überschaubaren Zeiträumen gelingen wird, den Nationalstaaten ihre Haushaltsrechte und ihr Recht zu Fehlentscheidungen wirksam zu beschneiden. Monti fordert aber nicht etwa mehr Selbstverantwortung und eine Rückkehr zum No-Bail-Out-Prinzip. Er fordert Eurobonds und einen gemeinsamen Schuldenfonds! Ein Stückchen radikaler fordert Ähnliches der französische Präsident Hollande. Er revidiert eine der wenigen vernünftigen Reformen seines Vorgängers Sarkozy und senkt das Rentenalter, gleichzeitig fordert er Eurobonds und eine Bankenunion. Die Deutschen sollen also dafür bürgen und zahlen, dass die französische Politik in die falsche Richtung geht.

## Deutlich höherer Inflation

Wahrscheinlich ist daher folgende Entwicklung: Unter wechselnden Überschriften wird, wie seit über zwei Jahren, die Schulden- und Bankenunion ausgebaut. Diese behindert zwar die Reformanstrengungen in den Südländern, aber verkettet Deutschland mit deren Schicksal. Letztlich ist dies nicht anderes als die Vergemeinschaftung der deutschen Finanz- und Wirtschaftskraft für die Zwecke des südeuropäischen Konsums. Die EZB setzt eine lockere Geldpolitik fort, um mit extrem niedrigen Zinsen die Haushaltsdefizite der Südländer mit der Notenpresse zu finanzieren. Dies führt zu deutlich höherer Inflation.

Alle wissen, dass in den Südländern eine erhebliche Abwertung der Kosten und Preise stattfinden muss. Für Frankreich setze ich diesen Abwertungsbedarf bei 20 Prozent an, für Griechenland bei 40 bis 50 Prozent. Da Wechselkursanpassungen ausscheiden, kann diese Abwertung nur erfolgen, indem es bei unveränderter Inflation in Deutschland in den Südländern über viele Jahre Deflation gibt. Das ist mit steigender Arbeitslosigkeit, steigenden Insolvenzen und sinkenden Realeinkommen verbunden. Oder die Nordländer haben für eine Reihe von Jahren deutlich mehr Inflation als die Südländer.

Ich halte die letztere Lösung für unreal. Käme sie gleichwohl, so würde sie bedeuten: Für Deutschland für etwa 10 Jahre eine Inflation, die bei 4 bis 6 Prozent liegt, gleichzeitig weiter ein Zinsniveau von nur 1 bis 2 Prozent, damit die Südländer nicht an ihren Schulden ersticken. Auf deutsch: Der deutsche Sparer soll durch die Entwertung seiner Geldvermögen für die Konsolidierung der Südländer bezahlen. Das ist im Kern der Inhalt der Politik der Bundesregierung, auch wenn das so nicht beabsichtigt war. Und das ist aus dem politischen Versprechen geworden, der Euro werde stark wie die Mark.

Quelle: F.A.S.

## Who's on the Hook for Europe's Losses, and for How Much?

Author: [Edward Kane](#) · June 15th, 2012 · [Comments \(1\)](#) Share This Print 0 0

What do you get when you mix politics with fundamental principles of economics and accounting? The answer is politics.

Both in the U.S. and in the euro zone, authorities seem willing to blame the weak economic recovery on weaknesses in bank, customer, and government balance sheets. However, they are not willing to come clean about what these balance sheets truly look like. The problem is not just that the assets of many systemically important banks are overvalued. The larger problem is that banks and governments are not made to account for the way in which, when important firms fall deeper and deeper into distress, implicit and explicit taxpayer guarantees absorb much of the markdowns that would otherwise have to occur.

In accounting parlance, a contra-liability is an item that is entered on a firm's balance sheet when and to the extent that responsibility for servicing some of its debt falls on a third party. For banks, financial safety nets transform a block of unknown taxpayers into just such a third party. The unacknowledged value of taxpayer guarantees are, economically, an unbooked contra-liability of the modern commercial and investment bank and an unbooked, and uncertainly dated, liability of the taxpaying households and firms. Those taxpayers are the ones that troubled governments are likely to saddle with the final bill for the bailout support that pressure-group politics currently and surreptitiously dictates.

Taxpayers' side of the bailout is a huge drag on the world economy. This is because, with each further delay in resolving the insolvency of zombie banks, rational taxpayers (including solvent banks) have to cut their spending and investment activity to set aside more and more of their wealth in an implicit or explicit precautionary reserve that is large enough to cover their surging tax exposure.

This is why it is disgraceful for spokespersons for JPMorgan Chase (JPM) to claim that its suffering a several billion dollar loss in derivatives bets in London markets had no effect on U.S. taxpayers. This claim mendaciously ignores the way that observing so massive a failure in bank and regulatory risk management has increased taxpayers' estimates of their side of the taxpayer put and fanned taxpayer fears about other hard-to-observe forms of TBTF risk-taking.

Not having to account for taxpayers' equity stake in too-big-to-fail institutions generated by regulatory delay and forbearance undermines political accountability and limits deceiving management teams' exposure to fraud claims.

In the European Union, intense uncertainty exists about the size of the liabilities and the prospective identity of the particular creditors, taxpayers, and range of countries that will finally be made to cover the shortages of its insolvent banks and sovereign nations. The inability of outside parties to size the insolvencies accurately fans taxpayer uncertainty and makes ordinary citizens' precautionary reserve all the larger in the aggregate.

Counterproductive delays in resolving the insolvency of large financial firms are the rule, rather than the exception. In the European Union today, laying more of the bailout burden on another country's taxpayers is the primary goal both of those pushing for a pan-European solution and those who are resisting their efforts. Whether we are talking about an expanded bank recapitalization fund, a joint deposit-insurance authority, or a banking union or fiscal union, the issue is the same: Who will pay the bill and how large will it get before it is finally presented?

Seemingly endless negotiations over this issue support gambling for a hard-to-foresee economic recovery among the regulatory community and a go-for-broke casino mentality in the undercapitalized financial community. **In the meantime, the job of the European Central Bank has become to issue increasingly poorly collateralized loans to increasingly poorly capitalized and insolvent banks.**

**In my opinion, this process is turning the ECB into the biggest and most dangerous zombie of them all.**



## Zone euro : Angela Merkel se fâche contre la France

Par [Alexandrine Bouilhet](#) Publié le 15/06/2012 à 13:51 [Réagir](#)



Angela Merkel, vendredi à Berlin. Crédits photo : JOHANNES EISELE/AFP

### **Angela Merkel souligne les «divergences croissantes» entre la France et l'Allemagne sur le plan économique. Elle estime qu'opposer croissance et austérité, «c'est n'importe quoi !».**

Le ton monte entre Paris et Berlin. «La médiocrité ne doit pas devenir l'étalon en [zone euro](#)!», affirme [Angela Merkel](#), vendredi, dans un discours d'un rare violence, qui intervient au lendemain de la présentation par François Hollande de son [plan pour sauver la zone euro](#), des [critiques formulées par Jean-Marc Ayrault](#), le premier ministre français à son égard.

«Les réflexions sur la mutualisation de la dette sont peut-être dans l'intérêt de certains sur les marchés, mais elles mèneraient l'Allemagne à la médiocrité», estime la chancelière, rejetant une nouvelle fois le recours aux [euro-obligations](#), qui figurent toujours en bonne place dans le projet français.

Les reproches d'Angela Merkel ne s'arrêtent pas là. «Opposer croissance et austérité c'est n'importe quoi!», estime la chancelière, visiblement exaspérée par le discours français qui dénonce les effets pervers de l'orthodoxie budgétaire à l'allemande. «Financer la croissance avec des nouvelles dettes, ce n'est pas viable!», ajoute-t-elle.

### **La chancelière accusée d'«aveuglement idéologique»**

Bien décidée à jouer de l'autorité que lui confère son pays, première puissance économique de la zone euro, et premier contributeur au budget européen, la chancelière estime qu'il est temps de parler des «divergences croissantes entre la puissance économique de l'Allemagne et la France».

Les remarques du chef du gouvernement français à son égard n'ont pas apaisé le climat. D'autant que ce dernier était présenté comme le plus germanophile du gouvernement Hollande. Jeudi soir, [Jean-Marc Ayrault](#) a invité Angela Merkel à ne pas «se laisser aller à des formules simplistes» alors qu'[Arnaud Montebourg](#) a accusé la chancelière d'«aveuglement idéologique», dans un entretien à *Usine nouvelle*.

# Full transcript of Obama's speech on the economy in Cleveland, Ohio

© The Washington Post Company

**Published: June 14**

*Full transcript of President Obama's June 14 speech on the economy at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio:*

OBAMA: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Thank you very much. Thank you so much.

Well, good afternoon, everybody. It is great to be back in Cleveland. (APPLAUSE)

It is great to be back here at Cuyahoga Community College.

(APPLAUSE)

I -- I want to first of all thank Angela (ph) for her introduction and sharing her story. I know her daughter is very proud of her. I know her daughter's here today. So give her a big round of applause.

I want to thank your president, Dr. Jerry Sue Thornton.

(APPLAUSE)

And I want to thank some members of Congress who made the trip today, Representatives Marcia Fudge...

(APPLAUSE)

... Representative Betty Sutton...

(APPLAUSE)

... and Representative Marcy Kaptur.

(APPLAUSE)

Now, those of you who have a seat, feel free to sit down.

(LAUGHTER)

So...

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We love you, Obama!

OBAMA: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: Four more years! Four more years!

OBAMA: Thank you.

So, Ohio, over the next five months, this election will take many twists and many turns, polls will go up and polls will go down, there will be no shortage of gaffes and controversies that keep both campaigns busy and give the press something to write about.

You may have heard I recently made my own unique contribution to that process.

(LAUGHTER)

It wasn't the first time. It won't be the last.

(LAUGHTER)

And in the coming weeks, Governor Romney and I will spend time debating our records and our experience, as we should. But though we will have many differences over the course of this campaign, there is one place where I stand in complete agreement with my opponent: This election is about our economic future.

(APPLAUSE)

Yes, foreign policy matters, social issues matter. But more than anything else, this election presents a choice between two fundamentally different visions of how to create strong, sustained growth; how to pay down our long-term debt; and most of all, how to generate good, middle-class jobs so people can have confidence that if they work hard, they can get ahead.

(APPLAUSE)

Now, this isn't some abstract debate. This is not another trivial Washington argument. I have said that this is the defining issue of our time and I mean it. I said that this is a make-or-break moment for America's middle class, and I believe it.

OBAMA: The decisions we make in the next few years, on everything from debt to taxes to energy and education, will have an enormous impact on this country, and on the country we pass on to our children.

Now, these challenges are not new. We've been wrestling with these issues for a long time. The problems we're facing right now have been more than a decade in the making.

And what is holding us back is not a lack of big ideas. It isn't a matter of finding the right technical solution. Both parties have laid out their policies on the table for all to see.

What's holding us back is a stalemate in Washington between two fundamentally different views of which direction America should take. And this election is your chance to break that stalemate.

(APPLAUSE)

At stake is not simply a choice between two candidates or two political parties, but between two paths for our country. And while there are many things to discuss in this campaign, nothing is more important than an honest debate about where these two paths would lead us.

Now, that debate has an understanding of where we are and how we got here.

Long before the economic crisis of 2008 the basic bargain at the heart of this country has begun to erode.

For more than a decade, it had become harder to find a job that paid the bills, harder to save, harder to retire, harder to keep up with rising costs of gas and health care and college tuitions.

You know that. You lived it.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: During that decade there was a specific theory in Washington about how to meet this challenge.

We were told that huge tax cuts, especially for the wealthiest Americans, would lead to faster job growth. We were told that fewer regulations, especially for big financial institutions and corporations, would bring about

widespread prosperity. We were told that it was OK to put two wars on the nation's credit card; that tax cuts would create a enough growth to pay for themselves.

That's what we were told.

So how did this economic theory work out?

(CROSSTALK)

OBAMA: For the wealthiest Americans it worked out pretty well.

Over the last few decades the income of the top 1 percent grew by more than 275 percent, to an average of \$1.3 million a year. Big financial institutions, corporations saw their profits soar.

But prosperity never trickled down to the middle class. From 2001 to 2008 we had the slowest job growth in half a century. The typical family saw their incomes halt.

The failure to pay for the tax cuts and the wars took us from record surpluses under President Bill Clinton to record deficits. And it left us unprepared to deal with the retirement of an aging population that's placing a greater strain on programs like Medicare and Social Security.

OBAMA: Without strong enough regulations, families were enticed and sometimes tricked into buying homes they couldn't afford. Banks and investors were allowed to package and sell risky mortgages. Huge reckless bets were made with other people's money on the line. And too many, from Wall Street to Washington, simply looked the other way.

For a while credit cards and home equity loans papered over the reality of this new economy. People borrowed money to keep up.

But the growth that took place during this time period turned out to be a house of cards. And in the fall of 2008 it all came tumbling down with a financial crisis that plunged the world into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Here in America families' wealth declined at a rate nearly seven times faster than when the market crashed in 1929. Millions of homes were foreclosed, our deficit soared, and 9 million of our citizens lost their jobs; 9 million hardworking Americans who had met their responsibilities but were forced to pay for the irresponsibility of others.

In other words, this was not your normal recession.

Throughout history it has typically taken countries up to 10 years to recover from financial crises of this magnitude. Today the economies of many European countries still aren't growing and their unemployment rate averages around 11 percent.

But here in the United States, Americans showed their grit and showed their determination.

OBAMA: We acted fast. Our economy started growing again six months after I took office and it has continued to grow for the last three years.

(APPLAUSE)

Our businesses have gone back to basics and created over 4 million jobs in the last 27 months; more private sector jobs than were created during the entire seven years before this crisis, in a little over two years.

(APPLAUSE)

Manufacturers have started investing in America again, including right here in Ohio.

(APPLAUSE)

And across America, we've seen them create almost 500,000 jobs in the last 27 months, the strongest period of manufacturing job growth since 1995.

(APPLAUSE)

And when my opponents and others were arguing that we should let Detroit go bankrupt, we made a bet on American workers and the ingenuity of American companies and today our auto industry is back on top of the world.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: But let's be clear: Not only are we digging out of a hole that is 9 million jobs deep, we're digging out from an entire decade where 6 million manufacturing jobs left our shores; where costs rose but incomes and wages didn't; and where the middle class fell further and further behind.

So recovering from the crisis of 2008 has always been the first and most urgent order of business, but it's not enough. Our economy won't be truly healthy until we reverse that much longer and profound erosion of middle-class jobs and middle-class incomes.

So the debate in this election is not about whether we need to grow faster, or whether we need to create more jobs, or whether we need to pay down our debt.

Of course the economy isn't where it needs to be. Of course we have a lot more work to do. Everybody knows that.

The debate in this election is about how we grow faster, and how we create more jobs, and how we pay down our debt. That's the question facing the American voter.

(APPLAUSE)

And in this election, you have two very different visions to choose from.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: No we don't!

(LAUGHTER)

OBAMA: Now, Governor Romney and his allies in Congress believe deeply in the theory we tried during the last decade, the theory that the best way to grow the economy is from the top down.

OBAMA: So they maintain that if we eliminate most regulations, we cut taxes by trillions of dollars, if we strip down government to national security and few other basic functions, then the power of businesses to create jobs and prosperity will be unleashed and that will automatically benefit us all.

That's what they believe. This -- this is their economic plan. It has been placed before Congress. Governor Romney has given speeches about it, and it's on his website.

So if they win the election their agenda will be simple and straightforward; they have spelled it out. They promise to roll back regulations on banks and polluters, on insurance companies and oil companies. They'll roll back regulations designed to protect consumers and workers.

They promise to not only keep all of the Bush tax cuts in place, but add another \$5 trillion in tax cuts on top of that.

Now, an independent study said that about 70 percent of this new \$5 trillion tax cut would go to folks making over \$200,000 a year. And folks making over a million dollars a year would get an average tax cut of about 25 percent.

Now, this is not my opinion. This is not political spin. This is precisely what they have proposed.

Now, your next question may be: How do you spend \$5 trillion on a tax cut and still bring down the deficit?

Well, they tell us they'll start by cutting nearly a trillion dollars from the part of our budget that includes everything from education and job training, to medical research and clean energy.

(BOOING)

OBAMA: Now, I -- I want to be very fair here. I want to be clear.

They haven't specified exactly where the knife would fall, but here's some of what would happen if that cut that they proposed was spread evenly across the budget.

10 million college students would lose an average of a thousand dollars each on financial aid. 200,000 children would lose the chance to get an early education in the Head Start program. There would be 1,600 fewer medical research grants for things like Alzheimer's and cancer and AIDS; 4,000 fewer scientific research grants, eliminating support for 48,000 researchers, students and teachers.

Now, again, they have not specified which of these cuts they choose from, but if they want to make smaller cuts to areas like science or medical research, then they'd have to cut things like financial aid or education even further.

But either way, the cuts to this part of the budget would be deeper than anything we've ever seen in modern times.

Not only does their plan eliminate health insurance for 33 million Americans by repealing the Affordable Care Act, according to the independent Kaiser Family Foundation, it would also take away coverage from another 19 million Americans who rely on Medicaid, including millions of nursing home patients and families who have children with autism and other disabilities.

OBAMA: And they propose turning Medicare into a voucher program, which will shift more costs to seniors and eventually end the program as we know it.

But it doesn't stop there.

Even if you make all the cuts that they've proposed, the math still doesn't allow you to pay for a new \$5 trillion tax cut and bring down the deficit at the same time.

So Mr. Romney and his allies have told us we can get the rest of the way there by reforming the tax code and taking away certain tax breaks and deductions that, again, they haven't specified. They haven't named them, but they said we can do it.

But here's the problem: The only tax breaks and deductions that get you anywhere close to \$5 trillion are those that help middle-class families afford health care and college and retirement and homeownership.

Without those tax benefits, tens of millions of middle-class families will end up paying higher taxes. Many of you would end up paying higher taxes to pay for this other tax cut.

And keep in mind that all of this is just to pay for their new \$5 trillion tax cut. If you want to close the deficit left by the Bush tax cuts, we'd have to make deeper cuts or raise middle-class taxes even more.

OBAMA: This is not spin. This is not my opinion. These are facts. This is what they're presenting as their plan. This is their vision.

There is nothing new, just what Bill Clinton has called the same ideas they've tried before except on steroids.

(LAUGHTER)

Now -- now, I understand I've got a lot of supporters here, but I -- I wanna speak to everybody who is watching who may not be a supporter, may be undecided or thinking about voting the other way.

If you agree with the approach I just described, if you want to give the policies of the last decade another try, then you should vote for Mr. Romney.

(BOOING)

Now, like I said, I know I've got supporters here.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (inaudible)

OBAMA: No, no. You should vote for his allies in Congress. You should take them for their word and they will take America down this path.

And Mr. Romney is qualified to deliver on that plan.

(LAUGHTER)

No, he is.

(APPLAUSE)

I am giving you an honest presentation of what he's proposing. I'm looking forward to the press following up and making sure that you know I'm not exaggerating.

I believe their approach is wrong.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: And -- and I'm not alone. I have not seen a single independent analysis that says my opponent's economic plan would actually reduce the deficit. Not one. Even analysts who may agree with parts of his economic theory don't believe that his plan would create more jobs in the short term.

They don't claim his plan would help folks looking for work right now. In fact, just the other week one economist from Moody's said the following about Mr. Romney's plan, and I'm quoting here: "On net, all of these policies would do more harm in the short term. If we implemented all of his policies it would push us deeper into recession and make the recovery slower."

That's not my spin. That's not my opinion. That's what independent economic analysis says.

As for the long term, remember that the economic vision of Mr. Romney and his allies in Congress was tested just a few years ago. We tried this. Their policies did not grow the economy. They did not grow the middle class. They did not reduce our debt.

Why would we think that they would work better this time?

(APPLAUSE)



We can't afford to jeopardize our future by repeating the mistakes of the past. Not now. Not when there's so much at stake.

(APPLAUSE)

I've got a different vision for America.

(APPLAUSE)

I believe that you can't bring down the debt without a strong and growing economy. And I believe you can't have a strong and growing economy without a strong and growing middle class.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: This has to be our north star, an economy that's built not from the top down but from a growing middle class; that provides ladders of opportunities for folks who aren't yet in the middle class.

You see, we'll never be able to compete with some countries when it comes to paying workers lower wages or letting companies do more polluting. That's a race to the bottom that we should not want to win, because those countries don't have a strong middle class, they don't have our standard of living.

(APPLAUSE)

The race I want us to win -- a race I know we can win -- is a race to the top. I see an America with the best-educated, best-trained workers in the world; an America with a commitment to research and development that is second to none, especially when it comes to new sources of energy and high-tech manufacturing.

I see a country that offers businesses the fastest, most reliable transportation and communications systems of anywhere on Earth.

(APPLAUSE)

I see a future where we pay down our deficit in a way that is balanced -- not by placing the entire burden on the middle class and the poor, but by cutting out programs we can't afford and asking the wealthiest Americans to contribute their fair share.

(APPLAUSE)

That's my vision for America: education, energy, innovation, infrastructure, and a tax code focused on American job creation and balanced deficit reduction.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: This is the vision behind the jobs plan I sent Congress back in September, a bill filled with bipartisan ideas that, according to independent economists, would create up to 1 million additional jobs if passed today.

This is the vision behind the deficit plan I sent to Congress back in September, a detailed proposal that would reduce our deficit by \$4 trillion through shared sacrifice and shared responsibility.

This is the vision I intend to pursue in my second term as president because I believe...

(APPLAUSE)

... because -- because I believe if we do these things -- if we do these things more companies will start here and stay here and hire here, and more Americans will be able to find jobs that support a middle class lifestyle.

Understand, despite what you hear from my opponent, this has never been a vision about how government creates jobs or has the answers to all our problems.

Over the last three years I've cut taxes for the typical working family by \$3,600.

(APPLAUSE)

I've cut taxes for small businesses 18 times.

(APPLAUSE)

I have approved fewer regulations in the first three years of my presidency than my Republican predecessor did in his.

OBAMA: And I'm implementing over 500 reforms to fix regulations that were costing folks too much for no reason.

I've asked Congress for the authority to reorganize the federal government that was built for the last century. I want to make it work for the 21st century.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: A federal government that is leaner and more efficient and more responsive to the American people.

I've signed a law that cuts spending and reduces our deficit by \$2 trillion. My own deficit plan would strengthen Medicare and Medicaid for the long haul by slowing the growth of health care costs -- not shifting them to seniors and vulnerable families.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: And my plan would reduce our yearly domestic spending to its lowest level as a share of the economy in nearly 60 years.

So, no, I don't believe the government is the answer to all our problems. I don't believe every regulation is smart or that every tax dollar is spent wisely. I don't believe that we should be in the business of helping people who refuse to help themselves.

(APPLAUSE)

But I do share the belief of our first Republican president from my home state, Abraham Lincoln, that through government we should do together what we cannot do as well for ourselves.

That's how we built this country -- together. We constructed railroads and highways, the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge. We did those things together.

We sent my grandfather's generation to college on the G.I. Bill together. We instituted a minimum wage and rules that protected people's bank deposits together.

(APPLAUSE)

Together, we touched the surface of the moon, unlocked the mystery of the atom, connected the world through our own science and imagination. We haven't done these things as Democrats or Republicans. We've done them as Americans.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: As much as we might associate the G.I. Bill with Franklin Roosevelt or Medicare with Lyndon Johnson, it was a Republican, Lincoln, who launched the Trans-Continental Railroad, the National Academy of Sciences, land grant colleges.

It was a Republican, Eisenhower, who launched the Interstate Highway System and a new era of scientific research.

It was Nixon who created the Environmental Protection Agency; Reagan who worked with Democrats to save Social Security and who, by the way, raised taxes to help pay down an exploding deficit.

(APPLAUSE)

Yes, there have been fierce arguments throughout our history between both parties about the exact size and role of government, some honest disagreements. But in the decades after World War II there was a general consensus that the market couldn't solve all of our problems on its own; that we needed certain investments to give hard-working Americans skills they needed to get a good job and entrepreneurs the platforms they needed to create good jobs; and we needed consumer protections that made American products safe and American markets sound.

OBAMA: In the last century, this consensus, this shared vision led to the strongest economic growth and the largest middle class that the world has ever known. It led to a shared prosperity.

It is this vision that has guided all my economic policies during my first term as president, whether in the design of a health care law that relies on private insurance or an approach to Wall Street reform that encourages financial innovation, but guards against reckless risk-taking.

It's this vision that Democrats and Republicans used to share, that Mr. Romney and the current Republican Congress have rejected in favor of a no-holds-barred government-is-the-enemy market-is-everything approach.

And it is this shared vision that I intend to carry forward in this century as president because it is a vision that has worked for the American middle class and everybody who's striving to get into the middle class.

(APPLAUSE)

Let -- let me be more specific.

Think about it: In an age where we know good jobs depend on high skills, now is not the time to scale back our commitment to education.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: Now's the time to move forward and make sure we have the best-educated, best-trained workers in the world.

(APPLAUSE)

My plan for education doesn't just rely on more money or more dictates from Washington. We're -- we're challenging every state and school district to come up with their own innovative plans to raise student achievement. And they're doing just that.

I want to give schools more flexibility so that they don't have to teach to the test and so they can remove teachers who just aren't helping our kids learn.

(APPLAUSE)

But, look, if we want our country to be a magnet for middle class jobs in the 21st century we also have to invest more in education and training. I want to recruit an army of new teachers and pay teachers better and train more of them in areas like math and science.

(APPLAUSE)

I have a plan to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges just like this one and learn the skills that businesses are looking for right now.

(APPLAUSE)

I have a plan to make it easier for people to afford a higher education that's essential in today's economy.

And if we truly want to make this country a destination for talent and ingenuity from all over the world, we won't deport hardworking, responsible young immigrants who have grown up here or received advanced degrees here. We'll let them earn the chance to become American citizens so they can grow our economy and start new businesses right here instead of someplace else.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: Now is not the time to go back to a greater reliance on fossil fuels from foreign countries. Now is the time to invest more in the clean energy that we can make right here in America.

(APPLAUSE)

My plan for energy doesn't ignore the vast resources we already have in this country. We're -- we're producing more oil than we have in over a decade.

But if we truly want to gain control of our energy future, we've got to recognize that pumping more oil isn't enough. We have to encourage the unprecedented boom in American natural gas. We have to provide safe nuclear energy and the technology to help coal burn cleaner than before.

We have to become the global leader in renewable energy, wind and solar and the next generation of biofuels, in electric cars and energy-efficient buildings.

(APPLAUSE)

So my plan would end the government subsidies to oil companies that have rarely been more profitable.

(APPLAUSE)

Let's double down on a clean energy industry that has never been more promising.

And I want to put in place a new clean energy standard that creates a market for innovation, an approach that would make clean energy the profitable kind of energy for every business in America.

With growing competition from countries like China and India, now is not the time for America to walk away from research and development. Now is the time to invest even more...

(APPLAUSE)

... so that the great innovations of this century take place in the United States of America, so that the next Thomas Edison, the next Wright brothers, it's happening here in Ohio, or Michigan, or California.

(APPLAUSE)

My plan to encourage innovation isn't about throwing money at just any project or new idea. It's about supporting the work of our most promising scientists, our most promising researchers and entrepreneurs.

My plan would make the R&D tax credit permanent, but the private sector can't do it alone, especially when it comes to basic research. It's not always profitable in the short term.

And in the last century, research that we funded together through our tax dollars helped lay the foundation for the Internet and GPS and Google and the countless companies and jobs that followed.

OBAMA: The private sector came in and -- and created these incredible companies, but we together made the initial investment to make it possible.

It's given rise to miraculous cures that have reduced suffering and saved lives.

This has always been America's biggest economic advantage -- our science and our innovation. Why would we reverse that commitment right now when it's never been more important, at a time when we have so much deferred maintenance on our nation's infrastructure, schools that are crumbling, roads that are broken, bridges that are buckling?

Now is not the time to saddle American businesses with crumbling roads and bridges. Now is the time to rebuild America.

(APPLAUSE)

So my plan would take half the money we're no longer spending on war, let's use it to do some nation-building here at home. Let's put some folks to work right here at home.

(APPLAUSE)

My plan would get rid of pet projects and government boondoggles and bridges to nowhere.

(LAUGHTER)

But if we want businesses to come here and to hire here, we have to provide the highways and the runways and the ports and the broadband access, all of which move goods and products and information across the globe.

My plans sets up an independent fund to attract private dollars and issue loans for new construction projects based on two criteria: How badly are they needed? And how much good will they do for the economy?

(APPLAUSE)

And finally, I think it's time we took on our fiscal problems in an honest, balanced, responsible way. Everybody agrees that our deficits and debt are an issue that we've got to tackle.

My plan to reform the tax code recognizes that government can't bring back every job that's been outsourced or every factor that's closed its doors.

OBAMA: But we sure can stop giving tax breaks to businesses that ship jobs overseas and start rewarding companies that create jobs right here in the United States of America, in Ohio, in Cleveland, in Pennsylvania.

(APPLAUSE)

And if we want to get the deficit under control, really, not just pretending to during election time...

(APPLAUSE)

... not just saying you really care about it when somebody else is in charge and then you don't care when you're in charge, if you want to really do something about it...

(APPLAUSE)

... if you really want to get the deficit under control without sacrificing all the investments that I've talked about, our tax code has to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more.

(APPLAUSE)

Just like they did when Bill Clinton was president, just like they did when our economy created 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and a lot of millionaires to boot.

And here's the good news: There are plenty of patriotic, very successful Americans who'd be willing to make this contribution again.

(APPLAUSE)

Look, we have no choice about whether we pay down our deficit. But we do have a choice about how we pay down our deficit. We do have a choice about what we can do without and where our priorities lie.

I don't believe that giving someone like me a \$250,000 tax cut is more valuable to our future than hiring transformative teachers or providing financial aid to the children of a middle-class family.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: I don't believe that tax cut is more likely to create jobs than providing loans to new entrepreneurs or tax credits to small-business owners who hire veterans.

I don't believe it's more likely to spur economic growth than investments in clean energy technology and medical research, or in new roads and bridges and runways.

I don't believe that giving someone like Mr. Romney another huge tax cut is worth ending the guarantee of basic security we've always provided the elderly and the sick and those who are actively looking for work.

(APPLAUSE)

Those things don't make our economy weak. What makes our economy weak is when fewer and fewer people can afford to buy the goods and services our businesses sell.

(APPLAUSE)

Businesses don't have customers if folks are having such a hard time.

What drags us all down is an economy in which there's an ever-widening gap between a few folks who are doing extraordinarily well and a growing number of people who, no matter how hard they work, can barely make ends meet.

(APPLAUSE)

So Governor Romney disagrees with my vision. His allies in Congress disagree with my vision. Neither of them will endorse any policy that asks the wealthiest Americans to pay even a nickel more in taxes.

It's the reason why we haven't reached a grand bargain to bring down our deficit; not with my plan, not with the Bowles-Simpson plan, not with the so-called Gang of Six plan.

Despite the fact that taxes are lower than they've been in decades, they won't work with us on any plan that would increase taxes on our wealthiest Americans.

OBAMA: It's the reason a jobs bill that would put 1 million people back to work has been voted down time and time again. It's the biggest source of gridlock in Washington today.

And the only thing that can break the stalemate is you.

(APPLAUSE)

You see, in our democracy, this remarkable system of government, you, the people, have the final say.

(APPLAUSE)

This November is your chance to render a verdict on the debate over how to grow the economy, how to create good jobs, how to pay down our deficit. Your vote will finally determine the path that we take as a nation, not just tomorrow, but for years to come.

(APPLAUSE)

When you strip everything else away, that's really what this election is about. That's what is at stake right now. Everything else is just noise. Everything else is just a distraction.

(APPLAUSE)

From now until then, both sides will spend tons of money on TV commercials. The other side will spend over a billion dollars on ads that tell you the economy is bad, that it's all my fault...

(LAUGHTER)

... that I can't fix it because I think government is always the answer or because I didn't make a lot of money in the private sector and don't understand it or because I'm in over my head or because I think everything and everybody is doing just fine.

That's what the scary voice in the ads will say.

(LAUGHTER)

That's what Mr. Romney will say.

OBAMA: That's what the Republicans in Congress will say.

Well, you know, that may be their plan to win the election, but it's not a plan to create jobs.

(APPLAUSE)

It's not a plan to grow the economy. It's not a plan to pay down the debt. And it's sure not a plan to revive the middle class and secure our future. I think you deserve better than that.

(APPLAUSE)

At a moment this big, a moment when so many people are still struggling, I think you deserve a real debate about the economic plans we're promoting. Governor Romney and the Republicans who run Congress believe that if you simply take away regulations and cut taxes by trillions of dollars, the market will solve all of our problems on its own. If you agree with that, you should vote for them. And I promise you, they will take us in that direction.



I believe we need a plan for better education and training and for energy independence and for new research and innovation, for rebuilding our infrastructure, for a tax code that creates jobs in America and pays down our debt in a way that's balanced.

I have that plan. They don't. And if you agree with me, if you believe this economy grows best when everybody gets a fair shot, and everybody does their fair share, and everybody plays by the same set of rules, then I ask you stand with me for a second term as president.

(APPLAUSE)

In fact -- in fact, I'll -- I'll take it a step further. I ask your vote for anyone else, whether they're Democrats, independents, or Republicans who share your view about how America should grow. I will work with anyone of any party who believes that we're in this together, who believes that we rise or fall as one nation and as one people.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: Because -- because I'm convinced that there're actually a lot of Republicans out there who may not agree with every one of my policies but who still believe in a balanced, responsible approach to economic growth and who remember the lessons of our history, and who don't like the direction their leaders are taking them.

And let me -- let me leave you with one last thought: As you consider your choice in November...

(AUDIENCE CHEERS)

OBAMA: Don't let anybody tell you that the challenges we face right now are beyond our ability to solve.

You know, it's hard not to get cynical when times are tough. And I'm reminded every day of just how tough things are for too many Americans.

Every day I hear from folks who are out of work or have lost their home. Across this country I meet people who are struggling to pay their bills, or older workers worried about retirement, or young people who are underemployed and burdened with debt.

I hear their voices when I wake up in the morning and those voices ring in my head when I lay down to sleep.

And in those voices I hear the echo of my own family's struggles as I was growing up and Michelle's family's struggles when she was growing up, and the fears and the dashed hopes that -- that our parents and grandparents had to confront.

Well, you know what? In those voices I also hear a stubborn hope and a fierce pride and determination to overcome whatever challenges we face.

(APPLAUSE)

And in you the American people I'm reminded of all the things that tilt the future in our favor. We remain the wealthiest nation on Earth. We have the best workers and entrepreneurs, the best scientists and researchers, the best colleges and universities. We are a young country with the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity drawn from every corner of the globe. So, yes, reforming our schools, rebuilding our infrastructure will take time. Yes, paying down our debt will require some tough choices and shared sacrifice. But it can be done. And we'll be stronger for it.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: And what's lacking is not the capacity to meet our challenges, what is lacking is our politics. And that's something entirely within your power to solve. So this November you can remind the world how a strong economy is built, not from the top down, but from a growing, thriving middle class.

This November, you can remind the world how it is that we've traveled this far as a country, not by telling everybody to fend for themselves but by coming together as one American family, all of us pitching in, all of us pulling our own weight, this November you can provide a mandate for the change we need right now. You can move this nation forward, and you can remind the world once again why the United States of America is still the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you.

God bless you.

God bless the United States of America

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## Merkel Stresses Limits to Germany's Strength

By [NICHOLAS KULISH](#) and [PAUL GEITNER](#)

BERLIN — Europe's currency union may be inching ever closer to the brink of collapse, but Chancellor Angela Merkel has a message for those pressing her to ride to the rescue: Germany is not as strong as it looks, and certainly not strong enough to prop up the rest of Europe.

"Germany's strength is not infinite," Ms. Merkel told the Bundestag on Thursday. "Germany's powers, too, are not unlimited. Consequently, our special responsibility as the leading economy in Europe means we must be able to realistically size up our powers, so we can use them for Germany and Europe with full force."

The most important actor in the European drama, Ms. Merkel said that she would resist any outside attempts to force Germany to consent to what she called "simple" and "counterproductive" quick fixes. Once again, she rejected jointly issued euro bonds or other forms of shared debt, which several leaders, including President François Hollande of France, have called for.

"I know that it is arduous, that it is painful, that it is a drawn-out task," Ms. Merkel said. "It is a herculean task, but it is unavoidable."

Behind the scenes, however, Ms. Merkel is pressing allies in Paris, Rome and elsewhere to cede more power to Brussels over their national budgets before Germany would agree to provide further backing for joint efforts to bolster the euro zone. In her speech, Ms. Merkel hinted at this approach by emphasizing her view that the only way for Europe to recover fully from the crisis is to strengthen political and fiscal unity to support its monetary union.

But that is a long-term strategy. And given Ms. Merkel's firm stance, coupled with Germany's longstanding reluctance to make more aggressive moves to shore up the euro, Europe faces a more immediate question: If the Continent's largest economy cannot or will not stop the euro zone from falling apart, who will?

"Merkel still thinks it's all about introducing new rules, making countries stick by the rules, and if they stick by the rules the situation will stabilize," said Philip Whyte, a senior research fellow at the Center for European Reform in London. "She seems to think that she has a lot more time than the markets seem to think."

Ms. Merkel delivered her pessimistic message as she prepared to fly to Mexico for a two-day summit meeting beginning on Monday, right after a critical vote in Greece on Sunday that could determine whether the country remains in the euro zone. Investors, meanwhile, briefly pushed Spanish bond yields over the key threshold of 7 percent on Thursday, a level that had previously prompted international bailouts for Greece and two other members of the 17-nation euro zone.

With larger economies like Spain and Italy teetering, Ms. Merkel's stern warning was not just posturing for a domestic audience opposed to bailouts, or tactical positioning before a summit meeting. Her statements reflected a growing fear in Germany that too many guarantees and payouts could threaten its own top credit rating.

That, in turn, would undermine the euro zone's rescue efforts, which are predicated on Germany's low borrowing costs and high standing in the markets. Indeed, German bond yields, which have been at historically low levels as investors have sought havens, have begun to creep upward in recent days.

At the Group of 20 meeting next week in Los Cabos, Mexico, the pressure for Ms. Merkel to find a way to contain financial instability and encourage growth is likely to be fierce. But far from turning toward stimulus or agreeing to some form of jointly issued debt, Ms. Merkel's advisers say that she will remind fellow leaders of their pledges to cut budget deficits in half by next year, as Germany has done.

Ms. Merkel has found herself in a difficult political balancing act. Anger in Germany over the rising price tag for bailouts continues to grow, with more than two-thirds of those surveyed in a recent poll saying that they wanted Greece to leave the euro. But business leaders in this export-driven economy are pressing her to salvage the currency that has served them so well.

The results of a Greek exit could be unpredictable. Higher borrowing costs already threaten to turn the \$125 billion bailout of Spain's banking sector into a full bailout of the country's government, the same rescue that Portugal, Ireland and Greece received. But a full bailout of Spain would severely tax European Union resources and turn the full glare of market scrutiny onto Italy, the third-largest economy in the euro zone, after Germany and France.

Hard-liners in Germany contend that the painfully high yields that countries like Spain and Italy are forced to pay are actually a good thing, because they keep the pressure on to make politically unpopular changes to labor laws, to raise the retirement age and to pursue other structural changes in their economies that impose immediate pain but promise a long-term improvement in competitiveness.

A majority of Germans opposed the introduction of the euro in the first place, but they took some solace in the fact that bailouts between European countries were prohibited. Now many Germans feel betrayed as the price tag to hold the currency union together has grown.

"They really want to see blood," said Irwin Collier, a professor of economics at the Free University in Berlin. "They really want to see the austerity hurt."

Mr. Collier said Germans were suffering from "transfer fatigue" after two decades of sending money to the former East Germany to rebuild it.

The top-selling book in the country is "Europe Doesn't Need the Euro," by Thilo Sarrazin, a provocative former member of the executive board of the German Bundesbank. The daily newspaper Die Welt devoted two pages on Sunday to whether Germany could leave the euro, under the headline "Return of the D-Mark. Would It Work?"

While a majority of Germans say they want to keep the euro, and support for the European Union cuts across party lines, there is a growing fear that dissatisfaction could spur the creation of Germany's first mainstream anti-Europe party.

"In private there's a rather large debate going on in Germany," Mr. Whyte said. "What I'm hearing at the moment is a cacophony. There's clearly not any single German view within policy-making circles."

German officials are exasperated with colleagues in other countries, whom they see as ignoring European treaties and their own constitutions in calling for new instruments like euro bonds, which the German constitutional court has signaled it would probably strike down under current laws. The idea that countries would pool liabilities without ceding authority over budgets to a central authority is viewed in Berlin as naïve.

But Germany has not closed the door to creative solutions to the crisis. Increasing attention has been paid here to a proposal by the government's independent council of economic experts to pool excessive debt. A single, limited fund, rather than an open-ended commitment, might have a better chance of clearing the constitutional hurdle.

A summit meeting of European leaders in Brussels at the end of the month is supposed to lead to a road map for overhauling the currency union, but Ms. Merkel is afraid of letting market expectations of a "big bang," as she put it recently, get out of control.

"We do not create policies for the markets, but for the future of our people," Ms. Merkel said, to applause from lawmakers.

The problem for Europe is that the two are becoming increasingly inseparable, and lenders are pressing for action.

“They will do anything to save the situation, because they do not know what will happen afterwards,” said Roland Döhrn, an economist at the RWI Institute of Economic Research in Essen. “Politics move very slowly in a world where problems move very fast.”

Nicholas Kulish reported from Berlin, and Paul Geitner from Brussels. Melissa Eddy contributed reporting from Berlin, and David Jolly from Paris.

NYT June 14, 2012

## How Greece Squandered Its Freedom

By NIKOS KONSTANDARAS

Athens

MY country is hurtling toward an election that will decide its fate — whether Greeks will fight on to remain part of Europe's core or succumb to their own weaknesses and turn inward, choosing isolation, anger and uncertainty greater than that from which they wish to flee.

The vote on Sunday will change our lives — determining not only whether we remain in the euro zone but also the nature of our society and the fate of the democracy that was re-established just 38 years ago after a dictatorship. We are bitterly divided between those who want to carry on with the reform process and those who want to turn back the clock. Our partners in the European Union are frightened of the consequences of our vote, but seem otherwise indifferent to our fate.

At a moment when the choices should be as clear as possible — between reform and stagnation, between Europe and isolation, between painful progress and the deceptive comfort of surrender — the issues are hopelessly confused by false expectations, by false choices and by the total failure of a political class that can't propose solutions to the country's problems and can't forge a minimal national consensus on what is at stake and what needs to be done.

We face a choice between two deeply flawed alternatives. On one hand, there is New Democracy, a center-right party that has done much to undermine Greece's economic reform and revival over the past two years. It refused to support the bailout agreement signed by the Greek government, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund on the grounds that it would stifle growth and so it undermined initiatives like tax reform that would have helped combat tax evasion by self-employed professionals and businesses. Yet it is now presenting itself as the responsible force that will stick to austerity and keep Greece in the euro zone.

On the other hand there is Syriza, a fractious coalition of 12 radical groups that has anointed itself the herald of leftist change throughout Europe and declares that it will immediately annul the bailout agreement while demanding that our partners continue to lend us money. The latter course could lead to the country's swift exit from the euro and a chaotic and unpredictable future.

Since last October, after the first suggestion that Greece might be forced out of the euro zone, we have lived with desperate uncertainty. Suicides, once few, are on the rise as the pressure becomes too much for some. Meanwhile, families and the disorganized and underfunded social security system can no longer cope. In a country of fewer than 11 million people, more than a million are jobless. Everyone else lives in fear that he or she may be next as companies close or lay off workers. Migrants are leaving and Greeks are emigrating. A recent study conducted on behalf of Panteion University in Athens suggests that 7 out of 10 Greeks between the ages of 18 and 24 hope to seek their fortune elsewhere.

This uncertainty has inspired radical choices. A cousin of mine, and his wife, left with their young child a few weeks after she was offered a job in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. They reasoned that one job in Dubai was more secure than two in Greece. In villages around the country, the unemployed and pensioners from cities and towns are returning to the land to clear fields and grow crops that they feel they and their extended families will need if the economy gets even worse. A friend, a successful lawyer, is thinking of going into farming as he sees his clients falling by the wayside. My elderly parents follow the news carefully, anxious about possible shortages of medicines. Having lived through many ups and downs, they are more sanguine than most: "Whatever happens to the many will happen to us as well," my mother says.

The insecurity shakes us to our core. When I go to the A.T.M., I hold my breath until I hear the reassuring whirring sound that says the machine will give me what I've asked for. I wonder whether I will be so lucky next time. My wife and I have been working for more than 25 years, saving for our children's education, because

even though about half our salaries go to taxes and social security, we know that we must pay for private schools, that we cannot count on state hospitals, and that our pensions are not guaranteed. (All this because others do not pay taxes, and because successive governments did not do their work.)

Every day we wonder whether we have done the right thing, jeopardizing our savings in a stubborn statement of confidence in a country that, since its founding, has declared bankruptcy several times. How will we tell the children that their lives would have been better if we had been less inert, less idealistic, more adaptable to circumstances? In a few years' time, will they be able to travel and study abroad as easily as we once did? We don't know.

The choice Greeks face on Sunday might appear simple — between tightening our belts and remaining in the euro or leaving it and facing an economic meltdown. But politics is never simple here.

The discredited New Democracy party, which governed Greece from 2004 to 2009, represents the failed political system that allowed Greece to fall so deeply into debt in the first place and then signed on to harsh austerity measures.

And a coalition led by the left-wing coalition Syriza wouldn't be the breath of fresh air that its 37-year-old leader, Alexis Tsipras, would like us to believe. Its platform is populist to the point of nihilism as it tries to suck up the support of those who've abandoned the mainstream parties and their failed policies: it promises to annul the reforms and austerity measures of the past two years, nationalize banks, block privatization plans and even take back some of the state companies that were recently sold off.

Meanwhile Pasok, the socialist party that until May had been Greece's other major political faction, alongside New Democracy, has withered to near irrelevance because it is blamed both for policies that stacked the public sector with political clients and bloated state spending, and for implementing the austerity and reforms demanded by our creditors.

None of these parties have advanced a serious agenda to avoid disaster. Those who are deeply in debt — or who aspire to gain at the expense of others — hope that the economy's slate will simply be wiped clean. Those who have stashed their money abroad will be able to buy assets on the cheap if Greece leaves the euro zone. But the people who work hard and pay taxes, who have a stake in reform and progress, who carry the burden of every mistake, have no credible representative to vote for. Those who want a better Greece have to look for the least bad option.

The widespread feeling of loss is worsened by the understanding that we wasted most of the past four decades — the longest period of peace and prosperity that the country has known. Greece made great strides toward achieving the standards of its European partners, with major infrastructure projects, hospitals and schools, and with European Union subsidies and markets helping to create a booming economy and a new middle class. But we allowed development to become a bubble. We lost the self-discipline, moderation and inventiveness that once helped the Greeks achieve great things, and we succumbed to political expediency, delusions of grandeur and a fatal sense of entitlement.

EVER since the Greeks began their war of independence against the Turks in 1821, these different aspects of the national character have been in perpetual conflict, resulting in breathtaking swings between glorious heights and desperate depths. The heroic resistance to the German occupation in World War II was followed by a terrible civil war between left and right that still cripples our politics; the inspiration of the Athens Summer Olympics in 2004 was followed by the economic, social and political ineptitude that brought us to today's collapse of the main political parties, and what is turning out to be the destruction of the country's backbone: small businesses and the middle class.

We hear that about 80 billion euros has been pulled from bank accounts and that 500 million to 800 million euros is being withdrawn each day. Some of this goes toward paying bills, while the rest is being hidden or moved abroad. And yet, last month there was still about 170 billion euros in Greek banks, despite the growing chorus of economists declaring that Greece will leave the euro. Why? Maybe when the volcano rumbles, when



the thugs come for our neighbor, when a society gives up the fight for progress, the familiarity of our routines numbs us to the dust and roar of the coming stampede. Maybe we do not think bad things will happen to us.

Maybe that's what the people of Constantinople felt before it fell to the Ottomans in 1453, or the Greeks who were swept out of Asia Minor in 1922, or the innocents sucked into the civil war of 1946-49.

What I want to remember from Greece in 2012 is how laziness and years of intellectual sloppiness can waste the gift of freedom and leave open the gates of the city — how we allowed our leaders to pander to us until we had no one capable of leading us, no one next to us at the barricades.

Nikos Konstandaras is the managing editor and a columnist at the Greek daily newspaper Kathimerini.

# L'agence Egan-Jones dégrade encore la France

Le Monde.fr avec AFP | 15.06.2012 à 07h34 • Mis à jour le 15.06.2012 à 07h34



**L'agence de notation américaine Egan-Jones a abaissé jeudi la note attribuée à la dette de la France à BBB+, citant la pression croissante exercée sur le pays par la crise de la zone euro.**

La note, qui était jusque-là de A, a été abaissée de deux crans, et la perspective est négative. La France avait perdu son AAA chez cette agence américaine en juillet.

Egan-Jones justifie cette décision par le ralentissement de la croissance économique française et la hausse des taux des emprunts publics. Elle prévient que *"comme la France a tendance à soutenir ses banques, elle pourrait bientôt se trouver confrontée à d'importantes charges supplémentaires"*.

Pour la dette publique, Egan-Jones a constaté une *"tendance désastreuse et le pire est encore à venir"*. Le nouveau président [François Hollande](#) va *"se retrouver pressé de tenir ses promesses de campagne ce qui en fin de compte affectera la qualité de crédit"* du pays, ajoute l'agence.

Les grandes agences de notation attribuent de meilleures notes à la France : Moody's et Fitch lui accordent encore un triple A, la meilleure note possible, tandis que Standard & Poor's lui a retiré en janvier le AAA, abaissant la note du pays d'un cran, à AA+.

# La crise s'aggrave en Europe

Le Figaro Par [Alexandrine Bouilhet](#), [Patrick Saint-Paul](#) Mis à jour le 15/06/2012 à 00:07 | publié le 14/06/2012

## Alors que les taux d'emprunt de l'Espagne et de l'Italie s'envolent, la France et l'Allemagne s'opposent sur la sortie de crise. Jean-Marc Ayrault et Arnaud Montebourg s'en prennent ouvertement à Angela Merkel.

À trois jours d'élections à haut risque en [Grèce](#), les marchés sont fébriles, les taux d'emprunt de [l'Espagne](#) et de [l'Italie](#) s'envolent, mais l'Europe est aux abonnés absents, paralysée par une opposition frontale entre Paris et Berlin.

Jeudi, les rendements des obligations espagnoles à 10 ans ont atteint 7%, un niveau historique. [Sceptiques à l'égard du plan de sauvetage des banques](#), qui fait jouer au gouvernement espagnol le rôle d'ultime garant du prêt de secours de 100 milliards d'euros, les marchés parient sur un sauvetage d'État qui serait très onéreux pour l'Europe. Par effet de contagion, l'Italie, troisième économie de la zone euro, a vu ses taux d'emprunt grimper à plus de 6 %, un record sur six mois. Dans la tourmente, [l'Espagne entraîne aussi l'Italie](#), troisième économie de la [zone euro](#), qui voit ses taux d'emprunt grimper à plus de 6%, un record sur six mois.

Face à cette situation, l'Europe n'a pas de réponse commune rassurante pour les marchés. Et pour cause: la [France](#) et [l'Allemagne](#) ne sont plus du tout sur la même longueur d'onde. Alors que [François Hollande](#) réclame de «nouveaux instruments financiers», notamment des euro-obligations, pour calmer les marchés, l'Allemagne s'y oppose fermement. Tout comme elle refuse une union bancaire qui ferait du contribuable allemand le bouclier contre une ruée des épargnants européens vers les guichets.

Pour que les choses soient claires, [Angela Merkel](#) a fait jeudi une mise au point très ferme, en affirmant que le sauvetage de la zone euro ne saurait reposer sur les seules épaules de l'Allemagne «[dont les ressources ne sont pas illimitées](#)». Surtout, elle a mis en garde contre les solutions «faciles» et «rapides», voire «médiocres», qui ramèneraient la crise en Europe à son point de départ. Signe de l'extrême tension qui règne entre Paris et Berlin, [Jean-Marc Ayrault](#) l'a aussitôt invitée, dans une réponse inhabituellement cinglante, à «[ne pas se laisser aller à des formules simplistes](#)». Dans un entretien à *L'Usine nouvelle*, [Arnaud Montebourg](#) reproche quant à lui à Angela Merkel son «[aveuglement idéologique](#)».

### Endettement et «manque de compétitivité»

Les solutions «faciles» dénoncées par la chancelière - les euro-obligations et l'union bancaire - ne peuvent être que l'aboutissement d'un processus d'intégration, estime-t-on à Berlin. «Nous ne faisons pas de la politique pour les marchés, mais pour l'avenir des hommes», a insisté Angela Merkel, rappelant que les «mécanismes de mutualisation de la dette sont non seulement anticonstitutionnels (au regard de la loi fondamentale allemande), mais aussi contre-productifs».

Pour Berlin, il n'y aura pas de solution à la crise si l'on ne s'attaque pas à ses deux racines les plus profondes: l'endettement et le «manque de compétitivité», deux tares partagées par la France et l'Italie. Il n'y aura ni transferts budgétaires ni «eurobonds» sans une véritable union politique en Europe, qui nécessite des transferts majeurs de souveraineté.

## As Europe's Currency Union Frays, Conspiracy Theories Fly

By [FLOYD NORRIS](#)

*"We need not just a currency union; we also need a so-called fiscal union, more common budget policies. And we need above all a political union. That means that we must, step by step as things go forward, give up more powers to Europe as well and allow Europe oversight possibilities."*

— Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, June 2012

Imagine for a moment that two decades ago, a newly unified Germany set out to take over the European Continent, as the previous unified Germany had tried and failed to do half a century earlier. This time it would use money, not guns, to accomplish the goal.

There is, let me hasten to note, no evidence of any such conspiracy. But if there had been, things might have played out more or less as they have.

What follows is a brief history of [the euro](#). The phrases in italics, showing motive and prescience on the part of the Germans, are invented to support the conspiracy theory. But the facts have not been changed.

Our tale begins almost 20 years ago, in the summer of 1992. Europe's great experiment with semi-fixed exchange rates was coming under pressure largely because of the decision by the German central bank, the Bundesbank, to sharply raise interest rates. It felt a need to do that because of inflation brought on by the generous terms of German unification, which grossly overvalued the East German mark.

Those high rates brought a flood of money coursing into Germany. The mark rose nearly 20 percent against the American dollar during the spring and summer. Since other European currencies were pegged to the mark, with only a small margin of wiggle room, they also rose, damaging countries' ability to compete in world markets. To maintain the peg, those countries were forced to raise interest rates when their economies were already weak, worsening the domestic situations.

Speculators concluded that the pegs could not last. Huge short sales of Italian lire and British pounds forced the governments to spend foreign exchange reserves to support their currencies.

In September first Britain and then Italy abandoned the peg. Their currencies depreciated rapidly. In due course, others followed. The British blamed the Germans for their high interest rates. The Germans rejected that. "One-sided accusations of responsibility are beside the point," [said Germany's chancellor, Helmut Kohl](#).

The lesson of the 1992 debacle was aptly summed up by C. Fred Bergsten, the director of what later became the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "If governments try to do inconsistent things, such as maintaining an exchange rate and not having policies that back up that rate, then the exchange rates get knocked off."

The lesson many Europeans learned was a different one — that common currencies had to be rigid, so there was no possibility of an attack on a weak currency by speculators.

Europe had already agreed, in the Maastricht Treaty signed early that year, to seek a course of eventual currency union, with details to be worked out later. The rules called for the countries to pursue complementary economic policies, but lacked any real enforcement mechanism. There was to be no way for a country to leave the euro zone. Once in, countries were to stay forever.

*Conceivably, Germany learned three things from the 1992 experience, and mapped out a course with those lessons in mind. First, absent fixed exchange rates, its export-oriented companies faced the risk of periodic competitive devaluations from the rest of Europe. German exports had peaked in 1990, and did not fully*

recover until 1994. They would not fall again for an entire year until 2010, after the credit crisis devastated world trade.

*Second, a currency union could help German exports if the euro's value were held down by less competitive economies.* Italy had been forced repeatedly to devalue the lira as rising costs made its exports too expensive. A common currency would not stop the rising costs, but it would prevent a new devaluation.

*Finally, if Germany adopted a low-interest-rate policy, and superlow rates arrived in European nations accustomed to high rates, banks could open the credit spigot and create a debt-financed boom in much of Europe. That would invite a mushrooming of imbalances. Ultimately, deeply indebted countries would face a crisis, one that they could solve only if they acquiesced to German policies and surrendered a large part of national sovereignty.*

In July 1992, the Bundesbank [raised its key interest rate](#) by 75 basis points, to 8.75 percent, perhaps sealing the fate of the lira and pound. It reversed part of that increase in September, but that was a case of too little, too late for Britain and Italy. Over the next few years, it cut the rate repeatedly. It was at 2.5 percent by the time the euro was inaugurated and the new European Central Bank took over responsibility.

As the years went on, Germany held down its wage costs. Its exports boomed as European neighbors used borrowed money to buy German goods. German banks helped to finance housing bubbles in the periphery — usually not directly, but through loans to other banks.

In hindsight, the critical moment in the crisis may have been when Ireland's banks failed in early 2009. Had the Irish government taken the position that it would stand behind deposits, but that loans made to the banks would be allowed to default, German banks would have been in trouble, and probably would have needed to be bailed out by the German government.

Instead, the Irish government chose to guarantee all the banks' obligations — a commitment it could not afford. Ireland had been running budget surpluses, but now it needed to be bailed out. The German prescription for Ireland, as it would be for the other countries that soon got into difficulty, was austerity. Since they could not devalue their currency, countries would have to reduce wages and raise taxes. Germany categorically rejected the idea of allowing its own inflation to rise, a move that could take some of the pressure off the troubled countries.

The last several years have been a time of repeated crises, with Germany appearing to be rigid until, at the last moment, it agrees to something to avert disaster without actually doing anything to allow the troubled countries' economies to grow.

The European Central Bank gave cheap loans to banks to enable them to buy their own countries' bonds, and they did. In the process, that allowed many foreign investors, including German banks, to bail out. As depositors grew worried and withdrew money from banks in troubled countries, the European Central Bank made up the difference by lending money to national central banks — and borrowing from the Bundesbank. The effect has been to relieve the German private sector at the expense of the public sector.

The endgame may be approaching. Troubled countries are facing an increasingly clear choice. They can stay in the euro zone, and face years of endless recession. They can abandon the euro, perhaps bringing catastrophe but giving them the freedom to devalue their new currencies. Or they can accept the German offer: *Surrender sovereignty. Accept German leadership and domination of a unified Europe. Then we will bail you out.*

If Europe does not accept the offer, and the euro disintegrates, it is hard to know how it will play out. There are, by design, no rules about how the euro zone could be untangled. But after the dust settled, Germany would be among the losers. A new German mark would no doubt be much stronger than the euro is now, making life a lot harder for German exporters. That reality has led some in Europe to think that Germany is bluffing, and that it will continue to pay the bill even if it cannot get what it wants.

That has angered Germans. “A Game of Euro Chicken” was the headline on [a commentary by Jan Fleischhauer in last week’s edition of Der Spiegel](#), the German magazine. “For Germany, being part of the European Union has always included an element of blackmail,” he wrote. “France has been playing this card from the beginning, but now the Spanish and the Greeks have mastered the game. They’re banking on Berlin losing its nerve.”

The Greek election on Sunday will be fascinating to watch. The leftist party led by Alexis Tsipras finished second in the inconclusive May election by offering to reject austerity and stay in the euro zone. That is an alternative not being offered by the rest of Europe. If Mr. Tsipras wins this election, there could be a showdown. But if the establishment parties recover enough support to form a government, then the play could continue, with Greece — now in its fifth year of economic decline — trying to cut spending without destroying the country. If there is again no election winner, there is no telling what will happen.

The euro was supposed to seal European integration and prosperity and assure that never again would the Continent begin a world war. Whether or not it manages to survive, the common currency has instead fostered anger, recession and resentment. Greeks and others see in this a German conspiracy. Germans see a conspiracy to force them to pay for the continuing sins of others.

If this flies out of control, the world economy may well be the loser, regardless of whether any of those conspiracies actually existed.

Floyd Norris comments on finance and the economy at [nytimes.com/economix](http://nytimes.com/economix).

# Germany's Constitutional Conundrum

EconoMonitor Author: [Marshall Auerback](#) · June 14th, 2012 · [Comments \(0\)](#) Share This Print 110 1

Hans-Werner Sinn, President of Germany's Ifo Institute and the Director of the Center for Economic Studies at the University of Munich, has taken to the [pages of the NY Times](#) to explain why Berlin is balking on a further bailout for Europe. Amongst the points that Sinn makes against German sharing in the debt of the euro zone's southern nations is a legal one: *"For one thing, such a bailout is illegal under the Maastricht Treaty, which governs the euro zone. Because the treaty is law in each member state, a bailout would be rejected by Germany's Constitutional Court."*

Sinn also argues that Germany's counterparty credit exposure already exposes the country to immense credit risk: *"Should Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain go bankrupt and repay nothing, while the euro survives, Germany would lose \$899 billion. Should the euro fail, Germany would lose over \$1.35 trillion, more than 40 percent of its G.D.P."*

Let's leave aside Sinn's broader rhetorical points ("Has the United States ever incurred a similar risk for helping other countries?" Umm, yes, it did – there was that little matter of World War II). Levity aside, professor Sinn does raise a huge potential conundrum as far as Germany and its broader relationship to the Eurozone's institutions go. In fact, recent German Constitutional Court rulings on bailouts could well blow apart the European Monetary Union. This is because the potential unlimited liabilities to which Germany is exposed under Target 2, the ELA, and various other lender of last resort facilities adopted by the European Central Bank do on the face of it run afoul of the court's ruling, which argued that any future bailouts had to be limited and subject to the democratic consent of Germany's Parliament. What happens, for example, if someone in Germany were to challenge the very legality of Target 2 on those grounds?

This is not the first time in which Sinn has expressed concerns in regard to Germany's exposure via "Target 2"; indeed, he was to our knowledge one of the first to raise this issue in a number of scholarly papers ( see [here](#)).

**So what exactly is "Target 2"? Target 2 refers to Trans-European Automated Real-time Gross Settlement Express Transfer.** It is the euro system's operational tool through which the national central banks of member states provide payment and settlement services for intra/euro area transactions. Target 2 claims can arise from trade and current account transactions as well as from purely financial transactions.

Recently financial transactions have become dominant. Funds have been taken out of banks on Europe's periphery and have been deposited in banks in the north of Europe, principally in Germany. The bank receiving the deposit places those funds with the Bundesbank (or other recipient national central banks); in doing so it has its funds delivered through the Bundesbank (or other recipient national central banks), which in turn deposits with the ECB. Via the ECB the funds then go to the bank on the periphery that has lost deposit funds. That is a Target 2 transaction. The so-called Target 2 outstanding balance is the net position of such claims between two European countries. The ECB in effect acts as the hub through which these transactions are mediated.

Target 2 has taken on heightened relevance in the past year as a consequence of the Eurozone's silent bank run. As deposits have fled the periphery banks – Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Spain – these banks have become increasingly reliant on Target 2 to overcome funding problems.

As an aside, it is also worth noting that banks can also borrow under the emergency liquidity assistance (ELA) program. Such assistance is extended by single national central banks to their banking systems. The risk is borne at the national level. The collateral requirements imposed upon a commercial bank for obtaining ELA funds is less than the collateral requirements needed for obtaining Target 2 funds. The national central bank in a country like Greece with commercial bank deposit runs ultimately funds its ELA financial assistance to its commercial banks from the ECB. That ECB funding for ELA is above and beyond Target 2 funding.

The ECB also conducts repo operations with banks in the system. Recently these repo operations (e.g., LTRO's) have also been funding banks in the periphery that have been experiencing deposit runs. It has been widely believed that LTRO funds received by Italian and Spanish banks went entirely into purchases of their



government's bonds. Some of these funds did go into purchases of national government bonds, but only in part; some of those LTRO funds financed deposit losses.

So where is the money ultimately coming from? To some extent there is a circular quality attendant with the banking crisis. Money leaves, say, a Greek bank. A wealthy Greek ship-owner is worried about the solvency of his country (or a concern that he might actually have to pay taxes), so he quickly withdraws the sums from a Greek bank and redeposits the money with a German bank. The German bank now might find itself flush with billions of dollars which it can't use, so it re-deposits the money with the Bundesbank, which in turn places it with the ECB. The ECB then might turn around and extends funding (via Target 2, or the ELA) back to the Greek banks and in effect closes the financial circuit created in the Eurozone when a citizen of one country chooses to move his deposit from a domestic bank to a bank domiciled in another euro area nation.

Of course, some of this money goes outside the euro zone (Swiss banks, US banks, London property, gold, etc) and it is almost certainly the case (even though the ECB would never admit it) that some of this funding (perhaps most of it) comes from the ECB actually creating new net financial assets. To get a sense of how big the ECB's exposure is, it is worthwhile looking at its "loans to other monetary financial institutions", which is one of the line items buried in its balance sheet. That the ECB creates new euros is not itself problematic from an operational standpoint: as the sole issuer of the euro, the ECB is free to provide as many euros as is needed to keep the funding system in place. It cannot go broke.

To reiterate, a private bank needs capital – clearly because there are prudential regulations requiring that – but because it can become insolvent. It has no currency-issuing capacity in its own right. While the ECB has an elaborate formula for determining how capital is allocated from the national member banks, at an intrinsic level, it has no need for capital. The ECB could operate forever with a balance sheet that if held by a private bank would signal insolvency.

The point is that a currency issuer (ECB) and a currency user (private bank) are not comparable in terms of solvency. The latter is always at risk of insolvency, the former never, so there is no OPERATIONAL risk or limit per se implied in the ECB's actions.

Although it might well assert to the contrary, the ECB has massively expanded its lender of last resort facilities, in many cases in violation of the Maastricht Treaty. As Professor Wilhem Buiter has argued in a recent [paper](#):

*[T]he European Central Bank (ECB) has been acting as lender of last resort (LoLR) for the sovereigns of the Eurosystem since it first started its outright purchases of euro area (EA) periphery sovereign debt under the Securities Markets Programme (SMP) in May 2010 (see de Grauwe (2011b), Wyplosz (2011, 2012) and Buiter and Rahbari (2012a)). The scale of its interventions as LoLR for sovereigns has grown steadily since then and its range of instruments has expanded. We interpret the longer-term refinancing operations (LTROs) of December 2011 and February 2012 as being as much about acting, indirectly, as LoLR for the Spanish and Italian sovereigns by facilitating the purchase of their debt by domestic banks in the primary issue markets, as about dealing with a liquidity crunch for EA banks. A future third LoLR instrument will be indirect lending by the Eurosystem to periphery sovereigns. This will be achieved through national Central Banks lending to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the IMF lending to the Spanish and Italian sovereigns, once these sovereigns have come under suitable troika (IMF, European Commission and ECB) programmes. If and when the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) gets a banking licence (becomes an eligible counterparty of the Eurosystem for the purpose of repos or other forms of collateralized borrowing), the ECB will have a fourth mechanism through which it can act as LoLR for sovereigns.*

Which gets us back to the issues raised by Sinn: Reflecting mounting German concerns about the country's growing counterparty exposure risks to the periphery, Sinn has proposed limiting Germany's Target 2 exposures. From a German legal perspective, Sinn is on very solid ground. In May 2010, when Germany's Parliament voted to provide financial aid to Greece to prevent it from insolvency and to approve the €440 billion (\$620 billion) European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), with €147 billion in loan guarantees, this was challenged in Germany's Constitutional Court. At the time, Germany's highest court ruled that the parliamentary criteria had been adhered to when the government agreed to those specific bailout measures.

At the same time, the court said the Bundestag had not ceded any of its authority in budget decision-making with its approval of the legislation. Furthermore, the judges ruled that future aid package resolutions could not be automatic and should not infringe on the future decision-making rights of Germany's parliament. Aid packages, they argued, would have to be clearly defined, and members of parliament would have to be given the opportunity to review the aid and also stop it if needed.

Under the terms of the German court's ruling, then, Target 2 itself would appear to be unconstitutional, even though Target 2 itself was one of the features incorporated in the Treaty of Maastricht. But the problem with Target 2 is that it involves an open ended indeterminate exposure of the German people to losses involved in the bailout of the periphery. The German parliament has no say in the disbursements. That this is unconstitutional would appear to be very clear on the basis of Germany's Constitutional Court rulings. Logically, it should extend to the other Lender of Last Resort financings that have been undertaken by the ECB, cited in the Buiter article above.

So consider the following: imagine that there is a Constitutional Court challenge of the Target 2 and other ECB lender of last resort financings. The day this occurs and becomes public the bank run will accelerate greatly. To be sure, the court might well rule that ECB agreements amongst the member states take precedence over the earlier ruling expressed in the wake of the 2010 bailout for Greece. But it would be hard to square that argument with the clear meaning expressed by the German court at that time. And if the Constitutional Court rules that ECB lender of last resort bailouts are unconstitutional the banks on the periphery will have to close and suspend payment on requests for withdrawals. So Germany's court could well become the instrument of the euro's destruction by frustrating the ECB's capacity to operate as lender of last resort.

*This post originally appeared at [New Economic Perspectives](#) and is posted with permission.*

### Euro-Illusionen

14.06.2012 · Weder der Bau von Brandmauern noch die Errichtung einer Schuldenunion schützen die Euroländer vor Ansteckung. Vielmehr führt jeder Ausbau der Gemeinschaftshaftung zu mehr Infektion mit dem Schuldenvirus.

Von [Holger Steltzner](#)

Wer hofft, Deutschland könne mit Übernahme der Haftung für die Schuldensünder der Eurozone den Euro und Europa retten, der unterliegt gleich mehreren Illusionen. Weder der Bau von Brandmauern noch die Errichtung einer Schuldenunion (ob durch Einlagensicherung, Bankenunion, Eurobonds oder Target-Ersatzkredite der EZB) schützen die Euroländer vor Ansteckung. Vielmehr führt jeder Ausbau der Gemeinschaftshaftung zu mehr Infektion mit dem Schuldenvirus, bis auch der letzte gesunde Staatsschuldner die Last nicht mehr tragen kann. Davor hat Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel in ihrer Regierungserklärung eindringlich gewarnt: „Auch Deutschlands Stärke ist nicht unendlich.“

Es ist ein Märchen, dass man nur Eurobonds einzuführen brauche, und die Euroländer könnten ihre Wohlfahrtsstaaten einfach weiter günstig auf Pump finanzieren. Mit dem Griff nach deutschen Sparbüchern, der sich hinter der Gemeinschaftshaftung verbirgt, gewinnen die Schuldensünder lediglich ein paar Jahre. Banken, Fonds und Versicherungen wollen diese Zeit nutzen, um so viel Euro-Kreditrisiko wie möglich beim Steuerzahler abzuladen. Weil jedoch die Eurozone auch als Schuldenunion auf den Kapitalmarkt angewiesen bleibt, stellt sich die Frage, welcher Investor zu welchem Zins den Euro-Sozialstaaten dann noch Geld geben will.

Eine weitere Illusion entlarvt Bundesbankpräsident Jens Weidmann: „Die Ausweitung der Gemeinschaftshaftung ist keine Antwort auf eine drohende Reformmüdigkeit in Europa, im Gegenteil.“ Die Vorstellung, ihre Einführung löse aktuelle Probleme sei so irreführend wie der Glaube, die Währungsunion garantiere wirtschaftliche Prosperität der Euro-Staaten. Weidmann hat zwei Vorschläge, was für eine stabile Währungsunion zu tun ist, die es wert sind, diskutiert zu werden. Entweder zurück zum Maastrichter Vertrag mit nationaler Souveränität und Eigenverantwortung, also nationaler Haftung für Staats- und Bankschulden. Oder weitreichende Eingriffsmöglichkeiten in die nationale Souveränität. Und erst danach eine gemeinschaftliche Haftung.

Notwendig wäre hierfür die Zustimmung der Bürger, entscheidend die Schrittfolge, damit die Balance von Haftung und Kontrolle gewahrt bleibt. Man muss nicht daran glauben, dass ein neuer EU-Vertrag besser wirkt als der alte. Die größte Illusion allerdings ist der Glaube der Rettungseuropäer, nach Vergemeinschaftung packe die Schuldensünder plötzlich der Reformeifer.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

# Bundesbank skizziert Weg zu tragfähiger Fiskalunion

FAZ 14.06.2012 · Wie könnte eine Fiskalunion in Europa aussehen, die wirklich etwas taugt? Der Bundesbankpräsident Jens Weidmann hat dazu jetzt ganz konkrete Ideen geäußert.

Von [Stefan Ruhkamp](#)



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Konkrete Vorschläge: Für den Fall, dass sich ein Land nicht an die Haushaltsregeln hält, ginge nationale Souveränität auf die europäische Ebene über.

Bundesbankpräsident Jens Weidmann hat am Donnerstag den Weg zu einer aus seiner Sicht tragfähigen Fiskalunion beschrieben. Kernelement einer solchen aufs Nötigste beschränkten Fiskalunion seien strenge Haushaltsregeln. „Für den Fall, dass sich ein Land nicht an die Haushaltsregeln hält, ginge nationale Souveränität automatisch in dem Ausmaß auf die europäische Ebene über, dass dadurch die Einhaltung der Ziele gewährleistet werden kann“, sagte Weidmann laut Redetext in Mannheim. Denkbar sei zum Beispiel das Recht einer übergeordneten europäischen Institution, Steuererhöhungen oder Ausgabenkürzungen nicht nur verlangen, sondern auch ohne Mehrheit im Parlament des betroffenen Landes durchsetzen zu können.

Sei auf diese Weise die Einhaltung der Haushaltsregeln gesichert, könne es auch eine gemeinschaftliche Haftung geben in Form einer Bankenunion oder gemeinschaftlich garantierter Staatstitel, sagte Weidmann. Damit beschreibt die Bundesbank erstmals im Detail, unter welchen Voraussetzungen sie die Einführung von Eurobonds für gerechtfertigt hält.

Entscheidend sei jedoch, dass zuerst der Rahmen verlässlich und auf Dauer angelegt und erst dann im zweiten Schritt die Haftung vergemeinschaftet werde. Würde man die Reihenfolge umkehren, „wäre zu erwarten, dass der zweite Schritt nie oder zumindest nicht adäquat erfolgt“, warnte Weidmann. „Eine gemeinschaftliche Haftung kann daher nur am Ende des Integrationsprozesses stehen und nicht am Anfang.“

Es sei ein Irrtum, dass die Gemeinschaftshaftung die aktuellen wirtschaftlichen Problem lösen könne, sagte der Bundesbankpräsident. Man könne dadurch nur Fehlentwicklungen kaschieren. „Die Ausweitung der Gemeinschaftshaftung ist daher keine Antwort auf eine drohende Reformmüdigkeit in Europa.“ Ungeachtet aller Änderungen am Ordnungsrahmen müssten auch in einer Fiskalunion Staaten mit finanziellen und gesamtwirtschaftlichen Ungleichgewichten ihre Wirtschaft und ihre Staatshaushalte in Ordnung bringen. „Je nach Ausgestaltung könnte eine Fiskalunion zwar größere Transferkomponenten enthalten“, sagte Weidmann. Er sei jedoch überzeugt, dass die Bürger es nicht hinnähmen, wenn Strukturprobleme in einzelnen Ländern mit Transfers „überkleistert und damit eher noch verfestigt“ würden.

## Demokratische Legitimation als Voraussetzung

Notwendige Voraussetzung für eine tragfähige Fiskalunion sei neben den Durchgriffsrechten für die noch zu schaffende europäische Institution die demokratische Legitimation in allen Mitgliedsländern. Nationale Souveränität und Selbstbestimmung würden abgegeben. Dafür sei eine eindeutige Willensbekundung der Bevölkerung erforderlich.

„Nur so entsteht das Vertrauen, dass der neue Rahmen Akzeptanz und Rückhalt in der Bevölkerung und damit auch Bestand hat“, sagte Weidmann. Zudem seien umfassende Änderungen der Europäischen Verträge und der nationalen Verfassungen erforderlich. „Dieser Prozess erfordert Zeit, ist aber unumgänglich“, sagte Weidmann. Aus deutscher Perspektive sei wichtig, dass die Grundpfeiler einer an Stabilität orientierten Fiskalunion so abgesichert sind, dass sie nicht mit Mehrheitsbeschlüssen wieder geändert werden können.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

## Taxing financial transactions

### Heading for an own-goal

The Economist Blogs Jun 13th 2012, 19:53 by D.S. | BERLIN

FOOTBALL analogies are wearing a bit thin, but nothing better describes the pummelling that Germany's coalition partners and opposition have been giving the idea of a financial transaction tax (FTT). Finally on June 13th, after much bluffing and political posturing, it looked as though a play-off between the junior coalition partner, the liberal FDP, and the main opposition social-democrat SPD was resolved: all major German parties now agree there should be some kind of FTT. The question is, what kind? And how many countries will adopt it?

Taxing financial transactions has long been proposed as a way of putting a brake on volatile financial markets, curbing speculation, and bringing in some revenue. In September last year the European Commission published a draft of a directive that would set the levy at 0.1% on cash and securities transactions and 0.01% on derivatives, reckoning that the annual revenue could be as much as €57 billion (\$72 billion). But there is almost no chance of getting all 27 European Union countries to adopt this. Britain, for one, will only contemplate a tax that is applied globally, or at least in big financial centres. The best that the FTT's champions can hope for is that a hard core of nine or ten euro-zone countries is prepared to impose such a tax, even at the risk of driving business to London and elsewhere.

The urgency to introduce an FTT is partly inspired by the need for revenue. Now that governments have committed billions to rescuing one euro-zone country, or banking sector, after another, there is an even more acute need for cash.

City slickers, for their part, regard the Commission's proposal as ill-conceived. There is no certainty, they say, that a tax could be imposed comprehensively on bilateral financial transactions, such as over-the-counter derivatives and foreign exchange deals, without simply driving the business offshore. Even the much trumpeted stamp duty on stock exchange transactions, applied for years by Britain's Inland Revenue, is being eroded by proxy deals (such as contracts-for-difference, and depository receipts (synthetic shares) on offshore exchanges).

As with many other recent pieces of legislation in Europe, however, political will may trump common sense. Take Germany's accelerated plans to close nuclear plants after the Fukushima disaster. Or the introduction of the euro itself, before economic convergence was robust. Now it appears that a hard core of European finance ministers, led by Germany and France, may continue to push through an FTT willy nilly.

In Germany the opposition Greens and SPD demanded that the government support an FTT as a quid pro quo for their votes in favour of the more important Fiscal Compact, which binds all EU countries, except Britain and the Czech Republic, to strict deficit limits. Chancellor Angela Merkel's government needs a two-thirds majority in the Bundestag (lower house) and the Bundesrat (upper house) to make the Compact law in Germany.

The danger with such political wrapping is that an FTT will be included, and applied, before it has been properly thought out. German politicians have agreed to something in principle without considering the design, and whether it might actually work.



# Hans-Werner Sinn

## Renoviert das Bad, und werdet mündige Bürger!

FAZ 12.06.2012 · Hans-Werner Sinn ist der bekannteste deutsche Ökonom. Wir baten ihn, darzustellen, welche Gefahren drohen, welche Chancen bestehen und wie man sich verhalten könnte. Es wurde ein Exkurs weit über die Ökonomie hinaus zu Fragen der Geschichte, der Moral und simpler Mathematik.

Von [Jürgen Kaube](#)



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Hans-Werner Sinn - ein unaufgeregtter Mann, dem derzeit ganz schön mulmig wird

Es entsteht gerade ein anderes Europa. Hans-Werner Sinn, der das sagt, ist der bekannteste deutsche Ökonom, und er meint es ökonomisch. Aber nicht „nur“ ökonomisch, sondern im Blick auf alle auch politischen Folgen, die sich aus der Wirtschaft ergeben. Man organisiere derzeit einen öffentlichen Kreditfluss, der die deutschen Ersparnisse nach politischen Gesichtspunkten in Länder der südlichen Peripherie lenkt. Durch politische Entscheidungen seitens der EZB, durch den immer größer werdenden Rettungsschirm werde privaten Anlegern die Entscheidung abgenommen, wo sie investieren, und ein öffentlicher Geleitschutz für das Kapital organisiert, der es dahin leitet, wo es sich eigentlich aus guten Gründen nicht mehr hintraut.

Man muss sich Hans-Werner Sinn als einen ziemlich unaufgeregtten Menschen vorstellen. Aber die europäische Finanzpolitik stellt seine Gelassenheit auf eine ziemliche Belastungsprobe. Es wiederholt sich für ihn nämlich derzeit genau ein Fehler, der auch zur Krise führte. Dass die armen und die reichen Länder sich zusammenschließen, dass Kapital wegen der Lohnunterschiede von den reichen in die armen fließt, das sei im Prinzip nicht falsch. Denn in den armen Ländern kann das Kapital viel mehr bewirken als bei uns. Nur hatte dieser Prozess zu viel Eigendynamik bekommen, es hat eine Inflationsblase gegeben, die Immobilienpreise sind gestiegen, die Leute haben gedacht, diese Preise steigen immer weiter, haben investiert, dann stiegen sie erst recht, und dadurch ist ein Zug mit Macht in Bewegung gekommen, der überhaupt nicht mehr zu stoppen war und weit, weit über das Ziel hinausgeschossen ist.

### Probleme mit der Druckerpresse gelöst

Die Preise und Löhne jener Länder stiegen, finanziert durch billige Kredite, in den Himmel, weit über die Produktivität hinaus, und die Länder verloren ihre Wettbewerbsfähigkeit. Das führte zu immer größeren Außenhandelsdefiziten, die immer mehr Kredite verschlangen. Aber dann verweigerte sich das Kapital, weil die amerikanische Finanzkrise alle nervös gemacht hatte, und man befürchtete, dass die Südländer sich übernommen hatten. Der Kredit, den die deutschen Banken und Versicherer direkt oder auf dem Wege über ihre französischen Kunden nach Griechenland geleitet hatten, floss nicht mehr. Daraufhin, so Sinn, haben diese Länder ihr Problem mit der Druckerpresse gelöst. Die Griechen wollten das deutsche Auto immer noch und druckten sich das Geld, das sie brauchten, um es zu kaufen.

Wie das gehen soll? Vor der Krise floss das Geld beispielsweise von Paris nach Athen, weil eine französische Bank es nach Griechenland verlieh, die Griechen kauften sich ein deutsches Auto, und das Geld floss wieder aus Griechenland heraus. Jetzt fließt nur noch Geld aus Griechenland heraus. Genau dieser Nettogeldabfluss wird durch den sogenannten „Target-Saldo“ gemessen. Der Geldbestand in Griechenland wird so aber immer geringer. Also wird Geld „nachgedruckt“, elektronisch, nicht in Papier und Münzen. Daher messen die Target-Salden, die eigentlich nur den Geldabfluss aus Griechenland messen, das ist Sinn als erstem Ökonomen



aufgefallen, indirekt auch das Nachdrucken von Geld. Es ist also ein Maß für den Ersatz der privaten Kreditflüsse durch die Druckerpresse.

Hinter dem Überschuss unserer Exporte über die Importe, erklärt Sinn, steht eine deutsche Ersparnis, denn wir liefern ans Ausland mehr Waren und verdienen dabei mehr, als wir von dort an Waren beziehen. Also bekommen wir normalerweise Schuldscheine und andere Vermögenswerte aus dem Ausland, die unsere Banken und Versicherungen in unserem Auftrag dort erwerben.

### „Wenn die Sache knallt...“

Heute sei das im Euroraum nicht mehr so, denn die Südländer verkaufen keine Schuldscheine und Vermögenswerte mehr an die deutschen Finanzinstitute, sondern drucken sich das Geld für den Warenerwerb. Bislang kauften Banken und Versicherungen für unsere Exportüberschüsse und die dahinterstehenden Ersparnisse im Ausland marktfähige Wertpapiere. „Jetzt“, so Sinn, „läuft das nicht mehr, denn die Banken und Versicherungen legen ihr Geld bei der Bundesbank an, und die Bundesbank erhält selbst Ausgleichsforderungen gegen das Zentralbankensystem, Forderungen, von denen anfangs behauptet wurde, sie seien irrelevante Salden, statistische Verrechnungsposten ohne jede Relevanz.“

Wenn Griechenland scheitert, sein Staat und seine Notenbank bankrottgehen, dann entstehen Verluste im Zentralbankensystem für alle anderen. Die teilen sie sich brüderlich nach ihren Kapitalanteilen. Deutschland ist da mit 28 Prozent dabei. Etwa 640 Milliarden unseres Privatvermögens, das wir in Form von Lebensversicherungspolice und Spargeldern haben und das im Euro-Ausland angelegt wurde, bestehen heute nur aus Forderungen gegen die Bundesbank. Und die Bundesbank hat Forderungen gegen ein EZB-System, Forderungen, die sie niemals fällig stellen kann und die zu einem Zinssatz von einem Prozent bedient werden. „Wenn die Sache knallt, haben wir diese 640 Milliarden Forderung gegenüber einem System, das es dann nicht mehr gibt.“

Daraus folgt für Sinn, „dass wir erpressbar geworden sind. Die Verhandlungsposition im Normalfall hängt davon ab, was im Katastrophenfall passieren könnte.“ Das erklärt, zu welchen Konzessionen man bereit ist. „Wir haben die letzten Jahre für Hunderte von Milliarden Euro netto in die anderen Euroländer exportiert und haben dafür nichts als Target-Forderungen bekommen. Der Süden hat einfach anschreiben lassen.“

Wie machen das denn andere große Währungsräume bei regional unterschiedlichen Leistungsbilanzen? Die Amerikaner, erklärt Sinn, erlauben das dauernde Anschreiben zwischen ihren Distriktnotenbanken nicht. Im Prinzip kann jede der zwölf Distrikt-Feds, die es gibt, ebenfalls mehr Geld schaffen, als für die Zirkulation innerhalb dieses Distrikts benötigt wird, also Geld, das die Bürger in andere Distrikte überweisen, um sich dort netto gerechnet Waren und Wertpapiere zu kaufen oder Schulden zu tilgen. Nur, wenn sie das tut, muss sie die anderen Distriktnotenbanken, die in ihrem Auftrag Guthaben einrichten, dafür einmal im Jahr mit echten, marktfähigen Wertpapieren bezahlen.

### Geld, das vor allem den Konsum diente

Auch die amerikanischen Target-Salden sind in der Krise zunächst angewachsen, aber mittlerweile sind sie bis auf 21 Milliarden Dollar getilgt. In der Eurozone stehen stattdessen 947 Milliarden Euro auf der Kreidetafel, und die Summe wuchs in letzter Zeit progressiv. Das Eurosystem wird durch die Umfunktionierung der Ersparnisse der Deutschen, Holländer und Finnen gerettet, „leider“, fügt Sinn hinzu, „ohne dass die Sparer oder ihre Abgeordneten das überhaupt wissen oder verstehen“.

Also halten wir diese Länder wirtschaftlich am Leben und über Wasser mit den Ersparnissen der Minderheit. Sinns Zukunftsszenarien sind unerfreulich: „Irgendwann kann es dann auch dazu kommen, dass die Schuldnerländer sagen: ‚Es sind jetzt so viele Schulden, was wollt ihr denn machen, wollt ihr ein Kriegsschiff schicken, um sie einzutreiben? Wir können nicht zurückzahlen. Also müsst ihr sie uns streichen, wie jetzt im Falle Griechenlands.‘ Und um dann den Kollaps von Staaten wie Italien zu verhindern, wird man Transfersysteme einrichten in Europa, die also eine laufende Finanzierung dieser Schuldenlasten ermöglichen.“

Ein Teil des Problems liegt für ihn auch darin, dass sehr viel Geld in die Südländer geflossen ist, das dort vor allem dem Konsum diente. „In Spanien hat man wenigstens noch in die Infrastruktur investiert. Aber in Griechenland? Hätte man das in die Infrastruktur investiert, dann wäre die Produktivität gestiegen und dann hätten die Griechen vielleicht auch wettbewerbsfähige Preise und könnten ihre Waren verkaufen. Das haben sie aber eben nicht. Sie sind unter dem Euro viel zu teuer geworden.“

Griechenland müsste um 37 Prozent billiger werden, um mit der Türkei gleichzuziehen. Weil die Einkommen hoch und die Exporte teuer waren, hat man sich aufs Importieren statt aufs Exportieren verlegt. Die Talente sind von der Exportwirtschaft ins Importgewerbe gewandert. „Das ist im Übrigen heute die starke Lobby, die auch verhindert, dass das Land wettbewerbsfähig werden kann, denn um wettbewerbsfähig zu werden, muss man billiger werden. Bei gegebenen Lohn- und Zinskosten geht das nur, wenn man die Produktivität verbessert, und bei gegebener Produktivität nur, wenn die Lohn- und Zinskosten fallen. Beides ist nicht einfach, die Steigerung der Produktivität dauert viele Jahre. Und über Lohnkürzungen billiger zu werden, stößt auf den erbitterten Widerstand der Gewerkschaften. Man bedenke: In Deutschland sanken zwischen 1929 und 1933 die Preise um 23 Prozent. Man weiß, was dann los war.“

### Es gilt die Formel: „Zeit kaufen“

Das geht also überhaupt nicht. Und stattdessen? „Was ich schrecklich finde ist, dass die Europa-Politiker die Illusion wecken, es gäbe hier eine Lösung für Griechenland im Euroraum, wo sie objektiv nicht existiert. Ich glaube, viele wecken die Illusion auch nur aus einem Grunde: Sie brauchen die Griechen als Geisel, damit die Rettungsgelder weiter zur Bedienung der immer noch ausstehenden Staatspapiere fließen. Die Politik verkündet das Dogma, dass jedes Land mit Hilfskrediten im Euro gehalten werden muss, obwohl es nicht wettbewerbsfähig ist, weil sonst angeblich Europa untergeht.“ Das stehe in Wahrheit hinter der Formel „Zeit kaufen“ - es wird Zeit gekauft für die jetzigen Eigentümer dieser Papiere.

So weit die Ökonomie, aber was heißt das politisch? Sinn wird es „mulmig“, wenn er daran denkt, dass gerade seine Kinder und Enkel zu Gläubigern der Südländer gemacht werden, die auf politischem Wege von Italienern und Griechen das verliehene Geld eintreiben müssen. „Das kann ich mir nicht als friedlichen Prozess vorstellen. Mein Europa war eigentlich eines der guten Nachbarschaft, wo man sich auch mal hilft, wo man ordentlich miteinander umgeht, freundlich sich besucht, in Austausch tritt. Keines, in dem man mit seinen Freunden ungeheure Schuldverhältnisse eingeht.“

Sinn findet es darum auch nicht richtig, einen Sparkommissar nach Griechenland zu schicken. „Damit ziehen wir nur den Hass auf uns. Statt Verhaltensmaßregeln zu geben, sollten wir einfach die öffentlichen Kredite begrenzen, die in Wahrheit ohnehin bloße Geldgeschenke sind.“ Im Übrigen wäre es viel besser gewesen, wir hätten das Geld selbst geschenkt, statt eine Einrichtung in Europa zu schaffen, in der kollektiv über Mehrheitsbeschlüsse das Geldschenken erzwungen wird und wir, weil uns die Summen zu hoch sind, als die Bösewichte dastehen. „Hätten wir aus eigenem Antrieb Marshallhilfen organisiert, wären wir die Helden.“

Was also wäre zu tun? Es gibt für Sinn nur eine Chance für Griechenland, wieder wettbewerbsfähig zu werden: raus aus dem Euro und abwerten. „Wir haben nach dem Krieg viele Dutzende Staatskonkurse mit Abwertungen gehabt, und fast immer war die Abwertung das Erfolgsrezept. Es gibt dann im Übergang Schwierigkeiten, es gibt den Sturm auf die Banken, denn die Leute räumen, wenn sie das riechen, ihre Konten leer. Doch selbst wenn sie all ihr Bargeld außer Landes schaffen, ist das nichts im Vergleich zu den Rettungskosten.“

### 116 Marshallpläne für Griechenland

Nach dem Austritt wertet die Drachme dann automatisch gegenüber dem Euro ab, und Griechenlands Wirtschaft beginnt zu wachsen. „Die Griechen kaufen nämlich wieder ihre eigenen Tomaten und das eigene Olivenöl, die Touristen fahren nicht mehr in die Türkei, sondern nach Griechenland, und vor allem kommen die reichen Griechen aus der Schweiz und sonst wo zurück, um sich in Griechenland billig einzukaufen und Firmen zu errichten.“ Die Schwierigkeiten dauern, erläutert Sinn unter Hinweis auf den Konkurs und die Abwertung Argentiniens, nicht einmal ein Jahr. In dieser Zeit könne man Griechenland unterstützen.

In Griechenland seien solche Erwägungen aber politisch tabu, weil die Griechen wüssten, dass sie, wenn sie im Euro bleiben, weiter gestützt werden müssen, und die Banken in Euro verschuldet sind. Die EU liebe solche Überlegungen auch nicht, weil sie die Transferunion nur dann erzwingen könne, wenn der Austritt zum Super-Gau stilisiert wird.

Es gebe zwar Ansteckungseffekte. Aber man müsse die daraus resultierenden Gefahren mit dem Risiko der Dauerfinanzierung dieser Länder vergleichen. „Ich halte Erstere für überschaubar und Letztere für riesig, denn die Summen, um die es geht, sind riesig. Griechenland hat inklusive der Target-Kredite und des Schuldenerlasses inzwischen etwa 460 Milliarden Euro erhalten. Das Nettonationaleinkommen dieses Landes liegt bei 170 Milliarden Euro jährlich. Man hat also das Zweidreiviertelfache des Nettonationaleinkommens gegeben. Oder ein anderer Vergleich: Wollte man einen Marshallplan aufsetzen, der relativ zum BIP genauso groß ist wie damals der deutsche, dann könnte Griechenland vier Milliarden Euro erhalten. Tatsächlich hat Griechenland 116 Marshallpläne erhalten.“

Am irischen Beispiel, so Sinn, sei überdies sehr deutlich zu sehen, dass die Kapitalmärkte die Krisenländer nicht in einen Topf werfen, wie es die Ansteckungstheorie suggeriert. „Irland hat seit Juli letzten Jahres eine andere Kursentwicklung bei seinen Staatspapieren gehabt, weil es Irland gelungen ist, von seinen hohen Leistungsbilanzdefiziten wegzukommen.“ Irland hat nämlich als einziges Land die Preise tatsächlich gesenkt: in den letzten fünf Jahren relativ zu seinen Wettbewerbern im Euroraum um genau 15 Prozent. Das könne an der starken Exportlobby in Irland und an der Schwäche der dortigen Gewerkschaften gelegen haben. Doch der wichtigste Grund war die Gnade der frühen Krise, der Umstand, „dass Irland bereits 2006, zweieinhalb Jahre vor den anderen Krisenländern, in Schwierigkeiten kam und dass es damals noch keine Rettungsschirme gab. Irland musste sich selbst helfen.“

### Die Zweideutigkeit von „Geschenk“ und „retten“

Die bittere Wahrheit, um die niemand herumkommt, ist für Sinn, dass eine Exportindustrie nur entsteht, wenn man sich das Geld selbst verdienen muss, um die Importgüter zu kaufen. „Man kann Ländern nicht durch Geldgeschenke helfen. Das hat ein griechischer Minister vor kurzem sehr deutlich in einem F.A.Z.-Interview gesagt, als er erläuterte, dass die EU mit ihren Hilfen die Exportindustrie des Landes zerstört hat. Geldgeschenke erzeugen immer nur Lebensstandard unter Vernichtung von Wettbewerbsfähigkeit.“ Ökonomen nennen dieses Phänomen die „holländische Krankheit“, denn in Holland war einst die Exportindustrie geschädigt worden, weil Gasfunde zu einer Aufwertung ihrer Währung geführt hatten.

Und so, wie das Wort „Geschenk“ zweideutig ist, ist es auch das Wort „retten“. Zum Beispiel wird gesagt, wir retteten Griechenland. Sinn erlaubt sich die Frage, ob wir wirklich retten, und wenn ja, wen? „Retten wir die Griechen? Was wir auf jeden Fall retten, sind Vermögensportfolios. Deswegen jubelt die Wall Street.“

In Deutschland stehe hinter diesem „Retten“ die deutsche Vergangenheit. Wir Deutschen können nur in Europa eine Zukunft finden. Mit der Paradoxie, dass die gute Absicht, Europa zu stärken, ins Gegenteil umschlägt.



© dpa

Es wird noch ungemütlich: die deutsche Durchschnittsfamilie in Ostfriesland

Die Banken und Versicherungen sind ganz eindeutig für diesen Kurs, denn sie haben noch so viele Assets in diesen Ländern, dass jedwede Rettungsstrategie aus ihrer Sicht zu wünschen ist. Sie wollen auch nicht direkt

gerettet werden, denn das würde ja bedeuten, dass der Staat Miteigentümer bei ihnen wird. Aus der Sicht des Steuerzahlers hingegen ist es zehnmal billiger, die Banken direkt zu retten als sie indirekt zu retten, indem wir Steuergelder einfach in die Welt verteilen, damit ein bisschen davon wieder zurückkommt.

Was heißt das nun alles für Deutschland? Der Rest dieses Jahrzehnts, so sieht es Sinn, wird für Deutschland in gewisser Weise ein goldenes. Wir würden zwar Teile unseres Vermögens verlieren, doch hätten wir genug Arbeit. Denn man dürfe nicht übersehen, dass die Krise für Deutschland zunächst einmal den großen Vorteil habe, dass sie mit der Umlenkung der Kapitalströme einhergehe. „Man weiß jetzt, wie riskant es ist, im Ausland anzulegen, und man sucht wieder die sichere, wenn auch niedrig verzinsten Anlage in Deutschland. Deshalb ist der Bauzins heute der niedrigste in der Geschichte Deutschlands, und wir haben einen Bauboom.“

## Demographische Probleme

Im nächsten Jahrzehnt jedoch kommen die demographischen Probleme. „Die Babyboomer sind heute etwa 47 Jahre alt, in 13 Jahren sind sie 60, das wäre also 2025, und dann gehen sie sukzessive in die Rente. Und 2030 sind die allermeisten in der Rente. Der Übergang wird extrem schwierig für Deutschland. Die offenen Staatsschulden werden von den wenigen Nachkommenden nicht mehr getragen werden können. Und jetzt wird auch noch die Hoffnung enttäuscht, dass die private Lebensversicherung ein zweites, solideres Standbein ist.“

Das heißt, der Lebensstandard im Alter, den man sich ausgemalt hat, mit seinen Beiträgen zur Rentenversicherung, mit seinen Sparleistungen, kommt nicht zustande. Aus demographischen Gründen nicht und auch nicht wegen der Schuldenkrise. Wenn eine Gesellschaft zu wenig Humankapital bildet, muss sie Realkapital an seine Stelle setzen. Sie muss sparen. Und jetzt stellen wir fest: Diese Ersparnis verpufft, weil sie in Staatspapieren südlicher Länder angelegt ist oder aus Forderungen gegen die Bundesbank besteht, die selbst wieder Forderungen gegen marode Notenbanken der Südländer sind.

Eine ausweglose Situation? Sinn wäre kein Ökonom, wenn er das bejahen würde. Die einzigen Auswege, die bleiben, sind aber längere Lebensarbeitszeiten, Kapitalbildung vornehmlich in Deutschland, Kinder und Immigration. Was wäre also den eigenen Kindern zu raten? „Gewiss nicht, das Land zu verlassen. Das Kapital der Welt kommt nach Deutschland und in die Schweiz, weil wir noch ein vernünftiges Rechtssystem haben, weil wir eine industrielle Basis haben, weil wir ein hervorragendes Berufsausbildungssystem haben für die jungen Leute, das die Straßenkriminalität und Unruhen klein hält.“

Also hierbleiben und sparen? „Ja, aber nicht irgendwie sparen, sondern in Form echter Eigentumstitel wie Aktien oder in Objekten, die einem gehören, am besten solchen mit einem Grundbuch. Konzentration auf das naheliegende Unmittelbare: lieber das Bad renovieren als komplizierte Zertifikate kaufen. Ansonsten aber wäre auch zu raten: Werdet mündige Bürger und lasst das nicht alles mit euch geschehen. Denn ihr seid es ja, die das kurzfristige Denken langfristig werdet ausbaden müssen.“

## The euro crisis

### Share a currency, with them?

The Economist Blogs Jun 12th 2012, 20:15 by R.A. | WASHINGTON

TYLER COWEN [directs our attention](#) to a [story](#) in the *New York Times*, which reads:

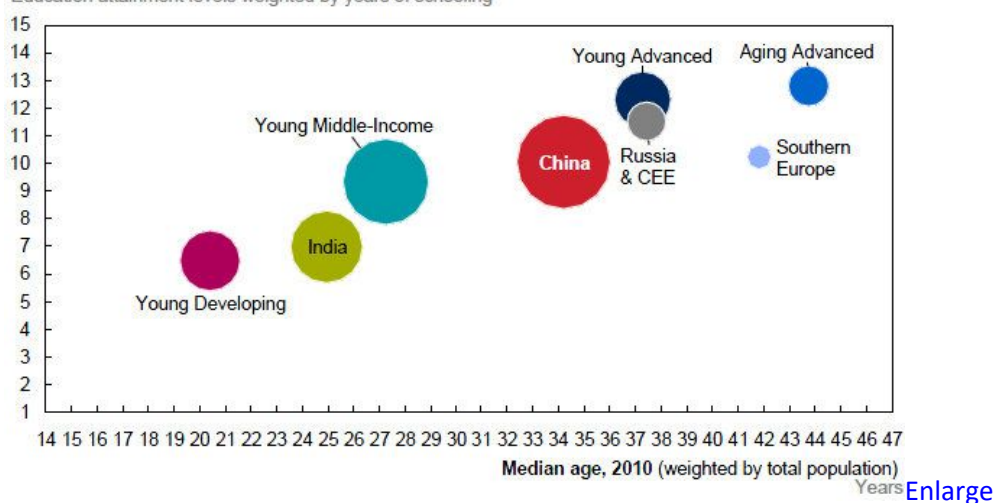
In 2009, only 30 percent of Portuguese adults had completed high school or its equivalent, according to figures from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

That reminds me of a chart I've been chewing over, from a recent McKinsey Global Institute report on global labour markets:

#### 70 countries fall into eight labor-market clusters, distinctly positioned by age and education

○ Size of circle represents total size of the labor force of the cluster in 2010

Education Index, 2010 (weighted by working-age population)  
Education attainment levels weighted by years of schooling



"Aging advanced" is most of northern Europe: Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands, for instance, as well as Japan (France, like Britain, is in "young advanced"). "Southern Europe" is just four countries: Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Demographically, they look very different from the rest of Europe—old for their educational level, undereducated for their age.

That's not why those countries are in crisis. Obviously pension costs affect debt loads and educational attainment influences productivity and growth, but there are other places in the world that suffer high pension costs and/or low levels of educational attainment and which aren't currently suffering economic depressions. And yet, that *is* why those countries are in crisis. Because it is no doubt deeply unsettling to many northern Europeans to imagine sharing fiscal resources with the south, in perpetuity, unless they can credibly demonstrate an effort to become more "northern".

A currency union can certainly work given such disparities. America has them too. In Massachusetts, 38% of adults have a college degree, nearly twice the share in Mississippi. Mississippi's median income is just 60% that in Massachusetts. And yet they coexist with a much closer federal union than the euro zone. It's the creation of the union that's difficult. Mississippi and Massachusetts fought on opposite sides of a bloody war over their union, and they didn't have ancient cultural and language gaps to deal with.

Of course, all parties committed themselves to the union when they joined the euro. And having done so they face potential catastrophe if they allow it to fracture. That may not matter.

Right now, most of Europe has its gaze fixed on Euro 2012 rather than market movements. Does that do more to reinforce the sense of shared European culture or to emphasise yawning national differences?



## The euro crisis

### More like fail-out

The Economist Blogs Jun 12th 2012, 15:33 by R.A. | WASHINGTON

I THINK it's safe to conclude that markets were hoping for a somewhat different response to Spanish banking troubles than [what they got](#). Spanish yields continued to climb today. The 10-year yield touched record highs this morning, and the 2-year yield, while well below November's frightening highs, marched steadily upward. Perhaps more troubling, contagion was back in full effect. The 10-year Italian yield is firmly above 6% once again. Yields on both short- and long-term government debt are rising around the euro area, including, strikingly, in Germany.

Concern may stem from the potential fiscal burden of bail-outs. The Spanish bank rescue, recall, consists of a plan to *lend* the Spanish sovereign money, adding to its debt burden and potentially pushing private creditors farther down the payment priority list. With Italy's banks also teetering, markets may be growing worried that the list of countries in need of saving may soon outpace the list of "safe" countries. Unless the central bank is clearly standing as lender-of-last-resort behind bank and sovereign guarantees, a fiscal death spiral could result.

Of course, there are plenty of other things to worry about. Yesterday, disturbing [reports](#) circulated concerning discussions of contingency plans for Greek exit, that might include border and capital controls as well as limits on ATM withdrawals. Such comments can be dangerous, provoking anticipatory capital flight. And then of course there is the looming Greek election, not so long ago the main crisis attraction now relegated to sideshow. The contingency-free Spanish bank bail-out has some [Greek politicians](#) declaring that their country should take a tougher line in negotiations with core states, the better to win similarly favourable terms.

While the crisis is not yet back to November's rolling boil, momentum is building once again. The next week will be eventful indeed, and it will take more than €100 billion in emergency bank lending to calm newly panicked markets.

## Why Berlin Is Balking on a Bailout

By HANS-WERNER SINN

Munich

ALTHOUGH Europe may seem far away from the economic life of the average American, the fate of the euro zone weighs heavily on the United States economy. Pension funds have invested in bonds issued by southern European states, while banks and insurance companies have underwritten a sizable fraction of the credit-default swaps protecting investors against default.

It's no wonder, then, that President Obama is urging Germany to share in the debt of the euro zone's southern nations. But in doing so, he and others overlook several critical facts.

For one thing, such a bailout is illegal under the Maastricht Treaty, which governs the euro zone. Because the treaty is law in each member state, a bailout would be rejected by Germany's Constitutional Court.

Moreover, a bailout doesn't make economic sense, and would likely make the situation worse. Such schemes violate the liability principle, one of the constituting principles of a market economy, which holds that it is the creditors' responsibility to choose their debtors. If debtors cannot repay, creditors should bear the losses.

If we give up the liability principle, the European market economy will lose its most important allocative virtue: the careful selection of investment opportunities by creditors. We would then waste part of the capital generated by the arduous savings of earlier generations. I am surprised that the president of the world's most successful capitalist nation would overlook this.

This does not mean there can be no systematic risk-sharing between the states of Europe. But for that to happen, the countries should first form a common nation, with a constitution, a common legal superstructure, a monopoly on power to ensure obedience to the law and a common army for external defense.

Otherwise, there is nothing to counter the strong centrifugal forces created by redistribution schemes, which would inevitably lead to political eruptions that would threaten the stability of the Continent. The European Union has enjoyed a long period of stability because it abstained from sizable interregional redistribution. This period would end if we redistributed incomes or debt without creating a United States of Europe.

Unfortunately, not one of these conditions is met in Europe today and won't be in the foreseeable future, because the euro zone countries, above all France, are unwilling to give up sufficient sovereignty.

Even a European nation, however, should not socialize debt, a lesson demonstrated by the United States in the 19th century.

When Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton socialized the states' war debt after the Revolutionary War, he raised the expectation of further debt socialization in the future, which induced the states to over-borrow. This resulted in political tensions in the early 19th century that severely threatened the stability of the young nation.

It took the experience of eight states and territories going bankrupt in [the 1830s and 1840s](#) for the United States to shed socialization. Today no one suggests bailing out California, which is nearly bankrupt but is expected to find its own solutions.

Criticism of bailouts in general does not mean, however, that Europe should eschew immediate help to crisis-stricken southern European countries. While help to avoid insolvency is dangerous, help to overcome brief liquidity crises is justified. The European Economic Advisory Group, an international think tank, has proposed



providing liquidity help in the first two years of a crisis, with selective defaults according to maturity and socialization of excessive losses thereafter.

We are, however, already in the fifth year of generous liquidity help to Europe's uncompetitive members. Since late 2007, the [European Central Bank](#) has helped with an international shift of refinancing credit, also known as [Target](#) credit, from the core euro states to the periphery, to which the German Bundesbank has contributed \$874 billion. Greece's and Portugal's entire current account deficits were financed that way.

Moreover, since May 2010, the E.C.B. has bought more than \$250 billion in government bonds, while nearly \$500 billion has come from rescue programs and help from the I.M.F. Add to that two European rescue funds, and you have a total of \$2.63 trillion.

It is unfair for critics to ask Germany to bear even more risk. Should Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain go bankrupt and repay nothing, while the euro survives, Germany would lose \$899 billion. Should the euro fail, Germany would lose over \$1.35 trillion, more than 40 percent of its G.D.P. Has the United States ever incurred a similar risk for helping other countries?

Some critics have argued that Germany, having benefited from the Marshall Plan, now owes it to Europe to undertake a similar rescue. Those critics should look at the numbers.

Greece has received or been promised \$575 billion through assistance efforts, including Target credit, E.C.B. bond purchases and a haircut after a debt moratorium. Compare this with the Marshall Plan, for which Germany is very grateful. It received 0.5 percent of its G.D.P. for four years, or 2 percent in total. Applied to the Greek G.D.P., this would be about \$5 billion today.

In other words, Greece has received a staggering 115 Marshall plans, 29 from Germany alone, and yet the situation has not improved. Why, Mr. Obama, is that not enough?

[Hans-Werner Sinn](#) is the president of the Ifo Institute and the director of the Center for Economic Studies at the University of Munich.

NYT June 12, 2012

## Germans, the Euro and the Painful Truth

By CHARLES GRANT

Will the Germans save the euro? Many people within the European Union and further afield are urging Berlin to take bold steps to secure the currency's future. They have become frustrated by the Germans' apparent inaction.

But the view of German policy makers — conveyed to me on a recent visit to Berlin — is that the government will do what is necessary to save the euro. What it will not do, they say, is spell out in public the measures they are prepared to take, lest that encourage the euro zone's problem countries to slacken efforts to curb budget deficits and enact reforms.

However, the best intentions of German policy makers do not guarantee the euro's survival. Whatever measures they deem necessary will have to clear the Bundestag, where many members oppose greater German generosity to Southern Europe, and then the constitutional court, which tends to cavil at more powers for the European Union.

The court of public opinion also counts, but German leaders have seldom explained to voters how the euro underpins their prosperity. And in the event of a financial panic, perhaps prompted by a Greek exit from the euro, could Germany's politicians respond quickly enough?

According to one senior German official, the key people in the Chancellery and Finance Ministry have little understanding of financial markets. Berlin is around 450 kilometers from Germany's financial center, Frankfurt, whereas in London and Paris politicians, officials and financiers live in close proximity. This may lead the German government, the official warns, to underestimate the speed with which markets can move, and their destructive potential.

German officials know that a healthy euro requires deeper euro-zone integration. They recognize the need for some sort of "banking union." They accept that they will have to talk about "euro bonds" — pooled borrowing for the euro zone — but say that a fiscal union enforcing budgetary discipline must come first. They want an "economic union" that would push the euro zone's weaker members to become more competitive. That would mean giving the European Commission the means to cajole governments to alter policies in areas such as pensions, labor markets, privatization and company taxation.

Such changes would affect only euro zone countries, but require all 27 E.U. member-states to agree to amend the Union treaties. German officials worry that Britain might block a new treaty, as it did last December, forcing the other countries to set up parallel structures alongside the E.U. Such a result, they believe, would weaken both the single market and Britain's sway within the Union. Given that Britain's contribution to resolving the crisis has been sermons rather than money, the Germans do not think they owe London any favors.

When "Anglo-Saxon" commentators criticize Germany for imposing excessive austerity, the response can veer toward paranoia. One key individual, when told that many G-20 countries agreed with the criticism, said that that was because Anglo-Saxons dominated the global media. One hears similar words in Beijing and Moscow.

Britain may be a bother, but the country that causes the biggest worries is France. François Hollande has turned out to be harder to handle than expected, for example by repeatedly calling for euro bonds. German officials fret that the French Socialists do not understand their country's economic weakness, and that they are not serious about either structural economic reform or cutting the budget deficit. "If the markets see that France and Germany disagree on the euro, they will have more doubts about the currency, so the French should stop their propaganda wars against Germany," one official said.

The Germans are particularly annoyed that France has teamed up with Italy and others advocating a softening of austerity. Several months ago the Germans were fans of Mario Monti, Italy's economist prime minister. But his public criticisms of German policy on the euro, combined with his lackluster labor-market reforms, have upset his erstwhile friends in Berlin.

The divergence on how to handle the euro crisis between Germany (and allies such as Finland and the Netherlands), and a group led by France and Italy suggests an obvious compromise. France and the southern Europeans should accept structural reform, budgetary discipline and a loss of sovereignty over some aspects of economic policy making. Germany should give member states more time to reach budget targets, let the southern Europeans write off more debt, and accept some debt mutualization.

Might Germany embrace such a grand bargain? Perhaps, one official said. "Some people around Hollande see what France must do, but it might be politically difficult for the French to accept fiscal union." This bargain would be politically difficult for Germany, too.

Even some admirers of Chancellor Angela Merkel admit that she lacks vision, dislikes grand ideas, is extremely cautious and has little emotional connection to the E.U. She resents being told what to do by foreigners and thinks their advice may be self-serving. But she is also a consummate political tactician who does not want to be the chancellor who allowed the euro to collapse.

Hans Eichel, a former finance minister of the opposition Social Democratic Party, said the S.P.D. would support Merkel in doing what it takes to save the euro. "The Germans are skeptical about the euro but don't want to return to the Deutsche mark, so if Merkel is brave enough to take Germany toward more Europe, the S.P.D., business and the trade unions will follow — but she must lead."

Many Germans hope that the euro zone's ailments can be cured without their having to pay very much. But some top officials in Berlin understand that Germany will have to pay a heavy price. If Merkel and other political leaders can explain this painful truth to the people, the euro's prospects will improve.

*Charles Grant is director of the Center for European Reform and the author of the C.E.R. report "Russia, China and global governance."*

# Renault appelle de nouveau l'Etat à l'aide

Par  Cyril Pluyette Publié le 12/06/2012

## Le constructeur, confronté à la chute des ventes en Europe, verrait d'un bon œil le retour d'une prime à la casse pour soutenir à nouveau la demande de voitures.

Confronté à la [chute des ventes en France et en Europe](#), [Renault](#) demande au gouvernement de soutenir à nouveau la demande de voitures. «Ce que j'appellerais de mes vœux, c'est qu'on soutienne le marché français et européen», a déclaré mardi [Carlos Tavares](#), le patron opérationnel du constructeur. «La question qui va se poser, c'est jusqu'à quel niveau peut-on laisser tomber le marché européen», a-t-il ajouté. Toute mesure de soutien est «bonne à prendre, à partir du moment où elle stimule la demande», que ce soit «sous l'angle de l'environnement» ou sous celui «du renouvellement du parc».

Le numéro deux verrait donc avec un bon œil le retour d'une prime à la casse. Ce dispositif, instauré fin 2008, encourageait l'achat d'un véhicule neuf contre la reprise d'une voiture de plus de 10 ans. Il s'était arrêté fin 2010. La prime, qui était au départ de 1000 euros, avait diminué progressivement. Parallèlement, le système de bonus malus écologique, favorisant l'achat des véhicules émettant le moins de CO2, encore en vigueur, est devenu nettement moins généreux.

Pour Renault, une nouvelle prime à la casse pourrait concerner des véhicules plus jeunes que précédemment. «Je ne crois pas que le système précédent ait suffisamment modernisé l'ensemble du parc roulant pour qu'il n'y ait plus de potentiel» pour remplacer de nouveaux véhicules, estime Carlos Tavares.

### Le groupe «fait des efforts d'économie»

Seul hic, ce type de mesure est extrêmement coûteux. L'État français a ainsi dépensé environ 1 milliard d'euros pour la prime à la casse entre 2009 et 2010 et 1,2 milliard pour le bonus malus entre 2008 et 2011. «J'observe que les politiques expriment un souhait de ne pas avoir d'austérité sans croissance», a souligné Carlos Tavares, dans un appel du pied au gouvernement français.

Le groupe explique que la situation actuelle est bien plus mauvaise que prévu. «On a un début d'année en France et en Europe qui est particulièrement inquiétant. À fin mai, le marché européen recule de 6% par rapport à l'an dernier et le marché français baisse de 16%, alors que nous anticipions en début d'année des baisses de 3% et 6%», pour ces deux débouchés, précise Carlos Tavares.

Pour l'heure, face à une situation difficile en Europe, le groupe «fait des efforts d'économie, dans tous les domaines», poursuit-il, en espérant que le marasme actuel ne «durera pas». Signe des temps, le patron opérationnel précise d'ailleurs qu'il a effectué son dernier déplacement à Tanger sur des compagnies low cost. Concernant le risque de suppressions d'emplois, «il n'y a pas lieu d'en parler car nous faisons tout pour l'éviter», a indiqué le numéro deux de Renault.

«Nous sommes capables pour l'instant de maintenir le bateau à flot» grâce aux ventes à l'international, notamment en Amérique du Sud, en Russie ou dans le Maghreb, souligne Carlos Tavares. Si les volumes du groupe sont en baisse de 13,3% en Europe à fin mai, ils augmentent de 13% hors du Vieux Continent (soit un recul de 2,3% dans le monde). «En 2013, nous dépasserons les 50% de ventes hors d'Europe occidentale», prévoit-t-il, contre 43% l'an dernier.

## Germans

### A boat apart?

The Economist Jun 11th 2012, 14:40 by R.A. | WASHINGTON

THE German business newspaper *Handelsblatt* has [taken a swipe](#) at our latest cover:



It's kind of an odd riposte. You've got export-dependent Germany there sitting *apart from* the world economy (dropping depth charges, maybe?). I'd say the "too big" part refers to debt, but Germany's public debt is bigger than Spain's. I'm not sure why America is there; it [grew faster](#) than Germany in the year to the first quarter of 2012 (luckily for the Germans, who are net exporters to the American economy).

The real takeaway would seem to be the insight this provides into the German mindset; whatever problems the world economy has, the Germans seem to believe, it isn't Germany's fault. That point, whatever its truth, is orthogonal to the one made in our [cover leader](#): that Germany's government, more than any other, has the ability to navigate the euro-zone economy, and by extension the world economy, away from an economic catastrophe. The *Handelsblatt* image signals that the Germans still don't get it.

## • **Worry for Italy Quickly Replaces Relief for Spain**

- By [LIZ ALDERMAN](#) and [ELISABETTA POVOLEDO](#)
- VENICE — Concerns grew on Monday that [Italy](#) could be the next victim of Europe's financial infection, leading nervous investors to sell Italian stocks and bonds and damping euphoria over a weekend deal to bail out Spain's banks.
- Italian officials privately expressed concern that the 100 billion euros, or \$125 billion, that Europe pledged to Spanish banks might not stop the troubles from spreading.
- Italy's main stock index was Europe's worst performer on Monday, a day when United States stocks were also dragged down and investors flocked yet again to the safe harbor of American and German government bonds. Even the Italian prime minister, [Mario Monti](#), a European technocrat who came to office after [the euro](#) crisis forced out Silvio Berlusconi last November, has begun to acknowledge the dangers posed to his country's 1.56-trillion-euro economy (\$1.95 trillion).
- The main fear is that Italy cannot grow its way out of a [recession](#) fast enough to pay a mountainous national debt. **Other concerns include the fact that Italy, with the third-largest euro zone economy after those of Germany and France, will have to shoulder a large portion of the bailout bill even as it grapples with its own sharp economic downturn.**
- **Because Italy does not have enough economic growth to generate the money itself, the government will probably have to borrow it at high interest rates, adding to an already heavy debt load.**
- "There is a permanent risk of contagion," Mr. Monti told an economics conference near Venice over the weekend, speaking by telephone. "That is why strengthening the euro zone is of collective interest."
- Prices of Italy's government bonds reached their lowest level in months. Investors apparently found little assurance that the euro currency union was any closer to solving its underlying problems — not with parliamentary elections in Greece this weekend that could determine whether the currency union is strong enough to retain its weakest members.
- Investor euphoria in Europe over the Spanish bailout deal Monday morning was short-lived, giving way to an essentially flat day on many European stock markets. But Italy's benchmark index was the Continent's worst performer, ending down 2.8 percent.
- Italian 10-year government bonds dropped in value for a fourth consecutive trading session. The yield — a measure of the government's borrowing costs and of investors' perception of risk — climbed 0.26 of a percentage point Monday to just over 6 percent. That is the highest level since January and a level that Italy could not afford for long.
- The Spanish government's 10-year bond yield also rose, closing up 0.30 of a percentage point, to 6.466 percent.
- "There's no doubt contagion will come to Italy," Daniele Sottile, a managing partner at the financial advisers Vitale & Associati in Milan, said at the same conference, which was convened by the Council for the United States and Italy on an island near Venice. "It's proof that the European mechanisms designed to stop the crisis are not working."
- Sergio Marchionne, the chief executive of both Fiat and Chrysler, was more blunt at the conference. "Somebody better do something before we get to the point of no return," he said.
- Although Mr. Monti, a former European commissioner, has a reputation as a skilled leader trusted by international officials, he faces a host of problems at home.
- Few question Mr. Monti's competence: Within the first six weeks of coming to power, he managed to pass more economic measures than Italy had in a decade, including increasing the retirement age, raising property taxes, simplifying the operation of government agencies and going after tax evaders. Still pending are economic changes meant to spur growth, including an effort to overhaul Italy's inflexible labor rules.
- But Mr. Monti's government is also shackled by a legacy of political unwillingness to make painful changes.
- As a result, "market attention looks set to shift to Italy," Commerzbank analysts wrote Monday in a note to clients. Combined with weak growth, they said, the difficulties Mr. Monti faces in getting lawmakers to make economic changes mean "it may be just a matter of time before Italy also seeks help."
- Italy's dominant political parties, the center-right People of Liberty and the center-left Democratic Party, are participating in Mr. Monti's government but are averse to being too closely associated with

the tough measures he has already put in place and the others he is still pushing for. Some opposition parties have been pressing for new elections to be held before Mr. Monti's term ends in 2013.

- Since Mr. Monti came to power, the Italian economy — like most of those in Europe — has grown weaker. It is expected to contract 1.5 percent this year and increase just 0.5 percent in 2013. Italian banks have sharply curtailed lending, pushing thousands of small and midsize Italian businesses into bankruptcy.
- Italy's unemployment rate has marched above 10 percent, well above Germany's 5.4 percent, according to Eurostat, the European Union's statistical agency.
- Its government debt, already at 120 percent of gross domestic product, will almost certainly continue to rise, especially if Italy must pay a larger portion of the bill for shoring up the monetary union. In many respects, Italy is still better off than Spain and the three other bailout recipients — Greece, Ireland and Portugal. Its annual budget deficit has shrunk to 2.8 percent of G.D.P., which is down from 4.2 percent a year earlier and below the 3 percent level required by the euro union.
- Italy has Europe's second-largest manufacturing and industrial base, after Germany's, and is one of the biggest export-oriented economies in the euro zone. "Made in Italy" is still a valuable brand the world over, led by icons like Ferrari cars, Gucci handbags and Ducati motorcycles. The country is also filled with state-owned assets like power companies and the national postal service that could bring in billions of euros should the government manage to privatize them.
- Despite recent downgrades by the ratings agency Moody's Investors Service, Italian banks are relatively sound — at least compared with Spain's — because they are not saddled with bad debts from a real estate bubble. And even though the Italian government issues more bonds than any other euro zone country, the Italian public owns about half that debt, meaning banks are less vulnerable to fluctuations in the bonds' value than banks in Spain, which are heavily invested in their government's risky bonds.
- Even so, deposits have been fleeing Italian banks for havens in Switzerland, according to several bankers at the weekend conference, on concern that Mr. Monti will raise taxes for the wealthy and as a hedge if the euro zone economy takes a turn for the worst.
- Contagion is as much about fear as economic fundamentals, which is why if Mr. Monti cannot muster the political backing soon to push through his changes, there is a widespread assumption that the crisis will quickly breach Italy's borders.
- "Monti has a good agenda, and has clear in his mind what should be done for Italy," said Cinzia Alcidi, a research fellow at the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels. But his approach is that of a technocrat, "and when it is confronted with political and social reality, that makes things more difficult."
- Across Italy's political spectrum, support for Mr. Monti has been tepid. But many observers agree that any attempt to hold early elections would be disastrous, blocking Mr. Monti's efforts at change and thrusting Italy back into political mayhem. It is unlikely that any other party or coalition would receive enough support to govern comfortably.
- "The good news" said Sergio Fabbrini, director of the school of government at Luiss Guido Carli University in Rome, is that Italy has veered away from becoming a "failed state in Europe" because of Mr. Monti.
- The bad news, he said, is that Italy's embedded politicians have still not acknowledged the reasons for Italy's problems. "And when the quality of the political elite is as low as it is in Italy, or in Greece, it is difficult to create the structural conditions for growth."
- Elisabetta Povoledo reported from Rome.
- This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:
- **Correction: June 11, 2012**
- An earlier version of this article misstated the size of the Italian economy, both in real terms and in relation to other European economies. Its gross domestic product is roughly \$2 trillion (€1.6 trillion) a year, not €2 trillion, and it is the third-largest in the euro zone, not in Europe.



- WSJ [ECONOMY](#)
- Updated June 11, 2012, 3:21 p.m. ET

## Cyprus to Become Fifth Euro-Zone Nation Seeking Bailout

By [ALKMAN GRANITSAS](#)

ATHENS—Cyprus said that it urgently needed European financial aid to boost its banks' capital, a step that would make it the fifth euro-zone economy to seek help from the region's bailout funds.

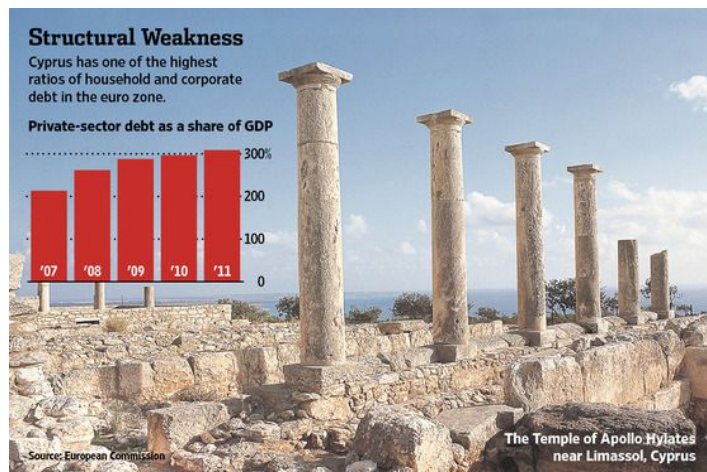


Photo: Getty Images

Cyprus Finance Minister Vassos Shiarly said that the country's need for an international bailout was "exceptionally urgent" in order for it to recapitalize its banks, and that the issue would need to be resolved by the end of the month.

According to several European officials, the size of any bailout would be unlikely to exceed €3 billion to €4 billion (\$3.8 billion to \$5 billion), a sum that wouldn't strain the resources of the euro zone's bailout funds. The economy of Cyprus—an island of 800,000 people—is 1/60th the size of the economy of Spain, which said over the weekend that it would seek European funds to recapitalize its own banks.

However, some European officials said the main impact of Cyprus's request on Monday might be to send a further signal that contagion is spreading in the euro zone. Greece, Ireland and Portugal are all in bailout programs.

Officials said Cyprus's government would probably seek funds along the model for loans to Spain, under which conditions will be placed on the country's banking sector but no new impositions will be placed on the way it manages its economy.

Cypriot banks—particularly the nation's second-largest lender, Cyprus Popular Bank—need to rebuild capital after suffering losses in the Greek government-debt restructuring earlier this year.

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Mr. Shiarly said no request for aid had been made, but said: "We have never ruled out the possibility that we will apply to the [bailout] mechanism for support. The mechanism is one of our choices."

The European Commission said it had received no indication of any aid request. "We know that the Cypriot banking sector...is under heavy pressure; we are monitoring that," said Amadeu Altafaj-Tardio, a commission spokesman.

He said there was no plan for Cyprus to ask for aid before Sunday's election in Greece, which officials have worried could spark turmoil in Europe's financial markets. Nonetheless, "if something needs to be done we have the instruments in place and ready to use," he said.

Last month, the Cypriot Parliament approved a plan to support Cyprus Popular Bank after the bank wrote down some €2 billion from the Greek restructuring.

A rights issue of new shares, which will be underwritten by the government, is set to start Friday and last about two weeks. With private investors unlikely to cover anywhere near the full sum, the plan creates potential liabilities of €1.8 billion for the state—equivalent to a tenth of Cyprus's annual economic output.

"The issue is urgent. We know that the recapitalization of the banks must be completed by June 30," Mr. Shiarly, the finance minister, said. "Until June 30 there remain only a few days left, and so as a result the issue is exceptionally urgent."

Cyprus secured a €2.5 billion loan agreement from Russia last year that staved off the immediate need for a bailout. The government had been exploring whether it could seek Chinese or further Russian funding but these options now seem unlikely, Cypriot and EU officials said.

The likely request for European aid comes against the backdrop of a weakening economy. Growth turned negative in the last two quarters of 2011 after a blast at a munitions dump in July knocked out half of the country's energy supply. Quarterly figures for gross domestic product released last week show that the recession is deepening.

To close the budget gap, the government is expected shortly to announce a new package of austerity measures, which is expected to further deepen the downturn.

—*Matina Stevis, Gabriele Steinhauser and Vanessa Mock contributed to this article.*

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Wenn politische Ideen wie z. B. die gemeinsame europäische Währung von der Wirklichkeit ad absurdum geführt werden und die herrschenden Eliten trotzdem an diesen Vorstellungen und Plänen festhalten, dann schlägt angewandte Politik in Ideologie um. Dieses neue Weltbild, nunmehr immun gegen Kritik und mit Anzeichen eines fortschreitenden Realitätsverlusts, gewinnt, je größer der Abstand zu den tatsächlich vorhandenen Fakten wird, immer mehr an Fahrt und benötigt zur Selbstlegitimation Durchhalteparolen, wie die von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel geäußerte, dass, wenn der Euro scheitert, ebenfalls Europa scheitern würde.

Der am 1. Januar 2002 eingeführte Euro löste die nationalen Zahlungsmittel ab und wurde als neues Bargeld - als Buchgeld wurde er bereits seit 2009 verwendet - benutzt. Die meisten Politiker, Journalisten und Unternehmer sprechen nahezu unisono vom Erfolg und vom wirtschaftlichen Nutzen, den die Eurozone dieser Kunstwährung verdankt.

Neben dem großen Heer der Claqueure in der Politik, den Medien und der Wirtschaft gibt es jedoch zahlreiche kritische Stimmen, die vor den unkalkulierbaren Risiken dieses politischen Traums warnen. Dass diesem gerade in Deutschland eine quasi religiöse Bedeutung zugeschrieben wird, ist es nicht verwunderlich, ebenso wenig die Tatsache, dass den Kritikern dieses Irrwegs ketzerisches Denken und infolge dessen sogar rechtsradikale Tendenzen attestiert werden.

Thilo Sarrazin unterzieht die europäische Entwicklung seit Einführung des Euro in seinem Buch "*Europa braucht den Euro nicht*" einer kritischen Bestandsaufnahme. Sein Fazit ist eindeutig. Die seit Jahren schwelende Krise im Euroraum ist das Resultat einer sich längst von den realen Verhältnissen des Kontinents entfernt habenden politischen Utopie.

Das Projekt Euro, das, so die ursprüngliche Idee, die europäischen Nationen wirtschaftlich und politisch zu einem ebenbürtigen Partner im globalen Wettbewerb integrieren sollte, ist längst von Scheitern bedroht. Die Zukunft des längst insolventen Griechenlands, dessen Beitritt nur aufgrund gefälschter Zahlen basierte, ist mehr als ungeklärt und in Spanien, Italien und Portugal droht ebenfalls die Zahlungsunfähigkeit.

Der Autor, seit seinem Buch "Deutschland schafft sich ab", in den Kreisen des politischen und medialen Mainstreams ein *Enfant terrible*, ist, im Gegensatz zu den zahlreichen selbst ernannten "Experten", ein ausgewiesener Fachmann ökonomischer und volkswirtschaftlicher Zusammenhänge. Die Zahlen und Fakten, die Thilo Sarrazin in seinem Buch vorlegt, sind ohne Zweifel beeindruckend, besser ausgedrückt, erschreckend. Vom Leser, der den wirtschaftlichen und finanziellen Argumenten der Autors folgen will, wird eine Menge Geduld und ein rudimentär vorhandenes Wissen um die Zusammenhänge und Interdependenzen vom Geld- und Finanzwirtschaft erwartet.

Die Zahlen sprechen, abseits jeder Interpretation, eine deutliche Sprache. Der Euro hat nicht zu dem wirtschaftlichen Erfolg geführt, den die herrschen Eliten mit diesem Projekt verbinden. Im Gegenteil, das innereuropäische Handelsvolumen hat sich unter dem Strich verringert. Deutschlands Anteil am Handel mit Ländern der Eurozone ist seit Jahren rückläufig. Die Ausfuhren in außereuropäische Länder hat jedoch zugenommen. Genausowenig wie es um die Summe von drei plus zwei - ergibt fünf - Diskussionen geben kann, sind auch die Handelsbilanzen der Euroländer, so Sarrazin, eindeutig. Es gibt die wirtschaftlich starken Nordländer, wie die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Österreich und die Niederlande und es gibt die nicht so erfolgreichen Länder des Südens wie Griechenland, Italien, Spanien und Portugal.

Das, so meint der Autor zu Recht, liegt unter anderem an den unterschiedlichen Mentalitäten der Mitgliedsstaaten. Während im deutschsprachigen Raum eine große Steuerehrlichkeit auf ein funktionierendes Steuererhebungssystem trifft, sieht es im Süden der Eurozone, wo es historisch geradezu eine bürgerliche Selbstverständlichkeit geworden ist, die Einkommen nach unten zu manipulieren, vollkommen anders aus. Und gerade hier, bei den wesentlichen mentalen Unterschieden, die landesspezifisch zwischen den Völkern des europäischen Raums herrschen, verortet Thilo Sarrazin den grundlegenden Fehler in der Konstruktion der Europäischen Union.

Diese war von Anfang an ein politisches Unternehmen um die vermeintliche Gefahr, die in den Augen europäischer Politiker - besonders der Franzosen - latent von Deutschland ausgeht, auf Dauer einzudämmen. Nach der Sakralisierung des Holocaust ist der Euro die zweite Zivilreligion der Bundesrepublik. Es ist Thilo Sarrazin zu verdanken, dass angesichts des Jubelchors bezüglich des Euro auch unbequeme Wahrheiten an die Oberfläche der gesellschaftlichen Diskussion kommen. Sehr zum Ärger für die über die Deutungshoheit wachenden Jakobiner der Politischen Korrektheit spricht der Autor das aus, was ansonsten im verbalen Geschwurbel über europäische Solidarität und deutsche Verantwortung nahezu unbemerkt von der Öffentlichkeit im Fokus der politisch Verantwortlichen der Bundesrepublik steht: Die Auflösung demokratischer Strukturen und die Abtretung nationaler Interessen an ein europäisches Direktorat durch die Ratifizierung des ESM.

Zusätzlich zu den bereits gemachten Fehlern, der Verstoß gegen den Vertrag von Maastricht durch die Verletzung des Bail-out, der Haftungsübernahme gegenüber Schulden von Drittländern und die Ausweitung der Kompetenzen der Europäischen Zentralbank, die in großem Rahmen Staatsanleihen aufkauft, genauer gesagt, den Markt mit frisch gedrucktem Geld überflutet, wird eine ökonomisch sich mehr und mehr als unsinnig erweisende Politik perpetuiert - auf Kosten eines seit Jahrzehnten währenden guten Verhältnisses der europäischen Staaten untereinander. Thilo Sarrazin hat durchaus Recht, wenn er davon spricht, dass die Stimmung unter den europäischen Nationen noch nie so vergiftet war, wie es aktuell der Fall ist.

Noch jedes politische Versprechen über die Solidität des Euro wurde gebrochen. Sufficient stellt der Autor einen Vergleich an über die von Befürwortern von Kernkraftwerken immer wieder betonte Unwahrscheinlichkeit eines GAU, eines größten anzunehmenden Unfalls - der Kernschmelze - mit den Versicherungen von Befürwortern des Euro in Bezug auf die geringe Wahrscheinlichkeit dass Deutschland in Zukunft seine finanziellen Garantien einlösen muss. Ersteres ist - zumindest in Fukushima - bereits geschehen...

Zwischen den Zeilen kann man auch einen großen Pessimismus des Autors bezüglich demokratischer Funktionen ausmachen. Wer z. B. auf eine Entscheidung, genauer gesagt ein klares Signal des BVerfG, des Bundesverfassungsgerichts, zur drohenden Ratifizierung des ESM durch das Parlament und dem damit verbundenen Transfer von Entscheidungsbefugnissen nach Brüssel hofft, der wird, so Thilo Sarrazin, vermutlich enttäuscht werden, weil das BVerfG erfahrungsgemäß der vorherrschenden Meinung des Bundesrates entsprechend - die ist aktuell pro ESM - entscheidet.

*"Europa braucht den Euro nicht"* bringt die harten Fakten der Realität zur Sprache und man kann sich über die kognitive Dissonanz der herrschenden Elite Deutschlands nur wundern. Das tut anscheinend auch der Autor. Auf Seite 236 vermutet er, dass *"...die gemeinsame Währung [...] vorwiegend als Mittel zu einem höheren Zweck diene."* Dieser höhere Zweck dürfte, wenn der ESM durch den Deutschen Bundestag gewunken werden sollte, im dauerhaften Zugriff fremder Staaten auf das deutsche Volksvermögen liegen.

Bereits vor Jahren schrieb die Pariser Tageszeitung Le Figaro *"Deutschland wird zahlen, sagte man in den zwanziger Jahren. Heute zahlt es: Maastricht, das ist der Versailler Vertrag ohne Krieg."* Nach der Lektüre des Buches von Thilo Sarrazin bekommt diese Einschätzung eine beklemmende Dimension.

## How Not to Solve a Crisis

OP-ED Columnist JOE NOCERA

There is a delicious moment in the HBO film “Too Big to Fail” when Christine Lagarde, then France’s minister of finance, calls Hank Paulson, the U.S. Treasury secretary. It’s September 2008, and [Lehman Brothers has just imploded](#) after the government refused to bail it out. Panic is in the air.

“Hank,” she scolds him. “How could you let Lehman fail? What on earth were you thinking?” She pleads with him to save A.I.G., which appears to be the next domino poised to fall. “This is not just an American problem,” she concludes. (Note: I served as a consultant on [the movie](#).)

Oh, the irony! Here we are, more than three-and-a-half years later, during which time the euro zone has repeatedly flirted with financial catastrophe. Lagarde now leads the International Monetary Fund, which exists, in large part, to help countries survive such catastrophes. Yet neither she nor anyone else in Europe has been willing or able to do more than use Band-Aids to stanch the bleeding.

A euro-zone meltdown, if it comes to that, would be devastating to the already battered economies of Europe, leading to widespread credit contraction, mass unemployment and depressed economies across the Continent. But it would undoubtedly take a toll on our economy as well — and it would be a huge blow to President Obama’s re-election prospects. To paraphrase Lagarde, this is not just a European problem.

The American and European responses to their respective financial crises are studies in contrast. The Bush administration and the Federal Reserve took an “all-hands-on-deck” approach: not just saving A.I.G. and recapitalizing the banks, but buying billions of dollars worth of subprime mortgages that were poisoning the banking system, and guaranteeing virtually all bank debt. Say what you will about the moral hazard that comes with bailing out too-big-to-fail banks, the strategy worked. By announcing to the world that it would serve as the lender of last resort, the federal government prevented a banking collapse, and, quite possibly, a depression.

In the euro zone, there is no lender of last resort. Germany, which has the money and the clout to play that role, refuses to. The European Central Bank is constrained by politics and its own narrow sense of mission. Just last week, it declined to lower interest rates — in no small part, [said its president](#), Mario Draghi, because “I don’t think it would be right for monetary policy to fill other institutions’ lack of action.”

Throughout [the euro](#) crisis, the response of Europe’s political leaders has been tepid, reluctant and unconvincing. They are willing to kick the can — and no more. The decision over the weekend [to lend Spain \\$125 billion](#) to shore up its tottering banking system is typical. For one thing, it’s [unlikely to be enough](#). For another, it will do very little to improve Spain’s underlying problems — including [25 percent unemployment](#), an economy in steep decline and a growing federal deficit that may require its own bailout. You wonder why people are already [speculating that Italy will be next?](#) Because there is no investor confidence that the problem has been solved. Why would there be? It hasn’t been.

One critical difference between America and the euro zone is that we have one government and [they have 17](#). For all our fractious politics, in September 2008, our government’s financial officials spoke with one voice. In Europe, the politicians and finance ministers in each of the 17 countries that make up the euro zone have to deal with their own nations’ political dynamics.

The Germans are sick of being asked to save what they see as the ne’er-do-well Greeks. The Greeks are just as sick of [the austerity programs](#) that the Germans have imposed on them. On Sunday, Greece will go to the polls and could well elect a government that will renege on the deals it cut to get bailouts and exit the euro zone. France’s new president, François Hollande, said during his campaign that [he would reopen the fiscal treaty](#) that European governments agreed to in March because it didn’t do enough to promote growth.

And on and on. It is often said that Europe needs tighter political and fiscal integration to save the euro, but there is no political will for that, and likely never will be. Sovereign governments, it turns out, do not willingly cede their own sovereignty. If the euro zone is to be saved, Europe's voters will have to save it. Everything they've done in the past year suggests that they would rather risk financial disaster than be wedded to countries with mores and politics very different from their own. The reason Europe lacks a lender of last resort is that its citizens don't want one.

As for us, all we can do is watch and wait and hope for the best. But don't be too surprised if President Obama calls Angela Merkel someday soon and asks: "How could you let the euro fail? What on earth were you thinking?"



# Die schönsten Journalistinnen von Paris

FAZ 11.06.2012 · Frankreichs First Lady Valérie Trierweiler will nicht nur im Palast, sondern auch im Fernsehen moderieren, ihren Vertrag als Mitarbeiterin beim Magazin „Paris Match“ hat sie verlängert. Doch kritische Stimmen sagen, sie schade dem Journalismus.

Von [Jürg Altwegg](#)



© Frankreich unter dem Schirm: Valérie Trierweiler und Francois Hollande

“Und wie geht es der schönsten Journalistin von Paris?“ Auch bei Valérie Trierweiler hatte es Dominique Strauss-Kahn mit seiner plumpen Anmache versucht. Die Anekdote findet sich in einem Buch über DSK und seine Gattin Anne Sinclair, das zum Wochenende erschienen ist: „Les Strauss-Kahn“. Geschrieben haben es zwei Journalistinnen der Zeitung „Le Monde“, Raphaëlle Bacqué und Ariane Chemin. Ihr Befund: Der Schutz der Privatsphäre war ein Alibi, das Schweigen der Medien der wirkliche Skandal. Weder Sarkozy noch Hollande hatten an DSK als möglichen Rivalen geglaubt.

“Ich dachte, die schönste Journalistin in Paris sei Anne Sinclair“: Mit diesen Worten soll Valérie Trierweiler DSK abgewiesen haben. Sie ist zweimal geschieden und will als moderne, emanzipierte Frau auch finanziell nicht von ihrem neuen Lebenspartner abhängig sein. Während des Wahlkampfes wurde die Kulturredakteurin bei der Illustrierten „Paris Match“ kaltgestellt. Die von ihr moderierte Fernsehsendung bei „Direct 8“ konnte sie behalten. Die Beziehung geht auf die Zeit von Hollande als Parteisekretär zurück und wurde jahrelang verheimlicht: aus Rücksicht auf die politischen Ambitionen der Partei und die Ehefrau. Im Wahlkampf von 2007 trat Hollandes Gattin Ségolène Royal an, und gegen Sarkozys chaotisches Liebesleben führten beide mit erstaunlicher Perfektion das Stück der intakten Familie mit vier Kindern vor. Wie falsch die Töne klangen, haben die Medien nicht gesagt. Bei Trierweilers Arbeitgeber war der Chefredakteur entlassen worden, weil er die ehemalige Madame Sarkozy mit ihrem neuen Partner aufs Cover gebracht hatte.

## Politik und Kultur?

Kurz nach der Wahl hat „Paris Match“ den Vertrag mit Valérie Trierweiler verlängert. Ihr Büro allerdings ist im Élysée, ihre Mitarbeiter werden vom Staat bezahlt. Beim Arbeitgeber darf sie nicht ins Intranet, sie ist gewissermaßen eine freie Mitarbeiterin mit fortlaufendem Gehalt. Zwei bis drei Artikel soll sie monatlich schicken. Der erste ist erschienen: Es ist die Rezension einer Biographie der Gattin von Präsident Roosevelt. Und sie beginnt so: „Eine Journalistin als First Lady ist keine Neuheit. Aber natürlich muss man nach Amerika blicken, um darin keinen Skandal auszumachen.“

Ebenso unbedarft äußerte sie sich im Rundfunk. Bei heiklen Interviewanfragen an den Präsidenten und zwischen den unterschiedlichen Medien würde sie entscheiden, gab sie bekannt. Noch bedenklicher war ihre Aussage, sie würde selbst ja nur über Kultur schreiben - was politisch unproblematisch sei. Umgehend befasste sich „Libération“ auf mehreren Seiten mit den Interessenkonflikten und warf Trierweiler vor, dem Journalismus zu schaden. Titel des Kommentars einer stellvertretenden Chefredakteurin: „Nein, Valérie Trierweiler ist nicht ‚normal‘.“



## Sie ist eine Errungenschaft

Und könne es in der „gaullistischen Monarchie“ auch gar nicht sein. Diese hat im Medienzeitalter ein neues Traumpaar hervorgebracht: Minister und Starjournalistin, verheiratet in zweier und dritter Ehe. Sie ist eine Errungenschaft der Kaviar-Linken und DSK/Anne Sinclair wie Bernard Kouchner/Christine Ockrent ihre Pioniere. Auch bürgerliche Kabinettsmitglieder haben seither Fernsehmoderatorinnen gefreit. Im neuen Kabinett ist das Modell ebenfalls vertreten. Im Palast aber blieben die Journalistinnen bislang auf das Gerücht als mutmaßliche Geliebte beschränkt. Es kursiert seit Giscard d'Estaing. „L'Express“-Begründer Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber hatte die attraktivsten Redakteurinnen in kurzen Röcken zu den Politiker-Interviews geschickt. Zwischen Cecilia und Carla Bruni wurde eine Journalistin des „Figaro“ an Sarkozys Seite geortet.

Mit der wilden Ehe im Élysée werden mehrere Tabus gebrochen. Angesichts der nicht sehr eleganten Behandlung der Première Dame, der „L'Express“ schon eine Titelgeschichte gewidmet hat, entsteht der Eindruck, dass die Medien für ihr langjähriges Schweigen einen neuen Sündenbock gefunden haben. Doch abermals bleibt das komplizierte Privatleben nicht ohne diplomatische Folgen. Es entschlüsselt uns Hollandes gestörtes Verhältnis zu Angela Merkel. Deutschland ist der Bereich seines Vorgängers, des Vaters seiner Stiefkinder, der sich finanziell angeblich ungenügend an ihrem Unterhalt beteiligt. Er war Autor bei „Paris Match“. Aber eigentlich ist er Philosoph und spricht hervorragend Deutsch. Er hat Bücher von Carl Schmitt und Hans Blumenberg übersetzt. Nächstens wird er in Stuttgart einen Vortrag halten - über Heidegger. Der Titel der Veranstaltung lässt nicht auf Anspielungen über Affären und Hannah Arendt hoffen: „Die Sprache spricht - wirklich? Philosophie auf Deutsch und Französisch.“

Quelle: F.A.Z.

# Schuldenkrise: Italien stellt Forderungen

FAZ 11.06.2012 · In Italiens Politik und Medien wird trotz der schwierigen Lage nicht über Reformen diskutiert. Das Land beschäftigt sich vielmehr mit der Frage, wann Deutschland endlich mit Eurobonds die italienische Konjunktur retten könne.

Von [Tobias Piller](#), Rom



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Die Zeitung „Repubblica“ zitiert Italiens Ministerpräsident Mario Monti mit den Worten, Kanzlerin Angela Merkel sei so hart wegen ihrer Wahlen 2013, doch Europa könne nicht darauf warten.

Nach dem Rettungspaket für Spaniens Banken haben nun angelsächsische Analysten und Nachrichtenagenturen Italien ins Visier genommen. Für negative Schlagzeilen zur Konjunktur liefert Italien seit Monaten genügend Munition. Ende Mai hatte zum Beispiel der Notenbankgouverneur Ignazio Visco gesagt, dass „in den nicht allzu negativen Szenarien die Schrumpfung des Bruttoinlandsprodukts 2012 auf 1,5 Prozent begrenzt werden kann“. Die Erholung zum Ende des Jahres sei umso lebhafter, je effizienter die Interventionen für eine bessere Nutzung öffentlicher und privater Ressourcen seien und je mehr Klarheit über den Zusammenhalt Europas bestehe.

## Industrieproduktion hat enorm nachgelassen

Die einzelnen Wirtschaftsdaten entwickeln sich nun entsprechend dieser Konjunkturtendenz, mit einer Arbeitslosenquote, die von 8 auf fast 10 Prozent gestiegen ist und einer Jugendarbeitslosigkeit (bis 25 Jahre), die in Italien schon immer hoch lag, und innerhalb der letzten zwölf Monate von 28 auf 36 Prozent gestiegen ist. Das italienische Statistikamt und der Unternehmerverband berichten über schrumpfende Industrieproduktion. Laut Statistikamt ist die Produktion im April im Vergleich zum März um 1,9 Prozent geschrumpft. Der Unternehmerverband prognostiziert für Mai einen weiteren Rückgang um 0,6 Prozent. Gegenüber dem Höchststand Anfang 2008 ergebe sich damit für Italiens Produktion ein Verlust von 23,5 Prozent.

Diese Daten beinhalteten noch nicht die Effekte des Erdbebens in der Emilia, das weitere Produktionsausfälle bedeutet. Für die Perspektive von Spekulanten, dass sich Italiens Lage in diesen Tagen besonders verschlechtert habe, gibt es aber wenig Anhaltspunkte.

## Monti: Europa kann nicht länger warten

In Italiens Politik und Medien dreht sich die Diskussion trotz der schwierigen Lage nicht um Reformen zur Belebung der Wirtschaft, sondern darum, wann Deutschland endlich mit Investitionsbonds und Eurobonds die italienische Konjunktur retten könne. Deutschland wird von Ministerpräsident Mario Monti hart kritisiert. Die Zeitung „Repubblica“ zitiert Monti mit den Worten, Kanzlerin Angela Merkel sei so hart wegen ihrer Wahlen 2013, doch Europa könne nicht darauf warten.

## Berlin is ignoring the lessons of the 1930s

By Niall Ferguson and Nouriel Roubini



Is it one minute to midnight in Europe?

We fear that the [German government's policy](#) of doing “too little too late” risks a repeat of precisely the crisis of the mid-20th century that European integration was designed to avoid.

We find it extraordinary that it should be Germany, of all countries, that is failing to learn from history. Fixated on the non-threat of inflation, today's Germans appear to attach more importance to 1923 (the year of hyperinflation) than to 1933 (the year democracy died). They would do well to remember how a European banking crisis two years before 1933 contributed directly to the breakdown of democracy not just in their own country but right across the European continent.

We have warned for more than three years that continental Europe needs to clean up its banks' woeful balance sheets. Next to nothing has been done. In the meantime, a silent run on the banks of the eurozone periphery has been under way for two years now: cross-border, interbank and wholesale funding has rolled off and been substituted with [European Central Bank financing](#); and “smart money” – large uninsured deposits of wealthy individuals – has quietly departed Greek and other “Club Med” banks.

But now the public is finally losing faith and the silent run may spread to smaller insured deposits. Indeed, if Greece were to leave the eurozone, a deposit freeze would occur and euro deposits would be converted into new drachmas: so a euro in a Greek bank really is not equivalent to a euro in a German bank. Greeks have withdrawn more than €700m from their banks in the past month.

More worryingly, there was also a surge in withdrawals from some Spanish banks last month. The government's bungled bailout of Bankia has only heightened public anxiety. On a recent visit to Barcelona, one of us was repeatedly asked if it was safe to leave money in a Spanish bank. This kind of process is potentially explosive. What today is a leisurely “bank jog” could easily become a sprint for the exits. [In the event of a Greek exit](#), rational people would ask: who is next?

The way out of this crisis seems clear. First, there needs to be a programme of direct recapitalisation – via preferred non-voting shares – of eurozone banks, in the periphery and the core, by the European Financial Stability Facility and its successor, the European Stability Mechanism.

The current approach of recapitalising the banks by the sovereigns borrowing from domestic bond markets – and/or the EFSF – has been a disaster in Ireland and Greece: it has led to a surge of public debt and made the sovereign even more insolvent while making banks more risky as an increasing amount of the debt is in their hands.

Second, to avoid a [run on eurozone banks](#) – a certainty in the case of a Greek exit and likely in any case – an EU-wide system of deposit insurance needs to be created.

To reduce moral hazard (and the equity and credit risk taken by eurozone taxpayers), several additional measures should also be implemented.

The deposit insurance scheme has to be funded by appropriate bank levies: this could be a financial transaction tax or, better, a charge on all bank liabilities.

There needs to be a bank resolution scheme in which unsecured creditors of banks – both junior and senior – would take a hit before taxpayer money is used.

Measures to limit the size of banks to avoid the too-big-to-fail problem need to be taken.

We also favour an EU-wide system of supervision and regulation.

It is true that European-wide deposit insurance will not work if there is a continued risk of a country leaving the eurozone. Guaranteeing deposits in euros would be expensive as the departing country would need to convert all euro claims into a national currency, which would swiftly depreciate against the euro. On the other hand, a deposit insurance scheme that holds only if a country doesn't leave will be incapable of stopping a bank run. So, more needs to be done to reduce the probability of eurozone exits.

Structural reforms that boost productivity growth should be accelerated. And economic growth needs to be jump-started. The policies to achieve this include [further monetary easing by the ECB](#), a weaker euro, some fiscal stimulus in the core, more bottleneck-reducing and supply-stimulating infrastructure spending in the periphery (preferably with some kind of “golden rule” for public investment), and wage increases above productivity in the core to boost income and consumption.

Finally, given the unsustainably high public debts and borrowing costs of certain member states, we see no alternative to some kind of debt mutualisation.

There are currently a number of different proposals for eurozone bonds. Among them, the German Council of Economic Advisers' proposal for a European redemption fund is to be preferred – not because it is optimal but because it is the only one that can assuage German concerns about taking on too much credit risk.

The ERF is a temporary programme that does not lead to permanent eurozone bonds. It is supported by appropriate collateral and seniority for the fund and has strong conditionality. The main risk is that any proposal acceptable to Germany would imply such a loss of sovereignty over fiscal policy that it would be unacceptable to the periphery, particularly Italy and Spain. Giving up some sovereignty is inevitable. However, there is a difference between federalism and “neo-colonialism” – as a senior figure put it to us at a meeting of the Nicolas Berggruen Institute in Rome.

Until recently, the German position has been relentlessly negative on all such proposals. We understand German concerns about moral hazard. Putting German taxpayers' money on the line will be hard to justify if meaningful reforms do not materialise on the periphery. But such reforms are bound to take time. Structural reform of the German labour market was hardly an overnight success. By contrast, the European banking crisis is a real hazard that could escalate in days.

Germans must understand that bank recapitalisation, European deposit insurance and debt mutualisation are not optional; they are essential to avoid an irreversible disintegration of Europe's monetary union. If they are still not convinced, they must understand that the costs of a eurozone break-up would be astronomically high – for themselves as much as anyone.

After all, Germany's prosperity is in large measure a consequence of monetary union. The euro has given German exporters a far more competitive exchange rate than the old Deutschmark would have. And the rest of

the eurozone remains the destination for 42 per cent of German exports. Plunging half of that market into a new Depression can hardly be good for Germany.

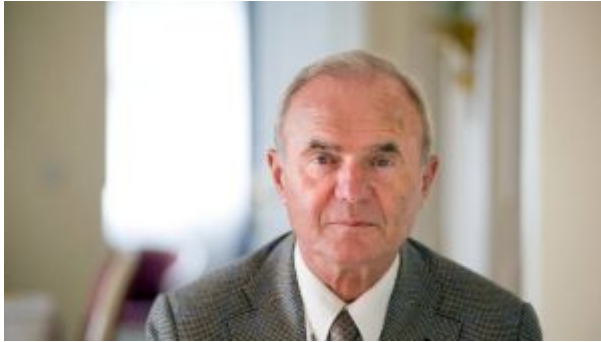
Ultimately, as Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, herself acknowledged last week, monetary union always implied further [integration into a fiscal and political union](#). But before Europe gets anywhere near taking this historical step, it must first of all show it has learnt the lessons of the past. The EU was created to avoid repeating the disasters of the 1930s. It is time Europe's leaders – and especially Germany's – understood how perilously close they are to doing just that.

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# Europa in Not - Deutschland in Gefahr

FAZ 11.06.2012 · Nach Griechenland und Irland sind Portugal und jetzt Spanien in den Mittelpunkt der Schuldenkrise gerückt. Deutschland soll immer mehr für die Misswirtschaft in anderen Ländern haften. Doch falsch verstandene Solidarität kann die Deutschen immer weiter von der europäischen Idee entfernen. Ein Standpunkt.

Von Otmar Issing



*Otmar Issing, der ehemalige Chefvolkswirt der EZB, ist Präsident des Center for Financial Studies in Frankfurt.*

Seit nunmehr fast drei Jahren reißen die Nachrichten über die Krise der Europäischen Währungsunion nicht mehr ab. Nach Griechenland und Irland sind Portugal und jetzt Spanien mit ihren Schulden- und Bankenproblemen in den Mittelpunkt gerückt. Auch die Existenz der Währungsunion selbst ist in Frage gestellt.

Der Versuch, Spekulanten oder Ratingagenturen als die Schuldigen zu identifizieren, ist längst als Ablenkungsmanöver entlarvt. Die Erkenntnis, dass die Probleme fast ausnahmslos in jedem Land auf eigene Fehler zurückzuführen sind, lässt sich immer weniger unterdrücken. Überzogene Lohnsteigerungen über viele Jahre, nicht zuletzt im öffentlichen Sektor, in nicht wenigen Fällen eine unsolide Finanzpolitik, in anderen eine hemmungslose Kreditvergabe der Banken mussten in einer Krise enden. Rigide Regelungen am Arbeitsmarkt, geradezu zunftartig geschlossene Märkte und Versagen der Politik, haben sich als Bremse für dauerhaftes Wachstum und als Ursache für extrem hohe Arbeitslosigkeit erwiesen. Die aktuelle Jugendarbeitslosigkeit von bis zu 50 Prozent in einigen Ländern lässt leicht vergessen, wie tief verwurzelt dieser Skandal seit langem in den betreffenden Gesellschaften ist.

## Eurobonds bedeuten für Deutschland: Höhere Zinsen und massive Verluste im Haftungsfall

Über diese Diagnose besteht weitgehend Einigkeit. Grundsätzlich herrscht auch Einigkeit darüber, dass auf all diesen Feldern die nationale Politik mit tiefgreifenden Reformen Abhilfe schaffen muss. Zweifellos wurden schon viele richtige Maßnahmen ergriffen, die in der Vergangenheit kaum möglich waren.

Seit gut zwei Jahren unterstützt die Gemeinschaft notleidende Länder mit finanziellen Hilfen aller Art. Das gilt für den Rettungsschirm ESFS und den geplanten ESM. Die EZB leistet mit immensen, niedrigst verzinsten Krediten, auch mit Maßnahmen über ihr Mandat hinaus, einen wesentlichen Beitrag.

Weite Teile der europäischen Politik, die Europäische Kommission eingeschlossen, von der Finanzindustrie und den Medien erst gar nicht zu reden, geben sich mit diesen umfangreichen Hilfen nicht mehr zufrieden. Forderungen nach Eurobonds, nach einer Fiskalunion und neuerdings einer Bankenunion eröffnen eine völlig neue Dimension. Diese Vorschläge haben eines gemeinsam, nämlich die Übernahme der Haftung für Schulden beziehungsweise fehlerhafte politische Entscheidungen anderer Staaten durch diejenigen Staaten, die sich an europäische Regeln gehalten und einigermassen solide gewirtschaftet haben. Eurobonds, also Anleihen anderer



Länder, für die Deutschland an erster Stelle mithaftet, ließen Deutschland rasch seinen Status als erstklassiger Schuldner verlieren. Die unausweichliche Folge würde sein: Höhere Zinsen für deutsche Anleihen und später massive Verluste für den deutschen Staat, wenn der Haftungsfall eintritt - der durch die mit der Haftungszusage verbundene laxere Politik wahrscheinlicher wird. Das wird hier zwangsläufig zu stark steigenden Steuern und Leistungskürzungen führen.

## **Das Vertrauen ist gestört - weil Verträge gebrochen wurden**

Wie kann man das dem deutschen Bürger erklären, der keinerlei Einfluss auf die Entscheidungen derjenigen nationalen Parlamente hat, für die er nun aber haften und zahlen soll? Ähnliche Konsequenzen sind von anderen Vorschlägen zur Mithaftung für Schulden anderer Länder zu erwarten. Wie kann man weiter begründen, dass zum Beispiel solide Banken und Sparkassen mit ihren Rücklagen für die Einlagensicherung von Banken in anderen Ländern geradestehen, die nachweislich verantwortungslos gewirtschaftet haben? Warum sollen deutsche, französische oder finnische Sparer indirekt für Misswirtschaft und überzogene Boni von Bankern in anderen Ländern haften?

Allen Vorschlägen dieser Art ist gemeinsam, dass sie mit der Absicht verbunden sind, Mitgliedstaaten oder Banken unter europäische Aufsicht und Kontrolle zu stellen. Dafür bedarf es jedoch umfangreicher Änderungen der Verträge, die - wenn sie denn überhaupt Wirklichkeit werden - viele Jahre dauern werden. Wie soll man aber solchen Versprechungen trauen, wenn die gleichen Institutionen und Politiker Verträge und Verpflichtungen aller Art in Serie gebrochen haben? Wie kann man von einer Europäischen Kommission eine objektive und wirksame Kontrolle erwarten, wenn diese Institution sich selbst immer wieder an vertragswidrigen Initiativen beteiligt oder Probleme verschleiert und damit deren Lösung verteuert?

## **Deutschland soll sich an die Verträge halten - und das Gleiche von anderen einfordern**

Der Grundsatz, dass jedes Land für die Fehler seiner eigenen Politik haftet (No-Bail-out-Klausel), war nicht nur ein tragender Bestandteil bei der Gründung der Währungsunion, er ist und bleibt ein unverzichtbares Element einer Union souveräner Staaten. Da die Währungsunion noch lange keine voll etablierte politische Union sein wird, der Weg dahin ist lang und steinig, widerspricht es diametral dem demokratischen Prinzip und jeder wirtschaftlichen Vernunft, Bürger in Haftung zu nehmen, die keinerlei Einfluss auf die verantwortlichen Parlamente haben. Finanzielle Hilfe muss sich deshalb auf die bestehenden Mechanismen beschränken. Sie muss genau begrenzt sein und darf nur auf der Grundlage von glaubwürdigen Verpflichtungen der Empfängerländer erfolgen. Mehr unter dem Motto der „Solidarität“ einzufordern, spricht diesem Prinzip Hohn und führt zu einem Europa, in dem Staaten, die dauerhaft über ihre Verhältnisse leben und abgeschlossene Verträge missachten, die entstehenden Kosten auf andere abwälzen können. Ein Staat, der immer wieder neue Hilfen verlangt, aber permanent eingegangene Verpflichtungen nicht erfüllt, hat keinen Platz in der Währungsunion.

Deutschland tut gut daran, sich selbst an die Verträge zu halten und das Gleiche von den anderen einzufordern. Ein Deutschland, das in falsch verstandener Solidarität durch die Übernahme unübersehbarer Verpflichtungen am Ende in Schulden ertrinkt, wird den Zorn seiner Bürger heraufbeschwören und sie noch weiter von der europäischen Idee entfernen, als dies inzwischen unglücklicherweise schon der Fall ist. Der Zukunft Europas würde Deutschland damit einen Bärendienst erweisen.



## Merkel Still Waiting for a Thatcher Moment

By [SIMON NIXON](#) June 10<sup>th</sup> 2012

Who knows what ultimately drove Alexandros to commit suicide by hanging himself in a park in Athens? But clearly financial worries exacerbated by Greece's economic crisis weighed heavily on the pensioner's mind. In a farewell note, he set out what he saw as the answer to the country's problems, according to Greek press reports. It wasn't a euro-zone growth agenda, common euro-zone bonds, a banking union, an end to austerity or a more expansive role for the European Central Bank. What Greece needed, he wrote in his despair, was a leader like Margaret Thatcher, "a leader with b—."



*Bloomberg News (left), Agence France-Presse/Getty Images*

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, left, is at the heart of European matters—as was Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

Alexandros understood something important that seems to have eluded a great many politicians and pundits outside the euro zone who have lined up recently to give their views on how to solve the euro crisis. Most of this advice takes one of two forms. One group, largely made up of British euro-skeptic commentators, insists the euro has always been an unworkable disaster and that the only solution is to break up the common currency. The other group, which now sadly includes U.S. President Barack Obama and U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron, insists the euro zone should move to an immediate political and fiscal union.

What both groups share is the belief that Angela Merkel is the villain of the crisis whose inflexibility risks dooming entire nations to a never-ending cycle of misery. This is grotesquely unfair.

Many of those willing the euro zone to fall apart rely on a flawed understanding of European history, politics and economics. They assume the trigger for a euro implosion will be a Greek euro exit, which they believe is inevitable and desirable, much like the collapse of the gold standard. But the euro is not a fixed exchange-rate system like the gold standard; it is Greece's currency. Greece can no more "leave" the euro than the U.K. can leave sterling. Unlike Argentina in 2002, Greece does not have a currency it can independently devalue. Of course, as a sovereign country it is free to introduce a new currency—although this could take months or years to implement—but what will back this new currency? The ability and willingness of the Greek state to collect taxes? Be serious. That is not a currency anybody would want to hold. The idea that investment—or even tourists—would flock to Greece following the financial devastation caused by a euro exit is fanciful. More likely the country would be in political and economic meltdown, soon to be followed by much of the rest of Europe.

Fortunately for Greece, the euro zone differs from the gold standard in other crucial respects. For one, it has a common central bank that automatically transfers reserves between member states, thereby avoiding the modern equivalent of a country running out of gold. That's important because the only reason Greece is likely to exit the euro is if the ECB stops transferring reserves by refusing to continue funding Greek banks. Earlier this month, ECB President Mario Draghi addressed this possibility head on, telling the European Parliament

that the ECB would always lend to solvent banks. His message was clear: The euro zone may cut off funding to the Greek government, forcing it to default on its debts and its obligation to its own citizens, but so long as it took steps to ensure Greek banks remain technically solvent, Greece could stay in the euro indefinitely.

But if those advocating a euro breakup are barking up the wrong tree, so too are those arguing for the immediate creation of common euro-zone bonds and a banking union. It is obvious a much deeper political union must be part of the long-term future of the euro zone. Germany knows this and Ms. Merkel herself has said as much. The question is when and under what terms? If Europe's problem was simply one of excessive debt, the current criticism of Ms. Merkel would be justified. But the euro zone's real problem is a crisis of competitiveness, a legacy of decades of entitlements, privileges, overgenerous welfare systems, inefficient bureaucracies, unnecessary and burdensome regulations and high taxes. Ms. Merkel rightly argues that a short-term fix that doesn't address these structural problems would be a grossly irresponsible betrayal not only of German taxpayers, but also of future generations of euro-zone citizens in every country.

Rather than attacking Ms. Merkel, those outside the euro zone who want to play a constructive role should aim their fire at the political elites in member states that continue to block reform. They should demand to know why even now Spain has still not fully restructured and reformed its broken banking system; or why Greece has still barely sacked a single civil servant or privatized a state-owned asset. They might ask what exactly Mario Monti has achieved as prime minister of Italy? Before taking up his post at the ECB, Mr. Draghi set out the reforms he believed Italy needed to restore its competitiveness, but how much of this agenda has been delivered? How many closed professions have been opened up? How many pointless regulations repealed? Why does Italy still have 8,000 administrative regions when the U.S. can get by with only 3,000?

Mr. Monti sometimes acts as if he believes simply not being Silvio Berlusconi automatically gives him the moral authority to demand Germany underwrite Italy's debts while offering very little in return. Now that Spain has been forced to seek a bailout, Mr. Monti's lack of progress is likely to come under increasing market scrutiny.

The tragedy is that Europe has yet to produce a single Margaret Thatcher as a result of its crisis. Ms. Merkel has worked valiantly to give Europe a "Thatcher moment." With hindsight, it is hard to think of much she could have done differently during the crisis, given the obstinate refusal of many euro-zone countries to embrace reform. The logic of the crisis may yet force her to concede further fiscal and political union without the safeguards she seeks. But until then surely the only rational response of anyone who believes in the moral superiority of free markets and transparent governments is to offer her their full-hearted support? That President Obama has chosen to lecture Germany is perhaps less surprising given his own political situation. But Mr. Cameron's decision to follow the U.S. leader down this path is profoundly depressing. If the leader of Mrs. Thatcher's own party is not prepared to speak out against corruption, vested interests, economic inefficiency and closed shops, what hope for Europe?

- EUROPE NEWS
- Updated June 11, 2012, 1:18 a.m. ET

## Latest Europe Rescue Aims to Prop Up Spain

By [CHARLES FORELLE](#) in London and [GABRIELE STEINHAUSER](#) in Brussels

Spain's acquiescence to a bailout of as much as €100 billion (\$125 billion) for its banks is a prelude to a much bigger question: Will Spain need a bailout for itself?

Some say Spain faces a daunting struggle convincing reluctant creditors that the country is a viable borrower. In the first market reaction to Saturday's events, Asian stocks rallied early Monday, in part on the Spanish developments.

Japan's Nikkei climbed 2.2% and South Korea's Kospi was 1.6% higher. China's May inflation data, which pointed to a weakening economy but weren't as bad as some expected, also lifted sentiment.



Reuters

A woman in Malaga, Spain, covers her mouth with a fake euro note Sunday in protest against the bank bailout.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy on Sunday expressed hope that the bailout would help the country's ailing economy, saying, "The European project, the future of the euro and our banking system all won new credibility yesterday." But he warned against expecting a quick turnaround following the banking rescue.

"This year is going to be a bad one, growth is going to be negative by 1.7%, and also unemployment is going to increase," he said.

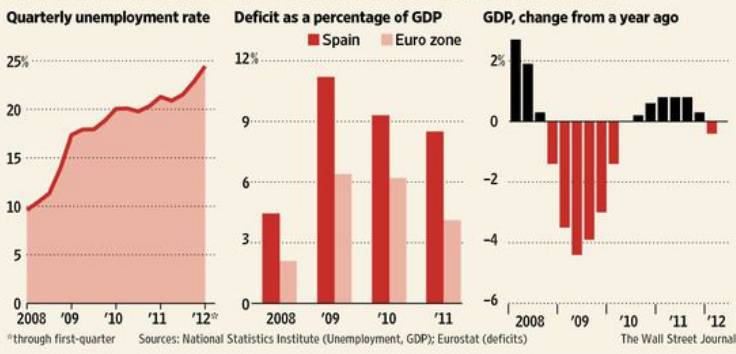
That leads many to conclude Spain will have an even larger deficit—and need even more borrowing from capital markets—than it now projects.

Helen Haworth, head of European interest-rate strategy for Credit Suisse in London, said there could be a bit of a relief rally this week. But fundamentally, she said, "to me, there is still no buyer of Spanish debt beyond the domestic investor base, which is basically the Spanish banks."

Whether Spain can avoid another bailout, for itself, is crucial to the future of the euro zone as it enters a tumultuous summer. Greece holds elections next Sunday that could set it on a path to leave the currency union. Italy is laboring to refinance its own giant debt pile under immense scrutiny.

## Challenges Ahead

Though the EU aid should help Spain tackle its banking troubles, many problem areas remain



Amid these threats to the euro, a full bailout of Spain could be a cataclysmic event. Spain's economy is the fourth-largest in the euro zone—larger than those of Greece, Portugal and Ireland combined. Finding the funds for a rescue would greatly strain the euro zone's bailout vehicles.

The question of a broader bailout follows Saturday's announcement that Spain would accept as much as €100 billion in aid with the intent of funneling the money into its ailing banking sector. Officials sought to portray the move as a limited intervention that falls short of the other euro-zone rescues—which have come with painful overhauls of entire economies.

In the short term, market analysts said, Spain's bonds could see a boost. The European aid for banks means Spain won't have to issue new bonds right away to fund the rescue. The Spanish government-bond market rallied last week in anticipation of an aid deal, and 10-year bonds yielded 6.25% Friday, off the peaks above 6.7% on May 30.

Even as Spain accepts help, many eyes are on the elections in Greece, the home of Europe's most biting overhaul. Sunday's vote pits a mainstream party that supports the country's bailout measures against an upstart party, Syriza, that wants to rip up the deal.

The two sides are running neck and neck, and officials fear a decisive win by Syriza could raise the odds of a fracture in the currency union and trigger further tumult in the Spanish financial sector.

## Euro Zone by the Numbers

The 17-nation euro zone is a collection of countries with vastly different economic profiles. See how they stack up on the major measures.



Spain's economy is flailing and foreign investors have fled from its government bonds all year. That has created a pressing worry: How will Spain pay for its sizable government deficit, officially projected at 5.3% of gross domestic product but widely expected to be larger?

Early this year, Spanish banks picked up the slack, but now they are backing off. Spain says it needs to borrow €86 billion this year to cover deficits and repay maturing debt; it has raised around €50 billion so far, leaving it

to find a further €36 billion from capital markets. By turning to its euro-zone peers for help with its banks, Spain is tacitly admitting money will be hard to find.

"What you have to say now is that Spain is likely to lose access to the bond markets completely at some point," said Justin Knight of UBS in London. "It has demonstrated to everybody that market access is limited by requesting aid."

## Big Events

A series of events affecting the crisis are set for this month:

- ◆ **June 13** German parliament to decide whether it will vote on European Stability Mechanism and fiscal pact before the end of June. Euro zone wants ESM to come into force as quickly as possible so it can finance loans to Spain.
- ◆ **June 17** Second round of French parliamentary vote; Greek national elections. Failure of pro-bailout parties to gain majority could create further shock waves.
- ◆ **June 18-19** G-20 leaders' summit in Los Cabos, Mexico. G-20 likely to pressure euro zone to resolve crisis.
- ◆ **June 21** Euro-zone finance ministers meet. Could nail down Spanish banks' financing needs.
- ◆ **June 22** Leaders of the bloc's four largest economies—Germany's Angela Merkel, France's François Hollande, Italy's Mario Monti and Spain's Mariano Rajoy—meet; they are expected to discuss reforms to the currency union.
- ◆ **June 28** EU leaders to meet in Brussels, seeking a road map toward deeper economic and political union in the euro zone.

Source: WSJ research

With foreign investors almost completely absent from Spanish bond markets for months, Spanish banks have propped up the government, which is now forced to turn to Europe for help propping up the weaker banks. Meanwhile, the stronger banks are shying away from buying government bonds—for fear they would be dragged down, too.

That knot between the government and its banks has been devilishly difficult to untie. Ireland couldn't do it, and its banks' huge losses eventually demolished public finances and thrust the country into a bailout program.

After a meeting with European finance officials Saturday, Spain said it would try to cut the knot by soon requesting aid from the euro zone. Those funds, coming from the bloc's bailout vehicles, would be lent to Spain, which would take stakes in troubled banks in return for cash or bonds.

The plan is short on details, particularly on what would be demanded of Spanish banks in return for the help—a reflection of the speed with which the plan was assembled. A senior euro-zone official involved in the discussions said the governments moved quickly because "Spain was on the verge of being unable to finance itself on the markets."

Spain will lose control over the supervision of its banks to international and European authorities, who will scour the banks' books and may order banks to shed assets—or even demand the closing of lenders seen as unviable.

The bailout will help Spain in one clear way: It is a low-cost means of rapidly cobbling together large sums that Spain would otherwise have had to pay dearly for—if it could find anyone to lend to it at all.

But it comes with a number of pitfalls. First, economists and market analysts point out, the costs of the bank rescue still fall on Spain: It must repay the European loans.



## Man in the Middle: Problems pressing on Mariano Rajoy from all sides



Second, the parameters of that aid make it more difficult for Spain to raise additional money. That is because lending from the European Stability Mechanism, the new euro-zone bailout fund that is expected to handle the bulk of the aid, is intended to have a "senior" creditor status: The ESM is meant to be repaid before holders of regular Spanish bonds if Spain were to default on its debts. Mr. Knight of UBS said "the fear that bondholders are subordinated by this" will make investors reluctant to buy Spanish debt.

If Spain is to avoid its own bailout, it will have to convince lenders its banking problems are under control. That isn't easy: Ireland was forced to take aid after repeatedly underestimating the extent of its banks' problems. And then Spain will need to convince lenders that, banking problems aside, it can survive.

To that end, Europe's strategy—and now Spain's—is to present the bailout commitment as a limited support program, far from the intrusive rescues that were needed for Greece, Portugal and Ireland. Thus, Madrid won't see the regular visits from the troika of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund to go through government books and closely check on the implementation of promised spending cuts and overhauls.

"There will be no new conditions in other areas like fiscal policy and structural reforms," European Union Economic Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn said Sunday.

It will be a tough sell. Spain's banking-sector problem is a deep one but not the only one the government faces. The economy is contracting viciously and unemployment is staggeringly high. The central government has had difficulty controlling the finances of its regional governments.

The continuing implosion of its property bubble pushed Spain back into recession in the first quarter and almost one in four workers is without a job. The unemployment rate among young people is near 50%.

"At the end of the day, we also know that the Spanish regions are going to need a lot more funding than has been assumed," said Ms. Haworth of Credit Suisse. "The Spanish deficit forecast of 5.3% is clearly not going to be met."

Pavan Wadhwa, a strategist at J.P. Morgan, said Spain faces a trio of problems: a troubled banking system, an overextended government and an economy in tatters. With the aid, he said, "you have resolved one of three things, so you might actually see a relief rally on Monday. But a relief rally is not going to last for a very long time."

—David Román, Santiago Perez and Jonathan House in Madrid contributed to this article.

Write to Charles Forelle at [charles.forelle@wsj.com](mailto:charles.forelle@wsj.com)

### Just don't call it a bailout

The Economist Jun 10th 2012, 19:30 by F.M.-B. and G.T. | MADRID



WHATEVER the €100 billion (\$126 billion) made available by euro-zone countries to recapitalise Spain's banks looks like, the Spanish government would really rather not call it that. "In no way is this a rescue," said Luis de Guindos, Spain's economy minister, while announcing that a deal to rescue Spain's banks had been done in a two-and-a-half-hour conference call with the 17 euro-zone finance ministers on June 9th. "It's a loan with very favourable conditions." The prime minister, Mariano Rajoy (pictured above), who left his underling to front the bailout, was meanwhile busy giving the impression that all was proceeding as normal. When he eventually appeared before the press the following day, Mr Rajoy made repeated reference to "what happened yesterday", as if the rescue were an embarrassing incident that, out of politeness, ought not to be mentioned by name. Then he flew to Poland to watch some football.

This was understandable, given the importance of confidence to banking, if slightly comical. Yet it was also emblematic of Spain's approach to its banking crisis, characterised by a mixture of bluster and denial that has ultimately proved to be self-defeating. The good news is that this loan signals that the country is at last facing up to the problems in its banking sector. A hundred billion euros is at the high end of what most analysts estimate is required and should be enough to protect Spanish banks against further shocks.

The government said it would specify how much money the banks needed after it received an assessment from two independent consultancies, Oliver Wyman and Roland Berger, due by June 21st. The loan amount is more than double the €40 billion capital hole identified late on June 8th by a report from the International Monetary Fund, though the IMF had warned Spain would need an additional buffer on top of this amount. Last week Fitch, a rating agency, said Spanish banks might require €50 to €60 billion in fresh capital, or up to €100 billion if things became really bad. The government needs to request enough money to persuade markets that it will not underestimate needs for a third time—as it did with provisioning orders totalling over €80 billion in February and May, which have proved insufficient.

The bailout will be channelled through the state-backed bank bailout fund, the FROB (Fund for Orderly Bank Restructuring), and so will count as sovereign debt. If used in total, it would add about 10% of GDP to Spain's debt burden. Even then, the debt to GDP would probably peak at below 100% in 2015. This is still less than other highly indebted countries in the euro zone.

Yet several details of the bailout are still fuzzy. First, it is not clear exactly what conditions would be attached to the aid. The government claimed there were no conditions for the rest of the economy. Other European ministers might disagree. The Eurogroup praised Spanish reforms but said it would also be monitoring deficit procedure and structural reform carefully. "Progress in these areas will be closely and regularly reviewed also in parallel with the financial assistance," in their words. The Eurogroup also mentioned "horizontal structural reforms of the domestic financial sector", which could mean something.

Second, the Eurogroup did not specify whether Spain would be borrowing from the existing rescue fund (the European Financial Stability Facility or EFSF) or from the new European Stability Mechanism which is due to



start in July. This matters because loans from the EFSF are not senior to other bondholders, whereas the ESM loans do have priority over privately held debt. A loan from the latter could spook investors in Spanish sovereign bonds.

How will the bailout affect Spain's ability to borrow in the markets? Cleaning up the banking system would be a positive step but it is not enough on its own. The country's economy is expected to shrink this year and the next. The bank bailout is unlikely to reverse the downward momentum, even if it eases the country's credit crunch. If Greece leaves the euro, it is possible that Spain will find itself shut out of the markets.

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## Europe Dodges a Bank Crisis in Spain, but Perils Lurk

By [JACK EWING](#)

FRANKFURT — With an agreement to bail out Spain's struggling banks, Europe again avoided financial chaos in a [debt crisis](#) that is in its third year. But Europe still faces far bigger challenges that threaten the Continent and with it, the world economy.

The most urgent of those concerns is being driven by events in a country at the other edge of the euro zone: Greece.

While the Spanish banking rescue will be expensive — as much as \$125 billion — it will be well within the means of a European emergency fund established for just such purposes.

Far harder to calculate are the costs if, after Greek elections next Sunday, the new government reneges on the bailout Greece negotiated with its European lenders a few months ago. That could lead to a withdrawal from the euro zone, threatening that currency union, which has largely benefited more prosperous members like Germany.

What is more, the Spanish bailout will do little to address European banks' addiction to the borrowed money they have depended on for their daily financing needs.

“The way the currency union has been functioning is not sustainable,” Jens Weidmann, the president of the German Bundesbank, told the *Welt am Sonntag* newspaper. “A breakup of the currency union would bring extremely high costs and risks that no one can really predict.”

Lucas Papademos, a former interim prime minister of Greece, said that Greece's departure from the euro zone would be catastrophic, pushing inflation in the country to as high as 50 percent, putting extreme stress on Greek banks and slashing living standards.

“The stakes are exceptionally high,” Mr. Papademos, who is also a former vice president of the European Central Bank, told a group of bankers in Copenhagen last week. “Because the decisions to be made at, and immediately after, the forthcoming elections will determine the country's future for at least the next decade.”

Those problems would not be Greece's alone. Europe's big fear is contagion — an infection of financial panic that could spread far beyond Greece. Spain's leaders have long said Greece's problems contributed to the general market uncertainties that helped undermine Spanish banks.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy cautioned that the ailing Spanish economy, Europe's fourth largest, which has had an unemployment rate of nearly 25 percent, would worsen before getting better.

“This year is going to be a bad one,” he said.

And it may not end there, with Italy struggling with economic stagnation and escalating borrowing costs.

A critical question will be how Saturday's deal will be received by investors on Monday, particularly with the Greek elections approaching.

“By no means is this a solution,” said Adam Parker, chief United States equity strategist at Morgan Stanley. The aid for Spain “could be a near-term positive from a trading standpoint, but you haven't solved anything in the long term.”

The next task for European leaders is to show the rest of the world that they are making a credible effort to repair the flaws in the euro zone that allowed the problems in one small country, Greece, to threaten the world economy.

On June 28 and 29, European Union leaders will gather in Brussels to discuss, among other things, ways to forge closer fiscal integration. Despite calls from some leaders for shared oversight of budgets and deficit spending, no concrete proposals have been made.

Even if Greece ends up with a government willing to try to live up to the terms of its 130 billion-euro bailout deal by meeting its payments and striving to narrow its wide budget gap, strong doubts remain whether any new leadership in Athens can fulfill those obligations. A lot of private money has already fled Greece, while its deeply depressed economy and dwindling tax revenues threaten to put the country even deeper in the hole.

“Even in case of a new government, I doubt whether the institutional framework in Greece can guarantee the program,” said Jürgen Stark, a former member of the European Central Bank’s executive board. “Who has the competence to implement the program? That is the key point.”

Mr. Stark is among those who contend the euro zone is strong enough to withstand a Greek departure. “There will be contagion,” he said in a telephone interview. “But I think it can be managed. It will be costly in the short term. There will be benefits in the long term.”

Jitters about what Greek voters might do may have helped soften statements from Germany, the euro zone’s paymaster, in recent days. Although Berlin has been Greece’s harshest economic critic, Germans awoke last Thursday to find Angela Merkel, their chancellor, telling them on television that Europe needed a fiscal union — implying that some of their tax dollars may be needed to help the suffering Spaniards and Greeks.

“We need more Europe,” Ms. Merkel said on ARD television. “We do not only need a monetary union, but we also need a so-called fiscal union. This means that we also need a common budgetary policy, and we also need a political union.”

Such a statement might have provoked an outcry a year ago — Ms. Merkel quickly played down the prospect of a “big bang” solution coming from the gathering in Brussels — but Germans may be realizing that their own well-being is in imminent danger.

This week official data will provide more clues about how the crisis is affecting Europe’s largest countries. Figures on industrial production in France and Italy are expected Monday and for the euro zone as a whole Wednesday.

Analysts have predicted declines, which would be bad for Germany because Europe’s biggest trading partners are other European countries. But slower growth in Germany could also create a political backlash, making Germans more reluctant to help their stricken fellow euro zone citizens.

“If people think they are poorer maybe they become more reluctant to share the burden,” said Clemens Fuest, economics professor at Oxford University.

Mr. Fuest said he was skeptical that Europeans would ever agree to delegate control over their national budgets to a European authority as part of a fiscal union. European leaders would be better off concentrating on measures that are more realistic, he said, like a common system for overseeing banks, guaranteeing deposits and dealing with sick financial institutions.

That could help avoid situations like those in Ireland, Cyprus or now Spain, where the cost of bank rescues raises doubts about the solvency of the national government.

Many proposals to push members of the European Union closer together would take years to carry out, too late to help ease current tensions. Mario Draghi, the president of the European Central Bank, said last week that it would help a lot if European leaders simply wrote a detailed plan for the future of the euro zone.

“The very fact of having an objective, a goal, an end point and a clear path would, by itself, contribute to a stabilization of the financial situation in Europe,” Mr. Draghi said at a news conference.

How much time he and other leaders have to chart such a path may depend on what Greek voters decide.

“The Greek government, when one is formed, must send a clear signal that it is prepared to implement the reforms that have been agreed to,” Mr. Weidmann, the Bundesbank president, told ARD on Sunday. “It’s in the hands of the Greeks.”

Nelson D. Schwartz contributed reporting from New York, and Raphael Minder from Madrid.